

GUEST EDITORIAL

Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life The Movie

To: Admirers of Ayn Rand
From: Michael S. Berliner, Executive Director
The Ayn Rand Institute
Re: The Ayn Rand documentary movie

The documentary *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* begins its national release in mid-February, when it will open in Los Angeles and New York City. If successful in those two cities, distribution across the United States and Canada will immediately follow.

This is a cultural event of potential major importance, for it could raise public awareness of Ayn Rand and her ideas to a much higher plateau. The content of the film is also of great importance, for the film provides a much-needed valid and inspiring portrait of Ayn Rand.

The movie is a privately financed, commercial undertaking, rather than a project of the Ayn Rand Institute. If successful, however, it can make a significant contribution to ARI and its goals. Consequently, we have supported the project from the beginning and will continue to do so. The Ayn Rand Archives and our knowledge about Ayn Rand's life provided important historical background during the writing of the film. But ARI's involvement did not end with research. We will be actively engaged in getting out the crowd. In January we will distribute a major press release to at least 500 newspapers, magazines and radio/TV talk shows. We hope to finance newspaper advertisements in addition to those planned by the distributor. We will organize volunteers to distribute advertising for the film

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in appropriate venues in their communities. High school teachers whose students participate in the essay contests will be encouraged to attend with their students. College club members will be encouraged to promote the film on their campuses.

I hope you will see the film at your earliest convenience, first for the enjoyment and emotional fuel but also because high attendance at the beginning is necessary for ever-wider distribution throughout the country. If you are able to throw a stone in the pond now, it may ripple through the culture for some time. The movie business is such that it is very difficult for a documentary to get produced and then purchased by a distributor. *Sense of Life* has passed those two hurdles. The next major hurdle is

keeping it in theaters long enough to gain wider distribution and thus have an impact on the public. Theater

owners are leery of the commercial viability of documentaries and are apt to drop them if they don't attract large audiences in the first few days.

To ensure success of the film, there must be many sold-out screenings in the opening week wherever it plays. Only then will theater owners be convinced to keep the film long enough for it to reach a public which may not know about it in time. To paraphrase the motto of Chicago voting: I hope you will go early and often, and bring your friends and relatives. The reaction of non-Objectivist audiences at film festivals has been extremely positive. To check dates and locations for future screenings, visit the ARI Web site (www.aynrand.org).

— Michael S. Berliner