



I N T E R
ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



coast to coast

A snapshot of what members are working on across the country – see page 8



Richard Hardacre

A letter to my fellow members

While many of you know me, I imagine many more are wondering, who is this guy? And what's he doing leading my union?

Who am I? Well, asked to describe myself I would say that I am committed to my career as a professional actor, that I have no illusions as to how arduous that path is, and that years ago I joined a few fellow performers of common mind with a mission to improve the lot of creative artists. I would say that I am a pragmatist and that I am determined when I have set a goal. And that I am devoted to my family of two young children is certainly a big part of my backbone.

Determination to build the strength of performers is what guided me to the privilege of leading our union. I'm going to tell you some of the things I believe that ACTRA must do and I'd like you to consider that, working together, we can accomplish them. We need to concentrate on three priorities that mesh with the ACTRA

Plan: we need to work ceaselessly on public policy to build our industry, we need to safeguard and improve our insurance benefits and we need to create solidarity among performers across Canada in order to make some well-deserved gains at the bargaining table.

Our campaign for distinctive Canadian film and TV production already has momentum. It is influencing decision-makers in Ottawa and has given our members a cause. ACTRA is at the vanguard of political action in English-Canadian culture. We've redefined what a union can do and we've moved beyond our role as a first-rate bargaining agent for performers' rights.

We can now tune our efforts into a deeper national consciousness. We can use our members' energies and our lead in national coalitions to inspire government to create a solid 'Cultural Policy' for English Canada, one in which performers and all creative artists are intrinsic to cultivating our culture.

This will be no small feat. It will require the unrelenting focus of our senior staff, the commitment of National Council and the energy of our entire membership.

We also need to pay attention to our own house. I want to assure you that ACTRA will do its darnedest to safeguard the insurance benefits to which our members are entitled. Extended health benefits, dental care, etc. are insurance benefits that we supply to our working members through ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS). We will look to improving the engagers' contribution to health insurance during our next rounds of bargaining. Meanwhile, we will be negotiating a new service agreement with AFBS and we will work closely with them to maximize the benefits that you can expect from your union.

Paying attention to our house also means building solidarity from coast to coast. We will be negotiating our big contract, the IPA, next winter. Members of UBCP/ACTRA will be negotiating their parallel contract, the B.C. Master Agreement, even sooner. At National Council, two minutes after I took the chair, I offered a simple concept – a wish really – that ACTRA's and UBCP's negotiators could agree to a strategy of coordinated bargaining. That we could craft the basic proposals for these two important contracts covering the bulk of film and television production in English Canada together. Joint preparation, while respecting the autonomy of our brothers and sisters in B.C., could do nothing less than create an environment of solidarity across the nation.

Both negotiating teams will face the global powers behind North America's major production studios, and they will exploit any lack of unity by forcing us to bargain in competition with each other. By contrast, in their last big contract rounds, SAG and AFTRA united in bargaining strategy and achieved a 10% gain over their next contract!

I sincerely hope that my first proposal as ACTRA's new National President has not fallen on deaf ears. If it has, performers from coast to coast will have the right to ask why. Why must ACTRA's performers, whether paying their dues in Halifax, Regina, Vancouver or Toronto accept lesser gains as a result of our not working together? I ask all of you to consider this. Then consider the strength of solidarity and how much can be achieved with it. Tell those who represent you what you want. It can be yours. It can be ours.

In solidarity,

Richard Hardacre
President, ACTRA National



Richard Hardacre with Vicki Gabereau, ACTRA/UBCP member and 2005 recipient of ACTRA's John Drainie Award.

ACTRA statement concerning CBC dispute

ACTRA supports the Canadian Media Guild (CMG) in its contract dispute with the CBC. ACTRA members are instructed not to perform any struck work at the CBC, and to support the CMG membership by volunteering to picket CBC locations with our CMG brothers and sisters.

ACTRA performers are instructed to respect CMG's picket lines and follow the instructions of CMG picket captains with respect to picket protocol. Those ACTRA performers who have existing contracts with the CBC are under a legal obligation to fulfill those contracts, except where the performer has a bona fide concern for his/her safety in which case the performer may refuse to cross the picket line.



Fall 2005 Volume 12, Issue 2

InterACTRA is the official publication of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), a Canadian union of performers affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress and the International Federation of Actors. *InterACTRA* is free of charge to all ACTRA members.

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Design: Joss MacLennan Design

Cover Photo: Rick Boland and Mary Walsh in *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching*. Photo by Paul Daly.

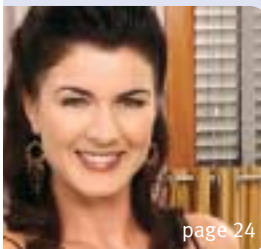
Printed in Canada by union labour at Thistle Printing.

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Publications Mail Agreement #40069134
ISSN 1705-9496



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Want to receive *InterACTRA* by email? If you'd like *InterACTRA* in your e-mailbox instead of by mail, email us at interactra@actra.ca with your membership number.

All alliances are good. Some are better than others. Reactivating our informal relationship with Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) would be better.

During our traumatic struggles on the west coast (early '90s), the CAW provided expertise, organizational support, political and labour connections – even sponsored a Canadian Cultural Policy conference at their Port Elgin educational centre which, with CAW support, was adopted by the CLC – all without cost to a cash-strapped ACTRA. They did this, and much more, only on a handshake, through immediate telephone responses, and, tellingly, while seeking nothing in return! When our jurisdiction was attacked, the CAW's intervention stopped the advances. Without that strong, immediate assistance, my friends, our union may not have survived. You see, when asked, CAW stepped forward. When asked, USW, unfortunately, did not!

Why a formal alliance with an unproven, American-headquartered union is preferred over a successful, informal one with the CAW is baffling. That ACTRA's National Council opts for hoped for benefits over proven successes defies logic.

It's a shameful way to acknowledge those who freely provided assistance; who helped simply because it was the right thing, and because they believed that, together, we could work to stop the erosion of Canada's cultural sovereignty.

– Dan MacDonald (President, during that period) Toronto, ON

ACTRA and the USW

I can't believe that ACTRA has signed an alliance with the Steelworkers.

Even more unbelievable is the fact it was all done without our knowledge.

ACTRA explored a similar arrangement with the CAW a few years ago, only to abandon the idea – I suspect because so many members were dead set against it. Is that why the current alliance was secured with no advance notice? It may have been perfectly legal, but it all seems very devious.

I believe the perpetrators of this alliance are also being very naive. We may well benefit from USW's assistance when it comes to negotiating with U.S. producers, but I fear the downside will outweigh any gains on that front. USW is an organization with an ugly past – and a not very pretty present – and I don't believe for a minute it's interested in Canadian culture, except to learn how to muscle in and take over. When a gnat goes to bed with an elephant, sooner or later, the elephant is going to roll over.

I hope to be proven wrong. But I'm very skeptical. And very afraid.

– Scott Walker, Toronto, ON

ACTRA Responds

There is no reason to fear or mistrust ACTRA's new strategic alliance with the USW. It is merely one more in a long record of partnerships that ACTRA has formed throughout our history, and it does not preclude us from making even more partnerships with like-minded allies to meet common goals.

To be absolutely clear, this is not an affiliation and does not involve any exchange of money between ACTRA and the USW. It is a three-year alliance that can be renewed when, and if, we continue to find it to be beneficial.

ACTRA has a long-standing relationship with USW – they have represented our staff since the mid-'80s. We are like-minded organizations with a focus on public policy, organizing and bargaining. Since more than half of the work for our members in Canada comes from multinational corporations headquartered in the U.S., it is to our advantage to have an ally that is strong in both Canada and south of the border.

Contrary to Mr. Walker's opinion, the Canadian elected leaders and members of USW are interested in helping to strengthen our unique culture and identity, as demonstrated by their support of the Blue Man Group boycott and at the recent CLC convention (see p. 6). They are willing to share their ability to reach their members on these and other issues that we have in common. Reaching out and sharing ideas and resources can only make our voices stronger.

– Richard Hardacre,
President, ACTRA National

The Stage Mom Survival Guide

for parents of young performers in the Canadian film and television industry, by **Robyne Ropell-Baruchel**, published by ACTRA.

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



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

Exciting positions available for dynamic goddesses!

ACTRA is committed to equal opportunity and treatment for all members. The National Women's Committee is a standing committee that is available to all members of ACTRA and serves as an advocate for the concerns of women performers. If you would like to serve on this committee, or if you have experiences and concerns that you want addressed or voiced, please contact Joanne Deer at jdeer@actra.ca.

Calling all scribes!

Interested in never-ending glory? Want to contribute content to *InterACTRA*? Please contact interactra@actra.ca.

Letters

InterACTRA welcomes letters and feedback. Submissions should be no longer than 200 words and may be edited for length. Please send submissions to: interactra@actra.ca.

ACTRA's National Council elects

new National President

ACTRA's National Presidents: Past Presidents **Dan MacDonald**, **Brian Gromoff**, **Thor Bishopric** with newly elected National President **Richard Hardacre**.



Brenda M. Crichlow (ACTRA/UBCP Secretary) and **Keith Martin Gordey** (ACTRA/UBCP Director).



National Councillors **Ruth Lawrence** (Newfoundland/Labrador) and **Tyrone Benskin** (Montreal).

Your representatives from across the country gathered for the bi-annual National Council meeting in May to tackle issues facing the members and our industry. On the second day, council set its sights on ACTRA's future by choosing a new National President to take the reins from **Thor Bishopric**, who stepped down after serving three very successful terms. It didn't take long for council to endorse long-time councillor **Richard Hardacre**. He was elected by acclamation.

Also a member of Canadian and American Actors' Equity, Richard is an actor with experience across Canada and

the U.S. He has been a member of ACTRA for most of three decades, sitting at National Council for 10 years – half of those as an Executive Officer. He was the recent President of ACTRA Toronto for two terms. Other accomplishments for ACTRA have included three rounds of Independent Production Agreement (IPA) negotiations as well as one with the National Commercial Agreement (NCA). In the former he helped author ACTRA's groundbreaking rights for children in film and television.

Richard is a nationalist and wants to see the strength of our national union grow. As

such, he is a strong proponent for the unified voice of creative artists in our culture.

ACTRA appeals CRTC satellite radio decision

ACTRA has joined a broad coalition of cultural groups in filing an appeal of the CRTC's disastrous satellite radio decision.

The decision, released in June, allows the two satellite services Sirius and XM to offer up to nine foreign channels for each Canadian channel. In doing this, the CRTC has created a precedent that will allow Canadian digital radio to be predominantly U.S. programming to the detriment of Canadian content. Essentially, the CRTC has given the greenlight to cultural 'product dumping'.

The satellite radio decision ignores the tremendous success of its regulations under conventional radio that mandate up to 35% Canadian content for AM and FM radio. These regulations have allowed Canadian talent to flourish, and made it possible for Canadians to hear music written and performed by Canadians. With this satellite radio decision, the CRTC is sending a clear message that it no longer cares whether Canadians have an opportunity to hear their own voices.

– continued on next page

Thank you Thor!

Throughout three amazing terms as President, your leadership was unflinching, determined and inspirational. In the recent years of your leadership ACTRA took up the challenge of urging public policy changes to improve our industry. With this goal, we transformed our union into the leading voice in English Canada for cultural issues.

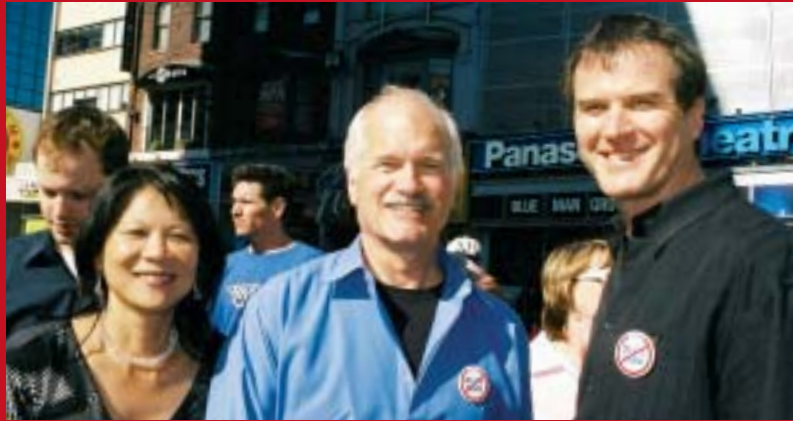
Your service has given performers across the country a stronger, more vibrant union.

And for that, we all applaud you!



Thor Bishopric with his family: Baby **Teale** and **Maria Bircher**.

Toronto City Councillor **Olivia Chow**, Federal NDP Leader **Jack Layton** and Toronto President and National Councillor **Karl Pruner** unite against non-union production.



National Councillor **Seán Mulcahy** rallies against Blue Man Group.

THE WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR WORKSHOP



WIDC brings eight mid-level women directors together for four intensive weeks of training at The Banff Centre. Directors are put through the paces of production working with professional mentors, including the acclaimed Deepa Mehta, cast and crews.

Both male and female ACTRA members are also invited to apply to WIDC to work as actors with the director participants. This is a unique opportunity to stretch your creative muscles and hone your craft in a safe environment.

- Story Incubation Module: Dec. 9-12, 2005
- Prep, Production, Post Module: Jan. 19-Feb. 5, 2006

Application Deadlines

Directors: September 30, 2005
Actors & Crew: October 31, 2005

For applications and info please go to: www.creativewomenworkshops.com
Carol Whiteman, WIDC Producer
TEL: 604-913-0747/1-877-913-0747
carol@creativewomenworkshops.com

ACTRA and its coalition partners – including the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, DGC and WGC – are calling for the decision to be overturned, and for all satellite radio networks and channels to be held to fair and balanced Canadian content regulations.

Union Solidarity

ACTRA continues to stand with its fellow unions in support of the protest against the non-union production of **Blue Man Group** in Toronto. A rally on opening night drew hundreds of members of ACTRA, Canadian Actors' Equity Association, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the Toronto Musicians' Association, and USW.

ACTRA also cancelled all reservations it had with the Sutton Place Hotel in Toronto, after learning the hotel was offering promotional packages to Blue Man Group. Thanks to ACTRA's intervention and the enlistment of our alliance partners at the United Steelworkers, the Sutton Place ended its association with Blue Man Group.

Join the boycott; spread the word. Go to www.bluelamanboycott.com for the latest updates. ACTRA thanks the Sutton Place for taking this step. ACTRA also thanks the USW, which represents workers at the Sutton Place, for helping hotel management make the right decision to end their promotion of Blue Man Group.

ACTRA puts culture on the agenda at CLC Convention

Thanks to ACTRA's strategic alliance with the United Steelworkers, performers now have an official voice at the country's biggest labour forum, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). ACTRA took its seat at the CLC's Executive Council in June, and a week later, sent delegates to the CLC Convention in Montreal.

ACTRA enjoyed the support of USW on a resolution adopted by the CLC Convention that called on the federal government to take measures to ensure Canadians have a voice in an increasingly foreign-dominated media. ACTRA's resolution urged the government to: maintain existing restrictions on foreign ownership of broadcast, cable and telecommunications companies; provide the CBC with the funding needed to produce and broadcast more Canadian TV drama, and to add \$60 million annually to the CBC budget to boost Canadian programming in general and hold hearings on the concentration of Canadian media ownership. The resolution also supported the principles of public broadcasting and called for the protection of Canada's cultural sovereignty.

Performers share a great many of the values and struggles of workers across the country. Working together is already strengthening ACTRA's calls for a robust cultural identity for Canada.

Feature Film Policy update!



Left to right: Nigel Bennett, Rob Morton, Howard Storey, and Brian Gromoff.

Nigel Bennett, ACTRA Maritimes President

“One of the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada is that Quebec values its artists. I think English Canada still regards actors as rogues and vagabonds to a great extent, people who are not to be trusted, not to be given credit cards, not to be allowed to buy houses. This has to change. If we want a star system, we must make the actor, the performer, the centre of the piece. This is a problem, I think, for most producers in English Canada. If you make the actor the centre of the piece, it gives the actor power. I think English-language producers in Canada are afraid of that power.”

Rob Morton, ACTRA National Councillor and UBCP/ACTRA Treasurer

“We need to celebrate Canadian, and that’s what’s missing in the whole formula. We’re such a polite society. We’re a bunch of very nice people up here. Sometimes there’s nothing wrong with putting up a billboard, dang it. There really isn’t anything wrong with that. Let’s celebrate the fact that we’re darn good at what we do. Most of the performers on **24**, an American series, are Canadian. Where’s the celebration in that? You get a little mention here or there, but that’s something to be proud of. It may not be our series, but the performers are Canadians. Let’s celebrate what we are... So what is the Canadian story? It’s not just small-town New Brunswick. We’re a diversified culture. It’s everything. We have a world-wide story to tell. It’s appealing to all of us. So let’s let the Canadians know that we’re fabulous at what we do. Let’s let our country know. And then let’s let the world know that we’re fabulous at what we do so tomorrow they’re dying to come see the Canadian feature as opposed to seeing **Arnold** and *The Terminator*.”

Howard Storey, ACTRA National Councillor and UBCP/ACTRA President

“I would go so far as to say that we can’t compete with the blockbusters, and neither would we want to. The whole American model, generally, is based on trying to homogenize the whole world so the whole world will buy whatever it puts out there. Our model has to be I think a global model that relates to the diversity of the world and expresses the differences. I think this would be found to be very valuable and would play very well with the idea of co-treaties around the idea of distribution, so that everybody’s

ACTRA members continued to dog the Heritage Committee as it hopped around the country soliciting Canadians’ input on the future of the country’s feature film policies. Following up on spring presentations in Toronto, Winnipeg and Ottawa, ACTRA appeared at the Committee’s June stops in Halifax and Vancouver. Thanks to tremendous interventions by members across the country, ACTRA successfully presented a unified national film strategy at every stop.

Here are some excerpts from the passionate and informed presentations from your fellow members:

product gets a chance to be seen beside the elephant, so that there’s at least a whole bunch of mice running around.”

“If we want a star system, we must make the actor, the performer, the centre of the piece.”

Brian Gromoff, ACTRA Calgary President

“How can you make certain our next generation of artists will mature? How can you make certain our culture is protected from those who would undermine it? By supporting it – money yes, we can do that, but it is also making certain there will be an opportunity to produce, exhibit, and publicize. It’s as simple as ABC to support the Canadian film and television industry. ‘A’ equals access to money and advertising, ‘B’ equals backing by government regulations, and ‘C’ equals cinema screen – Canadian ownership of cinema screen and compulsory time given to showing Canadian film.”

IPA Covers Video Games

In a recent article in their membership newsletter, the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA) incorrectly stated that the terms of the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) do not apply to the production of video games. ACTRA asserts that the IPA has covered video game production for many years. Video games are distributed either as ‘compact devices’ or via the internet and both means of distribution are currently covered by the IPA.

Over the years, many ACTRA members have successfully worked with several major game developers using ACTRA contracts, and as the industry has grown, ACTRA has stepped up our efforts to organize production of video games. In spite of the producers’ association’s erroneous claims, ACTRA assures our members that video games are covered by the IPA. If you are offered a job by a video game developer, you can – and should – request an ACTRA contract.

performing from coast to

A terminally ill cancer patient, a galactic guardian and defender of the universe, a romantically troubled life-guard, and a dope-selling computer salesman – ACTRA members are biting down on some challenging and juicy roles.

In some areas, especially Toronto and Vancouver, tax credits and a stabilizing loonie are bringing service production back at near-record levels. While in cities such as Halifax, domestic production is outpacing foreign. Service production keeps the money flowing and builds local infrastructure, but as recent years have shown, it's unreliable. A healthy domestic industry provides reliable, steady work and the guarantee of more starring and satisfying roles for performers.

2005 has brought challenging work for many ACTRA members in a wide range of projects across the country. However, one look at the U.S.-dominated schedules of the private broadcasters and Hollywood-jammed local cinema listings and it's clear that there's

still more work to do to ensure that Canadian performers have more opportunities to tell Canadian stories.

Let's take a cross-country tour to see what members are working on, and where in 2005.

british columbia

It's been a robust year so far in B.C., on the heels of one of the province's most dismal years in recent memory. Between January and April, film and TV activity was up 30% over 2004.

By May, there were 18 features shooting or in prep in B.C., including big-budget fare like the \$100-million *X-Men 3*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Catch & Release*, and the \$60-million fantasy pic *Dungeon Siege*. B.C. is also home to a healthy slate of service sci-fi series including *Stargate Atlantis*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *The 4400*. Dramatic series include returning seasons of *Smallville* and *The L-Word*.

voices from sea to sea

Maria del Mar, *Terminal City*

There are not very many strong female characters out there that are multi-layered written for people over 26 years old. Terminal City is full of life's dramas. It's articulate. It's real. I had to have the part.



Shannon Jardine, *The Tommy Douglas Story*

I was cast in a supporting lead role as Lally Lawson. I felt so proud to be part of a project about Tommy Douglas, a man who continues to be such an inspiration. The Tommy Douglas Story cast the most Saskatchewan actors in one project in the history of filmmaking in this province. That is an encouraging statistic for actors to celebrate Saskatchewan's 100th birthday with.



Cast of *The Tommy Douglas Story* with real-life Saskatchewan Premier **Lorne Calvert**. *Left to right: Jane Redlyon, Kristin Booth, Premier Calvert, Michael Therriault, Shannon Jardine, Ian Tracey, Kent Wolkowski. In front: Kim Elek.*

coast

Domestic production is ticking along with second seasons of CHUM's *Godiva's* and *The Collector* and new CTV series *Whistler* and *Alice, I Think*. Haddock Entertainment's follow-up to their ever-successful *Da Vinci's Inquest*, *Da Vinci's City Hall*, fired up its first season in August. The Movie Network's ambitious drama *Terminal City* was shot in Victoria in the spring.

A number of local features were also shot in B.C. this summer including the zombie flick *Fido*.

calgary and edmonton

Calgary started off in the spring as the happy host of two Canadian features: *Six Figures* and *Comeback Season* (written and directed by member Bruce McCulloch) and two service MOWs: *No More Victims* (U.S.) and *Child of Mine* (U.K.).

Robin Williams drove the Sony vehicle *RV* through town and another U.S. feature, *September Dawn*, was shot in Southern

Alberta (the last time the branch hosted two U.S. features in one summer was in 1999, their busiest year on record).

Robert Duvall returned with the mini-series, *Daughters of Joy*. Calgary also has several made-for-TV movies slated to shoot through the fall, as well as a children's TV series (currently on hold due to the elevated production levels in the area!).

Brad Pitt rode into Alberta in August with *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*. Photography started in Southern Alberta before winding its way up to Fort Edmonton Park, Edmonton and then cutting east to Winnipeg.

Edmonton started with summer with a CBS MOW *The Christmas Blessing* starring **Neil Patrick Harris** and **Rebecca Gayheart**, followed by an MOW for Lifetime, *For the Love of a Child*. Both were co-produced by Craig Anderson Productions and Calgary's Alberta Film Entertainment.

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Melissa Elias, *Falcon Beach*

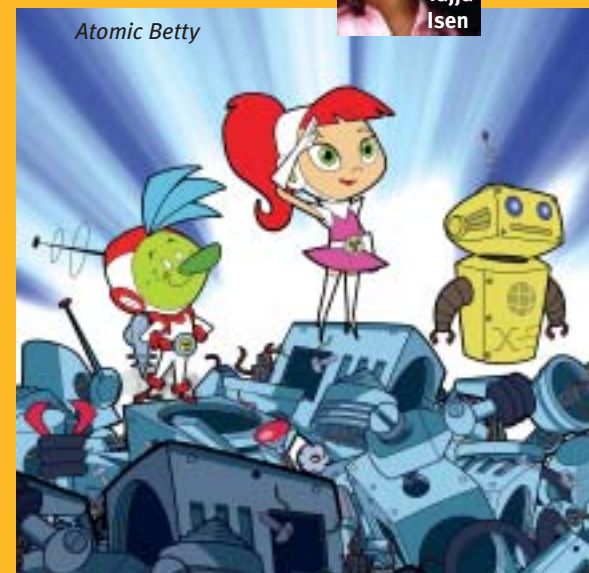
Erin is a great character. She is active, independent, strong-willed and non-traditional. I get to be funky, cool, spunky and energetic. This is my first part of this calibre and I couldn't have wished for more. The cast is so supportive of each other. I guess on film sets there are often egos tripping over each other, but there's none of that going on here. If I don't know something, any of the other cast will help me out.



Ephraim Ellis as Danny Ellis and **Melissa Elias** as Erin Haddad on *Falcon Beach*.

Tajja Isen, *Atomic Betty*

Providing the voice of Betty is truly an awesome experience! Identifying with this heroine's diverse persona makes it natural although I sometimes find it challenging to offset her tough side with her sweet nature. Working on the show also presents me with the honour of sharing the studio with several acclaimed Canadian actors. Being a 'Galactic Guardian' is out of this world!



performing from coast to coast

In addition to the usual documentaries and low budget projects, there are a number of made for television movies, series and features waiting to be greenlit including an Australian/Canadian theatrical co-production scheduled for mid-September.

saskatchewan

It's been one of the busiest seasons on record for Saskatchewan, good news for local members who are nabbing an increasing number of profile roles in service productions. Saskatchewan's biggest coup was *Tideland*, **Terry Gilliam's** \$20-million feature shot entirely in the province. The New Line Cinema romantic comedy *Just Friends* wrapped in March and *2 Human*, an L.A./Saskatchewan co-production, wrapped in June. A number of local members landed big roles including **Amy Matysio** and **Mike Fly**. Saskatchewan members **Tatiana Maslany** and **Max Keene** have good roles in a remake of a Chinese horror film, directed by the Pang brothers and two more features are looking possible this year.

Indigenous production is also humming. More than 50 local members were cast in CBC's mini-series, *The Tommy Douglas Story*. A few returning local series are in production including *Moccasin*

Flats and *renegade press.com*. Canada's number one-rated comedy, CTV's *Corner Gas* is also back for a 19-episode third season.

manitoba

While production started off slowly this year, a stable of local projects is keeping Manitoba busy. Local producer **Vonnie Von Helmolt** has finished photography on the TV special *The Magic Flute*, featuring the Winnipeg Ballet. *Tipi Tales*, the award-winning children's puppet series, will be back for a third season. Meanwhile, Global's teen drama *Falcon Beach* is shooting 13 hours. The show has already been picked up for U.S. broadcast by ABC Family.

The \$1.5-million Canadian feature *Summer Babe*, from writer/director **Matt Bissonnette**, was shot in Manitoba cottage country over the summer starring **Molly Parker**, **Lukas Haas**, **Adam Scott**, **Wendy Crewson** and **R.H. Thomson**.

Manitoba continues to attract a substantial number of mid-big budget U.S. projects including *Nothing But The Truth*, *The Plague*, *Population 436*, the MOW *Haunting Sarah* and mini-series *Category 7: End of the World*.

voices from sea to sea

David A.V. Elver, *Lucky Days*

While the film is part comedy and part drama, the shoot itself was pure joy. As an actor myself, I had written the script with specific actors in mind for the 14 principal roles. Thanks to the AIP (ACTRA Indie Production Agreement) and an incredible local acting community, almost all 14 of these talented professionals agreed to take part, making this easily both the biggest challenge and most rewarding experience of my career.

On the set of *Lucky Days*.



Nicolas Wright, *The Festival*

The Festival was a real dream come true. I had already worked with the entire production team and a great deal of the cast so it was like working on a TV show with your close friends. Every day was a blast, and there was a comfort level, which I believe yielded some very good work. There was so much freedom on the set, and it is IFC TV UNCUT, so there was no censorship, and I felt like I was really being pushed to take things right to the edge. Something that doesn't happen very often in TV.



Nicolas Wright in *The Festival*.

Drew Hagen, Chris Cuthbertson and Nico Lorenzutti, from *A Bug and a Bag of Weed*.



ottawa

The nation's capital is seeing a significant up-tick in production and roles for local members.

Locally generated production continues to thrive with the industrial and corporate video industry that has been the bread and butter for many Ottawa performers over the years. An increasing number of performers are creating their own opportunities by using ACTRA's low-budget programs to initiate projects. Voice-over performers are working on Funbag's 52-episode animated series *Faireez* and an increasing number of new media projects. *Getting Along Famously*, the CBC comedy series from **Colin Mochrie** and **Deb McGrath**, is also shooting in the city.

The big news in Ottawa is the record-smashing six MOWs that shot in the city this year. The summer alone saw three – compared to none last year. And Ottawa-native **Tom Green** returned home to shoot a road trip feature, tentatively titled *Infamous*.

toronto

Toronto's film and TV community breathed something like a collective sigh of relief this summer, or they would if they had time. The province's tax breaks helped the city bounce back to near record levels of production.

The city saw more service features than any year in recent memory. By June, more than a dozen features were already shooting or prepping, including local producer **Don Carmody's** *Silent Hill*, the **50 Cent** biopic *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* and *16 Blocks*, starring **Bruce Willis**. Other Hollywood features in Toronto this summer include horror sequel *Saw II*, the thriller *Silence, Take the Lead, Zoom, Truth, Justice and the American Way*, and *Cheaper by the Dozen 2*. Toronto resident **Clark Johnson** is shooting 20th Century Fox's *The Sentinel* starring fellow Canadian **Kiefer Sutherland**.

Unfortunately, most service productions continue to fly their leads in from L.A. However, Toronto members are increasingly being cast in leading roles. ABC's six-hour, 9/11 mini-series *Untitled History Project* cast 225 local performers, with a Canadian in the number three role.

While there aren't many new Canadian TV series in town, a number of shows were back at work including *This is Wonderland, ReGenesis, Deglass: The Next Generation, Instant Star* and *The Red Green Show*.

Magazine and variety series such as *Canadian Idol, Popcultured with Elvira Kurt, Comedy Now, Scanning the Movies* and *Design Match* were also keeping the city hopping. In mid-July, there were

– continued on next page

Drew Hagen, *A Bug and a Bag of Weed*

*This summer my fellow ACTRA Maritimes members, **Chris Cuthbertson** and **Nico Lorenzutti** and I were fortunate enough to bring this long-time project to camera. Acting in and producing the film along with **Michael Mason** was the realization of a four-year development process of a script Chris had been working on for years. The film is about three heavily in debt computer store salesmen who accidentally inherit a hockey bag full of weed and an old VW Bug. The salesmen develop a scheme to sell the weed using their computer sales training. Everything will be perfect, or so they think...*



Mary Walsh, *Hatching, Matching & Dispatching*

My character Mamie Lou is an ode to so many women that I know – women like my mother. Good-hearted strong women who hold their families together. They can fix a pipe in the stove, have dinner ready on the table, and deliver a good beating if they need to. Amazing women. Not demure.



“The Furey’s” on the set of *Hatching, Matching & Dispatching*: **Sherry White, Mark McKinney, Rick Boland, Susan Kent, Mary Walsh, Jonny Harris** and **Joel Hynes**.

performing from coast to coast

more than 16 animation projects in production including *Atomic Betty*, *Care Bears Movie*, *Jacob Two Two*, and *Girlstuff/BoyStuff*.

Commercial production and animation also continued to bring Toronto members a steady offering of work.

montreal

Local production remains a steady source of work for members, as the MOW-thriller seems to have made a comeback – a service production favourite in Montreal. MOWs included director **John Fawcett's** *Last Exit*, a road-rage MOW for CTV, and the TMN/Lifetime *Chain Palace*. The CBC's *Indian Summer: The Oka Crisis* will shoot through to October.

Series include the returning Canadian shows *15/Love* and *Naked Josh*, a new YTV series *Prank Patrol*, and *The Festival* – created by local producers and picked up by the IFC. While animation production continues to trend downwards, commercial production continues to be on the rise. Particularly exciting, is the booming low-budget industry in the city. Young filmmakers are finding success with local film and television projects produced under ACTRA's low-budget agreements, giving hope for a vibrant indigenous industry.

For the first time in two years, it appears that Montreal is going to see an influx of big-budget U.S. films this fall. With *300 Spartans*, *Sunrise*, *The Covenant* and *Midnight Meet Train* all set to shoot in the city over the next four months. Many

Reality check on Canadian drama

Contrary to what the media and our friends at the private broadcasters would have you believe, Canadian drama is not out of the woods yet. This year's Canadian Television Fund (CTF) results had some industry folks popping the champagne and celebrating the revival of Canadian TV drama. Sure, the CTF is supporting 75% more one-hour dramatic series this year over last year. However, that means a whopping seven series this year, compared to last year's dismal four. We're still a long way from the heady days of 1999 when there were 12 – you know back when the private broadcasters had fair spending and content requirements.

Ah yes, private broadcasters, they never fail to – well, fail. Out of 28 primetime hours, Global boasts a dazzling 1.5 hours a week of Canadian drama, the new one-hour drama *ReGenesis* and the teen drama *Falcon Beach*. CTV actually fares worse, with only one hour of scheduled Canadian drama: 30 minutes each of *Corner Gas* and *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. While both networks have Canadian series lined up for 'midseason' (i.e. when their big money U.S. series get cancelled), there's no guarantee if or even when we'll get a chance to see them. Cork the champagne and pass the Advil.

Montreal performers should soon be enjoying more workdays than they've seen in some time and at the very least, for the stunt community, Christmas has come early.

maritimes

2005 is shaping up as a busier year in the Maritimes than the kidney stone known as 2004, with a mix of some great local films and service production. The year started with the MOW retelling of the Canada/Russia hockey series of 1972, shot in Fredericton and St. John, N.B. and featuring Maritimers in key roles.

Another Canadian project generating excitement is the *Trailer Park Boys* film, which showcases a cast jam-packed with Maritimes members, including of course, the boys themselves. The feature will be followed by season six of the series. Local members **Chris Cuthbertson**, **Nico Lorenzutti** and **Drew Hagen** persisted to see production wrap on their first feature film, *A Bug and a Bag of Weed*. The comedy featured a raft of Maritimes members in juicy, hilarious roles.

Tom Selleck returned to Halifax to shoot two more *Stone Cold* films for CBS. The first, *Night Passage*, features several Toronto members although Maritimers such as **Rick Collins** and **McKenzie Scott** have snagged some of the smaller roles. Von Zerneck Sertner Films returned with the **Kathy Bates**-directed MOW *Ambulance Girl* and two more MOWs in the summer. Despite some un-beachy weather, the six-part Lifetime series *Beach Girls* also shot through the summer. Lifetime also brought the MOW *Dive from Clausen's Pier* late last spring.

Animation is thriving – Halifax Film Company is working on the second season of *Poko* for CBC, as well as a new series, *Lunar Jim*.

Rita MacNeil recorded two music specials in Cape Breton, while member **Tom Gallant** crisscrossed the nation revisiting the subjects of a seminal documentary for *35 Years*.

A banner six months of commercial production brought large shoots to all three Maritime provinces. Going into fall, the branch will see the latest project from Big Motion Pictures (*Trudeau*) as they tackle the FLQ crisis in a miniseries.

newfoundland/labrador

Local and Canadian production is keeping Newfoundland/Labrador members a whole lot busier than they were last year.

CBC added the Newfoundland comedy series *Hatching Matching and Dispatching* to its fall line-up. Thirteen episodes are being shot starring **Mary Walsh** as the family matriarch, along with **Mark McKinney** and Newfoundlanders **Shaun Majumder**, **Rick Boland**, **Susan Kent** and **Sherry White**. Written by Walsh with **Ed Macdonald**, the series is directed by **Henry Sarwer-Foner**.

The indigenous drama-documentary *Legends and Lore of the North Atlantic* shot 13 episodes for Global. The production featured **Gordon Pinsent** and generated more than 25 day-roles for local members for re-enactments.

St. John's and Gander served as key locations for Pope Productions' *Above and Beyond*. The \$9-million CBC miniseries provided Newfoundland members with an estimated 43 speaking roles, with local members **Allan Hawco**, **Mark Critch**, **Steve Cochrane** and **Leah Lewis** in key roles. Other cast included **Liane Balaban**, **Jonathan Scarfe** and **Kenneth Welsh**.

Tyrone Benskin as Karl Lubinsky in *Charlie Jade*.

Tyrone Benskin knew he wasn't in Outremont any more when he saw the animal heads hanging in the markets supplying the townships near Cape Town, South Africa.

Having won the role of Karl Lubinsky on the sci-fi TV series *Charlie Jade*, a Canadian/South African co-production, Tyrone took the opportunity to explore when he was not working. "Cape Town is a captivating place – incredibly beautiful, but people in the city live behind locked gates. Visiting the Townships, I was struck by the energy, the sense of community and generosity I found there. People who lived in lean-to shacks were quick to invite me

vidual negotiation, although there is an agreement in principle that actors should not be paid less than a certain amount."

Tyrone and his fellow Canadian cast members on *Charlie Jade*, **Michael Filipowich**, **Patricia McKenzie** and **Marie-Julie Rivest**, were covered by ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement (IPA). Producers who are signatory to the IPA and are producing entirely in an offshore location are obliged to engage ACTRA members under the terms of the IPA. Likewise, members must check with their branch before accepting jobs on offshore productions to ensure that the producers are signatory to the IPA and are offering ACTRA contracts.



Tyrone Benskin: Performing half a world away in *Charlie Jade*

by Sharon Davidson

home for a meal, likely to be soup made from those animal heads that were hanging in the market."

Craft services provided a wider range of offerings to the Canadian, South African and U.S. performers on the set of *Charlie Jade*. "As a foreigner I was struck by some of the differences in the acting community. There is no collective agreement in place for performers working in film and TV in South Africa, so the rates are set by indi-

Working under the IPA guarantees performers minimum rates and working conditions as well as producer contributions to the performer's insurance and retirement funds.

"Working on location in Cape Town gave me a new perspective on why out-of-town actors are treated so much differently than locals in Canada. Although production had provided me with a car for my own use while I was on location, I was always picked up at home and dropped

back home at the end of a day. It was more secure for them to do that than to risk that I might get lost in an unfamiliar city and delay a day's work. Also there are safety and the ever-present insurance issues."

Geographically and experientially, South Africa might be half a world away from Canada, but performers in both countries are bound by the ties of imagining lives and creating popular culture within the structure – *continued on next page*

Tyrone Benskin as Karl Lubinsky and **Jeffrey Pierce** as Charlie Jade.



Performing half a world away

of a multinational film industry.

“It was a unique experience as an actor for me, having the opportunity to work as foreign talent. In addition we had the chance to work with some incredibly talented South African performers, including **Danny Keogh**, one of the founding members of the ground-breaking *Market Theatre*, **Michelle Burgess**, **Bonnie Mbuli** and **Graham Clarke**.”

“The most exciting aspect of working on *Charlie Jade* was the unique creative process. It was the most collaborative environment I have ever experienced working on a television series. People from all levels were given the opportunity to contribute their individual creative strengths, from the cameraperson finding a shot to we the performers who were looked to to preserve and enhance their roles and the stories we told. Great care was taken by all to build something we began to realize, was truly quite special.”

Opportunities for ACTRA members to work overseas are growing as the number of treaty co-productions and use of locations such as Eastern Europe, Australia and South Africa increase. South Africa has seen a recent boom in production – between 2003 and 2004, Cape Town’s feature industry increased by 140%. The country’s also introduced generous tax credits designed not only to attract international production, but also to encourage local production.

Robert Wertheimer, the co-creator and executive producer of *Charlie Jade* commented to the *Hollywood Reporter* that, “In Canada, those tax credits have been beneficial to suppliers, unions, technicians and actors but evolved as less of a support system for Canadian culture and talent. Hopefully the incentives in South Africa have been designed to avoid those mistakes and nurture and protect the indigenous culture.”

From a performer’s perspective, Tyrone observed that the South African industry is “going through the same growing pains we in Canada went through in the ‘70s. Most of our actors are theatre trained as are South Africa’s. Making the change from the largesse of the stage to the intimacy of the camera is taking time. South Africa’s people have only had television since the mid to late ‘70s and black performers were barred from participating right up until the fall of Apartheid in 1994. However, there is a wonderful energy and willingness and desire to create work, particularly work



Michelle Burgess as *Essa Rompkin* and **Michael Filipowich** as *01 Boxer*.

that reflects South Africa and its people. Everyone understands that some of the work is not the best, but it will get better because they are willing to take the risk of producing less-than-stellar work in order to learn. We don’t make that leap often enough in Canada and we very seldom applaud or support the effort.”

Sharon Davidson was the ACTRA National Collective Bargaining Research Coordinator before moving to ACTRA/UBCP to take up a research position. Tyrone Benskin has a challenging career as a performer in Canada and internationally. He serves on the ACTRA Montreal Branch Council and the ACTRA National Executive.

How a South African-shot series can be CanCon

Producers are increasingly looking to international co-productions to help finance projects and gain access to new markets. Producers from two or more countries can combine resources and receive ‘national’ recognition in each country signatory to the relevant co-production treaties. In Canada, this means that international treaty co-productions, such as *Charlie Jade* do not need to be certified under a points system or be visibly ‘Canadian’ to satisfy Canadian content requirements. **Tyrone Benskin** argues that *Charlie Jade* – with nary a snowflake in sight – is still a ‘Canadian’ series:

“Four out of five of the series leads are Canadian. The financing for the production was supplied by Canada and South Africa. CHUM and Space, Canadian broadcasters, commissioned the series. **Bob Wertheimer** of Jonsworth Productions and **Jacques Pettigrew** of CinéGroupe are both established Canadian producers. Many of the directors and writers who worked on the show were Canadian.

Just as importantly, the ideas and the way the stories are told reflect Canadian attitudes and concerns about the world around us. Behind the CGI and the music you still have well written, character-driven stories that focus on the lives of people in extraordinary circumstances instead of a situational plot populated by good-looking stock characters and driven by gimmick. The plot lines deal with issues Canadians are concerned about – undue corporate influence, environmental degradation, corruption. It is Canadian even down to its use of silence or music on screen while the camera focuses on the performers’ emotional reactions, offering an opportunity for audience reflection and empathy that is not part of standard U.S. network production. We are Canadian not only in the way we reflect our own experiences, but in the way we imagine and tell stories about the world. Whatever we do, wherever we do it is as Canadian as the Mounties... but then didn’t we licence them out to Disney...?”

PAL VANCOUVER: MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

Building low-cost housing for senior and disabled members of the professional performing arts community on the west coast



by Keith Martin Gordey

A PAL Vancouver building – it seemed a plain impossible thing to do. It was so big that even when there was just a notion that there needed to be something like Performing Arts Lodge (PAL) Toronto in Vancouver, no one knew where to turn or what to do next to start the process. So it stayed an impossible notion. And then an elder member of Vancouver's performing arts community, someone who had been just getting by in modest circumstances, fell ill and, to some extent because of where and how she was living, died too young. If she had been in a PAL facility, things might have turned out differently. It galvanized those who had the original notion – it was time to stop talking and start doing, impossible or not.

Her death also raised a lot of questions. How was it possible for this to happen in such a rich country, a nation that, in a very un-Canadian way, 'prided' itself as a leader in social justice? How could this happen in a city that was always ranked in the top three of cities to live in the world? Who else and how many others in the performing arts were out there without a safety net?

So, put up a building. But it was so big. One person couldn't do it. A handful of people couldn't do it. But, perhaps, a group of committed individuals could inspire a community to try.

So it was that in April 2001, 40 people attended a founding membership meeting at the Salon of the Queen Elizabeth Theatre and elected a Steering Committee with **Joy Coghill** and **Jane Heyman** as co-chairs. The mission: to create a vision of a Performing Arts Lodge in Vancouver.

Vancouver first looked to PAL Canada and PAL Toronto for guidance, support and inspiration and was given all three. But we soon discovered that this was a different time and place from when PAL Toronto was built. For one thing, PAL Toronto was built with 100% government money when that sort of thing was available. Now, even if the various levels of government could be persuaded to contribute at all, it would only be in a modest way and it became clear that they wouldn't give anything to a far-fetched notion: PAL Vancouver had to prove that it had substance. It helped that we were now part of a long-standing national organization, but the ability to show that we could finance what was to become a \$20-million project was critical. An abundance of enthusiasm and small contributions, though welcome and necessary, were not enough. We needed the large, cold



REALITY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

cash kind of seed money, from a source with vision and faith.

UBCP/ACTRA was the first to ante up with a really significant donation when, in September 2002, **John Juliani** presented a cheque in the amount of \$50,000 at the media launch at the Bayshore Hotel. He was standing a stone's throw away from the Bayshore site where we hoped to build our building and indeed, it was shortly after this that PAL Vancouver was short-listed for the site.

To date, UBCP has contributed more than \$300,000 – making it the single greatest non-government donor. To my mind, this show of faith is what made the difference. UBCP contributed before any government did, and it is doubtful that the governments would have kicked in when they did without this concrete evidence of PAL Vancouver's financial viability. Later on, in
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MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

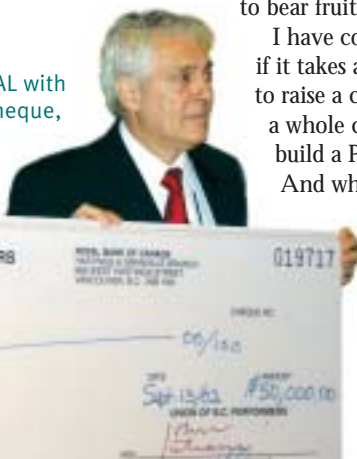
...the windows are in, the roof is on and the anticipated move-in date is spring 2006. People are applying to live there and the focus is shifting from a drive to get it built to filling it with people.

March 2004, when it hung in the balance whether PAL Vancouver would receive final approval for the site from Vancouver City Council, again it was a UBCP cheque, this time for \$100,000, and some 1,000 emails from UBCP members to the mayor and council, that tipped the scales to make sure that this long shot in social housing would be given a chance. That day, when council granted the final approval, the PAL supporters who crowded the room and spilled out into the hallway put on their red clown noses and erupted in a standing, cheering ovation that went on for some time. Mayor **Larry Campbell** told me later that he had never witnessed such an enthusiastic response to council before.

And so the story continues. The structure is up, the windows are in, the roof is on and the anticipated move-in date is spring 2006. People are applying to live there and the focus is shifting from a drive to get it built to filling it with people. With a well-designed performance space as the core of the building, we look forward to it becoming a small community of its own. In addition, PAL's Angels, Vancouver's version of Supporting Cast, is up and running and offering assistance beyond the scope of providing social housing. We continue to advance on all fronts.

However, fundraising continues to be a top priority. While various levels of government have responded to our initiative, they can only do so much. More money is needed to complete the project and then even more will be necessary to make sure that the rents are affordable for those with the greatest need. But the present situation is different from a couple of years ago; PAL Vancouver is now a tangible asset, it is something you can walk up to and touch. We have momentum and to contribute to its completion is not as great an act of blind faith as it once was and we are confident our fundraising efforts will continue to bear fruit.

John Juliani presented PAL with a \$50,000 cheque, in 2002.



I have come to realize that if it takes a whole village to raise a child, it takes a whole community to build a PAL Vancouver.

And while I have talked of the significant contributions of UBCP, it must be remembered that we are part of a community, a team where so many people have



contributed in so many ways, large and small, including our own ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society that stepped up to the plate with a \$50,000 donation at a critical time. To give credit where due would fill several pages. Apologies to those many, many not mentioned – and gratitude for their generosity, especially their generosity of spirit. Truly, it has been the spirit and passion of the participants in this story that has transformed this notion into a reality.

In the beginning it was mostly performers that actively supported PAL Vancouver. After all, we are the canaries in the coal-mine – we are often the most vulnerable to downturns in the industry. The result was a misapprehension that we were building an old folks home for actors. This is not the case. It is for the gaffers and publicity people, the staff at the union hall, the dancers, the directors, the musicians, as well as the actors. PAL Vancouver is for any and all who have made their living in the professional performing arts. Fortunately, more and more people from all vocations in the performing arts industries are starting to realize that PAL Vancouver is for them too. And they as individuals are getting involved, and their organizations, more and more, are taking their place as significant patrons to this noble cause.

The performing arts enrich our lives. They remind us of our humanity and touch our hearts. Many who are not performers, who don't work in the performing arts, have also contributed to and continue to contribute to making the dream a reality. Some may have handed a toonie to their child to put in the hat we have passed after a show. Some have served unstintingly on our board of directors. Many have given generously of their time, energy and money. Our thanks.

If you would like to participate in the activities of PAL Canada or any of the other PAL chapters across the country here is how you can get in touch:

PAL Canada/PAL Toronto TEL: (416) 777-9674

EMAIL: info@palcanada.org WEB: www.palcanada.org

PAL Vancouver TEL: (604) 255-4312 EMAIL: info@palvancouver.org

WEB: www.palvancouver.org

PAL Calgary TEL: (403) 252-9255 EMAIL: lereaney@telus.net

WEB: www.palcalgary.com

PAL Stratford TEL: (519) 273-8058 EMAIL: banks@cyg.net

PAL Halifax (c/o ACTRA Maritimes) TEL: (902) 420-1404

EMAIL: maritimes@actra.ca WEB: www.palhalifax.org

Keith Martin Gordey is an actor. He serves on the boards of UBCP and PAL Vancouver. He is not looking forward to the day when he is old enough to apply to PAL.

SCREEN TEST: Getting access to our own films



by Christie MacFadyen

I went to three different sources in search of an answer to the seemingly unanswerable question: *How do we get more Canadian films on our movie screens? Unsurprisingly, I got three different answers...*

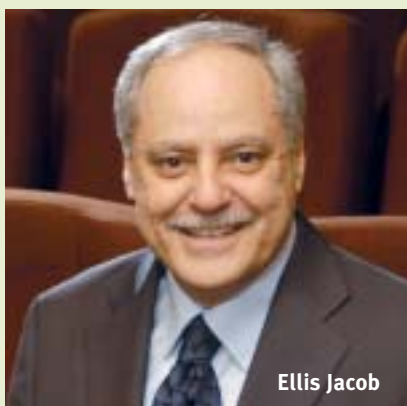
Honey wagons were jiggling when the news came to the film community that Cineplex Galaxy bought out Famous Players. Canadians now controlled 60% of the screens in our country! Our editor at InterACTRA wondered if I might invite Ellis Jacob, President and Chief Executive Officer of the new giant cinema chain, to lunch to see if this would mean more Canadian films in our theatres. In no time I was seated across from Mr. Jacob at a swanky Toronto bistro enjoying crispy Belgian frites dipped in herbed mayonnaise.

So Mr. Jacob, how do we get our films into the cineplex?

If it's a good film and people like it and pay to come and see it, we will show it in our theatres. If a Canadian film did better than the other films in the theatre it wouldn't be there for a week it would be there for a hell of a lot longer.

But we do make good films...

One of the difficulties is that a lot of the producers and distributors don't communicate. They come to you on Monday and say they want to open the movie on Friday, but by then you've already made your commitments. The communication has to start early, we have to work together and we have to develop that plan all the way to the finish line.



Ellis Jacob

Who has the cash for huge Hollywood-style promotional campaigns?

You have to start by platforming the movies and seeing how it performs, and that's not just Canadian films, some American films too, and you have to see how it does in the major markets and then you expand right across the country. People don't understand. 'Why isn't this movie playing on a hundred screens across the country?' In most cases it's because you don't want to take that financial risk as a distributor and find out it's not going to deliver.

'Platforming' ...that's a new one for me...

The Film Circuit, for example (a traveling show of independent films), has done an incredible job of getting Canadian films out there. We did it in every small market and some were so successful we had to expand to three or four evenings a week and often they sold out.

What about screen quotas? Or a box office levy to support the Canadian film industry?

I think that's a bad idea because I don't think access to screens is an issue. What it will do is basically force public companies to commit screens where there will be no audiences, and I think that's a mistake. If the audiences are there, we're going to keep the movies and we're going to run the movies. After gasoline and booze we are the most taxed commodity. As a retailer, the bottom line is we want to play films that will deliver in the marketplace whether it's from Canada, Bollywood, or Hollywood. It's hard for us to reach our percentages. Our capacity utilization is in the 20% range so most of those movie seats are going empty.

I also asked Ellis about the prospects of digital technology in cinemas. He doesn't think we'll be seeing it happen any time soon because digital projectors are too expensive. Pity, because last month I went to a screening of Atom Egoyan's

“If the audiences are there, we're going to keep the movies and we're going to run the movies.”

Quebec films have box office success, why can't we do the same in English Canada?

We have a pretty big battle. The French out-gross Hollywood on a regular basis. For example the new film coming out about **Maurice Richard** will blow Hollywood films off the screen in Quebec. I agree with **Wayne Clarkson** (head of Telefilm) in a lot of ways, at the end of the day the only way you will get better movies on the screen is by having the source of the movies improve – the artists, the scripts – and we've got to focus on what the audiences want to see. Producers are producing stuff that people don't really want to watch, and all our big actors go to L.A.

*new film Where the Truth Lies at Theatre D Digital in Toronto and it was stunning. Dozens of Canadian directors have done their digital post-production in Theatre D's beautifully restored art deco theatre and by all accounts they love it. I talked to **John Hazan**, co-founder of Theatre D and a pioneer in digital audio. He and his partners **Dan Peel** and **Carlos Herrera** want to create a space where cinema is an integral part of the film community: training, promoting, showing and making films.*

What's your plan for Theatre D?

It looks like a 1927 movie palace but with incredible technology. We'd like to establish an eight-cinema digital chain across – continued on next page

SCREEN TEST: Getting access to our own films

Canada in downtown theatres of major cities, bring them online, and bring back the original patina of the old theatres. Four days a week would be all Canadian programs and everyone across Canada who is in those eight cinemas would see the same film on the same night. That's a first, and filmmakers would then spend \$500 instead of \$30,000 to get their HD tapes out. Right now filmmakers pretty much have to hand-carry whatever they have because they only have one or two prints or one or two copies of the HD version.

The other three days at the chain will be a mix of private screenings or test screenings and independent or European films. We also want to do film training and have experts teach sound mixing, picture editing and prepping for features. You could do a live presentation in one city and have it shown in all the others cities simultaneously.

Why don't we see more Canadian films in the theatres now?

When people say that Canadians don't make films that people want to see it's such bullshit. Canadians are making them for their audience, their audience just isn't us, their audience is at film festivals, and the film festivals love these films. Right now *Sabah* is having a long run in our theatre. It's Canadian and people like it.

To round out this debate I spoke with ACTRA member **Ingrid Veninger**. She's an actor, producer, director and writer working in film, TV



Ingrid Veninger in *The Limb Lifter*.

and theatre. She has produced and acted in critically acclaimed films with directors such as **Jeremy Podeswa**, **Peter Mettler** and **Anais Granofsky**, with whom she recently completed the retro-future-gothic-romance *The Limb Salesman*. *Ingrid doesn't sit around waiting for the phone to ring.*

“A film that does \$200,000 in Canada is like making \$2 million in the States, yet we deem that a failure.”

What are we doing wrong?

As Canadians, even those in the industry are the last people to go out and see our own films, and the first to tear each other down. Do you know the lobster joke?

Yes, I know the lobster joke. No Canadian lobsters allowed out of the tank. The claws come out and pull you back in. It's creepy and neurotic.

First of all, we have to start taking more pride in our work. We have to want to get it out into the marketplace and feel confident that our films are entertaining. I see formulaic releases; a couple of ads in the paper, the standard two weeks in some theatre or one week because they already assume the film isn't going to do well. The distributors assume they're going to make their money back on broadcast and DVD rentals so why spend any on the theatrical release?

So the distributors are the lobsters in this case?

There is a prevalent attitude that Canadian films stink and we have to start changing that by exposing people to more Canadian films by whatever means necessary – free screenings at City Hall for example so people see films like *Bollywood Hollywood* and it has to be a regular thing so there's momentum. This is an industry that's growing up. We have to be patient and understand that it's going to take 10 or 20 years.

In many ways I think we are doing really well, it's happening slowly but surely. Our filmmakers get huge acclaim at festivals around the world. Theatrical release is just one avenue for a film to find its audience. Too much emphasis is put on how well a film does at the box office, that's how we

measure whether a film is a success or not, but that's inaccurate. All the other levels of exposure – TV, festivals, etc. – are not taken into account. A film that does \$200,000 in Canada is like making \$2 million in the States, yet we deem that a failure.

We should be working with distributors on marketing campaigns; distributors who are going to take more chances and love and believe in the films they distribute. We have to be proud of what we're making and work our asses off getting it into the marketplace and if it works to stand on the street in a chicken suit and hand out Popsicles... then do that!

But I want to be a movie star!

If you're an actor who complains about not being cast in stuff, then make your own work. No one's taking a chance on you? Take a chance on yourself, and prove to the world how amazing you are, write the most diverse part for yourself, something you would never be cast in. Create that for yourself, get it into one of the many festivals and start building your own way.

All right everyone, get to work we've got some seats to fill!

Actor *Christie MacFadyen* is ACTRA Toronto's VP External Affairs and a National Councillor.

by Ken Thompson, Director, Public Policy and Communications



CCAU press conference in Banff (left to right): Peter Murdoch (CEP), Maureen Parker (WGC), Arden Ryshpan (DGC), and Stephen Waddell (ACTRA).

CCAU to broadcasters: Stop cheating Canadians – you can afford to invest in drama!

Spending on Canadian TV drama has plummeted since 1999, with 2004 recording the lowest level in seven years. Drama spending by Canada's English-language private broadcasters bottomed out at \$53.6 million in 2004 from a high of \$73 million in 1998 – and that's including the amount the CTV is mandated to spend on drama under its transfer benefits, benefits that are due to run out this year. At the same time, spending on U.S. programming has more than doubled.

This was just one of the startling facts dug up by an independent investigation commissioned by ACTRA and its partners in the Canadian Coalition of Audio-visual Unions (CCAU). The report, *The Need for a Regulatory Safety Net*, was released at a press conference held during the 2005 Banff World Television Festival. During the festival, ACTRA and its CCAU partners put the reports directly into the hands of top-level industry decisions makers such as CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** and Telefilm Chair **Wayne Clarkson**.

Knowing that something had to be done to stop scripted drama – defined as both drama and comedy – from disappearing from our TV screens, the CCAU commissioned a report to find out what the English-language conventional broadcasters' advertising revenues are projected to be for the next four years. It turns out their revenues are set to rise by more than \$200 million by 2008. Obviously, despite their claims otherwise, they can afford to meet their obligations to Canadians by spending

more on high-quality indigenous drama. The study calls for regulations to guarantee a minimum level of Canadian drama on our public airwaves. It is critical that the CRTC put a long-term regulatory 'safety net' in place to ensure that Canadian drama levels do not fall below an acceptable level in English Canada.

Drama spending by Canada's English-language private broadcasters bottomed out at \$53.6 million in 2004 from a high of \$73 million in 1998.

That safety net should contain two components:

- a requirement that private conventional TV broadcasters spend a minimum percentage of their gross ad revenue on Canadian drama. Based on our research, the CCAU believes that the requirement should be at least 7%. This should be a minimum level, complemented by incentives that will reward broadcasters that meet or exceed that level; and
- each private station group should be required to commission at least two hours of original 10-point Canadian drama per week.

With this safety net in place, spending on Canadian drama would increase from \$53.6 million in 2004 to \$129-131 million in 2008. This is realistic given that the advertising revenues of conventional broadcasters are forecast to increase over the next five years.

While the report also includes a number of recommendations to ensure that pay and specialty services do their fair share, we believe that that the weight rests on the shoulders of the conventional broadcasters. The CBC and the three private TV station groups in English Canada – CanWest Global, CTV and CHUM – must continue

to be the principal carriers of high-ticket popular Canadian drama.

Canadian drama is critically important to the future of Canadian television. The CRTC's own Broadcast Monitoring Report shows that despite the so-called 'reality craze', year after year, when Canadians turn on their TVs, they tune into drama. Canadian dramatic programs allow us to celebrate our experiences, share our stories and identify with other Canadians. The production of Canadian drama is central to our cultural sovereignty.

For the full report go to www.actra.ca.

The members of the CCAU that financed the report include ACTRA, the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians Local 700-CEP (NABET), and the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC).



Heritage Minister brings tidings of joy to Banff

Heritage Minister Liza Frulla.

Heritage Minister **Liza Frulla** used June's Banff World Television Festival to let the industry know what the Liberal government will be doing to support Canadian TV productions. The minister's speech was positive, but then there is an election on the horizon.

Minister Frulla laid out a seven-point cultural agenda, zipping through the first six items: federal investments of \$860-million over the next five years, copyright reforms, museums policy, linguistic duality, support for Aboriginal cultures and cultural diversity around the world.

The government is extending its \$100-million CTF commitment for another year and says we can look forward to a long-term commitment to the CTF in 2006.

When she reached item seven she paused dramatically and announced the news for TV. She pointed out a fact we know only too well – 89% of what Canadians see on English-language TV is foreign programming. “We simply have to change this situation,” she said.

She then announced that the government is extending its \$100-million Canadian Television Fund (CTF) commitment beyond March 31, 2006, for another year. Best of all, she said that we could look forward to a long-term commitment to the CTF in the 2006 budget. The CBC will also continue to get funding from the CTF but not the amount requested by

Richard Stursberg, the CBC's head of English-language programming (you might remember his infamous deal with Hollywood talent agents when he headed up Telefilm last year).

Minister Frulla also told the eager audience that the CRTC will have to review its policies, including the disastrous 1999 Television Policy, during the licence renewals coming up in the next few years. We're not sure if CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** was in the audience for the minister's edict because he didn't mention it in his luncheon address the next day.

The minister then announced that the governance of the CTF would be streamlined and that creators would be represented on the CTF board – a welcome first. But CTF Chair **Doug Barrett** must have missed this bit since he

neglected to mention creators in his plug for maintaining the status quo at the CTF board during his luncheon address two days later.

Not to be outdone, **Bev Oda**, culture critic for the Conservative Party, held her own press conference during the festival – just in case the Libs don't form the next government. What she said, contrary to her party's previous platforms is that the Conservative Party would not fold up the CBC or dismantle the funding for domestic production and sell everything to the Americans. Whew, what a relief! Let's just hope **Stephen Harper** got a copy of that speech.

New rights for performers

Minister Frulla and her cabinet colleague **David Emerson**, Minister of Industry, tabled a bill in Parliament to amend *The Copyright Act* at the end of June before the summer recess. The changes mean that performers of audio recordings, such as singers and others, will finally have a property interest in their recorded performances, so that they can negotiate uses of their recorded performances including copying and distribution as well as transmission of their recorded performances over the internet. Performers will also receive a moral right that protects the integrity of their performances.

The amendments make the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Performers and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) part of Canada's *Copyright Act* and introduce other amendments that regulate the use of creative material on the internet. ACTRA will also continue to advocate for the same rights for performances in television, films and other audiovisual media to also be added to *The Copyright Act* as soon as possible.

While these amendments are a welcome step forward, every silver lining has its cloud and this bill is proving to be as controversial as the last copyright amendment in 1996 that brought performers neighbouring rights and a whole new stream of income. ACTRA is especially concerned about new exemptions that allow more free uses, reduced liability for ISPs transmitting pirate recordings and inadequate legal protections of anti-circumvention measures that would cancel out the benefits of the new rights won by performers.

The copyright bill will go to second reading and then to public consultation hearings when Parliament reconvenes in the fall.

Research fuels bargaining, organizing by Marit Stiles, Director of Research

I know you've been wondering what ACTRA's Research and Collective Bargaining department is all about. It's been weighing heavily on your mind. When you think ACTRA Research do you conjure up images of lab coats and vials? Or do you imagine hordes of forensic officers and statisticians poring over reams of data, spewing from giant computers – *Cold Squad* meets *2001: A Space Odyssey*?

Well, you're close. Sort of. Our primary job is to support collective bargaining. We consult members to find out how our agreements can work better for you, pull together background materials for negotiating teams, analyze industry data and information from our own membership database to provide a clear picture of the context within which negotiations take place, and model different scenarios. We compare and contrast clauses in other industry agreements with our own. We support branches when they have interpretation questions. And we provide analysis of key policy issues and funding decisions. No vials. No lab coats. No giant paper-spewing computers. Well, not yet.

This fall, preparation for negotiation of our major agreement, the Independent Production Agreement (IPA), will be front and centre. Negotiations with the CFTPA will kick off in February, and we will be more prepared than ever. As always, extensive consultations with our members will be

central to our success. The IPA has a direct impact on your career, and your livelihood – you need to tell us how we can make it work better for your safety, your career, and of course, your wallets. We will be checking in with members across the country this fall and there will be many other opportunities for you to have a say at 'town hall' meetings, branch AGMs, and through a link on our website.

In February, producers will see an experienced and savvy ACTRA team across the table. ACTRA's chief negotiator, National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell**, will be joined by a seasoned negotiating committee, including National President **Richard Hardacre**, who has participated in three previous rounds of IPA negotiations and served as Vice-Chair of the 2003 Committee. During the '98-'99 negotiations, Richard co-chaired a sub-committee with **Shirley Douglas** that authored groundbreaking new protections and rights for child performers.

In the meantime, bargaining continues on other fronts. CBC negotiations kicked off in May, 2005, and at time of writing, are still underway. The development of a solid digital media proposal is key.

ACTRA's team has been toiling for months to get an agreement on internet use. The issue is increasingly important to members with the recent announcement that cbc.ca will be going commercial and

with the CBC's increasing drive to use archival footage on the internet. Our members deserve to be fairly compensated for the use of their work in these growing areas.

ACTRA is also participating in a committee with the CFTPA and APFTQ analyzing opportunities in the fact-based/lifestyle genre, and examining fee structure and use fees for performers. At the Banff World Television Festival in June, I sat in on a panel of producers discussing the genre. Several producers said they see the future of this area being more reliant on programs that are well-scripted, with high-production value, and professional performers. This is all taking place, of course, within the context of Writers Guild of America, west lawsuits alleging sweatshop-like conditions in some reality productions.

ACTRA's research department also fuels our organizing efforts. One of our current focal points is Canada's booming video game industry. **Jill Rosenberg**, ACTRA's Digital Media Organizer, is actively working with video game producers across the country to encourage them to use ACTRA members. Jill is also building on a report recently released by New Media BC and the National Research Council that attempts to map out not only what companies are producing video games in Canada, but what type of games they're producing. Jill's interest is in finding out where opportunities exist for performers, and organizing those productions to ensure better pay and protection for our members.

It's going to be a busy fall for our department, and full of change. In August, we said farewell to **Sharon Davidson**, our Research and Collective Bargaining Coordinator. Sharon is well known to many members for her warmth, humour and intellect. And for Branch Reps across the country that have sought her advice in the interpretation of clauses in our collective agreements, she will be sorely missed. We wish her the best of luck and look forward to working with Sharon in her new role at ACTRA/UBCP. And we are pleased to announce that long-time ACTRA Toronto steward D.J. Anderson is joining our team!

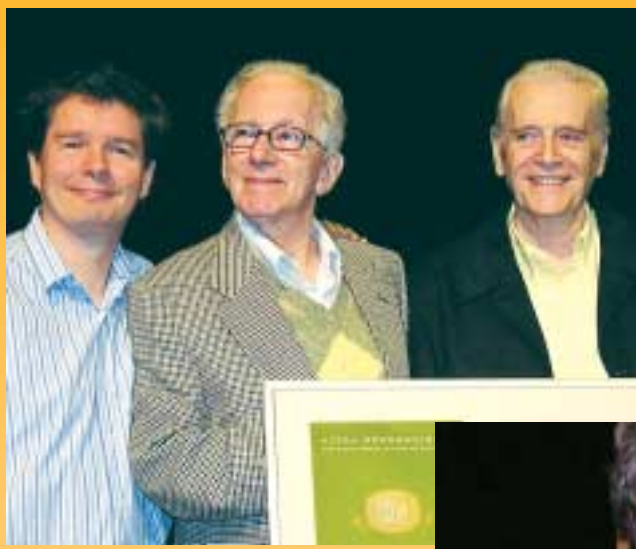
Now back to building those giant data-spewing computers...

Introducing your CBC Negotiating Committee members:



Richard Hardacre, Thor Bishopric, Nigel Bennett, David Calderisi, Jackson Davies, Catherine Disher, Soo Garay, Kyra Harper, Brooke Johnson and Ray Landry.

Newfoundland/Labrador



Thor Bishopric presents ACTRA National's gift to Newfoundland/Labrador founding members **John Holmes** and **Paul O'Neil**.

Newfoundland/Labrador

This year marked the 40th anniversary of ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador. To celebrate the occasion here on The Rock, we were host to the ACTRA National Executive meeting. On Saturday night we held a traditional Newfoundland dance and a card game. (**Brian Gromoff** is yet to come to terms with the rules of a good game of Growl!) After prizes were distributed for the highest and lowest scores, National President **Thor Bishopric** presented our branch with a beautifully framed, original edition of the 1965 ACTRA magazine article announcing the 'birth' of ACTRA Newfoundland. It was a fabulous and symbolic gift. In addition, **Keith Martin Gordey**, on behalf of UBCP/ACTRA, presented us with a ceremonial bentwood box beautifully carved by a Salish-Cree artist. Both gifts now inhabit a special place in our branch office. **Jane Nelson** and **Bob Underwood** from AFBS presented us with a donation for our new artist assistance program. Thanks to all who helped us celebrate!

– Amy House, President, ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador

Excerpt from the original welcoming announcement:

"The formation of a new branch of ACTRA is not an end in itself. But it is a beginning of the inevitable and necessary expansion of the Association towards the goal of representation of all writers and performers in Canada wherever they may be living and working.

To represent everyone is one thing, but representation must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility among the membership. And in Newfoundland there are signs already of a great sense of the kind of responsibility that will make ACTRA respected everywhere."



Keith Martin Gordey presents UBCP/ACTRA's gift to Newfoundland/Labrador President **Amy House**.

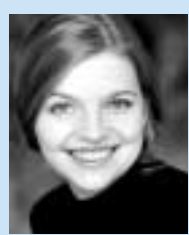
New Presidents for Calgary and Manitoba

Duval Lang, Artistic Director of *Quest Theatre*, will serve as President of ACTRA Calgary's new council elected in May. With Duval, newly minted councillors include **Darren Hafner** as Secretary, **Tom Erikson** as Stunt Member-at-Large, and **Rod Padmos**, **Kevin Rothery** and **Laryssa Yanchak** will all serve as Members-at-Large. Returning for second consecutive terms are **Roxanne Wong** (Vice-President), **Dr. James Dugan** (Treasurer) and **David LeReaney** (Member-At-Large). Former President **Brian Gromoff** will replace **Linda Kupecek** as National Councillor starting in January 2006.

ACTRA Manitoba elected **Sharon Bajer** as President in June. Sharon is joined by returning councillors Vice-President **Rea Kavanagh**, Treasurer **Ti Hallas**, and Secretary **Claude Dorge**. New to council are **Daina Leitold**, **Brenda Gorlick**, **Talia Pura**, **Adam Smoluk** and **Darcy Fehr**. **Wayne Nicklas**, National Vice-President, continues as National Councillor.



Duval Lang



Sharon Bajer

Toronto

In June, ACTRA Toronto launched **Mainstream Now!** a catalogue of 425 visibly diverse performers and performers with disabilities. The catalogue is part of ACTRA Toronto's continued goal of increasing opportunities for actors from diverse groups and broadening the types of roles they are considered for. *Mainstream Now!* will be distributed widely and its use will be encouraged among producers, directors and casting directors, both in Canada and abroad.

Mainstream Now!'s predecessor, **Into the Mainstream**, was published by ACTRA Toronto in the mid '90s and proved to be a valuable resource for engagers and casting directors. It also increased work opportunities for ACTRA Toronto members from various racially and culturally diverse groups. The new publication is in a binder format and additional pages will be distributed regularly by ACTRA Toronto.



Denis Akiyama and Sandi Ross at the *Mainstream Now!* launch.



Jennifer Podemski, Shakura S'Aida and Jani Lauzon.



Leesa Levinson is interviewed by *ETalk Daily*.

Contact ACTRA...

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www1.actra.ca/stjohns

applause



International kudos for Gross

ACTRA member **Paul Gross** captured the best actor award at the prestigious Monte Carlo Television Festival in July for the CBC political thriller *H2O*. Paul played a Canadian prime minister seeking to sell the country's water to the U.S. and co-wrote and co-produced.

Leo Awards

ACTRA members carried home a lot of hardware from the 7th Annual Leo Awards in May. The Leos celebrate B.C.'s best and brightest in film and television. Congratulations to all ACTRA members who were nominated, and to those who took home awards:

Feature length Drama, Male Supporting Performance **Chris Gauthier**, *Earthsea*

Dramatic Series, Male Guest Performance **Ben Ratner**, *The Collector*

Dramatic Series, Female Guest Performance **Thea Gill**, *The Collector*

Dramatic Series, Supporting Performance, Male **Matthew Currie Holmes**, *Godiva's*

Dramatic Series, Supporting Performance, Female **Sonya Salooma**, *The Collector*

Host in an Information Series **Kristina Maticic** (with **Anna Wallner**), *The Shopping Bags*



Rick Miller in *Bigger Than Jesus*.



The Dora Award-winning cast of *And By The Way Miss...*

2005 Dora Awards

Bravo to the following ACTRA members who were recognized for their brilliant stage performances at the 2005 Dora Awards, honouring Toronto's performing arts:

Outstanding Performance by a Male in a Principal Role – Play **Rick Miller**, *Bigger Than Jesus*

Outstanding Performance by a Female in a Principal Role – Play **Irene Poole**, *The Leisure Society*

Outstanding Performance by a Male in a Principal Role – Musical **David Keeley**, *Urinetown*

Outstanding Performance by a Female in a Principal Role – Musical **Mary Ann McDonald**, *Urinetown*

Outstanding Performance by a Male **Andy Massingham**, *Rough House*

Outstanding Performance by a Female **Barbara Gordon**, *That Time*

Performance in Theatre for Young Audiences

Ensemble: **Amber Godfrey, Andrea Donaldson, Diana Tso, Lauren Brotman, Christina Sicoli**, *And By The Way Miss...*

Youth or Children's Series **Sarah Lind**, *Edgemont*

Feature Length Drama, Female Lead **Helene Joy**, *Desolation Sound*

Feature Length Drama, Male Lead **Shawn Ashmore**, *Earthsea*

Dramatic Series, Male Lead **John Cassini**, *Robson Arms*

Dramatic Series, Female Lead **Amanda Tapping**, *Stargate SG-1*

Short Drama, Male **Ryan Robbins**, *Man Feel Pain*

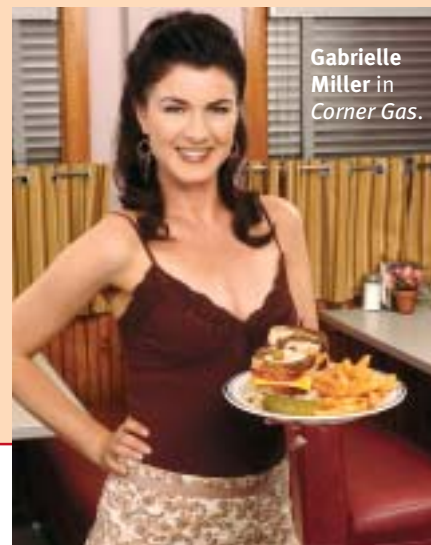
Short Drama, Female **Gwynyth Walsh**, *Flush*

Best Talk Series **Vicki Gabereau**, *Gabereau Live!*

Music, Comedy or Variety Program or Series, Host or Performance **Gabrielle Miller**, *Corner Gas*



John Cassini in *Robson Arms*.



Gabrielle Miller in *Corner Gas*.



Katie Boland



Mpho Koaho



Lauren Lee Smith

Just watch them!

Rising talents **Katie Boland**, **Marc-André Grondin**, **Mpho Koaho** and **Lauren Lee Smith** were among Playback's selection of "10 to Watch". The annual roundup includes talented actors, directors, writers who are "on the cusp of taking their creative careers to the next level."

- **Katie Boland**, 17, Toronto. "Featured in the much-anticipated mini-series *Terminal City*."

- **Marc-André Grondin**, 21, Montreal. "Winning hearts of movie goers in *C.R.A.Z.Y.*"
- **Mpho Koaho**, 22, Toronto. "Possible breakout in upcoming biopic about 50 Cent."
- **Lauren Lee Smith**, 25, Vancouver/L.A. "Stars in the forthcoming sexually charged feature *Lie With Me*."

Young Artist Awards

ACTRA members took Hollywood by storm at the 26th Annual *Young Artist Awards*. Bravo to all of the ACTRA-member winners and nominees:

Feature Film, Supporting Actor
Cameron Bright, *Birth*

International Feature Film, Leading Performer
Katie Boland, *Some Things That Stay*
Marc Donato, *The Blue Butterfly*

TV Movie, Mini-series or Special, Leading Actress
April Mullen, *Cavedweller*

TV Movie, Mini-series or Special, Supporting Actor
★ **Joseph Marrese**, *Lives of the Saints*
Alexander Conti, *When Angels Come to Town*

TV Movie, Mini-series or Special, Supporting Actress
★ **Olivia Ballantyne**, *Samantha: An American Girl Holiday*
Genevieve Buechner, *Family Sin*
Miriam McDonald, *She's Too Young*

TV Series, Leading Actor
Jamie Johnston, *Wild Card*
Adamo Ruggiero, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*

TV Series, Supporting Actor
Noel Callahan, *Romeo!*
Aubrey Drake Graham, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*

TV Series, Supporting Actress
★ **Christina Schmidt**, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*

TV Series, Actress 10 or younger
Conchita Campbell, *The 4400*
Jodelle Micah Ferland, *Kingdom Hospital*

TV Series, Guest Starring Actress
Cassie Steele, *Doc*

TV Series, Recurring Actor
Spencer Achtymichuk, *Dead Zone*

TV Series, Recurring Young Actress
Alex Rose Steele, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*
Brittney Wilson, *Polly and the Pocket*

TV Series, Ensemble Cast
Degrassi: The Next Generation – **Ryan Cooley**, **Jake Epstein**, **Stacey Farber**, **Aubrey Drake Graham**, **Miriam McDonald**, **Adamo Ruggiero**, **Christina Schmidt**, **Alex Rose Steele**, **Cassie Steele**, **Sarah Barrable Tishauer**.

Voice-Over Role
★ **Tajja Isen**, *Atomic Betty*
Brittney Wilson, *Polly and the Pocket*

★ Indicates award winner

Vicki Gabereau receives ACTRA's John Drainie Award

Interviewer extraordinaire **Vicki Gabereau** is this year's recipient of ACTRA's John Drainie Award for distinguished contribution to broadcasting. ACTRA President **Richard Hardacre** presented the award to Vicki at June's Banff World Television Festival's awards luncheon.

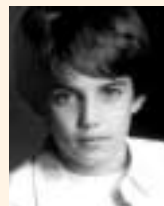
A Vancouver native, Vicki Gabereau began her 30-year career as a fill-in radio talk-show host in Brampton, Ontario before moving to the CBC where her first job was in archives. In 1981 she became host of CBC Radio's

Variety Tonight and in 1985, the format was changed and the two-hour long afternoon program *Gabereau* was born. Twelve years and 15,000 interviews later, Vicki moved to TV as host of *Gabereau Live*, which



wrapped this April, after more than 3,000 guests and 1,000 episodes.

ACTRA's John Drainie Award has been awarded since 1968. Vicki joins an illustrious list of past recipients that includes **David Suzuki**, **Shelagh Rogers**, **Pierre Berton**, **Mavor Moore**, **Lister Sinclair**, **Len Peterson**, **Knowlton Nash**, **Peter Gzowski**, **Barbara Frum** and **Daryl Duke**.



Joseph Marrese



Olivia Ballantyne



Christina Schmidt



NORRIS BICK 1936-2005

Most of us can only dream to leave such a legacy as **Norris Bick**. He was a broadcaster, musician, actor, singer, sportsman, environmentalist, as well as a true and caring friend.

Among his many professional accomplishments, Norris joined CBC Radio in Calgary in 1966 to host many popular programs over the years. He was also the on-camera weatherman when CBC TV launched in Calgary in 1975.

It was music, however, that was the constant in Norris' life. He was the recipient of an opera scholarship and subsequently performed in eight operas. Norris also played big band music, combos and jazz.

Norris was one of the founding members of ACTRA Calgary. We are so glad we were able to thank him and his colleagues for their hard work in establishing rights for performers in Calgary at our 60th Anniversary celebration in 2003 where Norris was presented with Life Membership. Norris continued to be an active and vocal member of our branch, even while facing illness and in recovery.

Those of us fortunate enough to have spent afternoons in the Legion with Norris and his good chum **Fred Diehl** were absolutely charmed by the stories that Norris would expertly narrate of days gone by. We will try to honour Norris by remembering him in stories of our own.

We all miss him; our hearts and thoughts are with his loving wife **Sandra**.

– Submitted by Norris' many friends at
ACTRA Calgary



PATRICK CHRISTOPHER 1945-2005

Patrick made a tremendous mark on the performing arts in this region. As a theatre professor at Dalhousie University, he instilled hundreds of young performers with his fiery passion for classic theatre. As a founder and Artistic Director of *Shakespeare by the Sea*, he provided thousands of Haligonians and visitors with unforgettable theatrical experiences – using the areas forests, shorelines and architecture in ways no-one had ever conceived of before. As an ACTRA member, his fabulous voice graced countless films and commercials.

Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife, ACTRA Maritimes member and former National Councillor **Elizabeth Murphy**. Elizabeth and Patrick had been together for 29 years and had sealed their relationship with a midnight wedding earlier this month – in celebration of Patrick's retirement from Dal and his 60th birthday.

Theatre in Nova Scotia has lost one of the great voices of the arts. We are all the poorer for the loss.

– Gary Vermeir,
ACTRA Maritimes Branch Representative

We share our sadness at the passing of the following members and colleagues:

Arnie Achtman
Damian Bagdan
Peter Brockington
Bruce Robert
Campbell
Derek Curwen
John F. Dodds

Delores Etienne
Bob Grace
Bob Hunter
Rheta Hutton
Heath Lamberts
Adam Ludwig
Phyllis Mailing

David Major
George Salverson
Edward F. Stidder
Kay Tremblay
Clara 'Clibby'
Verrian

The proof is in the pudding



by Ferne Downey,
ACTRA National Treasurer

Financial statements are a strange and secret language to many actors. Are they hieroglyphs? Are they text? Are they stage directions? There are many numbers but which are key to the scene? In my never-ending guise as a decoder, I will try to entice you to give the following pages a read. For a very good reason: these financial statements represent the final year of our ambitious five-year *ACTRA Plan* and they reveal a good story. We lived by the budget we set; we cut and controlled spending; we were able to share money with branches in need through ACTRA Plan Rebates; and the prize at the end of the day is a bigger surplus (\$533,742) and a healthier Action Defense Fund (ACTRA's strike fund built up over the years to \$1,406,904).

In 2000, then-President Thor Bishopric urged ACTRA to make bolder plans and we did. We launched the *ACTRA Plan* – ACTRA's ambitious business plan.

Members have benefited from significant improvements in member services – stronger collective agreements; a renewed commitment to public policy advocacy; organizing and a greatly enhanced industry

PRS/NR and the national union. We were united on this initiative from coast to coast and members voted in favour of the constitutional changes, which included an increase in basic and working dues.

Members have benefited from significant improvements in member services – stronger collective agreements; a renewed commitment to public policy advocacy; organizing and a greatly enhanced industry profile.

profile. *The ACTRA Plan* was kick-started that year with voluntary contributions from branches in surplus: Calgary, Maritimes, Montreal, Toronto and UBCP.

By late 2002, we came to the members with a unanimous recommendation – the time had come to rebalance the revenues to meet the challenges facing all of the components of ACTRA: branches,

As you will see on the *Statement of Operation*, ACTRA is funded by five revenue streams. The biggest stream flows from the branches – 'Per Capita Payments' for full and apprentice members and 'Information Services' (both determined by the number of members in a branch). The next is a more volatile line of income: 'Equalization Payments' for non-members working in ACTRA's jurisdiction, which decreases as we win our war to have more ACTRA members working! And lastly, there is a small amount of interest income. I say this to illustrate that the health of the branches sustains the health of ACTRA – we are mutually dependent upon each other.

This year we had a bigger surplus than anticipated – there were anomalies that went in our favour and are unlikely to be repeated. Our surplus of just over \$500,000 this year is not chicken feed and we respectfully acknowledge that. And it's also appropriate for a union of our size to have a strike fund.

ACTRA is fighting hard for Canadian production and with our research capabilities we will meet globalized media companies head to head and point for point in our upcoming negotiations. ACTRA is on your side and these financial statements show what we accomplished together last year.

N.B. Re: Note 6 Contingency. For those following the GST filing story that began five years ago, here's a hot-off-the press update: "Subsequent to completion of the audit, the CRA has revoked the November 2000 ruling. Based on our appeal, the CRA has ruled that certain revenue streams are subject to GST. This new ruling is effective November 30, 2000."

MEMBER DISCOUNTS Show your card and save your money

All ACTRA and UBCP members (Full, Apprentice and ACTRA Extras) are entitled to a number of **discounts** when you show your ACTRA or UBCP member card. For a full list of discounts and details on how to access these deals and more, pick up a copy of the benefits guide at your ACTRA branch, or download a copy from the members' section at www.actra.ca. Questions? Contact interactra@actra.ca or 1-800-387-3516 EXT 4045.

Bell Mobility Take advantage of special rates with Bell Mobility. With the plan, \$22.50/month gives you: 200 anytime minutes/month, free call display and voicemail, per second billing, \$0.20/min after 200 min., \$0.10/Canadian long distance, and NO connection charge.

Other plans are available, please ask for details when you call 1-866-548-2666 ext. 8020 or visit ANY Bell Mobility store, quoting plan number 100020530. Existing Bell Mobility customers can also switch to this plan free of charge by calling **1-800-667-0123**.

Biz Books Members are entitled to 10% off on all merchandise (excluding software) at Vancouver's leading industry bookstore. Just present your ACTRA/UBCP membership card at Biz Books at 304 West Cordova, Vancouver BC, TEL:(604) 669-6431.

Lush Get a 25% discount on professional-quality cosmetics! Just show your membership card at the cash register of any of Lush's locations across Canada.
www.lushcanada.com

Best Western International Get discounted rates at more than 4,000 hotels worldwide. Call **1-800-528-1234** and quote identification number 01340730.

Other hotels: ACTRA members are entitled to special rates at participating hotels in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Hollywood. Check the Benefits Guide for full details and locations.



Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

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**AUDITORS' REPORT
 TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTRA**

We have audited the balance sheet of ACTRA National as at February 28, 2005 and the statements of operations, net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at February 28, 2005 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Clarke Henning LLP
 Clarke Henning LLP
 Chartered Accountants
 Toronto, Ontario
 April 29, 2005

ACTRA NATIONAL
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

ACTRA NATIONAL
BALANCE SHEET
 AS AT FEBRUARY 28, 2005

	2005	2004
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 1,519,635	\$ 900,288
Accounts receivable	632,352	281,847
Prepaid expenses and deposits	64,037	54,861
Due from ACTRA Toronto Performers Branch	-	993
Due from ACTRA Performers' Rights Society	-	2,773
	<u>2,216,024</u>	<u>1,240,762</u>
Furniture, equipment and software (note 3)	124,974	251,863
	<u>2,340,998</u>	<u>1,492,625</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	465,394	403,114
Accrued vacation pay	36,976	35,428
Due to Branches	150,740	53,564
Due to ACTRA Toronto Performers Branch	99,726	-
Due to ACTRA Performers' Rights Society	25,089	-
Due to U.B.C.P.	28,812	-
	<u>806,737</u>	<u>492,106</u>
NET ASSETS		
Extraordinary contingency fund (note 2)	2,383	2,383
Unappropriated surplus	1,406,904	746,273
Invested in furniture, equipment and software	124,974	251,863
	<u>1,534,261</u>	<u>1,000,519</u>
	<u>\$ 2,340,998</u>	<u>\$ 1,492,625</u>

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Thor Bishopric

Thor Bishopric, Director

M. Ferné Downey

Ferne Downey, Director

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

	Invested in Furniture, Equipment and Software	Unappropriated Surplus	Extraordinary Contingency Fund	Total	
				2005	2004
Net Assets – at beginning of year	\$ 251,863	\$ 746,273	\$ 2,383	\$ 1,000,519	\$ 805,920
Excess of income over expenses	–	533,742	–	533,742	194,599
Purchase of furniture, equipment and software	9,732	(9,732)	–	–	–
Depreciation	(136,621)	136,621	–	–	–
Net Assets – at end of year	\$ 124,974	\$ 1,406,904	\$ 2,383	\$ 1,534,261	\$ 1,000,519

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

	2005	2004
Income		
Per capita – full members	\$ 3,128,588	\$ 3,106,025
Per capita – apprentice members	502,800	497,250
Information services	251,345	76,589
Equalization income	1,125,837	1,004,513
Interest income	17,371	12,258
	5,025,941	4,696,635
Expenses		
National council and executive (Schedule A)	154,175	122,995
National committees (Schedule B)	19,495	17,400
National executive director's office (Schedule C)	250,667	373,740
Bargaining and research (Schedule D)	372,934	413,244
Collective agreements (Schedule E)	248,782	265,368
Policy and communications (Schedule F)	565,272	537,951
Policy consultant (Schedule G)	10,415	58,236
External relations (Schedule H)	106,652	91,035
Finance, human resources and administration (Schedule I)	817,019	832,381
Information technology (Schedule J)	603,051	724,479
Occupancy (Schedule K)	357,590	357,739
GST expense	44,909	44,020
Transfer to ACTRA Performers' Rights Society	220,500	250,000
Transfer to Western Region	–	50,000
Apprentice member credit	173,921	153,686
	3,945,382	4,292,274
Excess of income over expenses before transfer payments	1,080,559	404,361
ACTRA financial rebates to branches	(332,100)	–
Transfer payments to branches	(214,717)	(209,762)
Excess of income over expenses	\$ 533,742	\$ 194,599

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

	2005	2004
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash receipts from members, nonmembers and producers	\$ 4,658,065	\$ 4,772,969
Cash paid for expenses	(4,300,926)	(4,335,626)
Interest received	17,371	12,258
	374,510	449,601
Cash flows from financing activity		
Advances from (repayments to) related organizations	254,569	80,997
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of furniture, equipment and software	(9,732)	(64,202)
Change in cash during the year	619,347	466,396
Cash – at beginning of year	900,288	433,892
Cash – at end of year	\$ 1,519,635	\$ 900,288

ACTRA NATIONAL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

1. ORGANIZATION

ACTRA National is a not for profit organization. The organization is a federation of branches and local unions, national in scope, representing performers in the live transmission and recorded media.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for nonprofit organizations.

These financial statements include only the operations carried on by ACTRA National. They do not include the assets, liabilities, income and expenses of the autonomous branches, including those administered by ACTRA National in trust for those branches. Separate financial statements have been prepared for the branches.

Furniture, Equipment and Software

Furniture, equipment and software are recorded at cost and amortized over their estimated useful lives on a straight line basis as follows:

- Computer equipment – 3 years
- Computer software – 5 years
- Furniture and fixtures – 5 years

Revenue

Revenue is accrued as earned.

Extraordinary Contingency Fund

In 1998 an extraordinary contingency fund was established to provide for organizing, bargaining and negotiations, extraordinary meetings of ACTRA National, and legal counsel. The fund was financed through voluntary contributions of 5% of nonmember work permit income from the branches/local unions. Subsequent to the 2002 fiscal year, no additional contributions have been made to the fund.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires the Company's management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and related notes to the financial statements. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

3. FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

Details of furniture, equipment and software are as follows:

	Accumulated		Net Book Value	
	Cost	Depreciation	2005	2004
Computer equipment	\$628,984	\$586,225	\$42,759	\$118,372
Computer software	109,744	68,069	41,675	63,624
Furniture and fixtures	176,750	136,210	40,540	69,867
	\$915,478	\$790,504	\$124,974	\$251,863

Computer system development costs that relate to new functions are capitalized and amortized over five years. These costs are classified as computer software.

4. LEASE COMMITMENTS

The Association has commitments under operating leases for premises. The leases expire on July 31, 2010 and the minimum annual payments under the leases are as follows:

Fiscal year	2006	\$ 94,143
	2007	105,090
	2008	105,090
	2009	105,090
	2010	105,090
	2011	43,788

In addition to the minimum rent, the Company is obligated to pay operating costs for its office space. The operating costs paid were approximately \$125,000 (2004 – \$121,000).

5. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The organization's financial instruments consist of cash, accounts receivable, accounts payable and advances to/from related companies. It is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

The fair value of these financial instruments, except for the advances to/from related companies, corresponds to their carrying value due to their shortterm maturity. The fair value of the advances to/from related companies is not readily determinable because of the related party nature of the balances.

6. CONTINGENCY

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), has ruled that certain revenue streams are not taxable. Consequently, previously claimed related input tax credits may not be deductible. This ruling is currently being appealed. In the event that the appeal is unsuccessful, input tax credits along with interest would become reimbursable to CCRA. Neither the aggregate amount of input tax credits to be reimbursed and interest, nor the outcome of the appeal are determinable at this time.

ACTRA NATIONAL
SCHEDULES OF OPERATING EXPENSES
 YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2005

	2005	2004
National Council and Executive (Schedule A)		
National Council		
Meeting costs	\$ 23,156	\$ 28,814
Councillor travel costs	22,790	19,509
Officer expenses	8,384	7,125
Senior staff expenses	6,692	4,672
Councillor tool kits	14,697	-
	75,719	60,120
National Executive		
Meeting costs	24,400	6,008
Officer expenses	9,906	4,971
Senior staff expenses	7,815	46
	42,121	11,025
Officers and senior staff meetings		
Meeting costs	383	710
Officer expenses	1,906	4,629
Senior staff expenses	1,015	4,589
	3,304	9,928
Honoraria	29,250	29,021
Officer expenses – other	3,781	12,901
	\$ 154,175	\$ 122,995
National Committees (Schedule B)		
Political action committee	\$ 500	\$ 684
Finance committee meetings	384	900
Women in the Director's Chair	10,000	10,000
PAL	5,000	5,000
Communications committee meetings	-	542
Discipline committee	-	274
Other committees	3,611	-
	\$ 19,495	\$ 17,400
National Executive Director's Office (Schedule C)		
Salaries	\$ 186,113	\$ 285,817
RRSP	22,482	34,376
General benefits	26,084	23,107
	234,679	343,300
National Executive Director expenses	9,051	18,951
Regional Director expenses	6,937	-
Western Regional Director expenses	-	5,900
Eastern Regional Director expenses	-	5,589
	\$ 250,667	\$ 373,740

	2005	2004
Bargaining and Research (Schedule D)		
Salaries	\$ 256,881	\$ 293,235
Maternity benefits	3,775	11,315
RRSP	19,849	17,993
General benefits	54,845	49,196
	335,350	371,739
Director expenses	11,460	4,692
Research materials	5,146	10,227
Organizing expenses and tools	20,978	26,586
	\$ 372,934	\$ 413,244
Collective Agreement Negotiation and Administration (Schedule E)		
CBC		
Negotiations	\$ -	\$ 4,252
Officer expenses	-	1,557
Senior staff expenses	51	90
Administration	-	48
Legal	1,500	2,000
Editing	6,070	1,380
	7,621	9,327
Commercials		
Negotiations	40,608	-
Officer expenses	5,208	-
Senior staff expenses	7,790	673
Administration	14,414	247
Legal	10,000	10,000
Printing	76,533	36,313
	154,553	47,233
IPA		
Negotiations	840	42,198
Officer expenses	1,893	6,358
Senior staff expenses	138	6,198
Administration	243	138
Legal	10,000	25,000
Conference fees	3,220	3,332
Printing	59,909	122,430
	76,243	205,654
Other		
Negotiations	396	160
Senior staff expenses	4,241	940
Administration	-	54
Legal	4,000	2,000
Printing	1,728	-
	10,365	3,154
	\$ 248,782	\$ 265,368
Policy and Communications (Schedule F)		
Salaries	\$ 214,366	\$ 145,044
RRSP	15,644	10,973
General benefits	41,278	26,566
	271,288	182,583
Director expenses	31,644	14,765
Lobbying expenses	40,054	17,054
Coalitions	19,735	22,006
President's expenses	4,271	1,409
	95,704	55,234
InterACTRA	102,110	65,458
Advertising	31,919	29,756
Sponsorships	26,976	24,852
Promotional materials	4,404	3,073
Administrative services	9,424	5,398
Publications	1,878	4,518
ACTRA awards	16,223	24,000
Communications Advisor	-	8,802
Public Relations Officer's expenses	1,199	354
Face to Face online marketing	4,147	-
	198,280	166,211
ACTRA 60th anniversary	-	133,923
	\$ 565,272	\$ 537,951

	2005	2004
Policy Consultant (Schedule G)		
Advisor fees	\$ 10,415	\$ 50,000
Expenses	-	8,236
	\$ 10,415	\$ 58,236
External Relations (Schedule H)		
FIA affiliation fees	\$ 39,142	\$ 35,264
CLC affiliation fees	22,911	21,578
Officer expenses		
FIA	4,902	4,607
FIANA	-	1,805
SAG/AFTRA	11,113	10,561
Senior staff expenses		
FIA	4,891	4,571
FIANA	-	1,291
SAG/WTO	14,591	11,358
Other	9,102	-
	\$ 106,652	\$ 91,035
Finance, Human Resources and Administration (Schedule I)		
Salaries	\$ 521,883	474,455
RRSP	43,243	43,367
General benefits	112,900	80,082
Temporary help	1,333	2,170
	679,359	600,074
National Director of Finance and Administration expenses		
Administration expenses	1,060	422
Printing	29,869	36,044
Professional fees	7,893	5,377
Auditing fees	10,939	8,229
Legal fees	15,000	59,724
Staff conference	21,498	17,718
Staff recruitment	975	3,311
Staff training	10,485	5,605
Staff appreciation	1,914	2,580
Bank charges	8,027	8,297
Alliance debt reduction	30,000	85,000
	137,660	232,307
	\$ 817,019	\$ 832,381
Information Technology (Schedule J)		
Salaries	\$ 308,377	286,654
Maternity benefits	-	6,911
RRSP	19,897	21,633
General benefits	65,343	54,876
	393,617	370,074
Maintenance	1,711	4,422
Software	14,923	15,833
Hardware	2,322	2,297
Supplies	7,234	5,983
Network costs	45,404	53,607
Depreciation - computer equipment	35,020	42,392
Consulting fees	9,919	48,663
Webtrust audit	24,890	17,523
Depreciation - membership system	68,011	163,685
	\$ 603,051	\$ 724,479
Occupancy (Schedule K)		
Rent	\$ 203,411	\$ 200,084
Telephone	21,358	22,318
Insurance	18,455	15,597
Supplies and miscellaneous	10,210	9,690
Postage	17,580	22,693
Courier	18,587	18,778
Furniture and fixtures - repair	1,559	4,608
Equipment rental	23,478	23,975
Depreciation - furniture and fixtures	33,590	31,368
Western regional office expenses	9,362	8,628
	\$ 357,590	\$ 357,739

ACTRA/UBCP's **Howard Storey** and **Rob Morton**.



Heather Allin, Christie MacFadyen and **Karl Pruner**.



ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre** with ACTRA member and WIDC Producer **Carol Whiteman**.



BANFF 2005

by **Heather Allin**

Flying into Calgary, renting a car, driving for two hours and setting up shop at the Banff World Television Festival, makes me wonder, why do we do this? Yes, it's beautiful here – mountains, wild flowers, elk, bald eagles, and bears notwithstanding. But why is a group of performers trekking into the mountains to what is widely considered a private party for producers, writers, broadcasters and networks who gather to buy and sell product?

Interestingly enough that was the attitude we met when we first started going to Banff. Our response? We're here because we make a significant contribution to the TV industry. We're here because this is where pronouncements get made and deals get struck. We're here to make sure Canadian culture stays on the agenda and that Canadian stories get told by Canadians. Now we are asked "What do you think about...?" And we are constantly being urged to continue to lead the fight for a Canadian voice on our TV screens. The industry now looks to us for plans and actions.

This year was typical of how we go about inserting our issues into Banff's agenda. We attended some big meetings – with the chair and senior staff of the CRTC; with the new CEO and senior staff of Telefilm; with senior officials from Heritage Canada and with the new pan-Canadian industry association. We hammered ACTRA's message home at all of these meetings – we need action now on Canadian production. That agenda was now on every important speaker's lips throughout the conference and at all of these meetings.

ACTRA also put our own stamp on Monday's Awards Luncheon, with ACTRA Toronto President **Karl Pruner** hosting and delivering member **Adrian Truss'** script. You knew you were at an excellent event when the ACTRA table laughed evilly at all of Karl's broadcaster jokes and everyone else in the room also laughed – between clenched teeth. Also at the luncheon, our new National President, **Richard Hardacre**, presented member **Vicki Gabereau** with ACTRA's John Drainie Award for excellence in broadcasting.

ACTRA also joined other members

of the Canadian Coalition of Audio-visual Unions (CCAUI) at a press conference to table a hard-hitting report on the broadcasters. Our event dominated reports out of the conference that day, which considering that the broadcasters sponsor and largely pay for this festival was a nice piece of work.

On Wednesday, Richard Hardacre sat on a panel discussing Canadian fiction production with two of Canada's leading producers **Laszlo Barna**, **Wayne Grigsby** and CTV's Senior VP of Dramatic programming, **Bill Mustos** and **Virginia Thompson**, producer of *Corner Gas*. Richard questioned the minuscule percentage of ad revenue that CTV spends on getting Canadian drama developed, promoted and positioned in order to build an audience. His questions about this, and realistic licence fees paid to Canadian producers, shaped the rest of the debate.

All in all, it was time well spent.

Heather Allin is ACTRA Toronto's VP, Communications and an ACTRA National Councillor.

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www.actra.ca