



Inside the Rockwood Academy Saturday cast and crew were shooting scenes for the movie "Agnes of God" starring Anne Bancroft and Jane Fonda. (Herald photo by Ani Pederial)

Agnes of God

\$400,000 undertaking for scenes

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

It sounds hard to believe, but the film-makers of "Agnes of God" couldn't find a convent-like structure in Catholic Quebec.

That's why they settled on Rockwood's historic Academy for their movie.

The former boys' school, which is currently the home of sculptor Andreas Drehters, is an Ontario Heritage Foundation building located on Highway 7, just west of Acton.

With \$400,000, the Academy has been altered into a convent under the guidance of production designer Ken Adam.

From London, England, Mr. Adam came to work on "Agnes of God" on the prompting of his longtime friend (Mr. Adam counts 25 years) Norman Jewison, director of the film.

"When I came eight weeks ago, I was told this was it, so I tried to make it work," Mr. Adam said. "They gave me five weeks for preparation. I've never in my whole experience of film worked in so little time."

During the five weeks, the Academy was transferred into a convincing convent.

All the windows were changed from long and rectangular to casement sash windows. A tin roof, and dormer windows which project from the sloping roof, were added.

"We did a lot of landscaping, put up split rail fencing (along the back of the property), planted cedar trees and made a convent court

yard," Mr. Adam said.

The long narrow gymnasium was changed into a chapel with roman arch stained glass windows and a lower curved ceiling crossed with thick dark wooden beams.

Even a bell tower with a cross piercing the sky was built.

Owner Drehters was reluctant to have the home's pillared porch removed, so Mr. Adam's crew covered it with weatherboarding.

"They (Ontario Heritage Foundation) were very good to us but they said we have to put it back the way it was," he said.

Although the film is set in the present day, Mr. Adam said the settling attempts to give the feeling the convent has stood for years, with many generations of nuns in its halls.

"In most of the pieces (we're) trying to give the feeling they've been here a long time," he said.

Set in Quebec, the story is, however, to be mostly filmed in Ontario. Three weeks worth of shooting took place in Montreal before the cast and crew moved to Rockwood last week. They were mostly shots of the court house, a doctor's apartment, an old people's home and an office.

After the convent shots, due to be completed Dec. 8, are done in Rockwood, the production moves to the Kleinburg Studios where cells and hallways scenes will be shot.

Of the Academy, Mr. Adam said it was rela-

tively easy to adapt the interior into a convent.

Some of the antiques, already in the home, have come in useful for the movie. Other furnishings were bought in Montreal where Mr. Adam said it was easier to find antiques.

"The owner of this place had an incredible collection of antiques," Mr. Adam said.

pointing to a wall crucifix in the wall niche in Mother Superior's office. It belonged to the late Joseph Drehters, the internationally renowned sculptor and father of Andreas Drehters.

Other local resources that came to be used for the film include local labor for doing the renovations to the Academy, and extras to

play old nuns.

The story relates the struggle between faith and reason by a young nun who gives birth. Meg Tilly, Canadian actress who starred in The Big Chill, plays the troubled nun.

Jane Fonda plays a psychiatrist who tries to help her with her psychological problems, and Anne Bancroft plays the Mother Superior.

has worked on many James Bond films including "The Spy Who Loved Me" and "Moonraker".

After spending the time and money to change the Academy into a convent, more money will have to be spent to fix it back into the home it was, Mr. Adam noted.

Films progressing

Herald Staff
When it comes to film making, Canada's come a long way, according to movie director Norman Jewison.

The Canadian director is working on the movie "Agnes of God" in nearby Rockwood, and took a few minutes break to talk to the press Saturday morning.

"Because of the increase in (film) productions in the last 10 years in Canada, it's possible to make professional crews who can become involved in feature film making," Mr. Jewison said.

"It would have been impossible to make a film here (in Canada) 10 years ago."

Apart from about a dozen people from the United States, the cast and crew of "Agnes of God" is made up entirely of Canadians. Mr. Jewison called them "very professional".

It was the story and the quality of the writing by New York's John Pielmeier which Mr. Jewison said attracted him to make a movie of the Broadway play "Agnes of God".

It was while he was working on the film "Best Friends" starring Carol Burnett and Alan Alda that Mr. Jewison caught the first production of the play in Boston. It starred Lee Remick.

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Real Storybook tale to Camelot

By ROBIN BAKWELL
Herald Staff

About 90 cast members and crew have been busy since the first day of school in September in preparation for Georgetown District High School's production of Camelot.

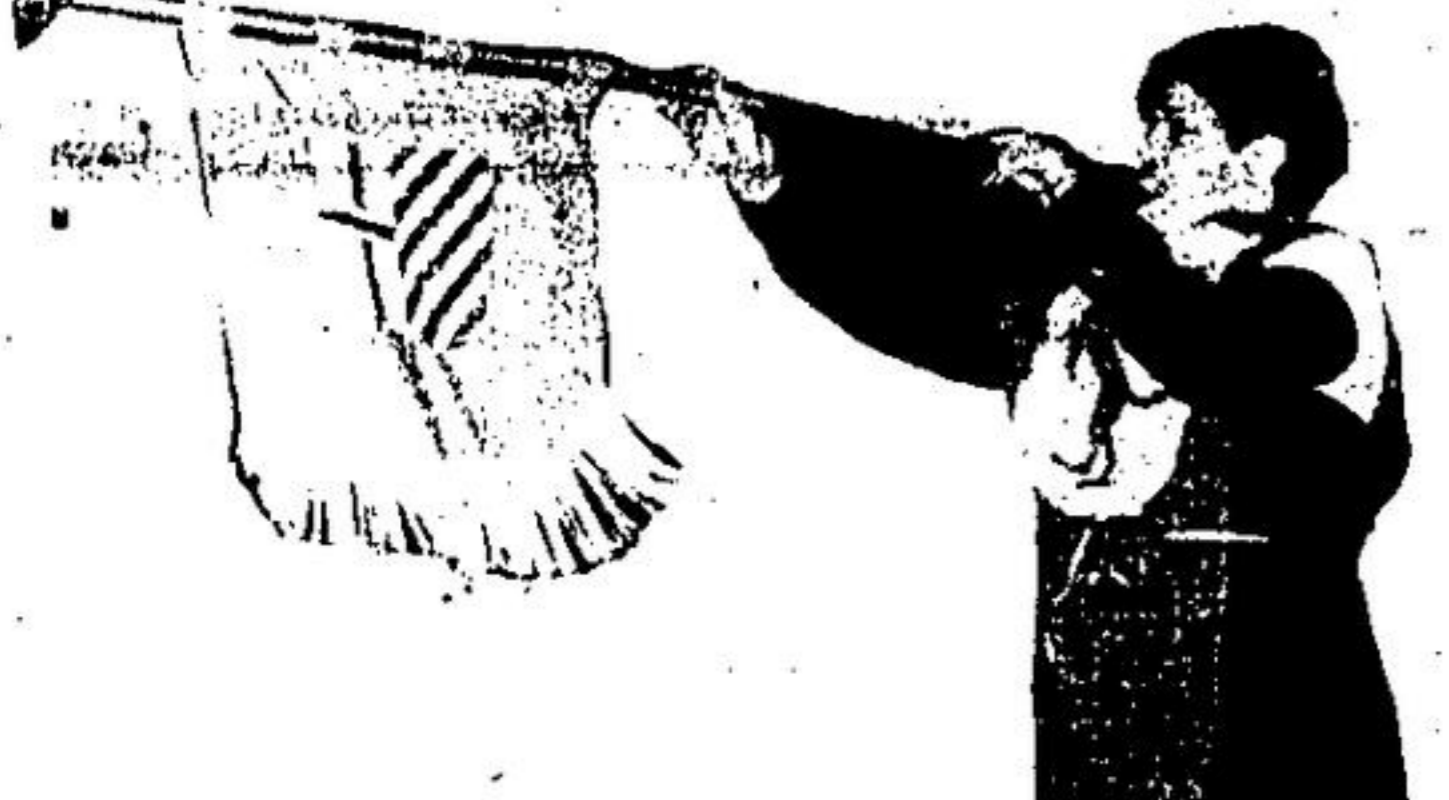
The musical, which is being produced by Ralph Ussel, musical director, and Yvonne Oldaker, artistic director, will be backed up by an eleven piece orchestra from GDHS.

There will be six male leads in the production and one female lead,

Students from all grades at GDHS have been working on such aspects as set design, costumes and lighting.

Armor for the knights has been made of paper mache with 22 pieces used to form one suit. The armor has been molded for each individual knight and Mrs. Oldaker called the task "a tremendous undertaking."

There'll even be some genuine medieval dances in the production which don't involve a lot of movement



Guinevere, with a 20 member female chorus and ten member male chorus.

Mrs. Oldaker described the musical as "real storybook stuff" which involves an eternal triangle between King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and Guinevere with "lots of knights banging around."

Opening with the marriage of King Arthur to Guinevere, the story unfolds when Sir Lancelot arrives on the scene forming a love triangle. An illegitimate son of King Arthur plots to take over the crown which eventually brings about the downfall of the 'Knights of the Round Table'.

because of the type of attire worn in those days.

Pellinore, a comic relief, will be complete with one of the more peculiar props, a husky type dog.

"There'll be a few other surprises, but I would like to keep them as surprises. Some of the scenes are not original and have been updated somewhat," Mrs. Oldaker said.

Showtime is Friday, Nov. 23, 7:30 p.m. at Georgetown District High School where tickets are available at \$5. Students (15 and under) and seniors can obtain tickets for \$3 and phone orders can be made at 877-0078.

Officer's on cue for 'Agnes of God'

Herald Staff

Roughly six or seven times an hour, Guelph OPP Constable Stan Balembe leaves the warmth of his cruiser to stop traffic on Highway 7 in Rockwood.

Parked just a few hundred yards from the Academy in which the film "Agnes of God" is being shot, Const. Balembe is stopping traffic to keep the sounds down during the filming.

"People are curious about what's going on," he said. "They ask, 'Have you seen Fonda yet?' She doesn't come in a limo, so you can't tell which car it is."

The movie stars Jane Fonda, Anne Bancroft and Meg Tilly.

"I wouldn't mind seeing them, but I'm not holding my breath," Const. Balembe said. "I

can see them on the screen."

It's his first time working on a film production, and Friday he even lunched with the crew and cast at a Rockwood

restaurant.

As rush hour approaches, traffic gets heavy, and Friday night it's even worse with people rushing to get home, he said.

Halton Hills Arts Council

Nimble fingered

By PAT HRETCHKA
Herald Columnist

I have always envied the truly creative. The nimble fingered types, who can create a work of art from a lump of clay or an empty canvas. My fingers are all thumbs. Don't get me wrong. I am not being falsely modest.

I do not aspire to the heights of Michelangelo and feel crushed because I don't measure up. My creations usually look like losers in a grade three contest.

After discovering my singular lack of talent in the fields of painting and sculpture, I turned to homier crafts. I cannot knit. This is a statement of fact. I have tried. Experts have tried to teach me. The results are best not spoken of.

Next on my list was crocheting. I was actually better at it than knitting. Perhaps it is because only one implement has to be maneuvered. In my case however better still wasn't very good. I did manage to crochet one four foot by four foot granny square. There's not much call for those.

Still looking for an artistic outlet I took up macrame. My rationale for trying it was, "Any fool can tie a knot". Well I managed to tie quite a few. It was while involved in macrame that I discovered the basic flaw in myself that led to my failure in knitting, crocheting and now alas macrame.

I have no sense of tension. I'm not getting psychological here. I simply am unable to keep a constant pressure on my materials which would lead to a uniform pattern.

Now that I knew my problem I had two choices. I could get down to work with renewed vigor and determination. Or I could take the coward's way out and quit. I quit.

Now I can safely admire the handwork of friends and acquaintances and if they say, "It was easy. You could make it. Here's the pattern," I can cast my eyes downward and say with a sigh, "I'd love to, but I have this condition that prevents me."

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