

FRONTS WEST

by Kathryn Allison

Barbara Janes is the new Director of the Pacific Regional Centre of the National Film Board. Before coming to Vancouver in November to assume her administrative duties, Ms. Janes was a producer at Studio D in Montreal for two-and-a-half years. Her most recent credits there include co-producing *No Longer Silent*, about women in India and *Speaking of Nairobi*, about the United Nations conference in Nairobi. About to be released in French and in English are *Impossible Takes a Little Longer* and *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief* and her French-language documentary *Firewords* about Quebec women writers, which is not yet available in English.

Ms. Janes has commended the work that has come out of this region in the past few years, and is looking forward to working in the Film Board's new amalgamation of marketing and production.

I Dropped in on the CAB/WABE Conference and caught the last two television seminars as well as some interesting lobby small talk. The Caplan-Sauvageau Report was a major source of spirited discussions,

and there were several references to a seminar on TV trends and forecasting in which Mimi Fullerton (director-general, TV Ontario) reportedly spoke about a new, less-costly trend towards more dialogue and fewer car chases in television production.

At a gathering titled "Getting Along with Cable", panelists Clint Forster (chairman, CCTA Ottawa), Bill McGregor (president, CAP Communications, Kitchener) and Don Taylor (v.p. Rogers Cable, Calgary) discussed problems between cable companies and broadcasters, such as audience fragmentation (which Taylor smilingly described as "customer choice"), commercial competition caused by the addition of "want ad" channels on cable, location of channel placement for Canadian vs. foreign broadcasters and the commercialization of local cable. All of the panelists agreed that cable companies had had positive effects in the areas of technical quality, extension of service area and the use of substitution, which repatriates Canadian audiences, often to their irritation.

The cable representatives had sharp criticisms of the Caplan-Sauvageau Report, which was accused of not being based on legitimate consumer research, and precluding private sector initiative. The tensions between broadcasters and cable companies were balanced with outlines of areas of possible cooperation, particularly in areas of stereo sound and high definition television and mutual promotion.

The seminar on Violence on Television was held after the CAP Voluntary Code Regarding Violence in television programming was ratified in a CAB general meeting. Panelists focussed on broadcasters' ability to manage violence on television through selection of programming, scheduling and placing warnings on violent material. While all participants agreed that violence on television should be controlled, the discussion kept returning to the contradiction between the Canadian public's concern over violence on TV and their viewing habits, which support it.

Desensitization and the general perception of television as a one-way medium were cited as possible reasons for the lack of complaints about violent programming, and the education of the public in critical viewing skills was deemed to be a necessary step in weaning Canadians away from excessively violent entertainment.

The inherent contradiction between broadcasters' providing a service to a public which has a right to the entertainment of its choice but also seems to need protection from its own tastes was mentioned frequently, and some good-natured sparring between CBC and CTV representatives touched on each other's programming, and the relative merits (or demerits) of *Hockey Night in Canada* and the *World Wrestling Federation* (the two networks' top draws).

The last day of seminars for the CAB/WABE conference coincided with TV Day, in which the three local television stations throw a big lunch at the Hotel Vancouver for local advertisers. It is encouraging to report that all three are producing local drama: BCTV, with its *Fifteen*, a teenage improvisational series; CBC with its *Lies From Lotus Land*; and CKVU, which is in development on several dramas, the first of which, *Life After Hockey*, will be taped in December.

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