

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

The festive season has been a pleasant one here in the east. The lakes are frozen to a smooth black-ice and the skaters are out turning dizzying circles, their long scarves streaming out behind them. On New Year's Day the local detachment of the 'Polar Bears' were out in full force to throw themselves screaming into Halifax harbour (whether this was due to the cold or the polluted state of the waters I cannot attest).

On December 11 the National Film Board organized the Atlantic premiere of the new film by filmmaking duo Tina Viljoen and Gwynne Dyer called **Harder Than It Looks**. A tightly cut and scripted half-hour film, it examines the proposition that our whole world might be made safer if Canada and the Scandinavian countries created a neutral non-aligned block which would form a buffer zone between the superpowers. In the tradition of the interest in peace and disarmament issues which seems to characterize this area, a capacity audience was on hand at the large theatre in the International Education Centre where the screen-

ing took place. Afterwards a panel consisting of Rear Admiral Frederick Crickett, former diplomat Arthur Andrew, Professor Gillian Thomas, Ms. Viljoen and Mr. Dyer debated some of the ideas presented in the film with equally energetic input from the audience. The salient point was that non-alignment is only a feasible strategy if one can make it stick and convince *both* superpowers that one is neutral. Various speakers also argued that, in the end, Canada's alignment makes little difference since in a nuclear conflict Canada will be destroyed irrespective of how it is aligned. Hence our chief foreign policy goal ought to be to find ways of getting the superpowers to behave and talk to one another. Sobering thoughts.

The winter chill seems not to have slowed down the pace of film activity in the area. Robert Frank's **There Ain't No Candy Mountain** wrapped in Cape Breton in the middle of December. Apparently the French, Swiss, French Canadian, American and Maritimes crew was a slightly unstable one with problems in communication and trust but the

film seems to have passed through relatively unscathed. The last segment of the film will be shot in New York.

In Halifax, Bill MacGillivray seems to have been cutting a blue streak and has come up with a fine cut of **Life Classes** which only wrapped on October 30. Rumours are the film looks very good and a sneak preview screening of the cutting copy will take place in the next month. At the same time Picture Plant, the producer of **Life Classes**, continues pre-production research on a documentary of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design which is planned for later this year. It is the centennial of the founding of the College (the location, real and fictional, of many of the scenes in **Life Classes**) and MacGillivray would like to make a film to mark the occasion.

Salter Street Films is continuing post-production on **Codco**, the made-for-television six-part mini-series which wrapped on November 8 (see the On Location report in this issue). On the southern front (the *very* southernmost front - shooting is taking place in southern Argentina!) Paul Donovan's **Normanicus** has survived an urgent cash-flow crisis in the middle of production and has completed principal photography more or less on schedule at the end of 1986.

Les Krizan, president of Krizan Productions in Halifax, has spent the past several months back in his native Budapest studying the Hungarian film production situation with a Canada Council grant. Always a superb cinematographer, he is trying to absorb even more of the lyrical Hungarian style of shooting. He is currently 'on leave' from this project doing the second unit shooting for

Salter Street in Argentina, but he is due to go back to Budapest to help shoot a feature there. Despite this globe-trotting he is nevertheless proceeding with plans for a feature he would like to shoot in Nova Scotia on - think of a better location if you can - Sable Island.

In New Brunswick at the Filmmakers Co-op in Fredericton work is almost complete on a dramatic film, **Spectre of Rexton**. An answer print is expected within the month. A new addition to the Co-op, Gail Schnitter, is working on a cell animation of a poem called **My Shadow** by John Louis Stevenson.

In Prince Edward Island Brian Pollard has a fine cut of his half-hour film called **Farmers Helping Farmers** which concerns a group of PEI farmers who decided to become active in Third World and development issues and organized an exchange between farmers in P.E.I. and Kenya. Now they are involved in a number of projects in Kenya and Tanzania for which they actively fund-raise. The film, which is slated for completion by the end of March, delivers the message that ordinary people can be involved and effective in such issues. Meanwhile P.E. Islander Dave Ward is in Halifax editing a personal film project of his called **Retrieval** which is a documentary using the medium of sculpture.

Meanwhile at NIFCO (Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-op), Derek Norman has started editing a film by Ed Rich called **Rollin's Progress**. This is a half-hour dramatic comedy which was shot in and around St. John's during this past summer and promises more of the patented NIFCO-style deranged comedy. Ex-

Vancouverite Debbie Macgee is shooting her half-hour dramatic film with the working title of **The New Poverty** about the world of the unemployed. Shooting is also taking place in St. John's. Ken Pittman and Red Ochre Productions are proceeding with **Finding Mary March**, their feature drama which was almost shot last summer, and which they now hope to shoot this year.

So although the festive season's Taiwan flu may have decimated our ranks somewhat, the east coast film community, fortified by suitable quantities of eggnog, is back in the saddle at their Steenbecks and cameras forging ahead into the New Year.

Seattle Cineplex

TORONTO - Theatre giant Cineplex-Odeon Corporation has agreed to buy a Seattle-based movie house chain with a total price tag of about \$45.5 million (U.S.).

Cineplex-Odeon bought Sterling Recreation Organization Co.'s 99 indoor screens and 15 drive-ins, which are located in Seattle, Tacoma, Tri-Cities, Spokane and Bellingham, Washington.

The purchase was made through Cineplex's wholly owned U.S. subsidiary and includes the costs of a major expansion program that is just about complete, a press release states.

Cineplex president Garth Drabinsky said the Seattle company has a reputation for quality theatres and operations. He added the Seattle area has a stable and prosperous theatre-going public.

With the purchase Toronto-based Cineplex will run 1,510 screens in 495 North American locations.

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