

interactra

News from the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

Applause!



Mary Walsh

ACTRA congratulates Newfoundland member Mary Walsh and Toronto member Tony van Bridge who were recently appointed to the Order of Canada. We also congratulate Toronto members Luba Goy, Don Ferguson, John Morgan and Roger Abbott of the Royal Canadian Air Farce who were inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame. (More on page 15.)



Tony van Bridge



Air Farce

Richard Bell

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New Era Launched with ACTRA Plan

At its June meeting in Montreal, ACTRA's National Councillors received the first draft of the ACTRA Plan, ACTRA's new action plan for the next year, three years and five years. The plan is a comprehensive priorities and planning document which, when complete, will set out bold new directions for ACTRA.

The goal of the plan is to:

- position ACTRA as a leader in the industry
- provide first-class service to every member
- secure substantive improvements in our collective agreements, and
- make ACTRA the greatest performers' union in the world!

National Councillors enthusiastically embraced the direction of the plan, and agreed to take the plan back to local councils and membership meetings for discussion. All ACTRA members are encouraged to get involved!

(See ACTRA Plan page 4, Message from the President page 3)

New ACTRA Offices in Toronto

ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto Performers are moving to new offices at 625 Church Street, Toronto ON M4Y 2G1.

ACTRA National is moving August 28. ACTRA Toronto Performers is moving in the fall. Call ACTRA National at (416) 489-1311 and ACTRA Toronto Performers at (416) 928-2278 (new number effective August 28).

letters to the editor

A good laugh



Tim Progosh

Thanks for helping make the first televised Canadian Comedy Awards a success. If we hadn't had the ink from our own publications, the show could not have happened. Also thanks to all ACTRA members who voted and especially those who took the time to nominate people.

We know there were errors and omissions that occur with every first time project. But we are already working on making things better for the 2001 awards. If you have constructive comments, please e-mail us at J4laff@aol.com.

Also please check the web site at www.canadiancomedyawards.com for updates on the nomination procedure. If there is a show, movie, actor, script, troupe etc. that you think is doing pretty funny work this year (Nov. 30, 1999 - Nov. 30, 2000), please let us know. If possible try to capture it on a digital camera so we can show the clip on the web site. If you want to try and arrange a cheap taping of your show, e-mail us. We may have a way to get video nominations done.

Anyway thanks to everyone. Keep checking the site. And never hesitate to e-mail us. We want your input.

Tim Progosh

Exciting time

It's encouraging to see all the good work that is taking place across the country in the Branches and at the national level. This is a crucial time for ACTRA; we are poised to take on great new developments and achieve-



Matt Holland

ments. Our Branches are strong, smart and enthusiastic; our Councillors and Executives dedicated to the cultural challenge brewing within the union. It's an exciting time to be a member, and a Branch President.

Matt Holland
Montreal President

Thanks to Brotherton's Travel

Brotherton's Travel has taken care of ACTRA National's travel needs for many years. To our agent Susan Sulker and her colleagues, we say many thanks for the excellent service!

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InterACTRA News welcomes Letters to the Editor. We encourage members to present opinions and exchange views. Please include your full name with your letter. We reserve the right to edit letters, which typically run between 50 - 150 words. Photos welcome.

interactra

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Inter ACTRA News is the official publication of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), a Canadian union of performers affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress and the International Federation of Actors.

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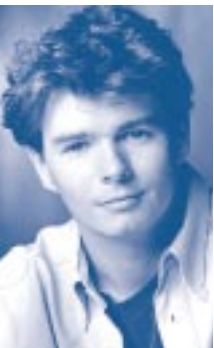
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message from the president



Thor Bishopric

Shaping the dream

Over the last several months, I have traveled across the country, talking with ACTRA members and Branch Councils about our dreams for ACTRA and the business plan we are developing to make our organization great!

The new ACTRA Plan - our action plan for the next one, three and five years - is taking shape. We are working to position ACTRA as a leader in our industry and we're focussing on providing world-class service to members across the country.

Business plans aren't always the most exciting documents, but the ACTRA Plan will be different. Available to members on CD-ROM and excerpted on our web site, it will include images, montages and clips from our history, along with a detailed analysis of what ACTRA is today and where we are headed in the future. It will be a living document that portrays the artistry and creativity of this organization and our members.

Our goal is to make ACTRA the greatest organization of self-employed performers in the world. We want to provide the highest standard of service to our members. We want to negotiate the very best collective agreements for

performers. We want to organize all non-union production. We want ACTRA to be a household name. We want every professional performer to be proud to be an ACTRA member.

We will accomplish these goals by establishing strong organizational objectives and targets and by developing clear guidelines for monitoring and measuring our success. The ACTRA Plan is focussing on three main areas - organizing, collective bargaining, and providing the best in service to members. Over the next six months, elected representatives, members and staff will work together to finalize the details of the plan.

I urge every member to get involved in this exciting process. The next five years promise to see unprecedented growth in our industry. We must ensure that professional performers receive the respect and remuneration that we deserve. Progress is being made in our organization. By harnessing the collective strength of our members and by pursuing our dreams for our organization, we can make ACTRA great!

Thor Bishopric
President

In brief

Web sites of interest



FIA

Check out the web site of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) at www.fia-actors.com. In four languages, the site contains news about FIA's work and developments in the performing community around the world. FIA brings together more than 70 actors' unions in 50 countries.

Performing Arts Lodges

See the latest from the Performing Arts Lodges of Canada at www.palcanada.org. PAL provides affordable housing and care for senior members of Canada's entertainment industry. Pal Place in Toronto houses over 250 members of our community. Residences in Stratford and Vancouver are being actively pursued with further discussions in Montreal, Halifax and Calgary. Become a PAL member for just \$20. PAL, 110 the Esplanade, Suite 328, Toronto ON ME5 1X9, (416) 777-9674.



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Need financial help? Want to donate?

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ACTRA Plan launches

new era for ACTRA



Maritimes Councillor Jamie Bradley (left) with Treasurer Ian Black.

Charting ACTRA's future

National Councillors reviewed the first draft of the plan at the June Council meeting in Montreal. While many details have yet to be finalized, Councillors heartily endorsed the direction of the plan, and applauded its bold resolve to make ACTRA great.

ACTRA President Thor Bishopric spoke energetically about his vision of what the organization could be. "We can make ACTRA the best performers' union in the world, with the highest quality service to members, excellent collective agreements, an expanding jurisdiction, and increasing work opportunities for members. Let us join together and use the opportunity to realize our dreams for ACTRA."

Ambitious Goals

The ACTRA Plan focuses on organizing, collective bargaining, and providing service to members, the three basic functions of ACTRA. The plan will outline how we will strengthen the organization to improve our performance in each of these areas. As well, it will set out the initiatives and programs that we will undertake in each year of the plan.

Organizing

At the Council meeting, there was lengthy discussion about what organizing means for performers.

National Executive Director Stephen Waddell explained that organizing is the act of coming together to strive for what can't be achieved alone, and selecting strategies and tactics to achieve shared objectives.

"It's what radio artists did in 1941 when they joined together and created the Radio Artists of Toronto Society (RATS) to improve fees and working conditions in radio. It's what we must continue to do today, as we face new challenges and look for new ways to protect and expand work opportunities for performers. The most immediate challenges for ACTRA are non-union production, raids on our jurisdiction, new areas of production and new media."

The ACTRA Plan outlines the organizing objectives to which ACTRA is committed. These include:

- Signing more productions to ACTRA agreements thereby creating more work opportunities for members
- Better policing of our jurisdiction to reduce non-union production and enforce the terms of our collective agreements
- Eliminating attempts by other unions to raid our jurisdiction
- Persuading producers and casting personnel to cast more Canadian performers in productions shot in Canada

In the next six months, ACTRA will finalize the ACTRA Plan. This will launch ACTRA into one of the most exciting periods in our 50-year history.

The film and television industry is exploding in Canada and potential opportunities for performers are expanding exponentially with the convergence between the Internet and traditional media. The ACTRA Plan will ensure ACTRA is positioned at the forefront of change, and has a clear vision, strategy, action plan and the resources to deal with these challenging and dynamic times.

- Signing specialty and Pay-TV channels to ACTRA collective agreements so members have access to the opportunities in the multi-channel universe
- Organizing companies producing for the Internet (commercials, programming, interactive entertainment) to become signatory to ACTRA collective agreements.

To accomplish these objectives, the ACTRA Plan will set out a program of action, which includes the hiring of four ACTRA organizers (one each in Calgary, Montreal, and Toronto, and one responsible for organizing the Internet and new technologies); reorganizing the responsibilities of staff in small branches so they can serve as organizers rather than administrators; promoting a strong sense of solidarity among ACTRA members and a unity of purpose across the organization.



Toronto Councillors Myra Fooden and Sean Mulcahy.



Maritimes Branch Representative Gary Vermeir (left) with President Thor Bishopric.

Collective bargaining

While ACTRA's collective agreements compare favourably with the best performer agreements world-wide, we are facing numerous and complex challenges arising from new digital technologies, the rapidly changing nature of both production and distribution, and the proliferation of specialty TV services.

The ACTRA Plan will outline how ACTRA will address these challenges. It will include:

- Developing and negotiating clauses in our collective agreements to ensure performers are fairly compensated for production and use of materials for the Internet and other new media
- Improving use fee payments and reporting obligations in light of the rapidly expanding markets for performers' work
- Negotiating first agreements with pay and specialty services
- Rigorously stewarding, enforcing and administering the terms of all ACTRA collective agreements.

In Year One, renegotiation of the Independent Production Agreement will dominate the agenda. New initiatives will include a strong education campaign to rally members around key bargaining issues and build member solidarity.

Another exciting initiative will be the completion of the electronic data interchange (EDI) system which ACTRA has developed to check contracts, calculate fees, process producer payments and remittances, and track use fees electronically. The system currently is being tested by selected producers. The plan will outline how EDI will be extended to all producers.

Service to members

Finally the ACTRA Plan will set out a detailed plan to improve service to members.

National President Thor Bishopric says ACTRA must create a new culture to better serve members' needs. "We all remember what it was like to make a life commitment to become an actor. We must create an organization that empowers members to pursue their dreams. Every time a member comes in contact with ACTRA, ACTRA must affirm the individual's decision to become a performer. ACTRA must be supportive, highly professional, and must enrich the lives of individual members fraternally, emotionally and economically. Every call to our offices, every contact with a steward, every mailing and newsletter, every reference to ACTRA in the media must make members proud to be a performer and an ACTRA member."

The plan will include a full range of activities that address members' needs. These needs include member promotion, training, relations with talent agents, improved life, health and dental benefits, collection of use fees, and progress in the public policy arena.



L-r: Montreal Councillor Maria Bircher, ACTRA Fraternal's Robert Underwood, Toronto Councillor Sean Mulcahy and former President Dan MacDonald.

Get involved!

National Councillors have been asked to discuss the plan at local Council and membership meetings. ACTRA members are urged to get involved in this exciting process. Many members have already discussed the plan with National President Thor Bishopric who has been visiting Branches across the country to encourage discussion at the local level.

Over the next month, staff will work with members to complete the ACTRA Plan. They will incorporate suggestions from members and Branches. The National Council is holding a special meeting in September to review the new document and see the CD ROM production. Once Council approves the plan, it will be made available to ACTRA members.

ACTRA hires National Organizers

At the June meeting, national councillors agreed to the hiring of four organizers, as recommended in the draft ACTRA Plan. This will assist ACTRA in increasing the work opportunities for performers and securing and expanding ACTRA's jurisdiction. Two of the organizers are already on the job: Dan Mackenzie is based in Toronto, and Frank Desjardins is based in Calgary.

Negotiations & Agreements

Performances on Internet key issue in CBC negotiations

Since January 2000, ACTRA has been in negotiations with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for renewal of ACTRA's Television and Radio Agreements. The major outstanding issues concern rates and conditions for production and use of your performances on the Internet, squeezing of performer credits, and CBC's administrative and reporting deficiencies.

Despite our best efforts to negotiate an equitable Agreement over a two-month period in the early winter, ACTRA was forced to seek the help of a federal government mediator to assist the parties to reach a settlement. The federal mediator called the CBC and ACTRA negotiators together on June 22 and 22, but no significant progress was made. The mediator brought ACTRA and CBC together on July 25 to 27 in Toronto but was unable to resolve the substantial differences between us.

Visit ACTRA's web site at www.actra.ca for the latest news.

ACTRA and NFB agree to terms of new agreement

Over the past several months, representatives of ACTRA and the National Film Board of Canada met in Montreal to renegotiate the national collective agreement covering production undertaken by the NFB. ACTRA's major objective in the negotiations was to upgrade the NFB's rates and conditions to a level comparable to the Independent Production Agreement.

Following a number of negotiation sessions, we were able to conclude Terms of Settlement with the NFB. The settlement will be submitted shortly for ratification to the ACTRA membership eligible to vote on the ACTRA/NFB Agreement.

The new Agreement once ratified will be effective until April 30, 2003.

ACTRA seeks agreements with specialty channels

ACTRA is pursuing negotiations with Alliance Atlantis Broadcasting, CHUM/City, and YTV for first collective agreements covering performers engaged by their specialty channels. The companies are presently considering negotiating jointly with ACTRA for an agreement that would cover all of their respective cable channels. The companies have agreed to get back to ACTRA in the early Fall.

The channels operated by these companies are:

- Alliance Atlantis Broadcasting: HGTV, Life, History, Showcase, Food
- CHUM/City: Bravo!, MuchMusic, MuchMoreMusic, Space, Star!
- YTV: YTV, Treehouse TV, Country Music Television.

Citytv

ACTRA has had a collective agreement with Citytv since the innovative Toronto station first hit the airwaves in the early 70's.

For the past few years, ACTRA and Citytv have been meeting periodically to try to develop terms for renewal of the collective agreement. The main obstacle was the issue of performer self-promotion, with ACTRA and Citytv divided over the issue of payment to performers who appear to promote themselves or a production in which they appear.

ACTRA and Citytv recently concluded Terms of Settlement, which will be submitted for ratification by members eligible to vote. When ratified by the members, the new Agreement will have a three-year term.

ACTRA staff negotiations

ACTRA collective agreements with our own staff across the county are also being renegotiated. Presently, ACTRA has agreements with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) covering branch representatives, stewards and administrative assistants; and with the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) covering clerical and secretarial employees working in the Toronto location. Both of these collective agreements expired in September 1999.

ACTRA management is presently in conciliation with the USWA under the auspices of the Ontario Government's Labour/Management Mediation Services.

Bargaining strategies for new media focus of FIA workshop

With the advent of digital technologies, markets for the work of audio-visual performers are expanding exponentially.

Yet these digital technologies are creating new challenges for performers and our unions around the world:

- How do we put a value on our work, since it can be seen by one, one million or one billion people at the same time?
- How do we keep track of who is using our work?
- How do we ensure we receive a fair return?
- How do we protect the integrity of the recorded performance in a world of perfect copies and digital manipulation?
- How can performers maintain a competitive advantage over digitally-created, or re-created performances?

Representatives from 13 performer unions in 8 countries met in Toronto in June to discuss strategies to protect performers in the digital age.

Based on a proposal from ACTRA President Thor Bishopric, the three-day workshop organized by the International Federation of Actors (FIA) focused on the collective bargaining challenges facing the primarily English-speaking performer unions in new media production and distribution.

The meeting, chaired by Thor, was attended by senior executives from the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA (U.S.), British Actors Equity Association (U.K.); Media and Entertainment Alliance (Australia); Irish Equity; and Union des artistes (Canada); plus representatives of performer unions based in Denmark, Sweden and Japan. Executive staff of the International Federation of

Actors (FIA), based in London, U.K., also participated.

Many of these unions are preparing for critical new rounds of collective bargaining with producers. There was extensive discussion on how performer unions can respond at the bargaining table to the challenges of digital technology and how we can cooperate to strengthen the position of performers worldwide. The participants grappled with the issues of production and Use fees for the new media, and monitoring distribution on the Internet and other new media.

FIA agreed to assemble a research group from FIA-affiliated unions to consult on basic principles and:

- Conduct research on new markets and evolving new media business models
- Examine methods to electronically monitor use of new media product
- Research and prepare a limited-circulation document on current new media provisions of all English-speaking unions' collective agreements
- Draft some basic definitions, principles and bargaining aims to be used in individual performer contracts and collective agreements
- Research the technology which would limit unauthorized use
- Develop standard working conditions in new media production
- Examine an international campaign to organize new media
- Develop a political statement on new media for the upcoming FIA Congress.

It was also agreed that FIA should establish a library of the FIA-affiliated unions' collective agreements as a bargaining resource. Finally, FIA agreed to explore hiring an international organizer.

New agreement with Vision TV

ACTRA negotiators met recently with representatives of Vision TV to renegotiate the terms and fees in ACTRA's collective agreement with the specialty cablecaster.

After several sessions, ACTRA and Vision were able to conclude Terms of Settlement which will be submitted to the ACTRA members who are eligible to vote on ratification of the ACTRA/Vision Agreement.

The Agreement will be effective for three years from the date it is ratified by the membership.

ACTRA and sci-fi producers unable to agree to terms

In July, after several months of talks, ACTRA terminated negotiations with the producers of the TV science fiction series *Star Hunter*, currently being filmed in Minto, New Brunswick. The producers were unwilling to come to terms with ACTRA on Use payments and wanted concessions that would have substantially undercut the Use provisions in the Independent Production Agreement.

ACTRA Martimes Branch has engaged a communications consultant in New Brunswick to advocate on behalf of New Brunswick members who want to work under the IPA like their colleagues in the rest of Canada. As well, ACTRA has made *Star Hunter* a priority assignment for our newly hired organizers.

Disputes & Settlements

ACTRA seeking commercials' residuals for stunt performer

ACTRA and the Institute of Canadian Advertising and the Association of Canadian Advertisers recently held a Joint Standing Committee meeting and successfully resolved a number of performer claims for their work in commercials.

Unfortunately, the one claim that could not be resolved at this stage was a dispute between ACTRA and an advertising agency over what constitutes a stunt for purposes of qualifying for payment of residuals.

As members will remember, the current National Commercials Contract provides for the first time that Stunt Performers are entitled to residual payments if "the stunt is recognizable as a stunt in the final commercial". ACTRA claims the stunt is recognizable in the final commercial; the agency disagrees. The dispute has been referred to final and binding arbitration and will be settled by a single arbitrator who will be chosen by the parties.

ACTRA pursuing residuals for Wayne and Shuster performers



CBC has sold *Wayne and Shuster* programs world-wide. L-r (front): Johnny Wayne, Carol Robinson, Frank Shuster; (back): Sheila Rutanen, Roy Woodsworth, Kathleen Younger, Bill Kemp, Rene Cherrier, Lindsay Robinson, Tom Harvey.

For over a year, ACTRA Performers' Rights Society has been pursuing a grievance against the CBC over the sale of the well-known *Wayne and Shuster* series to The Comedy Channel. CBC went ahead and sold the series to the specialty channel without seeking the permission of the performers in the series, and without renegotiating with the performers for such use.

ACTRA has filed a substantial claim for residual payments against the CBC. The CBC is refusing to settle the matter equitably. ACTRA has told the CBC that we are going to arbitration to have our performers fairly compensated.

ACTRA vows to defeat Media Guild raid on our jurisdiction

ACTRA will not tolerate a raid on our jurisdiction. We have made this clear to the Canadian Media Guild (CMG) which is attempting to sign up non-voucher background performers ("cash extras") in ACTRA's jurisdiction.

In a letter to Media Guild president Lise Lareau, ACTRA President Thor Bishopric said CMG's raiding activities are a blatant violation of the solidarity that should exist between organizations such as ours, and that ACTRA is resolved to defeat the Media Guild's efforts.

The Canadian Media Guild has filed an application to the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal (CAPPRT) which regulates the labour relations of performers and producers in federal jurisdiction. CAPPRT has agreed to hear the PACT/CMG application, though no hearing date has been scheduled.

ACTRA will intervene at the CAPPRT hearing and oppose PACT/CMG's application on the basis that CAPPRT has certified ACTRA to represent all freelance performers including background performers. ACTRA has a strong case to make: We are a national organization with over 50 years experience representing Canadian performers in film, television and radio and we have established agreements which provide performers with equitable rates and working conditions, residual payments, strong insurance and retirement benefits, and protections for children and stunt performers. PACT/CMG, on the other hand, has no experience in dealing with film sets and has knowingly negotiated away the residual rights of CBC freelance broadcasters.



Performers' Rights Society continues to collect millions for performers



PRs has sent out cheques to performers totaling more than \$11 million in the past five years. *Due South* (left) and *La Femme Nikita* (right) are among hundreds of productions which have generated payments. Here *Due South* performers (left to right) are Paul Gross, Bruce Spender and Callum Keith Rennie. *La Femme Nikita* cast (left to right) includes: Matthew Ferguson, Don Francks, Roy Dupuis, Pita Wilson, Eugene Robert Glazer and Alberta Watson.

- ACTRA's PRS is delighted to report that in the first half of 2000 it collected over \$3.7 million on behalf of performers and sent out over \$2.9 million in cheques. Compared with 1999, collections were up 34% and disbursements were up 69%.
- Among PRS' successful collection efforts were *Look Who's Talking Too* - \$125,000 and *Natty Gan* - \$330,000.

members ask...

When members receive cheques from PRS, they often call PRS to ask how cheques are calculated and how the money received from distributors and producers is divided amongst all of the performers in a given production.

answer It's easy. There are four basic steps:

- 1** We take the *minimum daily rate* at the time of production (\$500.00 for example) and *divide* it into the *gross fees* originally paid to each performer. This gives us the number of "*units*" for each performer (there is always a cap or maximum once any performer reaches 20 units).
- 2** We add the number of *units* assigned to each performer on the production to get the *total number of units* for that production.
- 3** We divide the *total number of units* into the amount of *money received* as payment for Use Fees from the Producer/Distributor. This figure represents the "*value*" of each unit.
- 4** Each performer's units are then *multiplied* by the *value of the units*, to determine the *amount due* to each performer. This is the amount which appears on the cheque issued by ACTRA PRS.

Example

- If a performer worked on a production and the daily fee was \$500.00, and their gross earnings for the production was \$10,000, the total number of units assigned to the performer for this production would be 20 units (which is also the maximum or capped amount of units).
 $\$10,000 \text{ divided by } \$500.00 = 20 \text{ units}$
- If another performer worked on the same production and had gross earnings totaling \$6,000, the total units assigned to the performer would be 12 units.
 $\$6,000 \text{ divided by } \$500.00 = 12 \text{ units}$
- If a Producer made a payment to ACTRA PRS in the amount of \$75,025 representing the total Distributors' Gross Revenue (DGR) earned and if the total number of units calculated for all performers in the production totaled 158 units, then the value of each unit would be \$474.84.
 $\$75,025 \text{ divided by } 158 = \474.84
(unit value amount)

- Any performer who earned 20 units would receive a cheque in the amount of \$9,496.80 (20 units x \$474.85) less deductions (dues, I & R, etc). Similarly, a performer who earned 12 units would earn \$5,698.08 (12 units x \$474.84, less deductions), or a performer with 5 units would earn \$2,374.20 (5 units x \$474.84, less deductions.)

That's it! We continue to make these calculations for all performers in the production and use these units for each subsequent payment received from the distributor for the production.

Calculations are done for each production and verified against the remittance statements and performers' long form agreements or riders.

This format of unit calculations has been in the Independent Production Agreement since 1980 when the royalty formula first entered the Agreement. A similar time and salary unit calculation is used by the Screen Actors Guild.

An interview with Nick Mancuso

Veteran actor Nick Mancuso is currently starring in *Call of the Wild*, a 13-part series shooting in B.C. Nick is a highly-celebrated ACTRA member who has starred in numerous live theatre productions, movies, movies of the week for television, and in television mini-series. His impressive list of credits includes starring roles in many movies including *Death Ship*, *Under Siege*, *Rapid Fire*, *Under Siege 2*, and two television series of his own *Stingray* and *Matrix*.

Nick is a militant advocate for fair treatment and equitable compensation for actors. He is determined to see actors win the artistic respect that they deserve in today's thriving film and television industries. Nick is spearheading a new initiative to get high-profile actors involved in the issues.



Right now, about \$3 billion is being generated and spent on the film industry in Canada. But the Canadian actor only gets 2 percent of that. It is an unjust and unfair situation threatening the very fabric of the acting profession and creating a service industry in Canada equivalent to a cultural Indochina. Furthermore, the lack of a star system in Canada ensures that no "system" is established.

While this is terrific for management, producers, agents, and distributors, it is lousy for serious professional actors. We must demand our rightful share of remuneration and respect.

What impact do you think the Working Actors Committee will have?

I believe that with a united banner like the Working Actors Committee, we will send a message to the industry that we mean business. This will strengthen the position of performers at the bargaining table with producers. The gains that we make will benefit everyone in our profession.

The Working Actors Committee is being set up by actors, for actors, without bureaucracy, as a paradigm of responsible democratic action. But we intend to work within the unions. Clearly the last thing we need is further fragmentation. If actors don't stand united, if we don't present a united front to producers both Canadian and American, we won't affect change.

Who is involved in the Working Actors Committee?

Working actors across the country are getting involved. We have set up an informal network, coming together through e-mail and actors talking to other actors. I am calling a meeting in Vancouver to talk about why we are setting up WAC.

I am also planning to pen an open letter to Canadians in LA like Donald Sutherland, Jim Carrey, Michael J. Fox, and Keanu Reeves, asking them to join with us and to help. You know that is what Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre did with Gary Cooper, James Stewart and Bogart in the early years of SAG. They responded and came together because there was a need!

I'll also get a web site going so that actors can have discussions and also post information. I see it as Internet democracy, giving working actors a direct say in making the changes that are essential to the survival and growth of the acting community in Canada.

Do you have a message for ACTRA members?

Definitely. Get involved in your union. Actors have a right to be treated with respect, to work in a profession where we can make a decent livelihood, which reflects our value in the market place. We have a right to a home, a car, a family, the basic necessities of life. We have a right to parity. We have a right to money from residuals if our product plays all over the world.

We have to realize that what we're asking for isn't outrageous. It isn't pie-in-the-sky. It's time to wake up. Say that we mean business. Otherwise there is nothing to be done to protect our interests in this climate of global takeover. I say it's time we say in a clear and unashamed voice, "Enough!" Together we can secure what is rightfully ours.

You are urging working actors across the country to get involved in a new Working Actors Committee. What is this committee and what issues will it address?

Mancuso: I see the Working Actors Committee as a forum for working actors to talk together about problems in the industry and how to resolve them.

The committee will deal with the very real needs of actors who make their livelihood in the profession - needs such as 12-hour turnaround, healthy working conditions, residuals on a par with SAG and fair compensation.

who's who at actra

Introducing ACTRA National Councillors

At ACTRA National, policy is set by members of the National Council and the National Executive. We want to introduce you to some of the decision-makers. Who's Who at ACTRA will be a regular feature of InterACTRA News.



Thor Bishopric,
National President

Thor first arrived at the National Council some seven years ago as Montreal's whipper-snapper delegate who agreed to attend one meeting to discuss the emerging threat and opportunity of New Media. But he was soon roped in to 'volunteering' to play a larger role and has since served three terms as National Councillor, two terms as National Vice-President and is currently serving his first term as National President (acclaimed June, 1999).

Thor's performing career began at age four with his first radio spot. He worked extensively as a child actor, relishing every opportunity to miss school and perform in television, film and radio. Throughout his teenage years and early twenties, Thor continued performing leading roles in TV pilots, radio dramas, MOWs, theatre productions, episodic programs and feature films. In the early 1990s, Thor began writing for television and has since written and adapted more than 120 produced scripts. Through his service corporation, Thor also works widely as a director, story editor, translator, lyricist and development consultant. In recent years, he has focussed largely on original project development, post-production services, voice-over work and of course, ACTRA.

To date, he has performed in over 1200 television programs, documentaries, radio programs, new media productions and feature films.



Jamie Bradley,
Maritime Branch
Councillor

Jamie started in TV as one of the first hosts of CBC's *Street Cents*. He has also written and performed in his own CBC Radio comedy series *Could Be Worse*, been a puppeteer for the TV pilot *Tooth & Claw* and is CBC Nova Scotia's movie reviewer. This July, he returned to the *Just For Laughs* World Improv Tournament. His production company, Soul's Lake Entertainment, is developing projects for BRAVO!, VISION and theatre.



Richard Hardacre,
Toronto Councillor

Having trained for the stage at the National Theatre School in Montreal and later at the HB Studio in New York, Richard Hardacre has been a member of ACTRA and Canadian and American Actors Equity since 1976. He is a working actor having been employed and rejected from coast to coast. A National Councillor since 1995, and an ACTRA Toronto Performers Vice-President, he works for the rights and unity of actors across this country. As an IPA negotiator, he co-authored our ground-breaking rights for children in film. With a young and growing family he will not give up the fight for our residuals. He was elected to the ACTRA Executive this June.

Change of name

The National Council in June voted in favour of changing our name back to ACTRA from the ACTRA Performers Guild.

We started to use ACTRA Performers Guild in the 80's when ACTRA was an alliance of three guilds. The Alliance has long since become history.

Photos and resumés a must

A recent By-law change now requires ACTRA members to maintain a current photo and resumé, personal address, phone number and GST/TVQ number (where applicable) with your Branch office. This information will be used by ACTRA to promote you and ensure you're paid promptly and properly.

Members must also carry a membership card on all occasions. Your new ACTRA membership card will include your photo. Please note: you will not be issued a membership card if you do not provide your Branch with a current photo and resumé.

It's easy to sign up for Face to Face With Talent On-line

Information and registration forms for performers and producers are now available on ACTRA's web site at www.actra.ca.

news... from the

➔ New ACTRA Branch presidents



ACTRA Branches in Montreal and Saskatchewan have new Branch presidents. Chris Scott (top left) has taken over from Mike Burns (bottom left) as Saskatchewan president, and Matt Holland (top right) has replaced Lynne Adams (bottom right) in Montreal.



➔ Montreal ensures background work goes to members

As a result of last year's IPA negotiations, independent producers must increase the number of ACTRA members they engage as background performers each day (25 in Toronto, 15 in Montreal and Vancouver, and 10 in other centres).

Montreal Branch has gone to considerable lengths to turn this gain at the negotiating table into a real economic benefit for ACTRA members. The Branch has produced a catalogue with photos and resumes of all Montreal members willing to do background work. It has distributed this catalogue to all casting agents. It also gives it out to every new production.

Members are starting to reap the benefits of these efforts, as most casting agents are using the catalogue and casting ACTRA members for background work.

The Branch is determined that all casting agents comply with the terms in the IPA. It slapped one production with very stiff financial penalties when the casting agent it was using - one of the larger agents in Montreal - ignored ACTRA's efforts and did not cast ACTRA members in background roles.

"Casting agents will either play by the rules or it will cost producers large amounts in penalties," said Raymond Guardia, Eastern Regional Executive Director. "We encourage all Branches to monitor productions so that those members who are willing to do background work get the chance to do so. It's their right!"

➔ Ottawa Annual Meeting draws record numbers



Gilles Plouffe

In May, 70 members attended ACTRA Ottawa's Annual Meeting, one of every three members of the Branch! In the last year, Ottawa Branch has undergone a transformation both in terms of member participation

and its profile in the industry in Ottawa.

Gilles Plouffe, who recently stepped down as president of the Branch, reported at the National Council Meeting in June that Ottawa has gone from 3 signatory producers to 49 in just one year! Council members gave him a standing ovation for the outstanding work he has done on behalf of Ottawa members. Gilles acknowledged the work of ACTRA consultant Arden Ryshpan (former ACTRA Eastern Regional Executive Director) who has led the organizing effort in Ottawa in the past year.

The Branch also recently hired Nanci Morrison as Branch Representative. She was formerly the federal NDP's chief organizer.

➔ ACTRA Toronto looks at performer-agent relationship

Last fall, ACTRA Toronto Performers Council identified examining the relationship between performers and talent agents as one of its top priorities. As well, the ACTRA National Council at its January 2000 meeting voted to "build and strengthen the working relationship between its members and talent agents in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect."

Accordingly, ACTRA Toronto Performers has contracted former Toronto Branch manager Celia Hamilton to study and research the relationship between performers and their agents. Celia has had an impressive career in the Canadian entertainment industry, working as a talent agent, stage manager and casting director, in addition to serving on ACTRA's staff for over 20 years.

Since April, Celia has held a town hall meeting with ACTRA Toronto members to get member input on agent-related issues. She has also met with agents and other industry parties to listen to their suggestions about improving their relationship with performers - and with ACTRA.

The ACTRA Toronto Council hopes to receive Celia's preliminary report within the next few months and to use her recommendations as a basis for improving our relationship with Toronto's talent agents. Stay tuned!

branches

ACTRA Calgary establishes list of recognized talent agencies

To address concerns of its members, ACTRA Calgary has developed an application process and a set of standards and ethics to recognize established and ethical talent agents in the Calgary area.

Talent agents who are recognized by ACTRA Calgary will be on the Branch list of recognized agents. This list is distributed on request to members and non-members and is posted on the ACTRA Calgary web site. These agents will be authorized to use the term ACTRA Calgary Recognized Agent on all advertising, contracts and paper work. This will indicate to performers and the industry that these agents are reputable and meet established industry standards.

New member reps on Fraternal Board



William Samples



David Ferry



Peggy Mahon

Members William Samples (Western Canada), David Ferry and Peggy Mahon (Central Canada) were elected to the ACTRA Fraternal Board of Governors in the first staggered elections earlier this year. David is a new Governor while William and Peggy have already served for 3 and 4 years respectively. Members Doug Paulson, Lorraine Thomson and Daphne Goldrick left the ACTRA Fraternal Board after lengthy and valued service of 19 years, 14 years and 6 years respectively. Members owe them many thanks for the work they have done on our behalf.

ACTRA 2000

Come to a *Celebration of Canadians on Film*, an event during the Toronto International Film Festival, organized by ACTRA Toronto with ACTRA Fraternal, ACTRA Performers' Rights Society and Face to Face with Talent.

Also during the festival, *Introducing CLIPP* (the Canadian Low-budget Incentive for Performers and Producers), ACTRA Toronto's new low budget Canadian feature film initiative.

When: Tuesday September 12, 9:00 p.m. - 2:00 a.m.

Where: This is London, 364 Richmond Street West (entrance in back lane), Toronto.

Limited tickets available from Toronto Councillors and talent agents.

Sponsored by Molson Canada.

In memoriam *Colleagues and friends share our sadness at the passing of the following members:*



Robert Homme



Dennis Sweeting

- William Atkinson
- Harold Avery
- Paul Champoux
- Eric Christmas
- John Colicos
- Jason Dean
- Frederic de Vancker
- Jodi Drake
- John Foss
- Helene Gougon
- James Hawes
- Doug Henning
- Robert Homme
- Ivan Horsky

- William Hutchings
- Mike Kanentakeron
- Leung Kwok-Wing
- Raymond Marlowe
- Ed McCurdy
- Graham McPherson
- Joe Murphy
- Jodi Nystrom
- H. Samuel Olson
- Bill Speerstra
- George Spurdakos
- Dennis Sweeting
- Sheldon Turcott

ACTRA supports SAG and AFTRA members on strike against US commercial producers



AFTRA and SAG members on the picket line. Above former SAG president Charlton Heston.

Members of the Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists initiated strike action against the U.S. advertising industry on May 1, 2000 to secure equitable rates and reuse payments in their television and radio Commercials Contracts.

ACTRA National President Thor Bishopric immediately pledged ACTRA's support for the striking U.S. actors, and advised ACTRA members not to accept engagements on any commercial production that relocates to Canada to evade the SAG/AFTRA strike.

Part of ACTRA's initial support for U.S. actors was our assertion that Canadian performers appearing in commercials produced in Canada during the strike for exclusive U.S. use should be paid in accordance with the SAG/AFTRA Interim Agreements (which have now been signed by over 1200 U.S. companies). ACTRA's position served a two-fold purpose – to demonstrate tangible support for SAG and AFTRA's strike action; and, to ensure that ACTRA performers would be paid the better rates in the SAG/AFTRA Interim Agreements.

Unfortunately, Canada's advertising industry associations, the Institute of Canadian Advertising (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) with whom ACTRA negotiates our Commercials Agreement, disputed ACTRA's position, claiming that the expired SAG and AFTRA Contracts

should apply. The dispute was referred to expedited arbitration, and unfortunately, the arbitrator ruled against ACTRA's position.

On a more positive note, ACA and ICA issued a Joint Communique to their members, asking them during the strike to encourage production in Canada under the terms of the ACTRA

Agreement. They noted that a large number of American advertisers have already come to Canada to produce commercials non-ACTRA. "[We] are anxious that the [U.S.] talent union dispute does not prejudice relations with ACTRA and the legitimate interests of Canadian performers and advertisers."

Solidarity

ACTRA has long-standing written reciprocal agreements with SAG and AFTRA. We have pledged to do everything in our power and authority to support our striking U.S. colleagues.

To be clear:

- SAG/AFTRA are striking only against the U.S. advertising industry. The SAG/AFTRA strike affects production of commercials, not U.S. film and television production.
- ACTRA has a signed collective agreement with the Canadian advertising industry. ACTRA's National Commercials Agreement is currently in effect (expiry January 31, 2002).
- Companies presently signed to the ACTRA National Commercials Agreement are legally entitled to engage ACTRA performers and produce commercials in Canada for Canadian and U.S. use. ACTRA's legal counsel advises us that ACTRA could be found to be acting illegally if ACTRA prohibited members from accepting work offered by agencies or production houses which are presently signed to the ACTRA-ICA/ACA National Commercials Agreement.
- ACTRA members and apprentices are advised not to accept engagements on U.S. television or radio commercials with companies not presently signed to the ACTRA National Commercials Agreement and which attempt to produce commercials in Canada to evade the SAG/AFTRA strike.
- During the SAG strike, ACTRA members should individually consider whether to audition for commercials which are signed to ACTRA but will be broadcast in the U.S.

Legal rights for performers on the horizon

Major gains for performers could be made this December if diplomats from 160 countries attending a diplomatic conference of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) agree to a ground-breaking international treaty giving performers the basis to own their own audio-visual performances.

Historic opportunity for performers

The meeting, taking place in Geneva, is an historic opportunity for the world's performers. After many years of lobbying, debate and seemingly endless meetings, WIPO may finally reverse its position taken 40 years ago at the Rome Convention that denied copyright protection for audio-visual performances.

Performers and performer unions from around the world have argued vociferously that performers must have legal ownership of their own audio-visual performances just as writers have copyright of written materials. In the digital era, legal ownership is crucial for performers to control both their performances and their images.

While many important issues are still unresolved, the treaty is likely to include a wide range of economic and moral rights for performers, which would help ensure performers:

- Receive compensation for new uses of their own performances
- Share in royalties available to performers in other countries
- Have increased ability to control digital manipulation of both their performances and their images.

ACTRA and other performer unions from FIA (International Federation of Actors) will be represented at the December meeting to promote the importance of an effective new treaty for performers. High profile actors from Canada, the U.S., Britain and Europe will take part in a Performers Rights Day in Geneva to meet with WIPO delegates and urge support for a broad range of protections for audio-visual performers. On the same day, events will be held in many other countries.

ACTRA has played a leadership role on this issue for years both in the deliberations with fellow unions at FIA and in consultations with governments. We are committed to continue this role leading up to the diplomatic conference. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to advance the cause of Canadian performers and we are determined to succeed.

If an effective treaty is concluded at WIPO, it will be a major breakthrough for performers. However, we will still have to work for the necessary changes to Canada's Copyright Act which currently contains only minimal rights for performers.

An agreement at WIPO with strong international standards and protections for performers does not guarantee amendments to Canada's Copyright Act but it would make our task of lobbying for such changes far easier.

applause

Congratulations to:

- Calgary member Ronnie Burkett who recently won the Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Play Award for his production of *Street of Blood*.
- ACTRA members Bill Hutt, William Shatner, Martin Short, Maureen Forrester, Evelyn Hart, Ginette Reno who were inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in June, along with the members of the Air Farce.
- ACTRA members Mary Walsh of St. John's and Tony van Bridge of Niagara-on-the-Lake who were recently appointed to the Order of Canada. Mary is an accomplished actor, comedian, director and writer who is well-known as a founding member of CODCO, Newfoundland's award-winning comedy troupe and the CBC's *This Hour has 22 Minutes*. Tony is a distinguished actor, director and playwright who for almost 50 years has performed on television and in major Canadian theatres including 15 seasons at Stratford and 21 seasons at the Shaw Festival.



Dan MacDonald



Martin Short



Bill Hutt

- Dan MacDonald, former president of ACTRA Performers Guild, who is the new president of Performing Arts Lodges of Canada.

SORRY!

Apologies to Montreal life-member Allan Bruce, Toronto member Cynthia Dale, Calgary member Brian Gromoff, and Jackie Chan for mistakes on names, locations and member status in the last issue.

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WORKSHOP

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



The Banff Centre
for the Arts

January 26 -
February 11, 2001

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: SEPTEMBER 25, 2000

The Women in the Director's Chair Workshop is designed to hone the skills of mid-career women film, television and video directors by taking them through all components of a professional dramatic production with ACTRA actors and professional (DGC, IATSE) and student crews.

Directors

A jury of film/television/video professionals will choose eight directors from applicants. *Stream One* will include directors that have already completed film, television or video projects. *Stream Two* will include women crossing over to directing without previous directing experience (performers, writers, AD's, etc). Cost: tuition – \$2,900, room and board – \$1,075. Some scholarships may be offered through ACTRA Branches, ACTRA Fraternal, and regional agencies.

Acting Ensemble

The acting ensemble is made up of up to 10 ACTRA or Apprentice members in good standing selected by the mentors. Actors participate in improvs, scene study and acting classes. Actors' travel, room and board, plus a small honorarium is covered by the workshop.

HOW TO APPLY

Director applicants send: Processing fee of \$50; three letters of reference; resume; VHS of your work (and/or additional support material); proposal stating your career goals, reasons for applying, and why you feel you should be selected; one Original Scene. Mail to: Women in the Director's Chair, Office of the Registrar, The Banff Centre for the Arts, Box 1020, Station 28, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff, AB T0L 0C0. **Actor applicants send:** Contact information, photo, resume, demo tape, cover letter. Mail to: Women in the Director's Chair, Actors, Attention: Carol Whiteman c/o The UBCP Office, 400-856 Homer Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 2W5.

For more information, contact: Carol Whiteman, Project Coordinator, Toll free 1-877-913-0747 (phone/fax), 604-913-0747 (phone/fax) or e-mail cut2whit@addax.bc.ca. Also see workshop website at www.creativewomenworkshop.com and ACTRA's website at www.actra.ca.

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