

RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding circles of ministry and community. You, our readers, are part of our life. We invite your comments and suggestions so that your thoughts may be reflected in these pages.

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Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
English Speaking Provinces

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A NEW GENERATION OF FILM MAKERS

by Susan Gardella, RSHM

SLEEPY HOLLOW, NY. Four years ago The RSHM LIFE Center After School Program was given the opportunity to participate in an offering of the Jacob Burns Film Center and Media Arts Lab. The program is called "Animation: Minds In Motion." I grew up in the era of great television cartoons. Many of them have become classics still shown on television today. Saturday mornings were filled with the adventures of Scooby Doo, Underdog, Rocky and Bullwinkle and my favorite, the space-aged Jetsons! The artistry of these hand drawn and inked cartoons has been overtaken by computer generated animation, a new medium for a new generation, but cartoons are as popular as ever and I know our students like watching them as much as I did.

It has been said that to be literate today, one also needs to be literate with visual and oral texts and know how to communicate with images. So I was thrilled when our Center was selected to participate in this innovative program, and I just hoped our 4th graders would share some of my enthusiasm. For children who primarily speak English as a second language, as our children do, simple communication can often be a



RSHM LIFE Center students at the premiere of their original animated film.

challenge. In this program students have the opportunity to collaboratively write, direct, and produce an original animated film. They not only draw all of the parts; they are the voices, sound effects, and animators. The curriculum creatively integrates elements of science, technology, math, language arts, and the arts for multifaceted learning experience. Most important, they learn how to communicate, negotiate and compromise by working in production teams. The program culminates with a red-carpet premiere at the theatre in front of family and friends. The children are introduced on stage,

given awards, and they and their families are invited to an after screening party.

The films our students have made may not become as famous as the cartoons of my youth but the experience and skills learned will stay with them for years to come. The looks on the faces of the parents as they watch the films and see their children take the stage and really shine is priceless. As each class has gone through the program over these years the films and story lines change, but the message remains the same: when you work together amazing things can be accomplished. ♦

EARLY DAYS ENGENDER LOVE OF MOVIES

by Cathrine Chitali, RSHM

CHIVUNA, ZAMBIA. The theme for this issue of *Soundings* motivated me to share my long standing experience of watching movies. My initial moments were in our house, the wall space in the sitting room. I was eight years old then.

My father Lourenco owned a projector and was an affiliate of Zambia Cinema in the early eighties. I grew up in a small coal mining town, popularly known as "Maamba Collieries Limited," where my father worked. There was no form of entertainment in this place, apart from taverns and bars, hence my father's idea to procure this equipment. Each time he returned from Lusaka with reams of films, he would view them in the house before showing them to the crowds in our neighbourhood. I was the first client to sit with him as he checked, then mended those that were jumping as the whole ream was going round and round the projector. I enjoyed watching those reviews with dad. However, I never realized they had a message as such; it was the pictures that appealed to my eyes. Only when I grew a little older did I recognize the message in the movies.

Since then, I have been a great fan of this genre and really enjoy movie time. Last December, 2010, I happened to be in Lusaka after my college residential school, and Sr. Florence was up from Zimbabwe. With my hectic schedule from college, I decided a movie might be a good way to relax. So, we took off to Archades Blockbuster and picked one that was highly recommended.

The title of the movie was *Due Date*. It was filmed in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Peter Highman (Robert Downey) is a high-strung architect who is flying home to Los Angeles for the birth of his first child. Due to an upheaval that



erupts, Peter is shot by an air marshal and put on a "no-fly" list. As luck would have it, fortune comes in the form of Ethan (Zack Galifianakis), who offers Peter a lift to LA. Ethan is travelling to Hollywood to try his luck at becoming a "real actor." Straight away the two men's diametrically opposed personalities clash and we find out that Ethan has a second motive for his travels—to spread his recently deceased father's ashes. The combined circumstances of their diverse goals and the obstacles they meet along the way make for an unbelievable journey. Finally, they arrive at the Hospital, just in time for the birth of Rosie Highman. Peter collapses at the sight, then comes to and finds Ethan cutting the umbilical cord.

The movie teaches patience with different and opposite personalities. Along our journeys, we encounter many people who are put there for a purpose. In the long run, they teach us something about ourselves that lies deep within. Peter never thought he would travel the whole way with Ethan. A hilarious movie!◆

NEXT ISSUE:
SOMETHING OLD
SOMETHING NEW

MESSAGES FROM FILM VIEWERS IN THE NORTHERN EURO- PEAN PROVINCE

by Pierre and Andre Dullaghan,
RSHM

BARROW & LONDON, ENGLAND. These are some messages heard in films much enjoyed and enthusiastically recommended:

A Man for All Seasons: Deep faith gives untold strength. See how St. Thomas More stood up for his faith with steadfastness. How he held to his belief in spite of being cajoled into 'giving in' for the sake of family loyalty and friendship. Follow your conscience, do the right thing even if it means accepting cruel death!

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas: the power of strong friendship between two innocent boys—each on either side of the Concentration Camp. Their friendship and love was so strong as to risk the dangers involved in their search for one boy's missing Dad—friendship and risk that ended in a horrific death.

Mamma Mia: the joy and fun derived from watching a story with a happy ending!

The Dead: a very subtle portrayal of what it means to 'love'. Gretta's reaction to being nostalgically reminded of a one-time deep love in her past profoundly moves her husband with the realization that *he* has never experienced such love.

The King's Speech: what danger can be done to a child with a problem not sympathetically attended by a father who constantly shouts with frustration! This massive personal handicap is overcome in the cause of duty, in overcoming the desire to hide away and eventually succeeding in making an impressive speech to the people of England.◆

FAVORITE FILMS

I would like to recommend **The King's Speech** because it underscores the effort of one man struggling to communicate at a crucial time in history. Although he was a member of the ruling class and facing the dilemma of world war, he epitomized the pain that millions of people in our contemporary world are having in their attempt to be heard and understood by their governments. It does remind us that one's position in society is not the determining factor. The ability to speak is a gift, and the right to speak is not always part of the package.
Margaret McKenna, RSHM

My favorite of all movies that I have seen in the last few years is **Invictus**. I loved the way Mandela got to know his "enemy" and learned Afrikaans and when he became President invited the former staff to stay because he needed them. He got to know personal things about each one and in his travels brought them gifts.
Mary Heyser, RSHM

As far as movies go, one of my all time favorites is **Out of Africa**. I thought that the clash of cultures (European and African) was so well portrayed by Meryl Streep's character. She clearly loved Africa and its people but was also tied to European ideas of stability and ownership of land. Central to the story was her attraction to Robert Redford's character whose free nomadic lifestyle and love of the open landscape was like the native Massai. And, of course, the acting, the scenery, and the soundtrack were also wonderful!
Maria Timoney, RSHM

Of all the films I've loved, I would choose **All About Eve**, a Betty Davis/Ann Baxter drama about a woman (Ann Baxter) who is a conniving assistant to a star (Bette Davis). I loved the acting of the two powerful women and the excellent drama they produced.
Celine Cripps, RSHM

My favorite is **The King's Speech**. I like this movie because it is an engaging story of a British king's triumph over a devastating speech impediment. Feeling totally unprepared to assume the throne, George works tirelessly with his speech therapist to overcome this difficulty. After many sessions, great perseverance, and complete dedication he is finally successful. This movie is a truly uplifting portrayal of a person's ability to transcend challenges.
Agnes Cloonan, RSHM

My all time favorite is **The Secret of Roan Inish**. The first time I saw it was when I was diagnosed with breast cancer and it was recommended by a doctor. It was very therapeutic to say the least. I have often watched it to carry me to a new space.
Eileen Buckley, RSHM

Shadowlands portrays the beautiful and unlikely love affair which gradually unfolds between C.S. Lewis, the serious professor and author, and Joy Gresham, the lively and outspoken American poet. While the film is filled with humor and good-natured repartee, the ending will bring tears to your eyes. What I liked best was the simplicity, honesty, and selflessness of the characters drawn from real life.
Irene Cody, RSHM

One of my favorite movies, one I try to watch whenever it comes on television (and it still does on occasion) is **Random Harvest**. I saw it at an early age when I went to movies with parents and friends, and it has stayed with me. Beautifully acted by Greer Garson and Ronald Coleman, it is described by reviewers as "a wartime tragedy dealing with a serious by-product of war as well as the uncertainty of human relationships." Because it was made in 1942, it has a happy ending, but we can relate the story to something that we are still coping with as soldiers return from Iraq and Afghanistan.
Margaret Ellen Flannelly, RSHM

I always tell people (because it's true), the last movie I saw was **Driving Miss Daisy**. I liked it because it entertained me which is why I went in the first place.
Georgette Lawton, RSHM

I love movies. One of my favorites is **Kiss of the Spider Woman**. In a horrid prison in Brazil, two men who are very different from one another are cellmates. One is a flamboyant homosexual played by William Hurt and the other a hard toned political activist played by Raul Julia. Many boundaries are crossed in this film. In the film, through the fanciful narratives of movies played out by William Hurt's character, these two radically different men with opposing views of life slowly, through listening and talking with one another, cross boundaries of separation. They forge a bond based on mutual understanding and respect and their relationship evolves. People can change!
Kathleen Kanet, RSHM♦

WAITING FOR SUPERMAN

by Marilyn Ficht, RSHM



Sr. Marilyn and her students at Verbum Dei High School, Los Angeles, CA

LOS ANGELES, CA. Up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Superman! In the comic strip, and later the movie, Clark Kent is a mild mannered man whom few even notice. But when someone needs a hero, he sets aside his ordinariness and reappears as the red-caped hero with the "S" on his chest and comes to the rescue of an innocent person who needs help.

In the film documentary, *Waiting for Superman*, the lives of five children from different parts of the country are followed. Each child is motivated to succeed in life, but it's not easy. As the film follows the

efforts of parents trying to make this happen, your heart breaks as you watch a little girl looking out a window seeing her classmates go to school. But she cannot go because her mother has lost her job and can no longer afford her private school tuition. An alternative school has been set up by an independent group and provides students with a very good education, but for this child it would mean a long bus ride each morning. Even after she and her mother decide make the trip, they still face problem of admittance. Admission depends on the luck of the lottery, and this little girl is not one of the

lucky ones. Only one child is selected out of the five and the look of disappointment on the faces of both the children and the parents/guardians says a multitude. Although their parents are determined to keep fighting to get the education that their child deserves, you have to wonder what will happen to the children and what kind of future they will have.

The fictional Superman made the world a better place because he brought hope to those in need and showed that someone cared about them. Each of us is called on to be "Superperson" when it comes to the education of children here in the United States. The danger children face is the temptation to "drop-out" of the educational system, leaving so many young boys and girls without a high school diploma. Teaching is hard work and encouraging students to want to learn is not always easy, but it is why many of us spent most of our adult lives in the classroom; some of us are still doing that.

Obviously, there are some "Supermen/women" out there, but the country needs more of them. This movie is a real eye opener about the education system in the US today. See the movie and go out and be a "Superman" for a child you know. ♦

INSPIRATION: REEL AND REAL

by Kimberly Field-Martin

NEW YORK, NY. Leymah Gbowee, founder and executive director of Women, Peace, and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-A) was the invited speaker for Marymount School's 85th Founder's Day on February 2, 2011. Students prepared for her visit by watching the documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. She impressed upon the students, faculty, parents, and alumnae that

one should "never despise a humble beginning." Her own movement to achieve peace during Liberia's Second Civil War began with only five women and eventually grew to thousands. The grassroots nature of her leadership was not only persuasive, but powerful, underlining that real social change can be begun by just one person.

Her words to the high school students were simple but powerful: have passion for what you do, find the courage to follow through, and don't be swayed by the opinions of others. Ms. Gbowee encouraged students to ask themselves, "What is my heart, soul, and spirit saying?" Assuring students that "we all have a time to shine in our lives,"



she tempered her discussion with the caution that they should not focus on money or fame but on commitment and the desire to see a real change. She stressed that "a sincere desire to see

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FILM FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS "THE OTHER"

by Edith Hart, RSHM

TARRYTOWN, NY. The Arts are a way to communicate and understand the realities of our time in a universal language that everyone can understand. With this in mind, the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Committee of the Eastern American Province is offering a film series during 2011. We have chosen four acclaimed films to engage us in an experience of opening our understanding of "the other" who may seem to be different. Following the films we discuss how we see and relate to what we have seen depicted in the film. The films for this year are *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Gran Torino*, *The Namesake*, and *Lone Star*.

On March 27, 2011, we saw *Snow Falling on Cedars*. The film is about the death of a fisherman in the Pacific northwest and a Japanese American accused of killing him. An essential part of the film is the still smoldering tensions of World War II and the internment of Japanese Americans. Another



theme in the film is a love story that embraces the local trial reporter and the wife of the accused.

The discussion that followed the film was very engaging and heartfelt. A great sense of compassion, openness, and trust in the sharing with one another were evident. People dug deeply into their memories and shared their sadness about the injustice of the in-

ternment of the Japanese people. Connections were made to similar attitudes today, the prejudice that remains from smoldering tensions of the past and the accusations and judgments that follow. The discussion also recognized the strength and solidarity of the Japanese people as well as personal memories of the Japanese being the enemy! One person suggested that another reason the Japanese were seen as "other" was their success as farmers which made them a financial threat to the status quo, especially in California. We also noted that the character of the trial reporter was also "other," even to himself because of memories and hurt.

In reflecting on this first of the film series we are grateful to each one for the thoughtful, honest, and compassionate sharing. One person affirmed that the discussion after the film was the best part of the afternoon. ♦

NEW CHANNELS OF STUDENT CREATIVITY

by Rosalyn Smith

ROME, ITALY. To develop our technology instruction and keep our students up to date, this year Marymount International School, Rome, has introduced a new course entitled iLab. This course enables students to use Mac software to present information in the form of movies, webpages, blogs, podcasts and dynamic powerpoints. The technology allows students to be creative, and interest level is high.

Students have created short movies for curriculum-based topics for classroom use (scenes from set texts in English), extracurricular information messages such as a movie to stop bullying in schools, fund raising projects to support the

mission in Zambia (DVDs of school events) and, recently, an exciting cross curricular production involving WWII veterans. The social studies, English and Italian departments co-operated to arrange for 8th grade students to interview Italian WWII veterans about their experiences. The iLab students filmed the interviews, then added English subtitles and archive film footage. The recollections of these veterans greatly moved the students involved and is now a permanent record for future 8th grade students to experience. The age of the veterans underlines the importance of archiving these recollections for future generations.

The technology enables the

students to express themselves in a medium they are quickly comfortable with and to create projects they are proud of. The only limit to the application of this technology in the classroom is the imagination of the student! ♦



CONTRIBUTORS

Cathrine Chitali, RSHM, teaches at St. Joseph's School in Chivuna, Zambia.
Andre Dullaghan, RSHM, serves on the Northern European Provincial Council in London, England.

Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM, retired in Barrow, England, is *Soundings* coordinator for the Northern European Province.

Marilyn Ficht, RSHM, teaches at Verbum Dei, an inner-city high school for boys in Los Angeles, CA.

Kimberly Field-Marvin is the Director of Communications for Marymount School of New York.

Susan Gardella, RSHM, is the Director of the RSHM LIFE Center in Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Edith Hart, RSHM, is a conservator of works on paper in Tarrytown, NY.

Rosalyn Smith teaches Biology and iLab at Marymount International School, Rome.



EDITORS: Margaret McKenna, RSHM
Bea McMahon, RSHM
Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM
Joanne Safian, RSHM
Cathrine Chitali, RSHM
Monica Walsh, RSHM
Mary Alice Young, RSHM

ART EDITOR: Edith Hart, RSHM
LAYOUT: Bianca Haglich, RSHM

www.rshm.org
www.rshmnep.org
province@rshmeap.org

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change" will be celebrated eventually. When a student asked whether she would change anything about her life if she could, Ms. Gbowee resolutely said, "No. I would not change anything." She believes that her experiences are gifts from God remarking, "Even mistakes strengthen us for the future."

Addressing Classes VI through VIII, Ms. Gbowee encouraged the students to reaffirm themselves by saying, "I can be," when someone says, "You can't be." She said, "You can be whatever you choose to be. Don't let others determine what you will become." Crediting

the teachings of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ms. Gbowee stressed the power of non-violence, despite the grave danger and injustice that she faced during the long years of civil war in her country. She asserted: "Courage comes from within you when you are raging, but you must channel anger into something positive. Put it [your rage] into a container of peace." To do this one must be able to forgive. "Forgiveness is the key to working as an agent of change and being able to let go" is the only way to implement change, she said.

The Founder's Day message

was a call to engagement. She empowered the girls through her conviction, positive outlook, and outspokenness. Eighty-five years ago, Mother Butler's courage and vision called Marymount into being. Her legacy grounds students to become the change they wish to see in the world. Women like Ms. Gbowee prove that one voice, one idea, and one person *can* change the course of history. [Ms. Gbowee was also Marymount's Commencement Speaker in June, 2011.]♦

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
Tarrytown, New York 10591
50 Wilson Park Drive
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary



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