

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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Michigan films A challenge to Hollywood

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

DAFT'S UPDATE '87, held Saturday at the William D. Ford Vocational/Technical Center in Westland, disputes the old adage that Hollywood is the world's film capital.

Fourteen films by Michigan Movie Makers were featured throughout the day-long screenings as part of a broad spectrum of films and tapes, many produced locally.

Edwin Rennell's 43-minute documentary, "1918 Over There 1978," is among the most ambitious of the films shown by the Michigan Movie Makers. It commemorates the 60th anniversary of World War I by depicting the Paris-London tour of

Sault Ste. Marie's World War I Drum and Bugle Corps.

The purpose of the Michigan Movie Makers is to expand and encourage the art of filmmaking throughout the state. The group meets at 8:15 p.m. the first Friday of each month at the Detroit Historical Museum.

The Detroit Producers Association co-sponsored this year's Update. DPA's membership includes 900 film and video professionals in southeastern Michigan, a group dedicated to production excellence and expanded film/video opportunities.

ONE OF THE surprise screenings at Update, for those whose eyes had not flickered shut by 3 p.m., was a five-minute Panavision trailer for Crescent Film's "Modus

Vivendi," a sci-fi thriller to be filmed locally.

Written, directed and produced by Chuck Cirgenelli, "Modus" features former Miss Michigan, Linda Rae, in what looks to be an exciting post-apocalyptic story. It will be shot in Detroit next summer on a \$3 million budget.

Update is an annual presentation by Detroit Area Film Teachers, an organization devoted to excellence in motion picture study and appreciation. In addition to Update, DAFT provides film screenings and educational services for members.

In May, DAFT's 18th annual Michigan Student Film and Video Festival at the Detroit Public Library Friends Auditorium will provide an opportunity for area students from kindergarten through 12th grade to present their work.

ANOTHER UNSCHEDULED, pleasant surprise at Update was a two-part tape produced by George H. Hathaway of the Detroit Edison Co. in his role as chairperson of the State Bar of Michigan's Plain English Committee.

The Plain English Committee is dedicated to doing something about legal jargon and the confusion attorneys create with their professional communications, which baffle, bedevil, bewilder, confuse, confound, perplex, puzzle and otherwise mislead those who have not attended law school.

Part I is "Sentences for Lawyers: The Legend of a Captivating Legal Brief." Gilbert Hill of the Detroit Police Department, best known for his role in "Beverly Hills Cop," plays the "Brain," a convicted felon for his success as a jailhouse lawyer.

As he lays dying, he imparts his knowledge to a young computer ex-



Ed Hoot of Bloomfield Hills (left), Lenore Moody of Southfield, Bob Makara of Birmingham, Ed Pieratt of Westland and Dan Paul of Farmington Hills gather during the Michigan Movie Makers presentation at the

recent DAFT Update '87 in Westland. Hoot, Makara, Pieratt and Paul were among those who showed films they had made in Michigan.



Paula Freshel of Westland, Nadine Maynard of Bloomfield Hills, and Dean Cobb, representing Farmington Public Schools, look over program for the day-long showcase of film and video productions. Maynard and Cobb were two of three panelists for an open forum on the role of cable programming in education.

pert who, the Brain hopes, will be able to program the computer to write long, confusing sentences by automatically combining short, clear ones. The satiric point is well-taken.

ALSO HIGHLIGHTING Update was Pat Zaremka's "Invisible America," one of 11 films by independent filmmakers, shown during the afternoon. It was written and produced by Zaremka, who wrote the story for her son's film, "Popcorn Man."

"Invisible America" was shot by son David, in five states — Michigan, Kentucky, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, West Virginia — and in Washington, D.C. Its gripping visual composition documents poverty in America and the vivid contrast between rich and poor.

A featured event at DAFT was "From Concept to Reality," a program in which Linda Chapman and

Pam LeBlanc of Meridian Films guided the audience through production of their documentary "Waiting Tables." The Golden Eagle award-winning film presents their view of the underprivileged. It is an intelligent and entertaining statement about waitresses and the abuse these pink-collar workers suffer in the food service industry.

AS VISUAL EMPHASIS in America has shifted from film to video, DAFT, DPA and the entire profession of visual imagery has shifted as well. The current expansion of cable TV is a major expression of that shift.

Update addressed the cable question from the educator's point of view with an open forum, "The Role of Cable Programming in Education."

An impressive panel of local experts fielded a wide range of ques-

tions. Nadine Maynard, general manager of Bloomfield Community Television and president-elect of the Detroit Producers Association; Dean Cobb, video production instructor at North Farmington High School, and Ron Teachworth, instructional coordinator for the Uica School System, comprised the panel.

The general impact of video production in education, particularly as it has been enhanced by cable television, was the panel's keynote. Highlighted were such issues as who is responsible for production, how much programming schools should be expected to produce and what the teacher or media specialist's role is.

Participants this year readily verify that DAFT's annual Update is the place for film/video buffs of all sorts — at least until your eyesight wavers.

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