

It's our dime

Movie Monday has brought a lot of possibilities to me. Where once I was utterly hopeless, (actually more than once), I now have this cool chance to do some really great stuff. The power of movies draws a crowd. The possibility of educating about mental illnesses and living out a real "psycho-social rehab" project is even more intriguing. It's a powerful formula. It's a grand experiment.

MM is an item. I've been earning credibility over the last five years. With a track record of almost 300 events I now have the belief in myself that it's sustainable, and the community agrees that this approach is working. Our biggest worry right now is how to accommodate the crowds that are turning out.

The challenge of exploring mental illness/health through film has been another fascinating aspect of the MM program. This November my friend Bruce Wallace and I will be attending the Rendezvous With Madness* Film Fest in Toronto to see what's great in the latest films on the theme of mental illness. We'll also be there to learn what makes a festival successful; hot films, expert forums, an art show, gala night, independent funding, and publicity. Hopefully we'll be able to link with Rendezvous and incorporate director Lisa Brown's six years of experience at managing big, week long event that really makes a ripple.

My goal has always been to invite other consumer/survivors into collaboration on the MM project and to explore their talents and creative abilities - their art - their dreams. Our experience is very valuable but even though big organizations claim to value consumer input and promise to incorporate it, we are often marginalized, tokenized, and volunteered to death. Ironically, because of this disillusioning process many of us drop out for our own mental health. I think MM offers us a voice of our own. We can work from our perspective, with our insights, and have control. It's our dime - we call the tune.

I'm heartened by the number of compadres who are coming forward to contribute in their special way to Movie Monday and I hope the "Reel Madness Film Fest" we're planning for mid-January will be a focus for us all to put our best forward.

Anybody else wanna play?

Bruce Saunders Aug 31/98

*Rendezvous With Madness web site: www3.sympatic.ca/rendezvous/