

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Rossi Cameron

EDMONTON... Some people might sneer at receiving a spray-painted brown paper bag as a gift, but not Glynnis Whiting.

But then Glynnis Whiting is not like most people and the bag was not just an ordinary brown lunch bag.

The occasion for the gift on December 16 was the first-year anniversary of Brown Bag Cinema in Edmonton. The brown lunch bag, which usually contains popcorn, was a token of appreciation from the film community. A bronzed version of the brown bag is in the making.

The idea for Brown Bag Cinema evolved during the 1986 Banff Television Festival.

"Anne Wheeler's *Loyalties* was premiered and a lot of the craftspeople were there for no other expressed purpose but to see the results of their work. There was obviously a need in the film community for a more informal kind of gathering where people could meet, exchange ideas and build rapport."

Glynnis, who recently resigned as a script developer for Allarcom to strike out on her own as a freelance writer, talked up the idea with people from CBC, Alberta Culture and Allarcom and was delighted to find them receptive.

She pulled together about 10 people who expressed interest. Their first organizational meeting was held at a small cafe called 'Bob and Ernie's Truck Stop.' There was a suggestion put forth that a loftier site might be chosen for these meetings, but Glynnis held firm. No stodgy meetings or officialdom, such as a board of directors. "It was to be kept really informal and in a non-political environment where no one is fighting for anything."

The meetings are still held at Bob and Ernie's and no one holds a title.

On the third Thursday of every month for the past year craftspeople, actors and producers meet at the media club to screen everything from rock videos, experimental films, dramas, CBC-type programs or NFB films. After screenings, the producers field questions about their productions.

There are eight sponsors for Brown Bag: Telefilm, Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp., Allarcom, Alberta Culture, CBC, ACCESS, NFB and National Screen Institute. Each sponsors a month and is responsible for arranging the necessary equipment, the production to be shown and pay the \$50 for the use of the media club and bartender. They are also responsible for bringing along a

vacuum cleaner to pick up the fallen popcorn.

Katie Daniels, consultant with Alberta Culture, is taking over Glynnis' job as "well, organizer or coordinator, I guess." There really isn't any official title.

"The complaint I heard most frequently from funders and independents was that there was no opportunity to find out about each other. The only time they met was when there was a lot on the table and someone was making a pitch. That's a very stressful situation.

"Now people can put faces to names at both ends of the spectrum."

Besides the informal wheeling and dealing that takes place at Brown Bag, some interesting partnerships have evolved.

Alberta Culture was teamed up with CBC and NSI to sponsor competitions in Alberta New Fiction and Writing for Youth. Super Channel has expressed an interest in optioning some of the new manuscripts.

The Brown Bag hosted the Post Input which was the best of Input this past summer.

According to Katie Daniels, Alberta has been asked if it will host the 1990 Input which comes to North America every two years.

"We are studying the feasibility of doing this."

Allarcom sponsored Glynnis's evening with a showing of *A Mouse, A mystery and Me*, a half-hour live action and animation Christmas special which aired simultaneously the previous Sunday on NBC, Global and ITV. It was co-produced by Allarcom and Ruby Spears Pictures of Los Angeles.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit, the brown bags were filled with green and red popcorn.

It was also a propitious opportunity for the sponsor to boast a little about the new Allarcom Studio which is due to open in mid-January.

The \$7 million studio is more than 51 thousand square feet and is completely equipped to handle features, TV series or commercials.

Project manager, Doug Steeden sounded like the proverbial new father when talking about his new baby.

"It's very exciting for Alberta. It will entice productions to Edmonton and keep the good people here. We lose too many of them."

The film community in Edmonton is not likely to quarrel with that thought.

Nor would they quarrel with the innovative concept of Brown Bag Cinema.

Consultants to top Telefilm posts

MONTREAL—Staff resignations continue at Telefilm Canada, despite efforts of the Board of Directors to manage the damage created by the double-whammy of financial overcommitment and the lack of administrative direction.

Two consultants from Le Groupe CGI Inc. Roch Bolduc and Michèle Fortin have been hired to assist senior management and the board for a three-month period. After less than a month at the task, Fortin has been named interim executive

director, following the non-renewal by the board of the mandate held by Judith McCann.

This appointment is giving hope to some that the vestiges of the Pearson administration are now gone and that a new start may be possible.

On Dec. 4, Marie-Andrée Vinet left TFC, having offered her resignation two weeks earlier. Vinet was head of both Operations and Business Affairs in the Montreal office and was the virtual head of all French production activities. Luc Germain resigned at the same time as head of Personnel.

Vinet's resignation was met with consternation and, it is reported, appeals by producers to the minister of Communication's office to find a way to keep her in her post. Discussions followed, resulting in her accepting a vacation until January 11 at which time negotiations may lead to her reintegra-

tion at TFC.

It is also reported that Debbie Bernstein has resigned her post in the Toronto office and will step down in February.

Meanwhile, Linda Beath will no longer deal with Toronto's broadcasters and sees her mandate limited to the Feature Film Fund. This modification follows a three-week sejour in Toronto by Bob Linnell, once head of the Toronto TFC office and now stationed in London, England, during which time he endeavored to straighten out the relations between TFC and the broadcasting community.

McCann, deputy director will be responsible for the Toronto and Vancouver offices, while Louise Beaudoin, also deputy director, will be responsible for Montreal and Halifax. In addition, McCann will chair the Decision Committee for projects submitted to Telefilm.



Although Glynnis Whiting gives full credit to the other participants of Brown Bag and its success, she should get full kudos for bringing the film community together in this informal, informative and very inexpensive way.



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