



tools of production at Shaw Cable. In Saskatoon, Dennis Jackson, Virgil Awasis, Vern Checkosis and Curtis Carter have created an Aboriginal Youth Show. The Calgary Native News group has also started a weekly current affairs show on cable tv.

Another home for Aboriginal production on the Prairies is the NFB's Studio One. Carol Geddes is completing her film on George Johnson, a Tlingit photographer who documented the life of his people in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Marilyn Dumont of Edmonton is completing *Mary's Story*, about her mother from 1930-50. Doug Cuthand is completing a documentary on the Elders' Gathering in Waden Bay (in northern Saskatchewan). Evelyn Kennedy from Manitoba is beginning a documentary on Aboriginal sovereignty, and Robert Houle is "curating a film" called *Dangerous Visions*, asking Aboriginal artists to reflect on the problems of modern society. Also at

Studio One, Loretta Todd's *Native War Veterans* is scheduled for a June release.

Another recent spark for the Prairies is independent filmmaker Maria Campbell, who has just finished her screenplay entitled *Halfbreed*. This may be the first feature drama by an Aboriginal director. And ex-

pect films this year from Winston Moxam (*The Barbecue*), a Black Canadian director based in Winnipeg, as well as Edmonton-based Selwyn Jacob (*Home At Last*), who is making a film about the building of the first mosque in North America – Edmonton's own Al Rashid mosque.

## Northwest Territories

*Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohen*

**T**HERE ARE MANY highly trained Inuit filmmakers and television producers who are actively breaking new ground. People like Elisapi Davidee, Blandina Makkik and Paul Apak have all been important to the development of Inuit production. But Elisapi is now working for CBC Radio North, and Blandina, who pioneered Inuktitut-language children's programming, is now working for an Ottawa-based political organization. Of the three, only Paul Apak is currently working at the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), as an executive producer at the Igloolik Centre.

As for us, we call ourselves refugees from the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, which we feel is not evolving from its non-Inuit management system (the headquarters are still in Ottawa) to an organization that is self-governed by Inuit peoples. Outside of the IBC, there are few opportunities, so this update comes from our perspective as the only

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZACHARIAS KUNUK

# Sea to Sea



WINSTON MOXAM's *The Barbecue*

independent producers in Igloolik.

We formed Igloolik Isuma Productions Incorporated as a partnership. It is a unique and successful cross-cultural collaboration. Currently, we are producing a 13-part television drama series called *Nunavut (Our Land)*. Set in the mid-1940s, it follows the lives of five families. Three programs are now complete. The first is called *Qamaq (Stonehouse)*, the second is *Tugaliaq (Ice Block)*, and the third is *Angirag (Home)*.

The objective is to recreate Inuit ways of life during that time, using Inuit actors. Part of the series shows how the Second World War affected these northern families, with priests nearby, and the

fear that the war would wipe them out. The latter program is being funded by Telefilm as a tv pilot, with commitments from the Knowledge Network, SCN and others. We'll be requesting more funds this year and the other ten programs are already written.

Our cultural advisor and the main actor is Paulossie Qulitalik. Although Igloolik has only a little over a thousand people, we're trying to build a star system here by using the same actors in our productions. Believe it or not, it's starting to work. Visitors from northern Quebec recognize these actors – Mary Qulitalik, David Aqqiraiuk, Damaius Aqqiraiuk and Rachel Uyarashuk.

## Ontario

Karen Tisch

**A**CCCESS PROGRAMS designed specifically for people of colour and First Nations people have provided unprecedented opportunities for filmmakers in Ontario. The Racial Equity Fund, funded by the Ontario Film Development Corporation and administered through the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto, has awarded 49 grants since its inception in 1990, providing emerging filmmakers with seed money for the development and production of short dramatic films. The Fall Lab, conducted by the Canadian Film Centre, is a six-week training program. Twenty-seven directors, producers and screenwriters nationwide (most of them Toronto-based, all pursuing feature film projects) have participated over the last three years.

In 1993, 31 new works by artists of colour were screened at the Images Festival of Independent Film and Video, and 13 films were screened as part of the Perspective Canada section of the Toronto Festival of Festivals.

The rapid growth of specialized festivals organized by communities of colour is even more remarkable. Since the Race to the Screen Conference in 1991, Toronto audiences have been offered a continuous wave of events: True Colours; Reel Aboriginal; The First National Encounter of Latin American Film and Video Makers in Canada (organized by Corrientes del Sur); and Desh Pardesh (an annual celebration of South Asian culture throughout the diaspora).

Networking among filmmakers of colour has also been a crucial element in the struggle for access. Organizations such as the Black Film and Video Network (BFVN) and Full Screen have worked to create common spaces and avenues of communication. Unfortunately, they have had to devote much time to lobbying government bodies for operating funds. Still, BFVN has grown substantially, and Full Screen, after a period of financial crisis, has also re-emerged with a new board and slate of activities.

While many equity-based programs have identified Aboriginal peoples as a key group requiring their services, Native filmmakers in Ontario have clearly not received the same benefits