



Filmmaker Mitchell enjoys slower pace, people

Editor's note: Each issue, the Mountain Monthly features people of interest who are BICS (Born in Cloudcroft), TICs (Transplanted in Cloudcroft) and perhaps, once-in-a-while, even a WIC (Wannabe in Cloudcroft).

By Harry Hoge.

Max Mitchell has set up his studio in Karr Canyon. An award winning author, film editor and movie producer, Max chose New Mexico for his studio because life is much simpler than New York or LA, there is so much space, and because the people here ask, "How can I help?" instead of "What can you do for me?"

Max was born in a small town in Ontario, Canada. "Petrolia was less than 2,000, but there is an extravagant opera house and other refined buildings due to the oil barons."

"I visited New York City in my early 20s and fell in love with the city."

It took two years of scheming, but after being chosen one of 25 out of 1,000 applicants to attend Uta Hagen's school for actors, he moved to New York and never went back. (Uta Hagen lived a celebrated life as actress of stage,



screen and television and ultimate teacher. She was elected to the American Theater Hall of Fame in 1981 and received a Special Lifetime Achievement Tony Award in 1999.)

Max struggled to make it in New York, even establishing his own "off" Broadway theater—500 Theater Row, on 42nd Street. "I wrote and wrote and wrote, but nothing... After thirteen years I decided to go to LA."

He had opportunities in California. He shared a Career Manager with Robin Williams and Billy Crystal, but still "The Big Break"

eluded him. "I wrote and wrote and wrote only to watch big dollar films not make it. I decided to try it on my own."

Max is being a little modest here. He is a two time finalist in the prestigious Writers Film Project and received an Edward Albee Artist Fellowship.

"Get your Stuff," his first feature film for which he is writer, producer and director, is based on his award-winning play by the same name, which was honored with a production at the Ann White Theater in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"Nobody can live in LA unless you are young or rich," Mitchell said.

"A friend of a friend of a friend suggested I come to New Mexico." He did and fell in love with the area. "Albuquerque/Santa Fe film industry has been spoiled by success. They won't talk to a producer unless their project has a multi-million-dollar budget." Max truly believes that good films can be made for much less.

Max is editing two short films shot in Los Angeles and is writing the screenplay for his next feature film — "Horror in the Wind."

"Two scientist working on a pest control technique, invent an airborne drug that makes the world gay."

The early part of the film sets the premise that such a biogenetic result is feasible and then the fun begins. "Bigoted heterosexuals are now begotting homosexuals and they pass all kinds of oppressive anti-heterosexual legislation." Sounds like a riot.

Max and I talked about being "an overnight success." "I wrote 10 plays before I submitted my first one," he said. "Bette Midler said it took her 16 years to be an overnight success." I can identify with what she said.

I found Mr. Mitchell absolutely fascinating to talk to. Actually it was so much fun, my notes were not so good, because I was too busy enjoying the conversation.

Be on the lookout for Max. He is scouting for talent: writers, musicians, camera operators and other essential people that it takes to make a film. Comedy is his favorite style... "Even the absurd and ridiculous."

You might want to visit Max's website www.reVisionfilms.com at