

# *The Five Senses*



*From Page to Screen • Interview with Sarah Abbott • Selling Your Doc • Reviews*





**THE LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS  
OF TORONTO**  
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# Editorial Larissa Fan

I know, I know, we're all sick of hearing about Y2K, the new millennium blah blah blah. But it's hard not to think about the holiday season without thinking about the possible consequences of the Y2K bug. Will we all be sitting in the dark on New Year's Eve? Will the Y2K alarmists who have stocked up on generators, water and canned food be having a good laugh at us all? Will the next issue of the Newsletter be hand-written and mimeographed? It doesn't help that none of the "experts" can say with any certainty what is going to happen, not to mention the added stress of trying to find something both warm and fabulous to wear for New Year's Eve (maybe something glamorous in a parka?). I'm just crossing my fingers and hoping to see everyone safe in the New Year.

In the meantime, a modest proposal for the filmmaker's Y2K kit for a computer and electricity-free world: a Bolex camera (spring wound) to shoot with, chemicals and containers for hand-processing (which should optimally be done in the dark anyway), a splicer and rewinds for editing the old-fashioned way. Then you would just need to solve the little problem of projection...

Good luck to everyone in dealing with whatever January 1 throws at us, whether it's no electricity or running water, or just the inevitable let-down of your New Year's celebrations. Just a reminder that the LIFT offices will be closed for the holidays from Dec. 18 through Jan. 3. Best wishes for a happy holiday and see you in 2000!

**Jeff Sterne**

## Board Report

Maybe it was the cold weather or the fact that it was the last meeting before the AGM, either way, it was good to see a healthy quorum. Lisa started by outlining the procedures and costs of networking the office so it will work much more efficiently. Linking computers so they share the same information was the gist of it, unfortunately the discussion surrounding which line the cost should be put under lasted a bit too long! Deborah then bombarded us with more numbers - costs surrounding the special events for the year. We wrapped up by preparing for the AGM and pointing out that a good LIFT member should be bullied into becoming a member of the board!

There will be more news on the AGM next issue, but just to let you know that the AGM will be moving to June in 2000.

The LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO is a non-profit co-operative which supports and encourages independent filmmaking through the exchange of information and access to equipment and facilities. LIFT hosts a program of workshops and monthly screenings and it provides access to information regarding funding sources, festival and grant deadlines and other related matters.

LIFT is supported by its membership, the Canada Council (Media Arts Section), the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

Articles published in the LIFT newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, the Co-op or members of the Board of Directors. Letters to the editor can be sent c/o LIFT, 37 Hanna Avenue, Suite 301, Toronto, Ontario M6K 1N5, Phone, 588-6444; Fax, 588-7017.

LIFT's website address is:

<http://www.inforamp.net/~lift>

e-mail: [lift@inforamp.net](mailto:lift@inforamp.net)

Anyone with suggestions or ideas, please call Deanna at the LIFT office, or e-mail: [fanburke@interlog.com](mailto:fanburke@interlog.com)

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THE CANADA COUNCIL  
FOR THE ARTS  
SINCE 1957

LE CONSEIL DES ARTS  
DU CANADA  
DEPUIS 1957



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*On the Cover:*

Still from "The Five Senses" dir. Jeremy Podeswa





**upcoming festival deadlines:**

**FESTIVAL /LOCATION /DATE: DEADLINE: TELEPHONE: E-MAIL & WEBSITE:**

**DOUBLETAKE DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**

Durham, NC 04/6-9/00 12/28/1999 919 660 3699 ddff@acpub.duke.edu www.doubletakemagazine.org/filmfestival

**FESTIVAL VIDEO LIEGE 2000 INTERNATIONAL**

Liege, Belgium 03/23-25/00 12/31/1999 ++32 0 4 344 15 12 filmetculture@ping.be

**INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS FILM FESTIVAL IN NAMUR**

Namur, Belgium 5/5-7/00 12/31/1999 +32 (0) 81 229014

**GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY AWARDS**

Athens, Georgia 05/22/00 1/14/2000 706 542 3787 peabody@arches.uga.edu www.peabody.uga.edu

**LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**

Los Angeles, CA 05/18-25/00 1/14/2000 (213) 680-4462 x68 visual@vc.apnet.org http://viscom.apanet.org/filmfest

**BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Hamilton, Bermuda 04/14-20/00 1/15/2000 441-293-3456 bdafilm@ibl.bm www.bermudafilmfest.com

**OBERHAUSEN INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**

Oberhausen, Ger 05/04-09/00 1/15/2000 +49 208 825 2652 info@kurzfilmtage.de www.kurzfilmtage.de

**FILMAK**

Pilsen Czech Republic 03/25-29/00 1/30/2000 +420 19 222231

**ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL**

Ann Arbor, Michigan 03/14-19/00 2/1/2000 734 995 5356 vicki@honeyman.org http://aafilmfest.org

**SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM FESTIVAL (MARKET)**

Austin, Texas 03/10-19/00 2/1/2000 512/467-7979 sxsw@sxsw.com www.sxsw.com

**18TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Laon, France 03/27-04/6/00 2/11/2000 +33 3 23 79 39 37 (26) festival.cinema.laon@wanadoo.fr

**SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

Glebe, Australia 06/9-23/00 2/18/2000 61 2 9660 3844 info@sydfilm-fest.com.au www.sydfilm-fest.com.au

**HIROSHIMA 2000 - THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL IN JAPAN**

Hiroshima, Japan 08/24-28/00 3/21/2000 81 82 245 0245 hiroanim@urban.ne.jp

**FEMINALE - INTERNATIONALES FRAUENFILM FESTIVAL KOLN**


Koln, Germany 10/10/2000 6/1/2000 +49 221 1300225 feminale@t-online.de www.dom.de/filmworks/feminale

**PLEASE NOTE:** Telefilm Canada's Montreal office moved to a new location at the end of October. With the exception of the Festival Bureau fax number, their main telephone and fax numbers, extensions as well as e-mail addresses remain unchanged. Please note their new address: Telefilm Canada, 360 St. Jacques Street, Suite 700, Montreal, PQ, H2Y 4A9, tel. 514 283 6363, 1 800 567 0890, fax 514 283 8212. The new Festivals Bureau fax number is: 514 283 2648

Guidelines and application forms for this list of festivals are on file and available for photocopying (10¢ a page) at the LIFT office. As much as we'd like to, LIFT staff cannot take the time out to fax forms to members. **Please do not ask.** If you are unable to make it into the LIFT office, you will have to call the festival directly to request an application form.

The 1996 edition of the AIVF Guide to International Film & Video Festivals is an invaluable resource for planning your festival entries for the upcoming year. It's available at the office as an in-house resource for all LIFT members.





## Calls for Submissions:

**DOROTHEA LANGE-PAUL TAYLOR PRIZE**, a \$10,000 award from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, promotes the collaboration between a writer and a photographer in the formative or fieldwork stages of a documentary project. Collaborative submissions on any subject are welcome. For guidelines, please send a SASE to: Lange-Taylor, Center for Documentary Studies, 1317 W Pettigrew St, Durham NC 27705, or visit <http://cds.aas.duke.edu/l-t> **DEADLINE: January 31, 2000.**

**DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**, a producer and distributor of anthropology/ethnographic and documentary film, video and multimedia for educational use, has several internships available starting ASAP. Please call Cynthia Close or Hande Gumuskemer at 800-569-6621 or send a letter stating your interests and a résumé to: DER, 101 Morse St, Watertown MA 02472 or 617-926-0491 or 617-926-9519 or <http://der.org/docued> or [docued@der.org](mailto:docued@der.org)

### IndieWIRE News:

**SIGGRAPH 2000 COMPUTER ANIMATION FESTIVAL**  
The year's finest achievements by the world's best film and video artists. Contact: Joe Takai, SIGGRAPH 2000 Computer Animation Festival Chair, Industrial Light & Magic, 3155 Kerner Blvd, San Rafael CA 94901 OR 415-448-3330 or <http://www.siggraph.org/s2000>  
**DEADLINE: Mar 15, 2000**

**SHORT ATTENTION SPAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL 2000** This festival presents films no longer than 2 minutes in length. Work can originate on any format, but send VHS best quality dubs only. If your work is selected, you may be asked to provide a BETA SP dub. The SAS-FVF will premiere in California and Georgia and also tour the U.S. categories: narrative, experimental, animation, etc. For more info visit <http://www.bandaland.com/short-film> **DEADLINE: January 1st**

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM 4TH ANNUAL OUTDOOR SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL** Information, guidelines, history of the festival, and print-post flier can be found at the following <http://asuam.f.a.asu.edu/filmfest/main.htm> ASU Art Museum Tenth Street & Mill Avenue Tempe, AZ 85287-2911 t. 480.965.2787 f. 480.965.5254 e. [spiak@asu.edu](mailto:spiak@asu.edu)  
**DEADLINE: February 18, 2000**

**3RD ANNUAL DOUBLETAKE DOC FILM FESTIVAL** - Seeking recent creative documentary work to screen in its General Submissions category. Held April 6-9 in Durham, NC. Over 40 programs make up the General Submissions, curated Thematic, International, and Career Award segments. Competition films are eligible for the Jury Award and the Audience Award. Submissions are accepted for 16mm, 35mm, Digibeta and Beta formats. Documentaries must have been completed after January 1, 1998 and be no more than 180 minutes in length. For more info call 919.660.3699 or check out their website at: <http://cds.aas.duke.edu/filmfestival>

**DEADLINE: December 28th, late deadline is January 7th, 2000**

**CALL FOR FILM/VIDEO SUBMISSIONS** The New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival is now seeking film and video submissions for the 2000 Festival, to be held June 1-11, 2000. We accept fiction, documentary, and experimental short and feature length films and videos by, about, or of interest to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered people. Since 1988, The New Festival has presented the annual New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, one of the most comprehensive forums of international lesbian and gay film/video, and an important exhibition platform for independent film/video makers. The festival provides a professional and public context for the presentation of innovative and challenging work that reflects the broad range of practice and ideas found in contemporary media. All submissions must include an entry form. For submission guidelines and entry forms, please contact: The New Festival, Inc. 47 Great Jones St, 6th Fl, New York, NY 10012 ph.: 212.254.7228, fax: 212.254.8655, email: [newfest@idt.net](mailto:newfest@idt.net) [www.newfestival.org](http://www.newfestival.org) Submissions postmarked on or before December 20, 1999 require a \$15 USD entry fee. Submissions postmarked after December 20, 1999 require a \$25 USD entry fee. **Final Deadline: February 7, 2000**

**YOUNG'INS WE WANT YOUR FILMS!** The Toronto Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival wants to screen your work! If you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer identified youth (25 years of age and younger) submit your film or video to our 2000 festival. Send a VHS preview tape to: Inside Out, 401 Richmond St. W. #219, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3A8. **SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS JANUARY 17, 2000, SUBMISSION FORMS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM** <http://www.insideout.on.ca>

**INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO ALLIANCE MEDIA ARTS NEWS:** IFVA WEBSITE FEATURES QUICKTIME VIDEO ABOUT IMAGE & NATION FEST IFVA website editor Karin Hazé has produced a 2 and a half minute video, in Quicktime format, about the gay & lesbian film and video festival in Montreal, Image & Nation, held in September. Go to the IFVA website <http://www.culturenet.ca/ifva> If you don't have the Quicktime player, you can download it for free at: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime>

**CBC TELEVISION SEEKS NEW WRITERS** Writers new to television are invited to submit original dramatic scripts for consideration in the third Television Arts Performance Showcase! **TO QUALIFY:** You must have had no more than 2 hours of your dramatic writing aired on network television. Scripts should run between 1 - 2 hours in duration. Only original & dramatic scripts from Radio, Theatre, Television and Film will be accepted. Adaptations from other works will not be accepted. **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:** Monday, January 10, 2000. The Selection Committee will be looking for three qualities: Originality, Good Dialogue, Good Structure. Application forms are available from: Gillian Gibaut, Coordinator, TV Arts & Entertainment Training CBC Training and Development. Email: [gillian\\_gibaut@cbc.ca](mailto:gillian_gibaut@cbc.ca) Fax: 416-205-3756

**CHICAGO INDIE TV SHOW: THE EXPATRIATE CAFE.** This is a television show that is currently being produced in Chicago featuring the work of international artists. They are seeking to make more international connections with independent film and video artists. For info go to the Expatriate Cafe web site: <http://www.thexpatcafe.com>

**1999 ONLINE QUEER DIGIFEST** launches PlanetOut's PopcornQ has announced the launch of their 1999 Queer DigiFest. DigiFest, presented by the MIX New York and MIX Brasil festivals, will premiere over the internet, many of the films screened at these events since "not everyone can attend these world-class festivals in person." Visit the PopcornQ website @ [http://www.planetout.com/pno/popcornq/fests/digital\\_film\\_fest.html](http://www.planetout.com/pno/popcornq/fests/digital_film_fest.html)

**THE IMAGES FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO** seeks proposals for **Art Fag 2000**. Create a super-8 film advancing your candidacy for the title of Art Fag 2000! Images will provide one roll of super-8 plus processing, thanks to Exclusive Film & Video. Films must



## new members:

Welcome new members  
as of Dec 99:

Elena Bojilova  
Martin Byrne  
Joanna Chappel  
Warren Clute  
Leif Harmsen  
Helen Hatzis  
Jordan Hodgson  
Tina Ianni  
Chris Kostyal  
Barbara Kymlicka  
Abigail Lapell  
Teresa Montanino  
Conall Pendergast  
Christina Prokop  
Christopher Romeike  
Andrew Ross  
Heather Rudynski  
Eduardo Sarmiento  
Jr.  
Alex Savazzi  
Frances Anne Solomon  
Timea Spitzkova  
William Strug  
Damien Varnado  
Shelina Virani

## funding & grant deadlines:

**CANADA COUNCIL**  
1 800 263 5588 X5060  
www.canadacouncil.ca  
Travel Grants  
Anytime  
Quest Program  
March 1, 2000  
Aboriginal Media Arts Program  
April 1, 2000

**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL**  
961-1660  
www.arts.on.ca  
Artists' Film and Video  
April 15 and October 15, 2000  
First Projects: Film & Video  
January 25 and December 15, 2000  
Aboriginal Filmmaker Assistance Program  
973-3012  
on an ongoing basis,  
please call their office to confirm

**THE HAROLD GREENBERG FUND**  
(416) 956-5431  
hgfund@tmn.ca  
January 13, April 6, July 6, and  
October 5, 2000

**INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION FUND**  
977 8966  
www.ipf.ca  
February 15, April 15, and August 1,  
2000

**BRAVO!FACT**  
(416) 591 7400x2734  
March 30, June 29, September 28,  
December 21, 2000

**MAXFACT**  
(416) 591 7400x2734  
maxfact@bravo.ca  
January 28, April 28, October  
27, 2000  
January 31, 2001

### FEBRUARY 1, 2000

A reminder to members that they must be Associate or Full members in good standing by February 1, 2000 to qualify for the upcoming LIFT Production Grants (application dates to be confirmed). So, get your volunteer hours in now, or upgrade your membership so that you can apply for funding for your films @ LIFT

## LIFT Orientation:

LIFT's orientation session will be on **Wednesday, Jan. 19, 11:30 am to 1 pm** for members who haven't yet familiarized themselves with the co-op. Call Kristine at 588-6444 for more info.

## Announcements:

### MEMBERS' FILM INFORMATION!!

Hey LIFT'ers, just a note to ask that you update the office of any information regarding your upcoming or completed films. You can do it on an ongoing basis - drop us an email, a fax, or call us by phone. We'd really appreciate the information, as LIFT requires the information for our funding applications. In addition, the programming committee could use the information when putting together the Monthly Screenings, and the Newsletter publishes the info. to inform and inspire the membership (if that's okay with you!). . . so, keep us up to date! email: lift@inforamp.net, http: www.inforamp.net/ lift, fax: 588 7017, phone: 588 6444

**VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR SCREENING FILMS** - A reminder that LIFT Members receive 5 volunteer hrs. for screening their works in the MONTHLY SCREENING. For more info. or submissions call Deanna at 588-6444.

**JOIN THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:** If you are interested in the direction of LIFT's Newsletter. Members receive 20 vol. hrs for committee service. Call Deanna at the office to RSVP. Upcoming meetings (6:15pm @ LIFT): Tues. January 4, February 1, March 7, and April 4

**LOOKING FOR VIDEO TAPES FOR A NEW LIFT LIBRARY OF MEMBERS' FILMS** - The goal for the new library is to: 1. create a resource for the Programming Committee to view new and past works of LIFT members;

2. to establish another means of presenting LIFT members films to the membership. Members of the co-op would be able to view VHS dubbed films. Your works will not leave the premises. If you are interested in donating a copy of your work call Deanna @ 588-6444. LIFT will not lend/screen members films to non-members, nor does it intend to attempt any means of distribution.

**LIFT'S PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE** is looking for new members! Looking for a way to make up your volunteer hours? Committee members receive 20 vol. hours for committee service. Next meetings are January 18, February 15, March 21, and April 18 (6:15pm @ LIFT). Call Deanna to RSVP.



# Web Column

## BIG-SCREEN IDEAS for SMALL-WALLET FILMMAKERS

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE STILL  
AVAILABLE FOR SILENT AUCTION  
BIDDING!

Contact the LIFT office if you are interested  
ASAP.

**Item #2: The Post Group.**

10 days of Offline editing on a Lightworks system.

Value: \$2,500.00

Minimum bid: \$833.00

**Item #4: deluxe Toronto.**

4 hours of TV mixing time mono/stereo. Mix does not include tape stock or transfer time. Expiry date - August 31, 2000.

Value: \$1,600.00

Minimum bid: \$533.00

**Item #5: deluxe Toronto.**

4 hours of TV mixing time mono/stereo. Mix does not include tape stock or transfer time. Expiry date - August 31, 2000.

Value: \$1,600.00

Minimum bid: \$533.00

**Item #8: The 16mm Shop.**

Rent \$1,500.00 at the 16mm Shop and receive an \$800.00 credit. Expiry date - December 31, 1999.

Value: \$800.00

Minimum bid: \$266.00

**Item #13: Synchronicity Digital Audio.**

Credit towards audio services.

Value: \$500.00

Minimum bid: \$166.00

**Item #21: Insomniac Press.**

8 Great books by local authors.

Value: \$160.00

Minimum bid: \$53.00

**Item #15: eye Weekly.**

Classified ad voucher. Need actors? A new room-mate? A location or a new love interest? \$300.00 worth of classified ad space in eye Weekly.

Value: \$300.00

Minimum bid: \$100.00

By Brian Gahan and Susana Molinolo

Have you ever had the opportunity to ask a question, and you didn't because you were too embarrassed, shy, or simply lazy? Well, following are some websites that contain pretty 'basic' information about filmmaking. Some of them contain really, really basic questions that are almost silly. But hey, no question is a stupid question, or is it? You decide. Happy Holidays!

<http://www.dibbs.net/~brantley/s8net.htm>

Mike Brantley's site is a compact, organized vault of information for Super-8 filmmaking. He didn't discover his Super-8 camera until his camcorder broke, but since then he's been hooked. He lists supplies/services, festivals, all about stock, how to process your own, and internet resources. All this stemming from a guy who believes 'nothing really compares with moving images strung out on celluloid' - he's definitely on to something.

<http://cybergecko.com/guide.htm>

Here are 15 steps to making movies. In order they are: 1. inspiration 2. writing 3. refining your vision 4. scene structure 5. early location scouting 6. fleshing out scenes 7. scene breakdown and production requirements 8. finding a production manager 9. shooting schedule 10. finalizing locations 11. requirements list 12. crew 13. organizing shoots 14. shooting 15. keep shooting. Alex's guide to no-budget filmmaking couldn't be more encouraging. So go out there and make your movies!

<http://www.remember.org/carpati/advice.html>

Here are some very interesting insights from an editor. He shares them by answering some pretty 'basic' questions about filmmaking, such as 'is it necessary to go to film school?', or 'what is the 1st step to being a filmmaker?' If you think you know the answers, skip ahead to the big leagues...

<http://www.grainypictures.com/>

...John and Janet Pierson are the former completion financiers behind indie hits like Spike Lee's SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT, Michael Moore's ROGER & ME, Kevin Smith's CLERKS, and Lizzie Borden's WORKING GIRLS. They were also the creators of the COLD SPRING FILM WORKSHOPS. Learn about what these two producer reps/ equity investors did to rocket launch the careers of indie filmmakers that are now major players.



## Members' Activities:

### WORKSHOP COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting is Wednesday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the LIFT office. We need input from the membership for our new and exciting Hand-Made Film Course scheduled to begin in January 2000. Committee members receive 20 volunteer hours for participating in this fascinating endeavor. Call Roberto at 588-6444 if you have any interesting ideas for any kind of workshop.

### PUBLIC SCRIPT READING AT LIFT!

The Public Script reading held on October 29 was extremely successful. Sui Ta, Glen Wylie and Christine Whitlock each had the first draft of their scripts read by professional actors and critiqued by members of the audience. We are looking for short scripts to read in public sometime in the early spring of 2000. If you are interested in having your short film script read please contact Roberto at LIFT.

### The Animation & Optical Printing Club

Are you thinking about making a film with the optical printers or the animation camera and are looking for help? Do you want to volunteer on an animation shoot or optical printing session to gain some experience? Are you tired of paying the minimum charges at film labs when you want to process less than 150 ft? If you have answered yes to any of the above questions then give Roberto a call at 588-6444 and join the club. The mandate of this club is simple: to encourage use of LIFT's optical printers and animation camera and bring members together to support each others projects and make filmmaking more economical. Because animation and optical printing sometimes involve shooting relatively small amounts of footage, the club will encourage filmmakers to process their films together in an effort to save money.

### EQUIPMENT RESOURCE MEETING

The first Thursday of every other month, LIFT hosts a meeting at which members will have the opportunity to express their views regarding the future of the equipment and facilities at LIFT. Anyone with particular interests or concerns but unable to attend the meeting is encouraged to put their suggestions in writing, and send them to Roberto or Lisa, by fax (416-588-7017), e-mail (lift@inforamp.net) or mail. This way they can be presented to the group and discussed. Volunteer hours will be given for the time spent at the meeting. The last meeting for 1999 will be held December 2 at LIFT at 6 p.m.

## LIFT Equipment News:

**NEW: PUT VIDEO CLIPS OF YOUR FILM ON THE INTERNET** with our new software, Media Cleaner Pro 4. It transforms your digitized image and sound into high-quality compressed files for distribution on the Web, Quick-Time Streaming, CD-ROM, DVD or kiosk. The software is available in the Media 100 Suite. Those interested in knowing more, please stop by the office and browse the manual.

**NEW:** Platinum Masters CD-ROM Volume II. Time-saving tips from Media 100 including: Heuris MPEG Encoder Demo; The Hollywood Edge Sound Effects Library Samples; New ICG tips styles; FAQ's and cool links. Come check it out.

**Wanted:** Members with carpentry skills and tools to help out with some projects for volunteer hours. Contact Roberto at 588-6444

### KODAK 7272 SAVED TEMPORARILY!

As a result of lobbying efforts by many LIFT members, Kodak has reinstated the 7272 stock for the time being or until a suitable replacement can be found. This stock available for sale in the LIFT store.

### KODAK 7378 STILL IN JEOPARDY!

This high contrast black & white stock, very popular among independent Canadian filmmakers (Canada accounts for virtually all sales of this stock) is being discontinued by Kodak. Normally a sound optical stock used only by labs, Kodak was very surprised to learn that filmmakers were using it as a camera stock. Because of the relatively low sales volume, Kodak has invoked its policy of discontinuing stocks that lose money. LIFT has purchased a quantity of the stock for use in our Hand Made Film Course, and to sell to members. It is imperative that we continue our protest to force Kodak to reverse its policy concerning 7378. If you are interested in expressing your concerns directly to Kodak, call Joanna Gravelle at 766-8233 ext. 34617 or fill out the petitions you have received in the previous LIFT mailing and drop them off to Roberto

**Effective January 1, 2000,** LIFT will no longer accept cheques for Production Equipment Rentals. Members can pay with cash or Interac to receive the 10% pre-paid discount, or with VISA, but no discount applies.





# WHO/WHAT

Compiled by Alana Butler

Info for this column can be sent to the Newsletter: by mail c/o LIFT, 37 Hanna Ave. Ste. 301, Toronto ON M6K 1W5; by e-mail to Larissa at fanburke@interlog.com ; by fax to (416) 588-7017. Have a press release, press package or postcard? Why not send a copy to the Newsletter? (Try it, it's easy!)



The Church of Jesus Today group photo: Writer/Director/Producer: George Fikou, Simon, Philippe, Charles, and K.C. Iona Tarkis

## PRE-PRODUCTION:

**MIKE MARCADA** will begin production in May on a 72-minute feature length film entitled *Huckleberry*. Mike hopes to shoot it on Super 16.

**PAUL TELFORD** is currently in pre-production on a one-hour documentary entitled *No Fixed Address*. It will include personal profiles on the homeless and will be shot on digital video.

**KARA BLAKE** is about to begin her LIFT grant project. *Type O* will be a 6 minute, 16 mm colour short. Kara is also completing the sound mix for *The Day of the Mouse*, a film about what happens when Disneyland comes to a small town for a day.

## IN PRODUCTION:

**TINA HAHN** is completing a 5-minute experimental film called *Today*. A visual poem, it was shot on Super 8 and finished on 16 mm. Tina expects it to be released in Spring of 2000.

**ANNETTE MANGAARD** has returned from Paris and is still completing principal photography on *The Many Faces of Arnaud Maggs*. It will be a 30-minute documentary on the famous Canadian artist who resides in Paris, France. It will be shot on 16mm and will be released next spring.

**JEFF STERNE** is having a great time shooting *Scrambled Porn*, an experimental documentary that is about the evolution of communication technology and how warped it becomes when adding the element of human sexuality. The release of the project is anticipated in March of 2000.

**STEVE SANGUEDOLCE** expects to have completed *SMACK* by the spring. *SMACK* will be a 55 minute, hand-coloured, hand-developed experimental film.

## POSTING:

**CHARLES JOHNSTON**, writer/director, and **FRASER ROBINSON**, producer, just finished production on *Tete a Tete* (16mm), a short dramatic film about a drug-addled cellist's final shot at redemption. It will be posting throughout the winter and spring with a scheduled finishing date in late spring.

**MARK WIHAK** is in post-production on *Autoerotica*, a 10-minute, 35mm colour film about love, procrastination and automobiles. It will make its broadcast debut on CBC Canadian Reflections in Autumn of 2000. *Autoerotica* was produced with the help of a LIFT production grant.

**JENNIFER CHAN** has retitled the rough cut of *Y2K-I'm Still Hungry* to simply *I'm Still Hungry*. It was directed by **MARJORIE CHAN** and stars **RENI KRATKA**, along with assorted guinea-pigs, cats, and other furry creatures.

**DAVID O'BRIEN** is completing the final touches on *Open*, a 15-minute, 16mm film shot on both colour and black and white. *Open* tells the story of Michael and Jake and their drug-fuelled attempt to rekindle a failing open relationship.

**JULIUS COMIA** has completed his 106 minute feature film. *Redding* is a coming-of-age film about 4 students. Julius was the director, producer, and writer. *Redding* was edited on LIFT's Media 100 and protocols. The film will be released in January of 2000.

**BRIAN MONTENEGRO** is mixing the soundtrack for the 4-minute animation short entitled *Candy*. It will be completed in about a month.



# WHO/WHAT

dec 99



still from *Deja Vu Deja Vu*, producer and director Igor Rados



Igor Rados at the Certaman Festival

## ON THE SCREEN:

*Deja Vu Deja Vu*, produced and directed by **IGOR RADOS** and written by **CHRISTINA BOTHWELL**, picked up two awards at the Certamen International Amateur Cinema Festival in Spain with in October: the Grand Award as the best film of the festival and the Popular Vote Award as the audience favourite. Congratulations to both Igor and Christina! Other LIFT films that screened at the festival were **GEORGE FILTSOS'** *The Church of Cosmo-tology* and **JANE E. KIM'S** *Crickets*.

**GEORGE FILTSOS** has enjoyed tremendous success with *The Church of COSMO-tology*. Shot in May of 1999 on 16mm, the 9-minute film was inspired by a real first date. The film screened at the Calgary Film Festival in November of 1999, won best short comedy at the Athens International Film Festival, was a CHRIS award winner at the Columbus International Film Festival, and will play at the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival in February of 2000.

Congrats to **LISA HAYES**, whose film *My Grandma's Boyfriend* won the long-handled Prize of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic at EXOTOPFILM 99: the XXVI International Festival of Professional Films, TV and Video Programs. Too bad she couldn't make the trip to accept the prize in person!

**ROBERTO ARIGANELLO'S** recently completed film *Yesterday's Wine* screened at the Vancouver Underground Film Festival. And *Gesture*, a 14-minute, 16mm experimental narrative which was shot in Mexico City, played at the LIFT Salon des Refusés in September.

**SARAH ABBOTT** travelled to Vancouver for the Underground Film Festival, where they screened a mini-retrospective of all her films: *My Withered Tomato Friend*, *Why I Hate Bees*, *Froglight* and *The Light in Our Lizard Bellies*.

**TINA HAHN'S** video installation entitled *As Easy As Breathing* is on at the Art Gallery of Hamilton until December 12, 1999.

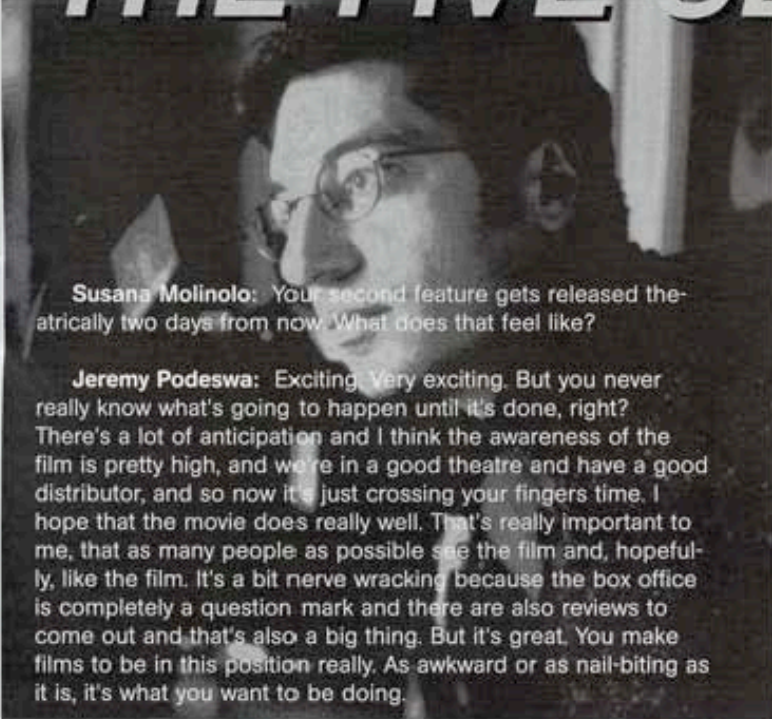
The latest awards for **PAUL LEE'S** *The Offering* are: a Special Commendation, 1999 Guernsey Lily International Film & Video Festival; Honorable Mention, 47th Columbus International Film & Video Festival; Award of Excellence for Print Media, 47th Columbus International Film & Video Festival. Congratulations Paul!



# THE FIVE SENSES

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEREMY PODESWA

By Susana Molinolo



**Susana Molinolo:** Your second feature gets released theatrically two days from now. What does that feel like?

**Jeremy Podeswa:** Exciting. Very exciting. But you never really know what's going to happen until it's done, right? There's a lot of anticipation and I think the awareness of the film is pretty high, and we're in a good theatre and have a good distributor, and so now it's just crossing your fingers time. I hope that the movie does really well. That's really important to me, that as many people as possible see the film and, hopefully, like the film. It's a bit nerve wracking because the box office is completely a question mark and there are also reviews to come out and that's also a big thing. But it's great. You make films to be in this position really. As awkward or as nail-biting as it is, it's what you want to be doing.

**SM:** Can you discuss the creative process that went into making this film?

**JP:** This film, like *Eclipse*, was actually quite a long organic process in the writing. You mean just the writing or the making of it?

**SM:** The actual creation from the moment you read the book...

**JP:** *A Natural History of the Senses*.

**SM:** Right.

**JP:** [That was] the first book that I read on the subject... I had this very abstract idea that it might be interesting to do something conceptually around the senses and I started to spin out possible story ideas. It was quite a long time in development until I came up with a movie that...hung together and was thematically tight and said something I wanted to say, using the senses as a vehicle. It takes awhile to figure out what the movie is really about. You start with a very conceptual thing and then you have discovered what the movie inside is about. I was probably writing for two years off and on. I got some development money from various sources and I was invited to the Screenwriters' Lab, which was very good. Then finally, the script was close to where I wanted it to be, and we could start putting it together - the financing and the casting - and that was another whole process of almost a year and a half of stuff. And then finally we put it together and once it got put together, it was all very quick. We shot the movie very quickly, we edited very quickly, and then got invited to Cannes before the film was even finished.

*Jeremy Podeswa's latest feature, The Five Senses, premiered in Toronto at TIFF where it received the Toronto City Award for Best Canadian Feature. Susana Molinolo interviewed Jeremy for the Newsletter in October just before the film's theatrical release.*

**SM:** And how important has it been for your career working with Camellia Frieberg since *Eclipse*?

**JP:** Really important because she has a lot of credibility and integrity. I think because of her reputation, and the films which she's been associated with have all been interesting films... I think when she puts her weight behind something it does mean something. In this case, she really, really worked hard to pull it together and to convince people they should get involved in a serious financial way. And also to, more or less, trust me creatively. I think it's very important to have someone on your side when you're making a movie who is looking out for your interests from a creative point of view, because there're a lot of pressures that are often put upon you to compromise, or adjust or change or make certain choices that you don't feel too good about... Because she has a lot of integrity, people trust her... I got to make the film without any interference creatively which is kind of amazing. It's all there on the screen. I got what I wanted so I think that's largely attributable to her, and I think we would never have gotten the film financed without her... It was a moderate budget movie and it was still considered to be a kind of risky script - very unconventional. Nobody was really sure whether it could be commercial or not...

**SM:** I really like the way you said "It's all there on the screen, the way I wanted it" - how many times do you think you've seen the film?

**JP:** Not that many. You'd be surprised - probably about twice.

**SM:** I just thought, what happens at that stage of the game? Do you look at it and say "That's not what I was thinking!"

**JP:** The amazing thing is, of the two features I've made, it was exactly what I [planned]. Sometimes I may think, "What was I thinking?" but I never think "How did that happen?" Because I know how that happened. It happened because I wanted it to be there. I can tell you that every single casting choice, every single camera choice, every single editing choice, every single music choice, every single sound effect, is something I was involved in... I really made the film from bottom up, every line of dialogue... every key crew member was somebody I wanted to see there, so I take full responsibility for better or for worse. If you love the movie, great, it's me. If you hate the movie, that's me too. You can't blame it on anybody else.





Daniel Maclvor (Robert), Mary-Louise Parker (Rona)



Pascale Bussi eres (Gail)

**SM:** How has your approach to directing changed since your first film?

**JP:** I think it hasn't changed at all, interestingly. It was very hands on in the first film, you know. I even edited it on my own. I don't shoot, but I pretty much do everything else and I like to be very hands on in every aspect of it. I like to know everything about the film inside out - when I'm shooting it, when I'm editing - and I want to know every frame of the film that we have in the cutting room... I've always kind of been that way... I really felt intuitively when I made my first film, I kind of knew what I was doing. I had no idea how that happened because I'd never even made a film or watched films being made, or anything. I just knew the way I wanted it to go, you know. Later, I look at the things and say "I wish I'd done that or that," but in the moment I really feel quite confident about what I'm doing so my methodology hasn't really changed. I've learned a lot more about what works and what doesn't work [and] become more sophisticated as a filmmaker, but the process hasn't really changed. I've been lucky actually because I've always been able to work in a completely free, independent way so I've been able to continue in the way of best art, which is being really an auteur where I write and direct and control every element... I sound like I'm a complete control freak.

**SM:** No, and I guess that's what you have to be to accomplish what you have.

**JP:** Well, I do feel very strongly that good films are the product of a single vision, no matter how much film is a collaborative medium. It's still the director who chooses who you're going to collaborate with, and then you collaborate with them. You don't just let people run off and do their thing. Sometimes you do, you have to. But you know when you can and you can't. The thing is that I think the film that doesn't work is the film that doesn't have a point of view, and I think that a strong point of view is why you can tell a Hal Hartley film from anybody else's movies. That's why you can tell Woody Allen's movies from anybody else's movies; why you can tell Whit Stillman or Martin Scorsese or Antonioni or Eric Rohmer or Trauffaut or any of these filmmakers. You just look at one minute of their movie and you know it's their movie, right?

**SM:** Yeah, there's a certain texture...

**JP:** Yeah, they have their own thing. Or Atom. Look at Atom Egoyan - any one of his films, you can't mistake him for anybody else. And it doesn't matter, the same cinematographer can work



on other director's movies, the same art director, and they look the same. And that's because there's a very strong director's hand in the work and for me, that's the most interesting kind of filmmaking. That's the kind of film I want to make.

**SM:** On a personal level, of all the relationships that I saw in *The Five Senses*, the one that I was most moved by was the one between the character Richard who's going deaf and the character of Pascale Bussi eres. Do you have any idea of [how much of the] emotion you were putting into that that has come across the screen?

**JP:** Yeah, certainly I felt that it was very moving and I found the actors unbelievably moving, that's why I cast Philippe and Pascale, I think they are just so incredible on screen, there's so much emotion and heart that comes out of them. It's a very simple story, their story, it's...two people coming from two different places, finding each other, in very difficult circumstances. I find it very very moving, myself, but it's interesting





Marco Leorardi (Roberto)



Nadia Litz (Rachel)

that with a movie like this, it's very much like a Rorschach test. You say to me that this is the most moving to you, but I can tell you that out of ten different people you're going to get ten opinions about what they found moving to them. That's what I found endlessly fascinating about this movie... to me that's the best response I could get because it means that the whole movie is basically working for people, but everybody has a different point of entry into it and it's a very subjective thing. There're things in your life that you connect to, and things in your emotional make-up that make you respond to certain things better than others. Everybody is different, but the great thing is everybody has some kind of intimate experience with the movie which I feel very good about. It doesn't matter to me what their point of entry actually is, you know. I feel attached to everything in the movie so to me, no matter what people feel most connected to, it makes me feel good. So long as they feel connected.

**SM:** Absolutely... I'll just ask you a quick question about working with the seasoned actor versus the newer, up and comer. What was it like to work with someone like Gabrielle Rose, and Mary Louise Parker who've been in the business for so long?

**JP:** They're amazing. The good thing about working with experienced actors - which I'm completely in favour of, always, even in my very first film in school I went to the very experienced actors...you're just making it tough on yourself if you don't. A great actor brings so much. Their choices are so interesting - they know intuitively what to do. They just make you look good as a director. I mean you have to direct them too, but at the same time, they bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and integrity as actors... Mary Louise is such an unusual, interesting and unique actress. She's never going to do exactly what you think she's going to do. She can do a scene ten different ways ten different times. It gives you so much choice as a filmmaker... Gabrielle's the same. She's just amazing, in everything. There were scenes with her in the movie where the whole crew was crying watching her do the scene... Pascale also is incredible to watch acting...

We had young actors too, but the thing, amazingly, [is that] some less experienced actors do have an innate quality as if they've been acting forever. Brendan in fact is very young but he has been acting a long time, so he does have a lot of experience. But Nadia, this is her first movie, but she had the kind of really solid, unaffected charisma that is quite amazing. I think that she has it in her to be a great actor for sure. Sometimes it comes from a wealth of experience, and sometimes it's just a quality that people have... If you cast properly, sometimes you can cast an unknown who's actually really amazing. I think it's really risky to cast a whole movie with unknowns - not because of the [talent] quotient but the experience quotient. Luckily in this movie, I find there's a great equality between the actors. It doesn't matter if it's Mary Louise, or McIvor or Nadia or Brendan. I think they're all as good as each other. That's what I'm really proud of.

**SM:** Definitely... It was really beautiful. I myself am a smeller, so you know, it's amazing to see things that we have all daydreamed about at one point in our lives come to life, like somebody else has taken the initiative to put it to life. So when I saw that whole story line I was in love, immediately, with the story. And where are you off to now?

**JP:** To the London Film Festival then directly to Torino in Italy for another festival.

**SM:** So you've probably got a full year ahead of you?

**JP:** Well, I've been going for quite a few months now so I'm going to stop. I think January I have a few festivals I have to go to and then I think that's pretty much the end of it.

**SM:** Do you have anything in development?

**JP:** I do. I have a couple of things I'm writing. So I'm pretty busy with that stuff too.

**SM:** Okay, Jeremy, I won't keep you any longer. Thanks a million for your time. And all the best of luck.





# From Page to Screen

by Jeffrey Round

Several years ago I wrote a short story, *Queen for a Day*, about an awkward young gay man from a small town who comes to the big city looking for love and romance. More recently, I was inspired to turn it into a screenplay. Since I am the author of the story, I presumed I would have no trouble turning my ideas into a workable script. Simple, right? Wrong. What worked well on the page as fiction quickly proved elusive in a screenplay.

The story started as a comedy about a boy named Lennie who has a penchant for trying on his mother's dresses. In the original story, there are hints of Lennie's dysfunctional family background, but the protagonist's aims are very here-and-now - he wants to make friends and win an amateur drag contest. What the story conveys easily, and what the first drafts of the screenplay didn't, were Lennie's internal pains and struggles with himself.

Many screenwriters and filmmakers have grappled with transplanting a successful story from page or stage onto the screen. In most cases, the wisdom seems to be that in order to bring the essence of a work onto the screen, it helps first to understand the differences between the genres, and what makes each work on its particular level and not on any another.

Studios are always on the look-out for salable scripts, and those that come from best-selling books or popular, award-winning plays would seem to have a jump on the market. Many classic books have been made into films: *The Great Gatsby* has been turned into a film not once but three times (1925, 1949 & 1974, or roughly every 25 years since its publication. Despite having a solid plot-line and good story structure, none of the film versions have achieved a success comparable to that of the book.

And the element that makes that book most notable - its language - has not been translated to screen

Interestingly, *The English Patient* seems to have gotten around this problem. Created from a poetic-prose text, its scriptwriters managed to convey nuances of the book's language without getting stuck in its density. Think of the scene in the sandstorm where Almásy and Katherine are trapped in the car: "Let me tell you about wind," he says, describing the many types of windstorms as the wind whips around the vehicle, burying them in darkness. Similarly, the plot of the film is far easier to follow than the book's. In the book, the characters' inner struggles are the main event, while the plot lies buried beneath a great deal of literary sorcery. By making the war the central conflict, the film deftly carves out both plot and characters equally, one emerging naturally from the other, with neither taking an upper hand. Although both are brilliant examples of story-telling, the film can be an exhilarating experience enjoyed in under three hours, while the book demands months of intense reading.

Both of these texts, a classic in its way, had a devoted following before becoming films, but not necessarily a following that would make for a film audience. The producers of *The Great Gatsby* may have forgotten that a best-selling classic has built up its reputation (and sales) over time, while a book on the New York Times best-seller list often has a short-lived, but very immediate popularity that will spill right over into the theatre if it's brought off well.

*Jaws* the film gambled on the popular success of *Jaws* the book. The same is true of *The Godfather* and a good many other popular hits of the day. Both of these films picked up where the books left off and, while both films are still popular today, their



literary sources have largely been left behind - not necessarily because they are bad books, though that may be part of it, but to a great extent because their filmic counterparts have outdone them for both immediacy and vividness of impact. Without making too large a generalization, the rule of thumb for translating books into films seems to be this: the better the book, the worse the film, and conversely, the worse the book, the better the film.

The more literary the book, the more likely it is that its content will concentrate on the inner lives of the characters - their psychology - rather than external plot events. External events occurring in real (book) time take on the largest part of their significance in the hearts and minds of the characters rather than elsewhere. There is just as firm a "show-don't-tell" rule to fiction as there is to film, though it manifests itself in other ways because the characters in books are primarily engaged in dealing with internal conflicts. A book character's biggest obstacle is usually his or her own inner nature, rather than, say, a great white shark, a sinking ship, or an evil empire. The problem for most novel adaptations, then, would seem to be one of externalizing inner conflicts - something Freud had a lot to say about - and making them visible for all to see.

One recent adaptation should by rights never have made it to film, simply because the book's action is entirely internal and would have been deemed unfilmable by anyone with any sense. Fortunately, filmmakers are often little short of lunatics, and for that reason we have a remarkable film version of an extraordinary novel, William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*. Rather than merely recreating the meandering hallucinatory scenes of Burroughs's almost plotless prose, Cronenberg chose instead to weave the narrative of Burroughs's eventful personal life (homosexual, writer, drug addict, private investigator and murderer, to list a few of his accomplishments) in with the scenes and characters of the novel.

The result is startling. Where the novel takes place completely in the mind of Burroughs's drug-addicted protagonist, Cronenberg places Burroughs (renamed Weller) himself at the centre of the film. To externalize the protagonist/writer's inner conflicts, the film utilizes a truly bizarre character in the form of a talking cockroach-typewriter, a sort of chatty Cathy id to the main character. By being completely free with the content of the novel, and using it as a springboard for his own creative imagination, Cronenberg reinvented the book in a thoroughly fresh and unique way.

Stage plays, too, often seem especially moribund on screen. Though they would seem to be closer in lineage to screenplays than are novels, the stylistic differences still manage to weigh them down. All that dialogue just doesn't work on screen. Like novels, plays exist in a world of their own, with unique needs, rules and aspirations. If the conflict in fiction is internal, and the conflict in film is largely external, stage plays exist in another

realm, that of the inter-personal. To make another generalization, classic stage plays often deal with relationship crises of one sort or another: Hamlet is pissed-off with his mother and step-father; Romeo loves Juliet, etc. And what do these characters do about their situations? Like most of us, they talk about them - endlessly. Plays are much more often about not taking action - at least until it's almost too late.

There are two ways filmmakers deal with stage adaptations. In the first case, the film becomes a document of the text/performance (e.g. *Streetcar*). Sometimes this is successful, though often it creates a "museum" piece, with all that entails. In the second case, the film reinvents the play. One play that has seen both treatments is O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Because the O'Neill estate does not allow substantial textual changes to his work, it's do-or-die for any filmmaker wanting to work with them.

Sidney Lumet's 1962 version faithfully captures what is admittedly a very long, arduous play about a woman succumbing to drug addiction, with some very strong performances to recommend it. There is little to suggest that we're watching a film rather than a play, however, apart from a couple of interesting camera moves at crucial points, as though the director suddenly grew self-conscious about letting the work take over the film. David Wellington's brilliant version, on the other hand, while equally long, never forgets for a moment that it is a film and not a play. The camera lovingly lingers on body parts - the twitching, convulsive hands of a drug addict - and on the beautiful period furniture of the house in which the characters are trapped, adding other dimensions to all those words, words, words! The result is a much more intimate portrait, as well as an enjoyable-albeit-tragic film, of a disintegrating family trapped in a sterile environment.

All this reflecting helped me to see my adaptation troubles were not unique. I wanted to maintain the integrity of the original story, while still drawing my audience in, and without sacrificing my character's inner life. Twenty drafts and four titles later I carved out a back-story that became the new main story, which gave my protagonist the aim of winning back his father's affection lost over an argument about his "lifestyle." The film is now called *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*.

Interestingly, my writerly inclinations still find the original story of a young man dealing with his inner fears more compelling than the one of his need for familial redemption. My filmmaking inclinations, however, know that this new version will play much better on-screen.

*Jeffrey Round's first novel, A Cage Of Bones (Gay Men's Press-UK), was an international genre bestseller in 1998. As well as being a writer, he is also an award-winning playwright, editor, tv producer, and artistic director for best boys productions. My Heart Belongs To Daddy is his first film.*



# The Eighth Annual Moving Pictures Festival of Dance on Film and Video

by Karyn Sandlos

Picture this: Five crazy women dressed in medieval costumes are trapped in a very small space, cackling and singing a hypnotic French folk song. They circle around one another and the perimeter of a room which, strangely enough, appears to have no corners. Theirs is choreography of the small gesture, a dance of confinement. Yet subtle movements tend to swell with meaning. The dancers in Laura Taler's film, *Silo*, delight and seduce with a rub of the nose, a curve of the wrist, and an arch of the eyebrow. This is a performance that is only possible at the place where dance and film meet.

Although I hung up my pink legwarmers at a tender age, I remain to this day a shameless dance voyeur. The Eighth Annual Moving Pictures Festival proved to be the ideal hangout for those of us with a combined fascination for the moving image and the body in motion. This year's Festival opened with a wine and cheese reception for Rachel Toomey's installation, *Grave Dancing*. Toomey, an Irish video and performance artist, explores themes of ritual in a contemporary context. In *Grave Dancing*, her bare feet beat out a persistent rhythm against a gray Irish sky. What is striking about this work is the viewer's perspective on the dance - ever wondered what it would be like to peer up at the horizon from your own grave?

Friday Night's program featured twelve dancefilm collaborations sponsored by Bravofact and produced by the immensely talented Kathleen Smith. Several works stood out for their unique contemplation of what film can do for dance and what dance can do for film. Two of these were directed by choreographer-gone filmmaker Michael Downing (*Terrain*, *Sporting Life*). Winner of the Cinedance Award, *Terrain* is an exquisite black and white period portrait of a swing-dance lesson with a contemporary twist. The opening shot of the Matador Club's rusted out neon sign precedes a dance

sequence filmed in a single seven-minute take. The film whimsically traverses a history of power and partnering in dance, and reaches its turning point when the girl drops the boy on his tight little ass. *Sporting Life* (choreographed by Julia Sasso) stages the half time show you'd never get at Varsity Stadium, as a team of dancers in business suits tear up the astro turf under glaring floodlights long after the fans have gone home. As the digital clock looms over the cheers of an absent audience, the unified movement of the dancers pushes precision to its breaking point. Also notable is *Red Brick* (choreographed by Bill James), a new and characteristically enigmatic film by Gariné Torossian which juxtaposes the still and moving image, the body and its paradoxical relationship to time. The program closed with a treat for Bolex diehards, as director Curtis Wehrfritz and choreographer Bill James team up to produce *Icarus*, a stunning film based on the Greek myth of the boy who flew too close to the sun.

Saturday night's Anatomic Café at the Rivoli was the next best thing to seeing Marc Glassman in a tutu. I'd go so far as to say that this was one of the most entertaining artsy events I've checked out in quite some time. Of course, who better than hosts Roy Mitchell (our very own Space Cowboy) and guerilla girl city councilor Olivia Chow to show us all a good time? The show opened with early dancefilms by Maya

Deren set against a kickass jazz interpretation by the three-man band, Astrogroove. Retro-reels were also on offer from James Fiege and Reel Folk, a group dedicated to preserving and screening unique films like these of the 16mm coin-operated cinematic jukebox variety. It would seem that in more civilized times and places, one could sit in a café, drop a franc in the box and watch films that go down as easy as a Partridge Family porno movie. Long live the archive.

Other highlights of the evening included the world premieres of films by Deirdre Logue and Chris Chong. *Moo-Head*, the latest in a series in which film maker Logue fantasizes about her own demise, performs a kind of playground masochism for grown ups, which makes me laugh and wonder why I'm laughing at the same time. Chong's film *Minus* evokes something about the relationship between dance and film that I have yet to fully understand, but that a festival like Moving Pictures makes it possible to consider. As ephemeral as a dream, the dancer in *Minus* reveals himself even as he disappears.

Thanks to Moving Pictures Festival Directors Kathleen Smith and Marc Glassman, and Lisa Sandlos, my dance appreciation teacher.







# The Loveliness of Lizard Bellies: an Interview with Sarah Abbott

by Larissa Fan

Sarah Abbott's latest film, *The Light in Our Lizard Bellies*, had its North American premiere at the Images Festival in April and screened recently in the Canada Dances programme of the Moving Pictures Festival of Dance on Film and Video. Larissa Fan interviewed Sarah for the Newsletter. (Check out Karyn Sandlos' review for more on Moving Pictures.)

**Larissa Fan:** Your latest film, *The Light in Our Lizard Bellies*, is a dance film which features Susanna Hood, who is a dancer and choreographer. Can you tell me a little bit about how that project developed as a film?

**Sarah Abbott:** In 1997 in May [Susanna] for the first time performed this 25-minute dance that she had created called *Four Ways of Approaching a Door* and I loved it, and wanted actually to make a longer film about it. I saw it then as just really black & white, perhaps coming from the visuals of her dance which was her white body in a black space. She was keen, and from October when we started seriously

looking for funds it took almost a year to get 1/20 of the budget. At that point I had \$3000 from the NFB FAP program, and I thought "nobody else is going to give me any money"... I approached TAC, OAC, Bravo, as well as I tried the whole corporate [approach]... That was August, and I just grabbed a Bolex and I grabbed Chris Walsh and Susanna, and we went to a park. I specifically chose the location to have a black background so that I could mimic as much as possible the studio setting that we wanted. Because there was so little money, I hand-processed it at Phil Hoffman's farm, he very kindly let me come up on two weekends. There was 1500' and it took an hour and a half per 100' and there were pigeons sitting up above the film. The only thing that landed on the film as it dried was a feather. I was lucky.

**LF:** The hand-processing, even if it was initially a financially driven decision, gives it a really beautiful look. You get those little bits of white on the film and little bits of scratches...

**SA:** I think I was really lucky, but I have to say, that because my initial idea to have this perfect white body and a perfect black background was still with me, I couldn't see the beauty yet... Phil and I watched the rushes, and I am very thankful actually that Phil was there, because Susanna would drop to the ground and move her arm back, and as she did that the exposure would change and it was really magical. So, thanks to Phil for saying "Look, there are some beautiful things happening"...and also after a while my looking at the film myself and realizing that, and listening. I think it's so important to listen to what your film is trying to say to you. If I had fought all those things I don't think the lizard would look the way it does.

**LF:** Well, it's sort of a lucky accident... some of those moments where the exposure changes and you can see more detail in the skin or in the leaves on the ground are really amazing, and something you can't really control...



## Festival of D



**SA:** Then in the editing room I worked with Susanna's structure for her entire dance and built it into this one section, which in a way I think is a mini-version of the whole dance in terms of its theme. Susanna's idea comes from the process of going through change, and how there are these flashes and you're not really quite sure where they come from...Then there are still flashes that come into your life of this change, whatever it is - your own desire or something pulling you and saying you have to change - and there becomes a struggle between the old and the new. The third part is sort of the bridge, almost this limbo state, as you move into being hurled into the change, the new situation, and that's when everything is just flipped upside down and you don't know where the ground is... And then you get to a point where you've come to the end and you're okay - Susanna touches her soft spots at the very end - you've made it and you're ready to go into the new light, or into the change. Probably as I describe that you can see how I was working with that in the editing, with the flashes in the very beginning, and then I cut into the dance with brighter close-ups, and then the bridge is when she's shaking, and then it's crazy when it's all cut up.

**LF:** What were some of the challenges in trying to translate the very physical, immediate nature of a dance performance to film?

**SA:** It was a challenge, that's for sure. First of all I had to figure out how I was going to shoot it, and Laura Taler said just get into a studio with a video camera, and so I did that. And even though I would watch a taped performance of Susanna's dance over and over and over again to try to understand the language, and even when I was breaking it down in the shooting, I still felt a bit alienated by it. Then in the editing room I just took it section by section and just focused, and I was looking so hard that I saw the dance, I felt like I understood it more. I don't know if that makes sense.

**LF:** Well I guess you're approaching it and breaking it down in the film language

that you're accustomed to... in a way, it's a way of dancing it yourself.

**SA:** Another thing too was that usually in my previous films I would just set up the camera, and let the action happen in the frame for the most part. I wouldn't be aggressive with the camera, I'd just lock it off, very passive, very interested in letting the world pass through the frame. Whereas I don't really like dance films where the camera is locked off and it's not engaging with the dance, so I had to learn how to do that. And I guess what it came down to was just not thinking too much about it, and letting myself go and be inspired by working very closely physically with Susanna on the day of the shoot...

**LF:** So you shot it in just a day?

**SA:** Yes. Thirteen hours, 166 shots - with an hour for lunch.

**LF:** What's coming up for you in the future?

**SA:** I have the Vancouver Underground Film Festival doing a mini-retrospective of my work.

**LF:** What films are they showing?

**SA:** All of them: *My Withered Tomato Friend*, *Froglight*, *Why I Hate Bees*, and *Lizard*. **Carolynne Hew** has a piece in that program as well, with *Swell*.

**LF:** Do you have any other films in the works?

**SA:** One of them is the film that I got the LIFT grant for, I shot it in the south of France two years ago, and I'd like to finish that by the spring. And there's another piece that happened as a result of my being out at Banff - I showed my work on the video night and a curator named Andrew Hunter liked it and invited me to create a piece that would be a small piece in a larger video that he was making, but when he and John Tupper at the Banff Centre were getting more serious about the production they realized that they needed someone who knew how to make a film, so they turned to me. So I'm producing, co-directing with Andrew, and shooting it.

moving pictures

no. 8





Adam, Kevin, Roxanne and Sophie at Hotel Piccadilly

# ROXANNE'S SURREAL ADVENTURE

BY ROXANNE JOSEPH

Ten years ago when I wasn't even thinking about looking for a job in film, the ultimate film gig seemed to find me. Back then, students could be choosy about their summer jobs. So, after working at the Sunken Dory Cafe for a couple of months, I decided it would be in my best interest to accept a position as an Administrative Assistant at the Ottawa Business Centre (OBC) which was located in the lobby of the Westin Hotel. OBC provided travellers staying there with on-site business services at their convenience.

Approximately two weeks into my stint, a group of people started coming in on a regular basis. Usually, I'd only have to send faxes or make photocopies of documents for them. I noticed most of these papers dealt with copyright issues, but the majority were pages taken from Variety Magazine. Trish, one of the women in the group, told me that she was helping out her friend, Kevin McClory. Kevin was the Executive Producer of the James Bond film *Never Say Never Again*, and she informed me about the confidential reason behind his stay in Ottawa. Supposedly, he was in Ottawa, directly from Ireland, to set up shop. (When the Ottawa Film and Television Association got wind of this fact they immediately began schmoozing Kevin to see how they could benefit from him being there).

Kevin had become interested in Canada's new copyright laws since some kind of impending infringement was about to take place by MGM-UA. He was getting prepared to sue them because he claimed to own exclusive rights to S.P.E.C.T.R.E. (Special Executor for Counter-Intelligence Terrorism Revenge and Extortion), which he



Roxanne and Kevin in front of Harris' House

had gotten from Ian Fleming. Kevin was also at war with his long-time friend, film producer Harry (Cubby) Broccoli. Both were alleged to be in development for the next Bond film, the first one Pierce Brosnan would appear in.

Obviously, once I absorbed all of this information, I wanted to get in on the action. I couldn't believe I was literally holding pieces of the big-time in my hands! After I became better acquainted with Trish and the rest of Kevin's entourage, I asked her if she thought Kevin would be needing any more assistance with his plans to open an Ottawa office. Unfortunately he had gone to Vancouver with his son and wasn't due back for a few weeks.

Kevin's crew consisted of his son Sean, Patricia - an assistant from Ireland, Robin - an attorney from Boston, and Trish plus her three kids. Patricia was scheduled to go home once Kevin returned, so it looked like there might be an opportunity for me. At the end of August, Kevin finally returned and Trish brought him down to the OBC to meet me. And so, I began my extremely cushy new gig, and what turned out to be a surreal adventure, by going to the 1989 Montreal Film & Television Film Symposium to take notes for him.

From October 1989 to May 1990, I apartment sat his 30th floor, two-bedroom suite/ make-shift office located in downtown Ottawa's Minto Place. Kevin had

already returned to Ireland with Sean and Trish had been holding down the fort. For seven months I had an absentee boss. I only corresponded with him by fax and phone until one day at the end of the May, he phoned instructing me to put everything into storage and get the rented office equipment back to its owners. My pad in the clouds was about to drift away, but what happened eight months later was even more surreal.

It was on a Wednesday, approximately one week before a university crunch session, when I got a call out-of-the-blue from Kevin. He wanted me to bring his stuff to the Bahamas! One of the requirements that Trish had told me was needed working for Kevin was spontaneity. A renewed passport was already in my possession. All the arrangements were made and I flew out three days later to Nassau. When I got out of the plane, my wave-nouveau hair-do came crashing down! The moisture in the air was unbelievable. The landscape was breathtaking. And, I was still in shock. Unfortunately, my luggage got misdirected to Bermuda, so getting tropical survival items was my priority. Drinking daiquiris and talking were Kevin's.

In the course of our seemingly lengthy conversation, he asked me if I was familiar with the Irish band U2, because he was on his way to visit Adam Clayton, U2's bass-player who was staying in Bermuda with

cont. on pg. 23



# AFTER THE FESTIVALS: SELLING YOUR DOC

by Alana Butler

You've managed the near impossible: your documentary film has been financed and produced. The festivals are over. Now, can you make money from your doc?

The market for documentary films has changed over the past few years. Documentaries account for only 1/3 of 1% of theatrical film revenues. Canadian documentary filmmakers have opportunities to recoup their financing costs through broadcast distribution. Broadcasters pay license fees to independent filmmakers for the permission to copy and air their documentaries. Several of the North American markets are discussed below:

## TVOntario

"Sixty minute documentaries are easier to sell than 90 minute ones," says Naomi Boxer, associate producer of TVOntario's *The View From Here* and *Human Edge* documentary series.

"Human Edge documentaries are acquisitions from international filmmakers. Documentaries are licensed for Ontario only."

Documentaries are generally licensed for a 24-month, first-window exclusive, with 10 plays over five years. License fees range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Development funds may be advanced as a portion of the license fee. TVO is seeking social issue documentaries which explore the human condition from diverse points of view. TVO is also seeking one hour science specials for their various science, technology, nature, and environment series.

Contact:  
Naomi Boxer  
TVOntario  
Associate Producer  
Documentaries, Independent Production  
and Science Documentaries  
2180 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4T 2T1  
Phone: (416) 484-2600 ext. 2471  
Fax: (416) 484-7410  
<http://www.tvo.org/documentary>

## CBC Newsworld Rough Cuts

Rough Cuts is a 52 week schedule of

new commissions and acquisitions which currently air on Saturdays on CBC Newsworld. Documentaries are approximately 40 minutes long and must depict Canadian stories with perspectives which are not visible in the mainstream media. According to senior producer Jerry McIntosh: "We will continue to take chances with newcomers. While we are open to second windows, we will insist upon exclusive first window rights."

Contact:  
Jerry McIntosh  
Senior Producer  
P.O. Box 500, Station A,  
Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1E6  
Phone (416) 205-6643  
Fax (416) 205-8842  
<http://www.newsworld.cbc.ca/programs/sites/roughcuts/>

## VISIONTV

One quarter of its programming consists of independent documentaries. Vision TV welcomes the submission of cassettes of films or programs for which the producer may control rights and which are within the VISION programming mandate. Filmmakers must enclose copies of any relevant print or promotional materials. The documentary may or may not have had previous Canadian television play. VISION acquires rights for 10 cable days over 5 years. The current rate for one hour of programming is \$2000; and \$1000 for half-hour material.

## Contact:

Paul de Silva  
80 Bond Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1X2  
Phone: (416) 368-3194  
Fax: (416) 368-9774  
<http://www.visiontv.ca/>

## WTN

### Hot Topics

WTN's documentary slot features films that explore controversial, provocative, and political issues of interest to women everywhere. Contact WTN for more info.

## Contact:

Manager, Acquisitions  
WTN  
P.O. BOX 158  
Station "L"  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R3H 0Z5  
<http://www.wtn.ca/wtn/hdocs/programs/hottopics.html>

## PBS

### Frontline

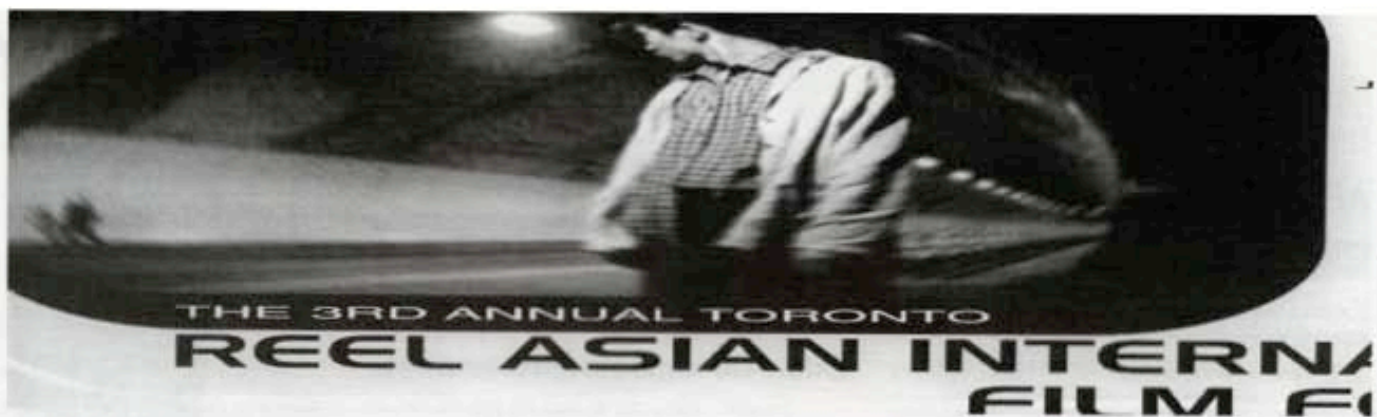
Since 1983, this weekly, one-hour series has showcased some of the world's best documentaries. Acquisitions must have a strong international appeal and may be about politics, society or personal stories. FRONTLINE acquires or produces approximately 20 projects per year out of the 900+ submissions and proposals received.

## Contact:

Michael Sullivan

*cont. on pg. 22*





# A Sampling of the Reel Asian International Film Festival

by Tina Hahn

The following is just a taste of the offerings at the 3rd Annual Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival. I had the opportunity to see three of the feature films, and had hoped to watch some of the shorts, but ran out of time ....

The first, *Standard Deviation*, is Samuel K. Lee's Canadian premiere. Instantly thoughts of Quentin Tarantino dash through my head. Samuel's film has an amazing opening title sequence ... if you can sit through the uncomfortable first scene. Samuel has constructed a multi-layered story that gets a bit weighed down by too many characters who philosophize instead of speaking. The underlying premise is reminiscent of the X-Files, there is a mysterious pyramid between five people that will yield lucky numbers to win a lottery that no one has heard of that happens every five years.

The next film is another Canadian Premiere and the Closing Night film,

*Freshmen*, by Tom Huang of the USA. Set in California, the film reminds us of what we put up with here in Canada - a whole semester passes for the freshmen involved and everyone is still wearing shorts! *Freshmen* is very much a first feature film, produced at Loyola Marymount University. The opening is slow, but once you get past it, you really feel for the characters and the transformations they undergo in their first year. Tom tackles everything from dealing with the standard of "love and life" to date rape to class differences to overcoming racist presumptions to being Asian a more meaningful way. The film can be a little predictable, but the characters are endearing, and the angst they feel really speaks to how all students are outsiders when they start at a new school.

The Opening Night film was my favourite of the three. *Life Tastes Good* demonstrates director Philip Gotanda's clarity of vision. The non-linear story unravels perfectly, each visual element

paying off in the end, each complex character full of surprises. The main character, Harry, interweaves poetic musings that add a layer of beauty to a visual feast. The art direction is superb, the use of primary colours in particular focuses your attention on key elements: a lemon, a mushroom and a cooking studio. I don't want to spoil this one for you, but this is a film with a sensuous lushness and light humour that is grounded by an underlying amount of sadness.

The features were just the tip of the iceberg, there was lots of other programming at the Reel Asian Festival. There were lots of shorts including two series of Korean shorts programmed by Helen Lee, a screening and panel discussion on Asian Adoptee Short Films and a workshop at the CBC Studios, "Producing on a Budget: Creating High Quality Feature Films Using Digital Video." For a re-cap and more information on future festivals, call (416) 410-0876 or visit their web-site, [www.reelasian.com](http://www.reelasian.com).

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FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS & FESTIVAL INFORMATION: 416 410 0876 INFO@REELASIAN.COM WWW.REELASIAN.COM



## AFTER THE FESTIVALS: SELLING YOUR DOC cont. from pg. 20

Executive Producer  
FRONTLINE  
125 Western Avenue  
Boston, MA 02134  
E-mail: [frontline@pbs.org](mailto:frontline@pbs.org)  
Fax: 617-254-0243  
<http://www.pbs.org/frontline/>

### POV

POV shows independent documentaries that are not produced within the PBS system. Completed films must be submitted on VHS along with photographic stills, reviews, and other documentation. Complete submission guidelines are online. When a work is making its television premiere on POV, \$500 per minute will be paid for exclusive broadcast rights for four broadcasts over a period of three years. This rate does not apply for films funded by the NEH, ITVS or CPB, or for a work that has already been broadcast.

Contact:  
Lisa Heller  
Executive Producer  
220 West 19th Street, 11th Floor,  
New York, NY 10011, 212/989-8121  
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/cfe1999/>

### The Documentary Channel

A new U.S. channel proposed for late 1999, it promises to be the voice of the independent documentary filmmaker. Documentaries of all lengths, genres, and subject matter will be broadcast.

Contact:  
Program Acquisitions  
Cynthia A. Burnett  
The Documentary Channel  
9595 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 502  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212-2505  
Tel 310.281.8000  
Fax 310.281.8001

<http://www.documentarychannel.com/>

### Other Documentary Resources

**The Guide to Canadian & U.S. Documentary Buyers**, produced by the Canadian Independent Film Caucus, is a 120-page booklet which includes information on more than 60 U.S. and Canadian broadcasters. Copies can be ordered from:  
The Canadian Independent Film Caucus, 344 Dupont Street, Suite 206, Toronto, Ontario, M59 1V9. Tel: (416) 920-9989, fax (416) 968-9092, e-mail [cifc@tvo.org](mailto:cifc@tvo.org)  
Copies are \$25 for CIFC members and \$40 for non-members.

### International Documentary Magazine

Published monthly by the International Documentary Association,  
1551 S.Robertson Blvd., Suite 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035-4257  
U.S.A. telephone (310) 284-8422 fax (310) 785-9334  
e-mail: [ida@artnet.net](mailto:ida@artnet.net)

### Useful Websites

Canadian Television and Cable  
Production Fund  
<http://www.ctcpf.com>


National Film Board of Canada  
<http://www.nfb.ca/>

International Documentary Association  
<http://www.documentary.org/>

Hot Docs! Festival Website  
<http://www.hotdocs.ca>

Documentary News  
<http://www.documentaryfilms.net/>

The Sundance Channel  
<http://www.sundancechannel.com/>



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## ROXANNE'S SURREAL ADVENTURE CONT. FROM PG. 19

his friend Chris Blackwell (former owner of Island Records). I almost choked on a piece of ice! I was about to meet an international rock star looking like I just finished taking a shower fully clothed! I kept thinking "Oh my God...this can't be happening!" We drove along a main road in Nassau and pulled into the drive way. Daphne (Blackwell's housekeeper) greeted us at the door. She led Kevin and I out to a patio where Adam and his girlfriend at the time, Sophie, were sitting. Adam came over to me and asked, "So, what are you working on?" I said, "My degree" while Kevin introduced himself to Sophie. This was the beginning of what turned out to be days that Kevin, Patricia and I spent hanging out with Adam and Sophie.

Patricia and Kevin were staying in Kevin's friend's place over on Paradise Island, because Kevin's own property on

the Island was under construction. To get there we had to take a speed boat from one of the docks off of Bay St. in Nassau, beside Captain Nemo's Dockside Bar/Restaurant to get to the Island. It wasn't until I got there that I found out that Kevin's friend was actor Richard Harris. And, his place wasn't a house - it was a mansion set on lavish grounds. Harris wasn't there so Kevin had full use of the place. We each had our own room with ensuite bathroom, and a butler, cook and housekeeper to go with it. It was a radical taste of the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

While I was in the Bahamas, Patricia and I only worked for about four hours one day unpacking and sorting through some of the boxes I had brought down for Kevin. We spent most of our time soaking up the sun and partying. I never would have

guessed while sitting in the lobby of the Westin that I would soon be lazing about in the sun in the Bahamas, and being paid for it!

On the day of my departure back home, I saw Adam and Sophie at the airport. They were headed to New York before going to Ireland since Adam had to take care of some business. I didn't see Adam again until four years later while I was living in New York City. "Kevin wrote some garbled message on a slip of paper for me to give to Blackwell, but it was undecipherable!" Adam said in reference to our Bahamian adventure years before. Of course this didn't surprise me. As with him, whenever people ask me what happened to Kevin and why I don't kind of work for him anymore I reply, "Regrettably, he liked the aromas of caramel presaged by a full-bodied taste of vanilla and pleasant oak more than he liked making films!"

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### NEWSLETTER NOTICE BOARD:

The Newsletter accepts story ideas on an ongoing basis. Need volunteer hours? Want to write?

Phone/fax LIFT or e-mail Larissa at: fanburke@interlog.com

#### UPCOMING ISSUES

Jan/Feb 2000

*Yes, it's the requisite Millennium issue. Make your mark on the new millennium, write for the Newsletter!*

*The Newsletter is compiling info for the annual storyboard of LIFT members' films completed in the past year. We need stills and a short description of your film. Please submit to LIFT by phone, fax, email or snail mail.*

**Submission deadline: Jan. 14**



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