

The West Coast

The festival season is upon us again and things at the Vancouver International Film Festival office are heating up. The Canadian Images sidebar, one of the festival's main sections, is under new management: filmmaker, programmer, teacher and occasional *Take One* contributor Ken Anderlini has taken over the reins for the 1998 edition. A chat with him reveals that there have been over 370 submissions this year, including more than 70 fiction and documentary features. Highlights include Nettie Wild's documentary *A Place Called Chiapas*, Bruce Sweeney's *Dirty*, Annie Frazier Henry's *Singing Our Stories* and Loretta Todd's *Today is a Good Day—Remembering Chief Dan George*. With regard to the latter, the festival and the family of George are discussing the possibility of setting up a Chief Dan George Award to recognize "humanitarian entertainment," an award open to all features in the festival. The wealth of work coming from First Nations filmmakers has prompted something special for 1998. Anderlini says, "This year Canadian Images will include a focus on work by First Nations directors, offering insight into the growth of an indigenous film industry. The program offers evidence of a strong aboriginal voice emerging in Canadian cinema and illustrates the way traditional film forms are evolving as First Nations directors tell their own stories".... In case you missed it, Premier Glen Clark arrived on the set of *Viper* in the show's futuristic sports car to announce that the B.C. government will bring in tax incentives worth at least \$20 million to foreign producers, in an attempt to keep the movie and television business going full-tilt in the province. The move brings British Columbia in line with Ontario, which announced similar incentives last year, and has local crews breathing a little easier, especially as some studies suggested the province stood to lose up to \$250 million in business if changes were not made.... Yes, that was Tommy Lee Jones you saw on Robson Street, and yes, that was Ashley Judd at that fine eatery. Both are in town shooting Bruce Beresford's *Double Jeopardy* for Paramount, a film that shows promise. I'm not sure the same can be said for the just-wrapped *National Lampoon's Golf Punks*, starring noted "golfer" Tom Arnold.

Jack Vermeë

Nettie Wild's *A Place Called Chiapas*

The Prairies

Pathological optimism has taken hold in Alberta. It's paid off for pioneers in farming and oil, so why not filmmakers? After countless meetings, presentations and promises, Alberta government officials felt that a tax rebate for the film industry just didn't fit with their philosophy. The buzz suggests that the legislators are eager to solve the perceived Alberta "disadvantage," they just don't like tax rebates. Producers, bureaucrats and politicians are urgently researching some form of special fund that producers can access, just as long as it doesn't look too much like the old AMPDC.... Still, the Prairies are alive with the buzz of cameras capturing motion pictures. CBC cancelled its long-running series *North of 60*, but Alberta Filmworks's producers Doug MacLeod and Tom Dent-Cox just wrapped four weeks of shooting *In the Blue Ground*, a *North of 60* television movie. A psychological thriller, the MOW builds on the show's success as a police drama set in the exotic North. Also in Calgary, *Honey I Shrank the Kids* is shooting its second season for Disney TV.... In Edmonton, producers Josh Miller and Margaret Mardirossian recently wrapped five more episodes of *Mentors*, a show about super-smart kids who have discovered the technology to bringing some pretty cool heroes to life. The pilot was about Einstein, but Alexander Graham Bell, Joan of Arc, Napoleon Bonaparte, Oscar Wilde and Lewis Carroll are also brought back to life. Calgary feature-film producer Bruce Harvey and actor/director Michael Ironside are shooting two thrillers in Edmonton this season. *Blood Money* is up next, now that *Question of Privilege* has been put to bed.... In Saskatchewan, Gil Cardinal's *Big Bear* is in the can after many weeks of shooting. The CBC miniseries has garnered great attention across the country, both for its subject matter and the team who persisted on the project for years—Cardinal, co-writer Rudy Weibe and actor Gordon Tootoosis, who plays the legendary Big Bear. Newly appointed Saskatchewan film commissioner Don Archbold says his province is attracting quite a bit of attention. A second CBC miniseries is slated to shoot there this summer, the \$11-million *Revenge of the Land*, based on a novel by Saskatchewan writer Maggie Siggins. Archbold, a former Alberta producer, says his first few weeks on the job are keeping him strapped to the phone fielding inquiries about fall movies.

Fran Humphrys

