

SEPTEMBER 1986

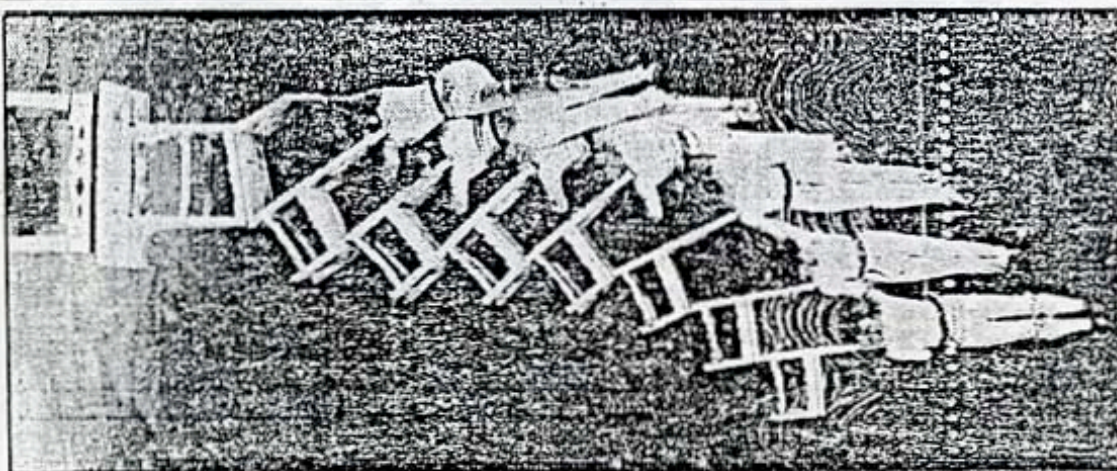
LIAISON OF
INDEPENDENT
FILMMAKERS OF
TORONTO

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DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, September 29th at 7:00. We will be discussing the new Board of Directors as well as the future of LIFT and what we've done in the past year. Most of the Board wish to stay on for another year, although quite a few of them will be busy with their own projects and thus will not be able to put in much time until December or January, a couple of others will not be able to be on the Board for another year as they have already served two years in a row. This is a rule that may be changed by next year, but it would be too much like Ronald Reagan if we tried to implement a new rule like that now. Not that it is so much fun being on the Board, it's actually a lot of work for no pay, a lot of time, but the present Board has really gotten things happening around here and we want to keep the momentum going. We have lots of new equipment coming in, a renewed interest in the co-op, and some new members who seem genuinely interested in helping out. You have to remember that this is your co-op, and the way to feel a part of it is to attend these meetings, especially this one, and give us some new ideas about what we should be doing here. LIFT as a place to get cheap equipment for your films is running smoothly, there are tons of productions happening this winter and next spring, but more than that, LIFT is sometimes actually FUN to be involved in, and I've heard a lot of comments from people just dropping by the office about how helpful various members have been re giving them feedback for their various projects. There has been some thought given to expanding the Board to ten people. There is talk of workshops and screenings. And all of this will be brought up on Monday.

---Colin Brunton



**The meeting
will come
to order!**

Chairpersons:

They work
without benefit
of support wires
— and if
possible, they
don't sneeze or
move much at
all.

THE FOURTH DAY, Part 2

(this article continued from last months newsletter item about Luis Garcia's film Once One Summer)

...The reason for John, the gaffer's delay, was simple: someone had broken into the home of a close relative, attacked her and left her critically injured. John had therefore spent the previous night and that morning at the hospital, arriving late at the location to work on that day's shooting.

At about 2:00, after one of those luxurious lunches so popular a part of our shootings, we moved to the second location. This was an interior scene in a small house in the west end of Toronto. In almost no time, the lights, sand bags, apple boxes and tons of equipment were unloaded. The speed with which this was done was not only due to the professional style of the crew, but was also necessitated by the fact that we had been given permission to use the house for a total of only three and a half hours!

Everything was set up while I rehearsed with the actors in the middle of it all. The shots were simple but we had to cope with the complication of filming on the narrowest stairway a house could possibly have and it was no mean feat to set up a tripod on it.

However, we did the first take not long after arriving and as I was preparing for the second, Keith Hlady told me that the camera was malfunctioning and that it would either have to be fixed or replaced. Peter Vinet, the assistant cameraman, got on the phone immediately with the rental house who informed us that it was going to take a few days to repair the camera we were using and that the only other option



AP/Wide World

The Thurlows, pictured here with their daughter Madelaine, were watching St. Elsewhere on television when their house in Birmingham, England, caught fire. A fireman said that Mrs. Thurlow and her two daughters continued watching the show as the house burned around them. "One of the daughters was smoking a cigarette. The wife was coughing." Firefighters removed the three women, a dog, and a "big fluffy cat" without injury. Baltimore Evening Sun (contributed by J. Dimeler)

'Sure, the cheque's in the mail...'

- Jack Burton

"When people ask me if I've paid my dues I tell 'em,

Andrew Kowalcuk is looking for picture editing work. He has been working for 2 1/2 years in post-production at a commercial production house, is experienced in both video and film, and wants to work on stuff that is less conventional. Phone Andrew at 593 5969.

THRee

was to let us use another type of camera. This of course was not advisable and I began to feel really nervous. What would we do if we had to delay shooting for a few days, since it seems to be so difficult to get rolling on a production?

Mark Hoffman, the key grip had the idea of calling S.C. Communications, since they had an S.R. camera and several of our crew had worked with them on their feature film called Pink Chiquitas. Keith explained our predicament to them and they offered to lend us their camera for the few days we needed it. And all this without charging us a penny!

We were thus able to resume our work the next day, and seventeen days later we completed our shooting. As I mentioned before, the fourth day of shooting will always be memorable for me, not only because of the tragic events that surrounded it, but also for the way people collaborating on the film helped me through these difficulties. Most of them were new members of the crew and our friendship grew throughout the duration of the filming. Without them the film would not exist today.

---Luis Garcia

OTHER STUFF:

Sean Whalen has recently arrived in Toronto from Halifax. He has a background in sound editing and production at the Atlantic studio of the NFB, and has been a long-standing member of the Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-op. Sean will be offering a weekend sound editing workshop at LIFT later this fall. Sean is also available for sound editing and production jobs: if you know of anything, let Luis know, or drop a note at the office.

Luis Garcia will be taking over Colin Brunton's job as the acting co-ordinator/office manager/etc at the office here. Colin was expecting to start shooting The mysterious Moon Men of Canada in November and wanted to take some time doing pre-production, but after a disappointing phone call to the Canada Council this morning (sob, sob - I didn't get my grant), he will be spending the winter writing, with hopes of shooting the Moon Men in the spring or summer of '87.

The A Space Film Committee is putting out a call for proposals of completed slide shows for an up-coming show - call Roz Owen at 977 4125 if you're interested.

Kathy Morin is producing/directing a documentary tentatively called Filmmakers. She is financing this project herself as a sound recordist and office temp, and feels fortunate that her crew is currently accepting beer in lieu of money.

Goin' Down The Road, part two: Peter Mettler (who will be giving a camera workshop this winter at LIFT) and Bruce MacDonald are spending a couple of weeks at the east coast,

~~Peter shooting some footage for The Top Of His Head, and Bruce is writing an article about why we make films...Hmmm...~~

Douglas Robertson (who did the soundtracks for two of Jeremy Podeswas films as well as various jingles) is looking for soundtrack work on any up-coming LIFT films. His resume is at the office for anyone's perusal.....

NO GUTS,

NO GLORY.

***Steve DiMarco got a nice review in this months Cinema Canada for his film Andy Moebrick's Last Stand, and I laid out this newsletter and found the review on my desk and didn't have space to print it. Next month....

OTHER STUFF: page 4

Gregory Sinclair will be shooting his first film called lunch with Harry's Dancer this october, and is looking for a few people: Ass't camera, AD/PM, Grip, Gaffer. Sound recordist, Boom operator, prop person, make-up, craft service and PA's. It is a two day shoot, Keith Hlady is shooting. Greg sez the film will be SUPPLR BUFFU. Contact Greg at braintree productions, 375 3990, 924 5360...we should have a bunch of new equipment by the end of the year including a mag transfer machine, Cannon head and tripod, new splicers and much much more. we have also scored a lot of stuff from the NFB (kinda thanks) including some more lights, cables and an Eclair camera we're going to get working by the year's end...Hey come on! while there are a few people who are always helping out here, there are more people who never do anything. be warned: we will start publishing your names next month, shaming you into putting some time in here. Remember, by next July, we will be clearing house, that is, we will be expelling all those people who haven't putten any time in here. we only ask that you put in 20 hours a year, so come on. once we see who will be on the Board this year you will be able to contact those people in whatever area interests you, and there is lots to do, and it doesn't have to be boring. Also, if everybody waits until next spring to put time in here, there may not be that much work to be done, so it might be wise to just get it over with...And I may as well remind all of those who haven't been prompt in their payments re: equipment and Steenbeck time. we need your money. Let's try and get this cleared up...And now, with all of this space to fill, let me list some of the things we need done around here: we need an electrician to fix a few things around the office and look over some of the equipment, we need some more books donated (lend) to our tiny film book library, we need people to volunteer to conduct workshops, we need roving reporters to dig up information for the newsletter (otherwise you'll continue to read filler like this) WE NEED SOMEONE TO FIX THIS TYPEWRITER!!! We need you to take your stuff out of the equipment room to make room for the new NFB stuff, we need someone to paint our front door, clean the floor, give us some posters (or your own work or others) we need a real hoser to bring back our pile of 24's building up on top of the fridge, we need feedback about this newsletter, we need some people to paint things in the office, and more and more and more and more...Arienne Mitchell and Linda Outcalt are going ahead with their kid's movie I'm Trapped in a Computer and will start shooting the weekend of the 2 (this weekend). Bruce MacDonald is trying to write a feature rock 'n' roll movie called Black on

Blonde, Jeremy Podeswa is writing a feature film, a road movie, Keith Dunnett is attempting to make a film in conjunction with Amnesty Int'l and Peter Gabriel, Keith Hlady is writing an hour long film called Efrem, another road movie, and Colin Brunton is expanding his idea for the Mysterious Moon Men of Canada into, you guessed it, a road movie. There, it is finished...



Just remembered about a couple of rare screenings coming up in October at the Innis Town Hall. Phone Jim Sheddon at 978 7023 or 926 1796 and find out about W.R. MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM Oct 2., and SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL (ONE PLUS ONE) The Godard Stones movie. You might never get a chance to see these films again, and W.R. is AWESOME!!!!!!!

I should also mention that the Innis Films are free or donation and don't tell anyone from the Censor Board about W.R.

Joel and Ethan Coen

The Coen brothers are having a good time. And why not? Their first film, *Blood Simple*—directed by Joel, produced by Ethan, and written by Joel and Ethan—was a hit at the 1984 New York Film Festival, and has opened to good box office and critical acclaim verging on mass hysteria. Being compared to Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles hasn't fazed the Coens, but not because the reviews haven't tried—one critic called *Blood Simple* the best first film since *Citizen Kane*. *Blood Simple* may have opened the doors to the magic kingdom, but the brothers Coen aren't ready to rush in just yet.

"I really think our film has been blown up out of proportion," says Joel. "A lot of it has to do with timing. *Beverly Hills Cop* seems to be the movie everyone was going to see. The press was tired of writing about it and was hungry for something else. It looks like we're it. Now they're reviewing each other's reviews. Let's face it: It's only a movie."

"Dealing with the publicity is almost as hard as raising money," says Ethan half-seriously. "I mean, *People* magazine called to do a story on us—can you believe it?" He gestures around an Upper West Side apartment befitting a couple of graduate students rather than Hollywood mini-moguls. "We didn't do it, but it got Joel to clean up the bathroom." He proudly shows off a tile floor clean enough to... walk on.

Although the Coens look and act like independent filmmakers—Joel went to NYU undergraduate film school, Ethan studied philosophy at Princeton—their professed allegiance to the action-horror school of filmmaking should be a reminder that the term "independent filmmaking" has always encompassed more than socially committed or avant-garde films. It

includes the Corman brothers—Gene and Roger—as well as the Kuchar brothers and the Mekas brothers. "If we see ourselves as part of an independent film movement," says Joel, "it would be the films like *Evil Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, or *Halloween*—not avant-garde or experimental films, but films that are commercial and work within a given genre." *Blood Simple* is a movie that sits squarely astride that tradition, but its skillful execution has a shock value all its own.

Even though a film like *Blood Simple* is not foreign to Hollywood, the Coens never really considered selling the script to a studio. "We knew no one would buy it—particularly since we wanted to make it ourselves," says Ethan. From his experience as an assistant editor and scriptwriter on low-budget features, Joel knew that they would need at least a million dollars to do the film the way they wanted to do it—and a million dollars is a lot of money for a producer and a director without a proven track record. Or is it?

"We spent about five months spinning our wheels," says Joel, "but we took it one step at a time. The first thing was to get a lawyer, and we talked to a lot of lawyers. Since the first consultation is usually free, we kept going, getting a lot of advice along the way, until we found one we both liked—and who would defer half of his fee. He set up the limited partnership." The Coens then went back to their hometown of Minneapolis (both their parents are college professors), not because they knew a lot of people with money there, but because a lot of people told them that they would be better off if they started in Minneapolis, that it meant something to be hometown boys.

It meant something to Daniel Bacaner, an investor who became the film's executive producer and helped the Coens to raise most of the money by providing introduc-

\$ Blood Simple

5

tions to other potential backers. The Coens hauled around a two-minute trailer they had made, figuring that it would be easy to convince people with a slick, stylized piece of film. "We were wrong about that," says Joel. "We couldn't get people to come to a screening room to see it in 35mm, so we made a 16mm reduction, got a projector, and took it around to people's homes or where they worked. We figured it would be harder for them to get rid of us. We went everywhere—bowling alleys, auto junkyards, banks. I'd say we saw at least twenty people for every one who gave us money."

Sometimes, the home visits had pitfalls. Once, as they were pulling into a hot prospect's driveway, the Coens' car rammed the man's Cadillac. "We had a short discussion on whether to tell him before or after we asked for the money," Joel recalls. Ethan remembers it as a very short conversation. "We decided to do it after, so he'd already turned us down when we told him about his car."

One of the advantages of a limited partnership for filmmakers is that the investors don't have creative control over what the film is going to look like. The Coens found that most of their potential investors didn't really care. "A lot of them said they didn't know anything about films or scripts, so why should they read it," says Ethan. "They were just interested in whether it was a good deal or not, and whether they would end up looking foolish." One investor did want to read the script though. "He was a urologist," says Joel. "When we got the script back from him, it was covered with blood." Once they had about half the money, the going became easier, but they couldn't let up: "You've really got to want it," Ethan says, "because there are plenty of opportunities along the way for you to throw up your hands and say, 'Hey! Why am I doing this?'" When that happened, one of the brothers usually had the answer.

The Coens didn't have much of a problem going out on a set for the first time. "I think the technical aspects of filmmaking are vastly overrated," says Joel coolly through a cigarette haze. "There was a kind of conspiracy of imposturing," adds Ethan, "even though we didn't know everything, we knew that no one else did either. We helped each other out." They also had a clear idea of the film they were going to do. Aside from a few subtitles that were dropped in the editing room, *Blood Simple* on the screen is very close to the script and the storyboards.

Even when the film was completed, though, the Coens faced the last independent's hurdle—selling the film. Hard as it is to believe, given the film's critical and popular reception, *Blood Simple* was turned down by nearly every major studio as being too bloody, too simple—or both. Finally, it was picked up by a small, independent company, Circle Releasing, with

was turned down by nearly every major studio.

one of the largest cash advances ever paid for an American independent film.

The success of *Blood Simple* has brought Hollywood to the Coens' door with a number of scripts and offers of work, but for now, they want to continue on their own. "We're working on a comedy script," Ethan says, "something more dialogue-intensive than *Blood Simple*, a film where everybody steps on everybody else's lines." For now, the guns and knives are back in the drawer.

They may be the toast of Hollywood and New York, but their fame has not yet reached Minneapolis. "We did screen the film for our investors," says Joel, "and I think most of them didn't know what to make of it. A lot of them had their kids there, though, and they told them the film was OK." As for their own parents, "They weren't overjoyed about us being filmmakers at first, but they've come around. They called before to say that they'd missed us on 'The Today Show,' but some friends of theirs had taped it and they were going over for brunch to watch it." Our sons the filmmakers. Orson Welles never had such a good time.

All right. What do these films and their directors say about Hollywood and independent filmmaking in the eighties? Well, for one thing, Hollywood is no longer the enemy. Filmmakers may not be rushing out to Sunset Boulevard, but they don't define themselves and their films as anti-Hollywood either. On the East Coast, John Sayles is more of a model than George Lucas or Steven Spielberg. The idea is to be able to churn out a few *Alligators* and *Piranhas*, then just do your own films, not set up a mini-NASA in Marin County. Scripts (and movies) are more important than social ideals or technique, and creative control is the most important of all.

Also, if Brooks, Gaver, and the Coens are any example, the new generation of independent directors are disdainful, though not openly so, of any sort of an apprenticeship, either a few years' hard labor in television or the independent's red badge of courage: the self-produced, self-distributed feature. Film schools may teach craft, but they also teach self-confidence. If you want to make movies, go make movies.

Which brings us to profits. In the last few years, independent films like *Smithereens*, *Liquid Sky*, *Eating Raoul*, *The Atomic Cafe*, *El Norte*, and *Stranger Than Paradise* have demonstrated that a film can be independent and still make money. Not necessarily a lot of money, but enough to remove the stigma from the word "independent"—maybe even enough to give the word a certain cachet. So a movie like *Blood Simple* can even be marketed as (heaven forbid!) an independent film. And

in spite of the tilt toward \$40 million "spectaculars" like *Dune* and *Cotton Club*, Hollywood has been making tentative forays into what was once exclusively independent turf, with "small" pictures like *Diner*, *Falling in Love*, *Country*, and *Choose Me*. Although the opposites have gotten more extreme—a \$40,000 experimental feature and a \$40 million Hollywood film may have no more in common than Kodak film stock—a middle ground has grown up, populated with both Hollywood and East Coast filmmakers, speaking a language the moviegoing public can understand. And it is into this middle ground that a new group of independent filmmakers seems headed.

Which brings us again to money. You ain't gonna go if you ain't got the dough, but a number of filmmakers out there are willing to go out and get it, and backers are suddenly coughing up the money. Why? Well, for one thing, the development of ancillary markets like cable and home video (as well as foreign television and, to a lesser extent, theatrical sales) has taken some of the risk out of theatrical film financing. An under-a-million feature could lose money in theatrical distribution and still break even in other markets, particularly if there are name actors attached to the film. Then, too, the economy has been good to people with money over the past few years; those who have it seem to have more of it, and are apparently willing to gamble on something like a movie now and then. After all, a \$15,000 share in a limited partnership is not much more than the price of a car, and an inexpensive one at that.

Finally, the new generation of independents, whether they know it or not, stand on the shoulders of the pioneers of the sixties and seventies who not only broke new ground with films like *Harlan County, U.S.A.*—proving that independent features (even documentaries) could open and do well theatrically—but also created distribution arms (First Run Features) and other self-help groups (New Day, Film Fund, the Independent Feature Project, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers) that consolidated the breakthroughs of individual films. At the same time, those "other independents," they of the slash-and-trash school, never really disappeared. In fact, they thrived and continued to provide real-life technical training to film-school graduates.

What this new group of filmmakers is saying is that they want to make movies—in their own way and on their own terms. They don't want to change the world, and they don't want to re-create the language of cinema every time they pick up a camera. It seems to be a message that a lot of people want to hear. ■

Eric Breitbart is a writer and filmmaker based in New York.

(cont. from other edge of the paper) W.R. is banned in Ontario (I think because of the politics rather than the sex) but since Innis is a private "film club" they think that they will get away with it.....

Directing Workshop

The following article has been LIFTed from the Cineworks newsletter of Winter '86.

Other notable films at Innis (see side notes on page 4): LMIERE'S TRAIN (ARRIVING AT THE STATION) by Al Razutis on October 9 with Renoir's LA BETE HUMAINE, and Razutis' THE WASTELAND (AND OTHER STORIES) and DEATH RACE 2000 by Paul Bartel with David Carradine on the same bill. DEATH RACE is hilarious if you're into trash epics at all.

EGOYAN Mystical director's role

There are Two Types of Directors

- 1) Control people (paranoid type)
movie In This Corner (C.B.C.)
- 2) Creates another world in his mind → objectifies it → gives this world an order not found in real world then tries to make it permanent

On Directing

Very Important! Find a through line in a story which gives it a sense of order (personal order)

On Directing Actors → general notes

- ① Casting is the most important part
Do not ask people to play roles or parts for which they're not suited!!!
Lead for types
- ② What an actor needs most is to know that the director has a clear, confident idea of the whole ~~picture~~ and what it means to you. (Passionately)
sometimes it's just a feeling
Points of human experience/contact.

③ The actors are the only people who are creating intuitively magic on the set.
Not tech people! Actors only! Only the director can inspire confidence, give them a greater purpose.
You have to excite them!

④ On Set the director must be diplomatic, make actors feel comfortable and at ease. Create a personal space around the actor. Make him feel special.

⑤ The best thing you have to tell an actor is HOW TO ACT! What they need from you is the through line, that you have played the whole thing through your head and know what they need represents in terms of your idea of the film. They need that calm!

On Directing Non Actors → Next of kin
Rehearsal Process
Most important thing is to create familiarity and support between actors that communicates on screen. An audience can sense it.
Not of kin → One month of Rehearsal on Video

- ② Work with video. Show non actors difference between what they look like trying to "Act" and how they express themselves in natural context. Show them how the Camera amplifies their gestures so that they won't have too.
They will understand!
- ③ With Professional actors it's a matter of selecting stock gestures and bringing the performance down. For Non Actors reduce all "Acting" to zero/ start from scratch and slowly build up syntax of gestures and simple motivations e.g. direct the concentration of the characters through, gestures, objects, or activity → example Next of kin → making someone cut onions.

④ The worst thing to do with non Actors is to change your mind!!! If you have to change something make them think it's an extension!
of something else.

⑤ Long Takes are better for Non Actors and short takes - coverage - harder.
Next of kin mostly shot in long shots.
One Eight minutes long!

The notes were taken by Tony Reif and Russell Stephens re: a director's workshop with Atom Egoyan.



You can only wonder what Laurie Anderson's static, stagy Home of the Brave might have looked like had Jeremy Podeswa been hired to direct it. With Nion — In the Kabaret de la Vita, Podeswa shows an assured, well-developed sense of what makes a performance into a film. The 24-year-old Toronto filmmaker has won awards for David Roche Talks to You About Love, the first in a series of performance films.

The 28-minute film Nion is taken from Commedia Bizarro, a stage performance by the gifted clown Ian Wallace. Wallace and Podeswa have co-scripted the work, which, with Peter Mettler's inventive cinematography, is unequivocally a film, and only secondarily a document of something else.

It's the odyssey of a baby-like alien who lands on earth and discovers fame, fortune and love through a series of magical journeys, encountering as a kind of perfect naif the often harsh social spheres of divided genders and confusion between the synthetic and the organic. Nion discovers, adopts and is rejected in several ways, but not without being transformed. Full of visual ideas and free of sententiousness or pretension, the film eschews any attempt to restore what must have been the enchantment of Wallace's live performance, finding an enchantment wholly its own.

Congratulations to Jeremy for this great review in the Globe and Mail, written by Salem Alaton. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that this was the only review of a short festival film published in any of the papers, and definitely the only LIFT film mentioned. Actually, now that I think about I do remember a review of Ranch (not a LIFT film) by Jay Scott (who also saw Bruce MacDonald's Knock! Knock!, but because of priorities wasn't able to write a review.....

While I have no qualms (well, I wish she would have mentioned that "this man" is David McFadden...and the film was shot by Peter Mettler...and that Jon Rochecamp and Film Transit in Montreal handles the int'l distribution of it... gee, maybe I do have some qualms after all...) about this review, or Pat Thompson, in this Cinema Canada (Oct.) review, I wish that CinCan would do more in-depth criticism of these films. They are much too short and superficial, and the title "Mini-Reviews" makes us sound like amateurs or students. Pat told me that she has lots of these films to review, but it takes months to see the review published. If there is so much to look at, why can't CinCan devote more space for short films?

A TRIP AROUND LAKE ONTARIO

A rather engagingly off-beat documentary on this man who's had two books published about camping trips with his family. Now forty, with his children grown up, he's going to write up this third trip he's taking alone and in October.

The writer bowls along in his car through the countryside, stopping in small towns and villages, talking generalities with the people he meets. The visuals are nice — mists, stones on the lakeshore, autumn trees, a ferry trip. No watch, no map — "Time loses its sharp little teeth" — and then he panics. "Let something happen... or the book will be a dud!" It's O.K. People give forth with halting reminiscences and trite recollections — strippers, a customs officer, Casey the volunteer fireman, a strange retarded girl and her mother. And they smile and pose for the camera. And the writer forks over \$1,000 for car repairs.

What's that? Sounds boring? Never. In fact, it exerts considerable natural, grass-roots charm. Back home, the writer clacks away at his computer keyboard as shots of his real "characters" come on the screen.

A film by Colin Brunton/Toronto, running time: 28 minutes. Available from The Canada Council/Ontario Arts Council.

LOCAL FILM-MAKERS MAKE GOOD

Congratulations to several Canadian filmmakers on their selection to various sections of the International Festival of Young Cinema in Torino; Midi Onodera's scathing analysis of sexual relationships, Ten Cents a Dance, Parallax; Linda Joy, by Newfoundland filmmaker William MacGillivray, and Irene Angelico's children of the Holocaust documentary, Dark Lullabies have all been invited to the Competition. Bruce MacDonald's Knock! Knock! and Cindy Gawel's Art Academy have been selected for the competition for directors under 30.

Screening in the non-competitive section of the Torino Festival will be Mike Hoolboom's White Museum, Tom Thibault's Little Brother watches Back (both screened in the Festival of Festivals). John Greyson's Moscow Does Not Believe in Queers and about a dozen others.

While it's encouraging to see John Harkness starting to show some interest in local indie filmmakers, he has neglected to mention some other LIFT mems in the Torino Fest: Ross Turnbull with Pleco, Frank Sanna for Lock, and Gerald Packer for Life on the Hamster Wheel...all are entered in the "under 30" category. I should add that Aaron Shuster and Baraba is in the Nouveau Cinema Festival in Montreal. I'm going to send Harkness some newsletters and hope that his interest in LIFT and other independent filmmakers continues.....

(From Now magazine, September 18 - 24)

Kathy Morin has a four plate Steinbeck for rent for \$275.00 per month. It can be moved to your apartment or house for use as Kathy doesn't want people editing their films in her dining room. Contact Kathy at 535 9883.....

SOME RAMBLINGS

Shortly after my studies at university (in film) were completed, I was fortunate enough to become gainfully employed as an academic researcher. The salary attached to the job seemed, at the time, extravagantly high and my spouse and I spent the next eighteen months forgetting how we'd ever survived on a student's income (and learning the truth of the adage that "the more you get, the more you spend"). By winter 1984, however, I'd saved enough to develop a short film. Written and shot in six weeks, Pleco took much longer to complete than I expected, a year in fact. In that time though, I learned more about filmmaking than I had in my years in university, where production was always in a group context and where I didn't pay the strictest attention to all the steps involved.

There were two crucial issues for me: the first important lesson was to allow the material to speak for itself. Basic enough, but my first cut, where I tried to impose my script and my conception of what the film should be onto the series that I had indeed made, was disastrous. Incoherent, arhythmical, ugly... The thing languished for six months, as I was too frustrated to feel like finishing it. Finally, returning to the same material, I felt brave enough to cut, to rearrange, to play with the sound and to do it all without referring to the written page. I now believe Peter Pearson, who once told me that once your picture is shot, throw the script away...

The next major realization for me was the value in strong collaborators. The contributions that the leads, the d.o.p. and the musician all made were integral to the film as it stands. All are working with me on the next project and for the type of filmmaking that I am pursuing, I would not have it any other way. To build a consistent group, both actors and crew, is as important to me in the process of filmmaking as anything else.

The other major lesson I learned was the necessity of patience when dealing with the National Film Board. I had help for Pleco under the PAFPS but in the year it took to complete, I had to meet no less than six co-ordinators in the Toronto NFB office. Each time, you explain who you are, what your project is, what you want now...Great program, lousy bureaucracy.

Currently the NFB is helping me with a new film, (working title: Where Beauty Lives In Memory). I applied for Canada Council and OAC money too, but they turned me down (The OAC was a qualified denial however). I think I know why: my application was written as a kind of academic justification for what I am attempting to realize with this film. This is great as notes to oneself but as an application for money it's not



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clear or simple enough for people to get an easy idea of what you want to do. I should have remembered that each jury member probably has about five minutes to read the application you spend weeks preparing. The more succinct, clear and coherent, therefore, the better. Anyway, the upshot is that this film, like Pleco, is being financed out of my own pocket, with the help of friends and (with gratitude) by the NFB. It's evident to me that building a body of work in order to gain peoples confidence (for both public and private financing) can be a long and expensive process.

---Ross Turnbull

NORTHBOUND CAIRO

Northbound Cairo is the working title for a ½ hour narrative experimental comedy film which is presently in the pre-production stages of its development.

The story revolves around Max and Mara, both staunch urban city dwellers, who go up to Georgian Bay for a weekend with a suburban family of four. A major part of the film is spent with the six main characters all cramped into a small sub-compact car - ostensibly for the drive to and from the "summer house". This scene is to be shot using front screen projection. All of the background footage is original super-eight film which I have shot whilst travelling through various countries including Egypt, Turkey, Italy, France, Greece, and Tunisia. There appears to be no relation between the foreground characters who make small talk and constantly munch away on various junk foods.

The second scene is the entourage's first stop - a restaurant - which becomes an exotic jungle of greenery and ancient native art forms. The camera slowly circles the group, making each characters' thoughtful ordering of lunch of singular importance.

It is late afternoon by the time they reach their destination. The beach. THE RAIN BEGINS.

That night at the All Canadiana Motel, Max and Mara discover that they have been given a room - together! Mara not terribly disappointed by the aforementioned discovery, sets out to seduce Max.

Next morning back on the beach, the father and daughter attempt and fail at some form of communication. Ditto for Max and Mara. THE RAIN CONTINUES. The final scene finds our family and two young friends back in the car for the long return drive. Dominating the conversation is Mara who reveals her discontent at her failure to achieve some form of communication with Max. Finally, in frustration, she leaves the car (in reality a platform with two seats set up in front of the front screen image) and the camera follows her as she moves off into the mirage of the desert.

No financial support for this project has been recieved (to date) and all finances are therefore being handled by myself, through MUCH scrimping and saving (I work as a relief Librarian for the Toronto Public Library). There has however been



NORTHBOUND CAIRO

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NORTHBOUND CAIRO





a high rate of support in other areas, i.e. cast and crew.

Shooting is set for October 11, 12, 13 - Thanksgiving weekend. Confirmed cast include Zoe Yanovsky (Mara) and George Higton (Max). Confirmed crew: Publicity and co-producer - Peter Meyboom, Assistant to Director - Michael Shaw, Cinematographer - Gerald Packer, Stills Photographer - Joanna Nokes, Art Direction - Alix Davis. ---Anette Mangaard

QUICK CUTS...

Starting October 20, Atom Egoyan will begin a three week shoot for his feature film Family Viewing, which he describes as a film "about mixed and found identities set in a nursing home, a cemetery, and a telephone sex establishment". The budget of \$160,000.00 was raised through private investors and grants from both the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, and investment from the OFDC. Atom felt no need to go to Telefilm Canada for further monies. (I should add that the money he's got is the "operating budget", the money needed to get the footage shot). Camelia Frieberg is the production manager/assistant director, the director of photographer is Robert MacDonald, and the cinematographer is Peter Mettler.

Sometime in early November, Michael Korican and the Bloor Cinema kicks off a new series called FILM CAN #1, a showcase for independent filmmakers from Canada. Michael's first show features his own film Altbach, Keith Hlady's There is a Rally, Rob Shoub's A Woman and her Dog, Jeremy Podeswa's Nion in the Cabaret de la Vita, and Colin Brunton's A Trip Around Lake Ontario. These films will be shown at a 9:30 slot in the middle of the week. This package has already been booked for a showing at a rep theatre in Waterloo in November, and if successful, will go on a tour of sorts across Canada. Promo packages are being put together AS I WRITE THIS, and there is even talk of putting the whole package on video for sales to stores and private individuals. We'll announce the exact date in the next newsletter. PLEASE COME!!!

On the Tube in Tokyo

What follows are real shows on Japanese television as translated in the Japan Times, an English-language newspaper in Tokyo. They were compiled by Susan Bigler.

- Meat Information
- Babbling Music Hall
- Morning Wide Show
- World "How Much" Show
- Quiz Time Shock
- Mint Time
- Super TV Blood Type
- Amateur Accomplishments Contest
- It's Laughing
- Welfare Sumo
- Hello from Studio
- Joyful Map Variety
- Amusing Vehicles
- Fishing Companions
- Let's Appear on TV
- High Spirit Show
- It's Making!
- Tuesday Special: Sumo Wrestlers vs. Baseball
- Players Singing Competition
- Young Oh Oh
- Playful Night Show
- Newly Weds Weight Game
- Laughter Soccer
- Cocky Pop
- Fanky Tomato Show
- Fanky Tomato Special
- Music Tomato Japan
- Kitchen Patrol
- Suspense News
- Sports Wide Show: "Number"
- Love Attack
- Nice Day Morning Show
- Grandma's Wisdoms
- Meat Ala Carte
- Quiz Hunter
- Soap Bubble Presents
- Salaried Men's Life: "Pubs and Bars"
- Surprise World #1: "Fried Ants"
- Cheap Living
- Laughing Couples
- Unknown World: "Toilet Seats of the World"
- Wonderful Tastes
- Special: "Naked Clans of the World"

Madcap mavericks plan sidewalk cinema

By Craig MacInnis Toronto Star

First there was the Festival of Festivals, then the B Festival, and now — coming to a sidewalk near you — the First Annual L.I.F.T. Gonzo Screenings.

"We want to keep pretty light-hearted about the whole thing," says Colin Brunton, acting co-ordinator of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto.

Brunton and his L.I.F.T. colleagues plan to set up a makeshift screening room on the sidewalk beside the University Theatre (100 Bloor St. W.) tonight at 7.

Passersby, he says, will be treated to six short films by young Toronto film makers whose work was rejected during the past year by the Festival of Festivals' selection committee.

The crew of madcap mavericks insist it's all in good fun and is not intended to disrupt proceedings at the nearby University Theatre, where a gala of Blake Edwards' *That's Life* is scheduled for the same hour.

"What we don't want to do is give the impression that this is sour grapes," says 31-year-old Brunton, whose own film, *A Trip Around Lake Ontario*, will be featured at the sidewalk cinema.

Admittedly, he hasn't sought permission for his seat-of-the-

pants festival. Brunton hopes the local constabulary shows leniency, although he admits police could shut the operation down at any time.

"I don't even know if we're going to last five minutes," he says. "We didn't get a licence to do it, but if we're polite and well-behaved we think the police will let us stay."

Festival officials were busy at screenings when The Star called for comment last night. But Brunton says "most of the people at the festival were really nice to us when we told them about it."

He says a five-by-four-foot screen will be set up against a storefront and a projector will roll the films from the top of a van parked against the curb. The projector will be powered by a portable generator.

In a tongue-in-cheek jab at the Festival of Festivals' complicated ticket structure, Brunton's press release promises that all passes — "Gold, Silver, Student, press, TTC" — will be accepted at the, uh, door.

In other words, it's free to anyone willing to stand on the street.

"And a friend of mine, Susan Parker, a local poet is going to hand out free popcorn," he promises.

The program, such as it is, will be repeated tomorrow night at 9.15.

FLFVEN

GONZO SCREENINGS

The First Annual L.I.F.T. Gonzo Screenings worked out great, despite a terrible rainstorm on Wednesday evening. We showed *A Trip Around Lake Ontario*, Derek Rogers' *My Reuven*, new L.I.F.T. members Jonathon Allore and Bruce Headlam's *Filbert and Morley*, and Bruce Moffitt and Scott Gilmore's *The Storytellers*. At times we had up to 40 people crowded around our Bloor Street location, and 10 diehards who stuck around for the whole show. We had a break at about 10:30, and while we tried (and failed) to figure out how to get Aaron Shuster's *Baraba* on the projector (it had been returned from Germany on some weird reel that wouldn't work on the Bell and Howell projector we had) intermission entertainment was provided by The Minimalist Jug Band, one Al Mader, who played his washtub bass and regaled the crowd with songs like "Row, row, row your boat" and others he seemed to make up off the top of his head (no relation to Peter Mettler's future feature *The Top of his Head*). Susan brought along some Paul Newman Popcorn on Wednesday (when we didn't show our films) and sent a message on Thursday saying that "...poet Parker is too pooped to pop". No probs from the police apart from a \$20.00 "no stopping" ticket, and only one complaint from an old man who lives in the Collanade, who said that he had to keep turning up the volume of his TV set to drown out

our sound. After I told him why we were doing this (we had all been turned down by the Festival of Festivals this year) he gave me a clenched fist sign and commended us all.

The whole thing was relatively easy, the hardest part was trying to get the exact right parking space, and the whole thing cost us about \$275.00 for gas, popcorn, a rented van and a Honda generator. Why don't some of you who have been rejected by the C.B.C. try a similar thing? Just pull a van in front of one of the CBC buildings, crank up the gennie, and show your films on the CBC...uh...at least the wall of the C.B.C.

---Colin Brunton

NEVER SURRENDER

L.I.F.T.
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This month's newsletter was

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