



I N T E R

SUMMER 2009

ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



Made in Canada

Exports are up!

See story
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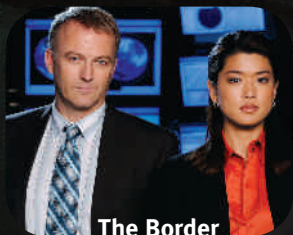
Flashpoint



The Bridge



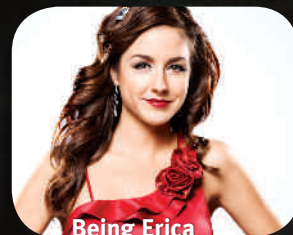
The Listener



The Border



The Guard



Being Erica

Introducing your new president... [page 2](#)

MEET YOUR NEW PRESIDENT Fuelled with optimism and dreaming big



I am thrilled to be the newly elected National President of ACTRA. And I am proud to be the second woman to lead this union in our 66-year history. I wholeheartedly and humbly embrace my new role and look forward to taking a bold, holistic, long-term view in terms of furthering the collective dreams we hold close to our hearts.

So who is your new fearless leader? I'm a performer in my bones and was born in Charlottetown, P.E.I., raised in New Brunswick and educated in Nova Scotia. Halifax was a wildly important incubator for me – as young artists, we flourished in the ferment of so much energy in live theatre and music. The cross-pollination has informed all of my artistic life. Much of my passion as a performer comes from developing and telling Canadian stories, sparked by decades of active collaboration with playwright Paul Ledoux. In 1979, I first worked in 'recorded media' as a voice actor in numerous dramas for the CBC Radio Drama Department in Halifax. For a few years I lived in Vancouver, but mostly worked at regional theatres in other provinces and was part of the acting ensemble at the Banff Playwrights Colony. My ACTRA membership number is actually a Winnipeg one, as I joined ACTRA in 1984 when producers wanted to televise a new Canadian play at MTC, *Clearances*, by Alf Silver. After that, Paul and I drove our VW camper van to Toronto and immediately began working in television and film. I've guested on most TV shows (especially when we had a bunch) and regularly work on Canadian and American TV commercials.

My second passion is serving the members of our union, something I have done for the past 18 years on the Toronto and National Councils. I served as President of

ACTRA Toronto, and more recently, have been your National Treasurer and representative on the AFBS Board.

But this experience, serving 21,000 members from coast-to-coast as your President, feels thrillingly new.

I fully respect branch autonomy, but more than that, I understand it in my DNA because I was there with Barry Flatman and David Ferry at the beginning of restructuring in the early nineties. I believe it was an inspired design that has helped us grow into the vigorous, membership-run union that we are today. Members gained a strong direct relationship with their home branch in this intentionally decentralized world. Going forward, we need to better understand who we are as performers and where we'll be five and 10 years from now.

Who are we now? Who do we aspire to be? Who are the young actors who join ACTRA? Where will we be when the boomer bulge is all silver-haired? Who are the actors who don't see a culturally inclusive landing place for themselves in our union? This is challenging work and I don't pretend to have the answers – but I promise to walk with my eyes wide open.

What fuels my enthusiasm for this work is my gut certainty that I can help keep us all pulling in the same direction. And, I believe that the trust I have earned at the national table can allow us to achieve the next level of solidarity as a union. With the pressures of globalization and mergers leading to the concentration of media in fewer and ever more powerful hands, the need for seamless solidarity has never been greater.

As President I will keep my vision trained on the long-term view and the Big Picture. Relationships with our sister unions, at home and internationally, will

What fuels my enthusiasm for this work is my gut certainty that I can keep us all pulling in the same direction.

continue to be groomed and hopefully deepened. Our eyes and ears will stay attuned to collaborative opportunities with our strategic and coalition partners.

In the short-term we have the prospect of labour peace on our big contracts with brand new Commercial and Independent Production Agreements. This is truly a gift that allows us to direct our energy toward enforcing those terms and being strategic advocates for public policy. I will find every way possible to fuel our fight for Canadian culture to increase Canadian dramatic content on our screens of all sizes and increase work opportunities that reflect the full diversity of our membership.

When we talk about our union being strong we do not mean our strength resides only in our collective agreements. We are strong because we are not alone. We have each other. We are 21,000 strong.

In solidarity,



Ferne Downey
ACTRA National President



WIDC 2010 is calling all actors and women directors!



The acclaimed **Women in the Director's Chair workshop** is a one-of-a-kind professional development offering in Canada, held annually in beautiful Banff, Alberta. This year it will be led by acclaimed Canadian actress and director, Helen Shaver.

Module 1 (directors only):
December 4 to 7, 2009

Module 2 (directors, actors and crew):
January 14 to 31, 2010

Deadline women directors:
September 30, 2009

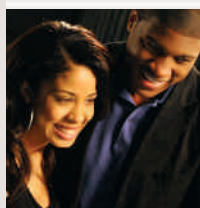
Deadline actors & crew:
October 31, 2009

For more information and application forms go to:
www.creativewomenworkshops.com

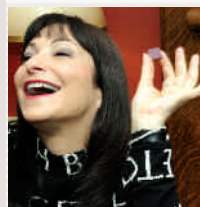
THE WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR WORKSHOP



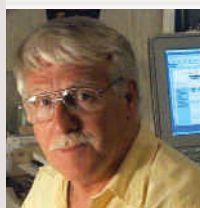
WHAT'S INSIDE YOUR UNION MAGAZINE...



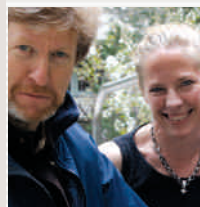
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INTERACTRA

Summer 2009, Volume 16, Issue 1

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Enrico Colantoni (Parker), David Paetkau (Sam) and Mark Taylor (Lewis) in CTV's *Flashpoint*. Photo by Ben Mark Holzberg, courtesy of CTV.

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Made in Canada

Exports are up!

by Art Hindle

U.S. Border Guard: "Are you carrying any food, alcohol or tobacco?"

Canadian: "No, But we have a number of hit TV series!"

U.S. Border Guard: "But no food, alcohol or tobacco?"

Canadian: "No, but we have a number of hit TV series!"

U.S. Border Guard: "You already said that!"

Canadian: "I know! But I love it so much I can't stop saying it!"

Now I have it on good authority that this conversation didn't take place, but it could have...

It's applause and celebration time

for Canadian TV as our series generate ratings and excitement on both sides of the 49th parallel. For the first time in over a decade, Canadian dramas are being embraced by major U.S. networks. *Flashpoint* paved the way last summer when it was picked up by CBS, quickly followed by *The Bridge* (CBS) and *The Listener* (NBC). And just recently, ABC announced it would pick up Global's *Copper* series which will feature an all-Canadian cast and is set to begin filming in Toronto at the end of June. Meanwhile, a number of Canadian series such as *The Border*, *The Guard*, *Being Erica*, *MVP* and *Paradise Falls* are finding audiences on U.S. cable networks.

So, you might ask, why are Canadian TV series selling in the U.S.? I say, why not? As far as I'm concerned, it's about time.

Our last (and first) home-grown hit to land on an American network was

Due South. Before that, *E.N.G.* flirted with CBS only to suffer the ignoble fate of being copied by that network. *WIOU* ironically starred two of our own, **Helen Shaver** and **Robin Gammell**. When it premiered on CBS it was skewered by the critics and negatively compared to *E.N.G.*, then airing on the Lifetime cable network. *WIOU* was taken off the air a couple of weeks later.

CBS learned its lesson when a few years later the same production team, headed by Robert Lantos, brought them the wonderfully inventive *Due South*, starring the multi-faceted **Paul Gross**. No stone or Yankee dollar was left unturned in attempting to make that show a CBS stalwart. It climbed steadily in the ratings and gained a massive cult audience. It was the first television drama to have an enormous international internet fan base that successfully campaigned to bring it back for two more seasons. That period of time marked the heyday of Canadian TV's migration south... until now!

So what's up? Why now? I believe it's TV's answer to weather's 'perfect storm' – an ideal convergence of a number of factors all at the same time, including:

- my union – ACTRA and our Canadian TV drama campaign;
- the 2008 Writer's Guild of America strike which lasted long enough to deplete producers of pilot scripts,

leading them to look elsewhere for product;

- the Canadian TV industry's evolution as a producer of high-quality TV series, spurred by the ever-increasing talent and excellence of our country's directors, writers, crew, producers and actors;
- the recent push by our private broadcasters to air new Canadian series, not-so-coincidentally, just as their licences come up for renewal by the CRTC.

Ever since the CRTC removed and relaxed many of the CanCon rules in 1999, we've watched our private broadcasters erode that content significantly. But in this past year, as private broadcasters ready themselves for their licence renewal hearings, they've given Canadian drama a chance and allowed us to prove – *continued on next page*

*Opposite, left to right: Lisa Marcos, Craig Olejnik, Ennis Esmer and Mylène Dinh-Robic star in Shaftesbury Films *The Listener*, airing on CTV in Canada and NBC in the U.S.*

Exports are up!

— continued
from page 4

that we make excellent series. The broadcasters may have set out to thinking “see what a good boy am I... now give me my licence,” when they commissioned these dramas but if they’re smart they’ll see the success, follow the money, and make telling unique, Canadian stories a priority.

Not one, but four of our shows have recently cuddled up to our American cousins. And I expect much more this time around because these shows have solid footing and the creators a solid vision.

While we’ve grown used to seeing Canadian drama cancelled practically before they’re even cast, John Morayniss, President of Canadian E1 Television, says *Flashpoint*’s success south of the border will help ensure the series has a future. “Landing a U.S. sale for a Canadian drama elevates the show internationally. If a U.S. network comes on board, it enhances the show and more money goes on screen,” he said.

Flashpoint was created by two ACTRA members, **Stephanie Morgenstern** and **Mark Ellis**. Ellis recalls the genesis of the show, how together they had watched a situation on television unfold with a man holding a sawed-off shotgun to the head of a young woman outside Toronto’s Union Station. “It was a horrible incident that really struck a chord with us,” he said.

They then pitched the idea to CTV who in turn attached Toronto producers Pink Sky Entertainment and Avamar Entertainment.

From the two-hour pilot to the CTV series to the pickup by CBS, *Flashpoint* continues to break ground, including the reportedly \$1.6 to \$1.8 million per-episode budget. The cast is fantastic. It’s obvious that everybody is on their game. It’s a character-driven drama, so casting was most important. **Hugh Dillon**, so impressive in the excellent Canadian series *Durham County*, and **Enrico Colantoni** of both *Veronica Mars* and *Just Shoot Me* fame are part of a stellar team of talented performers that includes **Amy Jo Johnson**, **Sergio Di Zio**, **Michael Cram**, **Mark Taylor**, **David Paetkau** and **Ruth Marshall**. David Frazee is their cinematographer extraordinaire, from the kickass Canadian series *Intelligence*.

The best part of this current wave of success is that we’re getting a chance to play ourselves, to tell our stories. We’re not standing in for Chicago or New York.

Colantoni says he’s proud of the fact that Toronto isn’t hiding in *Flashpoint*. “I want people to know that it’s a Canadian show and be fooled by that. I want them to know that Canada produces quality shows



Courtesy of CBC

Erin Karpluk stars in *Being Erica*. The comedy/drama debuted on CBC in January 2009 and airs in the U.S. on ABC’s SOAPnet where it’s the channel’s top-rated original series.

The Guard debuted in January 2008 on Global, and has been picked up in the U.S. by Ion Television, the fledgling Florida-based network, reaching 94 million households. (Left to right:) **Jeremy Guilbaut**, **Zoie Palmer**, **Steve Bacic**, and **Sonya Salomaa**.



Chris Heffernans/Berge/Courtesy of Global TV

Not one, but four Canadian shows have recently cuddled up to our American cousins.

and we can compete with the best of the American product.”

CBS Entertainment President Nina Tassler recently said, “*Flashpoint* has been a great success for us... as long as the creative content is there it gives us opportunity to look at other Canadian opportunities.” And look she did! In February CBS announced that they have picked up *The Bridge*, a stellar cop drama produced by E1 Entertainment and another CTV-commissioned show. With former Toronto Police Union chief Craig Bromell as the man behind the pitch, the show’s authentic realism is guaranteed. Barna-Alper Productions, one of Canada’s leading production companies, was brought on board to work with Bromell’s company 990 Multi Media. Besides the MOW in the can, 13 episodes were shot in May.

The Border airs on CBC and on ION in the U.S. (Left to right:) **Graham Abbey, Nazneen Contractor, James McGowan** and **Grace Park**.

The Bridge also has a strong Canadian cast, including **Aaron Douglas** (*Battlestar Gallatica*), **Paul Popowich** (*Angela’s Eyes*), **Inga Cadranell** (*Rent-a-Goalie*), **Frank Cassini** (*Da Vinci’s City Hall, Intelligence*), **Theresa Joy, Ona Grauer**, and a couple of veteran award-winning actors I admire... **Michael Murphy** and **Stuart Margolin**, even though Stuart took the part I wanted! The director is John Fawcett who was partially responsible for the dramatic look of the successful series *The Border*. Also on board is five-time Gemini Award-winner **Alan Di Fiore**, *Da Vinci’s Inquest*.

And as things come in threes, NBC picked up another CTV Canadian drama, *The Listener*. Produced by Shaftesbury Films, a company known for hit TV movies *In God’s Country* and *Eight Days to Live* and the Emmy-nominated *The Robber Bride* and one of my favourite series, *ReGenesis*.

U.S. cable networks are also picking up Canadian series by the bushel. Two CBC shows, *Being Erica* and *MVP* (cancelled by CBC), have been picked up by ABC’s – continued on next page



Copper (Global/ABC) is an hour-long drama about rookies on the job with the Toronto Police Service and is reported to cost \$2 million an episode. At press time no casting decisions were made and production was slated for summer 2009.

Series like *Flashpoint* and *Les hauts et les bas de Sophie Paquin* show us that Canadian creators are more than capable of producing entertaining television, and that there is an audience for Canadian shows beyond our borders. However, it is just as expensive to produce such high-quality programming for a small market like Canada as it is for the American market. Financial assistance is necessary to help Canadian producers bring their stories to the small screen.

Konrad Von Finckenstein
CRTC Chair
March 25, 2009



Exports are up!

– continued from page 6

SOAPnet. CBC's *The Border* and Global's *The Guard* will be part of the programming for the ION Network and *Paradise Falls'* three seasons have been running on here! for the past two years. Of course there have been many other cable sales including *Corner Gas*, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, *Instant Star*, *Whistler*, *Comedy Inc.*, *Comedy Now*. But the big picture is this: Canadian TV series are selling in the U.S.

ACTRA members want to know what this all means for the Canadian actor. Should all this cross-border activity inspire Canadian producers and broadcasters and our federal and provincial governments to facilitate more production in the television industry? The broadcasters who are licensed by the CRTC to use our airwaves are spending \$740 million on importing U.S. and foreign TV shows, and only \$54 million on "producing" English Canadian home-grown dramas. What if the money was spent on a 1 to 1 ratio, for

The Bridge is a one-hour cop drama inspired by former Toronto police union head Craig Bromell. **Aaron Douglas** stars as outspoken union head Frank Leo. CTV's *The Bridge* has been picked up by CBS in the U.S.

We've demonstrated our ability to create exportable TV product. My hope is that the CRTC and the Canadian broadcasters will take note and also decide it's the right thing to do.

Canadian and American programming? This new ratio has been recently suggested by Konrad Von Finckenstein, Chairman of the CRTC no less.

This industry, the television industry, can infuse our gross national production with great sums of money and create jobs in every sector of the economy. It doesn't need to pull resources from the ground, cut down resources from the forest, slaughter resources from the grazing fields, conquer the flowing resources of our mighty rivers or catch resources from our bordering oceans. Using the talents of Canadians, we can manufacture product out of thin air. Canadians can write the scripts, Canadians can produce the shows, Canadians can direct them and Canadians can act in them.

ACTRA has been lobbying hard for more than seven years for more Canadian drama on Canadian airwaves – I know some of those members who have spent almost as much time in Ottawa lobbying on The Hill and at the CRTC as they have on a set. Certainly this effort is to provide more work opportunities for our members. But it is also to encourage our unique culture in the form of us seeing our own stories on our TV screens. And finally, our union believes that it's the right thing to do.

The recent success of Canadian drama

proves that when given a chance – excellent Canadian drama can be produced! Excellent enough to not only attract Canadians to watch it, but to attract foreign buyers.

So there you have it. We've demonstrated our ability to create exportable TV product. My hope is that the CRTC and the Canadian broadcasters will take note and also decide it's the right thing to do. ■



Art Hindle has been acting for 40 years and "has seen it all..." He starred in and has directed episodes of *E.N.G.* and *Paradise Falls*. He recently put his 'toe in the water' by getting

elected to ACTRA Toronto's Council and now has the disease of wanting to improve the status of the actor in this country. Always accused of talking too much, he's decided to put those words to paper. He believes "it's the right thing to do..."

Hugh Dillon and **Enrico Colantoni** star in the one-hour police drama ***Flashpoint***, the first Canadian series since *Due South* to air in network primetime in both Canada (CTV) and in the U.S. (CBS).



CELEBRATING OUR NATIONAL TREASURES: Canada's funny ladies



We're in the funny

by Anne Marie Scheffler

Celebrating our national treasures, our funny female members, is an embarrassment of riches! From coast to coast, we have an abundance of hilarious dames. (So many that I didn't even get to in this article – my cup runneth over!) If comedy were currency, we are seriously laughing all the way to the bank. So to forget the gloom and doom of the economy, I've collected some casual conversations from our comediennes to turn those grey clouds into sunshine.

"People are still surprised by a funny dame," says SCTV alumni **Jayne Eastwood**. "That's always a bonus on the set. I don't do stand-up, I sneak my comedy into film scripts. You don't have to be good looking. It's nice if you are, but you don't HAVE to be, another bonus. You can get away with things for the rest of your life actually, that's cool right? I like ladylike comedy. I'm 62 years old. Leave the crass stuff for the 20 year-olds. I want to make the ladies who are having a nice glass of sherry

and volunteering at the hospital laugh."

If I were to buy stock in funny, I'd drop big bucks on the East Coast. I begin with the obvious prospectus of **Mary Walsh, Cathy Jones and Bette MacDonald**. Blue chip shows worth mentioning are *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching*, starring Mary Walsh and Bette MacDonald's *The Bette Show*. With loads of film, television and radio roles under her belt, and about 10 years of Halifax Comedy Festivals, Bette thinks it's exciting that there are more women doing comedy now. "When I was a kid in Cape Breton, there weren't that many Canadian women comedians. Or maybe it was just that we only had two TV channels... so there weren't that many Canadians – period. But now the numbers are growing and the voice is getting stronger... In fact, I think we're almost ready for *Hinterland's Who's Who*."

Then there's the dear *Comedy Inc.* babes, **Aurora Browne, Jennifer Goodhue,** and **Jennifer Robertson**. Says Goodhue,

Left to right: Debra McGrath, Jayne Eastwood, Robin Duke and Teresa Pavlinek.

"Women in comedy are a necessity, 'cause men don't have our point-of-view. More baked goods and shoes! That's my personal mission!"

Nia Vardalos, while in Toronto posting a film at Deluxe, says it's so nice to be back in Canada. "I grew up surrounded by funny Canadian women. When you were snowed-in, in the prairies, you'd have to perm your own hair for the Christmas party. That would make anyone funny." She says her influences are **Andrea Martin**, Bette Midler and her mom.

There's definitely value in getting gals together. As in comedy troupes, like *Women Fully Clothed*, *The Atomic Fireballs* and *Full Bawdy Comedy*. **Allana Harkin** tells me about a proud moment for *The Atomic Fireballs*: "Being at Sam (Bee's) house for a Fireball meeting when she got the call that she booked *The Daily Show*. We all looked at each other and knew her life was about to change."
– continued on next page

We're in the funny

— continued from page 9



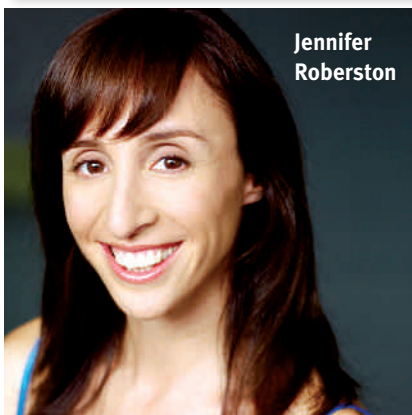
Debra DiGiovanni



Jessica Holmes



Lisa Merchant



Jennifer Roberston

All photos on this page by Tim Leves.

Improv class: \$200. Being good at it: priceless. **Lisa Merchant** has been improvising for over 20 years. Not only has she won three Canadian Comedy Awards, she was nominated for a Gemini along with her cast for *The Joe Blow Show* and a series lead on *Train 48*. Says Lisa on improv, "I always enjoyed the cohesiveness of team sports and I never had the guts to jump out of a plane, bungee jump or free fall. Spectacularly, improv fulfilled all those components. I love the group aspect and the danger aspect of improvisation. And, of course, the complete creative freedom."

We have loads of laughs in the vault. Remember *Go Girl!* with **Janet Van de Graaff** and Lisa Merchant, *Adventures in Comedy* with **Elvira Kurt** and *The Jane Show*, courtesy of **Teresa Pavlinek**? Teresa was nominated for a Gemini for best performer in a comedy, and was nominated for a Canadian Screenwriters Award. **Geri Hall** was nominated for a Gemini for a guest star part and **Kate Trotter** received an ACTRA Awards in Toronto nomination for her role as Stella on the show.

Speaking of funny ladies with their own shows, **Jessica Holmes** says, "We funny women can consider our work done when the last utterance of 'I usually don't find women funny, but you were good' is heard." There's more coming, too. **Laurie Elliott** reports she has just finished shooting the lead in a female-driven pilot called *Almost Audrey* for The Comedy Network and E! Entertainment. Laurie co-created it, and says The Comedy Network has been really supportive! (Like a bra, I suppose).

I put a lot of stock in funny ladies, on TV so I asked the question: **If we had a TV show with all the funny Canadian females in it, what would you call it?**

Jayne Eastwood: "What would I call a show full of funny women? I have no idea, but I'd like to be in it... playing a nice lady who drinks sherry and volunteers at the hospital, and does it badly."

Teresa Pavlinek: "I'd call it, *About Time*."

Geri Hall: "I'd call it, *The Waiting Room at Powerhouse*."

Bette MacDonald: "Some of the world's best writers and performers are from

Canada, so of course, it makes sense that our present government understands and supports this industry and would never dream of dismantling it... sorry, I just need a moment to disengage my gag reflex."

Kathy Greenwood: "I'd call it... *It's About Friggin' Time the Networks Figured Out They Should Try to Please the Largest and Most Profitable Demographic in the Country That's Just Itching to be Entertained*. Catchy, huh?"

A proud portfolio

Andrea Martin, **Catherine O'Hara**, Jayne Eastwood and **Robin Duke** were hilarious on SCTV, and helped pave the way for more funny. Mary Walsh and **Cathy Jones** created comedy gold with *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. **Luba Goy** represented the girls for about three decades on *The Royal Canadian Air Farce*. Winnipegger Nia Vardalos held the world in the palm of her hands and was nominated for an Oscar for *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. *Corner Gas* gals **Nancy Robertson**, **Tara Spencer-Nairn**, **Gabrielle Miller** and **Janet Wright** are also household names. **Naomi Snekus** is Canada's favourite funny commercial girl. Our sisters in stand up, **Kristeen Von Hagen**, **Dawn Whitwell**, and **Sabrina Jalees** are all over the TV. **Nikki Payne** and **Debra DiGiovanni** were finalists on NBC's *Last Comic Standing*. Debra tells me "I made it to number eight. Some British kid beat me. Whatever!" On doing stand-up, Debra says, it used to be me and the guys, now it's me, nine guys and the other girl."

Debra is opening for Paula Poundstone, she'll be on tour with the Doo Wops and the Imponderables. She's hosted the Geminis in 2008 and co-hosted the Genies with **Sandra Oh**, and in 2007 she won The Canadian Comedy Award for Best Female Comedian. So I like to brag about my BFFs a little bit. (And have pillow fights with them... and paint each other's toe nails...)

Words of wisdom from your funny females

Dying is easy, but comedy is hard. These babes have toughed it out in the traditionally male-dominated world of yuks. Betcha



Nia Vardalos at the Acropolis during the filming of the recently-released romantic comedy, *My Life in Ruins*.



Andrea Martin

Tim LeVes



Nancy Robertson

CTV



Mary Walsh

O&Z



Anne Marie “funny with heart” Scheffler is a funny female member herself, with a long list of acting and writing credits and awards. Nominated for a Canadian Comedy Award, she has a one-hour *Comedy Now!* Special which plays on The Comedy Network. She understudied at Second City Toronto’s mainstage, and currently has a television show in development. She is best known for her six one-woman shows and is debuting her seventh, *Suddenly Mommy!* at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival. www.annemariescheffler.com, www.suddenlymommy.com

not one of them has even batted an eye in the face of the doom and gloom. Seems to me, if you are used to making lemonade out of lemons every day, you’d be the Brown Owl in the brownie pack. With a motto like Lend a Hand, and I’m quoting Lady Baden-Powell here, you’d be prepared to help a fellow sister keep her chin up when things looked gloomy! Some final wise words from some funny ladies. By the end of this lift, we should all be laughing all the way to the bank.

Bette MacDonald: “I don’t have any words of wisdom about anything, except maybe, don’t wear those pointy, pointy high-heels because they are really uncomfortable. Oh, and never let your 12-year-old niece perform a cosmetic procedure on you just to prove that you have faith in her... Learned that one the hard way.”

Jayne Eastwood: “There is a better life coming. There had better be ‘cause this one’s a joke!”

Laurie Elliott: “Don’t take advice from people who can’t spell it. Seriously, I should not be trusted to give advice – I’ve used condiments as a mixer for my booze.

Jennifer Robertson: “There are rooms all over the country where great comedians

perform for free or next to free every night. So there is no excuse to not get out there, have a laugh, and forget your troubles for a few hours.”

Geri Hall: “Comedy can be such a powerful tool – it can make important social and political commentary at the same time that disarms people with laughter. It’s rather sneaky that way. But funny is funny, it doesn’t matter whether you have testicles or ovaries.”

Nia Vardalos: “My advice to up and comers is create your own work. Don’t wait for the phone to ring with an offer of a job – call yourself.”

Allana Harkin: “Here’s some words of wisdom I’ve gotten. Don’t glue prop hair around your genitalia.”

So, that’s the total, shareholders. Comedy is a commodity which will only appreciate more and more. Enjoy these investment strategies. Value our comedy gold, and for God’s sake, pull in the opposite direction of the hair growth! ■

To learn more about the ACTRA National women’s committee contact chair Ruth Lawrence at rlawrence@actra.ca and visit www.actra.ca.

Brian Palermo

Old SOUL meets new SOUL by Eli Goree

An incredible ensemble cast star in VisionTV's new drama series *SOUL*. Shot in Halifax, the series is about music and faith in an urban world, and about trying to do the right thing no matter what the cost. Cast member **Eli Goree** works alongside an amazing ensemble of actors – veterans and newcomers including: **Jessica Parker Kennedy, Karen LeBlanc, Michael Anthony Rawlins, Kim Roberts, Ish Morris, Mpho Koaho** and **Andy Marshall**, and Canadian R&B sensation **Keshia Chanté**. Eli asked his co-stars to share their experiences as actors.

Here are some excerpts.



Andy Marshall



Kim Roberts

EXT. 100 YEAR-OLD RURAL HOME – BACK PORCH – THE 80's MASTER ANDY MARSHALL

ELI

How did you get your start in this industry?

ANDY

My first ACTRA gig was a series of shorts through the NFB, then I would get the odd roles on a show called *Top Cops*. Back in the late eighties only stereotypic roles were available to black actors, but it was work, so I took it.

ELI

What is it like working with both experienced actors like Karen LeBlanc, Michael Beach, Michael Rawlins and Mpho Koaho, next to up-and-comers like Jessica Parker Kennedy, Keshia Chanté, Ishan Morris and myself?

ANDY

It is great. I am impressed with the level of commitment and enthusiasm that the newer actors bring. The focus was at the same level as the experienced actors. Everyday you guys would come to set prepared and ready to work. Keshia has such a huge role as a new actor but she's pulled it off. It's so nice to see the success of you and Jess, and Ish outside of *SOUL*, booking major roles on other shows – it's fun to watch.

ELI

Any advice you would give to actors just starting out?

ANDY

Take nothing for granted. Actors sometimes get hot for one, two or three years, then for some reason things dry up. That was a big lesson for me. Make sure you make the most of your opportunities.

INT. LIVING-ROOM – THE 90's PRO KIM ROBERTS

ELI

Throughout your career you have been at the forefront of bringing diversity to the stage and screen in Canada. Talk to me about some of the diversity-focused organizations you have worked with.

KIM

The Sirens Company was a feminist theatre company that really helped shape me, not just as an artist, but also with my politics. In 1994 I landed a Benlyin commercial and was told that it was the first time that a black woman was the speaking heroine in a Canadian commercial. In the early nineties Sandi Ross edited a book at ACTRA called *Into the Mainstream*, it was a catalogue of actors of varying races and abilities and accents. Then Sara Botsford got everyone in the book to audition on tape for *E.N.G.* and delivered it to the producers. That was huge in terms of getting Canadian actors seen and acknowledged. For a while after that there were little roles available, and now we're leading and creating shows like *Da Kink In My Hair* and *SOUL*.

EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY – THE 00's ROOKIE ISHAN MORRIS

ELI

Your life has been quite a journey. Briefly bring me from start to now.

ISH

I was born in Canada, but I grew up in the Cayman Islands. The first acting thing I ever did was a play called *Pirates of Penzance*, at about 12. I kept it up throughout school and after high school auditioned for the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. The academy was an amazing experience and that was where I caught the acting bug. I moved back to Toronto about three years ago.

ELI

Almost the entire production team of *SOUL* is made up of people of colour (producers Joan Jenkinson and Floyd Kane, producer/writer/actor Andy Marshall). How did that pioneer aspect of the show affect you while working?

ISH

Well I definitely remember taking that in when I first went to audition and I saw mostly coloured faces looking back at me from over the producers table. It was such a warm greeting, Joan gave me a big warm smile, which I think speaks well for the project. Everyone was committed to building that family atmosphere from the beginning.

ELI

There was such a bonding between the cast on the set of *SOUL*. How was that experience for you?

ISH

We all clicked. I think that had to do with the fact that we were shooting in Halifax and none of us, except you, had been there before. By the first week Keshia and I assumed that brother/sister role... I was teasing her, she was nagging me. It sounds like such a cliché to say we were all like a family, but we really were.

ELI

Where would you like to see your career go from here?

ISH

I try not to look too far ahead. I want to enjoy what I'm doing while I do it.

INT. VIA E-MAIL – THE FUTURE'S POTENTIAL JESSICA PARKER

ELI

How did you start acting?

JESSICA

When I was six I played the mother wolf in the *Jungle Book* at summer camp. I got involved in drama classes and school plays all the way up to grade 12. I attended Mount Royal College in Calgary and graduated with a diploma in Theatre Arts. After that I moved to Vancouver and began my career in film and TV.

ELI

What is it like to get a chance to work with so many seasoned professionals?

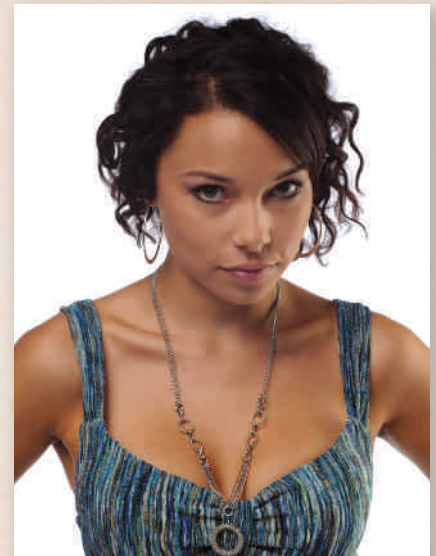
JESSICA

I feel honoured to be a part of such a great cast and such a unique project. Working with actors with many years of experience is an exceptional way to learn more about your craft. They exude confidence and humility. It is an absolute honour to work with them.

THE END



Ishan Morris



Jessica Parker



Eli Goree currently plays leading roles in Global's *Da Kink In My Hair* and Vision TV's dramatic musical TV series, *SOUL*.

This Nova Scotian has hosted the CBC award-winning consumer-affairs show, *Street Cents* and his childhood roles include appearing on numerous episodes of *Sesame Street*.

Mutual support: it's in our DNA

by Ferne Downey

No matter how tough the times, we all suffer together and triumph together as a tribe. We find ways to cheer each other up even when we need cheering ourselves. Last fall I was at a theatre fundraiser when the conversation turned to the collapse of the stock market. My friend's elderly father was bereft at the collapse of the stock portfolio he had built for her, a prominent arts administrator, as security in her retirement years. She told him, "Don't worry Dad, I've spent my life in the theatre. I know how to do poor." We all do. Despite the great creative rewards of our chosen profession, there are few members of our society who live such eternally vulnerable lives.

A long run in a series can be followed by a dry spell of equal length. Actors whose names are revered in the world of film and TV may continue to supplement their incomes by equally lucrative careers as caterers. Living close to the edge year in and year out takes its toll. Truth be told – if it weren't for the those incredible, nearly indescribable moments of creative bliss that occasionally grace the life of an artist, there would be no artists at all.

There are no rules and expectations are rarely met. We are trained to keep our emotions accessible, to persevere in the face of many obstacles, and to dig deep to re-invent ourselves over and over again. We are resilient and when times are tough, we pull together to help each other survive. Often enough this help is personal in its nature, friend-to-friend, but over the years our incredible systems of support have evolved within the artistic community as a whole. It's a system that continues to grow and inspire.

The Actors' Fund of Canada

The Actors' Fund of Canada began in 1958 when five actors **Donald Davis, Barbara**

Hamilton, Jane Mallett, Barry Morse and William Needles each put \$1 into a pot to start up the benevolent organization. They staged a series of benefits, built up the kitty and designed the all-inclusive mandate that anyone working in the entertainment industries be eligible. The Fund has become a vibrant, often life-saving, safety net for our community. Over \$3.5 million in emergency financial aid has been paid out over the past 10 years to performers, creators, technicians and production team members.

Current Actors' Fund of Canada President **Barry Flatman** has a habit of shining a very bright light into the heart of whatever organization is receiving the benefit of his attention. He was one of the architects of ACTRA's restructuring in the early nineties which consumed him 24/7 for the best part of a decade. In 2005 his agent Pam Winter was serving on the Actors' Fund Board and pitched him to join her there.

Under past-President, actor **Graham Harley**, the Fund had developed a strong Board and dynamic game plan. The Fund was successful in getting the word out to the community that help was there if they needed it. But the success put ever increasing stress on the Fund's very limited financial reserves. Building on all the work accomplished by previous Boards, Barry ramped up the fundraising efforts with the long-term goal of building a sustainability fund. "The Fund is an integral part of the culture in live theatre," says Flatman, "We need the same consciousness in the TV and film sector."

The TV Charity Challenge hopes to do just that, and has already become quite a lively fundraising competition between the cast, crew and producers of TV series all across the country. Productions vie

against each other for bragging rights as the show that can raise the most money for the Fund. CBC-TV's *Heartland* won the 2008 Challenge, raising a total of \$11,700 with Shaftesbury's *The Listener* running a close second. CBC-TV's *Royal Canadian Air Farce* kicked off the spring portion of the 2009 Actors Fund TV Charity Challenge by raising \$10,800. The clock is ticking for the next 'takers'... Visit www.actorsfund.ca for more information.

PAL (Performing Arts Lodges) Canada

In the early 1980s a series of new support initiatives began to come into play. Like the Actors' Fund, the Performing Arts Lodges of Canada (PAL) has had a profound effect on the well-being of members of the entertainment industry in Canada. PAL Canada is a national organization dedicated to providing affordable housing and care for older members and associates of Canada's entertainment industry, especially in the areas of health and well-being.

A group of Toronto performers were struck by the increasing number of artists who, after a lifetime of professional work, found themselves facing an impoverished existence. **Roy Wordsworth**, Founding President of the Performing Arts Lodges of Canada, summed it up, "In a business where insecurity follows like a shadow throughout your career, old age promises nothing more than poverty-line living at best. PAL was an idea whose time had come."

PAL Canada is continually expanding with a current total of six chapters in Halifax, Toronto, Stratford, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver. An ambitious – continued on page 16



The Actors' Fund of Canada
The lifeline for Canada's entertainment industry



PAL Canada
Caring for our own.



The 1991 ground-breaking ceremony for the Performing Arts Lodge in Toronto. *Clockwise, from back row:* **Bill Copeland** (1), **Vaclav Kuchar** (2), **Fred Davis** (3), **George Dick** (4), **Pierre Berton** (5), **Vic Bridgewater** (6), unidentified (7), **Ian Mathews** (8), **Ed Bissinger** (9), **Robert Latimer** (10), **Ann Mirvish** (11), **Patty Gail Peaker** (12), unidentified (13), **Rosemary Galloway** (14), unidentified (15), **Dinah Christie** (16), **Peggy Mahon** (17), **Don Cullen** (18), **Theresa Kowall-Shipp** (19), **Vivienne Muhling** (20), **Elsa Franklin** (21), **Desmond Scott** (22), **Sheila Waengler** (23), and **Patricia Carroll Brown** (24). *Inset:* Founding President **Roy Wordsworth** – without his enterprise and dogged determination PAL would not exist.



Hosts **Barry Flatman** and **Jeanne Beker** ham it up at the 2009 Scrabble® with the Stars annual fundraiser for PAL Toronto. Vivienne Muhling conceived of this creative playful night five years ago – proof positive that good ideas have legs.



CBC-TV's *Heartland* cast and crew joined The TV Charity Challenge to raise \$11,700 for the Actors' Fund of Canada. **Amber Marshall** and **Graham Wardle** posed with fans at the Charity Challenge BBQ and party.



The late **David Renton**, leading actor and founder of PAL Halifax, rallied the community in Nova Scotia.



Patty Gail Peaker, Supporting Cast founder, with the late **Joyce Gordon** (seated), at work in the Celebrity Club at PAL Place.



Ron Lea, **Aidan Devine** and **Shawn Lawrence** at the 2008 Actors' Fund charity golf tournament. The "Big Swing" Toronto event is in its eleventh year.

– continued from page 15

group in Edmonton are in the final stages of becoming a Chapter and that should be a reality before the end of this year. There are two actual functioning residences: PAL Place was built in Toronto in 1993; and PAL Vancouver opened their doors in May, 2006. "The establishment of regional chapters is a priority for PAL," says Calgary-based actor and activist **Brian Gromoff**, ACTRA's representative on the PAL Board. "It can take many years to actually have a building so it takes *perseverance* to overcome the obstacles." A recent achievement to celebrate is PAL Canada receiving its official charitable status and tax number on January 1, 2009. Said PAL Canada President Chris Marston, "We're staying true to the vision that PAL residences can span the country. It takes a lot of volunteer time and energy, but these two buildings prove it *can* work." Visit www.palcanada.org.

Supporting Cast

PAL's *Supporting Cast* is a group of dedicated volunteers who provide support to individual artists. By providing companionship, transportation, links to available professional community services, etc. they

"Caring for our own' is not just a slogan."

– PAL Canada President Chris Marston

enable artists to stay in their own, familiar environments for as long as they are able. When help is needed, it is offered sensitively, one person to another. *Supporting Cast* keeps people connected to the arts community, and to their colleagues.

Actor/singer **Patty Gail Peaker**, member of the founding PAL Board, helped spearhead PAL's *Supporting Cast* while waiting to find the site the first PAL Place in Toronto. Before the bricks and mortar phase of an actual building, this endeavour is crucial to the success of the PAL model. For 25 years *Supporting Cast* has helped in whatever way possible, while maintaining professional assistance in a confidential and discreet manner.

I wondered what fuels super-charged activists like Patty Gail who never seem to flag. She responded, "The reward for me personally is that I have seen a dream

come true. Today there are functioning *Supporting Casts* all across Canada stemming from new PAL chapters – this is the dream come true and it is still playing."

CAPE Newfoundland: making a difference

Like all good things, new initiatives emerge from individuals who see friends in need and want to help. In ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador's 39th year of existence, the local council pondered how to best mark their upcoming 40th anniversary in a meaningful way. Council decided that their anniversary legacy project should include stepping up and taking more responsibility for assisting local members in dire circumstances. *The Cultural Assistance Plan for Emergencies Artist Emergency Fund (CAPE)* was born.



Dan MacDonald, former PAL President and champion of PAL expansion from coast to coast, hugs **Joy Coghill**, co-founder of PAL Vancouver.



Celebrating the Actors' Fund 50th anniversary were **Dinah Christie, Sonja Smits, Tom McCamus, Sturla Gunnarson, Gordon Pinsent, Karen Kain, R.H. Thomson, Kristin Booth, Gordon Sim and Atom Egoyan.**

ACTRA NF president **Amy House, Ruth Lawrence** and the council knew what assistance The Actors' Fund could provide when there was sufficient lead time, but they were looking at something quite different and immediate. The Fund is designed for radical, catastrophic, unexpected emergencies where requests for help could be met within 48 hours.

They rallied the community and leading actors **Andy Jones, Cathy Jones, Gordon Pinsent, Jonny Harris, Amy House, Berni Stapleton, Pete Soucy, Pamela Morgan, Sean Panting, Colleen Power**, and the Dzolali Drum and Dance Ensemble performed at the first CAPE fundraiser on October 15, 2005. "That was a fantastic kickoff", says Ruth, "We raised nearly \$14,000 in one fell swoop. Then we had some money in the bank."

The CAPE Fund is administered through the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council and is available to any worker in the arts and cultural community requiring immediate emergency assistance.

www.nlac.nf.ca/funds.

Building our foundations

ACTRA has made annual donations to the Actors' Fund of Canada and PAL Canada a priority for obvious reasons – they are

One of the great strengths of our community is the fact that we always find ways to care for each other.

both fantastic organizations. AFBS provides substantial support to the Actors' Fund – both financially and in terms of Toronto office space at 1000 Yonge Street. ACTRA's broad family continues to build on our strength – our branch work, our related service organizations such as ACTRA PRS and AFBS, and new initiatives such as the Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union deepen our foundations.

What's next

One of the great strengths of our community is the fact that we always find ways to care for each other. We perform in endless rounds of benefits, we make calls to friends who need a friend, and we organize as volunteers and visionaries to help sustain and create new programs to help each other. We belong to ACTRA, CAEA and AFBS – all integral parts of

our growing infrastructure of organizations. Together we are tireless advocates for our art and artists. New directions and new solutions to old problems will constantly arise and we will rise to meet those challenges, because rising up to meet a challenge is built into our DNA. ■

Ferne Downey is the new elected President of ACTRA National. She has worked extensively as an actor in radio, television, film and theatre for 28 years and has advocated for the rights of performers for 18 of those years. Past service to the union includes participation on collective bargaining committees, two terms as VP Communications and President for ACTRA Toronto, and three terms as National Treasurer. She is ACTRA's representative on the AFBS Board and is the second woman to serve as National President in ACTRA's 66-year history.

It's a (new) deal

by Marit Stiles, Director of Research

Performers and independent producers have reached tentative terms for renewal of our Independent Production Agreement (IPA). The new agreement between ACTRA and the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA) and l'Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ) gives performers a rate increase of 2% each year for three years while the balance of the IPA terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The new agreement sends a strong message that will help to encourage production in Canada

In consultations that took place across the country, performers told us that they would not accept rollbacks to their wages and working conditions in this round of negotiations. Given the state of the economy and the fact that the IPA is already one of the best performer collective agreements in the world, negotiators for ACTRA and the producers determined that it was in the industry's best interest to work co-operatively to come to a quick, simple deal.

Our bargaining team reached an early deal that provides for rate increases that are in line with increases in cost of living. The deal preserves the strong terms ACTRA has fought so hard to achieve, including our ground-breaking new media provisions achieved as a result of our first-ever strike in the last round of bargaining in 2006/07.

Highlights of the new deal:

- 3-year term, commencing January 1, 2010 until December 31, 2012;
- 2% rate increase effective January 1, 2010; an additional 2% effective January 1, 2011; and a final 2% increase effective January 1, 2012;
- like the current agreement, the 2010-2012 IPA would permit the parties to potentially renegotiate the new media (Section E) provisions one year prior to the agreement's expiry;
- All other terms of the agreement remain unchanged.

The current agreement is one of the best in the world, and was achieved following ACTRA's first strike. The IPA covers the terms and conditions of work for professional performers in all independent film and television production in Canada, except for British Columbia which has a separate agreement. [To learn more go to actra.ca.](http://actra.ca) ■

A Stellar Cast!

We extend our deepest gratitude to the members of the Negotiating Committee:



Stephen Waddell
Chief Negotiator
and National
Executive Director



Richard Hardacre
Chair and Past
National President



Heather Allin
(Toronto)



Tyrone Benskin
(Montreal)



Jim Codrington
(Toronto)



Sonia Donaldson
(Alberta)



Art Hindle
(Toronto)



Cary Lawrence
(Montreal)



Wayne Nicklas
(Manitoba)



Mayko Nguyen
(Toronto)



Eric Peterson
(Toronto)



Julie Stewart
(Toronto)

We would also like to thank **Wendy Crewson** (Toronto), **Bruce Dinsmore** (Montreal) and **Karl Pruener** (Toronto) for their support.

One of six recent NCA sessions held in the ACTRA Montreal boardroom.



ACTRA educates industry partners on the National Commercial Agreement

Cross country branch visits by Daintry Dalton, Assistant Branch Rep., Commercials Montreal and National staff advisor, commercials, have been well received by signatory engagers, production personnel, casting directors and agents. Recent NCA sessions included: three in Alberta, one in Halifax, six (and counting) in Montreal, four in Vancouver and one in Winnipeg. ACTRA Toronto's Director of Commercial Production, Judy Barefoot,

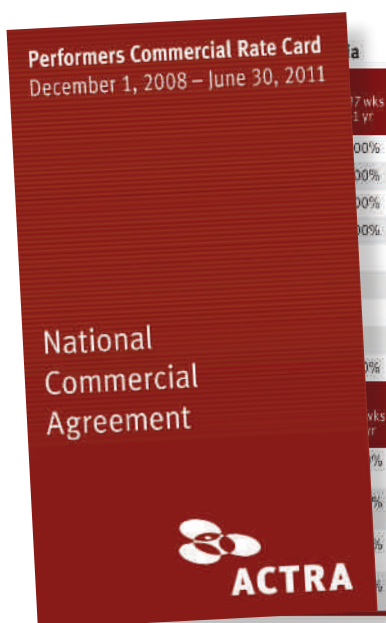
has also held several sessions with engagers, with more to come.

Important NCA changes were explained and highlighted, including:

- the basic television work session has returned to an 8-hour day for all on-camera performers and stunt coordinators;
- accident-on-set insurance coverage;
- engager obligations and signatory status;
- rates and conditions for the new media pilot project as well as changes to broadcast commercials which move over to new media.

Let your production colleagues know that the new wallet-size commercial rate cards are available at your local branch. To download the complete commercial agreement go to www.actra.ca. ■

Daintry Dalton, Calgary branch rep Tina Alford, and Calgary Commercial Steward Taisa Lynn Dekker hosted three NCA sessions in Alberta.



Wallet-size commercial rate cards are now available at your local branch.

Contract Q&A

Need clarification on a contract query? Agonizing over an agreement? Puzzled over payment? Send your questions about how ACTRA's collective agreements work for you to interactra@actra.ca and ACTRA's crack team of collective agreement experts will provide the answers you need.

Q: I'm an actor who'd like to produce a film, but my budget is tiny. What can I do?

– LD from Halifax

A: ACTRA has two programs designed for low-budget projects. The first is the ACTRA Indie Production (AIP) program, known as TIP in Toronto. Daily fees are set by each of the branches, and there are some restrictions on the type of production that can be done. For instance, television series, movies of the week, industrials and animation are not eligible. AIP/TIP requires that all performers be members of ACTRA.

Get more information on AIP here: www.actra.ca/actra/images/documents/ACTRA_Indie.pdf and on TIP here: www.actratoronto.com/TIP/TIP.html

The second is the Member Initiated Production program, known in Toronto as the Co-op program. It was designed specifically to encourage ACTRA members to come together to make their own original projects, and in doing so, to hone their acting skills and acquire skills and experience in other creative areas. Actors in a MIP/Co-op production are not paid daily fees, but have an ownership position in the production. Production criteria and guidelines vary from branch to branch, so please contact your local branch for more information.

One or the other of these programs should make it possible for you to produce your film. Staff at your branch will be happy to explain the programs in detail, and help you with the paperwork. ■



Stay tuned... (again)...

So remember in the last issue where we whooped out a final last rallying cry for the campaign for Canadian drama? Well you can put your flags down for another year. Sort of.

Just as performers were getting ready to storm Ottawa, the CRTC came out with an unexpected mid-season “Woah I didn’t see that coming” cliff-hanger and postponed the full-scale review until April 2010 and has issued one-year licence renewals.

ACTRA and our coalition partners have been waiting for the opportunity to fix the CRTC regulations that have all but wiped Canadian TV drama off the air. ACTRA’s drama campaign has been about preserving our culture and performers’ jobs. It’s all about work opportunities: the more Canadian content we can get on our airwaves, the more work there is for you. Obviously we’re disappointed that our members, who have been suffering the effects of bad regulation for 10 years now, have to wait yet again.

However it’s no secret that changing technology and the economic downturn have combined to create short-term challenges and a potential upheaval, not only in Canada but around the world. People – no, make that private broadcasters – are panicking. And long-term decisions made in times of panic are rarely good ones.

It’s been quite a dramatic few months. At the CRTC and the Heritage Committee’s TV hearings, Canada’s private conventional broadcasters have declared the system “broken” and “in a state of crisis.” They’ve threatened to shut down local stations unless we meet their demands for deregulation and fee-for-carriage. And we’ve watched broadcasters and big cable companies take out national full-page ads to buy and sell TV stations for the price of ‘a cup of coffee and a donut.’ If you listen to the broadcasters you’d think the sky had not only fallen, but that it had turned to black molten lava.

It is ACTRA’s belief that conventional television is not in crisis. It is facing the same challenges as any industry in transition and confronting a global recession.

Our industry and its key players have faced significant challenges in the past and have weathered the storm – remember how TV was going to be the death of radio?

If broadcasters are having difficulty with the downturn, it’s the result of their own lousy business decisions... they are blaming you, me, and everyone else who thinks that we should be able to see our own stories on our TVs.

In 2008, private conventional television broadcasters in Canada made a profit. While low by historical standards, they still made a profit. The days of double-digit growth in conventional advertising revenues may be gone, but conventional broadcasting will not disappear

by **Joanne Deer, Director of Public Policy and Communications**

tomorrow. Canadians will still want to tune in for their local news and event drama. YouTube will not replace CTV or NBC as a means of mass advertising any time soon.

The health of specialty channels also gives weight to the idea that you need to take a broad look at the industry as a whole before declaring the patient critical. Specialty channels made \$2.9 billion in profits last year and who owns most of these profit-generating machines? CTVglobemedia owns 32 and CanWest, 21.

The fact is, if broadcasters are having difficulty with the downturn, it’s the result of their own lousy business decisions. Unfortunately private broadcasters are blaming everyone but themselves. They’re blaming cable companies for taking their signals for free. They’re blaming you, me, and everyone else who thinks that we should be able to see our own stories on our TVs as they point to obligations to broadcast Canadian programming as the source of their financial troubles.

It’s a silly claim, seeing as the ‘obligations’ they complain about are pretty slim thanks to the CRTC’s disastrous 1999 Television Policy that removed expenditure requirements for Canadian programming. Out of a total 28 hours a week of prime-time only eight of those have to be priority programming. Also thanks to the 1999 policy,

Bruce Dinsmore, Charlotte Arnold, Colin Mochrie, Richard Hardacre and Stephen Waddell urge the CRTC to provide shelf space and funding for Canadian content on-line at the February New Media hearings.



Fred Chartrand



(Left:) Team ACTRA shows some muscle at the May CRTC TV Hearings: **R.H. Thomson**, **Julie Stewart** and **Richard Hardacre**.

low-cost entertainment magazine, variety and reality shows are counted in those 28 hours. The week ACTRA went to make our case before the CRTC, CTV and Global each had just two hours of scripted Canadian drama scheduled, that's out of a possible 28 primetime hours on each channel.

Under the current regulations, English-language private OTA broadcasters spent 61% more on foreign programming than on Canadian – \$739.7 million versus \$452.8 million – in 2008. Hardly oppressive.

Guess what else? ACTRA and some of our friends got together and did a study that shows that Canadian programming can be, and is profitable, especially when you account for the repeat airings across multiple specialty channels.

So if it's not Canadian content obligations that has broadcasters in a bind, then what's the issue? Well, to a great extent, the private broadcasters' challenges are largely self-inflicted. In an orgy of self-indulgence, they bid up the price of U.S. programs, sometimes buying a series not because they want to show it, but to prevent their competitor from acquiring it. They also spent billions of dollars acquiring new broadcasting properties (see above note on specialty channels!) so they could become oligopolies and have done so by borrowing money at a time when interest rates were high.

Their reckless business decisions meant that even after years and years of often record-breaking profits, when the advertising market softened, they had no flexibility to adapt and ride out the temporary downturn.

So why blame Cancon? It turns out, private broadcasters are opportunists. Private broadcasters are seizing on what they call a 'crisis' to hold us hostage on the issue of fee-for-carriage, to leave communities without newsrooms and free themselves of regulation that perhaps they never wanted in the first place. (Funny how they want to get rid of the regulations that require them to invest in Canadian programming, but seem perfectly happy with the simultaneous substitution rule that has made them so profitable for decades.)

If you're not going to air Canadian programming, why do we need you?

Our question to broadcasters is: "If you're not going to air Canadian programming, why do we need you?" The only *raison d'être* Canadian private broadcasters have is to bring us Canadian programming.

– continued on page 30



Cheers & Jeers

Cheers to Heritage Minister James Moore for bringing funding for television, new media and emerging platforms together under the Canadian Media Fund and giving us a two-year, \$310-million commitment

Cheers to MPs on the Heritage Committee for setting up hearings on the so-called TV 'crisis.'

Jeers to private broadcasters for blaming CanCon regulations for their self-inflicted financial woes.

Jeers to NS Liberals for circulating semi-nude pics of ACTRA member **Lenore Zann** when she announced she was running for the NDP. The photo is from a TV series in which she appears in character. Exploiting a performer's performance for political gain is dirty tricks indeed!

For more cheers, jeers and commentary hook into ACTRA's Twitter page at www.twitter.com/ACTRAnat.

Maritimes

It's official, the Maritimes experienced Spring-like weather for four days between snowstorms. We were very excited. However, the cold weather has not stopped two projects rolling film in March and April. The aptly named *Ice Castles* skated its way into town and, thankfully, has made use of our Maritimes talent. A re-make of the 70's classic, *Ice Castles* is helmed by the very same director, Donald Wrye.

Our very own ACTRA member **Josh MacDonald's** feature *Halo* is in production, with a predominantly ACTRA Maritime cast. *Halo* is a film adaptation

of MacDonald's own award-winning play, starring **Martha MacIsaac**, a Maritime member who began her career on *Emily of New Moon* and recently starred in the Hollywood comedy *Superbad*.

I am delighted to report that our new Branch Representative Richard Hadley, has been joined by our new Administrative Assistant Eva MacGregor.

Currently airing on VisionTV is the original series *SOUL*, a six-part drama set within the African-Canadian music community, created by Halifax Film and starring Canadian music sensation

Keshia Chanté and a mostly local cast.

We all know 'times are hard' and here in the Maritimes a rigorous belt-tightening by branch council and staff has turned our finances around. Now we are not seeing quite so much red, but are marching towards the black. However, we continue our cautionary stance in these uncertain times.



Jeremy Webb
ACTRA Maritimes
President



Mike Thompkins

Halo director George Mihalka and ACTRA Maritimes member **Josh MacDonald**, who wrote the screenplay based on his very successful stage play.



Chris Reardon

Canadian R&B sensation **Keshia Chanté**, with **Michael Rawlins** and **Kim Roberts** (*in the background*) in the new Halifax Film/VisionTV drama, *SOUL*.



Brad Kearns

Corbin Bernstein and **Shannon Jardine** in *Rust*.

Saskatchewan

An unusually long and cold winter has seemingly put a chill on the prairie production scene. With the exception of the well-publicized Corbin Bernstein low-budget feature *Rust* (shot in Kipling, Sask.) this has been a quiet time indeed. Production may be off, but these are busy times for the branch anyway.

In February and March, we partnered with the SMPIA to bring in **Brian Markinson** and **Kim Coates** to present acting workshops in Regina and Saskatoon. Both events were well received by our members.

On our branch council front, there is bad and good news: the bad news is our long-time National Councillor **Wendy Anderson** has stepped down; and the good news is long-time Branch Councillor **Shannon Jardine** has stepped into her place. We have great respect for both of these people and offer our thanks for their service to ACTRA.

Mike Burns
ACTRA Saskatchewan
Branch Rep



ACTRA Toronto calls on Ontario politicians at Queen's Park for action on behalf of artists. (Left to right) **Mayko Ngyuen**, **Gordon Pinsent**, ACTRA Toronto president **Heather Allin**, Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, **Wendy Crewson**, NDP Health Critic France G elinas, **Art Hindle** and **Peter Keleghan**.

Toronto

People in Toronto's film and television industry are tenacious and filled with optimism, we cling like desert plants to the hope and possibilities until it rains and we bear fruit. I'm pleased that my first branch report as Toronto President shows such growth.

Toronto is experiencing a renaissance of episodic Canadian television (*see Art's TV celebration story on page 5*). Being a bit cynical about what motivated the green lights – as I write, broadcasters are in front of the CRTC getting their licences renewed. We're not cynical that the current crop of series is some of the best TV produced anywhere. Our Canadian shows are finding audiences all around the world and are airing on U.S. major networks for the first time since *Due South*.

Knowing we'd be in negotiations for the IPA, we held a series of detailed focus groups with members, consulted our broad membership online and at our February members' conference. Council had careful discussions about our bargaining priorities. We knew when the time came we'd be ready. What we didn't know was how quickly that would happen. Actual negotiations took about an hour – as different from the last round as night from day. Most importantly, we're delivering stability for our industry, a priority for our

members. Thanks to those who joined me on the Toronto Team: **Eric Peterson**, **Julie Stewart**, **Jim Codrington**, **Mayko Ngyuen**, **Art Hindle**, **Karl Pruner**, **Wendy Crewson**. The national team members and our tireless staff who are dedicated, prepared and provide invaluable support.

Our provincial political work focuses on lobbying for Status of the Artist legislation. Wendy Crewson, Art Hindle, **Peter Keleghan**, **Mayko Ngyuen** and **Gordon Pinsent** came with me to Queen's Park on April 20 for an MPP lobby, kicked off with a successful press conference. We educated our Ontario politicians on challenges artists face, demanded legislation to provide artists with the rights that Ontario's workforce have, to enshrine our right to collective bargaining and, to install real legislative protection for child performers.

Over one thousand members attended our first three-day members' conference in February, crowned by our star-studded ACTRA Awards in Toronto. The awards were re-launched across the country in 2003, as part of our multi-level efforts to renew our union. And our members clearly love them!

ACTRA Toronto's council and executive team knows what it needs to do. We adopted our annual operating plan and budget in February, with bargaining, public policy,

and defending our jurisdiction being our key priorities. We're going to keep improving our members' services; look for new and better ways to ensure the diversity of our city is reflected and respected in our union and our industry; work within our national organization to defend our jurisdiction; and continue to wage the fight for Canadian culture.

Finally, ACTRA Toronto's electoral cycle unfolds in its now familiar way. My predecessor **Karl Pruner** wrapped up his two terms as president of ACTRA Toronto with a wonderful record of achievements: a key leader in our victorious 2007 battle over new media and fair pay; the launch of our new Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union, now open at www.creativeartscu.com; and leading ACTRA to its proper place in the house of labour through our strategic alliance with the United Steelworkers. Karl remains a key member of our leadership team as past-president on our executive. I am proud to be Toronto's newly elected president, and I'm loving every minute of it!



Heather Allin
ACTRA Toronto President

What's new at actra.ca?

View your work histories

ACTRA members are encouraged to view your work histories online, and not just at tax time. It's also a wonderful way to keep current with your income.

Pay your dues online

ACTRA National's Online Payment System is safe and easy. For security and to protect your privacy, you will be required to provide your full name, Membership ID and credit card information each time you sign in to make a payment.

Great deals for ACTRA members! Members Advantage Program

In 2000, ACTRA united with the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television to create MAP – a package of discounts for ACTRA members. Our goal is to keep increasing the quality and quantity of this program.



ACTRA is now officially 'tweeting'!

Visit and follow us: <http://twitter.com/ACTRANat>. You can also keep track of our tweets on the live feed at actra.ca.



Do we have your money?

ACTRA PRS may be holding an unclaimed residual payment for you:
1) If you have moved and not kept a current address with ACTRA;
or 2) If you are holding on to an uncashed cheque from ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (PRS).

If you have earned royalties, residuals and use fees under an ACTRA agreement, and have answered "Yes" to either of these questions, ACTRA PRS may be holding an unclaimed residual payment for you.

For info please contact ACTRA PRS at prs@actra.ca or 416-489-1311.



Performers' Rights Society

A DIVISION OF ACTRA

ACTRA members jump on board: News from Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union

Our very own financial institution has opened its virtual doors, and the buzz is spreading!

After some frustrating regulatory and operational delays, Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union finally began taking new members this spring. And more ACTRA members in Ontario are joining every day.

Creative Arts is the financial institution that understands the unique challenges faced by creative professionals.

It's a special kind of institution that caters to performers' needs, offering a full line of products including chequing, savings, loans, mortgages, GICs, TFSA's, RRSP's and business accounts.

One product that really has members excited is mobile banking, where they can get account balances and recent activity via their cell phone or PDA. Banking-on-the-move appears well-suited to the performer's lifestyle.



CREATIVE ARTS SAVINGS & CREDIT UNION

To find out more about what your new credit union can do to help you manage your day-to-day finances and reach your financial goals, call **416-642-6749** (toll-free **1-877-643-3660**) or go online and visit www.creativeartscu.com.



Barbara Franklin

We have lost our songbird from Saskatchewan.

No one enjoyed music more than Barbara who came to study at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto in the '50s and remained, calling the city home while never forgetting her beloved prairies. She received her LRCT, many awards, sang classics and opera, working with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Glenn

Gould and Nikki Goldschmidt, The Royal Conservatory Opera and CBC Opera, but she also loved jazz, had her own TV program, *Country Style* on CBC, worked extensively with Juliet, Howard Cable, Wayne & Shuster, performed at Stratford, starred in *Salad Days* in Toronto and New York and toured Canada, acting and singing in regional theatres.

Plagued with ill health for many years, Barbara never lost her sunny disposition or her faith – she loved life, appreciating every moment, the skies, the trees, even her aged car, and embracing all her co-workers with enthusiasm and generosity.

We will miss that wonderful voice and wild laughter. ■

– Corinne Langston



Paul Siren

Canada's cultural community lost a towering figure on May 31st with the passing of former ACTRA General Secretary Paul Siren. His contributions were immense: 20 years as ACTRA's General Secretary; 18 years as our representative at the International Federation of Artists (FIA); member of the Canadian Conference of the Arts' Board of Governors from

1984 and then its President from 1988-1990; drafter of the UNESCO Recommendations on Status of the Artists approved by Parliament in 1992; and member of the Order of Canada.

ACTRA awarded Paul a "Nellie" in 1985 for "best performance as General Secretary." Under his tenure, ACTRA's direction and status dramatically changed due to Paul's considerable trade union experience, collective bargaining skills, tireless efforts to reinstate fiscal responsibility, fostering of international ties, and overall breadth of vision. His legacy will continue to remind us that with a unified ACTRA membership, together we can achieve anything. Paul was my mentor, my inspiration, my colleague, and my friend. Goodbye Paul, you will be missed. ■

– Stephen Waddell



Doreen Ibsen

ACTRA Alberta member Doreen Ibsen passed away peacefully with her family by her side. She will be forever missed by her sons Paul, Bruce (Terri) and daughter Donna (Bob) Kinasewich, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Doreen passionately embraced the theatre and was an active participant in the Edmonton acting community for over 45 years. Several years ago ACTRA Edmonton awarded Doreen with a Lifetime Membership. She will be sadly missed. ■



Joyce (Simon) Gordon

One who swept everyone along, *willy-nilly*, on whatever project she decided to undertake, stalwart ACTRA supporter, advocate and activist Joyce Gordon succumbed to cancer in August of 2008.

Joyce was interested, lovingly assertive and feisty to the end. Ferociously committed in everything she did, Joyce demanded no less of others than she was willing to give of herself... which was considerable! She served ACTRA as Treasurer and was a driving force behind the establishment of our Women's Committee.

A versatile actor, her successful career included hundreds of appearances in commercials, voice-overs and films, as well as continuing forays into theatre and television. From her birth in Montreal, Joyce's booming voice was always there when needed, especially in her latter commitment to Performing Arts Lodges of Canada (PAL) and its many projects. She was among the first to recognize the growing need for assisted-living facilities at PAL and fought for their establishment. Our much loved, admired and accomplished colleague, contributed mightily to her community in any number of private, as well as public ways. She is missed. ■

– Dan MacDonald

Celebrating B.C. award winners

by D. Neil Mark

Several nods go out to exceptional

British Columbian members. I'm privileged to showcase their contributions, starting with the Sam Payne Awards.

On February 27, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the ceremony held at the Sun Sui Wah restaurant in Vancouver, where two of Canada's most well-known and respected actors were honoured that afternoon: **Babz Chula** and **Donnelly Rhodes**.

Always a keen supporter of independent film, Babz stars in Mark Leiren-Young's feature, *The Green Chain*. The Sam Payne Award recognizes performers for their humanity and artistic integrity – just one more to add to Babz's long list of awards that include several Jessie Theatre Awards, a Genie Award, a Leo Award, a Vancouver Film Critics Circle Award and on March 7 she received the Woman of the Year in Film and Video Award from Women in Film.

The entertainment community rallied together to help raise funds when Babz discovered that she had cancer. Canadian stars such as **Nicholas Lea**, **Ben Ratner** and **Gabrielle Miller**, musicians Jim Byrnes and Matthew Good, took part in the celebration. The non-profit Babz Chula Lifeline for Artists Society was formed to assist Babz with her medical treatment.

Winnipeg-born actor Donnelly Rhodes' career began as a member of the first graduating class of the National Theatre School of Canada and he has appeared in more than 100 television shows and films. Memorable productions include, *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid*, *Soap*, *The Golden Girls* and Vancouver-based shows *Danger Bay*, *Da Vinci's Inquest* and *Battlestar Galactica*. Donnelly has been nominated for four Gemini Awards and won in 2002 for his role on *Da Vinci's Inquest*.

UBCP's Women's Committee recently announced the inception of the Lorena Gale Woman of Distinction Award, to be presented at UBCP's July AGM. The new awards will be presented to a UBCP member whose work as a performer, and within the artistic community at large, embodies accomplishments that advance the status of women in society. Named in honour of member Lorena Gale, whose

powerful portrayals have graced the screen in over 200 productions, this accolade encourages the continued growth and diversification of performing opportunities for women. Check back at www.ubcp.com for the announcement of this year's inaugural recipient.

B.C. youth member **Cainan Wiebe** was honored with a win at the 30th Annual Young Artist Awards, on March 29 in Hollywood. This 13 year-old was nominated for two Young Artist Awards this year: Best Performance in a TV series: *Sanctuary*, and winner of Best Performance in a short film: *A Pickle*. This was Cainan's second nomination for the Sci-fi TV series *Sanctuary* and first nomination for the award-winning *A Pickle*, directed by Karen Nielsen with an all-Canadian cast and crew. The Young Artist Awards honours young people under 18 for their contribution to the entertainment industry:

www.youngartistawards.org.

And last, but not least, in May 2009 the Leo Awards entered their second decade. Winners in the feature-length drama category include, **Michael Shanks** for Best Lead Performance by a Male in *Stargate Continuum*; **Babz Chula** for Best Lead Performance by a Female in *Mothers & Daughters*; and winners in the Dramatic Series category include, **Tyler Labine** for Best Lead Performance by a Male in *Reaper*; and **Amanda Tapping** for Best Lead Performance by a Female in *Sanctuary*. **Jacob Rupp** won an Outstanding Achievement Award, marking the first time a stunt performer has been honoured with a Leo in this way. For a complete list of winners go to: www.leoawards.com.

The upcoming UBCP Awards Presentation and AGM take place on Sunday, July 19, at PAL Vancouver. Hope to see you there! ■



D. Neil Mark has been an actor and writer for nearly 20 years. Last fall he was elected to the UBCP Council and joined the *InterACTRA* editorial committee shortly after. In August 2002, he rode his bicycle from Vancouver to Toronto to raise funds for two charities and check out the ACTRA offices along the way.



Babz Chula and Donnelly Rhodes accepting their Sam Payne Awards.



Cainan Wiebe wins a Young Artist Awards.



Leo Award Winner **Tyler Labine**.



The Lorena Gale Woman of Distinction Award is named in honour of member **Lorena Gale** (pictured here) whose powerful portrayals have graced the screen in over 200 productions.



Ken Wornat

APPLAUSE YOUR UNION APPLAUDS YOUR PERFORMANCE

Paul Gross awarded Governor General's award

Congratulations to **Paul Gross** who received a Governor General's Performing Arts Award this year. The National Arts Centre Award recognizes the work of an extraordinary nature and significance in the past performance year.

Paul is an actor, writer, producer and director, and we applaud his memorable roles on *Due South* and *Slings and Arrows*. His productions include *Men with Brooms*, the miniseries *H2O*, and his recent hit feature *Passchendaele*. ■

ACTRA members honoured at the 2009 Canadian Screenwriters Awards

The WGC celebrated the winning words of Canadian screenwriters in April, hosted by **Geri Hall**. Winners included ACTRA members **Brent Butt** for *Corner Gas* and **Don McKellar** for *Blindness*. **Mark Farrell** was presented with the 3rd Annual WGC Showrunner Award to honour his exceptional leadership and creative vision.

For the complete list of winners go to www.writersguildofcanada.com. ■



Don MacGregor

Leslie Yeo Award for Volunteerism

The 2009 Leslie Yeo Award for Volunteerism went to **Sheila Paterson** (right), in recognition for her outstanding dedication to volunteerism on behalf of the Actra Fraternal Benefit Society. She is pictured here with **Joy Coghill**, who was the inaugural recipient of this award.

Winners of the 2009 ACTRA Awards in Toronto

"Receiving an ACTRA Award from one's peers is a significant feat and well worth both recognition and accolades," said **Heather Allin**, President of ACTRA Toronto. "Our performers are some of the best in the world. Each and every one of our 15 nominees worked hard, created expansively and gave their all, and it shows. Congratulations and well done."

Outstanding Performance – Voice: **Jamie Watson**, *Peep and the Big Wide World*

Outstanding Performance – Female: **Rosemary Dunsmore**, *The Baby Formula*

Outstanding Performance – Male: **Nicholas Campbell**, *The Englishman's Boy*

Leah and **Gordon Pinsent** presented **Peter Keleghan** with ACTRA Toronto's Award of Excellence. The February awards were presented at The Carlu. More photos at: www.actratontoronto.com. ■



Jag Gundu

ACTRA Toronto President **Heather Allin**, ACTRA Award winner **Rosemary Dunsmore** and awards show host **Theresa Pavlinek**.



Ken Wronner

Mark McKinney honoured with the Sir Peter Ustinov Award

Mark McKinney received the Sir Peter Ustinov Award at the 30th Banff World Television Festival. Mark's numerous credits include starring in *Saturday Night Live* from 1995 to 1997 and co-creating the acclaimed mini-series *Slings and Arrows*, which he wrote and starred in for all three seasons. And, we will forever be grateful to Mark, **Dave Foley**, **Kevin McDonald**, **Bruce McCulloch** and **Scott Thompson** for the amazing *Kids in the Hall!*

Mark has appeared in several films including the *Kids in the Hall* movie *Brain Candy* and the SNL spin-offs *Superstar*, *The Ladies Man* and *A Night at The Roxbury*. Mark starred opposite Isabella Rossellini in Guy Maddin's acclaimed tragic comedy *The Saddest Music in the World*. Currently he is the producer, senior story editor and showrunner for the Citytv series *Less Than Kind*. With his fellow KITH members, he wrote and stars in his upcoming project, *Death Comes to Town*.

Other festival award recipients included **Victor Garber** who received the Cineflix Award of Excellence and **Paul Gross** who received the NBC Universal Canada Award of Distinction. ■

The Genie Awards: An Ottawa celebration!

by Guy Buller

Ottawa's Aviation Museum was the backdrop this year for the 29th annual Genie Awards celebration, and my first major awards show! Steeped in history, endeavour and pride – the museum was an apt location for our industry to celebrate our best in Canadian film. It may not have had all of the Toronto 'glitz' but it was a classy affair where the bi-planes sparked my conversation with an Air Force major about Tiger Moths, which I had the opportunity to fly in a movie a few years ago.

I had to admit that there were more than a few Genie-nominated movies that

I had never heard of, but desperately wanted to see *after* that night! The storylines spoke to my understanding of who I am as a Canadian. It is a shame that English Canadians, for the most part, do not know these stories or the people who give their souls to the characters. We lack a 'star system' while being blinded by the light of others from south of the border.

The obscurity in which we Canadian actors work is a stunning reminder of what it means to be an actor in Canada – where major characters in Canada's biggest budget films have 'day jobs'.



Gordon Pinsent brushing up on his mountie stomp dance.

Passchendaele wins six statuettes, including best motion picture, and the Golden Reel for its \$4.45-million take at the domestic box office.

Actor **Joe Dinicol**'s comments on the hardships that our Passchendaele soldiers faced touched a chord in me. Why we are not telling and hearing more of these stories – our stories that make us the Canadians we are today?

In the Genie Awards program there is a message from the Prime Minister and Minister of Heritage claiming that the talent of our performers is a benefit to the country. Are not these the same people who were pushing Bill C-10, the “film censorship” bill, a little while ago and recently turned deaf ears to the plight of our national broadcaster? It's a shame the PM and his ministers couldn't show up to

celebrate our Canadian film industry – something that seems to be misunderstood by the present powers that be.

But I did get to meet **Gordon Pinsent!** As he walked up the red carpet I could not pass up the chance to greet him as ‘Quentin Durgens, MP’. He was taken aback by the fact that a ‘young fella’ would know him as such and mused about the days of climbing the steps of Parliament with a head full of curly black hair.

Wendy Crewson spoke out on behalf of all of us on the importance of promoting our stories and talent, as did **Sarah Polley**. These are my stars! Real actors still slugging it out for, I might say, a higher purpose.

It was with honour that I attended the Genie Awards and encourage all in our business to make greater efforts to attend and support each other. ■



Guy Buller is a film and stage actor who has served as ACTRA Ottawa's President for the past two years. With a background in geology, this

Katimavik alumni hails from Western Canada, most recently from Whitehorse, Yukon. Guy is a strong advocate for the film, television and theatre community in Ottawa.



Callum Keith Rennie won best supporting actor for his performance in *Normal*.



Natar Ungalaaq won best actor for his performance in *Ce qu'il faut pour vivre/The Necessities of Life*.



Best supporting actress winner **Kristin Booth** for the controversial *Young People Fucking* with awards host **Dave Foley**, who called on the feds to free up screens for Canadian films: “We need legislation that requires a percentage of the films playing to be Canadian.”

Stay tuned... (again)...

– continued from page 21

In addition to deregulation, broadcasters are also looking for fee-for-carriage. That is, broadcasters want cable companies to pay them for carrying their channels. We're not against fee-for-carriage. But we are against giving private broadcasters a new source of revenue and getting nothing in return. If the CRTC decides fee-for-carriage is the way to go, then we want some conditions: we need guarantees that all revenues from fee-for-carriage will be seen on the screen in the form of local and dramatic programming; cable giants should not be allowed to pass the buck on to hardworking Canadians; and the CBC must be included.

So what do we do until our next kick at the regulatory can? We push back against the tidal wave of woe and try to hold the line until everyone can take a deep breath and see that the sky is not, in fact, falling.

In May, Richard Hardacre, R.H. Thomson and Julie Stewart presented ACTRA's case before the CRTC. A week later, Richard and Wendy Crewson appeared before the Heritage Committee to make our case to Members of Parliament.

Now we'll focus on getting prepared for the next round of CRTC hearings into whether to re-introduce spending requirements for Canadian programming this fall and the long-term licence renewals in Spring 2010. We'll also keep rallying members, building coalitions and raising awareness.

Talk about the longest ending e-ver. ■



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(withdrawals are tax-free; investment income earned is not taxable; if you don't make a contribution this year, you can carry forward to next year; contributions are also not tax deductible).

For more information call Actra Fraternal Benefit Society at
416-967-6600 or 1-800-387-8897
Charlie Johnston: Ext 242 or Agnes Kwan: Ext 364
E-mail: benefits@actrafrat.com

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Well in hand

by Richard Hardacre



It's totally remarkable when a large number of opinionated and ambitious, creatively thinking people can get united behind the same goals. When those people are us – professional performers, actors in film and television, self-sufficient by nature and these days struggling for work, it really is significant.

After four years as National President, let's reflect on what we've accomplished together:

- a solid win in negotiating our IPA in 2007, enduring the first strike in ACTRA's 66 years; achieving the first contract for internet distribution in the global entertainment industries; moving forward from that, we have built the momentum among our sister unions within FIA to work with each other in the direction of global terms for gaming and interactive performance – our aim is a world-wide contract for this work among all English-speaking performers;
- the most recent IPA negotiated with a fair cost of living increase (a 2% rate increase in each year, for the next three years) with the balance of terms remaining unchanged. Our committee supported the briefest bargaining period possible in order to demonstrate stability in our industry and a strife-free environment to encourage production during this time that our economy is insecure;
- a successor agreement in 2008 to the National Commercial contract with terms including a fair deal for internet use that establishes stability for the ad industry during these volatile times;
- our seven-year drama campaign, most recently presenting our case to the CRTC at both the New Media and Conventional Broadcast hearings, and to Parliament's Heritage Committee hearing this spring into the state of broadcasting; and
- the growing solidarity and unity of our membership.

Our struggle just two-and-a-half years ago to achieve fair terms in the IPA for our work in New Media succeeded only because of our united willingness to call our first-ever strike. We made it

abundantly clear that we had to share in any revenue created in the distribution of our performances, no matter what the media. The determination and solidarity of our members got us a fair deal then, and, though unspoken, were fundamental to achieving this peacetime deal this spring.

Our seven-year push for more Canadian drama is getting traction. We've proven that we are second to none in producing episodic television series that are some of the best anywhere. In just this past year, four Canadian shows have been scooped up by major U.S. networks for the first time since *Due South*. The CTRC hearings into broadcasting, at which we have done a superb job of making our case for Canadian dramatic programming, actually motivated this resurgence in Canadian drama with the broadcasters temporarily trying to look like Canadian broadcasters.

Remember, countless earnings and thousands of industry jobs have been shipped out of Canada since the disastrous 1999 decision to cave in to the broadcasters' pleas for flexibility and relaxed regulations. Without regulation, Canadian content risks being the victim of programming decisions that favour spending sprees on wall-to-wall U.S. programs in primetime.

Less Canadian content now won't make our broadcasting system stronger, it will drive it into irrelevance. ACTRA's drama campaign must continue until there's a proper schedule for Canadian drama on primetime Canadian television.

ACTRA has made many appearances in the formal hearing rooms of the regulators, and we have advocated as witnesses at Parliamentary Committees of Heritage, of Finance and of Industry. Over the past four years I found scores of the best-known performers in Canada willing to represent the entire membership at these high-pressured hearings. They do this for the survival of our culture, as do our many members who throw their weight behind our growing unity.

Thank you Richard!

Throughout your leadership as ACTRA's National President we championed numerous victories to include the hard-won battle of ACTRA's first-ever strike in our 66-year history. As a passionate advocate for Canadian culture, you've lead us as key industry players in demanding action from politicians and the CRTC. We thank you for your dedication to building this union's strength and confidence.

We have inherited this fine work from those who came before us. It is ours to keep pushing along. Together we've built the strongest cultural union in Canada, and the strongest voice for Canadian culture. That countless members who are not household names are strengthening that voice, and are building our unity in all our endeavours, is the greatest source of my pride in this work we do together. We have moved our union of performers up to the next level.

There is more to do on our mandate to advocate for Canadian culture and to secure the rights and respect for the work of professional performers. Serving as your President has been a remarkable journey. While I leave my official post, I remain committed to building on the best work we do. I thank all of my colleagues on National and Branch Councils for their dedication and their support. I am confident that you, our members, have the strength and dedication that will continue to move our union forward. You are in good hands. I thank you all for our remarkable achievements together. It has been a great honour.

Friends, in solidarity, I thank you so much.

Richard Hardacre
Past National President



Allan Fedel/Courtesy of CTV

CORNER GAS FINALE

You've been great, good night...

We celebrated the end of an era when the last episode of the beloved comedy aired on April 13. The *Corner Gas* finale was watched by 2.9 million viewers and maintains an incredible average audience of 1.4 million viewers.

Originally developed by **Brent Butt** for The Comedy Network and CTV, *Corner Gas* premiered on January 22, 2004. Six

seasons and 107 episodes later, the series airs in over two dozen countries worldwide. *Corner Gas* has been nominated more than 80 times for numerous awards, including an International Emmy Award, Gemini Awards, Leo Awards, Director's Guild of Canada Awards, Canadian Screenwriting Awards and Canadian Comedy Awards. The series has won six Gemini Awards,

including Best Comedy Series.

Saskatchewan declared April 13 *Corner Gas* Day, paying tribute to the series that put Dog River on the map and made the small town of Rouleau a tourist attraction.

We tip our hats to the cast of Corner Gas!

Left to right: Tara Spencer-Nairn, Lorne Cardinal, Eric Peterson, Nancy Robertson, Janet Wright, Brent Butt, Gabrielle Miller, Fred Ewanuick.



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