

photo by Bruce Skinner

Actress (Rose) and Supporting Actress (Paulette Jiles), but won none. **Rose's House** is a film of which John Grierson would have been proud, not only for its unique 'creative treatment of actuality', but also for the way it represents the working class - with dignity and affection.

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## The Doll Factory

d: Annette Cohen, sc: Barbara Boyden & Annette Cohen, p: Barbara Boyden, pc: ABC Productions, lp: Jayne Eastwood, Color Running time: 20 minutes.

**The Doll Factory**, to quote the press handout, is "a fable which comments on the obstacles, real and imagined, which interfere with a contemporary woman's career aspirations." An unknown woman is on her way to the 18th floor of an office building for a very important 2:00 p.m. interview. She has taken the advice of every job hunter's manual and arrived early. Once she enters the elevator, her misadventures begin.

Do not allow yourself to be put off by the theme or the plot. **The Doll Factory** is far from dogmatic. It is both enjoyable and humorous and makes succinct comments concerning this woman's difficulties in rising to the top. The theme is now terribly year-before-last, but Ms Boyden and Ms. Cohen present it in an original and skillful manner. They avoid the hysteria which can, and often does, accompany feminist works. The film's intent is quite obvious, but its handling is restrained.

The film takes the form of several vignettes with each giving life to Murphey's Law - whatever can go wrong, will go wrong. Most of the obstacles confronting our heroine are of men's doing.

In spite of its tremendous humor, **The Doll Factory** is quite sad. Our heroine does not make it. Granted that it is difficult for anyone to succeed in life, it is still more difficult for women to make it in a man's world. Contrary to the cigarette ads, we have a

long way to go before we can make the grade as easily as men can.

With the exception of Jayne Eastwood's character, all the roles are caricatured in order to more fully make the points. Although all the pieces are excellent, I took particular, masochistic delight in one about a sophisticated director who has a penchant for strong, assertive women and who is going to help her make it. As someone I know flashed into my mind, I squirmed in my seat and thought "how true." Other women, I am sure, experienced the same thing with other characters.

**The Doll Factory** has an extremely large cast. Since everyone did so well, it is hard to single out any one person's performance. People that struck particular chords with me were the director, the female hostage, the hooker, and the guru.

A fraction of the camera work is a little awkward, but nothing unnerving. One or two of the shots are either overlit or were badly developed in the lab. In a couple of spots, the music is, at first, somewhat overbearing. On the whole, the production values are good and do not interfere with the unfolding of the story.

Ms. Boyden and Ms. Cohen are to be congratulated for their sensitive handling of a now, hoary feminist theme. This film demonstrates that they have what it takes to do a good job with their next project, Marian Engel's *Bear*, a novel which will require a great deal of taste and restraint in order to turn it into a good film.

I can only hope that any other feminist films I may see will be as successful and as satisfying as **The Doll Factory**.

Sheila Paterson

## Where Shipwrecks Abound

d:, sc:, ph: John Stoneman, ed: Bill Carter, m: Walter Carlos, Jim Bearden, n: Chris Wiggins, p.c.: Mako Films, Toronto, 1977, col: 16mm.

10,000 shipwrecks, by themselves, don't make a film. Incredibly, at least that number define the bottom of Canada's Great Lakes, products of late 1800's, early 1900's storms. Still, the



John Stoneman getting ready to go under

subject fairly guggles promise, like the head on a glass of good stout. Why then, I wondered, during a recent screening of Mako Film's **Where Shipwrecks Abound**, have we seen so little on the theme? Books yes, there are numerous editions available, but films to date have been sporadic, brief, and scratchy for the most part.

Access is success. A film, any film on the topic, is blatantly thin without good wreck footage, and in the case of Great Lakes wrecks there are no conveniently sited museum pieces, no foreshore sentinels. Getting it into the can means going 'down there' where they lie, up to 100 metres underwater. The truthful answer to my self-imposed question is: there are few competent underwater filmmakers on the continent, fewer yet in Canada. This film clearly shows that John Stoneman is one of those few.

**Where Shipwrecks Abound** is an hour-long documentary-type television film. Stress 'type' here because it is at once documentation and entertainment, containing a major component of dramatic reconstruction, already evident in an earlier multi-award winning short, short, **Wreck**. Stoneman pushes the technique much further in the new film, mixing underwater, surface, land, and studio sequences to good effect. The whole is in turn informative, amusing, dramatic, well-paced, and evocative of past and present inland maritime environments.

Seventy to eighty per cent of the film is shot on, about, and under Lake

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Huron and Georgian Bay, probing many 19th-Century wrecks interned there. But it is also more than a film about shipwrecks. Stoneman documents the contemporary aquatic action and projects the sense of underwater adventure which make these waters a central Canadian boating and diving Mecca. Land sequences at the jump-off point of Tobermory clip along merrily to the music of Walter Carlos (*Clockwork Orange*), while the sepulchral voice of Chris Wiggins (CTV's *Swiss Family Robinson*) presages the dramatic re-creation of past events and underwater sequences.

**Where Shipwrecks Abound** is a something-for-everybody film – necessary, obviously, as TV fare. Nowhere is there a hint of the shallowness, however, that can haunt be-all productions. Stoneman is sincere and empathetic with his subject in all its dimensions. (The proverbially mandatory three to five second slung-assed bikini shot is a personal objection only.)

Problems associated with this motion picture, if they can properly be described as problems in the usual sense at all, are those inherent in any underwater production. There is a spiritually exhilarating but physically limiting and ungrateful world down under. Tenacity and stamina are the chief demands on director and crew. Added to the usual problems with which every director must cope, they make the normal difficulties with the creative component of a film pall in comparison. High summer can find a swimmer refreshed by 18°C surface water, but down below ten plus metres – and down the filmmaker eventually needs to go, if he wants the best there is – the water is a mind-numbing 2°C or 5°C at best. Most critically, vision is peripherally limited by suspended particles in the water, despite intense lighting. Establishing shots are out of the question, and a measure of the film becomes the way in which the director works within and manipulates the fabric of the physical environment.

Stoneman provides his audience with a verbal and topside frame of reference for each wreck, then clarifies and sets it by using great sound and archival still clips of the ships as they once flew before wind and storm. Underwater, the camera moves in brief, wholly acceptable, crab-like dollys, as a man might work his way forward hand-over-hand on board a ship battling incoming seas. For a

change of pace, he has the camera aggressively probe, or alternately float mystically over the memory bones of this long past era. Still again, he indulges the audience in the wonder of underwater life for its own sake, pulling off a number of sequences to satisfy the appetite of even a veteran diver, and does it as a compliment rather than an intrusion to the greater subject matter.

It is a film of many elements this **Shipwrecks**: contemporary, historic/re-created drama and storyteller/

still, very fluid / above and below the surface/ living and dead/ fact and folklore (Jim Bearden wrote two memorable sea shanties to complement the theme)/ documentary and entertainment, yet it holds...well.... exceptionally well. It is a film whose time has come. Happily, someone had the courage and creativity to tie it all together and make the film. Happily too, it was made here in Canada.

Edward Lynas

## Flora: Scenes from a Leadership Convention

**d:** Peter Raymont, **sc:** Peter Raymont, **ph:** Douglas Kiefer, **ed:** Peter Raymont, **sd. ed.:** Les Halman, **sd. rec.:** Jacques Drouin, **exec. p.:** Arthur Hammond, Roman Kroitor, **p:** Mike McKennirey, **p.c.:** National Film Board, **col:** 16mm, **dist:** NFB, **narr:** Peter Raymont, **running time:** 58 minutes, 33 seconds.

With the television media entering the inner sanctum of the Canadian House of Commons, Canadians are becoming more aware of the nature of their hallowed political institutions. **Flora**, the National Film Board's

candid look at convention politics, and a woman's struggle to become leader of the Conservative Party, further expands our awareness of the Canadian political process.

The title of the film is deceiving. It is, in part, about Flora MacDonald's attempt to become the first woman leader of the Conservative Party, but it is also a behind-the-scenes investigation of convention politics, from its idealism to its wheeling and dealing. Actually, the film might have been more aptly called "A portrait of 'Fast' Eddie Goodman." Eddie is the party's chief fund raiser and a Flora supporter. He is seen addressing a group of campaign workers, and he reassures them that they are running an honest and frugal campaign by stating that "we're not here to buy it." Juxtaposed to this is a scene where Eddie is meeting with the campaign staff, and he reassures them

