



## The Banff Daily

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## Eastern Wave

CHRIS MAJKA

## Of flowers, warm winds and film

The calendar tells me its spring but Maritime weather being true to its nature, I'm sitting here this morning watching the snow accumulate on the crocuses in the backyard. Ah... if flowers could only speak, what would they say...?

If I were a tulip (perish the thought...) I would certainly long for a tropical breeze to fend off the glaciers which had descended upon me. My dreams might well come true, for a warm wind from China will shortly blow its jasmine fragrance over Nova Scotia's conifer hills, Not just a warm wind from China but, in fact, *Warm Wind from China*, a new dramatic film from Nova Scotia's (or, rather more precisely, a Prince Edward Islander come to roost on our fair shores) Kent Stetson. Director, writer, actor and raconteur, Stetson has been writer in residence at Neptune Theatre, this year. One of the fruits of his labour has been the play *Warm Wind* which was premiered, to great critical acclaim, this winter at the Sir James Dunn Theatre where it received a week-long run. Shortly thereafter Stetson went to Newfoundland where he staged the play again with a new cast, this time serving as both writer and director.

Evidently word of its success spread; recently Toronto-based Atlantis Films signed a contract with him to produce the project as a feature dramatic film. Stetson must have impressed the crew in Toronto for they've hired him as screenwriter for the project. Atlantis plans to finance the project with profits from previous ventures and will not be seeking Telefilm funds or broadcaster letter agreements. Rumours put the budget of the project well into seven figures and shooting may commence as early as June of this year. Fans of Stetson's imaginative work may well applaud!

Another writer, director, occasional actor, and raconteur on the local film scene is Glen Walton who also doubles as president of the Atlantic Filmmaker's Co-op (AFCOOP) and is an English professor at St. Mary's University. Glenn has been busy this winter preparing to direct a short dramatic film which he has written. It is an AFCCOP production with the working title of *The Room at the Back*. Short segments of it have already been shot; further shooting is scheduled for May and June of this year. Another project of Walton's has been *Ragged Island*, an 18<sup>th</sup> century historical feature which he wrote. In 1986 he shot the pilot segment in Lockeport, on Nova Scotia's south shore. Financing for the entire project has, however, proved elusive and Walton has been occupying himself with honing the script. Now, however, rumours hold that Walton is negotiating with a Montreal-based company which is interested in the script as part of a series of features which it plans to produce over the next year. Glenn tells me he hasn't yet put his name on any dotted lines but who knows what the future may bring?

Under the stewardship of AFCCOP coordinator Gary Swim, the Atlantic area film co-ops (AFCCOP, P. E. I.'s Island Media Arts Co-op, the New Brunswick Film Co-op and the Newfoundland independent Filmmaker's Co-operative) have embarked upon a very ambitious workshop program for this upcoming year. There are a total of nine workshops in all, commencing with an Assistant Director's Workshop taught by former AFCCOP stalwart (now making his home in Toronto) Cordell Wynne. This will be followed by workshops in Production Management led by Terry Greenlay and in Script Development with Bill MacGillivray, both Picture Planters tried and true. These will be followed in June, July and August by workshops in Sound Recording, Lighting, Camera and Acting for the Camera. The sessions will culminate in a Directing workshop led by Italian director Silvano Agosti. Depending on how things go, a film may or may not actually get made as a result of this workshop. It will then be followed by an Editing workshop in the fall. All in all it promises to be a comprehensive series of opportunities for filmmakers, both young and old, to learn and improve a gamut of filmmaking skills.

In other news, Brian Pollard's *A Wake for Milton* (*Cinema Canada*, No. 148) is now completed and is scheduled for a screening on the CBC *Reflections* series. Nigel Markham's film *Pelts*, being produced by the Atlantic Studio of the NFB, is still in post-production as is *Black Mothers, Black Daughters* but Les Krizan's film *Margaret Perry* is rumoured to be on the verge of release after a long hiatus in post-production. John Brett, filmmaker of the natural world, has been at work on a film called *Small Rivers* and I am told that it has been slated for a fall release on CBC's *Nature of Things* series. My fly on the wall also tells me that NFB's Elizabeth Clarke (who last year, on an interim basis, very capably steered the *Atlantic Festival Atlantique* through a crucial transition year) has been offered the post of Festival Director and shall shortly be leaving the Film Board to devote her energies full-time to this project.