

## Trade News

### TFC strategy supports increased license fees

MONTREAL – Telefilm Canada has released a list of policy priorities for the fiscal year 1989-1990 and has announced that strict selection criteria for film and television funding are necessary.

Entitled *Strategy for the Administration of Telefilm Canada Funds* the 49-page publication promises to be the first of its kind published at the outset of every fiscal year.

According to TFC, this re-examination of policies is a response to the growing demands of the industry in Canada. Last year, TFC was only able to participate in 75 per cent of eligible projects. Private investment also proved insufficient. Increased financial participation on a per project basis and the relaxation of its preferred recoupment position on certain projects led to a decline in participation by other public and private sector sources.

TFC anticipates a continuation of trends observed in 1988-89 which include an increase in the number of projects submitted, increased budgets and increased pressure on the federal funding agency for greater financial participation.

A numbered list of corporate priorities for the new fiscal year places *Quality and Canadian Content* squarely on top. While recognizing the importance of international co-production, TFC will tighten its selection criteria and limit maximum funding to films that meet maximum Canadian content criteria.

Among the highlights of the report is a new position by TFC that the maximum participation in the broadcast fund will only apply when the broadcaster's license fee "represents at least 25 per cent."

License fees currently vary between 15 and 20 per cent.

The maximum percentage of Telefilm

Canada's participation in production costs can exceed the 49 per cent ceiling by 15 per cent in the case of "a regional or French-language production or low budget production made by a promising director" but may not exceed 64 per cent of eligible production costs.

*Specificity of English and French-language productions:* A renewed commitment to productions originating "in the regions outside Montreal and Toronto, where the quality and potential audience justify its participation".

*Decision-making process:* TFC has promised to stop the "first come, first serve" method of allocating funding which in the past has exhausted most of the funds in the first quarter of the fiscal year. A new system will analyze projects at various intervals throughout the year... "in greater harmony with the industry's normal production cycle and recognize the individual needs of the regions better."

*Recognized expertise and competence:* "... Telefilm is aware of the need to develop and integrate new talents in the industry. It intends to co-operate with its partners in the public and private sectors to develop special programs..."

*Private-sector investments:* No longer will TFC insist on sharing a first recoupment position as a condition to invest in a production. This will encourage participation by private investors but will make it difficult for TFC to anticipate the same return on its investments. This uncertainty reduces the pool of the financial resources available each year. The corporation's estimated 1989-1990 operating revenues is \$12.7 million compared to \$14.3 million last year. TFC will not re-allocate this total amount. In effect \$3 million will not be allocated until revenues materialize as forecast.

*Improved marketing of productions:* TFC will place greater emphasis on the use of high quality

promotional material from the production stage. A marketing strategy will be required for any given production where target audiences and production audiences are concerned.

*International scene:* TFC will clarify its administrative policy regarding co-productions – balance in terms of participation and benefits between Canada and foreign partners. The policy will distinguish TFC's responsibilities with respect to co-production certification and with regard to participation in specific projects.

*Compliance and contractual commitments:* This year, TFC will introduce contractual requirements for distributors and exporters to submit copies of all distribution reports of all productions in which TFC has been involved. TFC will also draw up standard formats for production budgets and final cost reports.

John Timmins •

### Co-production treaty with France still in trouble

MONTREAL – France continues to pose problems for Canadian producers with an interpretation of a directive by the Council of European ministers that could damage the Canada/France co-production treaty.

With the 1992 European Free Trade Agreement in sight, the Council of European ministers has issued a directive (The Transborder Television Directive) which establishes a 60 per cent quota for European-made television. This quota restricts to 40 per cent the amount of non-European television that the EC countries

can program. This lesser percentage includes a majority of American programming.

Canadian film and television producers, who in the past have relied on Canada's bilateral co-production treaties with seven individual EC countries, realized they had a problem when France (the oldest and most prolific co-production partner) did not amend the directive to include Canada/France co-productions in the 60 per cent quota.

France has been asked by Communications Minister Marcel Masse to do as the other EC countries have done and amend the directive before it is presented to the European parliament for ratification in late May.

An amendment would recognize Canada and Quebec co-productions with France as indigenous French-language productions. Failure to gain this recognition would mean Canada/France co-productions are relegated to the 40 per cent slot.

The France-Canada-Quebec working group on francophone audiovisual relations has met several times since March to discuss the directive. Canada is the only country to have signed a co-production agreement on television relations with France where protectionist sentiment runs high.

### Atlantis shoots Bradbury

TORONTO – Atlantis Films and Grahame McLean Associates Ltd. have begun shooting 12 new half-hour episodes of *The Ray Bradbury Theatre* in New Zealand. The project is an official Canada/New Zealand co-production.

Bradbury will adopt his own stories for the series. Eight episodes are being shot in New Zealand, starting June 1, followed by shooting in Alberta.

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# Camera

## B.C. movie union rivalry heats up

VANCOUVER – Before April last year, life was simple for the movie producer working in B. C. The producer either signed the standard agreements with a combination of IATSE, Teamsters, Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) and Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), shot non-union, or went elsewhere.

But life during boom time is never simple. New unions in town, and local agreements signed in conflict with national standard contracts, have changed the rules. Technicians' unions NABET 800 and the Association of Canadian Film and Craftspeople came to town last year to get a piece of the expanding B. C. movie action. This move resulted in the established unions circling their wagons. Both ACFC and NABET have been frustrated in attempts to create a competitive moviemaking atmosphere similar to Toronto's, where they take the majority of the work.

While IATSE had, prior to this year, concentrated on building up the American import movie business, ACFC promised to focus on local indigenous productions. NABET wanted to carve out a market in the lower-budget movies IATSE wouldn't touch. The two rival unions held recruitment drives, signing up disillusioned IA permittees, and nearly everyone else with some level of experience. IATSE reacted by signing on those qualified for membership in IATSE before they could join the other two unions.

Local producers have enjoyed an organized series of concession contracts, offered by the established movie unions, known as "local production incentive agreements." Up to one-third deferrals have been offered to local producers for the last eight years. The other advantage for local producers in working with the established unions is using their collective deferral as cash at B. C. Film and Telefilm; using that deferral as equity private investment, you can, in theory, finance a movie with no money down.

While NABET and ACFC can outbid IATSE, getting the other unions to go along with them has been a major stumbling block. That is, until talks broke down between IATSE and E-Motion Films over their feature *Terminal City Ricochet* (see On-Location this issue). "They (NABET) bought their first picture," says IATSE business agent George Chapman, "the picture qualified as a local production entitled to our standard one third deferral. NABET gave them a two-thirds deferral."

"Not quite," corrects Kevin Brown, business agent for NABET 800, who says the two-thirds was based on a 16-hour day. "We only worked 12-hour days, meaning it worked out to around

a 35 per cent deferral. But they (E-Motion Films) didn't have it in their budget to cover the one-third of 16-hour days."

When NABET got the shoot, IATSE took the new rival union to the B. C. Federation of Labour to try and get NABET thrown out for unfair labour practices, or thrown off the show entirely. "They were told that they should recognize that NABET has jurisdiction and to begin a dialogue with us," says Brown.

NABET's presence at a meeting held in early May with IATSE, the DGC and Teamsters, means official recognition by the established unions of their rival union brothers. But ACFC, being an association, not a union, was not invited. Even NABET wants them kept out.

Having started out in Vancouver within weeks of NABET 800, ACFC has been a revolving door of presidents and business agents (Brown was their first business agent before being fired by ACFC, then hired by NABET). With no work, and unlike NABET, no major parent union next door to help out, ACFC has had little to offer its 220 members besides picnics and meetings, seminars and workshops. "The bottom line is we are here for the long haul," says Brenda Collins who points out that for the first two years of ACFC's 10-year existence, they didn't land a contract. Now that they are established in Toronto, they want to make ACFC a national organization.

Unlike NABET and IATSE, ACFC has its' own drivers' division, putting them in direct conflict with the interests of the 250-strong Teamsters local 155. Rumors about threats of mufferless motorcycles disrupting ACFC shoots have yet to be realized but, so far at least, no producer has been willing to take the risk of being the first to hire ACFC in Vancouver.

Meanwhile the Teamsters, "movie local," recently held its election, turfing out old business agent Bob Dennet and his executive, in favor of Fred Hunchuk and a new executive. As to whether the new administration will be more willing to work with ACFC, "Who knows what the future will hold? We have a very close relationship with IATSE and we certainly wouldn't want to disrupt that," says Hunchuk. That's also the official line from the DGC and ACTRA.

The Directors Guild of Canada is currently engaged in a jurisdictional dispute over a Toronto-based art director and member of the DGC, who worked on *Terminal City Ricochet* under NABET.

ACTRA is still involved in a "constitutional crisis" started when local writer Rick Drew, working on Paramount's big-budget TV series *MacGyver*, signed a Writers Guild of America contract with Paramount. The ACTRA Vancouver office, under then business agent Peter Dent, signed the agreement to allow more writers to work on the American series.

Paramount had a problem with ACTRA because, under the ACTRA agreement, which

was based on the model of low-budget Canadian features, the high-budget American series ended up paying the Canadian writers almost twice as much as the American ones. The other problem is the issue of copyright which, for serial TV with its regular characters and standard plot lines, may not be as important as in feature films.

ACTRA national wants the writers to keep copyright; when Toronto found out about the agreement in September, the Alliance tried to pull the contract back, but Paramount refused. After initially agreeing to disagree, the national and local ACTRA Writers guilds are still no closer to coming up with some form of ACTRA agreement that would allow Canadian writers to work on American shows.

Meanwhile Paramount has gone from having only one Canadian writer on *MacGyver* to three and, according to Drew, next year all four writers may be Canadian. With *MacGyver* being renewed for another season of shooting at the Bridge Studios in Burnaby, and enjoying its highest ratings ever, Drew says the Americans want to hire more Canadian writers. Unfortunately, few Canadian writers are experienced in episodic action adventures.

The problem of experience, and the standard ACTRA Writers Guild contract, is also keeping Canadian writers out of Cannell Films of Canada, the largest producer of episodic TV in the country. All Cannells' shows are written out of Los Angeles. With Cannell building a multi-million dollar studio in North Vancouver, frustrated Vancouver Writers' Guild members are hoping that some of those writing contracts will come north of the border. Meanwhile, they continue to fight with the East.

Ian Hunter •

YORKTON – The 25th Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival will offer a new workshop for students, June 2 and June 3, at the Yorkton Regional Highschool.

This production workshop is called *Video 89* and is co-hosted by the Saskatchewan Drama Association.

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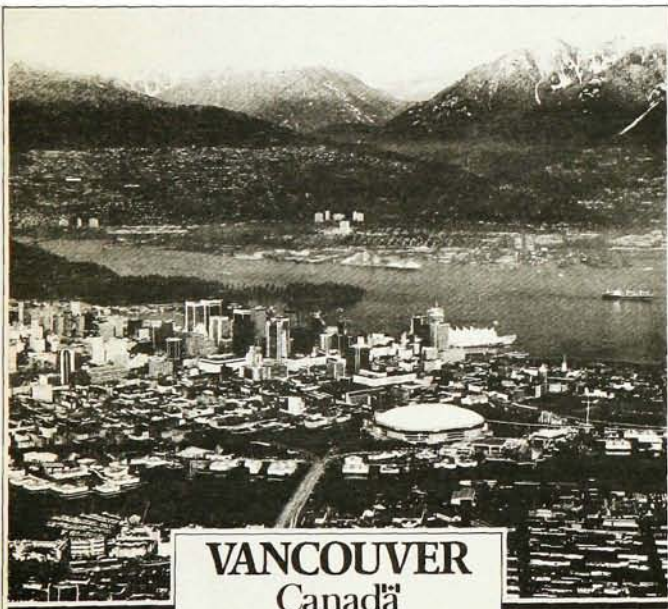
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**THE FOURTH WAR**

**C**ALGARY - Luckily my hair was the right length, above the collar of U.S. army uniforms, and I got six days work as one of the four token office W. A. C.'s on *The Fourth War*. The \$1.4 million John Frankenheimer action-drama to be released in early 1990, possibly with a name change, wrapped April 20th after eight weeks of a snowy, cold shoot in the Bragg Creek area, 20 minutes west of Calgary.

The plot of *The Fourth War* capitalizes on the international splash that *glasnost* is making, and from my perspective seemed to add some warmth to east-west Canadian crew relations. Roy Scheider stars as U.S. Army Colonel Jack Knowles, Jurgen Prochnow (*Das Boot* fame) as Russian Colonel N. A. Valachev: two tough military men posted to the West German/Czechoslovakian border who can't quite get used to the changing times and the idea that their new roles are more that of amicable public relations men than cunning aggressors.

At times the script called for 100 extras mobilized as Russian and American combat soldiers and then later on scaled down to form a 30-member U.S. camp core. Putting us through our paces was retired U.S. Marine Captain Dale Dye, contracted to play the Master Sergeant as well as the film's technical advisor, ensuring that our "covers" were creased just-so and our attitude fit our military rank. (The charismatic vet knows his stuff; he was also the military consultant on *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*.) Like the army hierarchy which Dye imposed there was also a visible crew hierarchy with Alberta members on the third rung jumping to commands from Toronto seconds who in turn took their orders from the handpicked international firsts. And so it goes in the world of off-shore productions - an observation, not a criticism. If anything the outside features create a positive melting pot where Alberta production crews gain valuable experience, make those all important cross-country contacts and begin to feel like they belong to a Canadian industry. Frankenheimer had nothing but praise for the Canadian crews' refreshing attitude and physical fortitude when braving -30 degree Celsius temperatures during the long February night shoots.

The only minor irritant was the fact that no one got paid for the 20-minute trip to the Bragg Creek base camp. IATSE, ACTRA and the DGC have agreed to include Bragg Creek within the city boundary so there is no compensation for mileage. The concession means production savings and repeat business. *The Fourth War* is the third feature that Hollywood producer Bob Rosen has brought to the area. He discovered Alberta's great backdrops in 1970 when he shot *Little Big Man* on the Morley Reserve and then last May and June he brought Frankenheimer in to direct *Dead Bang* with the Calgary area posing as Oklahoma.

**MOVE OVER HOLLYWOOD... the Japanese are Coming**

In August Haruki Kadokawa Films Inc. of Tokyo will be on location west of Calgary on the Morley Flats shooting the major battle scenes in the 15th-century Japanese historical drama, *Heaven and Earth*. Doug McLeod, the Canadian production supervisor, is already busy in preliminary development and research for the epic feature which will have the largest cast, specifically dressed for camera, possibly ever. The extravagant battle scenes call for two thousand extras and over 500 horses. As McLeod says, it also calls for new organizational methods. "We're pioneering new data bases to cope with the huge inventory and crews. A long prep period means fewer headaches and greater savings down the road."

McLeod estimates that he'll need 50 on-camera production assistants who are willing to work long hours for the basic wage but for a very important film credit. This is good news for Calgary film students who are encouraged to drop off their resumes at the Kadokawa Films office based at the International Hotel. Interviews will begin late this month.

*Heaven and Earth* is a \$40 million picture starring two of Japan's most celebrated actors, Ken Watanabe and Masahiko Tsugawa. The 30-day Calgary shoot starting August 8 - September 6th means an expenditure of about 10-15 per cent of the overall budget. Momentum Manufacturing Ltd. of Edmonton has the contract for the huge extra wardrobe. You don't have to look oriental to be cast because the detailed costumes will take care of the foreground and background looks.

**NOT TO BE OVERSHADOWED...**

Calgary independent producer Wendy Hill-Tout laments the fact that she is a hostage to provincial and federal grants in order to finance her first feature film, *Midnite Cafe*. "We're forced into this situation because they have taken away the capital cost allowance and we haven't got the perks to approach private investors."

The 30ish writer/director and now co-producer has been in development for two years on *Midnite Cafe*, a \$1.2 million comedy about women and relationships. Like many scripts, *Midnite Cafe* grew out of a conversation in a bar between Hill-Tout and her best friend and now co-writer, Lynda Shorten. The two writers were fantasizing about the search for the perfect man. Four drafts later the bleak pessimistic view turned funny. After awhile, says Hill-Tout, "you have to have a sense of humor when dealing with relationships."

The search is now on for the right comedic actress to play Melissa, a would-be visual artist and one of the film's five principal characters. In this simple telling it may sound like *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* but, says Hill-Tout, "that's where any similarity stops."

*Cafe* will be shot on location in an undisguised Calgary this coming August "even if I have to shoot it on 16mm and defer some of the salaries," says a determined Hill-Tout. "Making it can't be as hard as writing it."

AMPDC, NFB, Telefilm and SOGIC are all part of *Cafe's* production package. The co-producer is **Bernadette Payeur** from ACPAV, an independent cooperative in Montreal which is currently shooting *Le Party*. Hill-Tout and Payeur met at the Montreal Film Festival two years ago and discovered a common interest in making films about women's lives and social issues.

**EDMONTON CLIPS**

EDMONTON - The Economic Development department of the Alberta government is conducting an internal study, looking at what other provinces have done since the loss of the federal Capital Cost Allowance. Ontario and Quebec have already instituted tax shelters or rebates, while B. C. filmmakers are demanding similar programs from their own provincial government. In Alberta, Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association president **George Christoff** has called for a program similar to Ontario's or Quebec's. And both Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation executive **Gary Toth** and **Bill Marsden** of the Economic Development department have expressed their wishes to see the federal government reinstate the CCA. Marsden, who is the director of film development for the Industry Development Division, is off to meet with his provincial counterparts in Toronto.

**TINSEL MEDIA TAKES AWARD**

Congratulations to Edmonton's Tinsel Media Productions, who picked up an Ohio State Award on April 6. Tinsel Media took first place in the category of best one-hour documentary in the physical sciences for *Buried In Ice: The Franklin Mystery*. *Buried In Ice*, a look at the discovery of the ill-fated Franklin expedition, was produced by Tinsel and aired on Nova/PBS. Tinsel's **Nick Bakyta** was on hand to pick up the award presented at Washington, D. C.'s National Arts Centre. The Ohio State Awards are given for excellence in the areas of educational, informational and public affairs broadcasting.

**BYE-BYE CANNES**

As they say, the final cut is the cruelest one of all. True Blue Film's *Bye Bye Blues* (directed by Anne Wheeler) won't be competing at the Cannes Festival. The European selection committee viewed a ¾ inch video dub of a fine cut with a temporary mix, but declined to pass the film. Still, the True Blue crew seems to be in fine form. The Los Angeles-based Image Organization Inc. is the sales agent for the film, and they'll take a 10-minute promotional trailer to Cannes. As well, the film will be submitted to the Moscow Film Festival at the end of the month.



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### Cinexus buys Panavision

TORONTO—Stephen Roth's Cinexus Capital Corporation has bought "substantially all" of the assets of Panavision (Canada) Ltée, Canada's largest supplier of motion picture equipment and rentals with offices in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Jonathan Barker, Cinexus' newly appointed v. p. of

business and legal affairs, told *Cinema Canada* that the purchase of Panavision was a "solid investment which will form an excellent part of our portfolio."

Mel Hoppenheim, president of Panavision, describes the deal as a move towards vertical expansion.

"Nothing has changed," says Hoppenheim, "we've simply taken on new partners. We now have financing, equipment and a studio in which we are not producing ourselves."

Not included in the deal, says Hoppenheim, is the Expo Théâtre/Studio, a project of Panavision Canada Ltée and the recent recipient of \$3,148,000 under the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Cultural Infrastructure.

There will be no new staff and Panavision in Vancouver will acquire a lighting division, he says.

Last year Cinexus negotiated a co-venture agreement with Famous Players of Canada which lead to the creation of Cinexus/Famous

### Deluding documentaries: Shotgun is solution

VANCOUVER—One solution to the problem of reaching mainstream audiences in Canada with alternative documentaries was provided by Quebec videomaker Robert Morin, at the *Deluding Documentaries* show at Vancouver's Video In, held at the end of March.

"In Canada there are about six people who make all the decisions over what the nation will watch. You have this guy from Telefilm, the head of the CBC, CTV... and you take this shotgun, see, and you put them all in one room with a shotgun and give their secretaries these tapes to run or else. And for that one day you might provide an alternative to what is available on the TV. I think that's about the only way to do it."

The question was posed at the end of the sparsely attended evening discussion on the last day of the four-day event highlighting "passionate documentaries" from England, the Third World and black America, with a heavy emphasis on gay and feminist filmmaking.

Curator Sara Diamond defined the work presented as "directly engaging subjective views and fantasy within a documentary structure for use within a community."

The video documentarians presenting their work at the event were concerned with the "multiple realities" you can create on video and film, when you borrow elements from other conventions to make your point.

In attendance were British video artist Stuart Marshall, as well as Canadians John Greyson, Peg Campbell, Morin and collaborator Lorraine Dufour, UCLA-based film archivist Claire Aguilar and video producer Gary Kibbins. "The work we've seen has not been emerging out of the left but of the faceless, the disenfranchised, the ignored," Marshall summed up. He noted that, with the transition to video from film, the "guerrilla filmmaker has turned into media activist."

Players Films Inc., and recently Cinexus announced its first feature production, *Beautiful Dreamers*, starring Rip Torn, which will be distributed by Cinepix of Montreal. Barker confirmed that Cinexus is evaluating its options and developing an "appropriate role" for Cinexus in the distribution end of the business. BT Bank of Canada, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bankers Trust of New York, is Cinexus' equity partner in the purchase of Panavision for an undisclosed amount.

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When asked about Margot Kidder, a nameless *Mob Story* craftie remarked, "God, she's gorgeous, and she knows it, too." When shooting the scene, which introduces Margot's feisty, sexy character, Madame Kidder was attired in fish-net stockings and a frilly, skimpy, red satin camisole. The script called for the actress-soon-be-director-courtesy-of-Norman-Jewison to perform a lurid bump-and-grind on a tabletop covered with rotting fruit and onions. The setting was a tiny grocery store in Winnipeg's East End. Milling about outside and peering through the store windows were 20 drooling neighborhood onlookers, hoping to get a glimpse of Lois Lane in the flesh. Apparently, they saw quite a bit of flesh during the actual shoot. However, when Margot bounded out of the store to leap into the safety of her Winnebago, the stargazers displayed some disappointment since she had thrown an Inuit parka over her exposed flesh to protect herself from the 30-below Winnipeg weather. But before retiring to her place-of-seclusion-on-wheels, Margot turned to the slavering 'Peg rubes, whipped open her coat and flashed more than just a smile at them. Unfortunately, the dribbling, ear-muffled onlookers were so stunned (and delighted) by Margot's sub-zero striptease antics that they momentarily forgot to utilize their Kodak instamatics. Lucky for them, Margot was in a generous mood. She proceeded to pose in her Playboy flasher stance so the morons could snap away with vigour and glee. As you may know, Margot has enrolled in Norman Jewison's hot-shot Toronto film school to become a serious filmmaker.

### WINTER IS OVER

Shooting finally wrapped on the three-million-dollar Toban-produced pic, *The Last Winter*. Publicist Jennifer Young reported that the feature-length family drama about (what else?) a young boy growing up on the prairies was "on-time and on-budget" Young also reported that in spite of numerous kiddies in the cast (at last count there were five principals and 10 extras), things went smoothly with the little nippers. "They were amazing," said Young, "they took direction very well." It might have helped that the darling angels were constantly in the company of a tutor, several moms, and a fulltime kiddie-wrangler.

### GIMLI SCORES MAJOR AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR

Cinephile of Toronto has entered into a joint-distribution agreement with New York's Ben Barenholtz to distribute Guy Maddin's feature-length cult film, *Tales From the Gimli Hospital* to American markets. Barenholtz is most notable as being the man who guided other cult-faves to international prominence. Some of the flicks the distributor has been involved with include *Eraserhead*, *Pink Flamingos*, *El Topo* and *Blood Simple*. Maddin finally met Barenholtz at the American premiere of the pic at the San Francisco International Film Festival. Upon meeting the shy filmmaker, Barenholtz quipped, "Tell me something, son, you're not all there, are you?" Maddin agreed.

### PARTYING IN THE 'PEG

When *Mob Story* Transportation Captain Dave Perich hauled John Vernon down for his medical insurance examination, he noticed that the star's birthday would actually occur during the shoot, or more precisely, during Vernon's last day of shooting. Perich confirmed this date with John's co-star (and daughter) Kate Vernon. So, on the last day of shooting, the vet actor popped by the production office to say goodbye, and was greeted by the entire crew, who were equipped with Jeannie's Birthday Cake (a culinary institution in the 'Peg) and sparklers. Kate Vernon relayed to Perich how moved her Dad was by the whole affair, not to mention his delight with the edibles available in Winnipeg. "The catering at the beginning of this shoot was pretty gruesome," said Perich, adding that many Mobbie-types had been prepping their own food. One day, Perich noticed Vernon making a vat of chicken soup, so he responded by bringing in a mess of his homemade borscht. Soon, everyone got into the act. Vernon, in particular, was impressed with the superb garlic sausage available in Winnipeg. "As a matter of fact," Perich added, "I just sent a coil of *kubasa* down to Vernon in Los Angeles."

### THANK YOU WINNIPEG

Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO) hosted a late-April thank-you breakfast for a number of Winnipeg civic bureaucrats and political bigwigs. CIDO was so pleased with the amount of support garnered from civic officials for recent shoots, that they figured a shmoozy chow-down was the least they could offer. Sleepy little Winnipeg was the scene of numerous car chases and stunts during the shooting of *Mob Story*.

## Masse addresses cable convention

TORONTO - Federal minister of communications Marcel Masse told the 2,000 cable executives at their annual trade show that the federal government is willing to consider allowing competition within the industry and the opportunity for cable to compete head-on with the telephone companies. Right now cable operators own a monopoly over the areas they serve. But Masse also warned that this would mean that the telephone companies could go after the cable customer as well. Under current federal law, cable is classed as part of the broadcasting system, while telephone service is in the telecommunications industry. Masse told the audience that the rapid advance in technology is making it harder to tell them apart.

The focus of Cablexpo this year was on fiber optics and high definition television (HDTV) and the major advances in these technologies in the past two years. The Canadian Cable Television Association issued a strategic planning document, *Project 94*, which examines the inevitable merger of the two technologies, and concludes that, "for cable television industry, the development of HDTV and the ability to deliver the services are critically important."

With regards to competition from the telephone companies, the CCTA offered a strong challenge in their April *Communiqué*: "Telephone industry rhetoric notwithstanding, *Project 94* concludes that HDTV will be introduced and delivered by the cable television industry long before the telephone companies even have the ability to deliver video signals to the home."

## Cineplex takeover rumours persist

TORONTO - After an intense flurry of activity in April, Garth Drabinsky's bid to take control over Cineplex Odeon has entered a new phase. Drabinsky, Cineplex's chairman, has been rumoured to be trying to mount a bid to take Cineplex private. He and his backers on the board of directors agreed to abandon their plans for a separate deal with a group headed by Montreal financier Charles Bronfman in the face of fierce opposition from MCA Inc. of Los Angeles, Cineplex's biggest shareholder. Since then Drabinsky, Cineplex's chairman, has been mounting a bid to buy all the outstanding shares in the company he built.

The deal with Bronfman would have left

Drabinsky and Cineplex vice-chairman Myron Gottlieb with approximately a 30 percent share of the company. MCA holds 49 percent of the stock, but due to Canadian regulations only exercises slightly less than a 33 percent voting share. If Drabinsky and Gottlieb were to go after total control, it would mean buying 96 percent of the outstanding stock, or 45.8 million shares. At \$17.50 a share, the price offered to the Bronfman group, this would mean a cash outlay of close to \$800 million. Analysts in the financial community don't think this is possible given Cineplex's current bank debt load of \$664 million.



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## Indies go to Halifax

HALIFAX - The general meeting of the Independent Film and Video Alliance will be held in Halifax, June 7 to 10.

The meeting will consist of over 45 member groups in production, distribution and exhibition of independent film and video. A showcase of the best work of alliance members will be featured.

The host of this years' meeting is the The Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-operative, the Centre for Art Tapes and Atlantic Independent Media.



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## Platt leaves Atlantis

TORONTO - Janice Platt, one of the founding members of Toronto's Atlantis Films, has decided to take "an extended leave of absence" after ten years with the company she built with partners Michael MacMillan and Seaton McLean. "It's a terrifying thought", she told *Cinema Canada*, "but necessary." Platt was recently married and has no definite plans for the future, apart from her first child expected in October.

Platt said she had "no idea" that the company would grow so large after their modest start in 1978 when she, MacMillan and McLean formed Atlantis after graduating from Queen's University. It was Platt who walked up to receive the Academy Award for Best Short Drama for *Boys and Girls*, part of Atlantis' breakthrough series of family dramas. Over the years MacMillan emerged as the deal maker/executive producer and Platt, while still a partner, became one of the many producers for the company. Her last production was *Dude*, which Atlantis produced in association with Virtue-Rekert Productions.

## A salute to the documentary

MONTRÉAL - The National Film Board of Canada will host an international symposium and show two hundred documentary films June 16 to 25th in Montreal. The event which is part of the 50th birthday party of the NFB will provide a chance to question the status quo; an opportunity to share new directions with colleagues from around the world; an occasion for celebration; an engagement of ideas, ideals, practicalities and realities; an affirmation of belief in life and in those films and filmmakers who support the continuing search for truth.

The event is structured around ten days of screenings which will take place in a number of downtown cinemas as well as at the NFB, and six days of discussions, symposia, debates, addresses and workshops. Throughout this panoply of resources will be the opportunity to renew old acquaintances, to make new friends and to establish contacts which result in international collaboration.

According to the NFB, it will set the stage for this genre of film to find new forms and new audiences in the decades ahead.

Several hundred filmmakers, distributors, broadcasters, producers, journalists, critics and educators from around the world will gather to share their experience, to listen to esteemed colleagues and to pursue vigorous debate surrounding the documentary film. Each day will be devoted to a different theme, and will be enhanced by the presence of several dozen invited guests. People such as Danish filmmaker Dola Bonfils; Gary Crowds, editor of *Cineaste*; the dean of documentary filmmakers, Joris Ivens; American filmmakers Frederick Wiseman and Richard Leacock; Nick-Hart Williams, independent British director; David McDougall from Australia; Julio Garcia Espinoza, Cuban Vice-Minister of Culture; and Gaston Kabore, Secretary General of the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers.

The symposium will take place at the NFB studios and simultaneous translation or interpretation services will permit easy interchange amongst English, French and Spanish-speaking participants.

Many of the most interesting documentaries from forty countries will be shown to participants in both downtown cinemas and at the NFB itself. Of course it will be a chance to see the classics, but the programme is full of contemporary surprises as well. At least ten major new productions will be premiered, including Nettie Wild's highly-acclaimed "A Rustling of Leaves", Helga Reidemeister's "Shooting in Berlin", and "Falklands, an Untold Story" by Peter Kominsky.

In addition to the three groups of films chosen under the headings "The Eighties", "Canada-

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**THE PANELS**

Sunday, June 18

Who's Out There Watching? The viewers; what they want; are they watching? The effects of television. Young people and the documentary

Monday, June 19

The media and the documentary film; the subjective approach of the filmmaker and the "objective" policies of the media.

Tuesday, June 20

The innovative eye of women's documentaries.

Wednesday, June 21

Third World images; where do they come from anyway?

Thursday, June 22

The market: the network explosion; cablecasting; videocassettes; traditional networks. With all this apparent variety, can many perspectives and viewpoints really be maintained?

**THE WORKSHOPS**

Sunday, June 18

- The documentary and social change
- Studies of the viewing public and what this tells the documentary-maker.
- Public producers: their relationships with independents: developing collaboration.
- Public television
- The documentary in education (workshop organised by ADATE).

Monday, June 19

- Writing about documentaries made by women
- From Studio D to "Regards de femmes", - an account of the NFB experience.

Tuesday, June 20

- Writing about documentaries made by women
- From Studio D to "Regards des femmes", - an account of the NFB experience.

Wednesday, June 21

- Documentary-making in the Third World
- New approaches and possible collaboration
- Broadcasting, markets, exchanges

Thursday, June

- The range of markets
- TV and the independent producer
- Festivals: promotion and publicity

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**Famous raises  
ticket price**

TORONTO - Famous Players Inc. has raised the admission price at all theatres, effective May 12.

The discounted weekday (Monday through Thursday) adult admission has increased from \$5 to \$6 dollars.

The weekend and holiday weekday adult admission has increased from \$6.50 to \$7.00. Admission for seniors and children has increased from \$3.50 to \$4.00.

In British Columbia, the ticket price in 25 cents higher than other provinces because of a recently-instituted provincial tax.

**Back honored  
by CCA**

Ottawa - Frédéric Back, the Oscar-winning animator at the National Film Board is among the recipients of the Canadian Conference of the Arts' 1989 Diplome d'honneur.

The awards ceremony was held May 20 at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in P.E.I.

An art teacher, painter, animator, Back was one the first illustrators for the CBC. He worked in the first animation studio set up by CBC in 1968.

Among his award-winning works are *L'homme qui plantait des arbres* (*The Man who Planted Trees*)

and *CRAC*. Both films won Oscars in 1988 and 1982, respectively.

Other recipients of the Diplome d'honneur are Gwentheth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, co-founders of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Herman Voaden, former national director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

**Transit gets Termini**

MONTREAL - Films Transit Inc. has acquired world wide distribution rights to *Termini Station* directed by Allan King, starring Megan Follows, Colleen Dewhurst and Gordon Clapp.

The film will premier at the Festival of Festivals in Toronto.

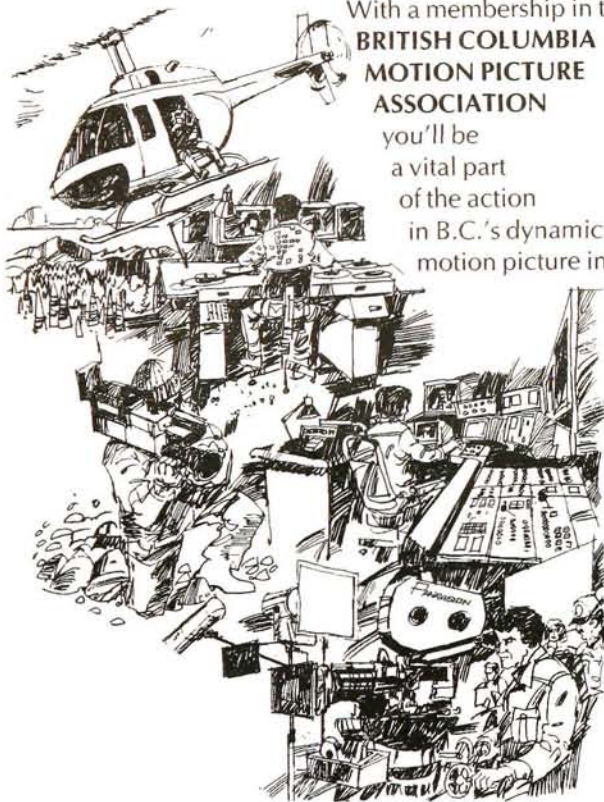
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*On (Experimental) Film*

**MIKE HOOLBOOM**

**A** nna Gronau's first film in five years, *Mary Mary* (60 min, col. 1989) opened March 7 at the Music Gallery in Toronto to an enthusiastic reception. It is the story of 'M', a filmmaker-recluse whose withdrawal begins a complex weave of dream diary, recorded conversation, titles, and tableau that takes as their central conceit the act of self-representation. *Mary Mary* is a psychodrama writ large, a film obsessively self-absorbed even as it unfolds the luxuriant vision of a mind at play, replete with swimming polar bears, whiteouts, flash-frame polaroids, and two long-gowned sisters demurely stepping into the heat of a summer afternoon 50 years before.

The film opens with a long and elegant tracking shot that leads us to the site of M's retreat, the film's literal and figurative home. This passage is twice refrained, first closing M's long drive outside (just one of four scenes set outside the house) and sounding from a TV set where M sits apparently reviewing the film's beginning. This reflexive loop joining the film's dark midsection with its opening threatens to enclose its protagonist in an Escher-like labyrinth of mirrored mirrors.

Much of *Mary Mary* moves between its implicit narrative codes and their eventual betrayal. Cutting from a dreamer to a dream sequence, we learn that this is not her dream but another's. The pictured house is not the one described in voice-over: a dialogue between two people carries only the voice of the protagonist sounding from both mouths (although both seem to speak in sync). All this points to the failure of narrative to account for our lives, that the way of our expression, our gestures of work, and love exceed any simply linear compact bent on resolution. Our mouth is not a story pining for conclusion but the alternating vent and receptacle of difference.

Four sets of 13 titles appear, enumerating in succession a polyphony of influences that move from children's books to native Indian calls for self-government. The wellspring for this intertextual weave is *The Secret Garden*, an English fairytale about Mary, an orphaned child who uncovers the family's secret cripple, teaches him to walk, and turns the key to the secret garden that was lost when the mother died. This story, in turn, finds its antecedents in tales like *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Finally there are a succession of native Indian myths surrounding the Bear Mother. Tracing *The Secret Garden* back to its ritual antecedents in which women and beasts married before the beast's slaughter, Gronau spins a delicate web of allusion that quietly permeates the film. In her first scene, M is shown asleep, finally awakening not with a kiss but the ring of a telephone. If M's bed occupies as much screentime as M herself then this film, like the sleeping beauty in the story of the same name, occupies the place between sleeping and awake. The following scene outlines the classic doppelganger of the psychodrama. M wakes only to speak with her double while great floating polar bears swim alongside.

M: "If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out - bang! - just like a candle."

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if I'm only a sort of thing in his dream, what are you I should like to know?"

M: "Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, Ditto," cried Tweedledee.

M's fragmented blend of identities coalesces here in the figure of Gronau herself ('A'), who waits opposite as the fictional and fictionalizing filmmakers stand mouth to mouth in a screaming wonderland that speaks of the horrors of dissolution. Between the joining of "A" and "M" ("am" or being) lies the great tank of amniotic fluid that holds its white bear in suspension. The rebirth (or bearing) M conceives for herself after her long sleep is inextricably linked with this archaic remnant, just as her house has been built on lands deserted by the Indians. Gronau suggests that the process of individuation is finally a political one - that we continue to live between the lines of a history that alternately obscures and illuminates - and that these traces of erasure must be resuscitated if our own lives are to have any meaning.

Each scene seems contingent here, isolated glimpses of a whole that remains tantalizing and elusive. Gronau's dangling of the veil issues only fragments: telephone messages from unnamed callers, disjointed dream memories, snapshots, tearing pages out of books in an intertextual frenzy, walks without destination and memories whose purpose is never to attach names and places but to energize new relationships. As M recites in voice-over: "Her life had become these moments."

M's solitary musings picture a body of parts recast in the light of representation. Early in the film, wrapped in a fold of silken sheets, she passes a hand mirror over herself, looking on as if she were another. Later she snaps self-portrait Polaroids - as we watch them develop, we realize she is privy only to her reflection, her image, or at best, her abilities to manipulate the means of reproduction. That the film's title is already doubled, underscores Gronau's project: to depict the development of reproduction in M's movement from inside to out, from the secret gardens within only she can till, to the wind-swept exteriors that demand a native's redress, from the house of her grandmother to the political struggle outside the looking glass.

CHRIS MAJKA



Prince Edward Island News

Fast-talking Lee Flemming from P. E. I.'s Island Media Arts Co-op is in San Francisco shooting material and doing research for The Knowing Hand, an independent documentary/experimental film. Writes Lee, "Using narration based on feminist text, discussion and poetry, the film will draw images and visuals from music, movement, art, and land/seascape that celebrate the erotic. I want to collect images; a collage of visuals that express the erotic and intimate in our lives." I eagerly await its appearance. Good thing Lee is collecting material on the west coast. Having spent considerable time in P. E. I.'s distinctly non-erotic bible belt, I am always reminded of Earle Birney's limerick; "O here is an isle/ where the sands run for miles/ but the lobster's not here for the plucking. / The water's berg cold/ the ladies not bold/ & only Milt Acorn says fucking."

Lee has just finished mixing her first film, Profiles of Immigrant Women, a 15-minute production about the experiences of immigrant women to P. E. I. and is doing research with Carol Millett on a film called Girls to Girls, which explores why girls do not participate equally in physical activity. Sounds like a busy year ahead. Also on the Island, filmmaker Dave Ward has just launched three p. s. a. 's for the P. E. I. Council of the Disabled, the P. E. I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Multicultural Council. Word is that they've turned out very well. Island Media has also received a grant through which it has hired artist Jodee Samuelson as a production trainee in animation. They are also well into planning for the Sixth Annual Atlantic Film and Video Producers Conference which this year will take place in Stanhope-by-the-Sea on June 22-25. They've been getting better and better every year...

Lifesize: Women and Film

Speaking of women and film, a group in Halifax called Lifesize: Women and Film is organizing a film series this month at Wormwoods which will include features by Margareta von Trotta, Léa Pool, Lizzie Borden, Yvonne Rainer, Agnes Varda, V. Chytilova, and J. Bashore. This will be dovetailed with two week-long workshops in scriptwriting and directing led by Mireille Dansereau and Norma Bailey (tentatively) respectively. These will be open to interested women filmmakers in the region and will give participants an opportunity to work with some top-notch professional women in the field.

Maritime Independent Television

A new face on the broadcast scene in the Maritimes is Maritime Independent Television (MITV). For the last six months this Irving family-owned network has been slugging it out with Atlantic Television (ATV), the CTV affiliate, the Atlantic Satellite Network (ASN) and the CBC affiliate, CBHT, for viewers, ratings and slice of the \$75 million regional advertising pie. The going is not necessarily easy. ASN has accumulated a debt of \$4 million in its six years of operation and doesn't anticipate breaking even until 1990 at the earliest. MITV hopes to break even in three to four years with revenues of \$5.5 million/year.

They have some very modern and versatile studio facilities and hope to attract productions to them. With this in mind they teamed up with Screen Star, a local production company, to produce a pilot for a soap opera series called The Distant Shore. If syndicators in Canada and the U. S. can put together enough potential buyers, they would like to have the series go into production in the fall.

Atlantic Filmmakers Co-Op

The good news from AFCOOP is that it has managed to buy a new 8-plate Steenbeck to replace the one which burned last fall. Paul Mitchelltree and John Taylor tracked down one in Montreal and after a few adjustments, it's up and running.

This month, the Independent Film and Video Alliance will be meeting in Halifax and AFCOOP is the host group. A steering committee has been organizing the week-long event since January and has recently received a grant to hire a conference co-ordinator and a co-ordinator for a film showcase to be shown at the time of the meeting.

AFCOOPer Glen Walton teamed up last summer with folksinger Ed McCurdy to make a "folk" video of McCurdy's 1949 hit song Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream. Walton and McCurdy also collaborated on The Room At The Back, a short drama in which Ed McCurdy plays (appropriately enough) an aging folksinger being thrown out of his apartment as a result of gentrification. Glen told me that editing of these films is progressing very well and they should be ready for release in the near future.



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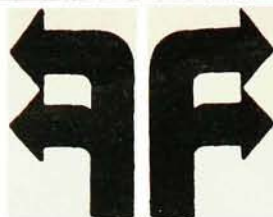
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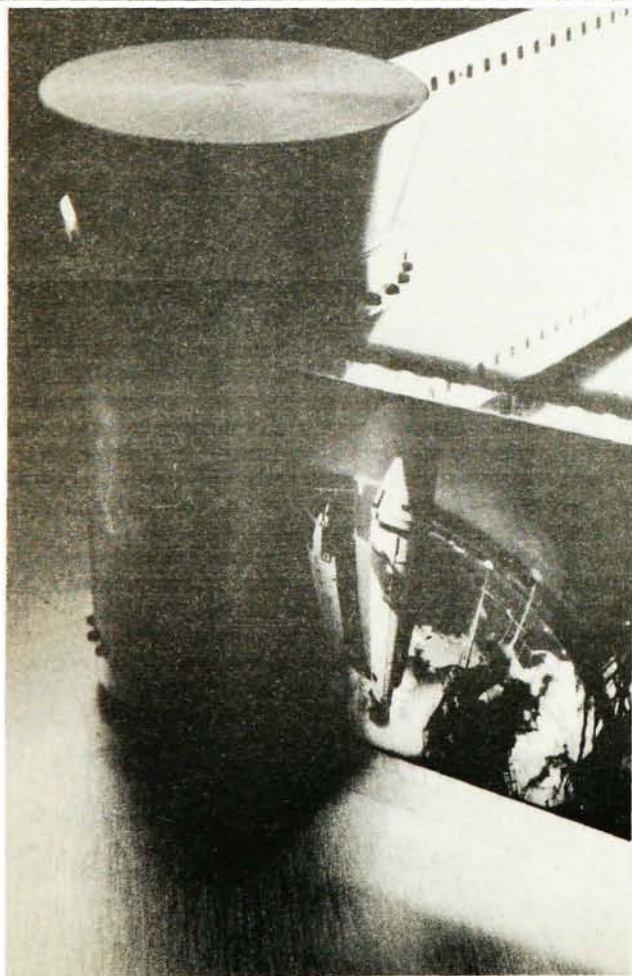
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*George Simhoni/Reader's Digest*

## Lighthouse loses power

VANCOUVER—Depending on who you talk to, *Lighthouse*, Erin Pictures' \$1.7 million modern gothic-romance-horror feature, is either dead or will be "the best movie to come out of B.C. this year," as producer Harry Cole puts it.

Between these two extremes lie hundreds of thousands of dollars of unpaid bills, grievances filed, and lawsuits threatened. More rumors and warnings have circulated over the *Lighthouse* problem than any other B.C. picture in recent memory. Fear of lawsuits, and of feeding the fire some believe could devastate the B.C. film industry, and the film funding agencies along with it, have stopped people from talking on record.

The other sticky issue is that Cole is the immediate past-president of the B.C. Motion Picture Association (BCMPA). An intense debate among members of the BCMPA and the B.C. film industry in general—over whether to remain silent and tacitly approve of what

occurred on *Lighthouse*, or spill the beans and risk backlash from the Eastern power brokers—heats up as the weeks go by.

As Telefilm completes an audit of Erin Pictures' books and a video edit of the movie draws near completion in Toronto, Eastern producers, jealous of the amount of movie-making done in Vancouver last year, are reportedly "wringing their hands with glee."

"Everybody will be paid, and the picture will be completed," Cole recently told an angry creditors' meeting on Vancouver Island where even the Coast Guard has gone unpaid. IATSE business agent George Chapman set up the meeting to allow Cole to defuse the threats of lawsuits. "They realize that if there is no picture there will be no money," says Chapman.

B.C. Film head Wayne Sterloff says that while the film is not on time, it is still under budget. "It will be finished," he says. "The motion picture guarantors have not been called in. If the picture was in danger they would have taken it over." Cole largely blames director Paul Tucker for the collapse of *Lighthouse*, while Tucker blames Cole. In January, the editor walked when his check bounced, and Tucker was fired after he

filed a grievance with the Directors Guild over his own bounced check. Cole says he fired Tucker for taking too long to edit the picture.

So as fingers point and lawsuits fly, the B.C. motion picture industry sheds its innocence.

## Sunrise appoints new CEO

TORONTO - Steve Bornstein has been appointed chief executive officer of Sunrise Films Ltd. of Toronto (*Danger Bay, My Secret Identity*). Bornstein had previously served as a consultant with the company. He served for three years as a senior vice president for Lorimar Home Video and prior to that, chief operating officer for Lion's Gate Films of Los Angeles. Paul Saltzman, president of Sunrise, made the announcement at the beginning of May.

Filming begins May 23rd on the sixth season of *Danger Bay* for CBC-TV and The Disney Channel in the U.S.

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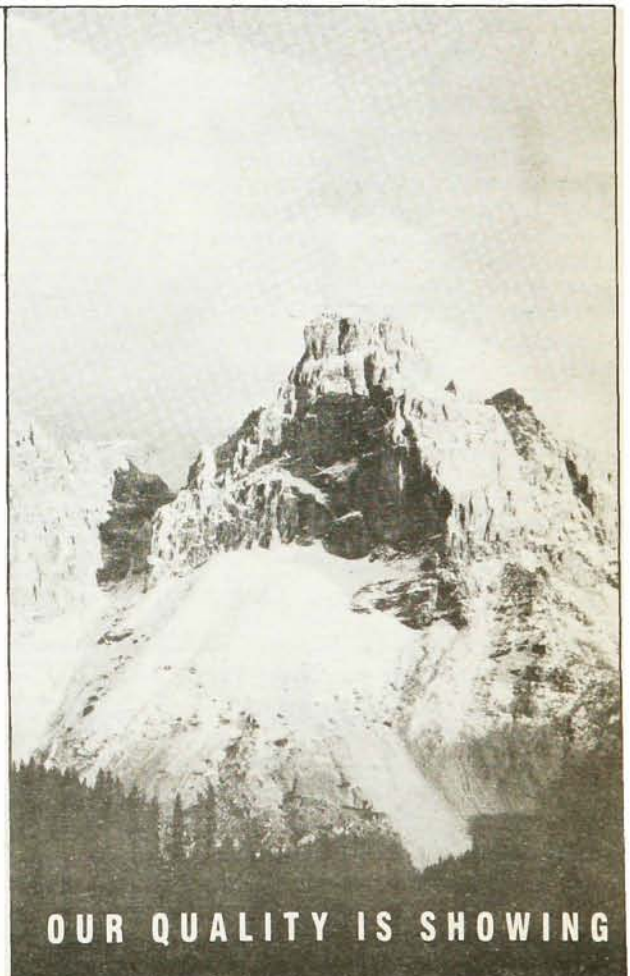
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