



## FAQs about *Films for Two*, *The Hot Pink Pen*, WITASWAN, and *Penny's Picks: 50 Movies by Women Filmmakers 2002-2011*

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*Through our support for women filmmakers, we can redefine  
what consumers everywhere get to see on their movie screens.*

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**What is Films for Two (FF2)?** The films we recommend are, by definition, films for TWO. Our goal is to help you make your own choices about what to watch together. We tell you what we've already seen and found worthwhile. The films we recommend are not necessarily romantic or action-packed, although some of them are. They are films for adults that we believe both men and women will find worthy of their time and attention.

**Who are the hosts of FF2?** Jan Lisa Huttner and Rich Miller are a hard-working "baby-boomer" couple, with great educations, and all the usual work and family obligations. Whenever they have "free time" together, they often spend it watching movies (in theaters, on video, or on cable).

**Jan** was born and raised in northern New Jersey, where *Million Dollar Movie*, *The Late Show*, and *The Late Late Show II* were daily television staples. While other Dads watched sports, Jan and her Dad snuggled up to historical epics and Roman spectacles featured on *Picture for a Sunday Afternoon*.

By early adolescence, Jan was bluffing her way into Manhattan movie theaters to see documentaries, indies, and foreign films.

Jan has a BA from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland (the "Great Books" school), and Masters degrees in Psychology from Harvard University and the University of Chicago. After working for more than 20 years as a computer consultant serving the healthcare industry, Jan now devotes herself full-time to *Films for Two*. She is an award-winning author/activist who writes regular columns as well as freelance articles for multiple print and internet outlets.

Her professional memberships include: Association for Women Journalists (AWJ), Chicago Film Critics Association (CFCA), Illinois Woman's Press Association/National Federation of Press Women (IWPA/NFPW), Journalism & Women Symposium (JAWS), Women Film Critics Circle (WFCC), and Women in Film/Chicago (WIF/Chicago).

**Rich's** Dad was a Foreign Service officer, so Rich traveled the world as a kid. He caught the movie bug when he arrived at Oberlin College in Ohio, where he graduated with high honors in Philosophy.

He spent six years in the Marine Corps Reserve, and attended graduate school at the University of Chicago, earning a PhD in Philosophy. Rich later made a career switch to Accounting. He completed an MBA and acquired a CPA while moving up the ladder at the University of Chicago Medical Center, where he is currently the Vice President of Finance.

**Jan and Rich met at the University Chicago, and it wasn't long before they became a movie-going married couple - who didn't always agree on which movies to see!** As Jan puts it,

*We enjoyed watching movies together, and like many couples we often made our choices based on reviews. But choosing the movie was only one part of the experience. The second part was going somewhere afterwards to eat and argue. And we began to notice that our opinions about the plot, the characters, the script, and even the costumes and cinematography often differed, and it was fun to hash all this out! At some point, people started asking us for recommendations, so one thing lead to another and here we are.*

**So who writes the reviews for FF2?** Jan and Rich call them "haikus" because they're short (approximately 50 words each, like little Japanese poems). Every *FF2 Haiku* represents the male and female, viewpoints from the perspectives of both Jan and Rich. Remember: *Films for Two* is "The Online Guide for **Busy** Couples."

**What is a Twozie?** Every year, Jan and Rich announce their individual choices for "Best Films" - and when films appear on both lists, they receive an honorary cyberaward from FF2 called a "Twozie." Approximately 30% of the films on

each list receive a "Twozie" every year.

**What is FF2 Media?** FF2 Media is the "umbrella" covering the *Films for Two* database, as well as Jan's two Blogs (*The Hot Pink Pen* and *Second City Tzivi*). FF2 Media, as a publishing imprimatur, just launched its first book (*Penny's Picks: 50 Movies by Women Filmmakers 2002-2011*). FF2 Media also plans to release audio podcasts and video content in the near future.

**Who is Penny?** "Penny" is Jan Lisa Huttner, a Chicago-based film critic and owner with Rich Miller of FF2 and FF2 Media. She is also the creative force behind WITASWAN and co-founder of International SWAN Day. The acronym WITASWAN, pronounced "wit-uh-swan," stands for **Women in the Audience Supporting Women Artists Now!**

**Why does Jan use the name Penny?** A "Pen" is a female swan. (The female is a pen; the male is a cob.) Jan realized that if she used the term "pen" for herself, then her blog could carry the tag line "Because the Pen is Mightier than the Sword." That tickled her funny bone, and lead her to create her Penny blog, *The Hot Pink Pen*, as an adjunct to FF2. As Jan puts it, *Penny is my "feminist voice." Penny speaks with a voice that's not appropriate for FF2.*

**In her book, why does Penny focus on women filmmakers?**

Since most movie critics are men, moviegoers are not getting the full story of what is available - and when a movie made by a

*Continued...*



**Rich Miller**



**Jan Lisa Huttner**

woman is reviewed, moviegoers only get the male critic's side of the story. Despite the strides made by the feminist movement, there are almost no films by women filmmakers in the multiplex – and it's NOT because women don't make enough movies. Women make lots of movies, and some of them are really good. The problem is, most people don't know about them.

**Why "Pink?"** As a child, Jan was a tomboy who NEVER wore pink. In her own words, *"As an adult, I realize that I happen to look good in pink. I began to fully embrace my "pinkitude" the first time I saw Yentl. Thanks to Barbra Streisand, I now understand: I refuse to cut out my heart just because I want to use my mind!"*

**Why does *The Hot Pink Pen* include a section called "Rants?"** Penny often doesn't agree with other critics' assessments of films, especially films made by women (such as the recent example *I Don't Know How She Does It*) or films made by men about women (such as the recent example *The Help*). On her blog, Penny rants (and sometimes raves) about comments made by some of her fellow film critics (as well as other journalists) – and invites them to fire back on *The Hot Pink Pen*, or to take a shot at her reviews on blogs of their own.

**What are WITASWAN and International SWAN Day?** Jan has been very active in the American Association of University Women (AAUW) for more than two decades, and has served in leadership roles on the state and local level, so the members of AAUW-IL were very much aware of Jan's intense interest in the environment for women filmmakers. In 2003, AAUW-IL Program Vice President Linda Henning Cohen asked her to present a workshop at its Spring Convention.

The following is the history of WITASWAN and International SWAN Day as chronicled in the Appendix to *Penny's Picks: 50 Movies by Women Filmmakers 2002-2011*:

### **10 Years in the Pond:**

#### **From Lonely Ducklings to a Bevy of Swans**

2002: Sparks ignited on the morning of June 2, 2002 when Chicago writer Jan Lisa Huttner (longtime member of the American Association of University Women) read an article in the Sunday *New York Times* about the "Celluloid Ceiling." The article, quoting statistics by Communications Professor Martha Lauzen of San Diego State University, compelled Huttner to take action. She wrote a letter to the *Times*, they published it, and a new cause took root.

2003: Working with Program Vice President Linda Henning Cohen, Huttner presented a workshop at the AAUW-Illinois Spring Convention. 42 people attended (including Penny Parish, Donna Sproston, and other women essential to the SWAN story), and as they watched *A Jury of Her Peers* together, the power of the film, combined with the subsequent discussion with filmmaker Sally Heckel, resonated with all who were there that day. AAUW-Illinois branches began inviting Huttner to come speak.

2004: At the summer planning meeting, President Kim Benziger and her AAUW-Illinois Board asked Huttner to provide updates for the Fall District Conferences, so "the project" needed a name. After weeks of brainstorming with input from more than two dozen AAUW-Illinois members, everyone agreed: We were **"Women in the Audience Supporting Women Artists Now!"** The WITASWAN rollout began at Illinois Valley Community College on October 2, 2004.

2005: Members of AAUW-Illinois (in collaboration with Chicago Area Women's History Council, Illinois Woman's Press Association and Women in the Director's Chair) invited filmmaker Sally Heckel back for a Silver Anniversary screening of *A Jury of Her Peers* at the Chicago Cultural Center on March 19, 2005 (timed to Women's History Month).

2006: Members of AAUW-Illinois (in collaboration with Illinois Woman's Press Association and the Australian Consulate-General Chicago) invited filmmaker Sarah Watt to screen her award-winning film *Look Both Ways* on March 18, 2006 (thus reinforcing Chicago's annual WITASWAN program tradition).

2007: In March, four Illinois organizations (Association for Women Journalists-Chicago, Illinois Woman's Press Association, International Women Associates, and Women in Film/Chicago) collaborated with AAUW-Illinois on the third annual WITASWAN program. The special guest was Felicia Middlebrooks, director of *Somebody's Child: The Redemption of Rwanda*.

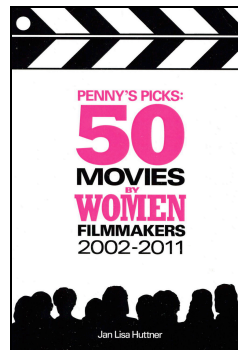
2007: In April, AAUW-Illinois Program Vice President Lois Strom invited Martha Richards (Founder and Executive Director of WomenArts aka The Fund for Women Artists) to speak at Spring Convention about issues confronting women in the arts generally (beyond Huttner's film niche). Driving back to Chicago afterwards, Richards suggested broadening the WITASWAN mission to support for all women artists in every medium and Huttner immediately agreed.

2008: The first International SWAN Day was celebrated all around the world on Saturday, March 29. It was such a success that Richards and Huttner agreed to make it an annual event (to be held on the last Saturday of every March). The AAUW-Illinois Board issued a proclamation recognizing Huttner "for her creativity and her foresight."

2009: Women artists began working with a wide variety of grassroots organizers to plan new SWAN Day events. WomenArts held a party introducing SWAN Day at the Sundance Film Festival. Chilean novelist Isabel Allende made an inspiring SWAN Day video. The League of Professional Theatre Women organized a SWAN Day panel at Lincoln Center Library in Manhattan, and Chicago celebrated with special guest Nancy Savoca (winner of a Sundance Grand Jury Prize).

2010: Over 170 public events (plus many private events) were posted on WomenArts' online SWAN Day tracking calendar. In New York, Richards organized a sold-out panel discussion featuring feminist arts activists such as Elizabeth Sackler (Founder of the Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum) and Carol Jenkins (Founding President of the Women's Media Center). In Chicago, six collaborating organizations welcomed Eileen Douglas for a screening of *My Grandfather's House*.

2011: In only four years, WomenArts has provided encouragement and collateral materials for over 700 International SWAN Day events all around the world including Argentina, Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Philippines, Romania, Uruguay, Wales/U.K., and, of course, the USA.



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