



Above: ACTRA's National President Thor Bishopric with Angela Vermeir and Louise Renault at ACTRA Maritimes' 2002 AGM.

Left: Members Gary Levert, David Renton and Stacy Smith outside Province House in Halifax protesting the provincial government's dismantling of the Nova Scotia Arts Council.

MARITIMES

It has been a turbulent few months for ACTRA Maritimes. The surprising announcement that **Cochran Entertainment** had gone into receivership was a tremendous blow to the industry. Cochran was a much-respected member of the original 'Big Five' – the companies that created the Nova Scotian film industry. Cochran series like **Pit Pony** and **Theodore Tugboat** have showcased Maritimes creativity all over the planet.

Add to this the news that one of the local soundstages has been sold to a courier company and the Nova Scotian Provincial government's hamm-fisted demolition of the **Nova Scotia Arts Council** and you can be excused for considering an application to barber college.

However, not all is bleak. We are pleased to welcome **Pam Stevenson** of PEI to Branch Council. For the first time in recent memory, our council has representatives from all three Maritimes provinces. Another first is the election of our

National Councillor **Jamie Bradley** to the post of National Treasurer. It has been a very long time since a resident Maritimer sat as an officer of ACTRA and we wish Jamie the very best with his daunting task.

And we have been blessed with some very exciting projects of late – made all the more exciting because they're Canadian. **Tom Fitzgerald's** powerful **The Event** and **Marion Bridge** – written by national treasure **Daniel MacIvor** – wrapped earlier this year. Strong performances by our local members anchor both of these wonderful scripts.

And so we gird our loins for the busy season. While it appears that we won't be playing host to the likes of **Harrison Ford** this year, we're thrilled to see our old friends from **Made In Canada** returning, as well as the gang from **Trailer Park Boys** and Her Excellency **Bette MacDonald** in her new series **Rideau Hall**. We've been to the valley this year... it's time for the peaks!

– Gary Vermeir
Branch Representative, ACTRA Maritimes

MONTREAL

The big news at ACTRA Montreal is that our offices have been renovated and office space expanded to make room for our previously cramped staff. While it was painful to get there, it was a necessary transition, and the new boardroom and

ACTRA staff Carmy Renda at our newly renovated offices in Montreal.



reception area look great! Members will soon be able to take advantage of a performer's gym, currently under construction in the former **Access-Cash** space next door to ACTRA. The space should be available for use sometime soon. It will feature a sizeable space for workshops as well as audio-visual equipment for making demos and audition tapes.

We're thrilled at the publication of ACTRA's **Stage Mom Survival Guide** by **Robyne Ropell-Baruchel**, an ACTRA-Montreal initiative which was a long time in the making. The guide offers practical advice to stage parents in the film and television industry in Canada. The little red book with the big ideas looks fantastic and does us proud. Our staff has also recently completed an informative pamphlet concerning performers' rights with respect to nudity in film and television production.

Production is returning to Montreal slowly but surely. Our intrepid Branch Rep, **Raymond**, observes that the tendency throughout the year is for a lot of U.S.-based productions to shoot here in the first six months, and then once **Telefilm** hands down their funding decisions, we should see more Canadian projects in the second half of the year. "Should" is the operative word here. We are all becoming painfully aware of the decline of indigenous production in recent years and ACTRA Montreal has taken steps to raise awareness among the membership, as with the recent, well-attended **Spotlight Series on Canadian Culture** with **R.H. Thomson**.

On behalf of Council, staff and all our members, we wish our colleagues across the country a happy and prosperous summer!

– *Matt Holland*
President, ACTRA Montreal

ACTRA staff Daintry Dalton in our new boardroom.



MONTREAL

OTTAWA

I am sad to say that the big news from ACTRA Ottawa is that we have lost our very capable and talented branch representative. **Nanci Morrison's** last day was May 8. The branch will certainly miss Nanci, whose dedication and knowledge helped to further cement the consolidation of the jurisdiction.

ACTRA is pleased to announce that **Chris Cornish** has been chosen as the new Branch Representative. Chris brings a wealth of organizational and communications experience to the job. Having worked for a Member of Parliament for the past five years, Chris' experience will also help support ACTRA's lobbying and public policy work at the federal level. Chris is expected to start his new duties towards the end of the summer.

In the interim, Raymond and **Shannon Joutel** from the Montreal Branch continue to provide us with invaluable assistance.

As to production in Ottawa, the animation industry continues to thrive with the announcement of new seasons for a number of productions, and there has been a rise in

industrial work over the past few months. All of these have provided opportunities for our members.

– *Lorraine Ansell*
President,
ACTRA Ottawa



TORONTO

Our focus on three priority projects has been keeping us very busy. We're building work opportunities, driving to reduce non-union production, and promoting membership involvement in the union.

Our membership involvement initiative



Keynote conference speaker Paul Gross.

is proving to be a huge success. The June 21st Members' Conference, **Making Connections With Your Art and Your Industry**, was a full and enjoyable day of professional panels, workshops and a call to action. Panelists included some of our finest actors: **Gordon Pinsent, Wendy Crewson, Sonja Smits, Steve Smith, Harvey Atkin, Tim Progosh** and **Diane Flacks**. In particular, **Paul Gross** gave an inspiring address urging concerted action on Canadian content.

Our political action task force is giving actors a stronger voice by letting politicians know what we want. We are fighting to get more Canadian performers in more Canadian films. In short, Canadianizing the Canadian film industry.

Our new **Toronto Indie Production** project, (TIP) has met with enormous enthusiasm from our members and emerging producers. With TIP, ACTRA Toronto affirms our members' dedication to further the development of Canadian media arts and Canadian culture in general.

Working with other guilds and organizations, we're promoting our diversity initiative. We sponsored the **ReelWorld Film Festival** and the **Innoversity Creative Summit** to promote diversity in the entertainment community.

We are currently focused on organizing non-union commercial production. We have identified the worst offenders and are implementing tactics that will make their non-union work unattractive.



Moderator Philip Akin and panelist Sonja Smits at ACTRA Toronto Performers members' conference.

TORONTO

In June, we held our **Child Advocacy** meeting for parents of child performers to explain how the new **National Commercial Agreement** applies to them. We were pleased to distribute ACTRA's **Stage Mom Survival Guide** at the meeting.

Above all, we remain firm in our advocacy of rights and respect for the working actor in our cultural industries.

– *Richard Hardacre*
President, ACTRA Toronto Performers

MANITOBA

Big bang theory has provided some interesting clues about the nature of our beginning. **Nostradamus** has predicted the end. But who could have foreseen the middle? And yet the “middle” is exactly where ACTRA Manitoba members find themselves. We seem to be in the middle of a steady stream of movie production in our province.

2002 already has six movies in the can and as this is being written one is still shooting, one is casting and two are prepping. ACTRA members both from Manitoba and across Canada are finding work here.

ACTRA Manitoba has once again received funding from the province.

Right, Forefront to back: Brian Richardson and B. Pat Burns,

Below: Lionel Moore, Brian Richardson, Mariam Bernstein, and Wayne Nicklas.

MANITOBA



This funding of more than \$30,000 will allow our branch to present a series of professional development workshops at costs that our members can afford. We plan a series of four workshops and the first of these will see the return of **Roland Parliament** from Toronto. Last year he provided popular voice-over workshops in Winnipeg and this summer he will be returning to help us produce demo CD's. Our plan is to use these demos as tools in our attempt to break into the non-union voice-over market in Winnipeg. There will also be audition, scene-study and master class workshops at later dates in 2002-2003.

Our branch has recently purchased a new colour printer and we will be using this to provide significant savings on the cost of printing our newsletter.

Life is good in our industry in the most central of all Canadian provinces. We are working and the weather is hot.

– *Wayne Nicklas*
President, ACTRA Manitoba

SASKATCHEWAN

From Saskatchewan's coldest spring has sprung the fruits of our branch's winter initiatives.

The **ACTRA Sask Audition Centre** has been used for casting commercials, dramas and for member auditions. This service for members and members-in-waiting will help Sask performers stand out on the audition tape. We've created a kind of hiring hall that makes joining ACTRA look even more inviting, and our members have a comfortable, nicely equipped space to be their best at auditions.

The Sask Talent Development Fund, which receives and administers training fees paid through the tax credit, is likely to raise over \$100,000 this year. This will give us even more resources to sponsor professional development.

Council Members **Kent Allen** and **Sean Hoy** have drawn as many as 50 participants to their Saskatoon **Gym Night** training sessions.



Cal Fehr

Saskatoon-based actor Kenneth Charlette stars as David in the pre-school series **Prairie Berry Pie**, set to broadcast in Saskatchewan on SCN and nationally on APTN.

The evenings usually combine guest talks and acting tips. Councillor **Dan Beavis** is also developing an audition centre at his Saskatoon watering hole **O'Shea's Pub**.

Touring the new **Saskatchewan Soundstage** is awe inspiring. It's quite amazing to stand in the middle of an 18,000-square-foot room that looks like it could stage a battle. There are two other stages almost as large. The fourth smaller stage is already home to the kids' show **Prairie Berry Pie** starring council member **Kenneth Charlette** along with Kent Allen and **Tom Rooney**.

Perhaps the most profound development this year has been the passing of **Status of the Artist** legislation in Saskatchewan. We are the first province to have its own *Status of the Artist* law since the federal legislation was introduced in the early 1990s. (Quebec passed its law in the mid-1980s). Our new 'enabling legislation' will lead to better collective bargaining regulations for freelancers and broader access to government employment programs for all artists.

The only bad news in all this is last year's poor production level. Our branch has been forced to cut our single staff person to a four-day week. Here's hoping production increases and perhaps our branch partners will help.

– *Chris Scott*
President,
ACTRA Saskatchewan



EDMONTON

Thor Bishopric attended our AGM April 30th. We can't recall the last time a National President was in Edmonton. Also in attendance were Calgary President **Randy Birch**, National Organizer **Don Dudar** and **Jane Nelson** from **ACTRA Fraternal**. Thanks to one and all for making the trip.

Edmonton is still suffering from the loss of a number of key **IATSE** personnel when the **Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation** (AMPDC) and its funding program ceased to exist. Our reduced IATSE component results in the ability to crew only one major production at a time. Add to that the fact that **CanWest Global** has the soundstage up for sale... well... The good news, however, is that the government has renewed its commitment to the **Alberta Film Development Program** and increased the ceiling for individual projects. **The Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association** (AMPIA) organized a reception at the **Royal Glenora** in Edmonton on May 8th that set the stage for the Alberta unions and 19 MLAs to meet and discuss the state of the film industry in this province – in particular the service sector. It was a very positive evening and we thank the organizers for the opportunity to attend.

In the meantime, we are busy with the usual smaller productions and **Mentors** (the series) began principal in July. We look forward to positive results from the efforts of Don Dudar and his initiative to educate and introduce Alberta labour organizations to ACTRA.

– Sharon Killey
Branch Representative,
ACTRA Edmonton

CALGARY

Our Annual General Meeting was held on April 29th with a fantastic turnout of 110 Full members, Apprentices and ACTRA Extras. I would like to thank National President **Thor Bishopric**, National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell**, and **Robert Underwood** and **Jane Nelson** from **ACTRA Fraternal** for taking the time to impart their important messages to our branch, as well as for entertaining our questions.

Calgary Branch Council recently held an intense weekend meeting in order to prepare our branch for the upcoming



Janet Kidder is Marina DiLuzio, Chris William Martin is Tom Stone, and Stuart Margolin is Jack Welsh in *Tom Stone*.

production season. We have come up with a plan that calls upon our local members to get involved in committees. These committees will devise and recommend strategies to the Branch Council to improve and solidify ACTRA's position within the film industry and the community in general. This strategy was shared with our members at the AGM – we have already witnessed much support as indicated by the number of members signing up for committees and contributing ideas.

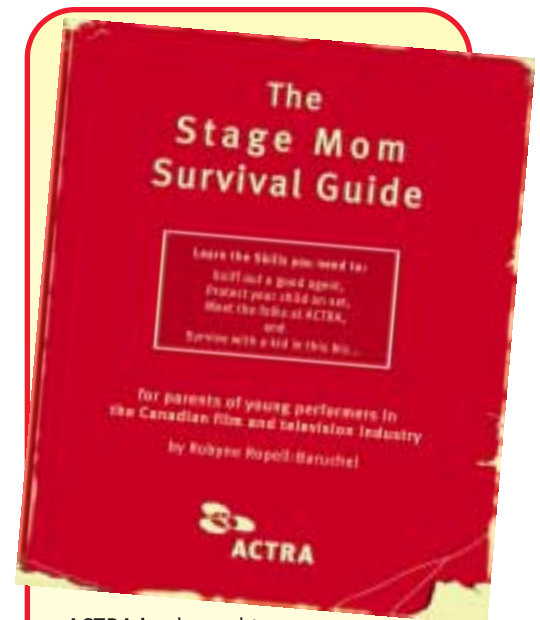
Already, considerable work has been done by the **Bylaws Committee**, which has laboured for months to modernize our branch bylaws to bring them more into line with the national bylaws and constitution. Also, the **Professional Development Committee** organized a master class with director **Randy Bradshaw** and will have many more exciting programs to offer in the future.

After relatively unimpressive production levels last year, we are excited to see that production in Calgary has picked up over the past couple months. Although *El Niño* is certainly doing its best to impede our progress, Calgary production has been steady throughout the summer and hopefully into the fall.

The television series, **Tom Stone**, is shooting in Calgary this summer. We look forward to another entertaining season of the CBC series starring some of our homegrown talent.



– Randy Birch,
President,
ACTRA Calgary



ACTRA is pleased to announce the publication of **The Stage Mom Survival Guide** for parents of young performers in the Canadian film and television industry, by **Robyne Ropell-Baruchel**.

This 100-page book is filled with information for young performers and their parents, including:

- the basics of the audition process
- the intricacies of the Independent Production Agreement
- special rules for minors and The Minor's Trust

The guide is free to ACTRA members (under 18), and is \$15 (incl. GST) for non-members.

The **Stage Mom Survival Guide** is available at ACTRA branches across Canada or call 1-800-387-3516 for more info.