

Hey, 7 years!

This is becoming a habit. After over 400 events Movie Monday isn't just happening in the institution, *we are an institution* (in the most positive possible sense, of course.)

We're finally becoming established as a non-profit society. After just me and some informal help for all these years and, for the last two years, the dedicated support of Bruce Wallace, it'll be "we, the society". Hopefully the board will keep me on as Coordinator, Artistic Director, Token Old Grizzled Sparky Guy, etc. If we could just find someone who'd love to be treasurer. . . .

Recognition is coming from other quarters, as well as audience appreciation. All the major mental health agencies involved in the Mental Health Monitoring Coalition; (CMHA, BCSS, MDA) keeping mental health on the government agenda are supporting and interacting with our program. Several pharmaceutical companies gave us unconditional grants to support our film fest this year. Every night we do a show there are some solid positive contacts with people challenged by mental illness and their supporters. There are always questions about access to services, commiserating about experiences and just people getting out of their isolation into a friendly place where someone knows and accepts them

I'm thrilled at how MM is taking on a life of its own. I used to have to push so hard to make it happen, now people are bringing great ideas and talents to our theatre. Our events are getting richer, with special presentations and performances almost every Monday. Filmmakers, musicians, people with special insights into feature films (like Judy Tethong with Windhorse - June 5) We're reaching way beyond just putting on a video, just mental health discourse. We're tackling big topics of universal interest - all through the power of film.

Here's a challenge that would fulfill another of my goals. A few of us will be going in the Oak Bay Tea Party Parade, June 3, with the now famous MM wheelbarrow float, a modest but plucky affair. This will be the forth time we've entered. I'd love to have a THrong walking down that street demonstrating support, not just for MM, but for the whole cause of openness and acceptance of mental illness/health. People who have mental illness challenges and supporters welcome, just like MM audience. How 'bout it? Details in the lobby on show nights or on the 595-FLIC hotline. Be part of a parade. You don't have to threaten to bomb the Premier's office to make a difference.



Bruce Saunders May 8/00