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CHOOSE A ROLE

MEMBER INDUSTRY SITESEER

JUMP TO

YOU ARE IN: ACTRA NATIONAL

ACTRA TOOLS

home site map glossary industry links contact

ROLLOVER A TITLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH.

FACE TO FACE ONLINE

THE ACTRA PLAN

ACTRA BRANCHES

ACTRA PRS

ACTRA's five year
strategic business plan -
our roadway to the future

The ACTRA Plan

What's Inside

 **BACK**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Birthday... ACTRA



April 2, 2003 – ACTRA marks its 60th anniversary in 2003 – celebrating 60 years of great Canadian performances, 60 years contributing to and fighting for Canadian culture and 60 years of advances in protecting performers. All members should be very proud of our organization's tenacity and grateful to those members who came before us and ensured ACTRA's success.

In February, ACTRA Toronto kicked off our 60th in style by presenting three ACTRA Awards at a reception at the Royal Ontario Museum. The ACTRA Awards were the Canadian industry awards, initiated in 1972, and awarded annually by ACTRA until 1986, when the Gemini Awards for Canadian television began. For some years now, we have yearned to have awards again – awards that centre on performers and performance – and our 60th seemed the perfect opportunity. Starting small seemed reasonable – our 1972 event had just three awards – so we decided to re-introduce the ACTRA Award in our branches. In 2003, we'll be presenting ACTRA Awards from our branches in Newfoundland/Labrador, Maritimes, Montreal, Manitoba, and in conjunction with awards already presented in British Columbia.

Toronto honoured Gordon Pinsent with an ACTRA 'Award of Excellence,' and presented two ACTRA Awards for Outstanding Performance to Kristen Thomson and Shawn Doyle.

We'll also be celebrating our 60th at the Banff Television Festival (June), at the Atlantic Film Festival (September), at the Canadian Consulate in Los Angeles (October), with a reception in Ottawa, and with a commemorative issue of InterACTRA this fall.

On another celebratory note, thank you to our membership for strengthening ACTRA's financial situation. In January, members ratified a constitutional referendum calling for an increase in members' dues and an ACTRA Performers' Rights Society service charge. It's a difficult decision to ask for more from actors – artists whose income is meagre and uncertain. But ACTRA can't do its job fighting on behalf of our members if our resources are dwindling. Your decision to strengthen ACTRA means we can remain focused and effective in our efforts. The additional resources will be directed toward core activities such as the fight for Canadian production, bargaining, and the continued collection of Use Fees through ACTRA PRS.

At the end of March, we commenced negotiations on our Independent Production Agreement (IPA). Sixty percent of ACTRA member income is generated under the IPA – it's by far our most important agreement. As always, we expect negotiations to be difficult – fighting hard for improvements, protecting existing gains, while assuring everyone from here to Hollywood that we too want to maintain stability in our industry.

And on one final celebratory note, National Councillor Maria Bircher and I are beaming with pride over another birthday – that of our daughter **Teale Miranda Bishopric**. Teale arrived at St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal on February 16th at 10:26 p.m. She was born in perfect health. The blessing of our daughter's birth will forever ensure that 2003, the year of ACTRA's 60th anniversary holds a special place in our hearts.



Thor Bishopric

