



By Carol Patton

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

**W**ith this issue, filled with more politics of the industry than usual, as it is our timely political issue, Legal Lens' Mark Litwak and I look at what he calls the "Brave New World of Production Incentives." Everyone is talking about them; every producer, major studio, and independent filmmaker wants to know how to get the best "deal" for their film. Dynamic shifts in location business have occurred during the last two years because of them. And every legitimate state government and municipality that doesn't have them, wants to get in on the trend that has shown great successes for those savvy states that already have them in place.

It seems that Massachusetts, which has been quite ambivalent towards the industry since it closed the Mass Film Office in July 2002, (under a cloud of suspicion) is finally positioning itself to take up the matter in a manner that reflects the voices of the current administration and the newly evolved Legislature. The Governor, the House and the Senate are coming together to act to remove the uncertainty in most everyone's mind about a Commonwealth sanctioned and supported film office, and establish once and for all where a filmmaker can go in Massachusetts for "one-stop-shopping" that provides professional assistance that eases the burden for a project when it comes to film in their territory. The people who work in the industry both inside Massachusetts and those who may wish to choose Massachusetts deserve nothing less than clarity on this issue.

It was good to have FEVER PITCH shoot 9-10 days in Boston. Originally planned for only two days in Boston, many locals and state elected officials banded together to make enough happen to at least extend their stay. The Directors, Bobby and Peter Farrelly, wanted to shoot the full 50-day schedule in Boston because that is where the film is set. (Boston Red Sox home field Fenway Park). Toronto won 40 days saving the studio \$100,000 per day. I'm still scratching my head wondering why Boston and Massachusetts couldn't come close enough to those savings to tip the scale in our favor, at least for 50% of the schedule or 25 of the 50 days. A proactive film office dedicated to the outreach and bringing in the business could have done better. IMAGINE spent time on the set with Representatives Brian Wallace and Robert Coughlin. Spending time in the Red Sox dugout, there was no doubt where their loyalties lie. Wallace and other important state and local officials were instrumental in cost saving devices that enabled the extra shooting time in the Commonwealth.

It was a pleasure to share another sunny afternoon in front of the Massachusetts State House on Beacon Hill with good friends of the industry. Our cover reflects the light on the faces of some of the "key" elected officials who are ready to open the gates for filmmakers in Massachusetts. After two years of marketplace confusion in the state we are fortunate to have such supporters, and judging by the number of other elected officials who stopped by to say hello, they are not alone. Our cover includes State House Leadership Majority Whip, Representative Thomas Petrolati, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Commerce and Labor Senator Jack Hart and Representatives Jennifer Callahan, Brian Wallace and Robert Coughlin.



It is clear that great things are happening for indigenous filmmakers as post-productions are wrapped and premieres are announced. Two of them mentioned in this issue and both are terrific stories to watch even though both of these films were shot on location, Vancouver and southern Arizona respectively.

Producer Steven Spielberg and Director Rob Marshall (CHICAGO) have cast Massachusetts' actress Zoë Weizenbaum in MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, shooting this fall in Japan. Carlisle, Mass Filmmaker Gabrielle Savage Dockterman (see feature next issue) introduced the 12-year-old to motion pictures a year ago when she cast her opposite Danny Glover in her film, WOODCUTTER. Peter Berkrot (of Essex, MA) helped Dockterman discover the spunky young actress from western Massachusetts, who was not even looking for film roles at the time. Prior to



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

In MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, Zoë Weizenbaum will play the role of young "Pumpkin." Also starring are Ziyi Zhang (CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON; HERO), Michelle Yeoh (CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON; TOMORROW NEVER DIES) and Oscar-nominated Ken Watanabe (THE LAST SAMURAI). Photo by Carole Segal.

Lenox Hotel owner Jeff Saunders, Award for Excellence winner Annette Bening, and Boston Film Festival Co-Director Mark Diamond at the Celebration in the beautiful Dome Room. (Bening holds an AMERICAN BEAUTY rose given by a spectator). Photo by Robert Pushkar.



ABOUT JULIA director Istvan Szabo and Annette Bening at the Boston Film Festival cocktail reception in her honor at the Lenox Hotel. Photo by Robert Pushkar.

Representatives Wallace and Coughlin out of the Red Sox dugout, getting ready to step up to the plate on the set of FEVER PITCH at Fenway Park. Photo by Claire Folger.

written by Oscar winner Akiva Goldsman (A BEAUTIFUL MIND, I ROBOT, BATMAN AND ROBIN), adapted from the best-selling novel by Arthur Golden. How about that for your second role in a motion picture?

WOODCUTTER, Miss Weizenbaum had only done three community plays, and had to forfeit the role of the Mayor of Munchkin City in a local production of "The Wizard of Oz" stage play in order to take on the film role.

"I'm thrilled, and not surprised," Dockterman told IMAGINE. "Zoë was a natural, extremely smart and uniquely talented. The cast and crew loved her." Dockterman makes her feature film directorial debut with WOODCUTTER. She has just wrapped postproduction for the film. In addition to Danny Glover, the cast includes Ron Perlman (HELLBOY, BLADE II, ALIEN: RESURRECTION), Linda Hamilton (THE TERMINATOR, TERMINATOR 2, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST), and David Strathairn (L.A. CONFIDENTIAL, DOLORES CLAIBORNE, THE RIVER WILD). Glover plays a reclusive Vietnam vet whose life is turned upside down by the presence of a young girl (Weizenbaum), the half-Vietnamese daughter of a former platoon member (Strathairn). WOODCUTTER was written by Dockterman, Ken Miller (of Washington state), and Nancy L. Babine (also of Carlisle, MA). It was edited by Peter V. White (of Hollis, NH). Emmy-nominated Sheldon Mirowitz of Boston's Verité Music composed the musical score.

In MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, Miss Weizenbaum will play the role of young "Pumpkin." Also starring are Ziyi Zhang and Michelle Yeoh, both of CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON fame and Oscar-nominated Ken Watanabe (THE LAST SAMURAI). The screenplay was

On November 5th, the Boston opening of SPIN, the prize-winning dramatic debut by Robert Redford's son, James Redford, has been scheduled at the Landmark Theatre. Co-produced by Boston-based entertainment attorney Elaine Rogers, Kneerim & Williams at Fish & Richardson in Boston (see IMAGINE December/January 2004) and Donald Everett Axinn. Axinn wrote the novel that Redford adapted for the screen. This is James Redford's directorial debut that will have premieres in Salt Lake City, Utah and Tucson, Arizona this month. Cast includes Stanley Tucci, Dana Delany and Ruben Blades. Be sure to watch for it.

In this issue you will find that there is plenty to "watch" coming up. Nearby film festivals include The New Hampshire Film Expo in Portsmouth, NH, The Boston Irish Film Festival, The Festival of Nouveau Cinema in Montreal, The Northampton Film Festival (see IMAGINE September issue), and The Boston Jewish Film Festival. Take the drive, the foliage will be exquisite.

Next month we are welcoming once again our Women Who Work in the Industry issue, guest edited by Rebecca Richards. And I want to express a special welcome to Carla Stockton. Carla, a frequent contributor to our publication is IMAGINE's newest associate publisher covering southwestern Connecticut. You'll want to follow her Connecticut travels through the independent film and creative production industry in that fertile area. Welcome Carla!

