

Community news

Former Winnipegger's sci fi film gets local premiere

NCJW uses family connection for fundraiser

By MATT BELLAN

In 1988, former Winnipegger Jonathon Kay had a startling dream.

He was drowning in a Rocky Mountain lake, when an alien from outer space rescued him.

That dream inspired the professional filmmaker to write, direct and produce a science fiction adventure movie he called Starlight.

The visually dazzling movie had its Winnipeg premiere December 4 at the Convention Centre Theatre.

Kay and many of his relatives joined several hundred other spectators for the screening.

The event was a family affair in more ways than one.

Kay's sister-in-law, Glenna, wife of Winnipeg lawyer Michael Kay, is vice-president of the NCJW's Winnipeg Section and chair



Jonathon Kay stands next to his sister-in-law, Glenna Kay, vice-president NCJW Winnipeg Section, and (at far right) Sharon Allentuck, president, NCJW Winnipeg Section with a poster for Starlight at the film's Winnipeg premiere at the Convention Centre Theatre December 4.

of the organization's Just A Second "opportunity store". That family connection led to NCJW here organiz-

ing Starlight's Winnipeg premiere, as a fundraising event for the organization. "There was very little cost

for us," explained Sharon Allentuck, president of NCJW's Winnipeg Section. Jonathon Kay provided

Starlight for the screening for free. Air Canada gave him complimentary return airfare from his present home in Vancouver.

Tom and Joe, '92 CITI FM's regular morning deejays, served at no cost as Masters of Ceremonies through a Winnipeg friend in NCJW. And a wide variety of caterers donated "decadent desserts" for the post-screening reception in the theatre lobby.

Kay's 110-minute film won international distribution after he showed it at the Cannes Film Festival.

Set in Nelson, a picturesque town in mountainous southcentral B.C., it's a science fiction adventure about an alien (Rae Dawn Chong) from the constellation Pleiades who visits Earth to bring back "Kieran" (Billy Wirth), a

young man who's the son of an alien from Pleiades and an Earthling.

Country music star Willie Nelson plays "Grampa Lium", a mystical shaman who helps awaken Kieran's latent supernatural powers. Nelson also wrote and performed A Dream Come True, a song on the movie's soundtrack.

A version of the dream that Kay had while living in California eight years ago appears near the opening of the film.

"It's the near-death drowning sequence - Kieran's drowning in a Rocky Mountain lake and being rescued by an alien woman," Kay recalled in an interview.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

The movie has a lot of special effects, including what looks like a yellow tinting of the film in one scene depicting devastation of the environment. "Reincarnations" of Kieran and his alien rescuer as puffs of cloud also soar through a highly realistic "solar system", as they head back to the Pleiades.

"It took one and a half years to do the optical effects," Kay said. Instead of using "computer-generated effects", which can cost millions to produce, he turned to Film Optical Effects in Toronto. In some cases, images are superimposed; the company used laser technology and other devices for its special effects.

The son of Harold Kay and the late Polly Kay-Wyndham, he dedicated Starlight to his mother's memory.

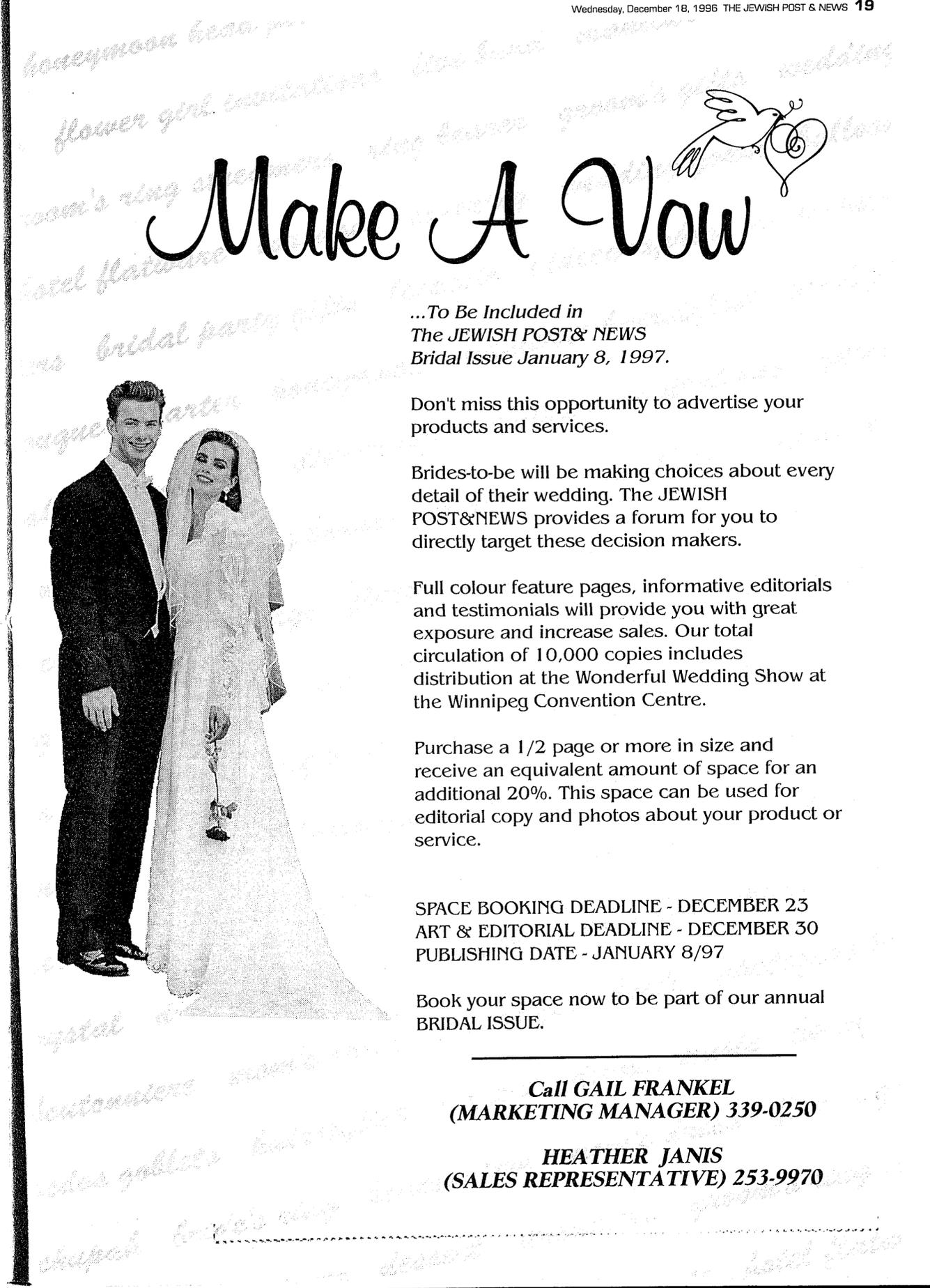
The movie reflects Kay's years of technical experience in film-making, and themes in the film like aboriginal religion reflect his interest in the occult.

He grew up in River Heights, and won two awards as a youth for still photography.

The quiet, but adventurous Kay left Winnipeg at 17 for a trip that included travels through Jordan, Syria, and other Middle Eastern countries, including Israel. He went on to India and other countries in the Far East that took him four years.

During that odyssey, after getting some jobs in the movie industry in Sydney, Australia, Kay made his first two films.

(Cont. on page 21. See "Jonathon Kay".)



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