

## ATLANTIC ECHOES

by Mike Riggio

**SUMMERSIDE, P.E.C.** - If you find it tough to produce films in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver, then switch places with Lawrence Carota. Carota lives and works in Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

Carota, who originates from California, began his early work in video with the NFB's *Challenge for Change* but, finding the old back-and-white, half-inch video too limiting, he soon moved into 16mm film.

Very early on he embarked on a sailing film, a bit of an ambitious project for someone starting out. "I salvaged a short out of that, and it was a good learning experience. But it certainly didn't have any selling potential." The sailing film was followed by an autobiographical documentary on his family which was aired as a one-hour special on ATV.

At this point he began working as a news cameraman for ATV. "Back then I was getting \$25 to write the story, film it and deliver it. Then we started making commercials for \$300 and have since produced a number of commercials on the island for various Maritime clients."

The commercials and the news work still provide a base with which to survive. And today Carota continues to work as a freelance news cameraman for the French network Radio-

Canada in Moncton.

At the present time he is completing a half-hour documentary on a fishing family from Freeland, PEI which, with possible NFB assistance, he hopes to have completed by early May. "The film shows the basic family relationships of the fishermen and the difficulties of being a fisherman in the Maritimes."

Carota's views on independent filmmaking in the Maritimes pretty well echo the thoughts of most of the independent producers in the region. "What we call a film industry - there's no such thing here. And it's very frustrating for people. In the Maritimes there is the talent and there is the ambition, yet there's very little offered to the filmmakers with which to support themselves."

Outside of the limited support that is given by the NFB and the Canada Council, there are not too many other agencies offering developmental assistance to the independents.

"CBC, concerned about its own in-house productions, is showing very little concern for support of independent producers. ATV has no budget for purchasing any sort of material. The CEDC seems inaccessible to the industry in the region. And that is a real slap in the face to the people that are

working in the independent industry."

The difficulties are created by isolation and distance. There are no laboratory facilities in Atlantic Canada, no laboratory that offers the basic processing of negative film and the normal

lab services of optical transfers and answer prints. "And there isn't any point in someone trying to set one up, because there's no industry here to support it." Equipment is also a problem.

One other major stumbling block in the region is the lack of

internal communication among the various production groups. Every producer seems to be working in total isolation from every other producer. There is very little awareness of what the nearest neighbour does or is capable of offering.

## DOC preparing for June reports

**MONTREAL** - In all cultural areas, the Department of Communications is busy consulting and preparing position papers, hoping to have the elements of a cultural policy in hand by summer.

"We intend to be prepared with a variety of options in all areas," commented Minister of Communications Francis Fox to Cinema Canada, "by the time the Applebaum-Hébert Commission is ready with its recommendations."

The Minister plans to react with alacrity to the suggestions of the Commission. No important policy decision is expected before then.

## Semaine funding cancelled by IQC

**MONTREAL** - The Semaine du Cinéma québécois has failed to receive grant from the Institut québécois du cinéma, a failure which most probably marks the end of that manifestation. The Semaine had requested \$40,000 from the IQC from a total operating budget this year projected at \$120,000.

The IQC cited the poor performance of the Semaine in 1980 (the last year it was held), when it failed to attract the public and cost \$175,000. It also

asked whether he thought the government might be prepared to take radical measures to shore up independent distribution in Canada. Fox responded that he didn't think "the Cabinet would be ready to take on the Americans" on the subject, but that certainly the government was very nationalistic, and would do everything possible to find a solution to the problem. "You can't talk to anyone in the industry today without realizing that distribution is now our number one problem," he concluded.

noted that the city of Quebec had withdrawn from the event this year.

The organizers of the Semaine countered, saying that the refusal of the IQC was made in an effort to oblige the event to integrate into the World Film Festival of Montreal. The organizers feel strongly that the Semaine should be held independently in the Spring, and fear that the focus on québécois films will be diluted if held in conjunction with the WFF.



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