

Monday evening, December 20

MARZ:

Its freeZing cold in NewYork today, and Im tired after a quiet night with Tina in front of the fireplace with wine, so I'll try to be quick with this letter. I decided not to send you the slides I took last weekend for two reasons; to avoid eztra problems with the mail, and because I know you would look at them with a bologna sandwich and I would probably never see them again. I'll keep them and hope to take pictures throughout our adventures on the Island.

There are three types of Block Islanders :

Native Islanders, there are abut five families left tha t go back to the original settlers (1631). There are very conservative, attend the Baptist Church in the middle of town, marry each other, and will be the most skeptical of our film crew. I met Martha Ball who is 25 years old, just finished clooege in New Jersey, and is now back on the Island not knowing what to do nedt--shell probaby stay on the island. Her mother plays the organ in the church.

Year round residnets, include people like William Stringlellow who is on our committe of professors. He is a homosezu l writer who moved with his boyfriend from New York eight years ago to the island for health reasons. They are fairly well accepted by the rest of the population because they respect other peoples privacy....everyone ws wery withdrawn and seclusive. others year round are the church ministers (♯) the man who runs the only restaurant open in the win ter, the waitress who works there, her boyfirends family, some hippies who have been moving out, men at the coast guard station and lighthouse.

Summer residents- they are ghosts in the winter and you feel th m everywhere, boarded up homes, closed hotels, empty pavilloions at hte beach, postcards on the walls, there is a collection o their cars left behind for the winter at the airport. The taxi driver that gave me a tour of the island siad that in the last ve years more people have been coming from New York Nsd New Jersey and that is really wrecking the island, before it was people from New England.(connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island).

Importatn Places on the Islnd:

The snack Bar at the airport is where all of the workers (carpenters, plumbers, etc) meet every morining at ten oclolck or coffee and to talk about whats been hapeeing. One of te most in ormed people on the island is Vera Sprague who runs the aairlined at the airport. She always know who is cming and going and herars all of the gossip at the lunch counter.

The arrival of the ferry at 12:30 everyday is another event that many people, especially the old men, turn out for. The boat is run by three very young boys, the captain is only twenty years old, they are very friendly and considered to be a bit fun loving AND WILLING to take risks.

Stringfellow says that Funerals are the best events on the island in the winter. Everyone comes, and they always recite the history of the family or the person who has died, folklore of the island.

The hardware store is open one hour every day 12:30 to 1:30. It is run by Captain Lewis, from one of the old families, he jogs and goes swimming in the ocean everyday. He and his wife are very eccentric.

The Town House is the only restaurant open in the winter, and only when they feel like it. A fifty year old man runs it, the waitress has just moved to BI this winter to be with her boyfriend whose father is the policeman on the island. Before that he ran an oil company in New York. Her boyfriend writes rock and roll music and tries to sell it to bands on the Mainland (USA). They just got a liquor license at the restaurant so some more people come, he wants to make a cocktail lounge this winter.

The post office and grocery store are together at one end of the town. Many people try to shop for groceries off the island to save money. The airport has special shopper flights on Saturday and Tuesday.

The Gables is the name of the only hotel, this winter the sewer diggers (20 men) will live there. They also serve meals to tenants.

There are two policemen, and volunteer firemen who all come when a special horn blows that can be heard all over the island.

Three men run the lighthouse at one end of the island, and there is a coast guard station in another part, some women learn judo here.

The Baptist Church has a kids recreation center in the basement.

There is a new library that Dale Chihuly is trying to make some glass for.

There are about 50 kids in the school which is very good.

There are no fishermen, their boats were washed away in a hurricane.

"BLOCK ISLAND--SUMMER PARADISE"

Project Synopsis

This application requests a matching grant of \$17,800 from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities for a media project concerning the community of Block Island. The grant will enable the founding of a nonprofit group, The Block Island Film Study Group (BIFSG), a conglomerate of humanists and film producers whose objective is to produce a TV-film document of life on Block Island during the winter months.

The program will have three phases.

First, an examination of Block Island's year-round community from the viewpoint of a group of humanists with backgrounds in jurisprudence and theology, arcaelogy, history, linguistic anthropology, geography, social anthropology, as well as media production and analysis.

Second, the collaboration of the ideas and information from the above study into a film treatment, and the production of an hour long film about Block Island.

Third, the presentation of the film to the people of Block Island, and then to all Rhode Islanders via a broadcast by WJAR-TV.

Rhode Islands oldest town, incorporated more than 300 years ago, is currently beset with several issues of public policy that will have an important effect on its future. The active participation of Block Islanders in their government make them a vivid example of democracy at work... a Bicentennial inspiration.

Project Description

Block Island's size (population 450) and isolation make it one of Rhode Island's most unique communities. The issues of community planning, economics, education, employment, energy, land use, transportation and the like which confront all communities are more urgently felt by Block Islander's due to their existence ten miles to sea. Consequently the islanders as a citizenry retain much of the vigor of America's first settlers in their constant attention to matters that affect the group as a whole. Attendance at monthly town meetings is often ninety percent of eligible voters.

The Block Island Film Study Group wishes to examine this side of Block Island which exists beneath the tourism most familiar to fellow Rhode Islanders, hence the idea to produce a film during the winter months, "Block Island--Summer Paradise".

The project will be initiated by a study of the island's year round residents. The humanists and filmmakers together will examine the history, archaeology, economics, government and anthropological makeup of the island. Several in the Study Group have previous first hand knowledge of the island history and current political situation. Attention will be focused on immediate public policy issues such as the question of a sewer system for the island, the creation of development and zoning laws, education, energy, and transportation.

Perhaps the most poignant current issue is that of a sewer system; it raises questions of ecology, environmental protection, government financing, the relation of federal to local government, the pertinence of archaeology and local history to future planning, economic well-being of the community and its relation to laws governing zoning...in short several prime examples of the interrelationship of citizens and government.

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The ideas and information resulting from the study will be the basis of a documentary program for television broadcast. The film production will attempt to create an informative as well as entertaining portrait of Block Island life. The narrative structure of the film will be derived from the activities of four or five islanders who occupy representative niches in the social fabric--for instance a fisherman, a high school student, a taxi driver, a housewife, a hotel owner, etc. The interrelationship of these "stars" in a micro-society will suggest to the viewer the macrosociety of the entire Block Island community. This style of filmmaking, which in effect allows the subjects of a film to tell their own story, is particular to the style of the filmmakers associated with the Film Study Group.

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Following a premiere showing to Block Islanders in the town's cinema, the film will be presented by WJAR-TV in a program inclu-

ding an afterword by a panel consisting of members of the Film Study Group as well as island residents. This will afford not only an opportunity for comment on issues raised by the film, but also provide a chance for the islanders to react to the film's depiction of their community.

Relation to the R.I.C.H. Bicentennial Theme

Block Islanders are living testimony to the fact that well informed consent of the governed is a right that not all have neglected. The fragility of their economy is not unlike that of early settlements in the history of our nation--demanding constant self criticism and realignment of mutual goals. Block Island was the first incorporated township of the Providence Plantations (1672)--it has been an example for other Rhode Island towns for more than three centuries, steeped in the history of man and the sea that is Rhode Island's heritage.

The Block Island Film Study Group aspires to take the viewers of its television program beyond the shimmer of the Summer Paradise to the roots which make Block Island one of the State's most vivacious communities. Prepared from a humanistic examination of current public policy issues, and the way in which the residents of the island respond to the issues--the program may broaden the awareness of all Rhode Islanders of their responsibility and duty in a Democratic society.

Relation to the Humanities

The Block Island Film Study Group is comprised of the following personnel:

William Stringfellow; attorney and author with special interest in theological ethics, resident of Block Island. Mr. Stringfellow's firsthand knowledge of the island and his humanistic perspective will be invaluable to the project. Graduate of Bates College, Law degree from Harvard.

John Senulis; Senior Survey Archaeologist of the R.I. Historic Preservation Commission, is currently a key figure in the debate over the proposed sewer system for the island, in charge of archaeological study pertaining to the impact of sewer construction. Through his work on the island Mr. Senulis is quite familiar with people, groups, and political factions. Graduate of Penn State University, PhD candidate University of Utah.

James Findlay; professor of History at the University of Rhode Island, director of the Rhode Island Oral History project. As the making of a film is essentially the recording of an oral history, his interest in this field particularly as pertains to Rhode Island will be valuable. One of the existing resources available to the Film Study Group, is in fact a long manuscript drawn from oral history known to an eighty year resident of the island. PhD Northwestern University.

William Beiman; asst. professor of Anthropology, Brown University, a linguistic anthropologist who studies communities through communication networks, occupational patterns, places of communication, visiting patterns, patterns of speech, etc. as a means to a subjective understanding of the community as related by the people themselves. PhD Univ. of Chicago.

Robert Jay; professor of Anthropology at Brown University, a social anthropologist concerned with community organization, did field work on Block Island in 1950 for a joint anthropology and sociology at the City University of New York. The notes from that study will be an interesting historical footnote.

Chester Smolski; professor of Geography, Rhode Island College, a specialist in community planning, Mr. Smolski is interested in Block Island's current debate over the adoption of zoning laws for the island.

John Kelly; PhD candidate Brown University, department of American Civilization, specialist in the relation of media to the shaping of public opinion, consultant to local and national television networks. As this project is an attempt to shape public opinion through the use of television, Mr. Kelly's assistance will be appreciated.

Marian Marzynski; assoc. professor of Film Studies, R.I.S.D. produced and directed documentary films for fifteen years in Poland, Denmark, France and other European countries. Recipient

of numerous international film awards, co-director and editor of R.I.C.H. funded program, "To Live In Providence". Mr. Marzynski will serve as co-director and editor of "Block Island--Summer Paradise".

Scott Sorensen; filmmaker for the West German Television Network (New York Bureau), project director, photographer of "To Live In Providence". Mr. Sorensen will serve as project director and photographer for "Block Island--Summer Paradise".

Television Presentation and Publicity

Following a screening in the Empire Theatre on Block Island, WJAR-TV will present the film and ensuing panel discussion. A graphic concept for advertising will be developed by Malcolm Gear Associates, and will utilize a poster, newspaper advertisement, and television commercials.

Evaluation

Upon the completion of the program, John Kelly--media analyst and member of the Film Study Group, will prepare a written evaluation of the project and its success in accomplishing its specified goals.

"BLOCK ISLAND--SUMMER PARADISE"

<u>TOTAL BUDGET</u>	<u>RICH</u>	<u>In Kind</u>
Film Production Costs	\$9,150	\$11,200
Post Production Costs	1,850	750
Transportation and Lodging	2,600	
Personnel	<u>4,200</u>	<u>6,600</u>
Total	\$17,800	\$18,550

FILM PRODUCTION BUDGET

25,000 ft. Ektachrome 16mm film	\$2,500	
Film processing (WJAR-TV)		\$2,500
Film Equipment Rental, 4 weeks, (based on current N.Y.C. rental, source Camera Mart Catalogue, 75% to be donated by Blackwood Prod. with whom Scott Sorensen is assoc)	2,500	7,500
Workprint	750	
28,000 ft. mag sound film	500	
1/4" sound recording tape	100	
Shooting Titles	200	
Still Photographs	100	
Telephone costs	100	
2 months rental editing table (Blackwood Productions)		1,200
Editing Supplies, leader	300	
Sound mix from A&B rolls	500	
First answer print w/ optical sound	800	
Two release prints for R.I.C.H.	<u>800</u>	
	\$9,150	\$11,200

"Block Island--Summer Paradise" Budget Continued

<u>POST PRODUCTION BUDGET</u>	<u>RICH</u>	<u>In Kind</u>
Graphic Design Concept (Malcolm Grear Associates)	\$250	\$250
Printing costs, poster	750	
Newspaper advertisement	750	
Television presentation (WJAR)		500
Rental Empire Theatre on B.I.	100	
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	\$1,850	\$750

TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING BUDGET

Ferry, 5 roundtrips, car and driver	\$150	
Ferry, 20 passenger roundtrips	150	
Car mileage, 3,000miX .10 per mi	300	
Emergency flight contingency	100	
Taxis on Block Island	100	
Lodging at The Gables (100 days, \$18 per day)	1,800	
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	\$2,600	

PERSONNEL BUDGET

Project Director	\$1,000	
Film Editor	1,000	\$1,000
Director of Photography		2,000
Soundman	400	400
Assistant film crew	400	400
Honorariums for humanists (7)	1,400	2,800
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	\$4,200	\$6,600

December 4, 1975

Scott Sorensen
34 East 62nd Street, Apt. 5F
New York, New York 10021

Dear Mr. Sorensen:

At its meeting last night the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities voted to approve your project Block Island--Summer Paradise with one stipulation and two recommendations attached. The Committee was quite enthusiastic in its support of your idea. Earlier in the meeting, we had shown To Live in Providence, and the members' strong reaction to it was reflected in their vote on the new project. One of their recommendations stemmed from their feeling that the film was an excellent depiction of life in a city - any city - and that it was not uniquely Providence. They have therefore recommended that your new film stress the unique qualities of Block Island and its inhabitants. They have also recommended that you attempt to demonstrate very strongly in the film that Block Islanders are a living embodiment of the concept of the consent of the governed. This will probably entail some footage of the financial town meeting as well as other governmental functions.

The Committee's one stipulation is based on the assumption that this film will be very successful and may well be of national interest. The Committee therefore stipulates that, once the agreed upon local showings have been accomplished, should the film merit consideration as a retail venture that arrangements be made for the Committee to have a partial share in the profits of the venture. This share would in no way ever exceed the amount of financial support which the Committee originally provided to the film.

With this letter, the Committee awards the sum of \$17,800.00 to the Block Island Film Study Group. Prior to the disbursement of any funds, we shall need a statement of the composition of the Group and a plan for distribution of the funds to an independent financial officer, preferably a banker or a certified public accountant. The budget submitted with the proposal has been

approved as the official program against which expenditures may be lodged.

Enclosed are two copies of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities regrant agreement. One copy is for your files and one is to be returned to this office. As project director, your acceptance of the stipulations of this contract is required prior to the disbursement of any funds. Please indicate your acceptance of the contract by your signature in the appropriate space on the final page of the contract. The signature of the project's financial officer is also required.

When your signature and that of the financial officer have both been affixed to the contract, please return it in person to the Committee office. This additional visit is to provide you with copies of our Financial Expenditure Report/Cash Request and In-Kind Service Report forms as well as with additional information on the procedures required by the Committee in the implementation of this grant.

The Committee requires that you keep them individually informed of the grant project public activities. For that purpose, I am enclosing the names and addresses of all the members of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities. It is further required that the grant and the name of the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities be mentioned in any and all public statements, advertisements, and news releases in connection with this project. I want to emphasize that the Committee is most serious in imposing this requirement. Wherever it is possible, we request that the Committee's logotype be integrated into visual public advertising.

Please confirm your acceptance of this grant by signing in the space indicated on the enclosed copy of this letter and returning it with one copy of the signed contract.

This decision was especially pleasing to me. I hope that I will be able to work with you on the film in January. We are particularly proud to be continuing our association with you. I am going to be in New York next Tuesday and Wednesday (December 9 and 10) if you want to meet to discuss the terms of the award.

I shall speak to you soon.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Roberts
Executive Director

cc Marian Marzynski

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

BLOCK ISLAND WINTER

1. Early morning / Adrian goes-Runners-Judo/
2. Hunting with boys
3. Fishing with The Last Fisherman
4. Pastor announce his retirement
5. Ferry boat arrives
6. Pastor's last service; shakehands
7. Morning at McCabes; the teachers couple; go to school with them - meet the music teacher and later his ducs
8. Mayor's speech
9. Rescue
10. Mayor and company play music at the church
11. Mayor's voice narrates traveling around the winter island
12. Town meeting
13. School bus brings to everyday's schools; girls and boys talk about the island and the future
14. McCabes on the beach talk philosophy of life
15. Bingo and Police Station
16. Captain Lewis island tour on preservation of land
17. Old Pastor in his garden talks about being old
18. Flight to funeral; talk about death and life /Fred Benson/
19. Old pastor shows the new house for the new minister
20. The new mnister arrives and move-in
21. Lady on the beach

Movie of Block Island angers many; C. of C. seeks petition signers

By STEPHEN M. BARON

Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

With community pride its rallying cry, the Block Island Chamber of Commerce has launched a petition against a movie recently made about the island town. With many residents hopping mad, the leader of the petition campaign said yesterday he expects to sign up 25 percent or more of the year-round population of about 500.

"Everyone approached so far has signed it," said Kevin Jones, president of the Block Island Chamber of Commerce. He estimated that at least 50 residents already had signed at the airport and the town hall, where Jones and his wife focused their effort yesterday. Jones drafted the petition Tuesday.

He insisted he was more concerned with getting a "good cross section" of the island community than with signing up massive numbers. He then rattled off the names of a number of town officials who had put their pens to the petition, including First Warden Herbert S. Whitman, the town council chief.

"It's in extraordinarily bad taste," said Whitman of the 90-minute color film. "We are all nauseated." The Chamber of Commerce hopes the petitions will persuade those with power over the film to revise it substantially or ban it altogether.

The movie, entitled "Block Island," was made by Marian Marzynski and Scott Sorenson with a \$30,000 grant from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities. The film had its island debut Nov. 20 at the First Baptist Church and an estimated 400 members of the winter community turned out.

Judging from the sentiment of the community, Jones said, "everyone who saw the movie (will) sign the petition."

It appears that even some who didn't see it will sign. Jones himself was among the minority who didn't get to the showing. His wife was sick that night and he had to take care of their baby. He said he was familiar with the contents of the film, however, and he emphasized that he was heading the petition movement as a representative of the Chamber of Commerce.

One of the basic criticisms of the film was that it devoted a lot of footage to a fight between the island's summer residents and the winter community over sewer construc-

tion. Summer colonist Joseph V. Connelly had led the anti-sewer movement, and Connelly seemed to have star billing in the picture.

The chamber is involved in the fight against the movie not because it fears bad publicity could hurt Block Island economically, Jones insisted. "It's more a matter of pride and being portrayed correctly," he said.

**'Extraordinarily bad
taste... we are
all nauseated'**

—Block Islander

Sorenson, one of the filmmakers, contended the sewer issue was not "balanced" in the film. He said he has taken additional footage of Whitman speaking against Connelly's position to provide that balance and that the movie will be reedited to incorporate the addition. He said Whitman didn't speak emotionally of the sewer issue when he was first interviewed, which is why the imbalance cropped up. He said the filmmaker filmed in good faith, however, noting that they even asked Block Island residents to give their opinions in questionnaires passed out at the screening. Sorenson hotly denied any suggestion he was reediting because of Block Island pressure.

Thomas Roberts, executive director of the humanities committee, said he, too, has "strong reservations" about the film, particularly the sewer issue presentation, which he said was one-sided. He has told the filmmakers of his feelings.

Asked if the reediting job will produce a product which Block Islanders are likely to embrace, Roberts said, "I think we'll mollify them somewhat. But I think the initial reaction to a creative work stays with one. I think they will continue to be dissatisfied. I hope less so."

The film is likely to be shown at least five times in the state and possibly on television as well. The showings most likely will start in February.