

Feedback from Reel Madness 2001

Apt. 203
446 West 13th Ave.
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 1N9
February 15, 2001

Bruce Saunders
Reel Madness Film Festival
2033 Chaucer Street
Victoria B.C. V8R 1H6

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for the wonderful festival!

Reel Madness was successful in so many ways. First I want to commend you for your imagination and creativity. To think that your Festival grew from your difficult experience as a mental health patient into the positive community event it now is. (I guess the parallel for me would be, as an asthmatic, to create a Bagpipe band of fellow wheezers.)

I only moved to the West Coast in the fall. However within a few months I met several people in Vancouver or from Victoria who knew of your Festival. One elderly man was a regular patron of the Movie Monday screenings and attended this year's festival. There were also filmmakers, like Marilyn Cherenko, and independents like Cineworks coordinator Meg Thornton and distributor Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza who know of Reel Madness. The Festival serves a vital role by bringing taboo issues about mental illness into the public eye, in a positive venue. The fame and acclaim of your Festival has spread. There is status to being invited to "Reel Madness"!

Your seemingly natural ability as a networker has been a wonderful bonus. Thank you for putting me in touch with broadcasters and other filmmakers. I recently spoke with Clive Holden, who forwarded my film Ladies in Waiting to WT'N. Also, I called Davor Marjanovic to commend him for his movie, My Father's Angel. We share a distributor, and if I ever get my feature financed, I will talk with Davor about an actor he worked with. Katherine Surridge and I have looked at each other's films and we have met several times. I have had contact with several that attended my workshop. So thanks for assuming the unacknowledged role of bringing people together. Yes, often we do click.

Best of luck with future festivals. Yours is the kind of event that has strength because of its small size, its intimacy, and its unique qualities. Show on!

Sincerely,

Lulu Keating

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Feb 11/01

Dear Bruce,

This is a rather belated thanks to you for organizing the Reel Madness festival. I came on the night of "Dad" / "Gordon's Head" and wow, what an experience. I found it especially interesting, in the discussion afterwards, that a lot of people said that one of the most difficult things about having a mental illness in the family is that it's rarely talked about, or that they can't talk about to their friends/others. One of the wonderful things about your festival is that it does provide a forum for people to actually TALK about it, in a respectful environment. Thank you for that!

I also wanted to let you know about a very good short film I saw on Friday night at the Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival. . . .

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From filmmaker Katherine Surridge

Jan/01

Thank you so much Bruce. I had a wonderful time and the audience was so responsive. It makes it all worth while. These are the true rewards of filmmaking. So thank you again for inviting me and giving 'The Goodbye' an opportunity to be seen. I will do everything I can at this end to let people know about your festival. I think it's a wonderful thing you are doing. Congratulations!
Talk with you soon and thanks for the referrals. Cheers!
Katherine