Committee or Committed?

We would like to raise a question here. If people want more recent and commercial films, and these cost much more than older and non-commercial films, then maybe we should replace the Film Committee with a Video Committee which could be in charge of renting popular films and could show them on a big video screen. This might not be a better alternative but at least it would be cheaper, and some of the money that is being used in the present system could be spent elsewhere. We have many problems with this idea. While it would enable us to screen movies such as "Top Gun" and "Beverly Hills Cop 3: Jason Meets Freddie," we might end up giving short shrift to foreign films, independent films, and lesser-known classics of cinema. In addition, video is simply not as good as film. The experience and the image quality are just not the same. In any case, the films that we present are a good alternative to the type of films which one can see at local theaters. One look at the marquis de Sade and we'll be back at this apparent. You will never see outrageous independent films like "Desperately Living," or old favorites like "The Conformist at the mall.

Now, back to where we were. Once you submit your budget to the Planning Committee and they give you money, then you make adjustments by changing some films. Then you arrange, schedule, and order them by phone. Usually you can get a good deal when ordering a good number of films from the same company. After that, a written confirmation is required by these companies. Once that's settled, a schedule has to be written, sent to Central Services and distributed. The activities performed by both members are usually:

Choosing the films—this can be fun but also mindboggling because there are so many films you can choose from, then you have to keep in mind the criteria of quality and variety, and take into account the requests of other students. The budget and the schedule is usually fun to do.

Hiring projectionists and getting them to show up on time, or projecting the show, sometimes when they don't show up at all. This involves one member of the committee being present at every show. Also, since there is no permanent setup in Sottery, we have to be there getting the projector and our little speaker ready for the shows. Yes, the sound is bad, the projection too, but we all know that! We also have, to deal with any technical emergencies that may arise (like Sottery after a party—that's the hardest one, a projector breaking down, sound problems, etc.) which we have to solve quickly. We also have to deal with people who criticize us and complain about our selection of films which we never go to see any of them. We have ways of dealing with these folks that won't be discussed here. Let's say we've got a little deal with the food service people...

Then, the work splits in two. One person takes care of dealing with the distributors. This person has to call them, get a good deal, order the films, write and send confirmations, talk to them when a film is late or when they didn't get the film back, etc. This person also receives the films when they are mailed to us. This person is also in charge of paying the bills, the projectionists' salaries, other expenses, and keeping track of the budget.

The other person makes the fliers and posters and is in charge of advertising. They are working films and send the Bi-Weekly calendar and other sources. Last semester we miscalculated and ended up printing more than we needed. This semester, though, we are getting better and the fliers do actually tell more about the film than just the title. (A personal note from Francisco here—"Believe it or not, it takes a lot of time and work to make those posters, and they are posted around for a purpose besides covering the walls. Please don't destroy or remove my pretty fliers before the films are shown! Afterwards, they are yours to do with as you will!")

This person also makes sure the technical aspects are working fine and sends the films back after the showdates.

Now, passing on to a kind of report prepared from last semester's questionnaire:

36 people liked last semester's selection of films while 7 wanted us kicked out of the Film Committee.

68 people would go to an "American Classic" while 5 wouldn't.

71 would go to a foreign film while 9 wouldn't.

John Waters got 23 votes in favor, 5 against, 36 would give it a try and 12 didn't send enough schedule to participate. Let's see what answers we would get if we asked the same question again. In any case, about 120 people, in total, attended the film. About half and half for each show.

We feel that we've improved our advertising campaign although the general lack of attendance makes us wonder.
John Lepp was approved by 39 while 19 opposed him. 12 were indecisive. By the way, a personal apology from Francisco to John for misspelling his last name as Lapp. Sorry John!

Sound, projection and punctuality... we know about that.

Concerning the alternative projection space: 23 wanted Olin and 22 Preston while 15 said Bottery is just fine. A few people made a few realistic suggestions. The fact is that after seeing a film at Olin we came to the conclusion that the Olin auditorium is a terrible place for showing films. It is too impersonal, too cold. Also, the acoustics are lousy and the sound system is the worst, although the equipment there is gorgeous. The art history room on the other hand, is too small. The only other place which is suitable for showing films is Preston. This is because that's what it was made for. It's comfortable and well-equipped. It is the ideal place to show small and serious films and films in Cinemascope (ha!)

But you will have to convince Adolfas to let us use it on a regular basis. Anyway, after Bottery is the place of excellence for "party" films (that is, before the actual parties take place because after Saturday night the place becomes a disgusting mess). This is so because people can drink, eat, smoke or do whatever they want with cucumbers during a film. It's also good for a big crowd which we wish we had more of. We had a plan of showing "fun" films on Fridays in Bottery and "serious" films on Sundays in Preston. Unfortunately that is not possible at the moment and who knows what's going to happen once the new Student Center opens, whenever it may be.

As to the suggestions for films, there were a lot and a very disparate lot. Be it enough to say that the most popular ones were included in this semester's selection of films. Believe us. By the way, now that we are at it, you can start sending your suggestions for next semester's films to box 321 or 950. But do it before May 10 so there is enough time to choose the films taking your suggestions into consideration. If we don't get reelected (Ha! Perish the thought), we will forward your suggestions and the results to the new Film Committee. They will be more responsive as we were, but that would be your tough luck, now wouldn't it?

Finally, we do not include this long, long article, a few words. Being part of the film committee means a lot of work, frustrations and disappointments, many conflicts and criticisms, headaches and anxieties, and a for good moments. It's a dirty, low-paid job (just $100.00 per semester for each person) and the satisfactions are few but, as they say, someone's got to do it. You may wonder why anyone wants to do it? We can answer with the immortal line said by Clint Eastwood in the classic Dirty Harry: "I don't know, is really don't." Anyway, if you want to run for the position let us give you a couple of tips: be ready to fight for it, even to kill if necessary, get a responsible, hardworking partner who loves good movies, and to know people in the film department (especially Adolfas), find yourself a bunch of androids to project the films for you, and get ready to ask for a raise. If you win, then we'll see you guys worrying, posting fliers, and carrying projectors and film cases around. Ha, ha, ha... but firstly, you've got to ask yourself one question. "Do I feel lucky? Well, do you... punk?"

The "Peoples'" Film Committee