

Movie series zeroes in on mental health

Films can do more than provoke or entertain; they can be potent educational tools.

Informing people about mental-health issues and acquainting audiences with stimulating cinema are the goals behind **Frames of Mind**, a new monthly film series copresented by the **UBC department of psychiatry** and **Pacific Cinémathèque**.

"We're using movies as a vehicle for teaching and learning," said **Harry Karlinsky**, the director of the psychiatry department's continuing professional development, in an interview with the *Straight*. "Films provide a terrific springboard for discussion. These are stimulating, interactive evenings for consumers, family members, health professionals, and cinephiles."

HEALTH NOTES

The series follows the lead of **Bruce Saunders**, who started the **Movie Monday** series in Victoria in 1993 while he was recovering from a severe depression and his second suicide attempt. Members of UBC's psychiatry department tested the idea this summer, when they screened **Completely Cuckoo**—Charles Kiselyak's 1998 documentary about the filming of Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*—to cap off its annual "clinical day". Starring Jack Nicholson as Randall McMurphy, a convict who's sent to a mental institution for observation, and Louise Fletcher as the ruthless Nurse Ratched, *One Flew* won multiple Oscars in 1975, including best film.

The start of Karlinsky's *Frames of Mind* based on our movie/discussion formula. The first three films were my suggestions.

Oregon State Hospital, a long-term psychiatric centre, then-superintendent and psychiatrist **Dean Brooks** helped oversee the project. (Brooks also played a role as Dr. John Spivey.) UBC invited Brooks, who's now in his 80s, to attend the screening and talk about his experiences on the film and at the institution. The evening was such a hit that people wanted more.

"The feedback was very positive," Karlinsky said. "People enjoyed the combination of a great film and an informative discussion that had many different voices."

Events take place the third Thursday of every month, and membership at the Cinémathèque isn't required. (For details, call 604-822-7610 or go to www.psychiatry.ubc.ca/profdevelop/film.) The next installment takes place Thursday (December 19), with **West 47th Street**, Bill Lichtenstein and June Peoples's documentary that follows the lives of four people with serious mental illnesses over a three-year period and that was shot at Fountain House, a rehabilitation centre for people with mental-health problems in New York City's Hell's Kitchen district. Following the movie, members of the **Coast Foundation Society** will gather for a discussion. The Vancouver-based organization, headed by Darrell Burnham, provides mental-health services ranging from supported housing to return-to-work programs.

Other soirees include the January 16 screening of Deborah Hoffmann's **Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter**, which chronicles the director's mom's progression through the stages of Alzheimer's disease. Cosponsored by the **Alzheimer Society of B.C.**, the film will be followed by a talk with local geriatric psychiatrist **Martha Lou Donnelly**. On February 20, *Frames of Mind* features Susan Stern's **Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour**, a look at the cult of the world's most popular doll. That's cosponsored by the Vancouver group **Awareness and Networking Around Disordered Eating**.

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