



INTER

Summer 2006

ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



ACTION!

Production coast to coast 2006

SEE PAGE 7



by
Richard
Hardacre

We are cut from strong cloth

The message I hear consistently from fellow performers is that utmost on their minds are real opportunities for work, and proper and respectful remuneration for their performances as skilled professionals. I concur with those goals. I share the ambitions and values of many working performers. Those goals seem self-evident, even simple. But in reality they are challenging, especially leading up to negotiations of the major contracts that we have with the associations representing the producers of film and television.

Over the past few months I have been encouraged and inspired by the determination of our members in British Columbia as they confronted offensive demands from the big Hollywood companies during negotiations to renew their *Master Agreement*. While a number of other unions in B.C. accepted rate cuts, members of UBCP stood up and said "NO!" The impasse led the parties to jointly seek the assistance of a mediator to help resolve the substantive issues, prior to returning to the bargaining table.

While producers and broadcasters alike wail about their struggle for 'marginal' profit, it's worth reminding ourselves and the industry that despite tightening economies, increased competition, some decreased ad revenue, and fragmented audiences, they are actually continuing to enjoy tidy gains. Would Bell Globemedia (the conglomerate that includes CTV) have been able – and willing – to shell out \$1.4 billion to snap up CHUM if business was going down the tubes? And it's worth noting that, in making their insulting demands in B.C. the major companies declined to present financial reports to support their claims that rollbacks were required.

In the U.S., producers and studios large and small, agreed to pay members of SAG, AFTRA, DGA and WGA some very fair increases. Meanwhile, our producers are paying performers in demanding roles less and less. And they, along with the same U.S. studios that agreed to pay increases for U.S. unions, are now demanding that Canadian unions be willing to 'share their pain' by taking deep cuts. What they really want is to bolster their profit margins on the backs of Canadian performers. That is absolutely unacceptable. Canadian performers are second to none. We deserve the same treatment and the same pay increases as our brothers and sisters south of the border. There is no legitimate rationale for us to be treated as second-rate performers.

We went to negotiation sessions in Vancouver and we stood side-by-side with our UBCP colleagues, adeptly led by **Rob Morton**, Chair of the UBCP Negotiating Committee and **Mercedes Watson**, Lead Negotiator. We have no reason to think that we won't be facing similarly insulting demands when we face producers this fall to

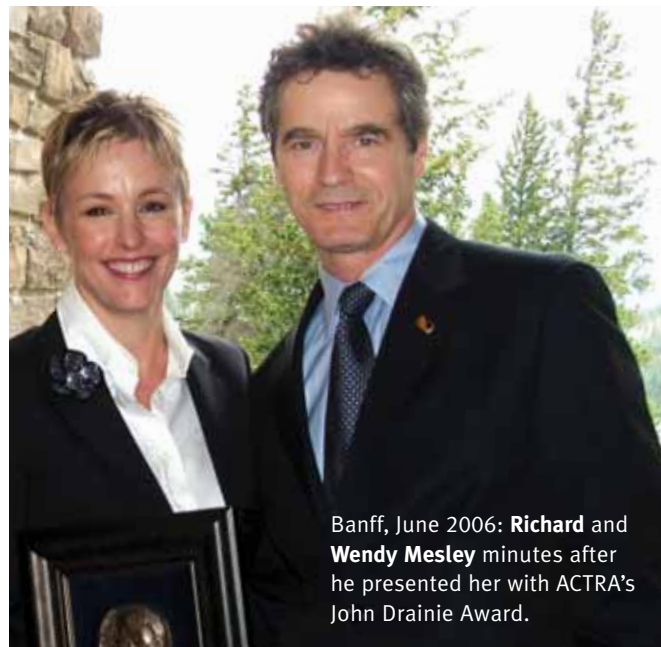
renegotiate our *Independent Production Agreement* (IPA).

We will be drawing on the vigour shown by the members of UBCP as we go into what might be our toughest round of negotiations yet. And we will be drawing on the total support of our entire membership. I firmly believe that Canadian performers coast-to-coast are cut from the same strong cloth. Our solidarity will give us the strength we need, when, following the lead of our brothers and sisters in B.C. we stand up and say "No. Our skill and our work are no less valuable than that of anyone else. We will be treated with the respect we deserve."

I can tell you that our team of performers on the negotiating committee, without hesitation, will be proud to make that statement.



Richard Hardacre
National President, ACTRA



Banff, June 2006: **Richard and Wendy Mesley** minutes after he presented her with ACTRA's John Drainie Award.



Summer 2006

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EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Richard Hardacre, Thor Bishopric, Joanne Deer, Ferne Downey, Brian Gromoff, David Macniven, Ken Thompson, Stephen Waddell

CONTRIBUTORS: Heather Allin, D.J. Anderson, Jamie Bradley, Joy Corion, Tom Gallant, Kim Hume, David LeReaney, Patricia McCutcheon, Mike Petersen, Jill Rosenberg, Marit Stiles, Carol Taverner, Christine Webber, Carol Whiteman

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Please return any undelivered mail to:

ACTRA, 300 - 625 Church St, Toronto ON M4Y 2G1
PHONE 1-800-387-3516 or (416) 489-1311 FAX (416) 489-8076
EMAIL interactra@actra.ca WEB www.actra.ca

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The Stage Mom Survival Guide

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

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



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

Correction

In the Spring 2006 issue, acclaimed actor **Donnelly Rhodes** was mis-identified in the photo on p.8 by his characters' name, Leo Shannon. We apologize for this error. Nine-year-old ACTRA member **Niamh Wilson** was missed on our list of Young Artist Award winners. Niamh's performance in *Haunting Sarah* (Lifetime) garnered her the Best Supporting Actress award for a Movie of the Week, Miniseries or Special.

Letters

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

Calling all scribes!

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

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Performers lobby Ontario politicians



On the stairs at Queen's Park.

High profile stars led ACTRA Toronto's Lobby Day at Queen's Park, the provincial legislature, in May. The issue of the day was urging the government to follow through on its 2003 election promise to pass **Status of the Artist** legislation. The important legislation would address the unique nature of how artists work, covering areas such as protection for child performers, career transition and training, income averaging and dignity for older artists.

After a hard-hitting press conference, more than 40 performers fanned out across the provincial legislature and met with 30 ministers, party leaders, and Members of Provincial Parliament.

The performers' visit generated extremely positive response from MPPs of all stripes. Responding to a pointed question from NDP Leader **Howard Hampton** during Question Period, the Culture Minister **Caroline DiCocco** said she intends to

act on some of these issues by late fall. ACTRA Toronto will keep up the pressure to ensure the minister follows through.

'Status of the Artist' means:

- Protection for child performers
- Dignity for older artists
- Career transition and training
- Income averaging



Anne Marie Scheffler, Lorne Cardinal, MPP Monique Smith, Art Hindle, and Theresa Tova.



Press conference: Colin Mochrie, Sonja Smits, Karl Pruner and Fiona Reid.



Moving in to PAL Vancouver

The dream is officially a concrete reality. PAL Vancouver opened its doors on May 29 and the first residents began moving in. Within 10 days, 50 'pioneer' residents had moved in and by mid-August all the 99 one-bedroom suites were occupied.

Vancouver's Performing Arts Lodge (PAL) was built to provide quality affordable housing and support for seniors in the professional performing arts industry. The eight-storey building boasts a roof-top garden, a reading room, and of course,

a studio performance space so residents can continue to flex their creative muscles with their peers.

PAL Vancouver's volunteers have worked tirelessly since 2001 raising the \$16 million needed to purchase the building. There was support from the City of Vancouver and other levels of government, however the bulk of the funds came from the performing arts industry. UBCP/ACTRA was the first large donor on board with \$300,000, which was recently matched by IATSE 891, to make

it possible to have 80% of the rental suites subsidized. But the work isn't done – \$150,000 per year needs to be raised to maintain current levels of subsidy and funds are needed to complete the theatre and to establish an endowment fund to secure PAL's future. If you'd like to get involved or make a donation to PAL Vancouver or any of the PAL chapters across Canada, here's how you can get in touch:

PAL Vancouver www.palvancouver.org

PAL Canada www.palcanada.org

PAL Halifax www.palhalifax.org

PAL Toronto www.paltoronto.org

PAL Calgary www.palcalgary.org



National Council: Taking care of business

Your elected reps met in Toronto in early June to take care of ACTRA business and hear an inspiring address from special guest, Canadian Labour Congress President, **Ken Georgetti** (*centre, checked shirt*).

CHEERS

The Toronto Star columnist

Antonia Zerbisias who channels

our sentiments exactly: "Canada's private TV network operators sing the blues so often, they ought to make a CD. It's always something: Cable operators treat them mean. The viewers done and gone. The CRTC leaves them crying. There's too much competition. There's not enough protection. Everything is changing. They can't keep up. Boo hoo hoo." (April 10, 2006)

ACTRA and AFBS: New Service Agreement

ACTRA members voted overwhelmingly to approve the new Service Agreement negotiated by ACTRA with our insurance and retirement benefits provider, Actra Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS). The agreement was approved by 93% of eligible voting members. The agreement solidifies our long-standing, arm's-length working relationship and provides a foundation for our future.

The ACTRA National Council and the AFBS Board had already strongly endorsed this renewed Service Agreement. However,

JEERS

The knuckleheads at the CBC who decided to bump *The National* to make room for a U.S. sing-along talent show, leaving **Peter Mansbridge** and Canadians who expect their public broadcaster to fulfil its mandate singing the blues.

The rocket-scientists at the CBC who dumped the Halifax produced drama *North/South* in the TV dead-zone of 2:30 p.m. premiering on Tuesday, July 4. As the *Globe and Mail's* **Andrew Ryan**

in the interest of ensuring that all members were aware of the terms and conditions of the renewed Agreement, the ACTRA National Council asked that members' approval of the Agreement also be sought in a mailed referendum.

Both ACTRA and AFBS are encouraged by the strong support shown by members' endorsement of the new Service Agreement. Both organizations are more committed than ever to working together to ensure that ACTRA members are receiving the best insurance and retirement benefits possible at the lowest cost.

astutely observed: "It's fairly obvious the drama was intended for a prime-time audience, but it was commissioned by a previous CBC regime... a decent Canadian-made production is resigned to a daytime timeslot ordinarily occupied by cooking shows and repeats of *Fashion File*. *North/South* is the series CBC left out on the dock to die." (July 4, 2006)



Peter MacNeill, Debra Lynne McCabe and Aidan Devine in *North/South*.

Courtesy: CBC/Andrew Trench

Past-ACTRA prez pulls up a chair at AFBS

Never one to sit still, ACTRA's very own Past-President **Thor Bishopric** has taken on a new post: Chair of the Board of Governors of AFBS.

Thor stepped down as the elected head of ACTRA National in June 2005 after serving a six-year term, the longest term of any ACTRA National Prez. Now, he is the first performer in AFBS' 30-year history to chair the organization.

Thor was first elected to the AFBS Board in 1997. During his 10 years of service as an AFBS elected Governor for Eastern Canada, Thor has served on the Benefits, Investment, Compensation and Executive Committees of the Board, and is currently Chair of the Benefits Committee, which is charged with the development of a new insurance program for members that will be introduced in 2007.

Former AFBS Chair **David Atkins**, who has completed a six-year term, has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board.



Performing from coast to coast 2006

While trailers are blocking the streets in several cities, others... not so much. Despite some geographic imbalance, overall, production is up or on track in most areas of the country.

Canadian production is still low. However 30-minute series and MOWs are filling in some of the holes left by the continuing lack of one-hour dramatic series. A healthy supply of low-budget features are giving ACTRA members more opportunities as producers who might have gone non-union in the past, now turn to ACTRA's low-budget incentive programs.

A rich pool of talented performers, experienced crews, unparalleled locations and increased tax credits are trumping the rising loonie as many parts of the country continue to draw foreign production. Vancouver, Halifax and, yes, Winnipeg and Ottawa, are enjoying foreign production at near-record levels. Other areas including Toronto, are seeing a moderate stream of Hollywood stars and big-budget projects roll across the border. Even Montreal, which has been plagued by a turf war between technicians unions, is back on the radar by the end of the summer.

While we're thrilled to have the business and the budgets that come with Hollywood shoots, they rarely offer local performers the best opportunities for leading roles. And as we've painfully learned over the past several years, cross-border production isn't always the most reliable. The only way to create a strong, reliable and vibrant industry is to build our own. Production of Canadian series is up ever so slightly, however, with the schedules of our private broadcasters chock-a-bloc with U.S. simulcasted programming, there are spots left on their skeds for our own original Canadian drama.

Let's take a road trip across the country to see what our members are working on in summer 2006.

ATLANTIC

Nova Scotia continues to be the production hot spot in Atlantic Canada. Halifax was home to several features including **Clement Virgo's** Canadian feature *Poor Boy's Game*. Written by ACTRA Maritimes member **Chaz Thorne**, the film stars a roster of talented ACTRA performers including **Tonya Lee Williams, Cory Bowles, Adrian Bowles, Laura Regan, Wes Williams, K.C. Collins** and **Lee J. Campbell**, along with **Danny Glover**. Thorne has two other scripts going to camera this year – *Pushing up Daisies* and *One Hit Wonder*. Other features included a portion of the **Roméo Dallaire** biopic *Shake Hands with the Devil*. Local feature *A Stone's Throw* and U.S. indie *Snow Angels* wrapped in late spring.

While *The Trailer Park Boys* rolled into their seventh season, other Canadian productions included the MOW *October 1970* and prep for a new series of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*.

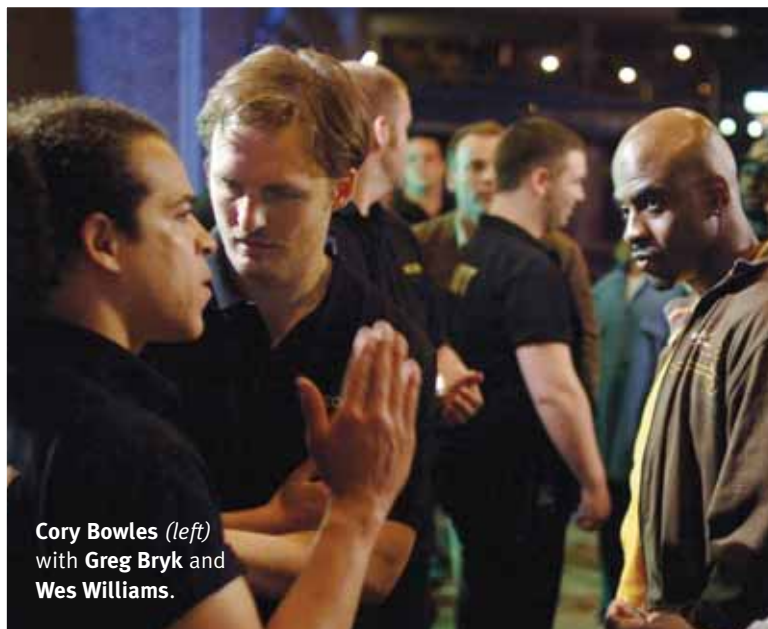
The area continues to attract a number of U.S. MOWs, with *Candles on Bay Street*, *The Wedding March*, *Relative Chaos*, and *Sybil* already wrapped in late spring and the next installment of **Tom Selleck's** *Jesse Stone* series is scheduled to shoot in October.

The province also continues to turn out world class animated series, including new seasons of *Poko*, *Lunar Jim* and *Bo on the Go* from Halifax Film Co., and the *Secret World of Og* out of Helix Studios in Sydney.

New Brunswick is reporting an average summer production season with the possible CTV MOW *Sticks and Stones* along with several Francophone series.

Unfortunately, ACTRA members in Newfoundland aren't enjoying the production boom that hit the province last year; they're facing a tough summer with very little production happening in the province, aside from a couple of docs. The sole dramatic production, a second season of *Hatching Matching and Dispatching*, has only been contracted for the writing of three scripts. There are not many producers in the province, and a number of which are still in post from projects wrapped in 2005, and others weren't able to get broadcast licenses that would allow them access to production funding.

(continued on next page)



Cory Bowles (left)
with Greg Bryk and
Wes Williams.

POOR BOY'S GAME by Cory Bowles

When **Danny Glover** stood his ground with intensity, a bat held to his face, and slowly put his gun away. I sat back and enjoyed the master class.

The story is a boiling pot of racial tensions in Halifax following the release of a convicted youth. I was fortunate to land the role of Earl, a young black male that has brushed off the division of white and black, and has the ignominy of hanging out with the 'white boys'. It was a nice role but difficult. If only that it was a reminder of my own experiences growing up in Truro, Nova Scotia, where racial tensions were a daily occurrence. On many occasions I found myself in the same position as Earl just wanting the fighting to stop and getting a healthy dose of backlash as a result. But that's one of the issues we deal with in this movie. How do we move forward, and maybe grow another inch in the process? It's a script that doesn't pull punches. And at the end of the day, the real issue is heart and do we have what it takes to face our own demons?

Performing from coast to coast 2006

Jennifer Podemski and Nathaniel Arcand in *Moose TV*.

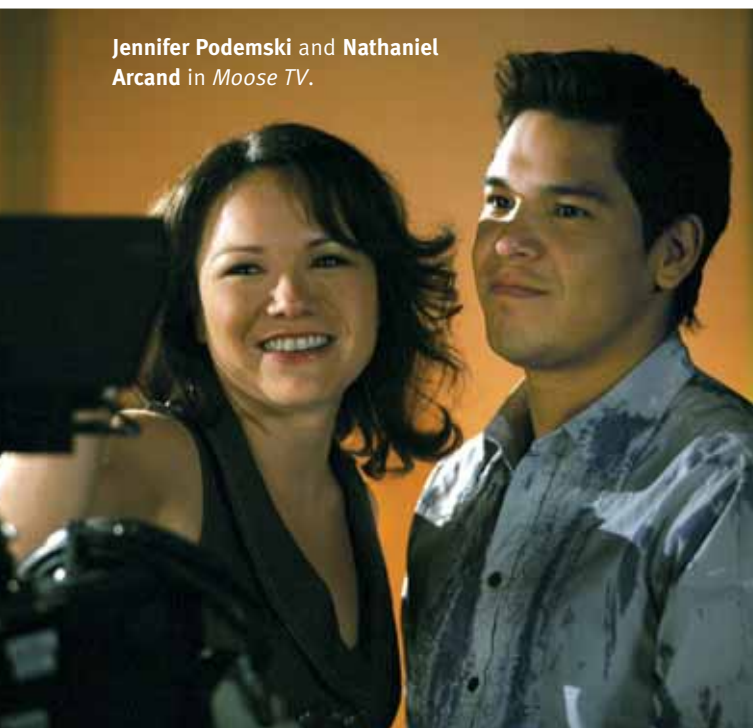


Photo by Sebastien Raymond copyright Resolution Pictures International

MOOSE TV by Jennifer Podemski

Working on *Moose TV* was absolutely a dream come true. I have always wanted to explore so many of the things I studied in theatre school and really dive into comedy. This show is really so funny and actually quite absurd, the character I play is fantastic and (director) **Tim Southam** really allowed me to explore some of my Comedia Del Arte and dance background – it was great, a real experience that every TV actor should experience. It is rare to star in a TV series and feel like you are using all of your muscles every day... that was my most favourite thing about working on this show. And to top it off, it is the first native comedy EVER, how amazing is that? Kudos to Showcase for once again thinking outside the box!

MOOSE TV by Nathaniel Arcand

There's something to it that's pretty unique in its way, that it's the first of its kind. It could be any kind of nationality in these roles, but it's natives, and they're doing comedy like what you'd normally only see in sitcoms that come out of Hollywood. You've got all these people that have never really worked together, but they came together and brought Showcase and the rest of the world along to see an awesome funny TV series.

QUÉBEC

In making a case for the importance of an indigenous Canadian industry and the danger of an over-reliance on service production, the situation in Montreal this year is clearly 'Exhibit A'. An ongoing turf war between two unions representing technicians continues to have a considerably negative effect on the city's overall production levels, scaring away potential U.S. projects and leading one major studio to declare the city a 'no shoot zone'. This fall, Paramount Pictures aims to buck the trend by bringing its \$110 million blockbuster, *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, to town. It will be the first major U.S. production to test the waters in Montreal since the turf war began and was the first-ever IATSE certified set in the province of Québec. Fingers are firmly crossed that everything will run smoothly. At press, two more U.S. pictures are waiting in the wings to see how things go before committing to Montreal as a location.

An up-tick in local production is also giving Montreal members a reason to stay optimistic. Muse has a number of fairly large MOWs in the works, including **Bruce McDonald's** four-hour miniseries *Killer Wave* and *Superstorm*. Seven local, lower-budget series were also shooting during the summer – *Mystery Hunters*, *Rumours*, *Webdreams*, *Race to Mars* and *Doctor Ology*. *Moose TV*, the first native-produced comedy series, is shooting eight episodes for Showcase and stars **Adam Beach**, **Nathaniel Arcand**, **Gary Farmer**, **Michelle Latimer**, and **Jennifer Podemski**. *The Great War*, a \$4.3-million four-hour documentary miniseries for the CBC and Radio-Canada is one of Quebec's biggest productions for 2006. Along with 150 of the actual descendants of soldiers and nurses who participated in Canada's war effort, the series has tapped a number of experienced local performers to do dramatic re-enactments – and one very new actor: **Justin Trudeau**.

Animation has been quiet, while new video game projects from Ubisoft are expected to roll out soon. Montreal members are also taking advantage of the steady level of commercials being produced.

“(Moose TV) is the first native comedy EVER... Kudos to Showcase for once again thinking outside the box!”

ONTARIO

In the nation's capital, production levels rose with the mercury. After a slow winter, summer brought near-high production levels to Ottawa. While corporate and industrial production remains steady, MOWs are coming on strong with between five and six shootings.

It was déjà vu when **Tori Spelling** and **Dean McDermott** arrived in town for the second summer in a row to shoot an MOW, *House Sitter*, also starring **Jonathan Higgins**. Other MOWs include *Demons from her Past*, and *Trace Evidence* starring **Amanda Detmer**, **Jonathan Scarfe** and **Anthony Lemke**, a co-production between Ottawa's Sound Venture Productions and Quebec-based Muse Entertainment for CityTV.

ACTION!

Ottawa also played host to its very first full-length monster flick, *Jack Brooks: Monster Slayer*. The low-budget film is the first feature from up-and-coming local prodco Brookstreet Pictures. Amberwood Animation also wrapped production on the third season of the hugely successful children's series, the *Secret World of Benjamin Bear*.

Toronto is reporting 'modest' production levels this summer. Members' incomes are feeling the squeeze – service production is slower than in recent years and the majority of the Canadian productions in town are low-budget projects.

The few big-budget U.S.-shoots that made it to Toronto included the US \$75-million New Regency/Fox sci-fi feature *Juniper*, *Saw III*, *P2*, *Camille*, and *Closing the Ring*. Through the fall, the city will host New Line Cinema's *Hairspray* with **John Travolta** and **Queen Latifah**.

U.S. TV series turning to Toronto included *The Dresden Files*, based on the books by **Jim Butcher**, Ridley Scott's CIA-based miniseries *The Company*, a third season of the top-rated *Life with Derek* for Family and Disney and Lifetime's *Angela's Eyes*, featuring **Lyriq Bent**. ACTRA members **Leslie Hope**, **Dustin Milligan** and **Karen LeBlanc** star alongside **Donny Wahlberg** in the Sony Pictures drama series *Runaway*.

U.S. MOWs included the Disney Channel's *Jump*, TNT's *The House Next Door*, and *Lipstick*, *Still Small Voices* and *Tipping Point* for Lifetime. Shaftesbury films wrapped *Me and Luke* for Lifetime and Movie Central, featuring members Kristopher Turner and Lindsay Ames. Shaftesbury also did a service shoot for BBC for a six-part miniseries, *The State Within*.

Production geared up on new seasons of several Canadian series including *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, *ReGenesis*, *Instant Star*, *Naturally Sadie*, *Jeff Ltd.* and *Billable Hours*. Parents will be thrilled to know that another season of the kids' cult hit *The Doodlebops*, starring **Lisa J. Lennox**, **Jonathan Wexler** and **Chad McNamara** as the ultimate preschoolers' rock band is also on the way.

On the variety series front, *Canadian Idol*, *Comedy Inc.*, *Kenny vs. Spenny*, and *You Bet Your Ass* all shot new seasons. *Punched Up*, a reality/sitcom hybrid for the Comedy Network, got underway after finding 13 people willing to have their lives rewritten by comedians.

The only area that seems to be growing this year is in animation, with 29 seasons in full-swing over the summer, including *Odd Job Jack*, *Max and Ruby*, *Captain Flamingo*, and *Sons of Butcher*.

MOWs included the adaptation of **Margaret Atwood's** novel *Robber Bride*, a co-pro between Shaftesbury Films a U.K. company. Shaftesbury is also set to shoot a miniseries, *The Summit*, in September. A **Victor Davis** biopic for the CBC shot in August with director **Jerry Ciccoritti** and **Paul Gross'** Whizbang Films will film the sequel to its miniseries *H2O*, *Trojan Horse*, this fall.

Local feature film highlights included **Sarah Polley's** feature directorial debut, *Away From Her*. Shot last spring, the film stars **Gordon Pinsent** and **Julie Christie** and was chosen for a gala premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival. *The Magic Flute*, a magical-realist take on the Mozart opera starring **Warren Christie** and opera singers **Mireille Asselin** and **Erin Windle** shot over the summer. Peach Arch produced a full slate of features – *Set to Kill* and *Bottom Feeders* wrapped in July, and three others, *The Mad*, *Harm's Way* and *Still Born*, shot in sequence starting in August. Noble House's *The Poet* and *Forgiven* are set to shoot through the fall.

(continued on next page)



Amanda Detmer and Anthony Lemke in *Trace Evidence*.

TRACE EVIDENCE by Anthony Lemke

In the suspense thriller *Trace Evidence*, my character Chuck is desperate to establish his law practice but they move from city to city because of his more successful wife's career (played by **Amanda Detmer**). Because he always has to start again, he is supremely frustrated. He also feels emasculated because his wife makes more money. She is about to make millions from her scientific research. Their marriage breaks down and Chuck, who never learned to control his anger and temper, plots to kill her for the money.



Jeff Seymour
in *Jeff Ltd.*

JEFF LTD. by Jeff Seymour

We decided that my character would run a nickel-and-dime advertising and promotions business because that environment gives him the freedom to do whatever he wants. He can go on wild adventures. He can come up with foolish moneymaking schemes. He can snow clients and lie and cheat without getting fired. Then we came up with the idea that my character's Uncle Kazem (played by **Hrant Aliank**) actually owns the building where I live and work so I don't necessarily have to earn enough to pay the rent every month. Since the character isn't constrained by a normal job, neither are we as writers. We can have him do anything.

Performing from coast to coast 2006

“The community has welcomed us with open arms, and we love working there.”



Steve Byers as Jason in *Falcon Beach*.

FALCON BEACH by Steve Byers

I have been lucky enough to spend the last few summers in one of Canada's coolest 'backlots' – Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba. It is a great little town just one hour north of Winnipeg. The community there has welcomed us with open arms, and we love working there. *Falcon Beach* gives me and my fellow actors an opportunity that doesn't come along very often. Just working is rewarding enough but to do it on a show that has us wakeboarding, riding motorcycles and soaking up the sunshine is totally unbelievable.

MANITOBA

Word spreads fast in Hollywood, and right now Manitoba is riding on the wave of popularity from *Capote's* success. The Oscar-nominated film is making U.S. producers give the province a second look, and for the first time ever, Manitoba hosted four U.S. features between January and April: *The Lookout*, *The Good, Blue State* and *You Kill Me*.

Business is carrying over into a busy summer, with several features shooting, including the long-anticipated adaptation of **Margaret Laurence's** novel *The Stone Angel*. Crews were kept hopping with six MOWs shooting back-to-back this summer and fall in Winnipeg, including *Off Road*, *Maneater* and *Elijah*, the **Elijah Harper** biopic for CTV.

After switching up its creative team, *Falcon Beach* began shooting a second season in June. The hit one-hour teen series isn't just airing on Global – it's now gone 'global'. It currently airs in the U.S. on ABC Family and was recently picked up by the BBC, adding to a 20-country reach that includes Australia, Ireland, France, Belgium, Malaysia, Turkey and Israel. A second TV series, *House Party*, shot a 30-minute pilot for the Comedy Network starring **Jay Malone** and **David Reale**.

After a record year in 2005, Saskatchewan's industry took a bit of a dip in the early part of this year, but now looks to be back on track.

SASKATCHEWAN

After a record year in 2005, Saskatchewan's industry took a bit of a dip in the early part of this year, but now looks to be back on track for the second half of 2006. After a few false starts, Minds Eye Entertainment's miniseries for CBC, *The Englishman's Boy*, began shooting in August. Adapted from **Guy Vanderhaeghe's** novel, the \$10.2 million MOW has attracted some of Canada's biggest stars including **Nicholas Campbell** and **R.H. Thomson**. *Intimate Stranger*, an MOW for Global/Lifetime starring **Kari Matchett** and **Peter Outerbridge**, was shot in Regina and Moosejaw.

Local producers Verité Films had two continuing series on the go: a fourth season of *Corner Gas* – the CTV comedy that continues to drive laughs and pick up audiences – and the fourth season of the teen drama *RenegadePress.com* for APTN and now, Global. A new clay-animated series for APTN and SCN, *Wapos Bay*, was in production in Saskatoon featuring voice performances by **Gordon Tootoosis** and **Andrea Menard** and has been greenlit for a second season. Also, a two-episode CBC pilot *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, featuring **Sheila McCarthy** and **Carlo Rota**, from Regina/Toronto production house Westwind wrapped in early July. The comedy, written by Regina's **Zarqa Narwa**, expects to shoot a full season in spring 2007.

ACTION!

ALBERTA

By midsummer Alberta had already met last year's count of major TV and film productions. Calgary managed to buck its usual November to March production slump this year. Three MOWs, *Dream Me a Murder*, *Mary Christmas* and *Touch the Top of the World*, and a pilot, *Jericho*, were already wrapped by the time the snow melted.

By midsummer Alberta had already met last year's count of major TV and film productions. Calgary managed to buck its usual November to March production slump this year.

Speaking of snow, a number of ACTRA members spent a good part of May crawling around in it while shooting *Everest '82* in the Rockies before heading to Calgary. The four-hour CBC miniseries is based on the true story of **Laurie Skreslet** and **Pat Morrow**, the first Canadians to scale Mount Everest in 1982. Stars **Eric Johnson** and **Gord Rand** were joined by **William Shatner**, **Leslie Hope**, and **Jason Priestley** in the ensemble cast. The next mega-project to hit southern Alberta will be **Paul Gross'** \$17.5 million film *Passchendaele*. Based on the famous First World War battle in Belgium in which thousands of Albertans took part, the film will shoot through the fall.

Other projects shooting in southern Alberta over the summer included four MOWs for Lifetime based on **Nora Roberts** novels co-produced by Alberta Filmworks. The company is also co-producing *Dinosapien*, a 15-episode CGI-live action series for BBC Kids.

U.S. feature *Resurrecting the Champ*, starring **Samuel L. Jackson** and **Josh Hartnett**, and *Moondance Alexander* with **Don Johnson** also produced in town. At the end of the summer, a unit shoot in Denver took a number of ACTRA Calgary members stateside to work. A number of very lucky members travelled to Fiji to shoot an MOW with the aptly-named local production company Nomadic Pictures.

Edmonton was facing a long, dry summer until APTN offered a minor reprieve by greenlighting a six-episode series based on the sleeper hit movie *Hank Williams First Nation*. **Gordon Tootoosis** stars in the series, shot in northern Alberta through the summer.

Local videogame producers Bioware are again tapping into Calgary's deep pool of voice performers for its next big release *Mass Effect*. The company previously hired ACTRA members to voice *Jade Empire*. The top-selling game won multiple-awards, including for performances – it pays to go pro!

(continued on next page)



Shawn Erker, Steven Yaffee, Bronson Pelletier, and Ksenia Solo of renegadepress.com.

renegadepress.com by **Ksenia Solo**

I am so proud of my work on *renegade* because the show has a special commitment to viewers. The show speaks to teenagers on a very intimate level and that's very rare in a teen series. *renegade* is also very caring of its viewers because the writers let teens decide for themselves what's real and lets the viewers know they're not alone in this sometimes scary and lonely time of our lives. (My character) Zoey's feeling pretty settled. She feels safety and comfort in her relationship with Jack. She's still trying to figure out what's right for her, but for now, she's enjoying feeling the closeness that she has with Jack.



Ted Atherton and fellow performer-climbers in *Everest*.

EVEREST by **Leslie Hope**

I was honoured to be recently included as a cast member on *Everest*. I came onto *Everest* at the end of a very long shoot and played only a small part. That team of Canadian actors was not only gracious and warm to me, but they were still so motivated in their work, still inventive and playful and still dedicated to breathing life into their characters. I am often proud to be a Canadian but frankly not always proud to be an actor. The work of all of those actors made me proud to be both.

Performing from coast to coast 2006

ACTION!

They're trying for a second gold rush in the Yukon with a film commission determined to reach \$30 million in film and production in the next five years – that's \$25 million more than they did in 2005.



Klea Scott and Ian Tracey in *Intelligence*.

INTELLIGENCE by Ian Tracey

After having played a cop for so long (on *Da Vinci's*), I can take what I know about law enforcement and actually be a really good criminal. I understand the playing field. (My character Jimmy) is not a typical 'bad man.' He's more like a guy living across the street. When I play cops or bad guys, I see they're really the flip side of the coin, living in the same world in a lot of ways, dealing with the same people, the same energy and types of violence.

YUKON

They're trying for a second gold rush in the Yukon with a film commission determined to reach \$30 million in film and production in the next five years – that's \$25 million more than they did in 2005.

The territory is making a dent with a new six-part series, *Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-rock*. The co-production mixes live action performers with CG animation. Live action shooting will take place this fall in Whitehorse, with the animation done in Edmonton.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Production in B.C. has returned to pre-2001 levels. As of mid-summer, 30 series and MOWs were in pre-production or shooting around the province – an increase from 18 at the same time last year.

On the indigenous front, CBC's gritty-thriller *Intelligence* from *Da Vinci's Inquest* creator **Chris Haddock** is getting early buzz based on last year's pilot/MOW, Haddock's track record and star **Ian Tracey's** indisputable acting chops. Local comedies include second seasons of CTV's *Robson Arms* and *Alice, I Think*, while *Whistler* enters as a new drama.

Vancouver also continues to be a popular spot for quality sci-fi series, with *Stargate SG-1* celebrating its tenth season and hitting the 200th episode milestone this past April, and critical darling *Battlestar Galactica* shooting season three. To their credit – and benefit – like many B.C. shot U.S. series, both continue to rely heavily on Canadian performers for many of their lead roles.

Production in B.C. has returned to pre-2001 levels. As of mid-summer, 30 series and MOWs were in pre-production or shooting – an increase from 18 at the same time last year.

Other service shows include returning seasons of *Smallville*, SciFi's *The 4400* and Showtime's *L-Word*. New series include ABC's *Masters of Science Fiction* and *Men in Trees*, ABC Family's *Three Moons Over Milford*, *Psych* for the USA Network, and the vampire-movie spin-off *Blade* for Spike TV.

MOWs shooting over the summer include *Alien Agent*, *Four, To Have and to Hold* and *Under the Mistletoe*. The MOW *Silent Partner* for Lifetime Television, SUN TV and Corus Entertainment starring member **Nelson Wong**, and *Mad TV's* **Tim Conlan** wrapped in July.

Features were also booking up studio space, with **Ice Cube's** comedy sequel *Are We Done Yet?*, Paramount's \$16-million drama *Things We Lost in the Fire* with **Halle Berry** and **Benicio Del Toro**, and *Shooter*, starring **Mark Wahlberg** and **Danny Glover**. The city was also a-buzz with big names from the U.S. in town to shoot *Deck the Halls*, *Fantastic Four II*, *Case No. 39* and *Night at the Museum*.

Victory for ACTRA's campaign for Canadian drama

You spoke – they listened!

by Ken Thompson,
Director of Public
Policy & Communications

Despite the early hour, the ACTRA table at Monday's breakfast at the World Banff TV Festival was full of smiles, and it wasn't the eggs benny. It was the long-awaited announcement by CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** that the commission is undertaking a sweeping review of Canada's broadcasting policy.

We can't help but think we finally got to them with our press conferences, media releases, letters, phone calls and meetings. The CRTC finally heard our persistent and passionate message: the 1999 *Television Policy* is a disaster, and must be fixed.

ACTRA and our partners in the *Canadian Coalition of Audio Visual Unions (CCAU)* have been calling for this review for seven years, ever since the CRTC eliminated minimum spending requirements, allowing private broadcasters to satisfy minimal Canadian content requirements with cheap reality shows at the expense of original drama. The result? English-language Canadian drama for TV has all but disappeared, making it near impossible for Canadians to see and hear their own stories. In 2005, Canadian private broadcasters spent \$401 million on imported drama, mostly from the U.S., and \$86.6 million on Canadian drama.

The broadcasting policy review ties into another study announced by Heritage Minister **Bev Oda**. The government has ordered the CRTC to do a fact-finding mission into the countless ways our industry is being affected by new technology and how we can make them work to our advantage.

So, with victory in hand, our work now really begins. It's you who got us this far; now we need you to help us follow through, turn up the volume and make sure that this review results in guaranteeing Canadian stories a place on our airwaves. It has to result in strict minimum spending requirements. And private broadcasters must make room for Canadian programming on their prime-time schedules.

ACTRA, as a member of the CCAU, will file a submission and present our case to the

CRTC in person at their November hearings. We're planning more actions that will require the participation of members across the country. Stand by!

But wait – there's more! We're also still calling on the federal government to guarantee long-term, stable funding for the Canadian Television Fund, Telefilm and the CBC.

Speaking of the CBC... In the last issue of *InterACTRA* we published an open letter to CBC management. We received no response from our public broadcaster, except the burial of *North/South*, a Halifax-produced serial, to a weekday-mid-afternoon-in-the-middle-of-summer time slot. And the simulcasting of *The One*, a U.S. talent show, and the bumping of *The National* to accommodate said U.S. talent show. (That *The One* was hosted by one very talented Canadian and CBC star, **George Strombouloupoulos** doesn't make it okay.) The show's premiere was the lowest-rated debut in ABC's history and was yanked off the air after just two weeks, leaving the CBC with a face full of egg, a gaping hole in its primetime schedule and a big question mark on its plans to launch a Canadian version.

Then there's the little issue of Bell Globemedia's big acquisition of CHUM Ltd., basically, our number one network is buying our number three. This media concentration will have a major impact, especially given that Canadians' viewing choices are already limited by the swath of U.S. product carried by private TV broadcasters. This merger has the potential to leave us with even fewer voices and less options for seeing our own stories. It could also have a devastating impact on communities across the country especially in centres that have both CHUM and CTV-owned stations. Job losses could be major – hundreds were laid off the day the announcement was made – and local news and production could be severely compromised.

We'll be following this carefully as the proposed acquisition is considered by the competition bureau and, of course, by the CRTC. We're curious to see whether the commission determines it is in the public



CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** announces policy review.

interest, and how it can possibly conform to the principles of the Broadcasting Act. We'll also make sure that the federal government pays attention and will call on them to impose strict limits on media concentration.

The irony is, just as we potentially lose channels to air our stories we might get more money to make them. The last time Bell Globemedia made a big buy, the CRTC made it a condition that they invest an additional whopping \$230-million in benefits, including \$24-million for drama (that's how we got *Corner Gas*!). Speculation is that this deal could mean up to \$170-million. A sweet promise to go along with the bitter pill of media conglomeration.

Bell Globemedia's aggressive moves are stirring up new speculation that it is primping itself up to be attractive to foreign buyers. Yet another reminder that the threat of foreign ownership of broadcasting and telecommunications remains ever present and menacing to the survival of Canadian culture.

ACTRA's message is clear: our right to diversity and openness in our media is being trampled on as media power is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. And selling our broadcasting industry off to a foreign media giant would mean cultural extinction.

Courtesy BMTF



by Jamie Bradley,
ACTRA National
Vice President

TWO HANDER: What's goin' on at Global? *An interview with Barbara Williams*



Barbara Williams is Senior Vice President of Programming and Production at CanWest MediaWorks (that's Global TV to the rest of us). She's responsible for all entertainment programming including acquisitions and productions for both conventional and specialty television. I had the opportunity to have an hour out of her busy schedule to chat with her about the state of Global and a bunch of other things. Here's how it went.

JAMIE BRADLEY: Barbara, you and CTV were down in L.A. in May for acquisition week. Is it a bloodbath down there between you guys?

BARBARA WILLIAMS: No. You actually don't really interact with them very much; literally, you don't see them. You're doing your own thing, screening shows and then comes the final day when the deals go down. You're negotiating with distributors and so there's some competition at that point, sure, but healthy, good competition. Not nasty or unfair or a bloodbath by any stretch.

How do you choose from all those productions that are sitting down there waiting for you?

Well, that's the magic isn't it? It's hard. We take a small team down so it's not just me sitting in a room deciding things. Partly you're looking at trends, trying to think about what really worked in the past year and where the viewers' interests might lie in the coming season. A great show needs a great place on the schedule to succeed. So you're thinking about the schedule at the same time as you're thinking about the creative. You've got a team of research people and sales people there with you that are analyzing how the show might rate given the time slot it's in and the type of show it is plus which shows might sell better knowing what the (advertising) agencies are looking for. So it's all those things all rolled together. It's actually a fascinating, very, very fun process.

Global just came out with a new image last year. How do you choose what personality you want your television network to have? In the past Global's been nicknamed 'Fox Canada' because most of your shows are the same.

Certainly, to a great degree, the shows you have on your schedule end up reflecting who you are as a broadcaster. But I think, beyond that, there's an opportunity to give your network sort of an overarching personality that can add to the flavour that viewers might be getting from the shows themselves. It's about being buzz-worthy and it's about having the water cooler shows.

Okay, now here's the question of the year: What are you guys doing Canadian programming-wise this season?

Tons. For me that's been one of the most exciting opportunities of this job and clearly an important part of the mandate when they brought

me into this job. There was a huge opportunity here to rebuild a Canadian production team and re-engage with the production community in a way that maybe Global hadn't as strongly in the past few years.

Coming to the air this year, we have renewals on *Falcon Beach*, *The Jane Show*, and *ReGenesis* because we do believe that you need to give series opportunities to grow. And we've also licensed a handful of new ones that won't be on the air this fall but will be coming out later this broadcast year. There are also 20 Canadian films we'll be doing co-operatively with Lifetime in the States that a few different Canadian production companies are involved in. We're doing some reality too.

Can you tell me how much money is being put into Canadian programming... ballpark?

No.

Oh, come on!

That's all pretty proprietary but I can certainly tell you there is no way to finance this kind of drama slate in Canada without putting up significant money.

Do you have any ideas of how we could improve funding and development of Canadian programming? The Americans pretty much have it down pat, but they started building up their money in the '20s.

It has a much, much bigger market to ultimately support it so their financial model is very different from ours. I do really believe in continuing support from our government. Certainly cooperating with American broadcasters is an important piece of the puzzle and there are a lot of cable productions being done in the U.S. now that are looking for funding opportunities themselves in a different way than the main nets are.

We keep losing Canadians – we lose our talent to the U.S. they get work on American shows and then we go down there and we buy those American shows. So it's kind of like Canada selling softwood lumber to the U.S., they make furniture with it and then we buy the furniture. Can you see a way for us to make our production environment so incredibly attractive so as to keep those people up here or is it just money?

I guess I like to think, maybe naively, but I like to think we share our talent rather than we lose our talent. Sometimes, you're right, we get it back through a straight acquisition of shows someone worked on. But, more and more, I think we see opportunities for the talent to flow back and forth across the border. And when they come back to us they often come back with greater skills, greater experience and greater opportunity.

We have the conversation endlessly in this country about building a star system. I think slowly, but surely, we are doing that actually. It's been a very healthy little war between *eTalk Daily* and



Cast of *The Jane Show*: Darren Boyd, Patricia Zentilli, Teresa Pavlinek, Kate Trotter, Andrew Misle and Hardee T. Lineham.

Courtesy: Global TV

Entertainment Tonight Canada. I think to have two national shows on a daily basis fighting over access to Canadian talent, I mean, who would have thought, that that would have happened and both those shows would be so successful with viewers?

Canada's always had such a fragile ego when it comes to its culture. Nobody's really defined it except for all the stereotypical things that beer ad had a couple of years ago.

Yeah, we have our own cultural style, I suppose. My sense honestly, having been in the industry for a long time, is that we're all getting better at what we do. Our television looks and feels better than it ever has before. The talent pool is deeper and richer than it was.

My sense is that we're all getting better at what we do. Our television looks and feels better than it ever has before. The talent pool is deeper and richer than it was.

When you first heard the announcement that Bell Globemedia was going to buy CHUM what were you and your underling vice-presidents thinking? Was it, "Holy crap!"?

Well, I mean, sure. I think everybody in the industry was surprised. Caught for a moment of like, "Oh, my gosh! That's quite an announcement." There's very little understanding yet of what it might ultimately mean.

Is Global looking at some companies to buy?

Oh, I don't know.

Buy CBC. Come on! Pool resources.

We've all bought CBC as taxpayers.

Yeah, you're right. So, can I jump to your dad for a sec? He was the first Canadian to become International President of United Steel Workers in the U.S. – ACTRA has a special relationship with Steel. So your dad was a heavy-duty labour guy. Did he pass anything on down to you?

Yeah. He's retired now. He has done really, really important work in his lifetime and we're enormously proud of what he has accomplished. And yes, of course he was an influence for us growing up as kids. I think there were some big, important principles that he taught us: to have respect and tolerance for all people, to acknowledge and to be respectful of the work that needs to be done across our society to keep our society functioning.

I think he taught us to be understanding of other people's situations and to be able to step back and see a big picture of how society works, how community works and the role that each and every person plays in that. I think it was an enormously valuable upbringing. You know, those are big, heady principles. But I would say we lived very much with those around us all the time and it was, I think, a very important upbringing.

Nice. Are you going to get a chance to flex some of those democratic-socialist muscles at Global?

What I think I do in my work here at Global is try to bring those principles for the people that do the work. If I can do that as a leader here at Global, I think that very much encourages the success of the whole company.

Final question. Speaking of unions, how are the unions for you guys? Are we a thorn in your side? "Are we 'sticking it to you' too much?" he asked facetiously.

I think it's important that ACTRA continues to support our talent base; it's essential to our business, to ensure that our talent is well represented, is well managed, has the opportunities to grow and develop. I think your organization has done a good job of that and continues to do a good job of that.

Well, we'll keep at all of you.

I'm sure you will.

Jamie Bradley is your National Vice President; a Halifax actor who likes to poke people in the arm until they give him a piece of their chocolate bar. He would really like to work on a lot more Canadian programs... please?

Ready to stand up to producers

by Marit Stiles,
Director of Research

In the last issue of *InterACTRA*, I told you about how ACTRA's stellar IPA bargaining team was heralding the arrival of spring and our stint at the negotiating table in June. Well, spring came and went, and so did the anticipated bargaining dates. The good news is that the postponement of our negotiations has everything to do with the strong stand our brothers and sisters at UBCP took in their negotiations with U.S. producers and the B.C. CFTPA.

Our bargaining team is strong, well-prepared and ready to gain back the respect we deserve.

UBCP put forward many exciting, and indeed historic, proposals. In particular, we were excited about the proposal that their agreement, the *B.C. Master Agreement*, be co-terminus with ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement (IPA), meaning we would in future negotiate together as a united front.

Unfortunately, the producers came forward with a shameful proposal to grossly discount performers' wages, while UBCP is proposing to actually gain wage parity with ACTRA members. While a number of other unions have accepted some of the producers' ludicrous rollbacks, UBCP is standing strong, led by **Rob Morton**, Chair of the UBCP Negotiating Committee and **Mercedes Watson**, Lead Negotiator. Eighty of UBCP's highest profile members showed up at the bargaining table to face producers and support their team, a remarkable show of strength and unity. Also there to show solidarity were ACTRA's National President, **Richard Hardacre**, and National Executive Director, **Stephen Waddell**.

But by summer, UBCP and the producers were still unable to resolve the substantive issues and found themselves at an impasse. The parties jointly sought the assistance of a mediator to help them resolve the substan-

tive issues, prior to returning to the table.

UBCP's fight will soon be ours as we likely face the same offensive demands from producers at the bargaining table. With our agreement expiring on December 31, 2006, we are looking forward to an intense fall, with bargaining now tentatively scheduled to kick off as early as the first week in October. Our bargaining team is strong, well-prepared and ready to gain back the respect we deserve.

On the commercial front, we've been closely watching events unfolding in the U.S. as our counterparts, SAG and AFTRA, negotiate their commercial agreements together (their contract expires on October 29, 2006). This year, the U.S. advertising industry associations asked for an independent study of the existing commercial contracts, arguing that emerging platforms (e.g. wireless, digital) mean much of the contract is no longer relevant. In August, SAG, AFTRA and the U.S. industry associations announced a tentative agreement on a two-year extension to the commercials contracts covering ads appearing on TV, radio, the internet and digital media, that would run through October 2008. The extension agreement is subject to approval by SAG and

AFTRA's national board and members through a joint referendum, as well as the producers' associations. If approved, the extension will result in a study examining alternative methods to compensate performers for commercials. The outcome of any study and their negotiations will have an impact on the direction and timing of our own upcoming Commercial Agreement negotiations in 2007. We'll continue to keep you informed of developments in the U.S., and how that is going to affect our bargaining.

Negotiations with the CBC of our radio and television agreements continue. Negotiations were postponed for a lengthy period during and after the outrageous CBC lock-out, but we're finally back at the table. The issues are narrowing down and we are moving toward a settlement. Stay tuned!

Finally, the new *Audio Code* – ratified by ACTRA members in February – has arrived from the printers! It will be mailed out to engagers and made available in a searchable format at www.actra.ca. It's the end of a long process of consultation, editing and re-editing, and the beginning of a new era of better wages and working conditions for performers working under this contract.

ACTRA National Council supports UBCP!

ACTRA National Council unanimously adopted the following motion of support at their June 2006 meeting:

ACTRA National is giving UBCP's negotiating committee and membership its clear and unequivocal support in their re-negotiation of the B.C. Master Agreement with U.S. and B.C. producers. ACTRA is proud of the gutsy and principled stand that UBCP members are taking in the face of outrageous and insulting demands from producers.

Producers are seeking to grossly discount performers' wages, at a time when UBCP is proposing to gain parity with its fellow performers in the rest of the country. The proposed cuts would mean discounts of approximately 75-80% of performers' total yearly

earnings. That Hollywood studios are reaping unprecedented revenues, and that our brothers and sisters south of the border have recently received a 10% pay increase makes the producers' demands even more shameful. It is unsurprising that producers were incapable of defending their demands at the bargaining table. The parties have jointly sought the assistance of a mediator to help them resolve the substantive issues, prior to returning to the table.

UBCP's fight is the fight of all professional performers across the country, and we will not allow ourselves to be used by producers to undermine UBCP's strength. By standing strong and accepting no less than fair and reasonable wages and working conditions, we are confident that UBCP will prevail.

The digital diaries

by Patricia McCutcheon
Digital Media Organizer

I'm excited to be filling in for the next year for **Jill Rosenberg** as ACTRA National's Digital Media Organizer while she is on maternity leave. In Jill's last article for *InterACTRA (Fall 2005)*, she described the digital industry as the 'wild west'. So I guess that makes me the new sheriff in town! During my term you can look forward to articles like this one to help keep you informed on what's going on and happening in the 'wild west of digital media' and how that can translate into great opportunities for you as a performer.

One of my first tasks was to attend *NextMEDIA* in Banff and the *Vancouver International Digital Festival (VIDFEST)* in June. These stimulating conferences focused on where the digital industry is right now and what direction it is heading in. The main message was that broadcasters are asking for more digital content and that can only mean great things for ACTRA members.

'Multi-platform' was the buzz term used at *NextMEDIA* on a regular basis. This term refers to combining traditional elements such as TV series and films with a whole gamut of extras and specialized content that can be delivered in new ways, for example on mobile phones, the internet, iPods, videogame consoles, etc. Broadcasters and film distributors are looking for ideas that can be spun out into an exciting entertainment package, transforming the average TV show or movie into a multimedia experience.

Let's take an animated TV show for kids for an example. When I was a kid, we had

to watch whatever was on the channel that wasn't fuzzy! These days with digital technology kids can demand a lot more. In addition to having a really amazingly animated TV show to watch, there are now websites featuring their favourite characters that they can manipulate through on line video games and they can download a choice of animated shorts onto their video iPods to show their friends at school. What is cooler than that?

So how does this affect you? These 'multi-platform' shoots are happening all the time and translate directly into more opportunities for work. Sometimes additional footage needs to be shot for these various digital projects. This can happen at the end of a shooting day or the director will require a few extra days of shooting. If you are on a shoot and you're asked to do some extra work for 'extra content' and you aren't quite sure, please call your ACTRA branch immediately. There's a good chance you might need to be paid for it!

A good example of a multi-platform production is *ReGenesis*. This TV series has an internet element that enables the show to have 'extended reality'. Fans are able to interact with the show by visiting various fictional websites, gain clues and solve a mystery related to various episodes. Check it out at www.regenesis.com

At *VIDFEST*, content for mobile phones was one of the major focuses. How can it be created, how can it be viewed and who will see it? According to the various workshops, it is very easy, it is here and it is growing at

a rapid rate. There are already awards shows popping up featuring these 'made for mobile' films.

Degrassi 'mobisodes' are another example of digital content that has used the talents of ACTRA members. Everyone knows *Degrassi: The Next Generation* is an amazing TV show. Did you know that the folks at *Degrassi* also created mini-episodes with new content that viewers were able to download to their phones? These mobisodes are a great way of reaching *Degrassi: TNG* fans around the world... and you know how they love their cell phones! www.degrassi.tv

ACTRA is being approached on a daily basis by producers who want to produce various digital projects of all types using members like you. This is a great indication that ACTRA members have a place in the 'wild west' of digital! Stay tuned for more updates from the new sheriff in town!

Digital media jargon deciphered:

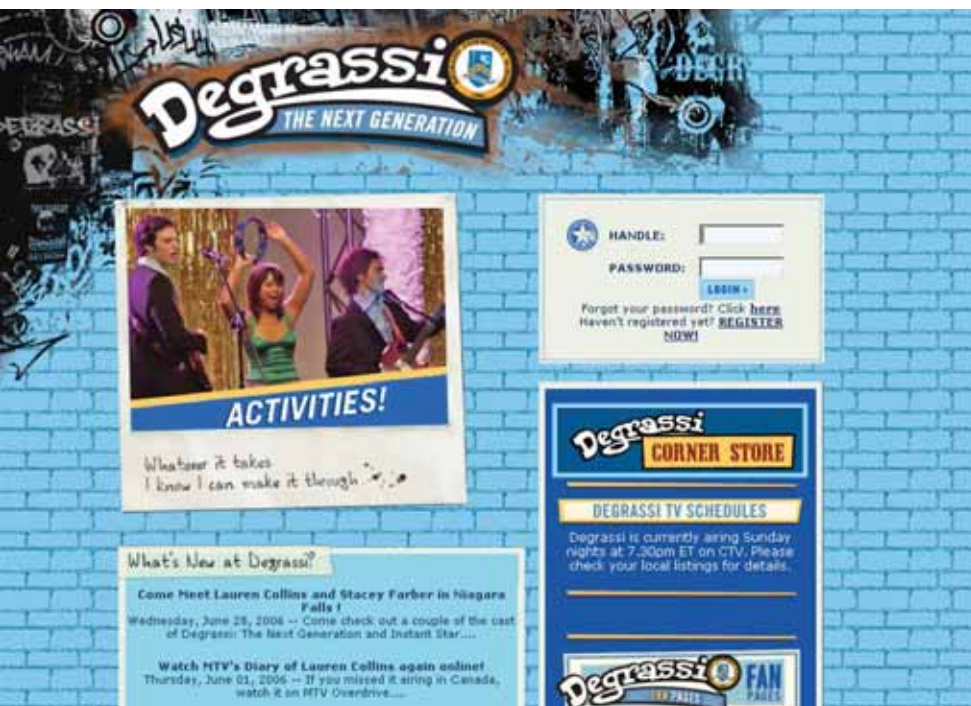
Multi-platform – the new buzzword from broadcasters. Means that they're looking for programs and films that they can spin-off into different formats. i.e. make a console or online game out of it, make a short version for mobile phones and iPods, have a website with extra video and 'diaries' of characters etc...

Mobile content – anything that you can get on a mobile phone: ringtones, graphics, games, movies, TV shows

Mobisode – a short mini-episode of a series meant for downloading and viewing on your mobile phone.

Internet content – anything you watch or listen to on the internet. Whole episodes of TV shows, teasers, extra 'behind the scenes content', diaries written by characters, movies, on-line games, etc.

Podcasts – programs that can be downloaded and listened to or watched on your iPod. Pretty much ANYONE, anywhere can create a Podcast and make it available around the world. They can be as simple as just an audiofile, like a radio show, or can be visual.





WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR: 10 years and going strong

Dear ACTRA members,

It has been a distinct privilege to bear witness to your amazing transformative, creative, professional and personal journeys at Women in the Director's Chair (WIDC) over the last 10 years. I have seen you become more courageous yet compassionate leaders, more confident creators, and we've all benefited from the 'learning opportunities'.

I want to thank the ACTRA councillors and executive boards that have facilitated the ongoing financial sponsorship that funds the

actor and director scholarships for the WIDC program. Special thanks to **Brian Gromoff**, our WIDC/ACTRA Liaison and an unsung WIDC champion. And of course the ACTRA members who are WIDC Alumnae, you are a living testament that the WIDC program does add meaningfully to our community.

WIDC is a one-of-a-kind offering that exists nowhere else in the world. As presenting partners of the program we should be proud of the contribution ACTRA and its

WIDC is a one-of-a-kind offering that exists nowhere else in the world.

members are making to the film and television industry in Canada and the slow but sure impact the WIDC program is making here and around the world.

Warm wishes for your every success fellow ACTRA members. Please feel free to contact me with questions on your next application to WIDC! And to alumnae – please drop me a line to let me know how you are doing – let's celebrate WIDC's 10th Anniversary together!

– **Carol Whiteman**
President & CEO, Creative Women Workshops Association, and Producer, The Women in the Director's Chair Workshop



WIDC 1998: Tina Keeper and mentor Stacey Curtis.

Photos by Don Lee and Ivan Nicholson

“I was able to do what every actor wants to do, explore and play different characters...”

My experience at WIDC 2006 was exciting and challenging. I was lucky enough to work closely with three female directors with completely different scripts. I was able to do what every actor wants to do, explore and play different characters – far different than traditional casting would probably ever

see me playing. It was a gift to go through a process with these women to dissect, rehearse and portray the characters within the scenes. I was able to ask questions that I otherwise wouldn't feel comfortable asking on a professional set, and toy with different emotions, intensity and tactics.

I recommend the WIDC to any actor who wants to take some time out in the beautiful mountains of Banff, Alberta to focus on acting and on-set communication, under the guidance of an incredibly talented mentor director, actor mentor, DOPs, editors and a group of dedicated professionals. It is truly inspiring!

– **Victoria Nestorowicz**,
WIDC 2006 Actor Participant



ACTRA at WIDC 2006: Back (L to R): **Carol Whiteman** (WIDC Producer), **Angela Vermier**, **Valerie Planche**, **Victoria Nestorowicz**, **Rogue Johnston**, **Megan Park**, **Nelson Carter-Leis**, **Rita Shelton Deverell** (director participant), **Miles Meadows**.
 Front: **Anne Wheeler** (Mentor Director), **Stefanie Samuels**, **Paula Shaw**, **Brenda Bazinet** (Mentor Actor).

The 12-hour days of WIDC 2006 in Banff were just what I needed to cure the disease that afflicted me. What was it? Career transition-phobia. I've succeeded many times before. But always when I come to the edge of that transition cliff I am gripped by a well-founded fear of change and learning a new language. Perhaps you're familiar with that fear?

I'm **Dr. Deverell**. At 16, I was an Equity apprentice. At 27, I started a long career as a broadcaster and ACTRA member, including building *Vision TV*. At 38, I was a university professor, and at 56, mentor to the world's first all-Aboriginal news team at APTN. Then at 59, I wrote and performed my first one-woman show *Smoked Glass Ceiling* and said I wanted to direct TV drama NOW!

The WIDC mentors, generous contemporaries director **Anne Wheeler** and actor

Brenda Bazinet, my fellow directing students, skillful producer and organizer **Carol Whiteman**, and all the supportive senior and trainee crew were just what the doctor ordered.

"I remembered why drama had been my first profession. That passion was reawakened..."

I found out how to make use of what I do know – delivering on time and on budget, crew leadership, pre- post- and production schedules, a background in acting – and to work with what I don't know. My artist loved learning how to craft and tighten a shooting script, communicate with actors on set, execute and share the vision with all departments.

Do I recommend WIDC? Yes. It is a highly polished learning experience for mid-career, or transition career, women directors. It is totally supportive and demanding, traditional and creative at the same time. And I remembered

why drama had been my first profession. That passion was reawakened, and I am now ready to make a difference in the world of TV drama.

– **Rita Shelton Deverell**,
 WIDC 2006 Director Participant



WIDC 2007

Led by the internationally acclaimed **Lea Pool** (*The Blue Butterfly*, *Emporte-moi*)

Director deadline: September 30, 2006

Actor/crew deadline: October 31, 2006

www.creativewomenworkshops.com

Toll free: 1-877-913-0747 or
 local (604) 913-0747

Congrats!

ACTRA member **Leslie Ann Coles**, recipient of the Fourth Annual @Wallace Studios WIDC Alumnae Award. Leslie Ann, a multiple award-winning filmmaker, actor and founder of the Female Eye Film Festival, receives \$10,000 in kind from @Wallace Studios towards rental fees plus a 1-year subscription to mymediabiz.com. She will use the prize to direct a teaser for her new comedy television series, *Variety Store*.

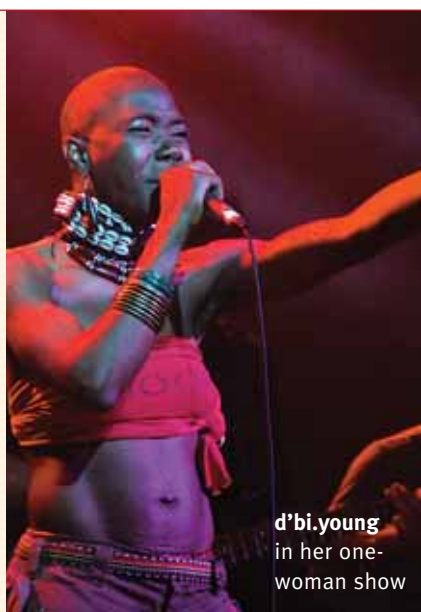
applause

Shatner ushered into TV Hall of Fame

William Shatner will join TV legends such as **Lucille Ball**, **Johnny Carson** and **Oprah Winfrey** in the U.S. Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Hall of Fame this year. The Emmy Award-winning actor was awarded the ACTRA Award of Excellence in 2003 by his home branch, ACTRA Montreal. Renowned for his work in *Star Trek* and currently starring in *Boston Legal*, Shatner has also branched out as a director, producer, author and recording artist.

Women in Film

ACTRA members **Tara Hungerford** and **Carol Whiteman** were honoured at the 6th annual Spotlight Awards Garden Gala presented by Women in Film and Video Vancouver in June for their outstanding contributions to the industry. Carol, from Creative Women Workshops, was the Sharon Gibbon Lifetime Member recipient for her dogged determination to mentor and bring out the best in women from across Canada. Tara received the Kodak Image Award for her innovative approach to directing not one, but numerous projects in the past year.



d'bi.young
in her one-woman show

Dora Awards

ACTRA members came home with a lot of kudos at this year's year Dora Awards for excellence in Toronto theatre. **d'bi.young** was a double winner – her self-authored one-woman show, *blood.claat – one woman story*, was named Best New Play, and she was named Best Female Performance in a Play. The award for Best Performance, Male in a Play went to **Shawn Doyle** for *A Number*. In the musical category, **Michael Therriault** won for his portrayal of Gollum in the *Lord of the Rings*, and **Corinne Koslo** won for her work in *Bunnica*. **Gord Rand** took honours for Featured Performance in a Play or Muscial for *Innocent Eye Test*.



Stephen Lobo



Tricia Helfer

Courtesy SciFi Channel

Leo Awards

Hats off to all of the nominees and winners at the 2006 Leo Awards, celebrating great TV and film in B.C. Extra applause for the following members who took home awards for outstanding performances:

- Christopher Heyerdahl**, Guest Male Dramatic Series – *The Collector*
- Veena Sood**, Guest Female Dramatic Series – *Godivas*
- Stephen Lobo**, Lead Male Dramatic Series – *Godivas*
- Tricia Helfer**, Lead Female Dramatic Series – *Battlestar Galactica*
- Rick Tae**, Supporting Male Dramatic Series – *Godivas*
- Sonya Salomaa**, Supporting Female Dramatic Series – *The Collector*
- Chang Tseng**, Male Short Drama – *InConvenience*
- Carly Pope**, Female Short Drama – *Sandra Gets Dumped*
- Gabrielle Miller**, Performance/Host Music, Comedy or Variety – *Corner Gas*
- Chris Gauthier**, Youth or Children's Program/Series for – *Zixx Level II*

Michael Therriault



Photo by Manuel Harlan



Janice Ryan



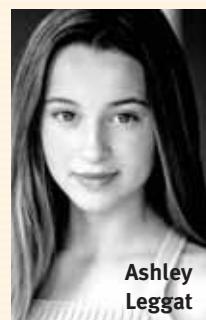
Valerie Ann Pearson

Rosies

The Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPPIA) honoured several ACTRA members at their annual Rosie Awards: **Janice Ryan** for her narration of *Circumpolar Bears*, **Valerie Ann Pearson** for her performance in *Shoe Box Zoo* and **Andrew Krivanek** for his performance in *Cost of Living*.



Lyriq Bent



Ashley Leggat

We're watching!

Members **Lyriq Bent**, **Ashley Leggat**, **Steph Song** and **Stephen Amell** were singled out by *Playback* on its annual "Ten to Watch" list of the 'hottest up-and-comers' in the country.



Don McKellar and Bob Martin.

Hey Tony!

Don McKellar and Bob Martin were the toast of Broadway at June's Tony Awards taking home the prize for 'Best Book of a Musical' for the *Drowsy Chaperone*. The show also won the award for best score for fellow Canadians Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison.



Salvatore Antonio

'Yo Bessie!

Congratulations to ACTRA member Salvatore Antonio for winning the 2006 Kari Award at this year's Bessies for best performance in a commercial. His winning performance was for "Cheeky Check Out" for the Toronto International Film Festival Group.

Deverell wins Mentorship Award

ACTRA member Rita Deverell was this year's recipient of the Quebecor/Banff Mentorship Award, giving her full festival access, one-on-one coaching, post-festival follow-up and the chance to meet face-to-face with some of the industry's biggest movers and shakers.



Amanda Tapping as Lt. Col. Samantha Carter in *Stargate SG-1*.

Courtesy SciFi Channel

10 Years of SG-1

Stargate SG-1 is celebrating its 10th season, with its 200th episode airing in August. The hyper-successful series now airs in more than 120 countries. Congrats to Canadian showrunners Brad Wright and Robert Cooper, and the fantastic cast and crew behind this Vancouver-produced international success!

Journalists honour Knowlton Nash

The Canadian Journalism Foundation honoured ACTRA life member Knowlton Nash with their Lifetime Achievement Award in June. Nash, a previous recipient of ACTRA's John Drainie Award (and a member of this year's jury) was described as a 'national treasure' by the CJF chair in announcing the honour. We agree, congrats Knowlton!

applause



Wendy Mesley

Courtesy BMTF

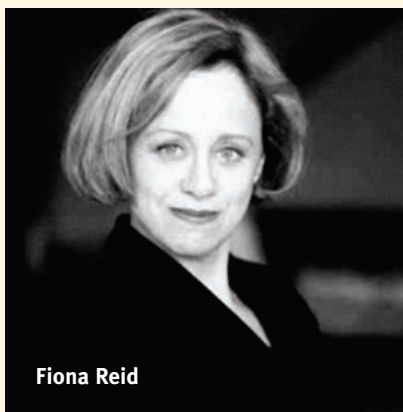
ACTRA's John Drainie Award

Wendy Mesley joined a long list of Canada's broadcasting greats when National President Richard Hardacre presented her with ACTRA's John Drainie Award at Banff in June. Presented annually since 1968, the award honours a person who has made a distinguished contribution to Canadian broadcasting in honour of John Drainie, one of Canada's most celebrated and well-known actors.

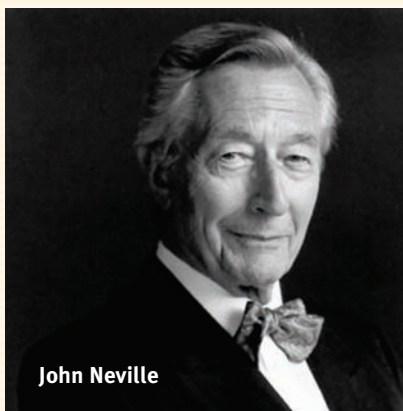
Following is an excerpt from Richard's presentation to Wendy at the Banff Awards Luncheon: "Throughout her 30-year career, Ms. Mesley's amply demonstrated creative vision and sheer journalistic guts make her an ideal recipient of this prestigious award. Along with her award-winning work as a news program host, Ms. Mesley's career in broadcast and documentary production exemplifies her as a true 'Triple Threat' in our world of media. Noted for her intelligence, tenacity and wit, Ms. Mesley is widely regarded as one of the best interviewers and producers in television. She demands, and gets, honesty from her subjects, uncovering stories that would otherwise be left un-told."

– continued on next page

applause



Fiona Reid



John Neville

Order of Canada

Congratulations to **Fiona Reid** and **John Neville**. Both ACTRA members have been awarded the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour, by Her Excellency the Right Honourable **Michaelle Jean**.

Perhaps best known as Cathy King in *The King of Kensington*, Fiona's recent TV and film work includes *Kevin Hill*, *This is Wonderland*, *Road to Avonlea*, *Luck*, and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. A two-time Dora Award winner, Fiona has spent 10 seasons at the Shaw Festival and appeared frequently at CanStage in Toronto.

Her charity work has associated her with the Toronto Association for Community Living, Canadian Centre for the Victims of Torture, Toronto Arts for Youth Foundation, and the Canadian Landmines Foundation. She is a past recipient of the Toronto Life Women of Distinction Award and is a passionate contributor to ACTRA's Campaign for Canadian Drama.

Born in England, **John Neville** trained as an actor at RADA, before joining Trent Players. During the '50s he appeared on stage with London's Old Vic Company, the

Bristol Old Vic, and was artistic director at the Nottingham Playhouse. Upon his arrival in Edmonton in 1972, he was artistic director of Citadel Theatre. He has since held similar positions with other theatre companies, including the Stratford Festival, while continuing acting. Highlights of his film and TV roles include a starring role in *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* and a recurring role in *The X-Files*.

Fiona and John will be officially inducted at a special ceremony at Rideau Hall later this year.

Members' short gets world distribution!

A group of ACTRA members have just signed an international distribution deal with California's Big Film Shorts for their 12-minute film. The film, *M-F*, was written, performed directed and produced by ACTRA members **Veronika Hurnik**, **Avi Phillips**, **Stephen Livingstone**, **Alyssa Pawlak**, and **Jefferson Guzman**. The film is about a young job seeker who gets offered a leg-up in exchange for 'getting rid' of the company's owner. With a production budget of \$1,500 and post costs of \$1,000, the team worked under ACTRA Toronto's Co-op Agreement.

"Our hope is that our story may inspire others to take advantage of the wonderful support from ACTRA in creating our own work and building our industry in this country," said Guzman.

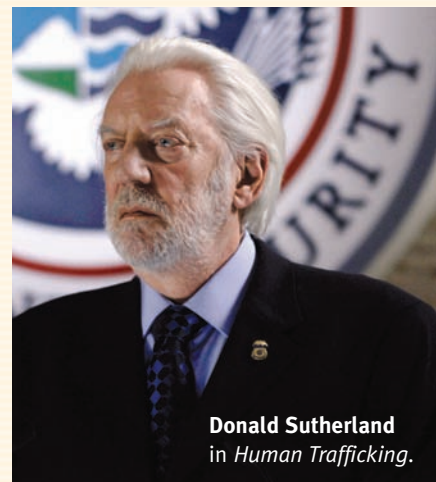
Got a great idea? Ask your branch about how you can make a short!



Veronika Hurnik, **Jefferson Guzman**, **Avi Phillips**, and **Stephen Livingstone** (front).

ACTRA at the Emmys

What's an 'Applause' column without a shout out to **Kiefer Sutherland** and **Sandra Oh** for putting in award-nominated performances? Kiefer won Emmys for his starring performance and production of *24*, and Sandra was up for Best Supporting Actress for the hit *Grey's Anatomy*. Other ACTRA nominees were **Donald Sutherland** for his work in the MOW *Human Trafficking* and **William Shatner** for his supporting role on *Boston Legal*.



Donald Sutherland in *Human Trafficking*.

Courtesy Muse Entertainment



Kiefer Sutherland in *24*.

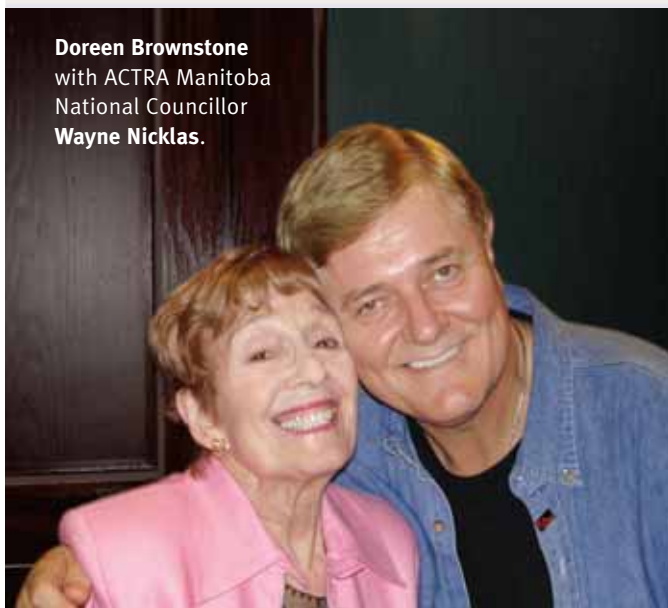
Courtesy Global TV

ACTRA Manitoba

Doreen Brownstone was named the first-ever recipient of ACTRA Manitoba's Award of Excellence. An ACTRA member for more than 30 years, Doreen has distinguished herself by achieving an undeniable level of excellence in her profession and demonstrated longevity in her career. The 84-year old recently starred in the title role of Manitoba Theatre Centre's touring production of *Driving Miss Daisy*, performing in 22 shows in 28 days.

Branch president **Sharon Bajer** presented Doreen with the Award at the branch's Annual General Meeting in June.

Doreen Brownstone
with ACTRA Manitoba
National Councillor
Wayne Nicklas.



UBCP/ACTRA

UBCP/ACTRA honoured two members at their Annual General meeting in July. **Doris Chillcott** was presented with the John Juliani Award of Excellence and a Life Member Award was presented to **Ivan Vance**.

Doris Chillcott with
UBCP President
Howard Storey.



Ivan Vance with
UBCP President
Howard Storey.



ACTRA Edmonton AGM

Robert Clinton, Coralie Cairns, Davina Stewart and **Colin MacLean** with certificates of appreciation for more than 23 collective years of service on ACTRA Edmonton's branch council.



ACTRA Edmonton President
Maralyn Ryan presents a Life
membership to **Doreen Ibsen**.



Happy 40th ACTRA Calgary!

ACTRA Calgary celebrated its 40th anniversary on May 4 at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. The centrepiece of the sold-out event was the presentation of life memberships to six long-time ACTRA Calgary members for the contributions they have made to their fellow members and the entire industry over the richly varied course of their lives and careers. Honourees were **Bonnie LeMay, Sandra Redmond, Harry Freedman, Joyce Doolittle, John Scott** and **Roland 'Roli' Nincheri**.

I was honoured to be the event's emcee, and welcomed a number of special guests, including ACTRA's National Executive who held their meeting in Calgary to coincide with our 40th Anniversary celebration. National President **Richard Hardacre** presented ACTRA Calgary with *Rhapsody in Blue*, a dramatic painting by Albertan Lillian **Tkach Matisons** which will be displayed proudly in the office along with the gift of a 'Talking Stick', resembling a small totem pole with beautiful carvings presented to us by ACTRA/UBCP President **Howard Storey**.

Brian Gromoff, ACTRA Calgary's National Councillor, accepted both gifts on behalf of our branch.

Other special guests included Alberta MLAs **Harry Chase, Dave Taylor** and **Wayne Cao**. Member and pianist extraordinaire **Marty Antinoni** kicked off the evening tinkling the ivories and serenading partiers as the evening wound down.

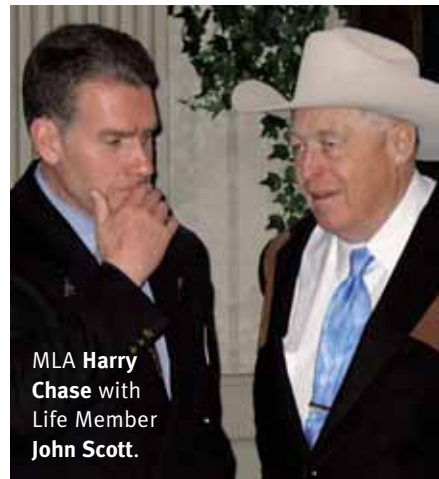
Several door prizes were handed out to those in attendance including the grand prize, a beautiful handcrafted glass lamp donated by Enclave Magazine and Circa in Inglewood, won by newly inducted life member **Joyce Doolittle**.

Many thanks to **Jennifer Blaney**, the staff and our 40th Anniversary Committee Members: **Roxanne Wong, Darren Hafner, Jonathan Scott, Til Hanson, Laryssa Yanchak, Kevin Rothery, Carl Hackman** and **Shirley-Ann Chapelle** for all their hard work organizing such a fantastic celebration.

– *David LeReaney, Councillor, ACTRA Calgary*



Life-member recipient **Joyce Doolittle** with ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre**.



MLA **Harry Chase** with Life Member **John Scott**.



David LeReaney, Stephen Waddell and **Roxanne Wong** get ready to dig into the cake.



DAVID RENTON 1934-2006

David, an ACTRA Maritimes Life Member, passed away on May 2. He was dedicated to the art of acting and those who practiced it. His eternal youthfulness, zeal, love of life and passion for actors never left him – even as ill health slowed him down in his final years. In 2003, Renton was awarded the Robert Merritt Achievement Award for his contributions to theatre in Nova Scotia at Theatre Nova Scotia's annual gala celebration in Halifax. And in May of 2004, ACTRA Maritimes presented him with the

ACTRA Award of Excellence for his years of selfless service to his brother and sister ACTRA members. At that ceremony, it was announced that the Award had been renamed the David Renton Award of Excellence – so that those performers who came after him could be inspired by his example. David's contributions to ACTRA Maritimes are beyond measure. He served on ACTRA Maritimes Council for many years and also represented the branch as their National Councillor. He was founding President of the Performing Arts Lodge chapter in Halifax.

The following is an excerpt from ACTRA Member Mike Petersen's tribute given at the celebration of David's life at the Neptune Theatre in June.

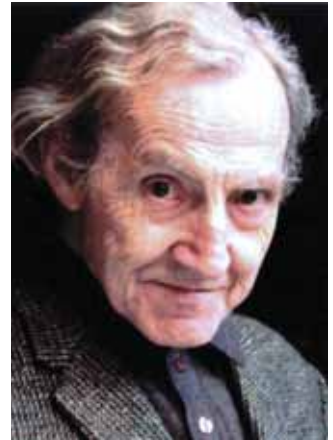
"Many of us know David for about the same reason: because he was interested in us, particularly us youngsters. During the years that I lived here in Halifax, David saw almost everything that I did. I have videotapes sitting on my shelf, archived performances, and I have those tapes because David made them for me. He was at the show, behind the camera, from Halifax to Dartmouth to Antigonish.

The word 'mentor' has come up quite a bit as people remember David, and that's perfect. He taught by example, by always giving his best to his hundreds of characters and thousands of performances. But also, he was out there, seeing shows, and always very kindly reaching back to give an encouraging word to the generation coming up behind him. All it took was 'Hey, good job.' In my case, it was after a performance I gave in Dartmouth 10 years ago. There were about 75 people crammed into this little space, and when my show was over, David sprang to his feet and called out 'Do it again!' And I have been. I'm still running on the fuel he gave me that day.

I think the best way to honour David is to continue what he began by reaching back to encourage the generation that's coming up. It can be done quite simply: just, whenever it occurs to you turn to the young actor standing next to you – pat them on the back and say 'Hey, good job. Good scene. I saw your show, you were great.' Or, if the spirit moves you, 'Do it again!' It's in this was that we can pay it forward from what David began."

*Donations in David's memory can be made to PAL Halifax,
103 – 1660 Hollis Street, Halifax NS B3J 1V7, (902) 420-1404.*

JOSEPH RUTTEN 1931-2006



I liked Joe. He was cranky and cantankerous, but he was also entirely himself, and good company. I worked with him a lot in radio, and did the films *Eb and Flo* and *Buried On Sunday* with him. We used to commiserate together at auditions. He was always well turned out. When I complimented him on his duds one time, he told me his mother had been a tailor and that he altered his clothes so they'd hang well. The picture of him, hemming his trousers, charmed me deeply.

He always was a bit of a mystery. He seemed lonely to me, and that called to my heart. But when he had a good part, he was solid as a rock and happy as a clam. He was a proud and solitary man, and a fine actor. Better than most know. I've done enough scenes with him to know that he was so good that it was easy to take him for granted. He never brought anything he was in down. He always delivered the goods, and often kicked the thing into higher gear. I remember a radio play back in the old days, in the big old studio in the film board building when he moved me to tears. I also remember he wasn't reading. He'd memorized the script. For a radio play.

This has been a difficult spring for us. To lose David Renton and Joe in the same season is a lot to take. But, there's glory here. When David and Joe were young lions on the scene, we had no past, no great ones to mourn. That we may shed tears for men such as this gives me hope that this community has taken our work to heart.

God bless Joseph Rutten, and his lovely wardrobe. He was an actor, no more, no less. He never visited his trials and tribulations on anyone. He came to rehearsal ready to work, and his work was always good, and sometimes great. We liked one another, shared a rueful humour and repartee. I never found out what he did when he wasn't working, and I now profoundly wish I had. Maybe we could have gone for a drive, got drunk, something...

– Tom Gallant

*Joseph was an ACTRA Maritimes Life member.
He passed away on June 22, 2006.*

Our sympathy and thoughts are with the families and friends of the following members and colleagues who have passed away:

**Gordon Atkinson
Bonar Bain
Pierrette Beaudoin
Richard Buehler
Don Cameron**

**Lee Dunbar
B.H. "Red" Fisher
Lewis Gordon
Christopher Paul Givens
Ernie King**

**Les Leigh
Demetrio Milani
Dorothy Rosa Montpetit
Glen Roald
Peter Schenkman**

**Ted Scott
Stella Sprowell
Michael Tabbitt
Richard Thomas
Colin Vint**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2006: Black is always in style

These financial statements represent the 6th year of our ACTRA Plan and reveal a good story. We lived by our budget, we cut and controlled spending, and we were once again able to share money with branches in need. We run a tight and effective ship, and the prize at the end of the day is a surplus of \$366,000 and a healthier 'Action Defense Fund' – ACTRA's strike fund – which now stands at almost \$2 million.

I'm proud of what ACTRA has become since it was restructured in the early '90s. At that time, ACTRA was under-resourced and had just inherited \$1 million in debt wracked up during the internal in-fighting of the previous Alliance. The national budget was less than \$2 million a year and we operated in the red. Today, we are in the black. We have not only paid off *all* of our past debt, but we are in a surplus position, and have annual revenues this year of nearly \$5.2 million.

As you will see on the *Statement of Operations*, ACTRA's biggest stream of revenue flows from the branches in the form of 'per capita payments' for full and apprentice members and 'information services' (both determined by the number of

members in a branch). The 'expenses' portion of the statements lays out the actual expenses paid to the year-end of February 28, 2006 and allows you to compare them to the actual expenses of the previous year.

ACTRA National Council sets our priorities and approves the budget, which is maintained by the monthly meetings of the ACTRA Executive. The National Finance Committee works hand in glove with **Anna Falsetta**, our diligent and brilliant Director of Finance and Administration. ACTRA is on your side and these financial statements show what we accomplished last year.

For example, if we look at the detail of 'Policy and Communications' (Schedule F) you can see where ACTRA accounts for the revenue used to continue the national fight in Ottawa for regulatory change. One of these expenses was our high-profile Lobby Day on Parliament Hill last November where we got our 'Platform Pitch' delivered to more than 80 Members of Parliament in the important days just prior to the federal election. **Ken Thompson**, Director of Public Policy & Communications, and his staff have built this small but mighty department into a highly effective unit. (FYI, on July 12, the Bell Globemedia buy-out of CHUM Ltd.



by Ferne Downey,
ACTRA National Treasurer

was announced at 4 p.m., our department was out of the gate with our press release at 11 a.m. – five hours *before* the announcement! It's just one example of how well the team operates). Through 'Lobbying' and 'Coalition' expenses we continued the fight against elimination of the current restrictions on foreign ownership of our airwaves. I'm using this department as one tiny illustration of what information can be gleaned from the fiscal numbers – they always tell a story.

We'll continue to build a strong union that fights for your rights as a performer. We will fight at the bargaining table with producers for respect and fair working in conditions. And we will fight for you in Ottawa to make sure we have a vibrant industry with job opportunities for performers across the country.

Want to read more? Treat yourself – go to www.actra.ca, click on the *ACTRA Plan*, and then *Financing the Plan*. The Audited Financials since 1994 are all posted for your reading pleasure! I'm available, as usual, and encouraged by your interest. Please contact me at anytime by email at fdowney@actra.ca or by phone at 416-489-1311/1-800-387-3516.



Some of ACTRA's highest profile members are involved in ACTRA's lobbying campaigns – including the headline-grabbing federal election press conference last January.



ACTRA

Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

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AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTRA

We have audited the balance sheet of ACTRA National as at February 28, 2006 and the statements of operations, net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

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

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at February 28, 2006 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Clarke Henning LLP
Chartered Accountants
Toronto, Ontario
April 28, 2006

ACTRA NATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

ACTRA NATIONAL BALANCE SHEET

AS AT FEBRUARY 28, 2006

	2006	2005
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 2,545,258	\$ 1,519,635
Accounts receivable	526,712	632,352
Prepaid expenses and deposits	59,956	64,037
Due from ACTRA Performers' Rights Society	41,267	-
	3,173,193	2,216,024
Furniture, equipment and software (note 3)	83,943	124,974
	3,257,136	2,340,998

LIABILITIES

Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	665,184	465,394
Accrued vacation pay	33,249	36,976
Due to Branches	546,494	150,740
Due to ACTRA Toronto Performers Branch	78,606	99,726
Due to ACTRA Performers' Rights Society	-	25,089
Due to U.B.C.P.	33,124	28,812
	1,356,657	806,737

NET ASSETS

Extraordinary contingency fund (note 2)	2,383	2,383
Unappropriated surplus	1,814,153	1,406,904
Invested in furniture, equipment and software	83,943	124,974
	1,900,479	1,534,261
	\$ 3,257,136	\$ 2,340,998

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Richard Hardacre, President

Ferne Downey, Treasurer

ACTRA NATIONAL

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

	Invested in Furniture, Equipment and Software	Unappropriated Surplus	Extraordinary Contingency Fund	Total	
				2006	2005
Net Assets – at beginning of year	\$ 124,974	\$ 1,406,904	\$ 2,383	\$ 1,534,261	\$ 1,000,519
Excess of income over expenses	–	366,218	–	366,218	533,742
Purchase of furniture, equipment and software	39,143	(39,143)	–	–	–
Depreciation	(80,174)	80,174	–	–	–
Net Assets – at end of year	\$ 83,943	\$ 1,814,153	\$ 2,383	\$ 1,900,479	\$ 1,534,261

ACTRA NATIONAL

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

	2006	2005
Income		
Per capita – full members	\$ 3,241,166	\$ 3,128,588
Per capita – apprentice members	488,400	502,800
Information services	260,894	251,345
Equalization income	1,183,490	1,125,837
Interest income	22,407	17,371
	5,196,357	5,025,941
Expenses		
National council and executive (Schedule A)	169,302	154,175
National committees (Schedule B)	32,931	19,495
National executive director's office (Schedule C)	274,546	250,667
Bargaining and research (Schedule D)	447,423	372,934
Collective agreements (Schedule E)	143,589	248,782
Policy and communications (Schedule F)	613,975	575,687
External relations (Schedule G)	248,568	106,652
Finance, human resources and administration (Schedule H)	971,682	817,019
Information technology (Schedule I)	653,768	603,051
Occupancy (Schedule J)	377,194	357,590
GST expense	57,274	44,909
Apprentice member credit	190,834	173,921
	4,181,086	3,724,882
Excess of income over expenses before transfer payments	1,015,271	1,301,059
ACTRA financial rebates to branches	(192,900)	(332,100)
Transfer payments to branches	(156,153)	(214,717)
Transfer to ACTRA Performers Rights' Society	(200,000)	(220,500)
Transfer to ACTRA Members' Insurance Premium subsidy	(100,000)	–
Excess of income over expenses	\$ 366,218	\$ 533,742

ACTRA NATIONAL

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

	2006	2005
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash receipts from members, non-members and producers	\$ 5,279,590	\$ 4,658,065
Cash paid for expenses	(4,549,821)	(4,300,926)
Interest received	22,407	17,371
	752,176	374,510
Cash flows from financing activity		
Advances from related organizations	312,590	254,569
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of furniture, equipment and software	(39,143)	(9,732)
Change in cash during the year	1,025,623	619,347
Cash – at beginning of year	1,519,635	900,288
Cash – at end of year	\$ 2,545,258	\$ 1,519,635

ACTRA NATIONAL
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

1. ORGANIZATION

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

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation

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

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

Furniture, Equipment and Software

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

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

Revenue

Revenue is accrued as earned.

Extraordinary Contingency Fund

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

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the year. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

Details of furniture, equipment and software are as follows:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value 2006	2005
Computer equipment	\$664,933	\$621,773	\$43,160	\$42,759
Computer software	109,745	90,013	19,732	41,675
Furniture and fixtures	179,942	158,891	21,051	40,540
	\$954,620	\$870,677	\$83,943	\$124,974

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

4. LEASE COMMITMENTS

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

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

In addition to the minimum rent, the Association is obligated to pay operating costs for its office space. The operating costs paid were approximately \$118,000 (2005: \$125,000).

5. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

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

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

6. GUARANTEES AND INDEMNITIES

The Organization has indemnified its past, present and future directors, officers and employees against expenses (including legal expenses), judgments and any amount actually or reasonably incurred by them in connection with any action, suit or proceeding, subject to certain restrictions. The Organization has purchased directors' and officers' liability insurance to mitigate the cost of any potential future suits and actions, but there is no guarantee that the coverage will be sufficient should any action arise.

In the normal course of business, the Organization has entered into agreements that include indemnities in favour of third parties, either express or implied, such as in service contracts, lease agreements and purchase contracts. In these agreements, the Organization agrees to indemnify the counterparties in certain circumstances against losses or liabilities arising from the acts or omissions of the Organization. The maximum amount of any potential liability cannot be reasonably estimated.

ACTRA NATIONAL
SCHEDULES OF OPERATING EXPENSES
 YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2006

	2006	2005
National Council and Executive (Schedule A)		
National Council		
Meeting costs	\$ 28,148	\$ 23,156
Councillor travel costs	27,078	22,790
Officer expenses	10,453	8,384
Senior staff expenses	6,635	6,692
Councillor tool kits	–	14,697
	72,314	75,719
National Executive		
Meeting costs	25,407	24,400
Officer expenses	7,288	9,906
Senior staff expenses	4,929	7,815
	37,624	42,121
Officers and senior staff meetings		
Meeting costs	861	383
Officer expenses	6,638	1,906
Senior staff expenses	4,772	1,015
	12,271	3,304
Honouraria	29,229	29,250
Officer expenses – other	17,864	3,781
	\$ 169,302	\$ 154,175
National Committees (Schedule B)		
Political action committee	\$ 621	\$ 500
Finance committee meetings	749	384
Women in the Director's Chair	15,000	10,000
PAL	5,000	5,000
Communications committee meetings	251	–
Other committees	1,166	3,611
Diversity committee	144	–
Actors' Fund of Canada	10,000	–
	\$ 32,931	\$ 19,495

	2006	2005
National Executive Director's Office (Schedule C)		
Salaries	\$ 182,900	\$ 186,113
RRSP	21,831	22,482
General benefits	19,566	26,084
	224,297	234,679
National Executive Director expenses	11,109	9,051
Regional Director expenses	2,980	6,937
Organizing	36,160	–
	\$ 274,546	\$ 250,667
Bargaining and Research (Schedule D)		
Salaries	\$ 275,070	\$ 256,881
Maternity benefits	13,227	3,775
RRSP	21,697	19,849
General benefits	65,885	54,845
	375,879	335,350
Director expenses	11,086	11,460
Research materials	32,810	5,146
Organizing expenses and tools	27,648	20,978
	\$ 447,423	\$ 372,934
Collective Agreement Negotiation and Administration (Schedule E)		
CBC: Negotiations	\$ 12,715	\$ –
Officer expenses	1,805	–
Senior staff expenses	316	51
Legal	–	1,500
Editing	–	6,070
	14,836	7,621
Commercials: Negotiations	5,544	40,608
Officer expenses	–	5,208
Senior staff expenses	–	7,790
Administration	4,170	14,414
Legal	–	10,000
Printing	34,382	76,533
	44,096	154,553
IPA: Negotiations	17,380	840
Officer expenses	5,472	1,893
Senior staff expenses	11,119	138
Administration	68	243
Legal	4,923	10,000
Conference fees	5,506	3,220
Printing	26,269	59,909
	70,737	76,243
Other: Negotiations	3,654	396
Senior staff expenses	705	4,241
Legal	1,791	4,000
Printing	7,770	1,728
	13,920	10,365
	\$ 143,589	\$ 248,782
Policy and Communications (Schedule F)		
Salaries	\$ 210,931	\$ 214,366
RRSP	14,244	15,644
General benefits	39,626	41,278
	264,801	271,288
Director expenses	32,414	31,644
Lobbying expenses	56,244	40,054
Coalitions	40,031	19,735
President's expenses	4,445	4,271
	133,134	95,704
InterACTRA news	99,393	102,110
Advertising	28,644	31,919
Sponsorships	26,314	26,976
Promotional materials	8,583	4,404
Administrative services	9,592	9,424
Publications	9,941	1,878
ACTRA awards	22,014	16,223
Public relations officer's expenses	3,634	1,199

	2006	2005
Face to Face marketing online	4,550	4,147
Policy consultant	3,375	10,415
	216,040	208,695
	\$ 613,975	\$ 575,687
External Relations (Schedule G)		
FIA affiliation fees	\$ 39,120	\$ 39,142
CLC affiliation fees	158,613	22,911
CLC committee and travel	2,210	–
Officer expenses: FIA	8,118	4,902
FIANA	676	–
SAG/AFTRA	10,694	11,113
Senior staff expenses: FIA	7,571	4,891
FIANA	3,700	–
SAG/WTO	9,765	14,591
Other	8,101	9,102
	\$ 248,568	\$ 106,652
Finance, Human Resources and Administration (Schedule H)		
Salaries	\$ 517,742	521,883
RRSP	44,494	43,243
General benefits	116,290	112,900
Temporary help	2,810	1,333
	681,336	679,359
National Director of Finance and Administration expenses	2,040	1,060
Printing	34,437	29,869
Referenda	10,060	–
Professional fees	5,000	7,893
Auditing fees	10,797	10,939
Legal fees	41,662	15,000
Staff conference	20,889	21,498
Staff recruitment	3,640	975
Staff training	6,894	10,485
Staff appreciation	3,516	1,914
Bank charges	7,994	8,027
Administration arrangement fee	115,417	–
Alliance debt reduction	28,000	30,000
	290,346	137,660
	\$ 971,682	\$ 817,019
Information Technology (Schedule I)		
Salaries	\$ 389,292	308,377
RRSP	25,544	19,897
General benefits	74,759	65,343
	489,595	393,617
Maintenance	524	1,711
Software	18,117	14,923
Hardware	6,853	2,322
Supplies	6,540	7,234
Network costs	41,586	45,404
Depreciation – computer equipment	35,549	35,020
Consulting fees	9,310	9,919
Webtrust audit	23,750	24,890
Depreciation – membership system	21,944	68,011
	\$ 653,768	\$ 603,051
Occupancy (Schedule J)		
Rent	\$ 223,007	\$ 203,411
Telephone	22,150	21,358
Insurance	20,282	18,455
Supplies and miscellaneous	10,038	10,210
Postage	26,434	17,580
Courier	14,063	18,587
Furniture and fixtures – repair	4,082	1,559
Equipment rental	25,073	23,478
Depreciation – furniture and fixtures	22,681	33,590
Regional office expenses	9,384	9,362
	\$ 377,194	\$ 357,590

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Show your card and save some cash!

All ACTRA and UBCP members (Full, Apprentice and ACTRA Extras) are entitled to a number of discounts when you show your membership card. For a detailed list of discounts and info on how to access them, pick up a copy of the *Benefits Guide* at your ACTRA branch, or download a copy from the 'Members' area at www.actra.ca. Questions? Contact interactra@actra.ca or **Christine Webber** at **416-489-1311/1-800-387-3516**, ext. 4005.

VIA RAIL Get up to **5% off** VIA Rail's best available fares in all classes by booking directly with VIA Rail using the **group discount number 709950**. There are no service charges or additional fees when you book directly with Via Rail by phone at **1-888-VIA-RAIL** or in person (not through a travel agent).

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Other plans are available – ask for details when you call Mike at **1-866-548-2666**, ext. **8003** quoting **plan number 100020530**.

PLAYBACK A publication about production, broadcasting and interactive media in Canada. A **25% discount** is available to ACTRA members on one and two-year subscriptions to Playback: 1-year subscription is \$52.50 (including GST), 2-year subscription is \$104.00 (including GST). Please contact customer service at **416-408-2448**. www.playbackmag.com/map

HOTEL DISCOUNTS... **Special rates** are available to ACTRA members at hotels across Canada and in Los Angeles, including: **Four Seasons** (Toronto), **Sutton Place** (Toronto, Vancouver), **Radisson Saskatoon**, **Delta Bow Valley** (Calgary), **Hotel Omni Mont-Royal** (Montreal), **Le Montrose Suites** (L.A.) – and many more! See the *Benefits Guide* for complete details.

Contact ACTRA...

ACTRA National Office

ACTRA Performers' Rights Society
300-625 Church St | Toronto ON | M4Y 2G1
TEL: (416) 489-1311/1-800-387-3516
FAX: (416) 489-8076
EMAIL: national@actra.ca | EMAIL: prs@actra.ca
EMAIL: prsnr@actra.ca (NEIGHBOURING RIGHTS)
www.actra.ca

Union of B.C. Performers

300-856 Homer St | Vancouver BC | V6B 2W5
TEL: (604) 689-0727 | FAX: (604) 689-1145
EMAIL: info@ubcp.com | www.ubcp.com

ACTRA Calgary

304, 1300 – 8 Street SW | Calgary AB | T2R 1B2
TEL: (403) 228-3123 | FAX: (403) 228-3299
EMAIL: calgary@actra.ca | www.actracalgary.com

ACTRA Edmonton

302-10324 – 82nd Ave | Edmonton AB | T6E 1Z8
TEL: (780) 433-4090 | FAX: (780) 433-4099
EMAIL: edmonton@actra.ca
www.actraedmonton.com

ACTRA Saskatchewan

212-1808 Smith St | Regina SK | S4P 2N4
TEL: (306) 757-0885 | FAX: (306) 359-0044
EMAIL: saskatchewan@actra.ca
www1.actra.ca/sask

ACTRA Manitoba

203 – 245 McDermot Ave
Winnipeg MB | R3B 0S6
TEL: (204) 339-9750 | FAX: (204) 947-5664
EMAIL: manitoba@actra.ca
www1.actra.ca/winnipeg

ACTRA Toronto Performers

200-625 Church St | Toronto ON | M4Y 2G1
TEL: (416) 928-2278 | FAX: (416) 928-0429
EMAIL: info@actratoronto.com
www.actratoronto.com

ACTRA Ottawa

The Arts Court | 170 – 2 Daly Ave
Ottawa ON | K1N 6E2
TEL: (613) 565-2168 | FAX: (613) 565-4367
EMAIL: ottawa@actra.ca | www.actraottawa.ca

ACTRA Montreal

530 – 1450 City Councillors St
Montreal QC | H3A 2E6
TEL: (514) 844-3318 | FAX: (514) 844-2068
EMAIL: montreal@actra.ca | www.actramontreal.ca

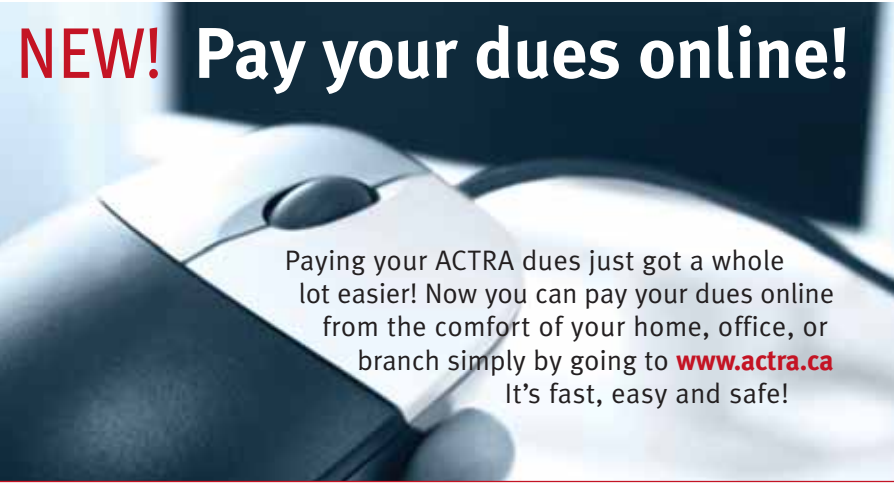
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103 – 1660 Hollis St | Halifax NS | B3J 1V7
TEL: (902) 420-1404 | FAX: (902) 422-0589
EMAIL: maritimes@actra.ca
www.actramaritimes.ca

ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador

685 Water Street | P.O. Box 575
St. John's NF | A1C 5K8
TEL: (709) 722-0430 | FAX: (709) 722-2113
EMAIL: newfoundland@actra.ca
www1.actra.ca/stjohns

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What happens in Banff... doesn't stay in Banff



by Heather Allin

Members and staff from Toronto, Vancouver and National office attend the Banff World Television Festival every year to ensure that our issues surrounding a healthy Canadian film and television industry stay alive, and move forward. Banff is the event where cultural policy often gets announced. Industry leaders and government officials take meetings with us, and we can talk informally with producers, broadcasters, movers and shakers.

The festival kicked off with a keynote address from Minister of Heritage **Bev Oda**. She announced that government was directing the CRTC to study the effects of technology on broadcasting. "Our government firmly believes that it is the role of government to make public policy, and to be accountable to Canadians for those policies," she said.

This could be taken as a sign that the government has recognized that the CRTC's 1999 Television Policy is ineffectual. However, I underline that so far, the current ministry and government are interested in facts only – no interpretations or advice.

We celebrated when CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** announced that the CRTC is reviewing its TV policy, and specifically the spending requirements on the private broadcasters. ACTRA has been calling for this review for seven years – finally, we felt like the CRTC is hearing our message that Canadian stories need to be guaranteed a place on our airwaves.

Throughout the festival, we joined our partners in the Canadian Coalition of Audio-visual Unions (CCAU) in meetings with Minister

Oda's key advisers, Charles Dalfen and his staff, and with Telefilm's Executive Director **Wayne Clarkson** and his staff. It is important to note that these people are interested in what we say. Our presence ensures the issues stay active in the conversations towards developing solutions and policies. These key meetings are critical legs in the fight for Canadian drama; it's a marathon challenge that we are prepared to keep running.

Also of note: **Richard Hardacre** presented ACTRA's John Drainie Award during the annual awards luncheon to the deserving **Wendy Mesley**. I was asked to honour the 10th Anniversary of Women in the Director's Chair, a programme ACTRA helped initiate. And we attended a 'Town Hall' on the future of television in Canada, where the speakers, all broadcasters and government funders, danced around the issues of development of Canadian talent, minimum spending, marketing, and where many proclaimed a dedication to the value of these components as an integral part of Canadian culture. We were also able to support many of our members who were in Banff pitching their ideas and taking meetings.

I close in saying that the staff and councillors who attend this event are solidly prepared, ready to speak on behalf of drama and a Canadian industry, and do so with finesse, wit and diplomacy. Our presence clearly makes a difference. Our presence means the issues we bring forward have to be addressed. We will not go away.

For more on the announcements at Banff read the Policy column on page 13.

All photos courtesy BWTF



Member **David Huband** delivers his pitch.



Heather Allin, WIDC Producer **Carol Whiteman** and **Lyn Mason Green**.



Minister of Heritage **Bev Oda** announces the CRTC's technology study.

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