

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

Quick notes this month from an Atlantic region blessed with the kind of Indian summer we always hope for but do not always receive.

I recently attended a most interesting screening organized by the National Film Board of Canada to launch their new film **Enterprising Women**. Held in the ballroom of the Hotel Nova Scotian, it had a very festive atmosphere complete with balloons and intermittent music reminiscent of the Academy Awards. The large room was packed almost to overflowing with a large and enthusiastic audience which was obviously delighted with the film and its positive and uplifting message – women can make it in the marketplace and they have the talents and abilities to do whatever they please.

This film is co-directed by Red Snapper Films' driving force, Lulu Keating, a one-woman theatrical production herself, and Hubert Schurman of Hollow Reed Productions. It focuses on six women with very different backgrounds and interests, who have set up their own businesses: Mimi Findlay and Liss McRae are co-owners of a pasta shop; Pearl Williamson is a mill owner and operator in Cape Breton; Karen Westhaver is running a salmon and trout farm; Marie Waters runs a business academy featuring her own blend of technical training, jogging, and meditation; and Diane Axent designs, manufactures and markets batik products.

The film is an optimistic, upbeat look at the variety of entrepreneurial undertakings that women are embarking upon, at least a few of which are in traditionally male fields. Surprisingly, the film hardly deals with any resistance these women might have encountered. The few times that this issue is touched upon, the women mostly say they have met surprisingly little resistance from the male business hierarchy. Some feminists may not like Mimi Findlay saying she is not averse to leaving the top couple of buttons of her blouse undone when dealing with men who she knows have chauvinist tendencies. However, on the evening I saw the films the audience greeted this comment with good-natured laughter. Five of the six ladies in the film were at the screening and stood to a prolonged chorus of applause. Karen Westhaver – obviously unaccustomed to so much attention and rushing to get back to feed her salmon that evening – told me she was more pleased with the representation of herself in the film

from she had been when she saw earlier versions.

Tony Merzetti of the New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-op writes to tell me about a whole series of productions that members are currently working on. Blair MacIntyre is working on **The Vacationers**, a comedy which follows two disgruntled couples travelling on their summer vacation. They meet a group of used-car salesmen who, after a recent drop in sales, are ready to do anything to sell a car. I simply can't imagine what it's going to look like!

Elsbeth Tulloch is working on **Colors of the Wind**, a short visual film about a seven-year-old girl's discovery of the world and herself after an encounter with a down-and-out bag lady.

**Out of the Darkness**, directed by Heinz Gloss, is a film about a World War II bomber mission told in flashback by the pilot who tries to summon the images of his crew who perished on the one mission that he did not go on.

**My Shadow** is an animated short by Gail Snedden taken from the well-known Robert Louis Stevenson short story about a little girl and her most uncooperative shadow.

Finally we have **Manic Film Session** (yes that is the title of the film) directed by Bev Thornton which I am told is a post-modernist experiment in spontaneous cinema (Now let's see...I'm always getting modern and post-modern cinema mixed up...). She is making extensive use of an optical printer to create a film about how people act and behave in front of a film camera. Now, never let it be said that New Brunswick filmmakers don't undertake a wide variety of films.

I spoke recently with Nigel Markham about **Pelts**, the NFB film I wrote about in the last issue of *Cinema Canada*. He, and not the nonexistent Derek Norton whom I mentioned in my article (Oh gasp, another erratum!), is the director of the film. He told me **Pelts** is getting perilously close to completion with only a few short sequences to be shot this winter on a fur farm in Prince Edward Island. My apologies to Nigel and Derek Norman.

I also spoke with Bonnie Baker at the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Atlantic (CFDA). She informed me that she and the Board of Directors were currently in the thick of a major rethink of the structure and policy of the CFDA. She expects the organization to emerge into its next incarnation in the next couple of months. Always interested in film distribution, I shall stay on

top of this one and bring you up-to-date as soon as I know more.

Various groups are gearing themselves up for fall shoots in the region. Word is the CBC – Salter Street Films co-production of the **CODCO Show** has been so enthusiastically received by CBC that Michael Donovan has been contracted to put together another series with even more episodes than the last. According to my ear on the ground, this is due to take place as soon as November.

Preparations for the Atlantic Festival Atlantique proceed apace. I hope to be able to tell you more in the next issue about what this annual fall gathering of Atlantic cineastes produces. Until then – keep wearing those 3-D glasses!

Christopher Majka •

Zoo grosses reach \$1M by November

MONTREAL – French-language box office figures for **Un Zoo, la nuit** are expected to reach the \$1 million mark by mid-November.

Cinéma Plus, distributors of the award-winning film, report (Oct. 7) \$650,000 in box office receipts since June 1987.

This first feature by Jean-Claude Lauzon, set in the underworld of Montreal, played in one Montreal theatre between June and the end of August when it opened on four additional French-language screens.

On Thanksgiving weekend, the film was scheduled to play on 15 French-language screens across Quebec.

Cinéma Plus say they expect a long run in French and English Canada.

In English Canada, after two-and-a-half weeks, a subtitled version of **Un Zoo, la nuit** has grossed \$65,000 on two screens in Toronto, one screen in Montreal and one screen in Ottawa where the film has been playing for two weeks.

The film will be featured at the Vancouver Film Festival and will open in Vancouver on Oct. 30.

**Un Zoo, la nuit** started to draw attention when it opened the Director's Fortnight at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

It won the \$2,000 prize (Prix le Permanent) for the best Quebec film at the Montreal World Film Festival followed by the Critics' Prize at Toronto's Festival of Festivals.

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