

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

The groundhog must have been able to see its shadow – it was a beautiful sunny day when February crept over the horizon – if it was able to dig through the enormous drifts all over the ground, that is. And I thought the Europeans were getting it bad this winter. Maybe this just proves that Newfoundland is part of Europe after all. Anyway, if only I could remember what it means if the Goundhog does see its shadow perhaps I could forecast... Oh, never mind.

Speaking of shadows, the Dutch production of **Mind Shadows** has completed principal photography in Cape Breton and Halifax. **Mind Shadows** is director Heddy Honigmann's screen adaptation of a well-known Dutch novel. It tells the story of a Dutch couple who retire to a rural area of Canada and the consequences they face when the husband learns he has Alzheimer's disease. Although a Dutch production, Imagex's Chris Zimmer served as a producer and all round production co-ordinator both before and during the shoot. Goede-lück, Heddy!

The crew from Salter Street Films have also returned. They were in Argentina for two months shooting the most recent Donovan survival epic, **Normanicus**. According to second unit cinematographer Les Kriszan, the fine volcanic dust which blew everywhere was one of the biggest problems. Hundreds of bottles of compressed air were consumed in a vain battle to keep the stuff out of the camera gear. Nevertheless, the lab reports on the developed footage are good, although Kriszan himself hasn't seen any of it since it was shipped back to Canada for processing and he was forced to shoot 'blind' for the entire time. Reports say Producer Paul Donovan will soon be going to Toronto to begin the mammoth job of editing the footage. Buena suerte, Paulo!

Kriszan's continuing interest in the cinema of his native Hungary has lead him to become an observer on the next film that Academy-Award-winning director Istvan Szabo (of **Mephisto** and **Colonel Redl** fame) is shooting with frequent collaborator Klaus Maria Brandauer. It is scheduled to start production in April in

Budapest and Berlin. Kriszan will be along as a Canadian observer anxious to see how they light, shoot, and direct films in the 'Hungarian School'. He is hoping to parley some of this experience, and his own very considerable background as a cinematographer, into a project of his own. He's written a script for a feature drama of a shipwrecked sailor on Sable Island which he is trying to fund. "It's like trying to get water out of a stone," he told me, referring to recent funding negotiations, but he's not giving up. Knowing Les, I'm already getting ready to see it on the screen. Sok szerencset, Les!

In Halifax, developments are no less interesting. Three local producers have banded together and formed a new production company called Brenton Films to produce a series of made-for-television films

called **Brenton Street Stories**. The three are Chris Zimmer of Imagex, Ralph Holt of Media Co-op Services, and Charlotte Harper of MediaFix. Script development has already begun, in cooperation with CBC and Telefilm, on ten scripts, six of which they hope to produce in the summer and fall of '87. According to Brenton Street, "this collection of stories will be contemporary, reflecting an urban Maritime reality seldom portrayed on television." Sounds interesting to me. Good luck, Breton Street!

Out of the can and racing for the screen is Glen Walton's **The Nova Scotia Song**, a documentary on the life and work of Nova Scotia's folk historian, Dr. Helen Creighton. The premiere was held on February 19 (the film was originally, to have appeared at the Atlantic Festival Atlantique in October but technical problems prevented it from doing so) and included a screening of the

1957 NFB documentary about Dr. Creighton collecting folk-songs called **Songs of Nova Scotia**, and extracts from **The Collector**, a musical based on the life and work of Dr. Creighton which is currently running at the Halifax Citadel. The whole evening was sponsored by the newly formed Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Atlantic (CFDA) as part of its program of promoting independent film and video producers of the Atlantic Provinces.

Intrepid Cape Breton filmmaker, entrepreneur, and raconteur Neal Livingstone has got another film project on the roll. This winter he's been pounding the corridors with a project called **John Nesbitt** about the monumental sculptor of the same name who makes his home on the Margaree in Cape Breton. CBC has now issued him a broadcast letter and he is continuing his rounds to try and raise the remaining funding. Plans call for

production to begin on May 1 and for the half-hour documentary to be ready for delivery to the CBC by September 1 (whew, there ain't no flies on that boy!). It will be shot in 16mm and edited right in Mabou where Livingston lives, rubbing shoulders with fellow filmmaker Robert Frank and Walter Delory (is there a 'Cape Breton School' of filmmaking in the offing?).

Opening the papers last week I saw that **John and the Missus**, **Children of a Lesser God**, and **Faustus Bidgood**, where all playing simultaneously (in addition to Chuck Clarke's **Eight Frames Per Second** running as a short, I might add). Gosh, it gives you a certain sense of optimism seeing all that made-in-Canada film up there on the screens at once. All that **Atlantic** film up there on the silver screen – I had to wipe a tear from my eye. So, before I break down sobbing, that's all for now from the east coast.

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MONTREAL – Donald Brittain's television special on the life of William Lyon Mackenzie King is shooting on locations in Montreal until mid-May.