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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Stepping up our efforts



October 2004 - The summer months were very busy at ACTRA. On one front we were cutting our way through the crowd to get culture on the election agenda and on the other we were battling it out with producers to secure a new National Commercial Agreement and winning significant gains for performers.

I am now looking forward to an eventful fall where we'll continue to fight for our industry, both domestically and internationally. ACTRA helped to put culture on the map during the election, now we'll move ahead and make sure it's on the agenda of the next Parliament. A minority Liberal government brings a whole new dynamic to Ottawa, and with it a whole new realm of possibilities. Our efforts have already begun with one-on-one meetings with new cabinet ministers and we're planning for another Lobby Day where some of our biggest stars will carry ACTRA's message directly to decision-makers and

Parliamentarians.

ACTRA's top priority continues to be the encouragement and stimulation of more Canadian production. As artists, and as a nation, it is essential that we are able to tell our own stories. However, building a self-sustaining domestic industry makes sense beyond the cultural imperative. Internationally, film and television production is increasingly unpredictable and we're feeling the effects of fewer service productions locating in Canada. There's no simple reason for the downturn. Multiple factors, including a higher Canadian dollar, personal and national security concerns, production budget compression as well as aggressive lobbying and tax incentives in U.S. and foreign markets all figure in the current decline and, interestingly, are all beyond our control. What's clear is that now, more than ever, we need to build a stable industry that is self-sufficient and immune to the fickleness of international trends.

At our June National Council Meeting, preeminent Canadian producer Laszlo Barna was invited to bring his perspective on the state of our industry. He iterated the importance of growing our industry from within, and he encouraged ACTRA to keep up the pressure and take the lead in our industry's advocacy. He reminded us that ACTRA has a priceless resource that other organizations don't have: our members. As performers, the public recognizes and relates to us. This isn't the time to be shy. It's time step up.

Internationally, a number of files that directly affect performers' working lives will be advanced this autumn. In September, I represented ACTRA's interests at the 18th World Congress of FIA, (the International Federation of Actors) held in Budapest, Hungary. ACTRA will return to WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) in Geneva, Switzerland to pursue a copyright treaty for performers. And ACTRA is playing a key role in helping develop a new international instrument on cultural diversity through the auspices of UNESCO, (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). If one can survive the acronyms, a deeper understanding of these big-picture international files is fascinating. I encourage all members to find out more by consulting [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).



**Thor Bishopric**  
ACTRA President