

# VANCOUVER

## Pacific Film Co-operative

The Pacific Film Co-operative is undertaking a research project for the distribution of Canadian films in small communities throughout British Columbia. The project is being funded by the B.C. Cultural fund. The co-operative will share information from the project with other interested film groups. It is the aim of the co-operative to establish a self sufficient network for film packages in the province.

## Independent Film Makers

Bix Milanich has just completed shooting *Memorex*, a science fiction film, funded by the Canada Council. Enda Bratt was production manager, Tony Westman cinematographer, Pattie Robertson Assistant Director and Richard Patton did sound.

Phil Borsas is making a documentary short on barrel making at Sweeney Cooperage, one of the last places in North America that makes barrels. The film is being funded by Borsas with assistance from the National Film Board. The film is called *The Barrel Yard* and is designed for release as a 35mm theatrical short.

Ron Precious is completing a film on an isolated trapper. George Payrastre has finished three films on Mayan culture and witchcraft, filmed in Mexico during the last two years. (There will be an article on these films in an upcoming issue.) S.F.U. Workshop film makers are involved in a number of productions that will be screened in May. Guy Bergeron, resident in film, is planning a script writing course for the summer session.

## B.C.F.I.A.

The British Columbia Film Industry Association held their annual general meeting on April 1st. Three new people were elected to the Board of Directors. The incoming board members are Kirk Tougas, Bob Linnell, and Ken Jubenvill. Jack Gattles was appointed to fulfill a remaining one year term. The board members currently in office are Keith Cutler, President, Art Steadman, Secretary-treasurer, Pattie Robertson, Ralph Umbarger, and Ernie Kerr.

The new accent of the B.C.F.I.A. is on active committees. Five committees were set up. These include Commercial and Industrial Producers, Inter-Craft

Liaison Committee, Information Centre and Promotion Committee, Newsletter Editorial Committee, and Canadian Feature Films Committee. The B.C.F.I.A. has formally made an intervention to the C.R.T.C. and the candidates for the last VHF channel available in Vancouver. The B.C.F.I.A. feels that using local film talent is an integral part of a community television station. We also feel that buying independently made Canadian films is an obvious practice which should be adhered to.

The executive of the B.C.F.I.A. extend an invitation to other film groups and associations who wish to solicit support from West coast film makers.

For individuals interested in receiving our newsletter (at least 9 issues per year) we are charging \$5.00.

For further information please write, *Pattie Robertson, B.C. Film Industry Assn., P.O. Box 91442, West Vancouver, B.C.*

—Peter Bryant

## Production

Like the weather, feature production is below average in British Columbia this year. Sally Struthers and Ed Ansner were here for sixteen days filming an ABC Movie for T.V. The action took place in Cypress Bowl, West Vancouver. The story concerns Helen Kelleben and Ralph Flores who spent 49 days at Watson Lake in the Yukon beside their wrecked plane before being spotted and rescued. *Hey! I'm Alive* is produced and directed by Lawrence Schiller who, as a *Life* photographer, filmed the actual Watson Lake ordeal.

For a T.V. movie, *Hey! I'm Alive* is using some of Hollywood's top talent; Cameraman Dick Moore, (*The Reivers, Scalp Hunters*). Special Effects are handled by Hal Millar, (*Planet of the Apes, Ice Station Zebra*), Dan Trepecke, make-up, (*The Planet of the Apes*). Charles Fries Productions Inc. are the contractors.

## Simon Fraser

At Simon Fraser University where Guy Bergeron is Resident in Film, a premiere of his students' work will be shown on May 21st at the New Images Theatre. There will be 100 minutes of film from the 74/75 Film Workshop. *Facts* is the title made by 25 students. Using computer animation, Doug Starret has come up with a surprising example.

Three solo efforts: *Once Upon A Climb* a film on mountain climbing, directed by Keith Nannary; *Cowboy Rosa*, by George Payrastre. There are four films done by the same group of three people: *Jack's Lunch, Exit, No*

*Entry*, and *336*. Lawrence S. Day, Mel Kennedy and Doug Starret pulled the strings.

The main staple of the program includes *Sammy, Sammy*, a documentary by Michael Chechik.

Dramatic films will be, *After Friday* 23 minutes, by Tim Sale; *Blizzard* by C.R. (Rudi) Wrench, is an adaptation from a short story by Sinclair Ross, and is in colour; as is *Via do lo Rosa*.

Guy Bergeron is pleased with the output and the students. He expects to be at SFU for two more semesters.

## ACTRA — Vancouver

An historic first for British Columbia was ACTRA local's decision to award nomination recognition to Vancouver members vying for the National Awards at the Hyatt Regency in Toronto, April 23rd. Each branch is entitled to a number of nominations proportionate to its membership. Toronto is entitled to seven nominations in each category, Montreal and Vancouver to two each in each category, and the other seven branches to one in each category.

A branch nominates members of that branch, or performances in, or scripts for productions which took place in that branch. This means that it is possible for the same performance or script to be nominated in two branches. For instance, Stuart Gillard, a member of the Toronto branch, has been nominated for a new Award — "Best Performance in a Feature Film" — by both Toronto and Montreal for his role in *Why Rock the Boat?*, an NFB feature film produced in Montreal.

In the film category Award for the Best Performance in a Feature Film — Montreal: Stuart Gillard — *Why Rock the Boat?*; Toronto: Stuart Gillard — *Why Rock the Boat?*; Ken James — *Why Rock the Boat?*; Andrea Martin — *Black Christmas*; Henry Ramer — *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; Vancouver: Alicia Ammon — *The Wolfpen Principle*; Pia Shandel — *The Visitor*.

## NFB — Vancouver

The British Columbia Regional Production Centre of the National Film Board of Canada is under the executiveship of Peter Jones. They have turned out some exceptional documentaries including the *Pacificanada* series of three.

Jack Long, veteran cameraman-director heads the technical department, and right now they are planning their program for this year. Completed is a half hour picture done in co-operation with the Alberta School Broadcasts: *The Man Who Chose the Bush*.

The story is about a Metis family of

Fort Chipewan and, according to Peter, might be termed pop-anthropology. The crew undertook the shooting during the Christmas holidays in Alberta and certainly shows the ultimate in dedication. The Alberta Department of Education sponsored. Director was Tom Radford of Edmonton; Cameraman — Tony Westman; Sound — Rick Patton; Assistant Camera — Fred Easton; Sheila Reljic edited and is joining the NFB Regional Production Centre as a producer, following her successful documentary which she directed on Soccer.

## Notes

The Harold Greenberg entry into the province with his long expected series of features is still apparently an 'iffy' proposition.

Mooted as the most costly Canadian feature (\$2,000,000) *Double Negative* which was to be partially lensed in Victoria, B.C., has also vanished from the production scene. Screen rights were alleged to be purchased for \$50,000, based on a book, *The Three Roads* by Ross McDonald of California. Archie MacDonnell & Associates were the promoters.

Bob Elliott is very quiet, and it is hoped he has not given up the idea of more serious production following the failure of his first feature attempt, *The Inbreaker*. Elliott is an ambitious, capable and highly personable young Canadian, and should in the future promote something really worthwhile in the Canadian feature film area.

Somebody has to wake up somewhere. We can't continue to depend entirely upon the American and British.

—Jack Ammon

# HOLLYWOOD

## Sydney Newman, The Czar of Canada's Film Industry?

—Leila Sorell

In a few answers to the opening questions I posed to Sydney Newman during the press conference held by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association on March 22, 1975 in Hollywood, one could detect his incredible knowledge of the film and television productions which made him a powerhouse whose weight will be felt in the Canadian film industry for many years.

Being the government film commissioner as well as chairman of the National Film Board (whose function



Sydney Newman and Leila Sorell reading 1973 copy of *Cinema Canada*

he explained in great detail), one wonders if this enormous concentrate of power given to him will not lead him one day to absolute power. Parliament allotted 20 million dollars to his disposal in 1974, however, being appointed by Parliament with a fixed salary leaves one satisfied that Newman is looking out with profound sincerity for the best interests of promoting the Canadian film industry. Even the aim of his recent trip to Hollywood testified to his desire to elevate Canadian films in the U.S.A. to their proper place.

In Newman's words the government agency's aim is to interpret Canada to Canadians and to the rest of the world.

He attended Filmex, which is the largest international non-competitive film festival in the world held annually in Hollywood. Filmex paid tribute exclusively to Canadian product in a program consisting of 27 shorts, educational and documentary films on March 20, 1975. The screening took place in an auditorium holding approximately 800 seats which were occupied by a capacity paying audience. The program lasted two and one-half hours and, quoting Marykay Powell, Filmex public relations executive, it was one of the most enthusiastically received programs of the entire exposition.

Beaming with pride, Sydney Newman felt that, judging from the applause, the results of this screening were gratifying.

Among many enlightening deeds of the Canadian Film Board is the fact, besides allowing tax incentives, that it aids financially with \$50,000 to \$300,000 to independent filmmakers. Such an aid is unknown and way overdue in the U.S.A. In spite of these grants, the Federal government does not impose any political restrictions or other censorship.

"With such a favourable climate, why did so many great talents of Canada defect to U.S.A.?"

"Yes. We are trying to do our utmost to bring them back. In fact," he added joyously, "We succeeded in getting Ted Kotcheff back with us to direct *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*."

"The best talent left Canada in the 1950s. There were few filmmakers in 1939 and the Film Board was created after the war. Canada is a small country and there is simply not enough work."

But Newman's role presently is primarily oriented towards television productions which will cater to mass audiences. There will also be changes in filmmaking. So far Canadians have been satisfied with U.S. films, but of late they want to be more and more identified with themselves.

Most astonishing to the press members was perhaps Newman's progressive concept of the "Challenge For Change" program, which the Film Commissioner called "one of Canada's greatest achievements." It gives a voice to the people and the power to criticize its government. Is it akin to our radio talk shows in the U.S.A. where people anonymously call in and criticize every governmental issue or personality?

Newman agreed, except that it is a visual concept "with greater impact on man's quest for a better democratic society."

"What countries are the best markets for Canadian films?" I asked.

"U.S.A. is first, followed by the United Kingdom, France and the iron curtain countries," he replied. "In fact, Czechoslovakia paid tribute to us with a special film festival honoring Canadian films."

"Any plans for co-productions and with what countries?" one member asked.

"Presently there are co-productions with France and Italy. But Canada's forte lies in educational and short subject films. The Film Board sponsors only three feature films per year."

Mr. Newman left no doubt in the minds of the press that he will continue to lead Canada in the right direction to earn its place among the major film-making countries.

While in Hollywood the Canadian Consul General hosted a party in honour of Mr. Newman. The gala occasion was attended by all the emigres from the North now living and working in Hollywood. □