

DOC BC National Report November 2009 by Michaelin McDermott

NATIONAL UPDATE TO DOC BC AGM November 30, 2009

2009 has been a pivotal year for documentaries in Canada. There are fewer broadcast opportunities for documentary and long running slots such as The Lens at CBC have been cancelled; the Department of Heritage has decreed the amalgamation of the CTF and New Media Fund into the CMF with all its uncertainty and confusion; and a Canadian copyright policy remains illusive. May we live in interesting times!

NATIONAL OFFICE

The office has undergone a number of personnel changes. Interim Executive Director Lisa Fitzgibbons became our ED. On July 24th, Membership Co-coordinator Jaspreet Sandhu left to continue her studies at graduate school and Lindsay Tibando took over her duties. **Sandra** Erazo is our new bookkeeper.

Cameron McMaster is DOC's invaluable advocacy researcher.

Doc has had two interns as communications assistants this year. Sana Iqbal completed a six-week term in mid-August and Claire Girard will complete hers in December.

A National Advisory committee has been struck.

Communications

The French translation of the organizational website remains to be uploaded and the French version of the site is still incomplete.

Board Insurance

DOC now has Directors and Officers liability insurance. This protection applies to the National Board as well as local chapter boards.

Governance

DOC National received a Flying Squad grant from Canada Council that allowed us to hire a consultant to look at DOC's operations and suggest ways that the organization can be more effective. As a result of the consultant's report and executive consultations, the governance committee is considering ways to improve the communications, functionality and operating of our organization.

The committee agreed to the following mandate: to review the Ginder report and make appropriate recommendations to the board with implementation being planned in the short, medium and long term.

ADVOCACY

Given the overwhelming challenge advocacy can present to such a small volunteer organization with limited manpower, the question '*does it make documentary filmmaking easier for our members?*' will be the guiding principle in shaping decision-making on all issues including Advocacy, Governance, member services etc.

*The voice of the independent filmmaker
La voix du cinéaste indépendant*

Through out the year, DOC members have actively presented well-researched positions on such hot topics as copyright, new media and digital rights, terms-of-trade, doc specific rules for production, licence renewals, and loss of documentary broadcasting opportunities. We've met with politicians and we've outlined the needs of the documentary sector to the CRTC, Department of Heritage, CRA and CTF.

Since July DOC has been engaged in numerous advocacy activities mainly for the 3 major policy consultations of 2009:

- the scope of the CRTC group-licence renewals in the fall,
- the on-going CMF consultations, and the
- copyright consultations.

Danijel Margetic has resigned from the Advocacy Chair, but will be available to assist when needed. We hope to announce a new chair very soon.

Benefits Proposals

DOC made proposals to Corus and Zoomer Media on behalf of the documentary community for a share of the benefits of the sales. Corus bought Drive-In-Classics and SexTV while Zoomer Media bought the Vision TV and other S-VOX channels. In both cases, we proposed the creation of mentorship opportunities for emerging documentarians in Canada and continued equitable partnerships between the stations and the independent documentary community.

Outreach

Our Executive Director, Lisa Fitzgibbons has been working with Natalie Barton towards a draft of a documentary policy proposal that they would present at the time of Forum during the RIDM in Montreal in November. CFTPA is participating as well. Essentially conceived as a 2-3-page document stating what is required to support a strong documentary sector, the document is intended for politicians and policy makers.

DOC in conjunction with Natalie Barton of L'Observatoire du documentaire has been working towards a draft documentary policy proposal that they would like to present at the time of Forum during the RIDM in Montreal in November. CFTPA is participating as well. Essentially conceived as a 2-3-page document outlining what is required to support a strong documentary sector, the document is intended for politicians and policy makers.

Terms of Trade

Discussion continues around terms-of-trade in conjunction with the CFPTA and other interested parties. In theory, some agreement between filmmakers and broadcasters is suppose to be in place before broadcasters can renew their licences. We'll see how this one plays out.

Getting Real

Doc is presently fundraising to publish the fourth edition of *Getting Real* -- the most comprehensive look at the state of documentary in the Canadian financing and broadcast landscape. Data from previous issues is often cited and is crucial when representing DOC in advocacy issues.

PROJECTS

DOCspace

The work to update the site from Drupal 5 to Drupal 6 has started. This will lead into the next phase of doing the online database transfer that is slated to be completed by end of November, in time for membership renewal. Completed a contract with consultant Alan Sawyer and it appears that we have to rethink the business model and focus of DOCspace as an online distributor. Robin Koning of POV continues to update content to DOCspace.

DOC Agora

A beta version of a webplex that lists resources was unveiled at Hot DOCS 09. Curriculum was developed as part of the Convergence Lab held in 2008 and now has been compiled into one document. This will be sent to chapters who might want to see what would be involved in setting up a similar activity in their area.

The project is scheduled to wrap in November, however this will most likely be delayed until 2010. The project aimed to incubate 6 new media projects, thus far only four have been incubated. The biggest success of the project so far has been the workshops offered by DOC Toronto.

National Masterclass

With assistance from the chapters, DOC has applied for a Canada Council grant to assist with Master Classes to be held in the chapters. The four filmmakers are Nettie Wild, Michael McMahon, Jennifer Baichwal, and Alanis Obomsawin. Currently, chapters that have confirmed their interest are: BC, Alberta, Winnipeg and Ottawa.

POV Magazine

DOC's **quarterly** magazine has been rebranded and redesigned and will soon be available on-line. As well, POV is in the process of becoming an independent **not-for-profit** corporation that will allow the magazine to apply to potential new sources of funding. This year's goal is to increase the subscription base by 5%.

HIGHLIGHTS & GOOD NEWS

MIPDOC

Trailblazer, Robert Lang (KENSINGTON COMMUNICATIONS) attended MIPDOC and Daniel Cross (EYE STEEL FILM), last year's trailblazer represented DOC.

DOC'S HISTORY

DOC owes much to its founders and early members who paved the way for DOC. An ongoing, updateable history can be found at **wikipedia**.

Savethedocs.

DOC was the first organization to react to the announcement of the CMF with a press conference at HOT DOCS and a general press release in addition to a letter writing campaign, and the launch of the savethedocs.com campaign (postcards, website, press conference, Q&A campaign). A petition for savethedocs.com was set up before the press conference.

DOC's FIRST PROMOTIONAL REEL

BC member Greg Nosaty created a promotional reel for the 2009 AGM. A short version of it will be presented to key decision makers.

ALAN KING MEMORIAL FUND

The King family and DOC has set up an endowment in King's memory.

IRANIAN/CANADIAN FILMMAKER MAZIAR BAHARI

DOC and DOC members were asked to write letters regarding Bahari's arrest and imprisonment in Iran. DOC member Annika Gustafson in Montreal spearheaded the effort. Bahari was released in **October**.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEBCASTS

Toronto was the first chapter to webcast one of their workshops and has offered advice and support to other chapters that are interested in webcasting their workshops.

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS

DOC has expanded our membership discounts to Choice Hotels. DOC members will receive **up to 15% off**.

Respectfully submitted by

Michaelin McDermott
Co-vice Chair, National Board of DOC