

# Clearing up Mental Stigmas

Movie Monday master releases his own creation: *Chomavision*

By Danielle Pope

**W**hen Bruce Saunders started filming his documentary about bipolar artist Bob Choma, he never thought the project would be 17 years in the making. He also never considered it would reach far beyond the boundaries of his other pet project, *Movie Monday*, to be a showcased film at the Vancouver bipolar convention — but that's exactly what's happened.

"Part of the reason I was so attracted to this project was because I admire this man's story," Saunders says. "Bob has a relatively extreme version of bipolar disorder, and he's had drinking problems and relationship problems, but all his life he's just been teeming with



Bob Choma's self-portrait  
*On A Bad Day*

up as a child artist to running high-production businesses, to Choma's fall into alcohol problems, mood swings, relationship failures and finally rediscovering his creative muse as an outsider artist later in life. It touches on Choma's time in the navy — he once stole a plane, and sunk a military boat — as well as his time in jail after almost losing his four children. All the while, Choma's sparkling personality and charming wit floats through, even in his senior years.

"Bob was a real player in his community at the time. Often, people are just trying to keep [those who suffer from bipolar] from being ill, but forget that people need creativity to thrive," Saunders says.