

## **Definitions of Movie Monday**

Here we present selections of how we were defining Movie Monday over the years – from earliest to latest. Most of the descriptions are excerpts from funding proposals – typically from the Canada Council for the Arts proposals. The statements reflect the intent to present Movie Monday as both a mental health consumer initiative with mental health related objectives as well as a media arts organization. The uniqueness was being able to maintain both statuses – a funded arts organization and a mental health consumer initiative.

### **Circa 1993 (aka The Original Concept)**

- To provide free, quality entertainment and social interaction for consumers of mental health services and their guests.
- To encourage interaction between community and “consumers”.
- To provide entertaining and absorbing selections during which people can forget their troubles for a while.
- To show to ourselves and to others that we can make things happen without financial support, using existing facilities, our own resources and energy. This may open doors for future projects.
- To show movies at times when in-patients at EMP are able to see them as an alternative to “ward tv”.
- To provide Bruce a chance to run his own little theatre and share his favourite films, a long time ream. Hopefully to share this opportunity with others.
- To show before the Feature, self produced videos.
- To produce graphics and marketing ideas spinning off from the original idea (popcorn bags).

An increasing benefit of this project is to positive interface between “normal” and people who have direct experience with mental illness. ... We are providing a positive interface between us and them. Some ex-patients or people with a heavy stigma about mental hospitals may not come because of our location but on the other hand by using the EMP theatre as a positive resource we’re softening the lines between being “institutionalized” (having “failed”), and being “healthy” and “free” in the community. This project is a catalyst for breaking down that stigma.

### **Circa 2001**

The Mandate of the Movie Monday Society is use film/video to provide entertainment and education about the issues of mental illnesses and recovery while promoting independent filmmakers in the programming of their films/videos.

Bruce Saunders started the Movie Monday project in 1993 following his second admission into Eric Martin Pavilion for treatment of his manic depressive illness. He has consistently organized weekly events since. Each year, fifty or more presentations averaging an audience of about eighty people, totalling thousands of people enjoying hundreds of events over the last eight years.

The annual Reel Madness Film Festivals began in 1999, inspired by Toronto's Rendezvous with Madness festival and Saunder's eagerness to expose audiences to more challenging, independent films from emerging artists and also to break out of the weekly program and provide a once-a-year special event worthy of concentrated media attention. This proposal seeks support for the fourth annual Reel Madness film festival scheduled for January 2002.

In 2000, the Movie Monday project incorporated to become the Movie Monday Society with an energetic Board of Directors comprised of filmmakers, consumers of mental health services and long-time supporters.

Movie Monday is unique in its commitment to ensuring that independent film/video is made accessible to the public regardless of income. All of our events, the weekly Movie Monday and the annual Reel Madness Film Festival, are *by donation* events. We attract an audience of film-lovers who may not go to mainstream theatres and independent film festivals because of the costs of admission.

Our events are much more than screening a movie. We provide lively post-film discussions and we facilitate the participation of the filmmakers whenever possible. Our theatre is not only appreciated by film-lovers but also by local filmmakers who compliment us on the consistently large audiences for their works, the opportunity for audience participation in discussions and the high quality production within our facility. Last year's festival reached out to local filmmakers with our Director's Seminars. Local filmmakers and aspiring filmmakers were attracted to these events that brought out-of-town directors to Victoria to share their experiences and insights. The directors also appreciated the audience feedback, the extra venue for their works and the extra payment from the workshops.

### **Circa 2003**

#### **Profile of Organization**

The mandate of the Movie Monday Society is to use film/video to provide education about the issues of mental illness and recovery while promoting Canadian and independent filmmakers in their programming of their films/videos. We are a unique, community-based arts program that brings together culture, community and health by providing access to affordable, entertaining films. We address challenging community issues, and we facilitate critical discussions and forums on these issues and films with the filmmakers and people who experience the issues.

Movie Monday is a weekly programme, with over fifty presentations a year plus special events and festivals. Now in our eleventh year of programming, we have developed a solid audience who appreciate not only the independent films but also appreciate the way we show the films. Many filmmakers say, "we show the films the way they were meant to be shown" meaning each show is a community gathering, an event that begins with a welcoming introduction and can end with an invitation to stay and discuss the film. We offer filmmakers the opportunity to sit with the audience and discuss their films and audiences develop even a greater appreciation of their art as they hear why and how the film developed. And, with the support of Canada Council, we support filmmakers in their travel and fees as well as local promotion.

## **The Evolution of Movie Monday**

Bruce Saunders started the Movie Monday project in 1993 and has consistently organized weekly events since. In 1999, we began the annual Reel Madness Film Festivals, that showcased films and filmmakers that use media arts to explore issues of mental illness and recovery. In 2000, this community project became an incorporated non-profit Society. This was also the year that Canada Council for the Arts began supporting our programming of independent Canadian media arts. Last year we successfully securing Charity Status and broadened our festival format to include a four-day First Nations Festival.

Bruce Saunders started Movie Monday with a dream to make an underutilized theatre in Victoria's mental hospital into a free venue for people to watch quality entertainment. His "Theatre of Dreams" has evolved over the years to become a respected venue for independent films that present challenging themes on important community issues – notably issues of marginalization.

Our films are shown in a critical context, with enthusiastic post-film discussions, many filmmakers in attendance and consistently large audiences. Most importantly, we have reduced the barriers to audience's being able to appreciate innovative independent media, as all of our events are free (by donation only). Our weekly program's success is founded on a reliable yet eclectic mix of films that combines Canadian independent films (features, documentaries and shorts) with other Canadian content and mainstream fare.

We are increasingly engaging with various community health groups, interest groups and cultural communities by linking emerging films with special events throughout the year, such as Asian Heritage month, AIDS Day, Pride Week and others. We have combined film events with the Canada Tibet Committee, the Getting Higher Choir performance and with local aboriginal groups' events. We also work closely with agencies libraries and video outlets to increase access to video copies following events.

Now, with the ongoing support of Canada Council, we are proud of increased ability to support filmmakers in bringing their films to our eager audience.

Part of our mandate is to use film/video to provide education about the issues of mental illnesses and recovery while promoting Canadian and independent filmmakers in the presentation of their films/videos. Our innovative, eclectic approach to programming is a proven success and has allowed us to broaden our scope and our audiences. With this proposal, we look forward to another year of programming with the support of Canada Council.

## **Circa 2005**

The mandate of the Movie Monday Society is to use film/video to provide education about the issues of mental illness and recovery while promoting Canadian and independent filmmakers in their programming of their films/videos. We are a unique, community-based arts program that brings together culture, community and health by providing access to affordable, engaging and

entertaining films. We address challenging community issues, and we facilitate critical discussions and forums on these issues and films with the filmmakers and people who experience the issues.

Our educational programming is not restricted to films and discussions about mental illness, and now includes other health and community issues that struggle with the similar issue of marginalization or misrepresentation by the mainstream media. Our schedule includes a significant focus on events that address addictions, First Nations issues, physical challenges, and gay/lesbian themes. These events are most often presented by filmmakers or other individuals who directly experiencing the issue. These events are often organized in partnership with related community health groups, interest groups, cultural communities or special events.

Bruce Saunders started the Movie Monday project as a volunteer in 1993 following his second admission into Eric Martin Pavilion for treatment of his manic depressive illness. He has consistently organized weekly events since. Each year Bruce programs fifty or more presentations averaging an audience of about eighty people, totalling thousands of people enjoying hundreds of events. Now in the 13th year of programming, we have developed a solid audience who appreciate not only the varied selection of films but also appreciate the way we show the films. Many filmmakers say, “We show the films the way they were meant to be shown” meaning each show is a community gathering, an event that begins with a welcoming introduction and often ends with an invitation to stay and discuss the film with special guests.

Movie Monday is unique in its commitment to ensuring that emerging films –many of them independent film/video – are made accessible to the public regardless of income. All of our events are by donation events. We attract an audience of film-lovers who may not go to mainstream theatres and independent film festivals because of the costs of admission.

Because of perceived need, we also increasingly are taking the role of film distributor as we help independent filmmakers distribute their films throughout local outlets such as libraries, non-profit agencies and video outlets.

Bruce Saunders has been programming films for many years and has built solid links with filmmakers, distributors, other programmers such as psychiatrist Dr. Harry Kalinsky’s Frames of Mind programme in Vancouver. Movie Monday also has a history of partnerships where we contribute film titles to other groups and organizations including University of Victoria, Canadian Mental Health Association, Eric Martin Hospital, the Mental Health Library at Riverview, BC Schizophrenia Society, School District 61, Saanich and Victoria Police and the Greater Victoria Public Library. Building relationships with community agencies and groups is seen as an integral part of Movie Monday’s programming.

## **Circa 2006**

### **Profile of organization**

The mandate of the Movie Monday Society is to use film/video to provide education about the issues of mental illness and recovery while promoting Canadian and independent filmmakers. We are a unique, community-based arts program that brings together culture, community and health by providing access to affordable, entertaining films. We address challenging community issues, and we facilitate critical discussions and forums on these issues and films with the filmmakers and people who experience the issues and with a broad audience as well.

Movie Monday is a weekly programme, with over fifty presentations a year plus special events, off site events and festivals. Now in our 14<sup>th</sup> year of programming, we have developed a solid audience who appreciate not only the independent films but also appreciate the way we show the films. Many filmmakers say, “We show the films the way they were meant to be shown” meaning each show is a community gathering, an event that begins with a welcoming introduction and can end with an invitation to stay and discuss the film with special guests. We offer filmmakers the opportunity to sit with the audience and discuss their films and audiences develop an even greater appreciation of their art as they hear why and how the film developed. And, with the support of Canada Council, we support filmmakers in their travel and fees as well as local promotion.

### **The evolution of Movie Monday**

Bruce Saunders started Movie Monday in 1993 with a dream to make an underutilized theatre in Victoria’s psychiatric hospital into a free venue for people to watch quality entertainment. His “Theatre of Dreams” has evolved over the years to become a respected venue for independent films that present challenging themes on important community issues – notably issues of marginalization.

Bruce has consistently organized weekly events over these 13 years. In 1999, we began the annual Reel Madness Film Festivals, that showcased films and filmmakers that use media arts to explore issues of mental illness and recovery. In 2000, this community project became an incorporated non-profit society. This was also the year that Canada Council for the Arts began supporting our programming of independent Canadian media arts. Then in 2001 we successfully became a charitable society.

Our films are shown in a critical context, with enthusiastic post-film discussions, many filmmakers in attendance and consistently large audiences. Most importantly, we have reduced the barriers. Audiences who cannot afford other venues and festivals are able to appreciate innovative independent media, as all of our events are by donation (with no pressure to pay at the door). Our weekly program’s success is founded on a reliable yet eclectic mix of films that combines increasingly Canadian independent film content (features, documentaries and shorts) with other Canadian content and mainstream fare.

We are increasingly engaging with various community health groups, interest groups and cultural communities by linking diverse, innovative films with special events throughout the year, such as Mental Health Week, Mental Illness Awareness Week, Asian Heritage Month, AIDS Day, Pride Week, Prevention of Violence Against Women Week, Remembrance Day and others. We have combined film events with the Canada Tibet Committee as well as local aboriginal groups’ events. We also increasingly are taking the role of film promoter as we help

independent filmmakers distribute their films throughout local outlets such as libraries, non-profit agencies and video outlets.

With the ongoing support of Canada Council, we are proud of our increased ability to support filmmakers in bringing their films to our eager audiences. Our unique setting and programming links emerging filmmakers with new audiences.

### **Circa 2007**

Bruce Saunders started the Movie Monday project as a volunteer in 1993 following his second admission into Eric Martin Pavilion for treatment of his manic depressive illness. He has consistently organized weekly events since in Eric Martin's theatre.

Now in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of programming, we have developed a solid audience who appreciate not only the varied selection of films but also appreciate the way we show the films. Many filmmakers say, "We show the films the way they were meant to be shown" meaning each show is a community gathering, an event that begins with a welcoming introduction and often ends with an invitation to stay and discuss the film with special guests.

The mandate of the Movie Monday Society is to use film/video to provide education about the issues of mental illness and recovery while promoting Canadian and independent filmmakers in their programming of their films/videos. We are a unique, community-based arts program that brings together culture, community and health by providing access to affordable, engaging and entertaining films. We address challenging community issues, and we facilitate critical discussions and forums on these issues and films with the filmmakers and people who experience the issues.

Our educational programming is not restricted to films and discussions about mental illness, and now includes other health and community issues that struggle with the similar issue of marginalization or misrepresentation by the mainstream media. Our schedule includes a significant focus on events that address addictions, First Nations issues, physical challenges, and gay/lesbian themes. These events are most often presented by filmmakers or other individuals who directly experiencing the issue. These events are often organized in partnership with related community health groups, interest groups, cultural communities or special events.

Movie Monday is unique in its commitment to ensuring that our events are made accessible to the public regardless of income. All of our events are *by donation* events.

### **Movie Monday and Mental Health**

Movie Monday's weekly events attract patients on the wards, past-patients as well as the general public. While Movie Monday is an educational program, it is a positive experience that people want to go to. In a way we are destigmatizing not just mental illnesses but also the psychiatric hospital as we invite people to come to the hospital for a positive experience. We have similarly noticed that media coverage of our events, and Bruce Saunders specifically, is usually the only positive news story about a mental health consumer and mental health issues in the media each year.

Our program provides socialization and psychosocial rehabilitation opportunities to people living with mental health issues. With a goal of education we use entertainment, guest speakers and audience interaction to break down the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and raise awareness of community issues. Finally, we support volunteers, individuals living with mental health issues, who find stability in contributing to a weekly program while finding support from the community that surrounds the programming.

### **Circa 2010**

Movie Monday Society provides a unique, community-based media arts program bringing together culture, community and health by providing access to innovative films. We address challenging community issues, and facilitate critical discussions and forums on these issues and films with the filmmakers, people who experience the issues and with the broader audience.

Movie Monday is a weekly program, with over fifty regular presentations a year plus special events. An essential principle of the Movie Monday Society is that our program is accessible to people on low-incomes and therefore all events are by donation. Our audience is the general public, however, we serve many people who are marginalized and who may not feel comfortable in mainstream venues and attract audiences seeking eclectic programming in a grassroots, community setting. The weekly film program is uniquely located in a 100-seat theatre at Victoria's psychiatric hospital. The original purpose of the Society was to use film/video for entertainment to provide education about the issues of mental illness and recovery and has evolved to be an excellent venue for promoting Canadian independent filmmakers.

Our objective is to showcase Canadian independent films in a dynamic, interactive setting, where filmmakers are invited into the theatre to discuss their works with a diverse audience. Feedback from filmmakers consistently supports the quality of our technical presentation and the engaging audience discussions stating this is the way they hoped their films would be presented and received.

Bruce Saunders started Movie Monday in 1993 with a dream to make an underutilized theatre in Victoria's psychiatric hospital into a free venue for people to watch quality entertainment. His "Theatre of Dreams" has evolved over the years to become a respected and accessible venue for independent films that present challenging themes on important community issues – notably issues of diversity and marginalization.

Movie Monday sustains vibrant partnerships within Victoria's local media arts community. As a media group with access to a dedicated theatre space, we partner with other local agencies such as CineVic and Medianet to host special events with out-of-town filmmakers as well as linking film events in our theatre with training workshops for local filmmakers. We are proud to have been repeatedly honoured with Monday Magazine's "*M Award*" for Victoria's Favourite Screening Series.

Movie Monday continues the cultural history of film providing a voice for diverse and marginalized communities. Our success is rooted in the achievements of now well-established gay and lesbian film festivals, human rights festivals, and other movements that effectively integrate

culture with politics and film with voice. Movie Monday is situated within the context of outsider art, and has been influenced and has influenced the use of film to explore issues of mental illness and recovery for over a decade now. This scattered movement includes the well-established Rendezvous with Madness festival in Toronto, and the more recent TIFF's Reel Comfort program, the Frames of Mind Film Series (Vancouver Cinematheque), Cinesanity (Winnipeg), Shadows of the Mind (Sault Saint Marie) as well as outside Canada such as the Reel Mind Film Series (New York), Reel Madness Film Festival (UK), and the Anubhuti Film Festival of Madness and Beyond in India. Movie Monday continues to collaborate and often support these related media arts programs.

Locally, we have located ourselves as a media arts facilitator for various communities seeking socially relevant films with artistic merit, displayed in a community-based venue, and within a format for critical dialogue between media artists, an experiential audience and other speakers. These collaborations are diverse and consistently include Aboriginal films and filmmakers, special film events as part of Pride Week as well as in collaboration with PFLAG, local francophone groups, Asian Heritage Month events, and film events focused on homelessness.

### **Circa 2017**

Movie Monday is a weekly film program. Our schedule and our 100-seat theatre are busy with over 50 screenings a year to a total annual audience of approximately 3,500 people. Throughout this programming we showcase Canadian independent film content and artists. Unlike many programs that depend on premieres to attract an audience, a particular strength of Movie Monday is presenting and drawing large, enthusiastic audiences to a diversity of films including shorts and especially documentaries. Our weekly program provides unique opportunities to showcase these films in an interactive format with artists and audiences participating in robust community events. We're proud to feature a large proportion of homegrown Canadian stories and thankful for the annual support from Canada Council since 2000.

When Bruce Saunders found himself in Victoria BC's psychiatric hospital in 1993 for suicidal depression, part of his bipolar illness he discovered an educational theatre on the main floor of the hospital. This would be the inspiration for Movie Monday. His "Theatre of Dreams" has evolved over the years to become a respected and accessible venue for independent films that present challenging themes on important community issues – notably issues of diversity and marginalization. Movie Monday's weekly programming utilizes the cultural power of film, providing a voice for diverse and marginalized communities. Our success is rooted in the achievements of now well-established gay and lesbian film festivals, human rights festivals, and other movements that effectively integrate culture with politics and film with voice.

Movie Monday is situated within the context of outsider art, and has been influenced and has influenced the use of film to explore issues of mental illness and recovery for over two decades now. Our venue – a theatre located at the city's psychiatric hospital – defies the boundaries between normal/madness, patient/public, insider/outsider, entertainment/education, mainstream/margins, art/reality and we provide all events 'by donation' to ensure financial barriers to experiencing art and culture are removed as much as possible.



Through ongoing research and acquisition of titles we provide a strong programming of artistic films that are engaging local audiences on critical themes, with diverse voices including Indigenous films and filmmakers and first-person films expressing the voices of individuals and populations that are too often marginalized or stigmatized from mainstream society via media art. We proudly presented engaging films in a critical context. Our post-film discussions continue to be a highlight of our programming and filmmakers continue to comment on the strength of our presentation and the vitality of the audiences. Many of the films are presented in collaboration with local agencies and groups bringing an engaged and knowledgeable audience to our theatre and experience new films.