



Free Press Weekly

Sunday, August 26, 1990

WEST EDITION

GILBERT DONG



Rosalie Bellefontaine, with cast members Mark Meekis and Emma Meekis, during production of the video 'North of West Gate.'

Kids become video stars

Bellefontaine's production depicts life 'North of West Gate'

By Bonnie Bridge

Hey Rosie! When are we going to do another video?" West Broadway kids ask Rosalie Bellefontaine.

Unfortunately, Rosie, a Winnipeg producer with a long list of films to her credit is moving soon to Saskatoon.

But the videos she wrote, produced and directed this summer gave local kids a once-in-a-lifetime chance to star in a film about their own neighborhood.

"North of West Gate" pays tribute to a poor but close-knit community south of Broadway, back to back with the well-heeled Armstrong's Point area.

Though they're next door neighbors, the two neighborhoods are divided — psychologically as well as physically — by

century-old gates that guard the entrances to the Point.

Bellefontaine, who's lived in the poorer part for six years, was struck by the contrasts — and the kids' survival skills.

"The film is based on the children I've grown to love and admire in this neighborhood," she said last week in the Furby Street apartment she shares with husband-collaborator Blaine Donais and their 18-month-old twins.

"I volunteered at Broadway Optimist Community Club and got to know the parents and children. And saw the problems — alcoholism, substance abuse, poverty and violence. They have a very difficult time of it.

"But they also have a very strong community here, a lot of honesty and commitment. They keep an eye on each other,

and take care of each other."

Bellefontaine's half-hour film is about a mentally handicapped kid — not a real person — who gets picked on by everybody, but especially by the bad kids. "He's an eight-year-old boy called Shane Osborne, slow and with a violent edge. Nobody likes him."

But when the neighborhood bully kicks him off a Dickie Dee cart and then hoists the cart up to a third-floor balcony — getting Shane into deep trouble — the kids decide things have gone too far. They mete out their own form of justice to the bully, and rig up a way to retrieve the cart.

"They have a very strong idea of what's right and wrong — though it might be a little bit different than what a middle-class person would think. When the bad kid goes too far, they go in and make things right."

See MAKING page 8.

Making film has ups and downs

continued from page 1

**GOOFY'S
BAZAAR**
**YOUR ONE STOP
FOR GAG GIFT NOVELTIES
FOR**
• GOLFERS
• FISHERMEN
• BOWLERS
SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR SCHOOLS & CLUBS
247
NOTRE DAME AT GARRY
942-7041

Filming on location with up to 45 amateur actors and "tons of volunteers" — many of them local kids and all crowding around to try on headphones and get involved — wasn't the quickest way to make a video.

"Not only that," said Donais, "but several of our characters moved away in the two years we've been working on this, so by the time we got the video off the ground, our main cast had

changed drastically."

Two cast members, ironically, are cousins of the late J. J. Harper, whose death after a scuffle with a policeman triggered the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Like the characters in the film, people in the neighborhood kept a close eye on things. "We'd be shooting on the street," Bellefontaine said, "and somebody would yell out a window 'Hey! What are you doing down there? What's going on?'"

During violent scenes, "people would tell us to stop picking on the kids. And when we were filming in a back lane, somebody came up and said 'Why are you shooting in this dumpy back lane? There's a nicer one over here.'"

The film is currently being edited, and meanwhile, the couple is packing for the move to Saskatoon, where

Donais — who did the music and sound track — will enter law school.

But they hope the film's premiere can be held — where else? — at Broadway Optimist Community Club.

Once completed, it'll be the latest of Bellefontaine's many accomplishments — among them "Quackery," a humorous five-minute film about a child trying to figure out the mystery of life. It was selected for exhibit at four Canadian film festivals and one in Scotland.

An activist who believes people can change things for the better, Bellefontaine hopes "North of West Gate" will create hope and understanding.

"I don't think people understand the nobility of the people in this neighborhood, and I hope that comes through in the video."



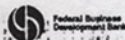
Peter Dyck

Advisor
Community Business
Initiative Program
Winnipeg West

The Federal Business Development Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Peter Dyck as Advisor for the Community Business Initiatives (CBI) program being launched in Winnipeg West.

The CBI is a business management training program that will be of interest and benefit to all small and medium sized businesses.

As a successful businessman, Peter developed an extensive background in merchandising, marketing, and planning in the retail sector.



Bank du Commerce
de développement

Canada

Candidates chosen

Candidates vying for election in the seven provincial ridings in this part of the city include:

Broadway: Avis Gray (Lib), Craig Johnson (PC), Conrad Santos (NDP).

Sturgeon Creek: David Armishaw (COR), Gerry McAlpine (PC), Andrew Swan (NDP), Iva J. Yeo (Lib).

Wellington: Becky Barrett (NDP), Walter Diawol (Ind), Ernie Gilroy (Lib), Clyde Perry (PC).

Assiniboia: Joan Johann,

son (NDP), Ed Mandrake (Lib), Linda McIntosh (PC).

Kirkfield Park: Frank Goldspink (Comm), Shirley Manson (NDP), Jasper McKee (Lib), Eric Stefanson (PC).

Wolsley: Fay Campbell (PC), Jean Friesen (NDP), Gordon Pratt (Prog), Harold Taylor (Lib).

St. James: Fred Debreccen (COR), Paul Edwards (Lib), Charles Lamont (Prog), Len Sawatsky (NDP), Joanne Thibault (PC).