



I N T E R

Winter 2006

# ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



**ACTRA and  
USW pitch  
Parliament!**

Gabrielle Miller

– see page 7



by Richard Hardacre

# The strength of a unified voice

**With this first issue of our magazine** for 2006, I offer wishes for a fine New Year full of prospects for good health and well being to all the members of ACTRA. In our challenging industry it always merits focusing on a clear perspective and on positive movement. A new year, as everyone knows, offers many opportunities ahead and the chance to reflect on what was learned in the year past. For ACTRA, 2006 has the promise of renewal on several fronts and maybe even a glance into a frontier or two.

What we start with is a freshly chosen National Council, elected by the members to serve in their interest for the next two years. There's an infusion of different energies and viewpoints coming in to work with the seasoned councillors that were re-elected from across the country. This is a display of organic and invigorating growth; and growth in many ways is what ACTRA is about.

We have been growing steadily over a very brief history into the foremost voice in our country speaking out for a strong industry and a vibrant culture for English-speaking Canada. A growing number of our members from St. John's to Victoria

have been joining our cause. ACTRA has taken the lead in a coalition of the unions and guilds working in film and television. We have told all the federal parties competing for Parliament that they have an obligation to inform the voters how they plan to encourage and protect our autonomous culture.

Our growth takes us as well into the winter and springtime bargaining of the *National IPA and the B.C. Master Agreement*, the two big contracts driving the engines of film and television in Canada. In those we must make fair gains. We must strengthen our rights commensurate with what was just achieved for all the creative and technical guilds of our brothers and sisters working in the same industry, for many of the same employers representing the major global media corporations. We, the performers of ACTRA, know we have earned the right to the same respect as these, our American comrades.

When we think of renewal our greatest opportunity is certainly upon us. For the first time since the 1996 Settlement Agreement between UBCP and ACTRA,

we have the united will to move together in one direction – that of solidarity. Building trust and respect has been an enormous challenge for the leaders of both this national union and our autonomous second-largest branch throughout a decade. Many elected performers and senior staff have devoted untold months of their lives toward that goal. I believe that at this moment a delicate balance is being tried. We have begun the shift towards a new direction – that of all English-speaking performers in recorded media in Canada working together on the same ambition. That objective is admirable, and attainable. We will create the best industry possible for our culture and our members. We will build the environment in which we can prosper equally. We will get the best deal achievable for all our performers. And we will do it by being unified.

In our own house we've had more than a taste now of what strength and impact a unified voice can have. We have watched the federal party leaders sit up and take notice of our efforts to put culture and the rights of cultural workers on their agendas. We have been to Parliament Hill to tell them, and we will keep on doing that until it works.

This is a tough business we have chosen in this beautiful country. It can be as harsh as an eastern January, but as full of promise and life as maple buds struggling to survive the frost. In a world where you can depend on so little, you can depend on this: ACTRA, with the strength of all of us will maintain and tighten its course to reach the best results we possibly can. The operative word is 'we'. We have a place to take as ours. Let's stick together and take it.

With strong wishes for a successful year, I remain committed to the job at hand.

In solidarity,



Richard Hardacre,  
ACTRA National President

ACTRA/USW Lobby Day reception in Ottawa: CLC President Ken Georgetti, ACTRA National President Richard Hardacre and USW National Director Ken Neumann.



# 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.



## Do we have \$\$ for you?

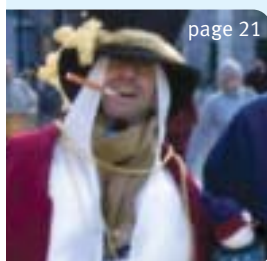
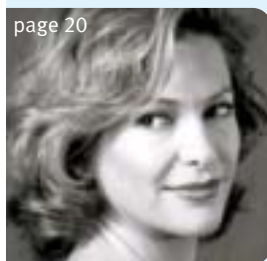
**Attention all performers who have earned royalties, residuals and use fees under an ACTRA agreement (film, TV, documentary or commercial productions):**

***Have you moved and not kept a current address with ACTRA?***

***Are you holding on to an uncashed cheque from ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (ACTRA PRS)?***

If you answered "Yes" to either of these questions, ACTRA PRS may be holding an unclaimed residual payment for you.

For info, please visit [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca), and locate the ACTRA PRS section to see a list of performer names under "ACTRA PRS NKA Payments" to see if your name or a performer you know is listed. If it is, contact ACTRA PRS (contact details are on page 23). We'd be happy to hear from you and arrange for payment!



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**Dear Editor:**

*InterACTRA* is looking great. But I do wish there was some accurate acknowledgement of past contributions to ACTRA. On page 5 (Fall 2005) you have a pic of ‘ACTRA’s National Presidents’. Not ‘some’ of them – or the ones who happened to be around when pictures were being taken.

Last spring I spoke to the two excellent editors of the Anniversary Edition (Dan MacDonald, Editor and Ferne Downey, Editorial Board member) of *InterACTRA* to point out that there was no mention of the Women’s Committee and its terrific contribution to ACTRA – and no acknowledgement of the wonderful women who struggled to make our association gender balanced. It’s great if we don’t need to push that button now but we should at least acknowledge that it was a significant development in our history.

– Meg Hogarth,  
*The first nationally elected president of ACTRA and (so far) the only woman.*

**Exciting positions available for dynamic goddesses!**

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

**Letters**

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

**Correction**

**Brittney Wilson** was nominated for two Young Artists Awards, not one as noted in the Fall 2005 *InterACTRA*: one for her role on the TV series *Romeo*, and one for her voice work on *Polly and the Pockets*. Congratulations Brittney!

**Want to receive *InterACTRA* by email?**

If you’d like *InterACTRA* in your e-mailbox instead of by mail, email us at [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca) with your membership number.

**Calling all scribes!**

Interested in never-ending glory? Want to contribute content to *InterACTRA*? Please contact [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca).

**A victory for culture!**

**On November 25, Canada became** the first country to sign on to the international convention on cultural diversity, scoring a major coup for the campaign to ensure Canadians have access to our own stories.

The convention was passed at UNESCO in October after many years of hard lobbying and negotiations. For the first time, international law recognizes that culture is fundamentally different from other goods and services and will allow countries to use tools like content quotas, subsidies, tax credits, and foreign ownership rules to make sure their culture isn’t drowned out by outside forces. Without these tools, we would not have a meaningful choice of Canadian books, music, films or TV programs.

The next step is to get the convention ratified by more than 30 countries in order for it to be a recognized treaty. ACTRA will continue to support the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity to help make this important treaty work for artists.

***This is Wonderland* defends fundraising title**

**In a tremendous show of support,** members of the theatre and film and TV communities raised \$75,000 for the Actors’ Fund during its *More Than Applause* fundraising campaign in October.

This year’s *Wonderland Challenge* competition pitted the casts, crews and producers of *Da Vinci’s City Hall*, *Godiva’s*, *The Tournament* and *This is Wonderland* against each other to raise the most money for the Fund through karaoke nights, on-set auctions, bake sales, and other events. After a hard-fought competition, the team from *This is Wonderland* successfully defended its title as fundraising champion, raising over \$7,000 of the \$16,000 raised in the contest.

The Actors’ Fund of Canada is a registered charity that provides short-term financial aid to entertainment industry professionals. Last year the Fund delivered \$450,000 in rent payments, grocery money,



*Wonderland’s* **Eric Peterson** (back), **Michael Healey**, **Cara Pifko**, **Siu Ta** and **Michael Riley**.

utility payments and other basic living expenses and \$2.8 million over the last 10 years.

For more information go to [www.actorsfund.ca](http://www.actorsfund.ca)

# ACTRA supports CBC workers

**When CBC's management locked out** more than 5,500 workers ACTRA members across the country took the streets to show their support.

ACTRA also took on a leading role in recruiting more than 15 organizations to help stage *End the Lockout*, a benefit at Toronto's Massey Hall. ACTRA member R.H. Thomson hosted the star-studded celebration of public broadcasting that bought out 2,000 supporters and raised more than \$10,000 for the CMG workers' fund.



UBCP President **Howard Storey** and Director **Rob Labelle**.



(Above): ACTRA Saskatchewan members (l to r) **Dan MacDonald**, **Jean Freeman**, **Alan Bratt**, **June Mayhew**, **Ian Black**, **Mike Burns** (branch rep), **Mike O'Brien** (CMG/ACTRA member) and **Marie Degenstein**.

Maritimes: **Jamie Bradley**, **Nigel Bennett**, **Stephen Waddell**, and **Richard Hardacre** join in the CMG picket.



ACTRA Toronto members, leaders and staff demonstrate with CMG workers at the CBC Broadcast Centre.





FIA Executive meeting in Sydney, Australia.

## ACTRA stands by Australian performers

**Performers are likely to be among** the first to be affected by an unprecedented bash on Australian workers' rights. Prime Minister **John Howard** has pushed through new legislation that cuts basic protection down to a handful of statutory rights, for which performers can hardly qualify – due to the intermittent nature of their work.

At the October meeting of the International Federation of Actors Executive Committee (FIA), Canada seconded a motion that was unanimously adopted in support of Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) and their campaign against this legislation. ACTRA is instructing all members not to work in Australia unless the production on which they are to work has signed a collective agreement with the MEAA covering all performers on production.

"These measures clearly aim at bending the unions and pulling performers back to the Stone Age, where employers ruled and workers had no voice," said **Tomas Bolme**, FIA President. "It is outrageous and FIA

will stand by fellow performers and workers in Australia to ensure the pill does not go down well."

The new regulation will – among other things – remove notice of termination, long service leave, unfair dismissal and redundancy payments for small employers. Other measures will make it possible for employers to refuse to bargain collectively with a union, even against the overwhelming wish of its members. Furthermore, it will allow employers not to apply the terms and conditions of an agreement to new employees. The changes also provide for some entitlements – e.g. meal breaks or annual leave – to be traded in for a pay rise. The so-called "Work Choices" bill will allow employers to design their individual contracts rather than employ workers under the collective agreements. It will also introduce the worst competition among them, luring them into giving basic rights in for more money.

The full text of the FIA resolution in support of Australian Performers can be found at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).

## Cheers

The December 12 episode of *Corner Gas* set a new audience record for the hit comedy with a peak of 3 million viewers. The episode, "Merry Gasmas", drew even more eyeballs than hit U.S. series *CSI: Miami*.

Try as they might, CTV couldn't keep *Robson Arms*, the quirky series from Vancouver down. Despite sitting on the shelf for a year, the show finally aired this summer on Friday nights at 10:30. Critics loved it, and Canadians watched it. CTV announced that it has requested a second season. Let's hope they reward it by giving it a decent time slot...

## Jeers

CBC President **Robert Rabinovitch** and his sidekick **Richard Stursberg** didn't even pretend to be remorseful when they were pulled in front of MPs to explain their lockout of more than 5,500 workers. "People have asked whether the lockout was worth it and my answer was yes," Rabinovitch, told the Heritage Committee. He said the choice was either "wait and let the union strike at a time of their choosing or bring negotiations to a head at a relatively quiet time of the year." A cold and calculated move? You betcha.



# ACTRA AND USW LOBBY DAYS 2005

## Mr. Dave goes to Ottawa...

by David Sparrow

**E**arly on the morning of November 21, 2005, I found myself aboard a bus filled with ACTRA members and Steelworkers bound for Ottawa, the birthplace of many words and much hot air. I was part of an historic joint lobbying effort to awaken Members of Parliament from all parties to the assault taking place against Canadian culture and identity. For the record, the bus trip up was pleasant and uneventful save that no one, from either union, would join me in my rousing chorus of '99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall'.

When we got to the capital it turned out there was no time for singing. We were joined by performers and USW members from Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and places in between at a luncheon where we learned about each others' issues and were briefed on the points we would cover when meeting with MPs. Steel, I learned, had a long and proud history of lobbying on the Hill. They were tenacious. They lobbied for 12 years to ensure passage of the Westray Bill, named in recognition of the 26 miners who lost their lives in the 1992 mining disaster in Plymouth, N.S. The bill is a shining example of the USW's refusal to take 'no' as an answer and to keep lobbying until you get the change.

Our mission on this trip would be to present a 'Platform Pitch' – a list of demands we wanted to see in the parties' election platforms. It included ideas for fixing two key regulators – the CRTC and the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT). ACTRA members would explain how the CRTC was failing to live up to its mandate of protecting

and promoting Canadian content and USW members would speak to how a weak CITT was allowing other countries to 'dump' low-cost steel in Canada. We discovered that this idea of 'dumping' was our common ground. The Canadian airways are full of U.S. simulcast TV shows that are in essence 'dumped' here in that they

***The USW refuses to take 'no' as an answer and keeps lobbying until they get the change.***

are cheaper to license than Canadian dramas, and the broadcaster avoids the cost of actually producing anything (i.e.: no work for us). Other platform priorities included investing in culture, making key legislative reforms to protect workers, tax artists more fairly, and maintain limits to foreign ownership of telecommunications companies.

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ACTRA and USW on the Hill.

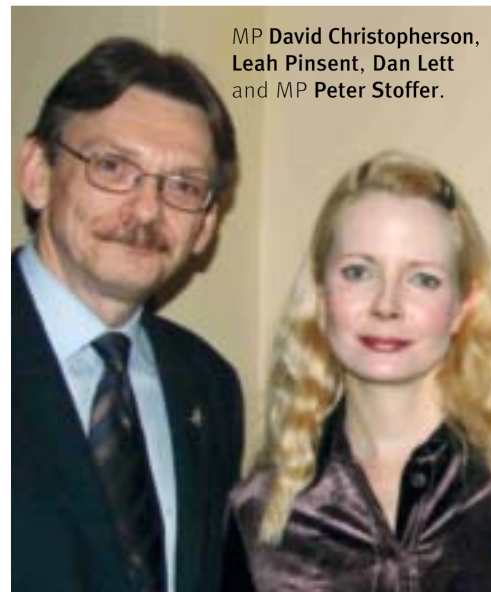




David Sparrow  
preps on the bus.



National Councillor (Montreal) **Tyrone Benskin** and Senator **Marie Pepin**.



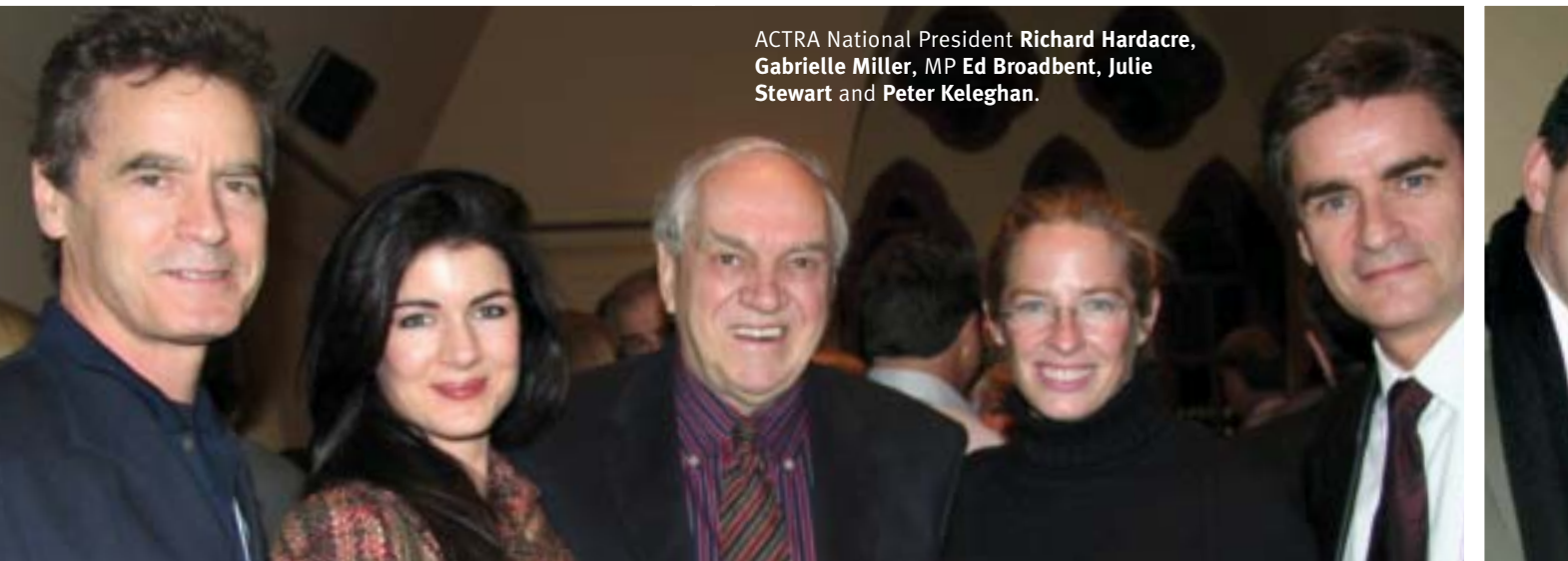
MP **David Christopherson**,  
**Leah Pinsent**, **Dan Lett**  
and MP **Peter Stoffer**.



NDP Leader **Jack Layton**  
and ACTRA National  
Treasurer **Ferne Downey**.



**R.H. Thomson** at the press  
conference, **Julie Stewart**  
looks on.



ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre**,  
**Gabrielle Miller**, MP **Ed Broadbent**, **Julie Stewart**  
and **Peter Keleghan**.

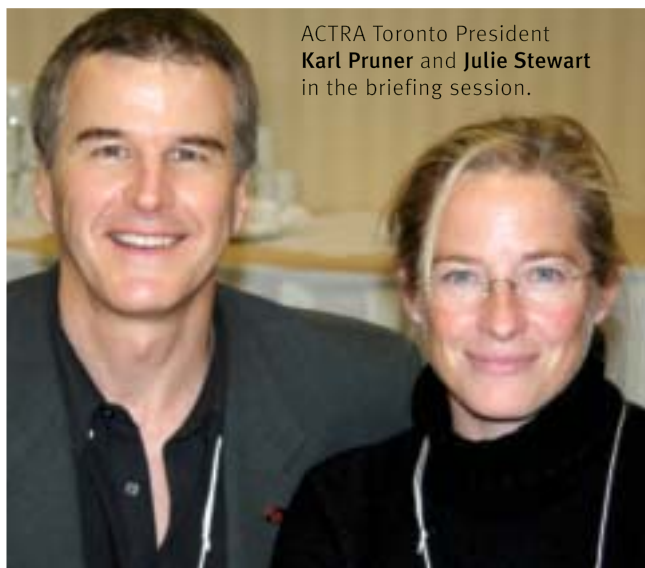


## ACTRA AND USW LOBBY DAYS 2005 continued from page 7...



Lobbying kicked off Monday evening with a reception in the War Room of the East Block. Members of Parliament and Senators from all political stripes came out to meet and chat with us. (Did I mention there were free drinks?) I met the Speaker of the House Peter Milliken and was able to share with him our desire for increased and sustained funding for the CBC, Canadian Television Fund (CTF) and Telefilm.

On Tuesday morning, **Peter Keleghan** and **Leah Pinsent** did a terrific live interview on CBC radio, and **R.H. Thomson**, **Gabrielle Miller**, **Julie Stewart**, and Peter Keleghan, along with USW's National Director **Ken Neumann** held a press conference in the Parliament Buildings where they challenged all four parties to bring Canada back to a position of strong cultural and national identity. Within hours our joint 'Platform Pitch' was being covered on major news websites, and on CBC Newsworld and CTV. The following day, pictures of our members and their message was spread coast to coast in *The Globe and Mail* and other newspapers.



ACTRA Toronto President **Karl Pruner** and **Julie Stewart** in the briefing session.

*Canada is a beautiful, unique and rich country. I believe our arts and culture are fundamental to retaining our voice, personality and national identity. The ACTRA Lobby trip to Ottawa was educational and inspiring. We covered incredibly important issues that desperately need attention. It is my hope that we will be heard and the necessary changes in funding will be made. A long-term commitment to keep our arts as an active, integral ingredient of our national expression is imperative. I felt very honored to be a part of something so important to our community and country. Thanks to everyone at ACTRA, I had a blast!*

– Gabrielle Miller



ACTRA Toronto Councillor **David Sparrow**, House Speaker **David Milliken** and National Councillor (Ottawa) **Barry Blake**.

While all this was going on, members of ACTRA and the USW swarmed the Hill to meet MPs. Each ACTRA member was teamed with a USW member. My partner was **Joe Krmpotich** from Sault-St. Marie, a real salt-of-the-earth kind of guy with a quick mind and a great memory. As we made our way around the Hill he would recognize and approach MPs and they'd smile and call out "Joe!" He was a well-connected guy and he'd always introduce me with "...and this is my friend Dave from ACTRA. He'd like to talk to you about the CRTC." I learned a lot from Joe. He never left a discussion without asking the MP to identify who specifically they would talk to on our behalf. And after the meeting he'd follow up with an email reminding them of what they promised to do for us. It was fun to impress upon them that we were there representing our combined 300,000 voting members and their families, and we'd really like to know how they were going to address our issues.

In total, over four days, members of ACTRA and the USW met with more than 80 Ministers and MPs and the entire NDP caucus.

– continued on next page

## ACTRA AND USW LOBBY DAYS 2005 continued from page 9...

We presented a list of demands that will benefit actors coast to coast and by extension, all Canadians. Most MPs seemed genuinely concerned about the state of Canadian programming. And those who weren't were usually swayed when they learned how little English-Canadian drama is aired during primetime on the major networks.

Our trip to Ottawa was a tremendous success on many levels. It gave performers and USW members a chance to get to know and understand each other and each other's issues. It informed MPs, just before an election, of the terrible state our cultural institutions have been reduced to. And personally, it gave me a taste of the power we hold as a union. We may be independent contractors, we may live in disparate and distant parts of our great nation, but when we speak in solidarity with one clear voice, we have strength, and we can make things happen. On January 23 we will elect a new government. So, do some lobbying of your own. Ask questions. Find out what your candidate stands for when it comes to culture, identity, and funding for the arts and vote accordingly. Then hold them to it.

Now then, "98 bottles of beer on the wall. 98 bottles of beer..."

An extra special thanks to the ACTRA members who volunteered to go to Parliament Hill to lobby MPs. Thank you for so generously sharing your passionate voices and your time!

**Heather Allin, Tyrone Benskin, Thor Bishopric, Barry Blake, Ferne Downey, Thelma Farmer, Dawn Ford, Richard Hardacre, Matt Holland, Peter Keleghan, Dan Lett, Gabrielle Miller, Chris Owens, Leah Pinsent, Karl Pruner, Priya Rao, Austin Schatz, David Sparrow, Julie Stewart and R.H. Thomson.**

## Federal Election 2006: Get Involved! Go to [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)

# ACTRA/USW platform pitch

## Things the federal government can fix to bring Canada back to Canadians:

### Fix two federal regulators

- CRTC – address the crisis in Canadian TV drama
- CITT – include workers and community as members of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal and allow them to file complaints when trade cases are being considered

### Make three critical investments

- Fund CBC, Telefilm, Canadian Television Fund
- Fund public health care and post secondary education
- Fund safe transport by making improvements to infrastructure

### Make four key law reforms

- Artists' rights – Institute tax averaging for professional artists
- Bankruptcy laws – make sure workers are paid first
- Foreign ownership – maintain current limits to foreign ownership of our airwaves
- Labour code – make it illegal for employers to use scab labour



**InterACTRA** asked member **Karen Nicole Smith** to talk to prolific and talented performer **Wendy Crewson** (*The Good Son*, *The Many Trials of Jane Doe*, *The Man Who Lost Himself* and the upcoming film *Summer Babe*) and *Globe and Mail* columnist and author **John Doyle**.



by Karen Nicole Smith

## Star search: Building our own star system

**T**he 'star system' is busy at work in the U.S., where there's an almost insatiable appetite for films and shows and stories and photos of successful actors. Unfortunately, English-Canadian performers haven't had the benefit of such a healthy star-system. With rare exception, even some of the busiest, most successful, award-drenched Canadian actors aren't recognized on the street, let alone by name.

Part of the problem lies in being so close to the U.S.-machine. We are so overwhelmingly influenced by the American system that we expect our industry and our 'star system' to look and work just like theirs. As a result we take our stars and their voices for granted, stifling our unique Canadian potential. Having performers who are recognized and celebrated by Canadians will draw more eyes to our films and TV series. I think we've got to get out of the shadow of the U.S. system and work to nurture our own identity. We need to create a unique industry and a unique 'star system' – not a copy of the Hollywood system but something of our own.

Let's look at some classic Canadian film and TV myths and consider some ideas that could move us forward to our own successful star-generating machine:

**Myth:** We don't have stars!

**Reality:** **John Doyle** argues that we do. "**Don Cherry, Jean Chrétien, Lloyd Robertson...**" the list goes on. We don't necessarily recognize our stars because our own star system encompasses more than just the "traditional elements of show biz", as John put it. While there is a core group of performers who are household names, they are only a part of the definition of a Canadian star. This is a good thing. We don't have to start from scratch because a broad, multifaceted system is already in place, we can build from here. We can also take heart in that our system doesn't come with the trappings of the U.S. system – overzealous paparazzi, tabloid media, perpetuation of unnatural body image, etc. "Do we want that big fiery machine?" asks **Wendy Crewson**.

**Myth:** We don't have the talent to support an industry as strong as the U.S. film and television industry.

**Reality:** It only takes one roll call of Canadians working in the U.S. to prove that one wrong. The number of successful actors, writers, directors, producers and crew in the U.S. is astounding. Heck, just tune into 24 to see a whole slate of Canadian stars! We need to believe that we are as talented, as interesting and as capable as Americans are. Why? Because we are. Let's accept that we are fabulous and build our own industry so talented performers have the choice of staying home to have a challenging and exciting career telling their own stories.

*We've got to get out of the shadow of the U.S. system and work to nurture our own identity*

**Myth:** We don't have the money to make TV or films as well as they can.

**Reality:** Ok. Fine. They have money. But remember, the U.S. system has a 90% failure rate. For every one hit film or series, nine fail. They just have enough cash in the system that they can crank out enough to see which rise to the top. Besides, money isn't everything. Some of the most commercially and critically successful Canadian shows are made on a shoestring. Instead of fancy sets and special effects, they rely on interesting, Canadian stories told by a team of talented Canadians (*see above*).

Unfortunately, sometimes we're so overwhelmed with the American experience that we forget about our own stories. We have to create uniquely Canadian content – not just copies of Hollywood fare. Other countries do it, so can we. As Wendy reminds us, "In every other developed nation in the world, at least half of their top 10 shows are their own indigenous products because people in those countries want to see themselves."

**Myth:** 'Hollywood North'.

**Reality:** We're better than that. "Until we stop thinking of ourselves as an extension of the American industry, we'll never be more than an extension of the American industry," Wendy says.



Lois Pail / The Globe and Mail

She's right. Why settle for being a branch plant? Buying into the line and calling ourselves 'Hollywood North' is essentially denying that we have our own industry. Yet again, we're just measuring our system, our talent and our industry to the Hollywood standard and we're setting ourselves up for failure. Let's take back our right to have our own, unique industry. Why not start referring to L.A. as 'Canada South'.

The overwhelming theme seems to be that before we have our own stars, we need to get some confidence and take pride in our industry and ourselves.

"We've got to acknowledge our difference and use that in a positive way," says John. "No country in the world can match the star system of the United States. With us being next door it's even more futile to try to match it or copy it."

Clearly, we've got to change our thinking about ourselves and about our industry? But how do we approach something this monumental? We've got to figure out how our industry works, what our audiences want to see, how to market and promote our product and how to create our stars. Let's get to work.

– continued on page 13



Wayne Nicklas



John Connolly

AFTRA President **John P. Connolly** was recently working in Winnipeg on **Clive Barker's *The Plague***. He sat down with ACTRA Vice President **Wayne Nicklas** for a chat about the challenges facing performers on both sides of the border. AFTRA represents more than 75,000 performers, journalists and other artists working in the entertainment and news media. AFTRA's scope of representation covers broadcast public and cable television, radio, sound recordings, 'non-broadcast' and industrial material, internet and digital programming.



# BORDER CROSSING:

## A chat with AFTRA President John P. Connolly

**Wayne Nicklas:** I guess it's your first time in Winnipeg, John. I'd like to say welcome and hope everybody's treating you well here.

**John Connolly:** I've done films in Vancouver before and I've often visited Montréal and Toronto and Niagara Falls, but this is my first chance to work in Winnipeg, and I must say that I'm really happy to be here and I also am quite gratified at the reception that I've had from both Canadian artists and crew and the folks here in town. The quality of the work is extremely high.

**Wayne:** Unfortunately, Canada's private broadcasters simply refuse to air any Canadian product. They go for what's profitable, and what's profitable for them is, quite simply, American product. Do you think that AFTRA would support protection of cultural diversity that has some value to the American actor as well as to the smaller countries like ourselves, who really have a serious front-line struggle to see our own TV shows and films?

**John:** This is an extremely important question and I've got to pay some special credit to ACTRA. ACTRA has taken an extraordinarily important leadership role on issues of cultural diversity among performing artists worldwide.

Now, look, I'm a U.S. performer. I was born in the United States. I grew up there. I'm happy to be a U.S. citizen, with all of our flaws. And as a performer I'm quite happy when work that I do is shown in other countries. But I think it has to be acknowledged that when a kind of a tidal wave of U.S.-based production, for instance, begins to really blow out indigenous production from distribution systems in that country, that there has to be a rebalancing.

One of the things that is quite disturbing to me is that Canada has for many, many years had an extremely strong, highly developed and extraordinarily artistic cinema. And my personal sense of things is that it is in some measure being threatened by the near-exclusion of Canadian product from motion picture screens in Canada. I heard a figure, that at one point recently, the measure was that only 2% of Canadian screens are showing Canadian product in motion picture theatres, and if that's true,

I think there's a serious problem there.

In the U.S., the complete lack of any regulatory restraint on the media that was implemented under President Clinton created the situation where we now have a vertically integrated media industry from top to bottom: production, distribution, and ownership whether its entertainment or news. I'm not at all convinced that it was really healthy. It may be healthy for the bottom line, but you know, the airwaves in the fundamental laws of the United States are owned by the people, and to use the airwaves requires a level of public service, and that public service needs to be defined both in terms of news and information, and in terms of certain cultural content and diversity. And I'm not sure that the model that we now have serves that. Clearly, the evidence is that that model is not serving Canada as it should.

***“ACTRA has taken an extraordinarily important leadership role on issues of cultural diversity among performing artists worldwide.”***

**Wayne:** We noticed on AFTRA's website that you supported the CMG workers who are locked out by the CBC. We think that's fabulous. Within our country, public broadcasting is super important to us as actors. Does it really mean much to the American actor?

**John:** First of all, it's a matter of fundamental solidarity that we would support the CBC workers who have been locked out. A public entity locking its workers out is... I mean, it's just... it's beyond vile. It's appalling.

The relationship of Canadian actors to the CBC, it seems to me, is much more profound than the relationship of U.S.-based actors to public broadcasting. Public broadcasting never really invested significant

money after a few early attempts in developing U.S.-based scripted entertainment programming.

Where U.S. actors work for PBS is in children's programming. So the richness of children's programming in public broadcasting is a real legacy of AFTRA performers, because *Sesame Street* and *Electric Factory* and all those great shows are all AFTRA shows, and we're really proud of them, and it's beautiful work. But most of the other product on PBS is of the talk show, cooking show, et cetera, variety and that's all AFTRA programming, but there is not a strong tradition of original dramatic product.

**Wayne:** Let's look ahead. What do you think, the hardest thing we're going to have to do as performers and as unions, in the next 10 to 20 years?

**John:** We are artists – whether we report the facts as news people, interpret the facts to critique or celebrate our society as actors or dancers, or sing an interpretation of the facts as musical artists. But for us to be able to sing that truth and report those facts, we have to be able to make a living as workers. And it is our labour and inventiveness and insight and energies that create these enormous cash flows throughout this media industry. We need institutions that are powerful enough to defend our interest as working people, and therefore defend our interest as artists, and to regain some modicum of control over the work we do. Without that kind of power we will not be at the table, we will not be in the conversation – we will not be in the game.

One of the key lessons that American workers have yet to fully learn and understand is the importance of international solidarity. People – U.S. people – often have this notion that they can go it alone, that it's all about them. We can't look at the world that way anymore. The proof is all around us. And so reaching across borders and talking with fellow artists and fellow workers and other union leaders is not simply a luxury, it's not something nice to do – I think it's an absolute necessity. So that's one reason I really cherish the personal relationship I've been able to develop with the leadership in ACTRA and the members whenever I had a chance to either work with them, as I am now, or work with them across borders on common projects. It's only collective action, where people organize and work together on a common project, which really can create the lever that we need to move the situation.

## Star search – continued from page 13

**Learn from success.** “*Comer Gas* should be studied as a textbook example of successfully selling Canadian television,” John points out. “In 2004, *Comer Gas* was the most popular comedy in Canada – more popular than *Everybody Loves Raymond*.”

Look at that, we do have a voice, and it is appreciated and financially viable. Proof we can do it, and we want it.

**Demand a ‘safe haven’.** As Wendy puts it we need a ‘conservation area’ for Canadian TV. “Quebec did it to save its culture. It placed unpopular restrictions on television broadcasters and now they are reaping the benefits.”

**Step out of the shadow.** U.S. productions and content will always figure into the Canadian industry experience because of its huge scope and because we're so close – let's just collectively decide to have a ‘life’ outside of that. We're too smart, talented, funny and unique to be living in someone else's shadow – no matter how big the shadow is.

The good news is, we have help. We have a wealth of examples in Canada to study – we have hugely recognizable novelists, athletes, and musicians. We can also learn from Quebec's experience and those of other countries. We're not alone in this struggle, as we're reminded in John's book about the experience of Ireland creating its industry and ‘star system’ in the shadow of the U.K. (*A Great Feast of Light: Growing up Irish in the Television Age*, Doubleday Canada).

We even have some of our media on our side, believe it or not. “Canadian media is not against coverage of Canadian people. There is a myth that the press is only interested in Americans,” says John.

Taking it a step further, John says we embrace the U.S. experience of creating a star system. Let's take the best parts, and avoid the worst. We have the talent. Let's get out there and start telling people.

*We have a wealth of examples in Canada to study – we have hugely recognizable novelists, athletes, and musicians*

– ACTRA member  
Karen Nicole Smith  
was born in  
Kingston, Ontario  
to Trinidadian  
parents. She studied  
sociology at McGill  
before dropping out  
to follow her true  
passion and  
enrolling in theatre  
at Montreal's  
Dawson College.  
Karen Nicole has  
lived in Montreal,  
Atlanta, New  
York, and now  
Toronto.



**Wendy Crewson**  
as Louise Arbour  
in *Search for Justice*.

Courtesy CTV

# IPA NEGOTIATIONS 2006: Looking to win

by Marit Stiles, Director of Research

**ACTRA has a proud history as a leader** in collective bargaining – our agreements have established benchmarks for unions worldwide. We intend to draw on this strength when we sit down at the bargaining table in March to re-negotiate our biggest contract, the Independent Production Agreement (IPA). Going head-to-head with the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA) and the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ), we will be looking once again to make major gains in wages and working conditions for our members.

each of the next three years, plus 1% on insurance and retirement.

Again and again we heard that ACTRA members are fed-up with the consistent failure of producers to meet even the minimum terms of the IPA with respect to working conditions. This is an issue of respect and dignity for performers. It was a recurring theme across the country and it needs to be addressed in bargaining.

There was also a clear call for more work opportunities and tougher language around access to auditions, including proposals for a casting code of conduct, and strengthening

will be formulated. In the meantime, keep an eye out for more opportunities to provide input. You can also send us an email with your ideas and thoughts by visiting the “Have your say on the IPA” link at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) (you need to login with your ‘member’ password to access it).

Meanwhile, bargaining continues with the CBC. With the lockout over, we have finally received a response to our latest proposal for Internet Use – a sticking point in negotiations. ACTRA’s CBC Negotiating Committee met in December to approve our response, and continues to work toward a



Montreal: **Susan Glover** and **Simon Peacock**.

***ACTRA members are fed up with the consistent failure of producers to meet even the minimum terms of the IPA with respect to working conditions***



Montreal: **Mark Anthony Krupa** and **Matt Holland**.

In recent months, ACTRA Branches across the country have been holding member discussion groups and town halls to generate new ideas and proposals for our bargaining committee. We even had a chance to meet with our members in Los Angeles. National President **Richard Hardacre** and National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell** (ACTRA’s chief negotiator) attended many of these sessions, hearing first hand from a broad spectrum of members, including performers working in animation and digital media, series regulars, background performers, apprentice members, ACTRA Extras, stunt performers, and minors and their parents.

Many important themes emerged from our consultations. First, and most importantly, our members have emphasized the need for a significant improvement in minimum fees. More of our performers are working for scale (‘the minimum is the new maximum’) so performers want to narrow the gap between our rates and those of the Screen industry standard with a 3% increase over

of the ‘Equal Opportunity Policy’ clause in the IPA. ACTRA Extras suggested a number of strong proposals including preference of engagement language for members of ACTRA, and overtime after eight hours.

Many of our members listed digital media – iPod, internet, mobile phones, etc. – as a priority going into bargaining. They want to ensure that ACTRA members are well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities in new and emerging technologies.

Use fees and residuals were another popular theme. A number of principal performers proposed that on a set where one performer has SAG residuals, all performers should. ACTRA’s bargaining committee will be considering which options best meet the needs of our members, and our Research Department will be carrying out comparative and industry research to inform that decision.

These and other proposals will be considered at a National Wages and Working Conditions Conference in January and a prioritized list of final negotiating proposals

deal on internet use that will ensure members are fairly compensated for their work, whether it’s posted on a digital archive site, shown simultaneously on CBC.ca and CBC TV, or created especially for use on the internet. With news that CBC has inked a deal with AOL Canada Inc., that will see the online giant sell ads for the CBC.ca and tap into CBC’s video content, it is critical that we ensure our members are protected and well-compensated.

**Jill Rosenberg**, National Organizer for Digital Media, **DJ Anderson**, Collective Bargaining Researcher/Coordinator, and ACTRA Montreal Steward **Claire Martell** are in negotiations with the National Film Board around digital use, and Jill continues to market ACTRA performers to new media producers.

2006 should prove to be a challenging, yet banner year for ACTRA. We intend to make substantial gains at the bargaining table and will continue to seize upon the increasing opportunities for performers in digital media.

# ACTRA and AFBS are working together



by Ferne Downey,  
National Treasurer  
& AFBS Governor

**Recently, ACTRA and AFBS published a positive *Joint Statement*. I reproduce it here in its entirety for your reading pleasure.**

“Some communication has been circulated recently about the relationship between ACTRA and AFBS which has caused concern. While we support ACTRA and AFBS members’ democratic right to express their own opinions, we would like to issue a clear statement of our mutual positions regarding some of these communications.

AFBS was created in 1975 as a distinct arms-length Fraternal Benefit Society to provide services to members of the founding guilds of ACTRA. We’d like to assure you that AFBS has always worked and continues to work closely with the founding guilds to provide the best insurance and retirement benefits for performers.

### **Examples of our good business relationship:**

ACTRA and AFBS, while committed to maintaining our historical relationship, are currently negotiating a new agreement that will clarify our on-going business relationship. These negotiations are proceeding and a positive outcome is anticipated. We can assure the members of both ACTRA and AFBS that the new agreement will preserve the arms-length relationship existing between AFBS and ACTRA. There is no intention on the part of either ACTRA or AFBS to alter the relationship that exists between the two organizations.

The AFBS Board of Governors is reviewing the ACTRA insurance plan’s design and will be proposing to ACTRA some changes that will impact positively on the costs of insurance and provide a more sustainable and flexible insurance plan. Importantly, your retirement plan continues to be administered by AFBS.

In response to increasing costs of member insurance, and with ACTRA’s endorsement, in June of 2004 AFBS implemented a minimal administration fee on members’ RSP holdings. That fee is less than ½ of 1% – well below fees charged by any other financial institution and no additional service charges are anticipated. The fees, which are recovered from members’ retirement accounts, are now applied to subsidize members’ insurance benefits.

The change made last year in ACTRA’s National Commercial Agreement fundamentally altered the way that monies flow to AFBS. This administrative change that directs monies to flow through ACTRA to AFBS has been accomplished. The process was implemented in August 2005 and ACTRA and AFBS staff are working closely together to ensure a smooth transition.

ACTRA’s (and AFBS’s) goal is to provide members with accurate and up-to-date histories of their earnings and insurance and retirement contributions from engagers, and in ACTRA’s case, to collect data for statistical research to strengthen ACTRA’s collective bargaining with the industry. This change in process will in no way affect your benefits.

Until 1999, all non-member income (or equalization payments) was directed to AFBS to pay for the cost of investing and administering your retirement plans and to subsidize the cost of your insurance benefits. Over the past years, ACTRA (with the support of the Board of AFBS) has amended each of ACTRA’s collective agreements with engagers to provide for a split of non-member

equalization monies between ACTRA and AFBS. No change to the sharing of these equalization payments has been made, and no change is being contemplated.

We want to assure you that ACTRA and AFBS remain committed to offering you the best possible insurance benefits at the lowest possible cost. If you have any concerns about your insurance and retirement plans and their administration, we invite you to call or email either of us for information and clarification.”

Signed,

**Stephen Waddell,**  
National Executive Director, ACTRA

**Robert Underwood,**  
CEO & President, AFBS

### **My two cents worth**

It bears repeating that ACTRA, AFBS and the engagers all agreed seven years ago that ACTRA would receive a portion of non-member monies to assist ACTRA in its administration of ACTRA Agreements. This ‘news’ is not news – it spans seven years of practice.

Vis a vis the Commercial Agreement. The intention of the change in the flow of I&R funds is to provide better member service: if ACTRA can better steward the Agreement and AFBS can save staff time and energy and there is no change in the split of non-member monies, and it is the members who are the clear winners, what is not to like? ACTRA has engaged new staff to process the contributions and input the data but it is well worth it.

### **Looking forward to the new benefit year**

There are a couple of things to anticipate for March 1, 2006. When your opportunity comes to ‘Maintain Class’, don’t let it pass you by. Think about it, talk to AFBS, talk to your friends – talk to me! Bad cash flow? In addition to paying by VISA, cheque or pre-authorized monthly cheques, this year you can also use your MasterCard.

The much-anticipated Insurance Plan Redesign will be rolled out in 2007 – giving us another year to communicate and fine-tune this vital initiative. However, opportunities to improve benefits for members and contain some costs for AFBS will arrive on March 1, 2006. They include: coverage for insured dependents of deceased members upon payment of the annual insurance premium; introduction of a ‘managed dental formulary’ to provide excellent dental care while containing some of the spiraling costs of the plan; offering new full ACTRA members the opportunity to purchase OnePlus health and dental; the lifting of an age restriction in the future will begin with offering the option to ‘Maintain Class’ to those who have attained age 65 on March 1, 2006; and a brand new benefit in regards to ‘prolonged illness’ will be introduced. I can’t go into more detail here, but you will receive clear information from AFBS.

### **Questions or concerns?**

Please contact me, ACTRA’s appointee on the AFBS Board of Governors at ACTRA, **416-489-1311**, or **1-800-387-3516**, or via email: **fdowney@actra.ca**

Happy New Year to all!

# Tonya Lee Williams Excellence defined

by Richard Hardacre

**I came away from lunch with Tonya Lee Williams** feeling overwhelmed, yet energized – her passion is inspiring. If I was confident that Tonya was an excellent choice to receive this year's ACTRA Award of Excellence at our Los Angeles reception, after our lunch, I was doubly certain.

Tonya joined ACTRA Toronto in 1978 as a result of a series of hugely successful 'wear a moustache' milk commercials. She starred on the *Polka Dot Door* and the teen reporting series *Welcome to My World*, before being cast to play a cashier in *Check it Out*, the first of a number of U.S. sitcoms to shoot in Toronto at the CTV studios. Tonya and I worked out that we first met on one episode of that series when I had a guest spot as a mid-20s yuppie trying a bit too hard to be cool by adopting the hair, the torn clothes and the puncturing of a punk. She moved to L.A. in 1987 and was soon appearing on TV shows such as *Hill*

Along with two daytime Emmy nominations Tonya's work on the show has earned her two NAACP Image Awards – she's been nominated every year she has been on the *Y&R*. Tonya used her increasing profile to bring attention to a variety of issues such as sickle cell anaemia, and always, she says, her intention was bring her profile and 'cachet' back to Canada.

"I've never spent more than three months in L.A. without coming back to Canada," she says proudly.

Currently Tonya is exploring her creativity through writing and directing, and producing. In 2003 she founded the Toronto-based Wilbo Entertainment and produced the Gemini-nominated *Tonya Lee Williams Gospel Jubilee*, which aired on CBC. In 2004, Tonya made her directorial debut and executive produced *Kink in my Hair* a TV pilot for Vision TV, based on the nationally acclaimed play picked up by Vision and CBC.



**Tonya Lee Williams with her ACTRA Award.**

"I know it's working when a South Asian filmmaker meets a black filmmaker and they realize they're all trying to tell the same story," she says.

The festival now has a charitable foundation committed to mentoring and inspiring underprivileged youth, giving them hope

***Tonya is a role model to all of us, as a talented and accomplished performer, and as a passionate Canadian***

*Street Blues*, *Matlock*, *Gimme a Break*, *What's Happening Now*, and movies like Disney's *The Liberators*, *A Very Brady Christmas*, *Spaced Invaders* and *Hearts of Fire*.

Then came the *Young and the Restless* in 1990. Tonya says she jumped at the chance to play Doctor Olivia Winters as it gave her the opportunity to appear in mainstream American homes on a daily basis. "Before this I had turned down 90% of the stuff that was being offered to me – prostitutes, drug addicts. The concept of my career has been not to do anything that reflects poorly on my community. My passion about being an actor has always been about changing perceptions, and the *Y&R* allowed me to do that," she says. "It catapulted me into mainstream homes across America and showed them a black person being portrayed in a positive way."

Throughout her career, Tonya has been a relentless activist with a deep commitment to building a stronger, more independent Canadian film and television industry that reflects the country's rich diversity. "My hope is that our stories will be a key factor in creating more tolerance among Canadians and hopefully eradicate our long history of systematic racism."

Tonya became disheartened seeing Canadian youth flooded with U.S. films and TV shows filled with violent images and negative stereotypes – messages she felt our youth were glorifying and emulating. Her response was to create the *ReelWorld Film Festival* in 2000. With her own money, she created a film festival mandated to nurturing, promoting and celebrating the full spectrum of racially and culturally diverse films and video.

and the tools they need to express themselves creatively and positively. Tonya was recently appointed to the Toronto Film Board by Mayor **David Miller** and she is an active member of ACTRA Toronto's Diversity Committee.

"My new passion is to tell the stories I want to make in Canada, says Tonya. "At the age where I am, I have nothing to lose. I can take chances."

Tonya is a role model to all of us, as a talented and accomplished performer, as a passionate Canadian, and as someone who uses her energy and influence generously to expand opportunities for others and create an industry in which everyone can find a voice.

Tonya is an artist who is truly in her element and ready to make the most of it. And I, for one, can't wait to see what she does with the next 27 years.



# Branches spotlight members

## UBCP/ACTRA

UBCP/ACTRA, was pleased to present two awards at the UBCP Annual General Meeting in July at Vancouver's Four Season's Hotel.

**Joy Coghill** received the **John Juliani Award of Excellence** in recognition of her significant achievements as a performing artist and for her distinguished contribution to the lives of her fellow performers and the film and TV industry overall. **Chic Gibson** was presented with a **Life Member Award** in recognition of his many years of dedicated service on behalf of the Union and its members.



**Joy Coghill**



**Chic Gibson**



**Gary Levert, Joan Orenstein (front)** and ACTRA Maritimes President **Nigel Bennett, John Beale (back)**.

## Maritimes

ACTRA Maritimes honoured four members at their December awards ceremony. Two performance awards went to members for their work in *Trudeau II: A Maverick in the Making*: **Rhonda McLean** took home the prize for Outstanding Performance (Female) for her work as the crusty Asbestos waitress in the CBC MOW and **Gary Levert** won for Outstanding Performance (Male) for his pivotal role as Gérard Pelletier.

**John Beale** received the certificate for Best Performance in a Commercial for his comic turn in the Atlantic Film Festival spot *Elevator*. And the David Renton ACTRA Award of Excellence was presented to **Joan Orenstein**. Joan has had a long career on stage, film, radio and television which has included many memorable performances in such projects as *The Hanging Garden, Shattered City, Seeing Things, Emily of New Moon* and *Charlie Grants War*, to name but a few.

## Montreal

ACTRA Montreal held a special gala in November where ACTRA Awards were presented to **Claudia Ferri, Bruce Ramsay** and **Terrence Scammell** for Best Female, Best Male, and Best Voice Performance respectively. Veteran member **Victor Knight** was honoured with the ACTRA

Community-builder Award for his important contribution to the branch and to AFBS, while **Vlasta Vrana** was presented with the ACTRA Award of Excellence for his outstanding body of work. Robert Higden won the ACTRA Shorts competition earlier in the day.

*(l to r) Vlasta Vrana, Robert Higden, Claudia Ferri, Victor Knight and Bruce Ramsay.*



# applause

AFF winner  
**Kristen Bell.**



## Atlantic Film Festival

ACTRA members took home both awards for Best Performance at the 25th Atlantic Film Festival in September. **Kristin Bell** won for her work in *Focus Group Therapy* and 16 year-old **Aaron Webber** shared the Male performance award with veteran actor **Daniel MacIvor**. Both were honoured for their work in **Amnon Buchbinder's** feature film *Whole New Thing*.



**Jackie Burroughs**

## GG's Performing Arts Awards

ACTRA members **Jackie Burroughs** and **Moses Znaimer** were among this year's winners of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards for lifetime artistic achievement. **k.d. Lang** won the National Arts Centre Award for exceptional achievement over the past performance year.

## Comedy Awards

High-fives are in order for the following funny members who took home 2005 Comedy Awards in October for their mirthful performances:

- Pretty Funny TV Male – Brent Butt**, *Cornet Gas*
- Pretty Funny TV Female – Samantha Bee**, *The Daily Show*
- Taped Performance Live – Levi MacDougall**, *Comedy Now!*
- Pretty Funny Male Film Performance – Mike Wilmot**, *It's All Gone Pete Tong*
- Pretty Funny Female Film Performance – Kristen Thomson**, *I, Claudia*
- Pretty Funny Comedic Play – Kristeen von Hagen**, *Dickwhipped*
- Pretty Funny One Person Show – Ron Sparks**, *From the Desk of Ron Sparks*
- Pretty Funny Sketch Troupe – The Imponderables**
- Pretty Funny Improv Troupe – Slap Happy**
- Pretty Funny Female Improviser – Lisa Merchant**
- Pretty Funny Male Improviser – Doug Morency**
- Pretty Funny Newcomer – Mark Forward**
- Pretty Funny Female Stand Up – Nikki Payne**
- Pretty Funny Male Stand Up – Mike Wilmot**



**Sandra Oh**

## Golden Globe nominees

Congrats to ACTRA members **Kiefer Sutherland** and **Sandra Oh** for their Golden Globe-nominated performances. **Donald Sutherland** has two nominations for his work in *Human Trafficking* and *Commander in Chief*. Canadian director **David Cronenberg's** film *A History of Violence* is nominated for Best Picture.

**Michael Riley**,  
*This is Wonderland.*



Courtesy: ACTT

**Cara Pifko**  
*This is Wonderland.*



Courtesy: ACTT

**Kristin Booth**,  
*ReGenesis*



Courtesy: ACTT

# Gemini Awards

# applause

**Steve Smith** was the 2005 recipient of the prestigious Earle Grey Award. Steve was recognized for his outstanding body of work and his significant contribution to the international profile of Canadian television. This year's Gemini Humanitarian Award was presented to Royal Canadian Air Farce's **Luba Goy**, **Roger Abbott** and **Don Ferguson** for their public service and tremendous contributions to their community.

Congratulations to all of the nominees and winners of the 2005 Gemini Awards, especially the following, who were recognized for their outstanding performances:

## Best Performance, Actor in a Leading Role – Dramatic Program or Mini-Series

★ **Brendan Fletcher**, *The Death and Life of Nancy Eaton*  
**Chris Diamantopoulos**, *Behind the Camera: The Unauthorized Story of Mork and Mindy*  
**Jonathan Scarfe**, *Burn: The Robert Wraight Story*  
**Charles Martin Smith**, *The Last Casino*  
**John Simm**, *Sex Traffic*

## Best Performance, Actress in a Leading Role – Dramatic Program or Mini-Series

★ **Kristen Thomson**, *I, Claudia*  
**Tina Keeper**, *Distant Drumming: A North of 60 Mystery*  
**Anamaria Marinca**, *Sex Traffic*  
**Wendy Crewson**, *Sex Traffic*  
**Alisen Down**, *The Life*

## Best Performance, Actor – Continuing Leading Dramatic Role

★ **Michael Riley**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Nicholas Campbell**, *Da Vinci's Inquest*  
**Peter Outerbridge**, *ReGenesis*  
**Jeff Seymour**, *The Eleventh Hour*  
**Ben Bass**, *The Eleventh Hour*

## Best Performance, Actress – Continuing Leading Dramatic Role

★ **Cara Pifko**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Julie Stewart**, *Cold Squad*  
**Tammy Isbell**, *Paradise Falls*  
**Victoria Snow**, *Paradise Falls*  
**Waneta Storms**, *The Eleventh Hour*

## Best Ensemble Performance – Comedy Program or Series

★ **John Paul Tremblay**, **Cory Bowles**, **Lucy Decoutere**, **Barrie Dunn**, **Sarah Dunsworth**, **John Dunsworth**, **Jeanna Harrison-Steinhart**, **Michael Jackson**, **Garry James**, **Tyrone Parsons**, **Pat Roach**, **Mike Smith**, **Shelley Thompson**, **Jonathan Torrens**, **Robb Wells**, *Trailer Park Boys*  
**Ron Pardo**, **Bob Bainborough**, **Rick Green**, **Teresa Pavlinek**, **Janet Van de Graaff**, *History Bites*  
**Dan Redican**, **Bruce Hunter**, **Bob Martin**, **James Rankin**, **Gord Robertson**, *Puppets Who Kill*  
**Al Goulem**, **Cas Anvar**, **Paula Boudreau**, **Annie Bovaird**, **Victor Chowdury**, **Louis-Philippe Dandenault**, **Kate Greenhouse**, **Tracey Hoyt**, **Martin Huisman**, **Richard Jutras**, **Dean McDermott**, **Christian Potenza**, **Swikriti Sarkar**, **Ryan Tilson**, *The Tournament*  
**Cathy Jones**, **Gavin Crawford**, **Mark Critch**, **Shaun Majumder**, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*

## Best Performance, Actor – Guest Role Dramatic Series

★ **Henry Czerny**, *The Eleventh Hour*  
**Bernard Behrens**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Shawn Doyle**, *The Eleventh Hour*  
**Luke Kirby**, *The Eleventh Hour*  
**David Cubitt**, *The Eleventh Hour*

## Best Performance, Actress – Guest Role Dramatic Series

★ **Kristin Booth**, *ReGenesis*  
**Diana Pavlovska**, *The Collector*  
**Lolita Davidovich**, *The Eleventh Hour*  
**Fiona Reid**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Dawn Greenhalgh**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Ann Holloway**, *This Is Wonderland*

## Best Performance, Actor –

### Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Program or Mini-Series

★ **Richard Zeppieri**, *Except the Dying*  
**Jean-Pierre Bergeron**, *Prom Queen: The Marc Hall Story*  
**Luke Kirby**, *Sex Traffic*  
**Chris Potter**, *Sex Traffic*  
**Stefan Arngrim**, *The Life*

## Best Performance, Actress –

### Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Program or Mini-Series

★ **Maria Popistasu**, *Sex Traffic*  
**Layla Alizada**, *Chasing Freedom*  
**Alberta Watson**, *Choice: The Henry Morgentaler Story*  
**Martha Henry**, *H2O*  
**Miranda Handford**, *Tripping The Wire: A Stephen Tree Mystery*

## Best Performance, Actor –

### Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Series

★ **Michael Murphy**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Noel Fisher**, *Godiva's*  
**Dmitry Chepovetsky**, *ReGenesis*  
**Tom Rooney**, *This Is Wonderland*  
**Michael Healey**, *This Is Wonderland*

## Best Performance, Actress –

### Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Series

★ **Ellen Page**, *ReGenesis*  
**Sonja Bennett**, *Cold Squad VII*  
**Kate Trotter**, *Paradise Falls 2*  
**Ellen Dubin**, *The Collector*  
**Catherine Fitch**, *This Is Wonderland*

## Best Individual Performance, Comedy Program or Series

★ **Mary Walsh**, *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching*  
**Levi MacDougall**, *Comedy Now!*  
**Irwin Barker**, *Halifax Comedy Festival*  
**Lewis Black**, *Just For Laughs*  
**Colin Fox**, *Puppets Who Kill*

## Best Performance, Childrens' or Youth Program or Series

★ **Ksenia Solo**, *renegadepress.com*  
**Laurence Leboeuf**, *15/Love*  
**Alexz Johnson**, *Instant Star*  
**Tatiana Maslany**, *renegadepress.com*  
**Tasha Pelletier**, *renegadepress.com*  
**Daniel Cook**, *This is Daniel Cook*

★ Indicates award winner



## LORRAINE ANSELL 1956-2005

**L**orraine Ansell, ACTRA Ottawa's president and a driving force in the acting community in this city, died on November 28th, 2005 after a courageous battle with cancer. Lorraine died peacefully in the arms of her husband and life partner **Josef**, secure in the love of her family and her many friends. On their behalf, I would like to thank all of you from branches across the country who have sent condolences and best wishes.

Actor, union activist, wife, colleague, stepmother, writer, sister, outdoors enthusiast, daughter, mentor, aunt, confidante, friend. These are some of the roles Lorraine took on in her all-too-brief time with us. These various titles she wore so well represent the 'what' of her life, but mere titles alone cannot capture the 'how' of Lorraine. She infused these disparate roles with her bright and effervescent spirit, her kindness, her fierce commitment, her joie de vivre and her incandescent inner light, weaving her spell over all who knew and loved her. I consider myself enriched in numbering myself among them. Lorraine was my friend and my colleague, and I miss her achingly.

*"She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time  
for such a word."*

– Barry Blake,  
National Councillor, ACTRA Ottawa

## LLOYD BOCHNER 1924-2005

**W**hen I received the news of **Lloyd's** passing in New York a couple weeks ago, I couldn't stop thinking about the 59 years of friendship that we had and how treasured those years were. I felt sad that I hadn't had a chance to say goodbye to him. I knew that Lloyd had been ill the last several years, but I was not prepared for this final act.

If I had had a chance to see and talk to him in the last couple of months, I would have reminisced about the moments we shared together – and we had some great moments. When I arrived in Toronto in 1946, fresh out of college, looking for work, I met my future wife **Marilyn**; and at that time she was an actress on CBC and Lloyd was an actor on the network. They had shot an industrial film for the Canadian Banking industry called *The Maple Leaf Story*. I was greatly amused by the film – there was my future wife, and there was the handsome young Lloyd Bochner.

As the years went by, and both of us married our lovely wives, we became socially friendly and that continued until 1956 when Lloyd and I both left for New York. I to do a daytime NBC television show and Lloyd to star on Broadway with Eva Gabor. We decided to share an apartment together. I wouldn't say that we were exactly 'the odd couple' since our paths didn't cross until after the theater closed. He would come back to the apartment after 11 p.m. and I'd have some coffee and Danish ready for him, and we would discuss what happened during the day to each of us. And then we'd sit down and play gin rummy. There was one rule in our game – that we had to speak Yiddish.



Now Lloyd and I each had a smattering of the language, but I wouldn't say that either one of us was a Yiddish linguist. So after we ran out of the usual words and phrases that we knew, we would start inventing things. It got to be hysterical, and we'd laugh ourselves sick.

Shortly thereafter, Lloyd's play closed and he went back to Toronto. I stayed on in New York, and a few years later we met again when we both moved to L.A. In the years that transpired after that, we became socially friendly and went into a few business deals together. In our business transactions, Lloyd was very methodical in doing his research, and any time we had something to discuss, he would do the research and call me and tell me what he thought we should do – and I always agreed with him.

If I'd had a chance to talk to him, I would have told him that he was a wonderful actor – a great friend – and one of the finest gentlemen I ever met. These are things I would have said to him. I will – next time we meet.

– Monty Hall

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

**Rob Bedard**  
**Long John Baldry**  
**Paul Jamieson**

**Tom Furlong**  
**Buck Hamilton**  
**Al Holt**

**Gonzalo Canton**  
**Nino Caratozzolo**  
**Janet Craig**

**Bob Dawson**  
**Claude De Martino**  
**Walter Marsh**

## Maritimes

### Taking the pulse of the Maritimes

Last summer, ACTRA Maritimes' member **Shauna Jones** offered to undertake a business survey of our branch as part of her studies at Dalhousie University. Since our Council had been discussing creating just such a survey, her offer was accepted gratefully! Together, we developed an on-line survey to collect member feedback on a number of issues. Almost one-third of our membership responded and the results were very enlightening.

- 56% said they had less than 10 auditions in the past three years, 27% read for roles between 11 and 20 times during the same period, while the remainder had more than 20 auditions during the past two years.
- 57% reported that these auditions led to less than 10 engagements in three years, 22% had more than 11 and a fortunate 1% had over 30 gigs.
- 40% of the engagements were Background, 29% were Principal roles and 20% were Actor engagements.
- 58% of the respondents have agents, while the rest were self-represented
- 88% were 'satisfied or completely satisfied' with the services provided by ACTRA Maritimes. Only 7% expressed 'dissatisfaction or complete dissatisfaction', with the remainder professing no opinion. In terms of what needed to be improved, 'equitable regional casting' topped the list, with 'training' a close second.
- Members indicated that enforcing pay scales and ensuring safe and fair sets were tied as the most important tasks for our branch, with 'providing communication and information' coming closely behind.

When asked "What does your ACTRA membership mean to you?" the responses were varied. Here is a sampling:

*"Everything. It's a part of me."*

*"I am grateful that it stands behind the members 100%. It makes me feel safe to step on set knowing that my morals and dignity are being protected. And being in a small community,*

*the ACTRA council know you as a name, not a number, so there is a comfort level to talk to them about any concerns. I like that!"*

*"Inflexibility."*

*"It means a great deal to me. I just wish it meant a little more to the people who hire you as a day player. I wish being a full member here was looked at as being equal to that of a full member in Toronto, etc. I'd like to think that I get jobs here because I have some talent – not just because I am satisfying some tax credit. I'd like to know others think that, too."*

*"It doesn't make life any easier, and at times can cost more than what one can gain. I believe ACTRA to be one of the biggest barriers in a young performer's career."*

*"A reliable and knowledgeable group of people in the Maritimes branch office that are there to ensure my working experience is safe and has*



**Shauna Jones**

*integrity. Most importantly, this branch makes me feel valued and respected, no matter how much or how little I work in the jurisdiction."*

This is just a sampling of the tremendous outpouring of thoughts and information captured by our survey – much of which will take weeks for us to fully digest. Thanks to Shauna Jones and her team for making the survey possible.

– Gary Vermeir  
Branch Rep, ACTRA Maritimes



**Rob LaBelle, Paul Bartlett (Reel West) and Dax Belanger** have some Snowman Fund fun.

### UBCP Snowman Fund

The UBCP/ACTRA presented the 2nd annual *UBCP Snowman Fund* at the 2005 Whistler Film Festival, in support of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of B.C. and Yukon. UBCP launched the event last year when one of their Board Members suffered a heart attack. The efforts is UBCP's way of demonstrating their gratefulness for his recovery and the care he received, and to give back

in a small way by helping others to avoid or overcome similar problems. Last year, the UBCP was pleased to present a cheque the Heart & Stroke Foundation with a \$3,500 cheque. This year, a snowman-building contest was set to take place in Whistler Village, with the support of the Whistler Film Festival, with a goal of raising \$10,000.00.

## Newfoundland

### Newfoundland stars shine on artists in need

Last year, our arts community suffered several tragedies and the need for an emergency fund that could respond to urgent requests was painfully clear. As part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations, ACTRA Newfoundland decided to establish one.

Our event in October, *Stars Shine on the Artists Emergency Fund*, featured actors, singers and dancers, namely ACTRA members **Andy Jones, Cathy Jones, Amy House, Berni Stapleton** and **Pete Soucy**, singer/songwriters **Pamela Morgan, Sean Panting, Colleen Power** and *The Dzolali Drum and Dance Ensemble*. Visual artists contributed works for the silent auction along with many of our community and corporate friends. Branch councillors **Mack Furlong, Lisa Hurd, Kevin Lewis** and I hosted for the evening.

In all, over \$14,000 was raised that night. "It was a blast! We had some of our best talent here committed to helping other artists," said Pete Soucy. We were also delighted to announce a contribution from ACTRA Fraternal towards the fund. And the audience, many of whom came simply to support the cause, left elated from an incredible night of entertainment. "Cathy Jones was the best I'd ever seen her. Bar none," said one happy patron.

The Artists Emergency Fund, founded by ACTRA Newfoundland and administered by the Newfoundland & Labrador Arts Council, will be open to all artists and cultural workers facing catastrophic circumstances. At the event, the Music Industry Association of Newfoundland & Labrador was handed the baton by our President Amy House to host the 2006 fundraiser and we already have a commitment from the film & dance community to host in 2007. We're so elated – we're seeing stars!

– Ruth Lawrence

ACTRA National Councillor, ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador



ACTRA Newfoundland President **Amy House** with fellow benefit performers, **Andy Jones** and **Pete Soucy**.

## Montreal



**David Acer**, host of the ACTRA Shorts Festival.

On November 5, ACTRA Montreal rolled its ACTRA *Shorts* screening, AGM and awards ceremony into one fun-filled, informative day at the Delta Hotel. The shorts screening was hosted by comedian, magician and Gemini-nominated star of *Mystery Hunters*, **David Acer**, and revealed a genre eclecticism that hadn't been as evident in previous years. Dramas, documentaries, music videos, experimental films and comedies were all on display, with **Robert Higden's** hilarious *6 of 1* taking the audience favourite award.

Many members stuck around for the late-afternoon AGM even though the production front hasn't been as rosy as everyone had hoped it would be. Still, what local producers have been putting out there has been getting recognized; Montreal members were well represented in a long list of recent Gemini nominations. There were some comprehensive presentations on low-budget projects and burgeoning employment opportunities in video games. At the meeting, the members thanked and congratulated outgoing National President (and local Vice-President) **Thor Bishopric** and welcomed his successor, **Richard Hardacre**.

The awards ceremony that evening was a glamorous, well-attended affair punctuated by memorable highlights and poignant moments. Members, staff and industry guests wined, dined and danced in a celebratory atmosphere that extended into the wee hours of Sunday morning. Special thanks to **Randy Duniz** for his excellent organizational skills and technical wizardry and to our awards jury who had the difficult task of narrowing down the 15 worthy nominees to only 3 winners. (See p. 17 for more!)

– Matt Holland

President, ACTRA Montreal

# M E M B E R D I S C O U N T S

## Show your card and save your money

All ACTRA and UBCP members (Full, Apprentice and ACTRA Extras) are entitled to a number of discounts when you show your membership card. For a full list of discounts and details on how to access these deals, pick up a copy of the benefits guide at your ACTRA branch, or download a copy from the 'Members' area at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca). Questions? Contact Christine Webber at [cwebber@actra.ca](mailto:cwebber@actra.ca) or 1-800-387-3516/416-489-1311 x 4005.

**Moksha Yoga** is a unique yoga series combining the precision of therapeutic yoga and the foundations of traditional yoga in a specially heated room. Classes are suitable for all levels of ability. Come and discover a new experience in heated yoga and get **10% off** when you show your membership card at Moksha Yoga Studios in Toronto, London and Montreal. For locations go to [www.mokshayoga.ca/studios](http://www.mokshayoga.ca/studios)

**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).

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

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

**Lush** Get a **25% discount** on professional-quality cosmetics! Just show your membership card at the cash register of any of Lush's 22 locations across Canada. [www.lushcanada.com](http://www.lushcanada.com)

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# ACTRA in L.A.

Los Angeles-based ACTRA members came together on November 15 to talk shop and celebrate one of their own.

First up, a membership meeting at the Bel Age Hotel where members gathered hear what's new at ACTRA. National President **Richard Hardacre**, ACTRA Toronto President **Karl Pruner** and National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell** gave members an update on the upcoming IPA negotiations and solicited their suggestions. Performers were also eager to hear about the production climate back in Canada and were buoyed by news of ACTRA's ongoing political action campaign to expand work opportunities for members.

In the afternoon, members and industry colleagues assembled for 'high tea' at the Residence of the Consul General of Canada, **Alain Dudoit**. While sipping tea and nibbling on cucumber sandwiches, members had a chance to catch up with old friends and make new connections far from home.

The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of the ACTRA Award of Excellence to the ever-gracious **Tonya Lee Williams**. The large crowd packed into the poolside venue to congratulate Tonya was a warm testament to the respect and admiration she attracts from her peers. (Turn to page 16 for more on Tonya).

(Top left): ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre**, **Tonya Lee Williams** and Consul General **Alain Dudoit**.

(Top right): ACTRA member **Lisa Langlois**.

(Middle left): Members **Julie Zwillich** and **Allan Kolman**.

(Middle right): **Tonya Lee Williams** with Y&R co-stars **Peter Bergman** and **Melody Thomas Scott**.

(Bottom): ACTRA members **Heidi Rayden**, **Dylan Ramsey**, **Barbara Eve Harris**, and guest **Ricky Brava**.

Photos by John Sciuilli/Wire Image



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[www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)