



Inquiries: Pamela Wallin, Box 581, Wadena, Saskatchewan, S0A 4J0 | pamela.wallin@gmail.com | 306-338-9045

Chapters And Verse

Autumn in New York

It didn't feel much like autumn, it was hot and muggy and with 170-plus world leaders and assorted poobahs jamming the streets with their stretch limos and SUVs, it was impossible to breathe or move or even get to one of those fabulous New York restaurants for a late-night dinner. Every hotel room was full - not only with the entourages from the UN Millennium Summit - but with the rockers and rappers in town for the MTV Awards, broadcast live from the historic Radio City Music Hall just down the block. The traffic was so insane, the street closures so widespread, the inconvenience so immense, that the NYPD lit up office buildings across New York City, the evening the UN Summit ended, spelling out "Thank You New York!". But most cynical New Yorkers -- not to mention the tourists -- we're neither amused nor placated. I almost missed my plane, because U.S. President Bill Clinton decided to have lunch at the famous Carnegie Deli, which threw Midtown into full scale security lock-up.

Still, that is New York and it was, as always, exhilarating. My hotel room looked over Central Park -- I could almost see the ABC studios on the Upper West Side, where the first-ever Canadian Edition of Who Wants To Be A Millionaire was recorded under security conditions that would rival that of Clinton's. I know the secrets, but as you know, I can't tell. You'll have to watch CTV on Wednesday September 13th and Thursday, September 14th at 8 p.m.(7 Central) to see your fellow Canadians making you proud. After many hours under the set lights, we all had a chance to get to know each other a little and wave the flag in our own understated way. Canadian Consul-General Michael Phillips and his lovely Irish wife Oonagh (who was an enthusiastic member of the Millionaire audience) and the Deputy Consul Dwayne Wright and his wife Ellen hosted the contestants, their guests and the Canadian contingent for wine (impressively Canadian) and snacks, making us all feel part of that impressive group of Canadians who populate the movie and television screens of America. Then, with our pride bolstered, we were off for a final, frenzied taste of the Big Apple.

But if we thought we were coming home to peace and quite -- wrong. The Toronto International Film Festival is in full swing --- celebrating its 25th anniversary. There are almost as many limos in Toronto's trendy Yorkville as there were in midtown Manhattan as the international stars swan from screening to screening and party to party, making the best of an exchange rate that allows them to shop till they drop - not that money is necessarily an object for the likes of Richard Gere, Robert De Niro, Gwyneth Paltrow, and casts of others.

The Festival is really a quality event that has put Canada on the cinematic map and it's provided a reason (not that we needed one) to turn the cameras on those who create and deliver some of the best films in the world. The film festival phenomenon (which was, oddly, invented by Mussolini in Italy in the 30s) offers some real insights into global culture and myriad national psyches. The Canadian audience has a great reputation for being smart and savvy or as Australian director, Paul Cox, said, we "practically lick the screen". I think that's a compliment.

The Pulitzer prize winning critic Roger Ebert, a long-time fan of the Festival, joins us on Pamela Wallin's Talk TV – along with the Godfather of Canadian Cinema, Norman Jewison and critic Brian D. Johnson, author of the just released *Brave Films, Wild Nights*, a juicy retrospective of back room deals and off-screen antics of the stars and their makers - those who entertain and sometimes educate us with the stories they create. So even if you can't take in the films, catch the programme and pick up Brian's book. It will give you a great sense of our own movie makers and stars, as well as this world class event which has created a Canadian industry of which we can be proud.