

Volunteer Spotlight Interview



JOAN CURTIS

Joan is a pillar within the FIN volunteer community. Everyone loves her! She's quick with a laugh and immediately makes people feel welcomed. Joan is very generous with both her time, volunteering all year round, and her food – often bringing in treats like jerk chicken or homemade salsa to the volunteer office. As an avid movie lover, Joan sees all sorts of films and her open-minded and adventurous attitude makes it hard to believe she's a shy person at heart. FIN is lucky to have such a dedicated volunteer!

Cydney: What is your “day job?” What do you do when you're not volunteering?

Joan: I'm retired! I was a sterilization technician, at the old Grace [Maternity Hospital] and then we moved over to the new Grace attached to the IWK... I loved what I did, we sterilized all the instruments and the bundles for the hospital, so you know you're taking care of the patient.

C: How long have you been volunteering with FIN Atlantic International Film Festival?

J: You know what, I don't know. I would say maybe about 7 – I never really put a date or a time... I'll say 7 [years]. I'm trying to think back to what made me start, which was the red carpet on Oxford Street. I said,

“What’s going on there?” and they said, “A red carpet!” and I said, “A red carpet in Halifax?” And the next year I signed up!

C: Why do you volunteer?

J: Because I am very – or I was – a very, very shy person. I cringed when I knew somebody of high standard talked to me, I didn’t know what to say, I cringed. It’s just to get me out of my shell, to meet people, to mingle, and to get rid of my shyness.

C: It seems to have worked!

J: I think so! When I go anywhere with my companion, [he says] “Is there ever a day when we go out and you not meet someone, you don’t know someone?” I think it worked out for me.

C: What part of FIN AIFF would you recommend to a newbie? Not a new volunteer, but someone who is new to Halifax and wants to go to the festival – what should they check out?

J: First I would recommend that they go through the book, get the schedule and go through the [program guide]. It would be best if they got a pass, so they can come and see what movies they want or as many movies as they want. And the people who bring the festival together are fantastic people to meet!

C: And what are you looking forward to this year?

J: Some GOOD MOVIES! Throughout the years I’ve been able to see some incredible films at the festival. My favourites were: The Dressmaker, The Handmaiden, Manchester By The Sea, and Personal Shopper. I’m going to be working anyway, but [this year] I’m looking for some unusual movies, and some that make me go, “Oohhh I’ve got to see that again!”

C: What is your favourite film or guilty pleasure film?

J: Pretty Woman or An Officer and A Gentleman. Or this one – [Terms of] Endearment?

C: What is your best festival memory?

J: Meeting Olympia Dukakis. She had a film here which was good, it [focused on two]women. I know it will come to my mind, but I can't tell you.... [Cloudburst!] Yes, Olympia Dukakis, meeting her was really, really nice.

C: She was premiering a film here or...?

J: She came in for, you know, after they film they have the talk, and as she was going in I said, "Hi Ms. Olympia, how are you?" and she shook my hand!

I knew she was coming so I had three postcards - Mahone Bay, Halifax, and somewhere else - and I gave them to her. I just said, "Enjoy Halifax, Nova Scotia!"

C: What's your favourite movie snack?

J: POPCORN!!