

MOVIE MONDAY: A FILM LOVERS' DREAM COMES TRUE

VICTORIA (ICN)—We have been looking for 'Signs of Hope' here at ICN. One sure one is MOVIE MONDAY, the creation and on-going project of Bruce Saunders and his friends and family.

A former "consumer" of mental health services at the Eric Martin Pavilion of the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, Saunders discovered, during his stay at the EMP, the potential of an under-used but more than adequate theatre, tucked into a corner of the large institution. Through various funding sources (his own pocket being a major one), Saunders acquired a video projector, a 15-foot screen and a sound system and began showing films on Monday evenings, to any and all that are interested, FREE OF CHARGE. On June 12, 1995 "MM" celebrated its second anniversary.

As it states in its promotional material, Movie Monday offers "quality entertainment and social interaction for consumers of mental health services and their guests... encouraging interaction with the larger community, all are welcome. Movie Monday is an independent, un-funded, volunteer project. Donations are welcome, to cover modest operating expenses."

ICN is pleased to run the MM schedule of events most months (see page 15), and can attest to both the quality of the films shown and Saunders' ingenuity in programming. The atmosphere at the theatre is warm and friendly; you won't regret checking it out. Be warned though: it is best to call 595-FLIC and check the schedule as MM has begun to show films on Saturday evenings. Hope they don't have to change their name or reprint the t-shirts they sell as reminders of a unique community development and out-reach project.

Founder Reflects on the Success of Movie Monday

On the occasion of Movie Monday's Second Glorious Anniversary



Bruce Saunders with wife Laurel and their younger son at Second Anniversary Celebration. Movie Monday is staffed by volunteers. Film showings and entertainment are free and popcorn and soft drinks are available at very reasonable prices. ICN Photo

we showed *Field of Dreams*. The Eric Martin Pavilion lecture auditorium has become a kind of "theatre of dreams" for me. Not only has this little volunteer program been running for two whole years, 113 shows on schedule, but it has become a

special place for events far greater in scope than "just showing videos for people with mental illnesses."

Every week we get a mixed audience of people; "in" the mental health system, "graduates," people who just want to see a good movie in good company instead of at home alone, some who don't have access to a VCR, and others who choose not to have TV in their home. All kinds of people for all kinds of reasons. The answer to "Why do you come?" I am most pleased to see so often checked off on the questionnaires is "because MM is usually a good event."

We call them "Movie Monday Magic Moments"—things that happen in our little theatre because of the unique nature and goodwill of a volunteer, labour-of-love operation. Some conspicuous examples have been:

- The Big One—when we showed *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, Dr. Brooks, who played "Dr. Spivy" came in answer to my inquiry and spoke of his experiences acting in the movie with Nicholson and being technical advisor on the film. (His presentation is on tape and will be presented on October 14, at 7:00 pm, when we show the film again).

- Other audience discussions, sometimes with guest speakers, have followed films like *Awakenings*, *Benny & Joon*, *Jesus of Montréal*, *Fearless*, *Mr. Jones*, and *Gordon's Head* (a film by a local film maker about the impact of schizophrenia on family members).

- Atom Egoyan's dad, Joseph, came and talked at length about his son's growth to international stature in the film industry. He spoke with enthusiasm about Atom's recently released *Exotica* (great movie! - coming to Movie Monday on October 28 at 7:00 pm). It was the second time we'd screened Egoyan's excellent *Next of Kin*. With all due respect, this kind of show you don't get at Capitol 6!

- I Had the pleasure of chatting with Stan Rogers' mum to arrange, with her best wishes, to show *One Warm Line* in a folk program last summer. The agent for Bill Lishman (*The Man Who Flies with Geese*) answered my correspondence and sent video cassettes of Bill's exploits which I screened with enthusiasm. Rick Hansen replied to my letter, writing: "I'm sure that success will crown your efforts." I feel it has.

I feel it especially when some of my compadres help to host, or show their art or play music for the audience before the show, and when I see my faithful family and crew pitching in. I feel it when some of the regulars voice or nod their appreciation as they leave. That's the pay off! And we're not just talking about this thing happening, it is an event every week! It's running on a shoestring out of my back pocket and with the generous participation of GVHS.

Before I started Movie Monday, when I was "upstairs" in EMP, I wondered if my life could ever get back on the rails. Now, 30 months later I'm rattling down that track. It's never straight forward but I'm coming across all kinds of possibilities around every curve. Much like Kin-sella's *Field of Dreams*, with a lot of work, perseverance, some luck and imagination the same kind of magic is happening in our "theatre of dreams."

Bruce Saunders, Victoria



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