

## A NOTABLE EXPERIENCE

### The Selection Process for the ALA Video Round Table Notable Videos for Adults Annual List

By Rue Herbert, Library Media Center, University of South Florida, Tampa

*MC Journal: The Journal of Academic Media Librarianship*, v8#1, Summer 2001

The sheer number of video programs released each year and the vast range in their quality and focus can, at times, be daunting to say the least for librarians responsible for collection development. There are excellent sources for reviews of videos, *including Video Librarian, MC Journal, Library Journal, and Booklist*. The members of the American Library Association Video Round Table (VRT), and more specifically the ALA Video Round Table's Notable Videos for Adults Lists can provide further assistance. An important goal of the VRT is to provide leadership within ALA on all issues related to video collections, programs, and services in libraries, strengthening the ability of members to provide exceptional collections to library users, and the Notable Videos for Adults Lists provides potential selection suggestions.

<p>

The Notable Videos for Adults List was established in 1999 by the American Library Association Video Round Table to provide guidance to librarians involved in building high quality video collections for their adult clientele. The Notable Videos for Adults Committee consists of eight members, all who must be members of the American Library Association and the Video Round Table. The membership of the selection committee strives to represent all types of libraries and media centers that serve adults. The ALA-VRT and Notable Videos for Adults Committee recognize the increasing number and wide diversity of documentaries, educational titles, and performance works available, and these programs are the focus of the Notables selection process. The Committee does not consider feature films and those videos directed at a very specific, highly specialized audience.

<p>

Members of the Committee meet at the ALA annual and mid-winter conferences to preview, discuss, and ultimately select videos suggested throughout the year. Titles may be suggested by anyone who has viewed the program in its entirety, excluding affiliates of distribution or production companies. As suggestions are received, a decision is made whether or not to nominate the video for further consideration. If a title is nominated, it is the responsibility of all committee members to view the video. The Committee has developed specific criteria that are applied to each suggested video title for the nomination and selection process. In order to be selected, a video title should meet at least one, and preferably more than one, of the Committee defined criteria. High quality production values are understood as necessary for titles to be included in the final list. At ALA Midwinter, the members of the Committee meet to discuss, in great detail, the merits of those titles nominated for inclusion on the final list of videos. Using the established criteria, an annual Notables List is developed and approved.

<p>

All the specific requirements and procedures for the Notable Videos for Adults process, as well as general information on ALA-VRT, are available through the Round Table's web page at <http://www.ala.org/vrt/criteria.html>. It should be noted that the criteria can provide an excellent framework for critically analyzing video programs under consideration for inclusion in a library collection, thus providing an additional selection tool for librarians. The annotated lists of each year's Notable selections provide an essential reference for possible purchases.

<p>

While membership on the committee requires a substantial commitment of time and attendance at both the annual and mid-winter conference, the rewards for serving are numerous. Membership on the Committee provides an opportunity to meet and work with colleagues who have similar interests, and contribute a variety of views and expertise. Committee members experience a broad range of distinctive video programs. Many of the titles not selected still provide opportunities for thoughtful, challenging discussion, and will ultimately be included in a variety of library collections. It is with a sense of accomplishment and excitement that the new list is distributed. Given the quality of the competition and the critical standards of the Committee's selection process, those consulting the Notables Lists as a collection development tool can feel confident that the videos included are of high quality in both content and production values. Each year produces a new Notables List and a very notable experience for Committee members.

### **Notable Videos for Adults 2001**

**42 Up.** Producer/director Michael Apted. Distributor: First Run/Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

In the sixth installment of the remarkable series begun in 1964, filmmaker Michael Apted checks in on 11 of the 14 Britons he first interviewed as children.

**American Movie: *The Making of Northwestern.*** Producers Sarah Price and Chris Smith. Director Chris Smith. Columbia TriStar Home Video. VHS and DVD. Home video sources. Chris Smith's portrait of filmmaker Mark Borchardt's attempts to make a movie offers a humorous, haunting, and insightful behind-the-scenes look at fringe independent filmmaking.

**Ayn Rand: *A Sense of Life.*** Producer, writer, director Michael Paxton. Strand Home Video. VHS and DVD. Home video sources.

In this Oscar-nominated feature-length bio-pic, Michael Paxton presents an altogether fascinating portrait of the controversial philosopher/novelist.

**The Brandon Teena Story.** Producers, directors, editors Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir. Zeitgeist Films; distributed by New Video. VHS and DVD. Home video sources.

The life and tragic murder of Brandon Teena, born Teena Brandon, highlights a community's response to issues of gender and identity.

**Cinema Verite: *Defining the Moment.*** Director Peter Wintonick. Producer Adam Symansky. Distributor: National Film Board of Canada, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Hohokus, NJ 07423.

Filmmaker Peter Wintonick explores the an influential film movement of the 50's and 60's through interviews with masters of the genre and clips from key films.

***Coming to Light: Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indians.*** Writer, producer, director Anne Makepeace. Distributor: Bullfrog Films, P.O. Box 149, Oley, PA 19547.

Curtis was a pioneer photographer of American Indians who created often-controversial portraits, but today descendants of Curtis's subjects use his images to revive the past.

***Jeni LeGon: Living in a Great Big Way.*** Producer Selwyn Jacob. Director Grant Greschuk. Distributor: The Cinema Guild, 130 Madison Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10016-7038.

Travel from Chicago to Hollywood, New York, London, and Vancouver, as African-American dancer Jeni LeGon, colleagues, students, friends, and historians review her extraordinary life and career in a segregated society.

***The Legacy: Murder and Media Politics and Prison.*** Writer, producer, director Michael J. Moore. Distributor: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543-2053.

Learn how California's "three strikes" law ran amuck, creating an expensive system heavily populated with non-violent offenders.

***On Our Own Terms (Moyers on Dying).*** Producer/director Gail Pellett. Distributor: Films for the Humanities & Sciences.

Bill Moyers explores the agonizing decisions made by terminally ill patients and their families in this informative and touching four-part series.

***One Day Longer: Story of the Frontier Strike.*** Producer/director Amie S. Williams. Distributor: CineVegas, 2501 N. Green Valley Pkwy., #118-D Henderson, Nevada 89014.

For seven years Las Vegas hospitality workers fought their for jobs, wages, and benefits at the Frontier Hotel, in the longest strike in labor history.

***Rabbit in the Moon.*** Producers Emiko Omori and Chizuko Omori. Directed, written, and narrated by Emiko Omori. Distributor: Transit Media, 22-D Hollywood Avenue, Hohokus, NJ 07423.

Filmmaker Emiko Omori's memoir examines the affects of World War II internment on Japanese Americans, focusing upon the lasting divisions within their minority community.

***Sing Faster: The Stagehand's Ring Cycle.*** Distributor: Direct Cinema, Ltd., P.O. Box 10003, Santa Monica, CA 90410.

The feats and follies of the San Francisco Opera Company's technical crew, in a funny, irreverent, behind-the-scenes view of Wagner's 17-hour Ring Cycle.

***Stranger with a Camera.*** Producer/director Elizabeth Barret. Distributor: California Newsreel, 149 9th Street, Suite 420, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Elizabeth Barret traces the events leading to the murder of Canadian filmmaker

Hugh O'Connor while documenting poverty in Jeremiah, Kentucky, in 1967.

***Walking with Dinosaur.*** Producer Jasper James. VHS and DVD. Home video sources.

Jurassic Park meets National Geographic, in this realistic, animated view of 155 million years of dinosaur history. The DVD version shows how animators and paleontologists worked together to answer scientific questions.

***Well-Founded Fear.*** A film by Shari Robertson and Michael Camerini. Distributor: Epidavros Project, 141 West 28th Street, Suite 6B, New York, NY 10001.

Told from the perspective of political asylum applicants and asylum officers, this eye-opening story discusses issues of stress, credibility, consistency, chance, and mood.

*Rue Herbert is Head of the Library Media Center at the University of South Florida, Tampa, and is a current member of the ALA Video Round Table's Notable Videos for Adults Committee.*

Copyright 2001 Rue Herbert. All rights reserved. Commercial use requires permission of the author and the editor of this journal.

The author and editors do not maintain links to World Wide Web resources.



**ISSN 1069-6792**

**Revised: 7/9/01**

**URL: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/publications/mcjrnl/v8n1/notables.html>**

