

## E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

Recently, I attended the premiere of **No Accident**, a well crafted new short produced by the National Film Board of Canada.

Directed by Paul Cowan and Mike Mahoney, the film examines the topic of drinking and driving by following, Bert Robertson, whose son was killed by a drunken driver, as he speaks to a high school class on the issues and responsibilities involved. It is a powerful 13 minutes intercut with black and white dramatized footage of the accident.

Many educators and law-enforcement officers at this screening seemed to agree that the film could be a powerful and effective tool, especially for educating young people. One observer suggested that it be compulsory viewing for inhabitants of the detox cells at the local police station where it could be shown non-stop 24 hours a day! This screening reminded me of all the carefully targeted, narrow-focus films an important and current topics that the NFB produces and which many of us never see. It was a pleasure to see this one.

Another current topic in the Atlantic provinces is censorship. The New Brunswick Film Classification Board has decided to ban David Lynch's **Blue Velvet**. (George Rom-

ero's **Day of the Dead** was also banned but received comparatively scant publicity). The case of **Blue Velvet** has drawn ire from a number of people including Fredericton film producer John Pedersen of Capitol Films.

New Brunswick is the only province in Canada which has banned the film. The decision has received support from people like Rev. Ivan Rayner, the past-president of the Saint John and District Ministerial Association, a group which encourages letter-writing campaigns against certain films which it feels could be psychologically damaging. E.H. Bringloe, who has been chairman of the Classification Board for a year and a half, argues that the quality of a film has nothing to do with the board's decision, it simply follows "acceptable community standards"

New Brunswick is in an odd situation - its English-language films are classified by this Board, whereas French-language films, shown in the province's 18 francophone theatres, are classified in Quebec by the **Régie du cinéma**. Now, I wonder what would happen if a French-language version of **Blue Velvet** were to be released?

The lower end of Argyle Street in Halifax may someday

become Nova Scotia's answer to London's Wardour Street - a veritable warren of filmmakers are settling in. On one side of the street is the NFB and facing them are Gerard Dolan's new company Videoactivity, Lulu Keating's Red Snapper Films and Chris Zimmer's Imagex.

The latter served as the Nova Scotia production end for the Dutch company which filmed **Mind Shadows** in Cape Breton this winter. Their joint association is continuing through this summer, when final sequences will be filmed in Amsterdam, to the final release planned for

early fall. The film will be released in English, English-Dutch, and English-French versions targeted for specific audiences in Canada (by Cinefile) and in Europe (by a Dutch distribution company). This kind of trans-Atlantic co-operation

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is most exciting for us in this region. Zimmer pointed out to me that several Canadian crew members have already received job offers in Europe as a result of their participation on this film.

Red Snapper/Imagex is also hard at work in pre-production on Lulu Keating's feature **Africa Chronicles**. They have visited Africa once and are planning a second trip this summer to Kenya and Tanzania to scout locations and make various local contacts. Zimmer told me that funding is falling into place and, if all goes well, they hope to be filming in Africa.

From Chris I learned that though the legislation for the proposed provincial Film Commission is still pending, the province has through the department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness become active in providing production funding for film projects. It provided some financing for **Mind Shadows**, for Bill MacGilliv-

ray's **Life Classes** and Michael Donovan's **Codco** productions. It is encouraging to see the province starting to take this positive stand with respect to film financing.

Anyone out there remember Star Channel, Atlantic Canada's shortlived contribution to the pay-TV marketplace? After a year of head-to-head competition with First Choice and C-Channel (another shortlived entity) the star fell and Star Channel went into receivership. In the path of this plummeting meteor another entity was formed - Studio East.

During its brief existence Star had built a small but sophisticated, studio facility from which it broadcast its packaged programs and which it hoped to turn into a small production center. Now this facility has been rolled into Studio East and under former Star mover and shaker, Andrew Cochran, is developing various projects. A recent one is two half-hour episodes of a chil-

dren's TV drama called **Blizzard Island** which it has undertaken jointly with CBC. Directed by **Fraggle Rock** alumnus George Bloomfield, they will serve as pilots for a full-fledged series. It is a fantasy show involving two children who have to return a magic necklace to its rightful owner, the Great Argon, and pass through a variety of adventures in the pursuit of this goal. The production uses both CBC and Studio East facilities as well as a veritable bestiary of puppets. I can hear the chains rattling in the dungeons already.

**ERRATA**

Director Ed Riche (not Rich) telephoned to tell me that his film is called **Rolland's Progress** and not **Rollin's Progress** as I had misspelled it in *Cinema Canada*, #138. Furthermore he told me that although it has comic elements in it, it is more properly in the dramatic mold than the comedic one. I also heard from Maurice Victor

Thorburne in New Brunswick who informed me that the Tourism, Recreation, and Heritage Film Commission which I had reported as already being set up in *Cinema Canada*, #139, is only in the process of being established. My apologies to both.

**Christopher Majka •**

**MONTREAL - Anne of Green Gables** and director/producer Kevin Sullivan have been awarded a George Foster Peabody Award for meritorious service in broadcasting in 1986.

The highly acclaimed Canadian television - movie is the first Canadian production to win a Peabody Award, presented by the University of Georgia School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

In all, 25 'Peabodys' were awarded. They are to broadcast what a Pulitzer prize is to literature, a Sullivan spokes person explains.

**Decline video goes to market**

TORONTO - Hailing it as the most highly acclaimed movie in the history of Canadian cinema, New World Video has released **The Decline of the American Empire** on video.

Denys Arcand's sex comedy began its run in theatrical movie houses starting in July 1986. Still playing in major movie houses across Canada **Decline** has grossed over \$4 million so far with \$3 million of that coming from Quebec alone.

The video version of the **Decline** will be available in both subtitled and dubbed versions, states a New World Video news release.

Marshall Forster, vice-president and general manager of New World Video, said that based on **Decline's** theatrical success he is hoping it will be equally popular on video.

Forster said a market-by-market advertising campaign will be used. He said an embossed cover has been produced that is "very classy."

**Decline** won eight Genies including best picture and best director, was nominated for an Academy Award as best foreign picture of 1986 and won the Critics International Award for Best Picture at the Cannes Film Festival. In total it has won 21 prizes worldwide.

The video will be available starting June 11.

New World Video is a division of New World Mutual Pictures of Canada Limited.

**Roxy closes as old theatres get converted**

TORONTO - One of Toronto's most well-known repertory movie houses has closed down after a 15-year stint as a revue venue.

The Roxy Cinema, located on Danforth Ave. in the eastern part of the city, closed on June 5.

The building that houses the Roxy has been sold and plans have been made to redevelop the facility, said Tom Litvinkas, who manages the Roxy. Litvinkas also owns and operates a group of other repertory movie houses in Toronto.

The Roxy is a 670-seat cinema that had one of the biggest movie screens left in Toronto, Litvinkas said.

He added that he anticipates the Bloor theatre will pick up the slack left by the closing of the Roxy.

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