

The spirits' go-between

In a room 'full of love,' moviemaker films medium channelling messages

Michael D. Reid, Times Colonist

Published: Tuesday, June 15, 2010

If the spirit moves you and you're an inquisitive filmmaker, why not make a documentary about it?

That's what inspired Krista Loughton after she met Jane Kennard at a public event at the University of Victoria last October. Cut to last Friday night at the Belfry Theatre where she found herself documenting the work of the local "go-between" -- a term Kennard prefers to psychic, medium or other widely used labels.

"I was blown away in a room full of love. It was amazing," says Loughton, 38. "There's no better way to learn about something than to make a film about it."

Footage captured during Dialogue With Spirit Guides: The Big Picture featured Kennard fielding questions from the audience and, with associate Joanna Pettit as facilitator, sharing wisdom and support from "spirit guides" she channelled.

It's for Loughton's documentary on Kennard and Circles Within Circles, a local group devoted to bringing the healing perspective of spirit guides into the physical world. It's an ideal fit, since healing is a common theme in Loughton's films such as *Our Hero*, her short on Rev. Al Tysick, and her upcoming labour of love challenging perceptions about homelessness.

"It's not a film I'd make for just anyone besides Jane at this point in my life," Loughton says.

Quoting a lyric from Lou Reed's *Last Great American Whale* -- "Don't believe half of what you see, and none of what you hear" -- Loughton says she can empathize with Kennard based on some reactions she has been getting.

"Most commonly it's a sideways glance, or the brow furrows and the shoulders move away from me," she says. "They either laugh in your face or they are engaged.

There's no middle ground." Noting the role of a documentary filmmaker is to be objective, Loughton says the voices of skeptics won't be ignored.

Even some of her crew members had a hard time believing Kennard could communicate with spirit guides.

"We're going to address that for sure," Loughton says. "That's what has caused Jane not to want to be in the public eye."

How does this shy, self-described "very ordinary person" feel about being the focus of a movie? "I don't like it," she says candidly. "But I love Krista. She's a doll. It's a bit strange, but I do want the word out." She says she hopes more people will realize that what she does is not some kind of game. "I really do want to help. I want the world out there to lighten up your life, to bring in the light," says Kennard, who discovered she had psychic abilities as a child.

Kennard describes herself as a human plug. "I connect the energy. I think everyone has this ability. You don't need an interim person," she says. "I just do what I do."

She says she was distressed by how much pain there was at the Belfry. "I felt sad. I wanted to cry," says Kennard, who was later "unnerved" by footage Loughton sent her.

"It's a very strange thing when words are coming out of your mouth and you have no memory of it," she says. "I guess it's like hypnosis, when someone says, 'I can't believe I thought I was a chicken.' "

Loughton says her objective is to make a documentary that truthfully chronicles Kennard's fascinating journey. "It's been very difficult for her and caused her a lot of pain to have this gift," she says. "I want to give her an opportunity to share that, and alleviate some of that pain."