

# the week's best bets

**fri.**

The Winnipeg Film Group's summer mid-festival looks at the Monty Python comedy troupe tonight. John Cleese's Meetings Bloody Meetings is the featured attraction.

**sat.**

The fourth annual Winnipeg Fringe Festival winds down this weekend, but you've still got two full days of Fringing left if you head out early today. Get thee to Market Square!

**sun.**

Toronto group Messenjah closes things off at the Black-O-Rama Reggae Festival tonight at Memorial Park.

**mon.**

Former Winnipegger Rosalie Bellefontaine premieres her half-hour video, North Of Westgate, tonight at the Broadway Optimist Community Centre on Young Street.

**tues.**

Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves star as the title characters in Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey, on tonight at a theatre near you.



**wed.**



The spectacular Les Miserables keeps on packin' em in at the Centennial Concert Hall.

**thurs.**

Schwarzenegger says 'hasta la vista, baby' in Terminator 2, now showing at the Northstar, Kildonan and St. Vital cinemas.



## Kids coping

By JOHN KENDLE  
Sun Staff Writer

### North Of Westgate video explores dynamics of a neighborhood

It's not Mann's Chinese Theatre. Indeed, the Broadway Optimist Community Club is nowhere near Hollywood.

Nevertheless, the Young Street community centre plays host to a world video premiere on Monday night — the first public screening of North Of Westgate, a video project by former centre volunteer Rosalie Bellefontaine.

Produced and directed over the summers of 1989 and '90, the 28-minute video offers a glimpse at the lives of children in the West Broadway area. Bordered on the west by Maryland Street, on the north by Broadway Avenue and on the south by Armstrong's Point, the neighborhood is poor and much maligned.

Now living in Saskatoon, Bellefontaine said she was moved to make the video by the tightly knit social fabric she discovered during the six years she lived and worked in the community.

"I was working at the community centre as an employee, and I got involved with the lives of the kids and introduced to the kind of life that they led," Bellefontaine says.

"It's often misrepresented and misunderstood, and I wanted people to know just how the kids cope with the confusing message and morality that they find there. I

was quite struck by the way the kids develop their own sense of morality and doing good, and how the people look after each other," she says.

The video's fictional story focuses on the efforts of a group of neighborhood kids to outfox the neighborhood bully. By hijacking a Dickie Dee cart from a younger, slower playmate and dragging it up to a third floor balcony, the bully has landed the smaller boy in a lot of trouble.

The other kids in the 'hood, led by young actors Mark and Emma Meekis (who had no previous acting experience), join together to outwit the bully and see justice is done.

"A mainstream viewer might see (the video) as disjointed," Bellefontaine says. "But the community itself is disjointed, there's such a high turnover rate in the community — its structure is quite fragmented — that I did that to represent the odd mosaic of the community."

"It was actually going to be even more of an art film, but I realized it wasn't fair to the kids to do that."

Bellefontaine shot the project over two summers, but dismisses much of the first year's work as "almost a pre-shoot, where we developed a framework." She says the neighborhood really opened its arms to the project.

"The kids were the first to accept the idea, naturally, but most of the parents were very supportive, as well. They saw it as an interesting activity for the kids."

"There were a few incidents, because we'd draw quite a crowd when we were shooting and people looking out their windows would ask us what we were doing in their street, but everything was ironed out in the end."

Shooting was funded by the Manitoba Arts Council, the Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO), the Canada Council, and with \$5,000 of Bellefontaine's own cash.

"Everyone got paid, which was a good thing. Even the extras got the legal amount of \$1."

Following North Of Westgate's Monday premiere, Bellefontaine says the video will probably be made available locally through VideoPool and nationally through similar independent outlets.

"I think it would be appropriate for Superchannel, though, and I could even see YTV maybe picking it up."