



I N T E R

WINTER 2010

# ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



**OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!**

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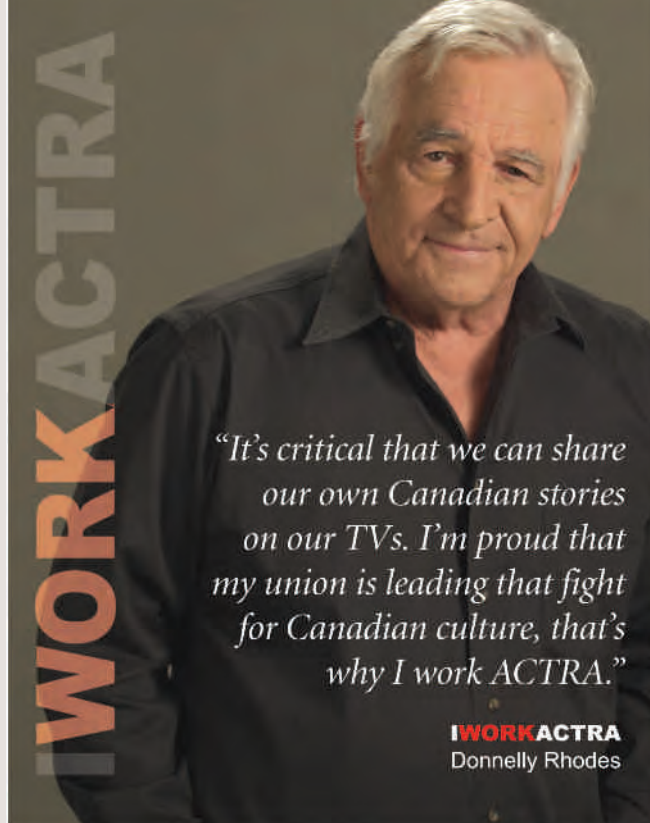
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## Beat the rush and register for ACTRA PRS direct deposit

This year you will be able to deposit ACTRA PRS funds directly into your existing bank or credit union account, or your agent's trust account (if that's what your contract with your agent requires). ACTRA Performers' Rights Society's new direct deposit benefit will allow you to get your money faster, eliminate the risk of lost or stolen cheques and an email will be sent to you as confirmation of the deposit along with the cheque details. Beat the rush and request the Authorization



**Performers' Rights Society**

Form, fill it out, and email it back to [prs@actra.ca](mailto:prs@actra.ca), or fax it to **416-489-1040**.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Judy Land, **416-644-1516** or [jland@actra.ca](mailto:jland@actra.ca).



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COVER PHOTO: ACTRA's Day of Action for Canadian TV programming as the CRTC launches TV hearings on the

future of TV broadcasting on November 16, 2009. Pictured here are Jackson Davies, Tonya Lee Williams, Carlo Rota and James McGowan. Photo by The Canadian Press/Sean Kilpatrick.

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# OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!



**BY FERNE DOWNEY**  
ACTRA National President

**Look at the prime-time schedule of CTV or Global or CityTV any week of the year.** When you colour-code it blue for U.S. and other foreign programming and maple-leaf red for Canadian drama and scripted comedy, the picture speaks a thousand words. Our prime-time airwaves are drowning in a sea of American shows. This is madness.

What other developed country would allow its broadcasting system to be chock-full of so many foreign programs that its own domestically produced dramas are relegated to the back burner? Or worse, Saturday nights in July?

As far as I can tell – just us! We know we live right next door to the biggest cultural exporter in the world. We also know our private broadcasters have become addicted to cross-border shopping in the U.S. In 2008, they spent \$740 million on U.S. programs, but just \$54 million on Canadian English-language

dramas and comedies. While CTV spent 11 times more on U.S. and foreign programs than on Canadian drama, Global spent 19 times more and CityTV spent a whopping 29 times more. This ratio is so out of whack that it defies common sense. Even this past year while broadcasters were crying poor, they spent more than ever on U.S. programming. If Canadian broadcasters are only going to counter-program U.S. shows in prime-time, what do we need them for? We could watch *House* on Fox rather than Global.

We have the right to expect our own stories on our TVs with a wide range of choice that reflects Canadian attitudes, opinions, diversity, ideas, values and creativity. *The Broadcasting Act* says so in clear language. Well, in reality it ain't so. Canadian conventional television has succumbed to being a purveyor of U.S. culture. A country whose people can't tell and share their stories because their media is dominated by another country's stories

Bonnie Leussener



# OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!



Chris Cuthbertson

**ACTRA Maritimes pickets CRTC offices in Dartmouth. (First row L to R:) Josh MacDonald, Francine Deschepper, Marguerite McNeil, Carroll Godsman, Ed Thomason and branch rep Richard Hadley. (Second row L to R:) Grace McDonald, Sherry Smith. (Back row L to R:) Wayne Murdock, John O'Keefe, Don Ritchie, Genevieve Steele, Chris Turner and Lenore Zann, MLA.**

## CHRONOLOGY: ACTRA'S PUBLIC POLICY CAMPAIGN FOR CANADIAN DRAMA

**JUNE 1999** CRTC TV policy lets broadcasters off the hook – a decision that proves to be a disaster for Canada's film and TV industry.

**JUNE 2002** ACTRA's National Policy Conference names crisis in Canadian TV drama one of the union's top priorities.



2002 policy conference: Gordon Pinsent, Chuck Shamata, Nick Mancuso, Shirley Douglas, Sean McCann and Fiona Reid.

**JULY 2002** Paul Gross's speech at ACTRA Toronto members' conference on the death of Canadian TV drama galvanizes members and leads to national media coverage.

**FEBRUARY 2003** Finance Minister John Manley announces \$25 million cut to the Canadian Television Fund (CTF); ACTRA protests his Toronto fundraiser.



2003 Ottawa Lobby Day: Gordon Pinsent, then-Finance Minister Paul Martin and Paul Gross.





**ACTRA front-row-centre on day one of CRTC's TV Policy Hearings on November 16, 2009.**  
 (Front row L to R:) Mark McKinney, Tonya Lee Williams, Zaib Shaikh, Carlo Rota, James McGowan.  
 (Second row L to R:) Nicholas Campbell, R.H. Thomson, Ferne Downey, Tyrone Benskin, Jackson Davies and Charlotte Arnold.

Fred Chartrand

cannot thrive as a country or a people, in my humble opinion.

So how did we get into this mess? We can thank the rules the CRTC put in place the last time it did an overhaul of its TV policy in 1999 – or in this case, lack of rules. The disastrous 1999 *Television Policy* let broadcasters off the hook, allowing them to ditch Canadian drama and any obligation to spend a set percentage of their revenues on Canadian programming. Instead, they were given free rein to meet their minimal Cancon requirements with low-cost reality and magazine-style infotainment shows. So that's exactly what they did. Prior to these changes in 1999, Canadian TV was making a huge breakthrough – we had 12 one-hour dramatic series on the air. A few years later, we were left with two.

The good news is this fall the CRTC once again reviewed its TV broadcasting policy. We've been waiting for this chance to rebuild our industry for 10 long and lean years. If our federal regulator was going to decide the future of our Canadian TV industry, we needed to be there, we needed to be articulate, we needed to be loud and proud and we needed to be heard. In short, we needed to kick up a mighty fuss! And that we did.

**“The CRTC must take the public’s interest to heart and stop giving both private broadcasters and big cable the wide breadth they have enjoyed for so long. We’re the ones that end up paying for this with higher cable bills and less Canadian programming on our airwaves. The fact is both sides need to be doing more.” – Tonya Lee Williams**

## THE ACTION

On November 16, ACTRA's National Day of Action, a dozen of Canada's leading actors sat in the front rows on that opening day of the CRTC's TV policy hearings and bore witness to Chair Konrad von Finckenstein's opening remarks. The day was set to be dominated by two of the big warring titans in the "Local TV matters" vs. "TV tax" showdown. So in between CTV Globemedia



**MAY 2003** Canadian TV stars storm Ottawa for ACTRA's first big Lobby Day on Parliament Hill and get the CTF cuts reversed.

**DECEMBER 2003** CRTC data confirms broadcasters are abandoning Canadian English-language TV drama.

**FEBRUARY 2004** New numbers show broadcasters doubled their profits in 2003 while drama continues to die.

*Blue Murder* and *Cold Squad* – two hit TV dramas – are cancelled.

**MARCH 2004** Finance Minister Ralph Goodale promises CTF funding will be safe for the next two years after ACTRA members inundate the federal government with letters.

**JUNE 2004** The CCAU (ACTRA, WGC, DGC and CEP) release a report urging broadcasters spend 7% of revenues on

Canadian drama and schedule the programs in 'real' prime-time.

**APRIL 2005** ACTRA and USW form strategic alliance to take on cultural issues in Canada and around the world.

**JUNE 2005** Heritage Minister Liza Frulla announces that the CRTC must review 1999 TV Policy at upcoming TV broadcaster licence renewals.



2004: Paul Gross, Rick Mercer, Wendy Crewson and Sonja Smits.



# OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!



Fred Chartrand

## CHRONOLOGY: ACTRA'S PUBLIC POLICY CAMPAIGN FOR CANADIAN DRAMA

**NOVEMBER 2005** ACTRA and USW hold joint lobby in Ottawa meeting with over 90 MPs.

**DECEMBER 2005** During federal election ACTRA demands answers on drama from all political parties. In January 2006, ACTRA puts culture on the election agenda with a star-studded press conference.



2006 election press conference: Gary Farmer and Sonja Smits (Maurice Dean Wint and Fiona Reid).

**FEBRUARY 2006** CRTC 'urges' CTV, Global and CHUM to increase spending on Canadian drama to 6% of gross revenues, but fails to legally oblige them to do it.

**NOVEMBER 2006** ACTRA calls for more drama at CRTC's over-the-air TV review.

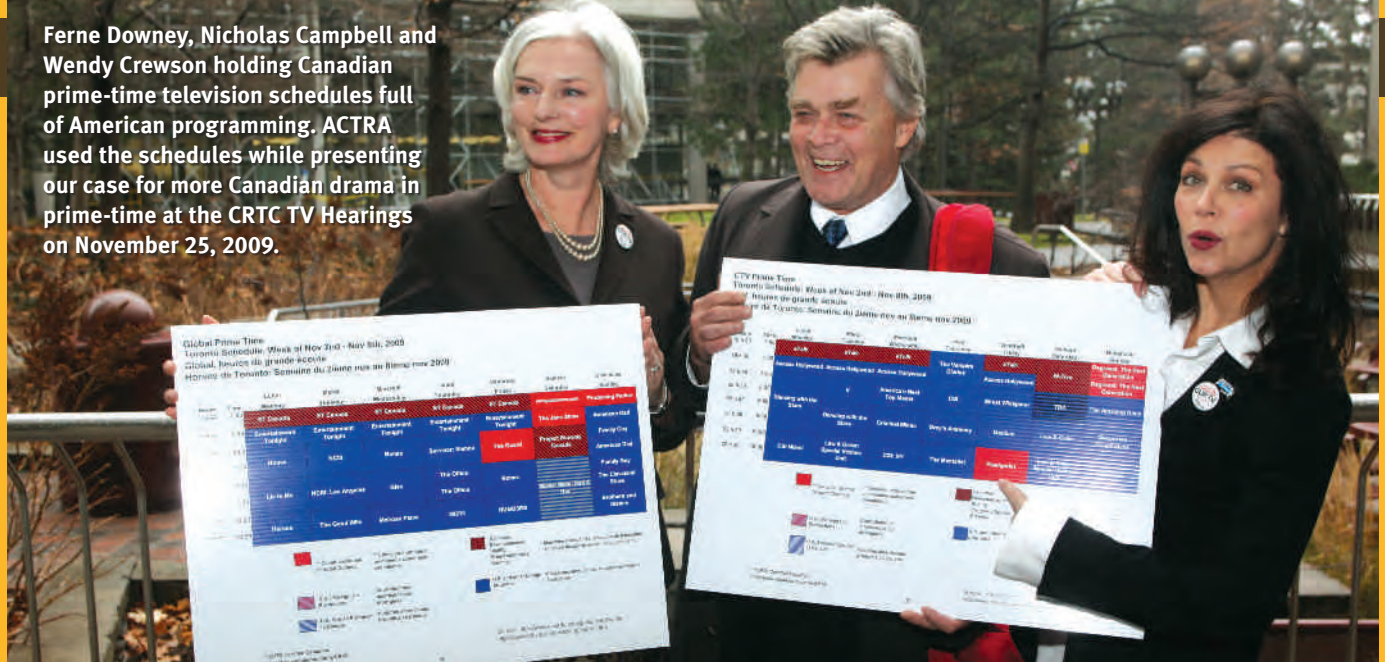
**NOVEMBER 2006** ACTRA holds demo at broadcasters' (CAB) convention in Vancouver shifting media focus to the drama crisis.



2006 Vancouver press conference during CAB: Donnelly Rhodes, Jackson Davies, Joy Coghill and Howard Storey.



Ferne Downey, Nicholas Campbell and Wendy Crewson holding Canadian prime-time television schedules full of American programming. ACTRA used the schedules while presenting our case for more Canadian drama in prime-time at the CRTC TV Hearings on November 25, 2009.



Fred Chantand

and Rogers presentations, we snuck in and stole the spotlight with a press conference, deftly turning the channel to our message.

As actors in Halifax, Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton held events in support of ACTRA's Day of Action, a large contingent of Ottawa-based members welcomed five busloads of highly motivated colleagues from Toronto and Montreal. Together we marched from the National Arts Centre to the steps of Parliament Hill where singer-songwriter and musical genius Gordie Sampson energized the rally, thanks to our friends at the American Federation of Musicians, Canada. The outpouring of passion accelerated as **Tyrone Benskin, Nick Campbell, Jackson Davies, Mark McKinney, James McGowan, Carlo Rota, Zaib Shaikh, R.H. Thomson and Tonya Lee Williams** took the stage lending their hearts and souls to the rally. Three young stars from *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, **Charlotte Arnold, Jamie Johnston and Dalmar Abuzeid** became the centre of our hopefulness and underscored beautifully the opportunity we have here. There is no shortage of talent in this country.

After the thrill of the rally, our work in Ottawa wasn't done.

## WE WANT CONVENTIONAL BROADCASTERS TO **SCHEDULE AT LEAST TWO HOURS OF CANADIAN DRAMA EVERY WEEK IN PRIME-TIME.**

Over the course of two intense days we had 60 meetings with MPs, five Ministers, the chairs of key committees and critics in Heritage, Finance and Industry. We dominated news and talk shows across the country and hosted a 30-MP evening reception which included the Heritage Minister.

The Day of Action was completely thrilling and I am deeply grateful for the commitment of so many engaged ACTRA members who joined us in Ottawa and held events in their own cities across the country.

We returned to the CRTC a week later, this time with stars Nick Campbell, **Wendy Crewson**, and ACTRA's National Executive Director Stephen Waddell and Joanne Deer, our Director of

**APRIL 2007** ACTRA appears at Heritage Committee's hearings on CBC's mandate – MPs agree with ACTRA and urge government to increase CBC support.



2007 Heritage Committee: Raoul Bhaneja and Arlene Duncan.

**JUNE 2007** ACTRA protests lack of Canadian programming at CTV and Global fall schedule launches.

**AUGUST 2007** CTV buys CHUM, Rogers buys CityTV – ACTRA urges the CRTC to set new standards for how much

broadcasters must spend on Canadian programming when ownership changes.

### SEPTEMBER 2007

ACTRA appears at media consolidation hearings calling for more quality CanCon in every medium, timeslot and genre.

**OCTOBER 2007** Speaking at ADISQ Awards Gala in Montreal, then-ACTRA President Richard Hardacre calls on CRTC to return to its cultural priorities and stand up for drama.



2007 Global fall launch: Leesa Levinson.

# OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!



Mark McKinney and Charlotte Arnold.



Tyrone Benskin outside the CRTC TV hearings room.

Fred Chartrand

Policy and Communications, to formally pitch our plan. ACTRA had worked closely with colleagues who share the same goal of a healthy and vibrant Canadian TV industry – the WGC, DGC and the CFTPA – to develop a pitch that would help bring about balance and greater strength for the system as a whole – not just benefit one or two corporate players.

## OUR SOLUTION

In the past, the CRTC has looked at conventional and specialty channels separately. This time they will look at them together under each corporate group, noting that due to consolidation most specialty channels and conventional networks are now owned by the same handful of conglomerates.

This smart move will bring some balance to the system. While conventional broadcasters have had some recent challenges, specialty broadcasters have continued to flourish – and they've done so while meeting high Cancon and spending requirements. The CRTC requires specialty and pay channels contribute a

**“We’ve been waiting 10 years to get the rules fixed. If the CRTC gets it wrong again our airwaves will continue to be dominated by U.S. programming, our industry will be crushed and we will lose yet another generation of actors and writers to L.A.”**

–Mark McKinney

percentage of their revenues to Canadian programming expenditures (CPE) and air a specific amount of hours of Canadian programming (the amounts vary from channel to channel). This system works well so ACTRA has asked the CRTC to apply the same idea to the conventional broadcasters. CTV, Global and other conventional broadcasters had CPEs before they were stripped away in 1999. Let's bring them back.

Next, we need to add in a safety net for drama to make sure that broadcasters don't just blow their CPEs on cheaper reality and newsmagazine shows. ACTRA proposes a special CPE for

## CHRONOLOGY: ACTRA'S PUBLIC POLICY CAMPAIGN FOR CANADIAN DRAMA



Robb Wells at 2007 ACTRA CAB rally in Ottawa.

**NOVEMBER 2007** Broadcasters forced to hire additional security when hundreds of ACTRA members protest Ottawa CAB convention.

**MARCH 2008** CRTC numbers show broadcasters spent \$505 million on U.S. and foreign programs in 2007 – up 5% from 2006.

**APRIL 2008** ACTRA and the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting release poll showing 67% of Canadians trust the CRTC and the federal government to preserve Canadian culture on TV – only 8% trust cable and broadcasters.

**JUNE 2008** ACTRA opposes CRTC recommendation to split the CTF into private and public streams as catering to cable companies.

**JULY 2008** CRTC report shows that while broadcasters' revenues keep increasing, they keep cutting spending on Canadian drama.

**AUGUST 2008** ACTRA condemns federal government's cuts to cultural programs.

**SEPTEMBER 2008** ACTRA puts culture on the election agenda with a press conference and a rally with coalition partners





**Bus-mates Ruth Lawrence and Wendy Anderson.**

Joanna Bennett



**Nicholas Campbell and Art Hindle.**

Janessie Leung

drama for each corporate group, with the conventional broadcasters contributing 6% of their prior year's gross revenues to drama. The amount would float – when times are good and revenues are up, they will have more money to spend on Canadian programming and when revenues decline, their contribution decreases.

Finally, we need to make sure that the dramas are accessible to the widest audiences possible and not just hidden away on niche specialty channels. We want all new Canadian dramatic programming produced by a corporate group to air at least once on the groups' conventional channels where they have the potential to draw large audiences. And we want conventional broadcasters to schedule at least two hours of Canadian drama every week in real prime-time, 8-11 P.M., Sunday-Friday. They have become too used to ticking off their Cancon obligations by airing reruns in the summer and on Saturday nights when no one is watching. That simply cannot go on.

Our industry and our culture are at stake here. The CRTC must get this right and at a minimum, reinstate Canadian programming expenditures and exhibition requirements for drama.

If this doesn't happen, the federal government has signalled that they may take the unusual step of issuing a policy directive to the CRTC. ACTRA is working hard on that front too, lobbying MPs and the Minister of Heritage.

## BLUE SKIES AHEAD?

Blue Skies ahead? Or stormy grey, grey, grey? Let's imagine the blue-sky scenario, because we are poised to make it possible.

I'll tell you a secret – we want broadcasters to make money. Lots and lots of money. And despite their claims to the contrary they can do that making Canadian programming. We have research showing Canadian drama can and does pay its own way, especially with the emergence of large corporate broadcast groups that own conventional and specialty TV channels. Telefilm Canada numbers also show that with the help of smash hits like *Flashpoint* selling around the world, Canadian TV made more than \$85 million in foreign sales in 2008, up 21% from 2007.

This also proves what we've said time and again: give us the

condemning the government's attacks on artists.

**OCTOBER 2008** CRTC sides with ACTRA's position and denies cable and satellite TV industry's calls for sweeping deregulation and denies fee-for-carriage to broadcasters.

**JANUARY 13, 2009** ACTRA urges the government to invest in culture to stimulate the economy at pre-budget consultations.



Colm Feore at 2008 election news conference.

**FEBRUARY 10, 2009** CRTC report shows private broadcasters spent a record \$775 million on foreign programming in 2008, up 7.4% from 2007.

**FEBRUARY 17, 2009** ACTRA tells CRTC to regulate broadcasting in new media to ensure shelf-space for CanCon and suggests ISPs contribute to production funding.

**FEBRUARY 18, 2009** ACTRA meets with Heritage Minister

James Moore on the issue of Canadian programming.

**FEBRUARY 26, 2009** ACTRA makes "video-on-demand" submission to the CRTC urging stronger CanCon and increased contributions by VOD services to production.

**MARCH 9, 2009** Minister Moore announces CTF will be revamped into the Canadian Media Fund bringing funding for TV, digital media and emerging platforms together.



# OUR TV. THE FIGHT OF THE DECADE!



November 16, 2009:  
Day of Action on Parliament Hill.

Fred Chartrand

chance and we'll make top-notch TV that is not only treasured by Canadians, but by audiences around the world.

We need to seize this moment of opportunity so our talent will stay to serve and create shows for a Canadian TV industry that is poised to explode in ambition, reach and profitability. We must stay vigilant, focused and keep building common-cause with like-minded people who want our Canadian broadcasting system to be truly ours. Let the next decade be a marvel. ■

## STAY TUNED IN TO THE TV DRAMA CRISIS:

- 1 make sure we have your up-to-date email address: send it to [national@actra.ca](mailto:national@actra.ca)
- 2 watch your email for **ACTRA e-news**
- 3 visit [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) and follow ACTRA on **Twitter**

## CHRONOLOGY: ACTRA'S PUBLIC POLICY CAMPAIGN FOR CANADIAN DRAMA



2009 CRTC new media hearings: Bruce Dinsmore, Richard Hardacre, Charlotte Arnold and Colin Mochrie.

**MARCH 26, 2009**  
Numbers show specialty, pay and VOD services are not only making healthy profits, but they are also investing heavily in Canadian programming.

**APRIL 6, 2009**  
ACTRA asks the CRTC to deny OLN's request to allow it to air more drama – but

dump all requirements to air Canadian drama. CRTC listens.

**APRIL 27, 2009** ACTRA appears at broadcaster licence renewal hearings to ask CRTC to deny calls for deregulation.

**MAY 7, 2009** ACTRA, CFTPA, DGC and WGC release Nordicity study debunking myth that Canadian drama is a money-loser.

**MAY 13, 2009** ACTRA urges Heritage Committee not to fall for broadcasters' pleas for deregulation and to show leadership and present a modern vision for Canadian broadcasting.

**MAY 15, 2009**  
CRTC signals more spending on CanCon, announcing it will look into reinstating programming expenditures for Canadian broadcasters in the fall.



2009 CRTC TV hearings: R.H. Thomson, Julie Stewart and Richard Hardacre.



# Where's 'Our TV' in the 'TV Tax' vs 'Save Local TV' showdown?

## Yeah, what's up with that?

Invariably, that's the question I'm asked whenever the slap-fest between Canada's big broadcasters and bigger cable companies comes up in casual conversation. Most folks are confused by the 'Save Local TV' vs. 'Stop TV taxes' campaigns between the conventional television networks, and the cable and satellite conglomerates. With all the money they're spending on competing TV commercials, and full-page ads in the *Globe* and *National Post*, you'd think they owned the TV stations and newspapers. Wait... they do!

And, what's it all about? Money of course. The broadcasters want the cable companies to pay them for the right to deliver their signals into your homes in cable packages. The line is, if they don't get this money they will have to shut down local TV stations. And so to raise the profile and gain public support for their campaign for more money from the BDU's, the broadcasters implemented the 'Save Local TV' campaign.

They have asked the CRTC for this 'fee for carriage' twice before; and twice before the CRTC has denied them. Why? Because everyone and the CRTC knows that the broadcasters won't invest all of the money into local news or other Canadian programming, they will just spend it blowing their brains out on buying even more of the U.S. shows that dominate our prime-time schedules.

On the other side of this unseemly tussle, the cable/satellite giants refuse to pay the broadcasters any new fees which they've dubbed for PR purposes a 'TV tax.' The cable bullies are threatening consumers with downloading this fake 'TV tax' to us if the CRTC grants 'fee for carriage' to the networks.

And what's ACTRA's position on all of this? Our view is they're BOTH wrong. While they're arguing about which one of them is more hard done by, regular Canadians are

by **Stephen Waddell,**  
National Executive Director

suffering because we're paying more and getting less. Since cable rates were deregulated in 2002, cable and satellite companies can charge consumers as much as they want to – and they do.

Rogers has increased its basic cable rates an average of 85% while Shaw customers are paying 68% more. The result was \$2.1 billion in profits last year. We think that they can well afford to make a significant financial contribution to support Canadian programming.

I for one – haven't been paying the cable companies' phoney 'TV tax.' I sent them a letter telling them to pay for it themselves and I've urged others to do the same. In the face of their record profits – they can well afford it.

The broadcasters for their part have failed to live up to the principles of the *Broadcasting Act* which mandates that they must "contribute in an appropriate manner to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming" and "make maximum use, and in no case less than predominant use, of Canadian creative and other resources in the creation and presentation of programming." A glance at CTV and Global's prime-time schedules shows that we are very far from that reality. It's time to make broadcasters give us what we are entitled to – the opportunity to see our own Canadian programming, especially drama, in prime-time.

Canadians are also entitled to fair cable rates – if cable companies won't give them to us, maybe it's time to re-regulate them.

In any case, it's time to end the free ride for cable and broadcasters. We must fight for what is right, for what is ours, and take back 'Our TV.'

Have your say! Go to [www.ourtv.ca](http://www.ourtv.ca). ■



Photo by Guy Butler

**JUNE 3, 2009** ACTRA denounces broadcasters' fall skeds – out of a possible 112 prime-time hours CTV, Global, CITY and A Channel are making room for just 6½ hours of new Canadian drama a week. A 17 to 1 ratio.

**JUNE 4, 2009** CRTC rejects calls to regulate broadcasting in new media, throws question of ISP levy to Federal Court.

**JUNE 19, 2009** Heritage Committee report on local TV calls for increased funding for local programming and the CBC, reaffirms maintaining CanCon and calls on CRTC to look into broadcasters' excessive spending on U.S. TV.

**OCTOBER 8, 2009** With CRTC policy review on the horizon, broadcasters and big cable hijack public's attention to their squabble over "fee-for-carriage." ACTRA launches "Our

TV" campaign to put Canadian drama at the forefront.

**NOVEMBER 16, 2009** ACTRA marks start of CRTC TV policy review with National Day of Action including star-studded press conference, rally on Parliament Hill, two days of lobbying MPs and actions in branches across the country.

**NOVEMBER 25, 2009** ACTRA makes the case for drama at the CRTC TV policy hearings.



Ferne Downey and AFM's Gordie Sampson at November 2009 rally.

**DECEMBER 9, 2009** ACTRA appears at CRTC "fee-for-carriage" hearings and calls for re-regulation of cable rates.



# Becoming an activist

Three stars of *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, **Dalmar Abuzeid**, **Charlotte Arnold** and **Jamie Johnston**, joined fellow performers on Parliament Hill November 16 to march en masse for ACTRA's Day of Action for Canadian Programming. Fellow ACTRA member and marcher **Joanna Bennett** caught up with them on-line to get their take on ACTRA's rabble-rousing.



Dalmar, Jamie and Charlotte speaking to the media.

Joanna Bennett

**Joanna Bennett:** Let's first allow our members to catch up with what's new in your lives. What are you up to these days?

**Jamie Johnston:** Well, Dalmar and I are in a super-awesome band so we practice quite often and I've also been auditioning.

**Dalmar Abuzeid:** No filming for me at the moment, so it's all band stuff. Jamie, myself and three others from *Degrassi*, and one who isn't an actor, have formed the band Soundspeed!

**Charlotte Arnold:** I'm in 3rd year journalism at Ryerson and doing some auditioning too.

**JB:** Well, for such busy people, it's great the three of you joined us on Parliament Hill to bring ACTRA's message to the CRTC. From your

perspective, what's the big deal about having Canadian programs on our airwaves?

**DA:** The big deal is that there are barely any Canadian shows on Canadian channels.

**JJ:** Besides being good for the economy, it's good for Canadians to have an identity and be influenced by Canadian stories.

**CA:** I just don't think that Canadian stories are given a chance and how can you create a cultural identity without that?

**DA:** I grew up watching mostly American shows without even being aware.

**JB:** So if the CRTC gets their act together, perhaps the next wave of kids will become more aware

of their country and the stories within it?

**DA:** That would be great. If anything they would be able to distinguish between American and Canadian shows earlier than I could.

**JJ:** Yeah, I really hope people start watching Canadian shows – and I hope they do it because they want to! We have a few really great shows right now and we simply need to keep our talented actors and crew working with us here in Canada.

**CA:** We don't have to be seen as inferior to the States in terms of TV. Kids need to see the range of talented people work here in our own country.





# actor

We need  
more Canada  
on Canadian  
**TV!**



“ Besides being good for the economy, it’s good for Canadians to have an identity and be influenced by Canadian stories. ”

— **Jamie Johnston**



# Becoming an activist actor

Below: MP meeting with ACTRA National President Ferne Downey, Liberal MP Justin Trudeau and Jamie Johnston.



**JB:** Your comment, Jamie, about the economy is sound, yet when it comes to culture, do you think citizens care? If we saw ourselves on TV and film more, would that make a difference?

**CA:** I like American TV a lot but I really think there's something special and unique about Canadian TV. *Corner Gas* couldn't have been made in the States, and I love it for that.

**DA:** Canadians have demonstrated their support for home-grown shows like *Corner Gas* and *Flashpoint*.

**JJ:** I think it would make a difference, seeing our stories on TV because we can actually relate! So many people relate to *Corner Gas* because there are so many small towns with tight-knit communities similar to that... and *Little Mosque* – there are so many Middle-Eastern people who can relate. As Canadians we all have friends from other cultures, and it's great that we represent that in our shows.

**CA:** I was just going to add that even *Degrassi* could pass for an American show story-wise because teens go through similar things everywhere. But as a Torontonian you're seeing familiar faces and places, you can relate on a different level.

**DA:** Seeing more Canadian TV reinforces our sense of identity, so that we know we're not just a slightly altered reflection of the U.S.

**JB:** We also obviously have great actors, crew, writers etc... you three and your show case in point! Would you prefer to keep working in Canada if the opportunities continue to be here for you?

**DA:** I love to travel, but it's hard to say that I'd want to live anywhere else but here. So if opportunities are here, then I'll go for them.

**JJ:** I love Canada, and when I travel to the States I enjoy it, but anywhere in Canada I feel at home. California is one of the coolest places on earth but the attitude there is ALL business and I'm just not that kind of guy.

**CA:** Unless I was moving for a specific job, I would have a really difficult time living and pursuing work in L.A. Canada is preferable in soooo many ways.

**JB:** A connected thought – is there an expectation that an actor must go to the

states to become “successful”? If so, why is that?

**DA:** I'd say so because sure there's more competition in the States, but so too are the opportunities.

**JJ:** An actor usually does have to go to the States to be successful because there is sooo much more money there.

**CA:** I guess it depends on how you define success. Like **Sarah Polley** is obviously hugely successful but she isn't necessarily a household name. We don't have that same star system.

“ We don't have to be seen as inferior to the States in terms of TV. Kids need to see the range of talented people work here in our own country. ”

— **Charlotte Arnold**

**DA:** I grew up with that expectation in mind, right when I was starting out. Just thought that was how things were.

**CA:** Me too, Dalmar. People have been asking me when I was moving to L.A. since I was little.

**JB:** Let's go back to lobbying in Ottawa. I'm sure you're all used to cameras and interviews, but you were standing on the steps of the Parliament buildings in our nation's capital, hundreds of ACTRA flags waving in the breeze, members shouting and cheering, and you shared the microphone with other passionate performers such as **Nicholas Campbell, Tonya Lee Williams, and Carlo Rota**. How did that make you feel?

**DA:** Not alone AND empowered with knowledge.

**JJ:** It was cool to all be on the same side. It made me feel like I was a part of something really good and in some way it gave ACTRA and actors a face... if that makes sense.

**CA:** I felt like such a radical. Haha! That was my first ACTRA march and with the drum going and the chanting – it was pretty exciting. I was in awe of how well-spoken all of the other actors were who stepped up to the mic.



**JB:** Jamie, you were grinning through your time at the mic, it looked like you were getting a kick out of it!

**JJ:** Ya, I felt like everyone was paying attention to me and I didn't have anything nearly as smart to say as everyone else did. I had a list of things to say but I forgot everything.

**DA:** You didn't forget everything, it was a true message.

**JJ:** From the heart dude!

**JB:** When **R.H. Thomson** was at the mic he called you the next generation and warned you to get ready for a long fight. What did you think of that?

**DA:** Sounds like work to be prepared for wrapped in a compliment.

**CA:** Yeah no pressure! It felt really great to be included as a part of that group and then to sort of have the torch passed was nice. It's a responsibility that all of us share if we want to keep working in Canada so that trip was another opportunity to learn from the pros and get better equipped to carry on the good fight.

**JB:** The following day you were paired with seasoned performers and activists and headed to the offices of various MPs, people whose job it is to decide the fate of this country. Was that challenging? Did they listen?

**JJ:** Thankfully I was with our National President **Ferne Downey**, so she had the majority of our points covered. But it was kind of nerve-wracking, Members of Parliament, top-notch lawyers... and me with dirty hair, jeans and whatnot...

**CA:** Well I was paired with Toronto President **Heather Allin** and we met with MPs who





Dalmar speaking at 'Our TV' rally on the Hill.

were sympathetic to the cause, so that took some of the pressure off. But I felt a little like Jamie too, sort of like “how did I get here?”

**JJ:** They listened to Ferne, and at least pretended to give a hoot about what I had to say, but I could tell that all they wanted to know about was the money.

**DA:** I was paired with **Karl Pruner**. I was nervous, but it turned out to be an amazing learning curve. We visited four MPs, who were all receptive to varying degrees, but nonetheless listened to what we had to say. I got to talk from my personal experience with *Degrassi* as evidence to the facts we were stating.

**CA:** In the end I was really proud to say I've done some lobbying now, and if there's a next time, I'll have a better idea of what to expect.

**JB:** Well, we are all on various points of that learning curve but we are never alone in these efforts so that's the beauty of it all. But remember, as working actors, there are no better experts with that kind of experience! What you contribute is VERY valuable.

**CA:** When politicians make certain comments about arts and culture not being valuable, it's maddening. This sort of thing makes me feel like I'm doing something to change those attitudes.

**JB:** You talked about other issues with the MPs too, stable funding for things like the CBC and the CME, tax averaging for artists and access to EI for the self-employed. How could these things affect you personally?

**DA:** More job opportunities. Living alone as an actor becomes a little easier with the benefits of insurance.

“ I was nervous, but it turned out to be an amazing learning curve. We visited four MPs... I got to talk from my personal experience with *Degrassi* as evidence to the facts we were stating. ”

— **Dalmar Abuzeid**

**CA:** Well if I continue to work as an actor as an adult, tax averaging and insurance are things that will affect how I live between jobs so that instead of being a “starving artist,” I might have some stability.

**DA:** In some cases the need for a part-time job becomes eliminated, so less stress!

**CA:** And even though I'm not supporting a family on my income right now I have plenty of friends who are and I want to see them benefit from that security.

**JJ:** Well we need stable funding so that we can have shows for more than one season. We need tax averaging because for artists, we may make a substantial amount of money one year, and nothing for years after.

**JB:** All your answers are pretty tight! I'm amazed that you all have a sense of how turbulent this business can be!

**JJ:** We've all lived through the winter – cold and dry.

**CA:** Drama queen.

**JB:** So that leads me to ask, growing up in the biz with adults handling your careers, have you always understood what your ACTRA union membership does for you?

**JJ:** We really take it for granted, and honestly very few people know what the hell is going on. You guys (and now I guess it's us guys) work hard to make it better for

actors. ACTRA saves us money when we are under 18, and makes sure we get treated and paid fairly.

**CA:** Yeah I started when I was four and my mom basically handled everything until I was much older. I think most child actors know they're being protected, but not the details.

**JB:** As a result of your experience with ACTRA lobbying, what message about our industry do you have for other actors your age? Or any age for that matter...

**DA:** If you're interested in the future of the Canadian entertainment industry, there are steps that can be taken right now to ensure that future.

**CA:** Just that if you're serious about this crazy line of work then it's probably a good idea to get involved with the future of the industry.

**JJ:** Fellow actors – rock on. Also, ACTRA works hard for you, be thankful. Believe in yourself and ourselves as a country. Give Canadian shows a chance... and if you have questions, call, or drop in to ACTRA.

**JB:** So... would you rally for more Canadian TV again some day?

**JJ:** Yeah, and I'll convince some other actor-friends to join the effort.

**DA:** Ditto!

**CA:** We do have a massive cast!

**JB:** Thanks so much for chatting with me online!

**DA:** Thanks Joanna!!

**CA:** Thanks Joanna, 'twas a good chat!

**JJ:** Cool, see ya later.

**JB:** Signing off. ■



# ARTS MATTER



**I live and work in B.C., and so am** influenced by what goes on in my home province more than anywhere else. As a cultural supporter and worker, I question why the economic value of arts and culture is unappreciated. I question why our actual worth as artists is under attack by our provincial and federal governments.

During the last federal election, ACTRA Maritimes Vice-President Sherry Smith spearheaded the Rally for the Arts by speaking to a simple truth: "Art is as essential to our lives as breathing." Here's part of her speech:

*"I would like you to imagine for a moment a life without the arts. Start removing your television, your CD collection, the books on your bookshelf, the art on your walls... If you have children perhaps you will have to remove the instruments they are learning to play, remove the craft supplies... the games, puppet theatres, dress-up clothes, the ballet slippers. Then look at your community – remove the gathering places for art activities, the movie theatres, the libraries, the stadiums, the art galleries, the concert halls, the theatres. Let's also remove the clothing stores, the jewellery shops, the restaurants, the pubs, the clubs, the book stores, the karaoke nights. And if we look around this gathering place, let's erase the architecture. The murals. The monuments. Remove all the programs for future artists. What colour is your world now? Art is as essential to our lives as breathing. It surrounds each and every one of us and we all participate."*

Most governments are actually investing money in arts and culture during this economic downturn, with the most notable exception of Gordon Campbell and the B.C. Liberals. Their recent deep cuts and unscrupulously mean-spirited behaviour is all in the name of one of the largest cultural events, the Olympics. They're taking money from the everyday arts, cultural and sporting programs to throw a three-week party for their elitist IOC club and associates. I'm all for supporting athletes, but oppose tearing out the heart of our arts and cultural community for a three-week event. Shame on them!

Yet thankfully our strong B.C. arts community has fought back. A recent

B.C. Arts Council report confirms the province's strong cultural base, with the over 25,000 working artists in the province comprising 1.08 percent of the population. That's the largest percentage of working artists in any province's labour force.

As for the federal Conservative government, they're recent converts to understanding the bang-for-buck in the

Our arts and cultural sector is not only sustainable, it is an economic driver that is so important to support. I am perplexed to observe that our government has ignored an industry that contributes \$85 billion and over 1 million jobs to the Canadian economy. It just makes sense to invest in arts and culture as studies show that for every dollar of initial expenditure,

value-added industries," the provincial government's arts cuts continue unabated.

A vibrant arts and culture community plays a key role in spurring sustainable and vibrant communities, where we can take advantage of the myriad networks that will move Canada's economy forward. In doing so, all levels of government must take into consideration how to shape our economy.

# B.C. SLASHES ARTS BUDGET BY 90% ARTISTS FIGHT BACK

by D. Neil Mark

arts sector. But this change of view only occurred *after* a majority government slipped through their fingers in 2008. Remember the Prime Minister's poor judgement when he said, "I think when ordinary working people come home, turn on the TV and see a bunch of people at, you know, a rich gala all subsidized by taxpayers claiming their subsidies aren't high enough, when they know those subsidies have actually gone up – I'm not sure that's something that resonates with ordinary people." Funny, but since then, Mr. Harper has been singing a different tune while playing the piano at a gala event at the National Arts Centre – which itself was originally built with taxpayer's money.

Heritage Minister James Moore has been echoing the Conservatives' mea culpa for the PM's election gaffe with country-wide announcements like last September's commitment of \$467,000 to support the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF). At the press conference Moore said, "There's a strong fiscally conservative argument for supporting the arts. This has to be a central component if we're going to deal with economic recovery... Writers create things of social and economic value out of nothing more than their own knowledge and imagination... Infrastructure without the kind of activity that artists provide is culturally and economically soulless."

## OUR CULTURAL INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTES \$85 BILLION, AND OVER 1 MILLION JOBS TO THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

anywhere from \$8 to \$11 is generated in economic spin-offs.

In fact the 1 million jobs in arts and culture is on par with the agricultural, forestry, mining, oil and gas industries *combined*, as the Conference Board of Canada has shown. But most Canadians wouldn't know that considering the short shrift arts and culture gets compared to those heavy-hitting industries.

As B.C. NDP Arts Critic Spencer Herbert says, the forestry industry supplies wood for stages, theatre-goers eat in restaurants, and tourists need hotels to stay in. Today, tourism is the province's fastest-growing economic sector and our arts and cultural industry plays a vital part.

Yet despite B.C. Finance Ministry reports from as recently as September 2009 which state, "in recent years, a more diversified economy has emerged, supported by many non-resource activities such as film, food and tourism, and other

And, that must include artists and the cultural identity we bring to our nation.

Besides all the numbers and statements I've thrown around in this article, it is clear that the "arts and culture" of a nation are just as viable and important as the food grown by farmers, or the goods produced by manufacturers. Artists mirror the heart and soul of a nation – the palette of who and what we are. ■

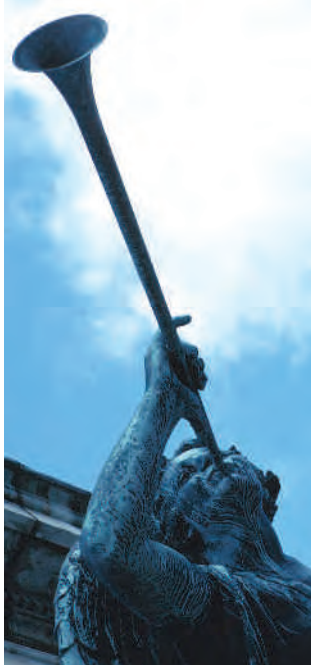
Learn more at  
[www.stopbcartscuts.ca](http://www.stopbcartscuts.ca)



**D. Neil Mark** has been an actor and writer for nearly 20 years. Last fall he was elected to the UBCP Council and joined the *InterACTRA* editorial committee shortly

after. In August 2002, he rode his bicycle from Vancouver to Toronto to raise funds for two charities and check out the ACTRA offices along the way. D. Neil is one proud Artist.





# BLOWING YOUR OWN HORN!

STOP FLYING UNDER THE RADAR. PROMOTE YOURSELF.

Shannon Jardine on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival premiere of *Surveillance*, directed by Jennifer Lynch.



Terry Malukowsky

## BY SHANNON JARDINE

**I am a farm gal from Saskatchewan who learned early**

on to publicize my acting work – otherwise I got into trouble from the locals. Neighbouring farmers and townfolk would get upset with me if I had appeared on television, in a theatre production or a feature film and they had missed it. So I started working with the local newspapers, and radio and television stations in the surrounding areas whenever I had any work coming out.

I took the idea of self-promoting more seriously when I started producing my own work. Most of the actors I know who garner good press coverage for themselves are also creators of their work. The stakes are high when you finance your own projects. If we don't get the word out, we – or whoever helped finance us – are out of pocket!

## TIPS FOR SELF-MARKETING

Promoting and producing her own work over the last 10 years, Newfoundland-based actor **Ruth Lawrence** has put together her own list of media who cover the arts in her area. Says Ruth on her process, "Best thing to do is start with a press release with a short and simple message. Avoid sending it out on Fridays and Mondays, because on Friday no one is looking and on Monday morning they have to sift through all the stuff that came in over the weekend."

Publicity is expensive so actors should first make use of the PR people already available to them, such as the unit publicist already working on the show they are on. Toronto publicist Micol Marotti's advice is to build a relationship with the unit publicist – give them your bio, résumé, let them know where you are from, if you do charity work and any other interesting or unusual activities that you participate in.

**Brent Fidler** is an actor, writer, producer and director who has been based in Winnipeg, Vancouver and Los Angeles. "I feel that no one can promote a person better than that person themselves.

## TIPS ON DEALING WITH MEDIA

"Be passionate on the phone. If you are excited about your project, it is contagious. Write down what you want to say before you call. That way you don't get off topic or ramble. Be concise – less than thirty seconds."

– **Brent Fidler**

"Do something that will get the picture on the front page – that's how you do publicity – otherwise you have to spend a fortune buying the front page."

– **Mary Walsh**

"Prepare for your interview, know your key messages, anticipate questions, never assume anything is 'off the record' and be available for follow-up."

– **Katherine Holmes**

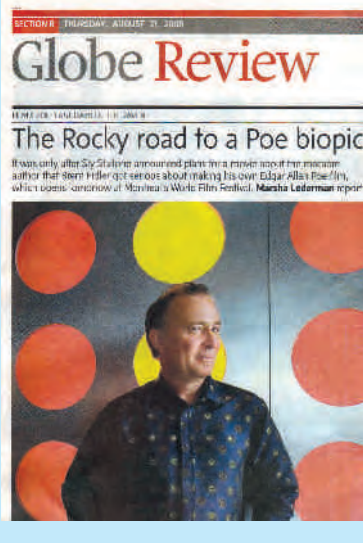
"Nothing is ever off the record. Don't be surprised if you are misquoted. Do not take reviews personally. Members of the media are not your friends and you are not theirs."

– **Carrie Sager**

For an actor like myself who has been doing lead film roles in Canada and Los Angeles since 2006, when you look at the price you pay for a publicist, I feel there's really not much they can do that you can't do yourself. So I would say save your money for headshots."

Brent finds the Canadian media is very approachable by individuals promoting their own projects, so learning the trade of a publicist is something we can do. The internet and email makes sending out a press release with video, a press kit, and photographs easy: "A picture speaks 1,000 words," says Brent. "The media loves photos so one striking image can sell the concept and attract readers. Get permission to use a set still with a very short caption and photo credit and send it out with a press





Brent Fidler at Universal Studios in L.A., accepts the award for Best Feature Film at the 2008 Cinema City International Film Festival for *Poe: Last Days of the Raven*.

Heartland star Shaun Johnston was appointed Stampede Marshall at the 2009 Ponoka Stampede, one of North America's largest professional rodeos that attracts over 70,000 fans to Ponoka, Alberta, annually.



George Brown

release of 200 words or less with BOLD key points. The next step is follow-up – don't wait more than three days to follow-up with a phone call or email, and only one media follow-up call is what I consider to be 'the rule'."

## KNOW YOUR 'PITCH'

Ruth advises that you put a lot of thought into the pitch – first figure out what media outlets work for your particular project and what audiences it may appeal to. You may find connections that are specific, such as a medical, sports or a business connection.

Prior to the world premiere of *Poe: Last Days of the Raven* at the Montreal Film Festival, Brent Fidler, who produced, wrote and played the lead, called a reporter at *The Globe and Mail*. "Something about the story struck a nerve with her and she gave the movie its first national press – a two-page cover spread." There's more... for Poe's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary Brent contacted Ben Knuckle at the *Associated Press*, the media wire service for North America. Ben was already doing an article on Poe and included a mention of Brent's project in his article. The AP story was picked up by 75 newspapers across North America.

## ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF MARKETING YOURSELF

Marketing isn't just limited to press in the media, it also involves you as an actor working hard to create your own work. For example, I try to find out about auditions outside of what is being sent to my agent, I network by getting out to social functions and I take the time for friendly follow-up with people I have worked with. Anything you can do to get on, and stay on, people's radar is a good investment. A prime example of how this can translate into work is when Brent (who had worked with me before) saw me in a short film and at the screening he asked if I could take a lead role in a play he was producing. Attending industry and wrap

"The best publicity you can do for yourself is simply to be someone that people enjoy being around."

– SHAUN JOHNSTON

parties can also get you work. I went to a Vancouver television series wrap party, that I wasn't even part of, and two producers approached me to say they had seen me in a theatre production recently. On the spot they decided that I was perfect for their project, and offered me a role in their film.

"Publicity isn't just sending out information to the media, it is also about getting out there and marketing yourself at events and producing a play or a short film (think of making a short film as a huge business card)," says Brent. "Most actors are unemployed 90% of the time or more so we gotta put a lot out there to try and find that job all the time."

Micol reminds us to also promote ourselves locally, including within your culture and ethnic group. "If you're a UofT graduate, let them know about your stuff. Actors should promote themselves to their friends on Facebook and Twitter. Track down the reporters who are bloggers, who advise people, 'I saw this movie and this actor is amazing'. If audiences can follow that person's blog and Twitter they may trust that information and not view it as a blatant marketing tool. Success on Twitter is not about selling movies, but selling themselves. Followers feel connected to a trusted source."

**Shaun Johnston** is an Alberta actor who is currently a lead on CBC's *Heartland*. He says that the best publicity you can do for yourself is simply to be someone that people enjoy being around. If you're courteous and respectful, you'd be surprised at what kind of impact that can have on your career. Says Shaun, "This approach may not bring overnight celebrity, but for the long haul you want to be in the hearts of others, not just – continued on next page



Marg, Warrior Princess (aka Mary Walsh) dons the breast plate on *This Hour has 22 Minutes* during the 2008 Canadian election. Her and Stephen Harper's kiss was caught on video for thousands to see.



Courtesy of CBC



Jamie Lewis

Ruth Lawrence (centre) with Michelle Winsor and Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Executive Director Reg Winsor, taken at the St. John's International Women's Film Festival.

## BLOWING YOUR OWN HORN!



Mary Walsh

in their minds.”

**Gabrielle Miller** hired her Vancouver publicist, Lesley Diana, when she was playing lead roles on the television series *Corner Gas* and *Robson Arms*. She assisted Gabrielle in getting a website up and running which has since had over 10 million hits. Says Lesley, “It is important that actors have websites and that their publicist works with the web designer. That way a producer or director can go to the website for a quick overview of what they have done. A great tool for the actor.”

## WHEN TO CONSIDER HIRING A PUBLICIST

Toronto-based publicist Carrie Sager suggests that you consider hiring your own publicist when you have multiple things happening at the same time – for example you are shooting a film, another film is about to be released, a tv show is in production, or you have just published a book. If you are just working on one particular project it is best to take advantage of the PR resources that are available from the production side. However, when you have multiple projects on the go, it is a good time to give your profile a push.

Lesley Diana also suggests that you first have a body of work, and not to call a publicist because you just booked your first guest role on a series. You should have a leading, co-star or a recurring role – it needs to be somewhat substantial. Says Lesley, “If you are in a feature film it is best to hire a publicist at least three months before the film comes out as it takes time to gather all the information and magazines need a three-month lead time, four is probably even better.”

Toronto publicist Katherine Holmes adds that hiring a publicist could be during the launch period for your feature or TV series: “Let's say an actor has a film that will be playing at the Toronto International Film Festival – that would be a really good time to have a publicist.”

When you are working a lot it can be hard to juggle work, press inquiries and various requests from organizations.

## TIPS ON HIRING AND WORKING WITH A PUBLICIST

“When looking for a publicist, word of mouth is best – ask actors with good visibility who they use. When interviewing publicists ask if they have a strong connection with a variety of media, what's their strategy for social networking, what articles do they have on past actors, a clippings booklet, can they think outside of the box?”

– **Micol Marotti**

“It's important that the publicist you use works with the publicist of the feature film, or the network or the television series just so that you aren't putting something out before they want it put out. It is so important that you work with the professional who understands protocols of how the system works.”

– **Lesley Diana**

“Making sure the unit publicist gives you key messaging about the show that comes from the producers so that you have an understanding as an actor how the show or the feature is being positioned.”

– **Katherine Holmes**

“In Canada I start at about \$650/month and I like to work a minimum of 3 months because then you have time to gather all the information and write the bios, send out the release. I try to stay reasonable because most Canadian actors are not earning what the Americans are, and there are only so many publications and TV shows here.”

– **Lesley Diana**

“It is important to figure out before you hire a publicist what your objectives are... what would you want to see happen? An appearance on *etalk*, *ET Canada*? Have a photo and story in *Toronto Life* magazine? It is important to have actionable objectives that can fuel the publicist's proposal to you on what they could accomplish on your behalf.”

– **Katherine Holmes**





Gabrielle Miller



Gabrielle hit a point in her career where she felt hiring a publicist would be a really good idea for two reasons: she and Lesley worked well together and Lesley was able to handle the requests as they came in. Said Gabrielle, “It was a time in my career where I felt like it was a really good opportunity to talk about the work that I had been doing and for fans to get to know different sides of me.”

**Mary Walsh** is a household name in Canada and only recently hired a personal publicist for the first time: “I hired a publicist because I won the Dave Broadfoot Award for Comic Genius at the Canadian Comedy Awards. I’ve got a couple of things on the go and I thought it would be good to get some publicity around it. Up to now most projects that I have worked on already had a publicity machine in place.”

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A PUBLICIST?

Gabrielle Miller thinks a publicist can be beneficial for work opportunities: “When you have a good press package and are dealing with a network or a producer that isn’t familiar with you, I think your PR stuff can be helpful along with your regular materials like your demo reel, your photo and résumé. Having a publicist can be valuable if there is an event you heard about and are interested in attending. Also, it can give you the ability to put your voice behind the things that really matter to you – various organizations and charities that you work with. I feel grateful when given the opportunity to discuss those things close to my heart.”

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A PUBLICIST

When you reach a point in your career where a publicist can help take you to the next level, actively research who will be the best fit for you. Be very clear with a publicist at the first meeting as to what your expectations are. Make sure you get from them in writing how much they will be charging you and ask them what kind

“Having a publicist can give you the ability to put your voice behind the things that really matter to you.”

– GABRIELLE MILLER

of extra expenses that could include. Just like your agent, your publicist is representing you so make sure you like what they are putting out there about you. That includes expressing up front what you are and are not comfortable with – if you don’t want to be in magazines where you would appear in sexy shots posing nude or scantily clad, make sure your publicist knows that or likewise let them know if you would be happy doing those type of shots.

So if you are wondering when to stop flying under the radar, and start promoting yourself, the time is now. Get to know the unit publicist on the projects you are working on, let the media outlets know when you have projects coming out, get out to all industry-related events, create your own website and produce your own short films. Use the tools that are available to you such as Facebook and Twitter. We need to think creatively to get the media’s interest. There is so much that you can be doing for your own acting career right at this very moment so don’t be afraid to blow your own horn! ■



**Shannon Jardine** recently received her second consecutive nomination for Best Performance by a Female Lead from the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Association. Her film and TV credits include: *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *Surveillance*, *Rust*, *The Englishman’s Boy*, a recurring role on *Rabbit Fall* and eight episodes of *Corner Gas*. Shannon has served on ACTRA Saskatchewan’s Council for four years and has been a National Councillor and a member of the ACTRA National Women’s Committee for one year.



## Gemini Awards: Calgary celebration!

### A glorious night at Stampede Corral by Patrick Creery

On November 14, the Stampede Corral, former home of the Calgary Flames and Stampede Wrestling, was transformed into a star-studded broadcast gala to celebrate the best in English-language Canadian TV when the Gemini awards came to Calgary.

Canadian celebrities walked the red carpet, posed for pictures and spoke to media as they made their way into the event.

Anyone who decries the state of Canadian television need only look at the actors and shows which were nominated to see that, as always, the quality of television produced in this country and the talented performers in these programs is on par with what is produced around the world.

The evening's host, **Ron James**, did a wonderful job with his inimitable sense of humour. Seeing the show live, including all the fun stuff behind-the-scenes, was truly magical. I loved being able to switch between watching the presenters on stage and the teleprompter at the back of the arena, to see what was coming and what the presenters decided to do on the fly. The show was live and it was exciting. We'd be whipped up into applause as we came back from commercial breaks.

Both the pre-ceremony and the after-party events were a thrill. Our Canadian television stars wandered around the room and we could easily meet up with each other.

From my group, it was fun to see who was star-struck by whom and how

we bolstered each other up to go and meet our admired fellow performers. Introductions were made and pictures were taken.

My personal highlights include:

- Saying hi to **George Stroumboulopoulos** and asking him if he had found his Guru drink earlier that day (I'm a closet techno-geek and follow him on Twitter) as well as being able to thank him for his show... a true Canadian late-night talk show with fabulous guests and great interviews.
- Seeing **Mike Smith** in front of me at the bar without his "Bubbles" glasses on, thinking "gee that guy looks familiar" and then seeing **Robb Wells** and **John Paul Tremblay** and putting it all together.
- Watching John Paul being stopped by security as he went in to the ceremony because he wasn't allowed to take his drink in (c'mon... let him take the rye 'n Coke in... don't you know who he is?)
- Getting to talk to **Kenny Hotz** at the after party and telling him that his mother's hummus recipe (which I copied from "Pitch") is the one I use and that everyone raves about.

In light of the current CRTC TV hearings and the battle going on between the networks and the cable providers, I think back to that night of the Geminis: all the great shows nominated, the awards



Erin Karpluk for *Being Erica*, wins Best Performance by an Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role.



Mpho Koaho for *SOUL*, wins Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Series.



Enrico Colantoni for *Flashpoint*, wins Best Performance by an Actor in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role.

given out and the Gemini tributes given to *Corner Gas*, *Trailer Park Boys* and *The Royal Canadian Air Farce*. And when I hear the question asked in the media, "Do Canadians want to watch Canadian television shows?" I say, "You bet they do!"

For complete details on the 2009 Gemini Awards, please visit [www.academy.ca](http://www.academy.ca).



(Front:) Davina Stewart, Jeff Halaby, Howie Miller, branch rep Tina Alford, Patrick Creery, Taisa Dekker, (back:) Dana Andersen, Cory Monteith, Shaun Johnston, John Scott, Aimee Beaudoin.



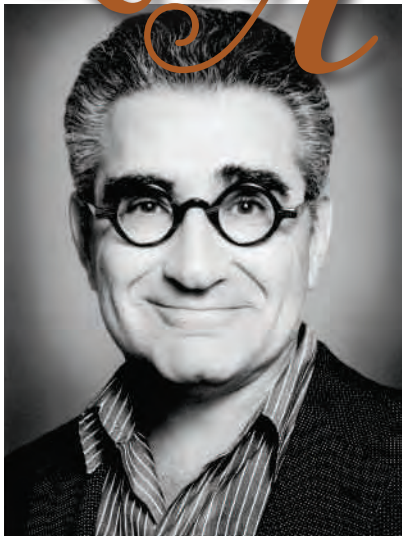
**Patrick Creery** joined the ACTRA Alberta council in June 2009 as Member-at-Large. Patrick has served on the boards of the CPAA (Calgary Professional Arts Alliance), Ground Zero

Theatre and the Alberta Ballet Community Engagement Council. His production company, Red Frog Entertainment, was formed in 2008 and he has produced two short films. He is the driving force behind Cold Read Calgary, a cold-reading series which takes place in Calgary during the summer months.





# Q&A



## Eugene Levy

Recipient of the 2010 ACTRA Award of Excellence in L.A.



**A:** Definitely not. My own sense of comedy was heightened to the nth degree because I was working with these brilliantly talented people. Over the years of doing the show, I was hoping that some of their genius would magically rub off on me. The SCTV cast was the most comedically gifted group of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. And all of them, with the exception of Rick Moranis, I had worked with in the Second City Theatre. I'd have to say it was the Second City organization that provided all of us with the kind of comedy foundation that would only serve to elevate our own personal standards of humour, both as writers and actors.

filmmakers to solicit scripts, and then selecting the top five which ensures you are getting the cream of any and all feature comedy scripts that have been written nationwide was a big initial first step. The Canadian Film Centre, in its wisdom, then brought in the top writers, producers and directors to mentor these top five teams. There will be a strong, concerted effort to get their final drafts financed, and I'm hoping that out of the five, at least a couple will get produced and distributed and maybe, just maybe, Canada's next feature comedy blockbuster will be born. Without going to L.A.

**Q:** It seems Canadians, including yourself, have been the driving force behind some of the top comedic films. There are many theories about what makes us so hilarious. What's yours?

**Q:** You are mentoring the Canadian Film Centre's Telefilm Canada Features Comedy Lab. What do you think of the next generation of Canadian comedy performers? What opportunities are out there for them in Canada... Will they be able to "make it" without going to L.A.?

**A:** I wouldn't expect my theory on why Canadians are so funny to be fully appreciated here in Canada because I don't personally think Canadian people are any funnier than people from any other country with the possible exception of Germany. I can honestly say I've never met a funny German. They are a lovely people, warm and hospitable, but humour is not the thing that keeps their country ticking. I really think one is born funny or not born funny, and if it's not in the genes, it ain't gonna happen no matter how much back bacon or maple syrup is consumed.

**A:** The Features Comedy Lab is probably the most organized approach to enhance Canadian film comedy in the history of Canadian film. Asking the country's budding young

**Q:** What's next for Eugene Levy?

**A:** Answering another question. But fortunately, this seems to be it.

**Q:** What happened at SCTV? There were so many talented performers on that show who are still making us laugh today. Would you be the same actor you are today if you hadn't worked with your SCTV castmates?

Eugene Levy is known to audiences around the world, having starred in more than 40 films and the groundbreaking sketch-comedy TV series SCTV. He has invested considerable time and resources giving back to Canada's film and TV industry, remains a committed and active Second City Alumni and is Chair of Telefilm Canada's Features Comedy Lab. Other honours include numerous Canadian Comedy Awards, the Banff TV Festival's

Sir Peter Ustinov Award, the Gemini's Earle Grey Award, a star on Canada's Walk of Fame and the Governor General's Performing Arts Award. The ACTRA National Award of Excellence recognizes a member's career achievements and contribution to fellow performers and the Canadian industry. Previous recipients include **Sandra Oh, Kiefer Sutherland, Tonya Lee Williams, Lloyd Bochner** and **Leslie Nielsen**.

# APPLAUSE

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## Shirley Douglas receives Crystal Award



Kim Hume

Keep Ontario Cameras Rolling rally at Queen's Park.

Women in Film & Television Toronto (WIFT-T) presented **Shirley Douglas** with the 2009 International Achievement Award on for her significant body of work on stages and screens in Canada and abroad. She has worked with famed directors, such as Stanley Kubrick (*Lolita*) and David Cronenberg (*Dead Ringers*), and has portrayed many strong female roles, including Nellie McClung and the matriarch May Bailey in the CBC's *The Wind At My Back*. She was named an officer of the Order of Canada in 2003 and was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2004. Shirley has been nominated for several Gemini awards and received one for her performance in the television film *Shadowlake*. In her distinguished role as an ambassador for Canadian performers, Shirley Douglas continues to advocate for the rights and respect of performers and the dire need for a Canadian star system in English Canada.

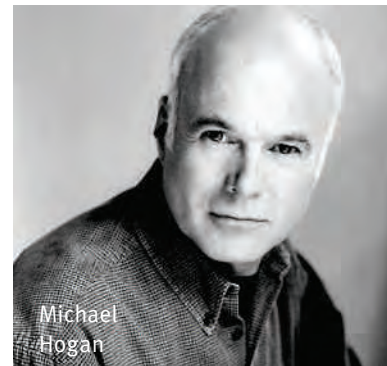
## Canadian Comedy Awards – Beavers presented in Saint John Mary Walsh receives Dave Broadfoot Award

The Princess Warrior has triumphed again, this time at the 2009 Canadian Comedy Awards and Festival in Saint John, N.B. The Dave Broadfoot Award for Comic Genius, created by **Roger Abbott** and **Don Ferguson** from *The Royal Canadian Air Farce* in 2006, was presented to **Mary Walsh**. Said Roger Abbott, "Over 35 years into her career, Mary is still creating successful projects not just for herself, but for other writers and performers... She's a mentor and beacon to women in comedy and she's made people laugh with smart, sharp wit."

Other big winners included *Young People F\*\*king* with three awards, with **Peter Oldring** taking home the award for Performance by a Male. The hit television show *Less Than Kind* garnered two awards with **Wendel Meldrum** taking the award for Performance by a Female and the entire cast of *Less Than Kind* was honoured with the Performance by an Ensemble Award.



*Less Than Kind* stars Jesse Camacho and Wendel Meldrum.



## Actors' Fund of Canada *Battlestar Galactica's* Michael Hogan auctions props

**Michael Hogan** has joined the growing list of stars showing their support for the Actors' Fund of Canada by donating proceeds from a costume and prop auction held at the Pasadena Convention Center in L.A. Two props chosen to represent his *Battlestar Galactica* character Colonel Tigh, his iconic eye patch and a desk set fetched more than \$2,000. Choosing the fund as his charity seemed like a natural option: "So many people think that the life of an actor is an easy and glamorous one, but for every person who lands a role on a hit TV series there are 200 who are doing great work, but toiling in obscurity, barely able to make ends meet," said Hogan. "I've been a supporter of the fund for years now, and would love to see more actors who have become successful give back to the community where they began their career."

Every year members from across the industry help to raise money for The Actors' Fund of Canada. The Fund has helped over 10,000 entertainment industry workers recover from illness, injury or other circumstances causing severe economic and personal hardship since it was founded in 1958. To make a donation or set up a charity event visit: [www.actorsfund.ca](http://www.actorsfund.ca).





## Colin Mochrie to receive ACTRA Award of Excellence in Toronto

**Colin Mochrie** will receive ACTRA Toronto's 2010 Award of Excellence on February 19. With over 50 film and television credits to his name, Colin is a Canadian star recognized the world over. The Award of Excellence also recognizes Colin's generosity towards his union and its members. Colin's history of cultural activism with the union spans from lobbying Queen's Park for Status of the Artist legislation, to representing ACTRA at pivotal CRTC hearings and speaking out during recent federal elections against government censorship and cuts to the arts.

Colin is an ACTRA Toronto councillor and recently accepted a seat on the board of directors of the Actors' Fund of Canada.

Three juried performance awards will also be presented at the ACTRA Awards in Toronto gala event at the Carlu, to be hosted by **Geri Hall** with a musical performance by The Pocket Co. featuring **Don Francks**.

## Eric Peterson honoured with Earle Grey Award

The Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television honoured **Eric Peterson** with the prestigious *Earle Grey Award* for his outstanding body of work as an actor and significant contribution to the



Earle Grey

international profile of Canadian TV. Eric has garnered numerous accolades including five Gemini Awards. He has brought to life a broad range of memorable characters, including the lead in *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, the conscientious lawyer Leon Robinovitch in the popular drama *Street Legal*, and the loveable curmudgeon Oscar Leroy in the hit comedy series *Corner Gas*. Actively involved with the ACTRA community, Eric was honoured with the ACTRA Award of Excellence in Toronto in 2008. He serves on ACTRA Toronto's council, is a long-time supporter of performers' rights and was a key spokesperson in ACTRA's first-ever strike in 2007. Eric continues to be a leading voice in support of more Canada on TV.



Bill Borwardt

## Tom Jackson appointed Chancellor of Trent University

ACTRA member **Tom Jackson**, award-winning actor, producer, musician and tireless social advocate can add a new credit to his long list of accomplishments – Chancellor of Trent University.

# Bargaining update

by Marit Stiles, Director of Research

**With the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) wrapped and ready to be printed in early 2010, ACTRA is turning our attention to bargaining with Canada's broadcasters.** For the most part, broadcasters license production from independent producers (and therefore the IPA applies) or have subsidiary production companies that are adhered to the IPA. But with the CTF morphing into the Canadian Media Fund, Broadcasters are seeking the ability to access that fund, to a significant degree, to subsidize in-house production. That could mean more in-house production and more work for ACTRA members.

ACTRA has a long history of collective bargaining with CTV, CityTV, Global and of course CBC. While ownership of private broadcasters sometimes changes hands, those collective agreements stand. Earlier this year, we sent notice to bargain to CTVglobemedia, Canwest, Rogers, Corus and CBC, indicating we were looking forward to meeting with them to negotiate better terms and conditions for our members. We have already held preliminary meetings with Corus and Rogers, and are looking for bargaining dates with CTV and CBC.

Key to negotiating with broadcasters is to ensure that we have the ability to apply pressure through the federal *Status of the Artist Act*, should things not move smoothly. Under the *Act*, we can appeal to the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal (CAPPRT), and so were alarmed to learn that the government had failed to appoint enough tribunal

members to meet quorum. Without quorum, the tribunal is unable to hear any cases, closing an important door for ACTRA and other unions representing artists. Fortunately after several angry letters to the minister, the government recently appointed a new member and the tribunal can hear cases once again.

Meanwhile, ACTRA and the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA), continue to hold our joint quarterly meetings, as set out

Courtesy of CBC  
in the National Commercial Agreement (NCA). This is where we deal with disagreements over interpretation of clauses and other issues, and examine industry trends. At a recent meeting, we noted the increase in made-for-new-media commercials, particularly in

Toronto. Ad agencies are taking advantage of the experimental rates in the 2008-2011 NCA, and that's good news for ACTRA members.

We also continue to discuss with the ICA/ACA alternate models of compensation for the use of commercials. In the last round of negotiations, we talked about the need to update the current payment system for use, to ensure it better reflects the reality of television today. For example, in recent years some sports and other specialty channels have really taken off. Compensation for use of a commercial airing on those channels should be paid accordingly. Now's the time to test those models as we prepare to fight for more gains at the bargaining table in 2011. ■



Entering its fifth season, the popular CBC Radio 1 series *Afghanada* details the experiences of a unit of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. L to R: Paul Fauteux, Jenny Young, Billy MacLellan and Jordan Pettie.

## Contract Q&A

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

**Q:** Recently, I worked as a Principal Performer for three days on a commercial that's only going to appear on a website. The first day, I worked 8 hours, the second day, 4 hours and the third day, 6 hours. The ad agency wants to use the commercial on lots of different websites. What will my session and residual fee be?

– B.P. from Montreal

**A:** The session fee may vary from day to day, depending on the hours of work. Under the terms of the new media pilot project, the minimum session fee of \$320 includes four hours of included work time. As soon as work time goes over four hours, the session fee automatically doubles to \$640, which includes up to eight hours of work.

Your session fee will be: Day 1 @ \$640 plus Day 2 @ \$320 plus Day 3 @ \$640.

The residual fee is based on the length of use, calculated as a percentage of the session fee rate for one work day only, unlimited websites. For a maximum of 100% of the session fee rate, the Engager is entitled to one year's use of the commercial on unlimited websites.





# Your AFBS notice board

## Tax-free savings account

Did you know that had you invested \$5,000 in the AFBS Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA) in February, 2009, you would have earned 18.3% (for the General Fund) and 9.3% (for the Bond Fund)? And remember, all earnings are tax free!

TFSA – 2009	Investment on Feb 1st 2009	2009 Return to Dec 1st	Tax Free Investment Income
General Fund	5,000	18.3%	\$ 915
Bond Fund	5,000	9.3%	\$ 485

If you did *not* take advantage of the TFSA for 2009, you have an opportunity to invest up to \$10,000 this year. AFBS has one of the lowest fees (MER) in Canada, which helps contribute to our stellar long-term returns.

## RRSP contribution limit for 2010

Your AFBS contribution limit for RRSP deposits for 2010 is equal to 18% of your 2009 net income, or a maximum of \$22,000 as set by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

CRA calculates your actual RRSP deduction limit and you will receive your Notice of Assessment in the spring of 2010, following the processing of your 2009 tax return.

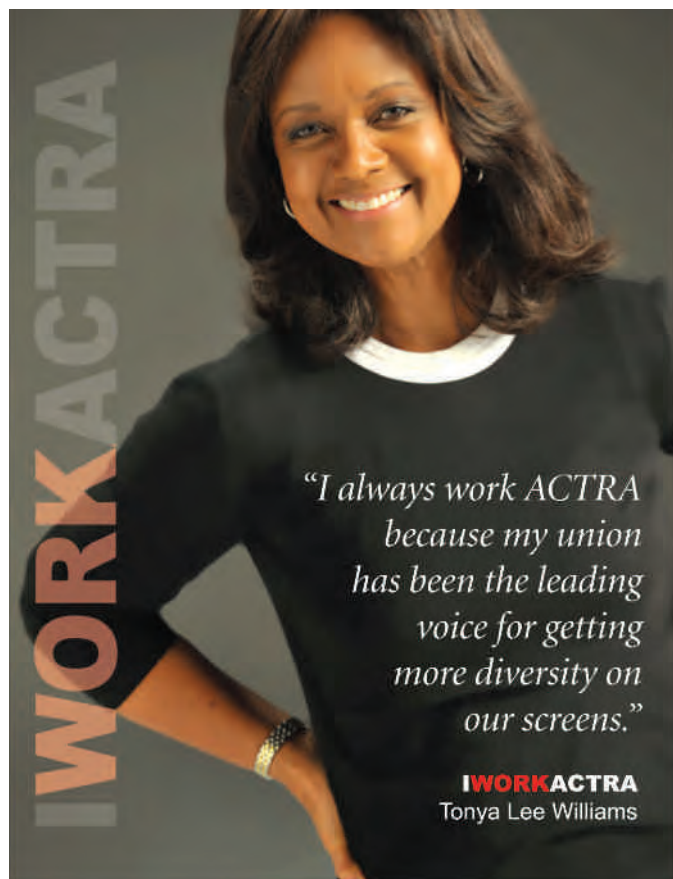
There are penalties for over-contributions to your RRSP, and failure to advise AFBS of your annual deduction limit could result in over-contributions.

If your RRSP deduction limit on your 2009 Notice of Assessment is different from the AFBS limit for 2010 at \$22,000 (upper left of your Member Account Statement), please fax a copy of your Notice of Assessment to update your AFBS RRSP deduction limit to 1-888-804-8929.

## Watch your mail in March for a Member Insurance Statement

Review your *Member Insurance Statement* carefully and quickly since this information is time-sensitive, and failure to respond before the deadline may result in a lost opportunity.

Also watch for our new and improved AFBS website!  
[www.actrafrat.com](http://www.actrafrat.com)



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 Joey Jeremiah  
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# Moving closer to copyright protection for performers

**You too could finally see your rights** as performers protected both globally and in Canada. This past December in Geneva at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a great deal of headway was made in bolstering performers' rights.

First, we're one step closer to achieving an international treaty on the rights of audiovisual performances. This has been a long time coming, but it appears that an agreement is in sight and by this time next year it may (fingers crossed!) be a done deal.

For performers this means legal guarantees that you'll receive a fair return for your artistic contributions to a film

or TV program. Although ACTRA's collective agreements provide strong protections, it's important that international law affords you the same rights as other artists.

Second, the European Union (EU) ratified the so-called Internet Treaties which establish basic standards of protection for copyright and related rights in digital media. With all 27 EU member states – from the U.K. to Germany – agreeing to implement the treaties, over 80 countries have now signed on.

Yet Canada remains a laggard. Undoubtedly this outsider status will put even more pressure on the Conservative



government to table a copyright bill that finally brings us into the 21st Century.

Rest assured, ACTRA will be there knocking on every cabinet minister's and head bureaucrat's door to ensure performers' rights in Canada are not just protected, but enhanced. We've got a busy – but optimistic – year ahead.

## It's tax time! View your work histories online

Don't forget you can access your work history online 24-7.

Here's how:

- 1 Go to **www.actra.ca**
- 2 Choose a role – double click on "Member"
- 3 Enter your user name and password (if you need a password, email: **f2f@actra.ca**)
- 4 Click on log in, select ACTRA Membership System.
- 5 Select "view your work history" (you can view your work history information by date range or assessment year)
- 6 To print your work history click on "print"

*You can also view your dues and other fees paid for income tax purposes.*

## EI for self-employed workers Feds put artists on equal footing

**For years ACTRA has been fighting** to get governments at all levels to recognize that performers, like all self-employed Canadians, deserve the same rights and access to benefits as other workers. Simply put, if artists are to fully participate in the Canadian economy, we must be treated as equals.

Well, we're one step closer. The House of Commons passed Bill C-56, the *Fairness for the Self-Employed Act*, extending special Employment Insurance benefits, including maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits to self-employed Canadians. Access to the plan will be voluntary and will require an opt-in of one year before making a claim. The majority of ACTRA's 21,000 members are among the 2.6 million Canadians who are self-employed and therefore have not been entitled to basic benefits such as EI.

ACTRA supported the bill as a positive first step and appeared before the Human Resources Committee to tell MPs how artists will be affected. Although we'll keep fighting to ensure all artists can one day access full EI benefits, we are proud that our voice is being heard in Ottawa.

## ISAN: Tracking your work

**It has become trickier than ever** to track productions as films, TV shows, and video games are distributed around the world on a variety of platforms. In comes "ISAN" (International Standard Audiovisual Numbers) Canada. Under ISAN, each audiovisual work is given a unique identifying number that is centrally registered and permanently attached to a production. No matter where it is distributed in the world or in what format, the ISAN stays with it, making immediate and accurate identification possible.

ACTRA's IPA demands that each production done under the agreement must be assigned an ISAN. Better tracking means being better able to track payments to rights holders, including to producers, distributors and performers.

ISAN Canada was launched a year ago to assign numbers to Canadian productions and connect with other ISAN agencies around the globe. To learn more about ISAN go to **www.isan.ca**.





**Ferne Downey**  
President



**Richard Hardacre**  
Past President

# Who's who

## MEET YOUR National Council



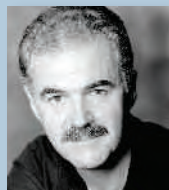
**Heather Allin**  
Toronto



**Nigel Bennett**  
Maritimes



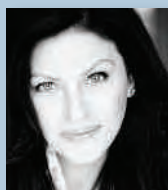
**Tyrone Benskin**  
Montreal



**Barry Blake**  
Ottawa



**Rick Boland**  
Newfoundland



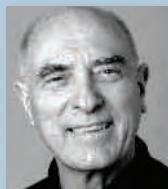
**Wendy Crewson**  
Toronto



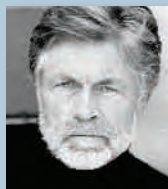
**Sonia Donaldson**  
Alberta



**David Gale**  
Toronto



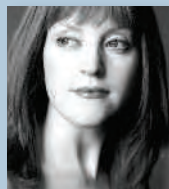
**Brian Gromoff**  
Alberta



**Art Hindle**  
Toronto



**Karen Ivany**  
Toronto



**Shannon Jardine**  
Saskatchewan



**Jani Lauzon**  
Toronto



**Cary Lawrence**  
Montreal



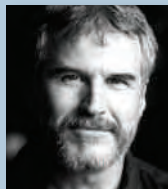
**John Nelles**  
Toronto



**Jack Newman**  
Toronto



**Wayne Nicklas**  
Manitoba



**Karl Pruner**  
Toronto



**Alvin Sanders**  
UBCP



**Austin Schatz**  
Toronto



**David Sparrow**  
Toronto



**Howard Storey**  
UBCP



**Theresa Tova**  
Toronto



**Christine Willes**  
UBCP

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### ACTRA Performers' Rights Society

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FAX: (416) 489-1040  
EMAIL: [prs@actra.ca](mailto:prs@actra.ca)  
EMAIL: [racs@actra.ca](mailto:racs@actra.ca) (RACS-RECORDING ARTISTS' COLLECTING SOCIETY)  
[www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)

### Union of B.C. Performers

400 – 1155 West Pender St | Vancouver BC | V6E 2P4  
TEL: (604) 689-0727 | FAX: (604) 689-1145  
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FAX: (403) 228-3299  
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EMAIL: [ottawa@actra.ca](mailto:ottawa@actra.ca) | [www.actraottawa.ca](http://www.actraottawa.ca)

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EMAIL: [montreal@actra.ca](mailto:montreal@actra.ca) | [www.actramontreal.ca](http://www.actramontreal.ca)

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### ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador

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EMAIL: [newfoundland@actra.ca](mailto:newfoundland@actra.ca) | [www.actra.ca/stjohns](http://www.actra.ca/stjohns)

# FAREWELL



## Brenda Devine

Best known for her moving portrayal of Jenny Andrews in *Random Passage*, Brenda Devine played roles large and small in over 19 film and television projects including *Dick*, *Gullages* and *Strike!* She shared her passion and creativity with a new generation of performers by teaching at ACTRA and coaching privately. She

gave strength and love to others while fighting recurring bouts of cancer for many years with bravery, dignity and grace. We are left to celebrate her life by rising to her shining example of strength and courage.

– Karyn Dwyer



## Douglas Campbell

Douglas was active in developing theatre in Canada and founded The Canadian Players in 1954 with Tom Patterson. The company toured Canada with a mix of Shakespearean and contemporary productions, until the mid-'60s, when it relocated to Toronto as a permanent company. In the 1990s, Douglas directed

Stratford productions including *Julius Caesar* and *The Alchemist*.

Douglas played the roaming 19th-century Ontario Provincial Police Inspector Cameron on the CBC's 1979 series *The Great Detective*. Other screen appearances include, *Anne of Green Gables: The Continuing Story*, *Charlie Grant's War* and *Mark Twain and Me*. He was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1997 and won the Governor General's Award for Performing Arts in 2003.



## Bill Forbes

There is no one apposite that aptly describes who Bill Forbes was. He turned his hand to everything and always in a thoroughly committed way. Wills (as I called him) was a clever comedic actor; writer; designer; puppeteer; director; mentor plus an all-round creative genius. We must append to that the title of generous human being – more interested in the greater good than in himself.

Bill gave countless years of service to Canadian Actors' Equity as Atlantic Councillor and was recently generating fresh initiatives for PAL Halifax. He had an insight into things that mere mortals often missed and his sense of humour could assuage scurrilous debate.

At the time of his death Bill was on a trajectory of success and satisfaction – was settling into his refurbished school house, had worked on various contracts and was doing a summer season on the shores of the Minas Basin at Ship's Co. Theatre. We were neighbours in the woods overlooking Blomidon and cherished every moment we got to sit in our lawn chairs and watch the world go by. My summer wasn't quite the same when Bill's chair stood empty.

As I write this I realize along with many colleagues I still have not accepted that Bill will not be reappearing in a theatre near you. We are cheered that there are some memories retained on video and they did a small bit to heal our hearts at Bill's well-attended memorial. It was a packed house and the only show in Halifax that night!

– Deb Allen



## Goldie Semple

Marigold Ann Kennedy (Goldie Semple) was a long-time member of ACTRA. However, most of her friends, both public and private, will remember her for the astonishing variety of her dramatic and comedic stage performances, especially at the Shaw Festival

(17 seasons) and at Stratford (9 seasons).

Born in Vancouver in 1952, Goldie attended the University of British Columbia and the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School before embarking on her 30-year-plus career. During her eight-year experience of cancer, she continued to work and play. In the 2009 Shaw Festival season, she performed three roles to outstanding effect in *Brief Encounters*, the mainstage trilogy of Noel Coward one-act plays.

After the season, she enjoyed a three-week holiday in England and Italy with her husband of 33 years, Lorne Kennedy, and their 14-year-old daughter, Madeline. She died peacefully at home on December 9, shortly after their return. A celebration of her life will take place at the Shaw Festival later in the year.

Donations in memory of Goldie Semple may be made to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

– Guy Bannerman





## Sylvia Lennick

One of the last surviving members of the Wayne and Shuster comedy troupe died in Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital in August. A tireless worker for artists, Sylvia Lennick held several elected offices in ACTRA and, along with her husband, Ben, worked to make sure

performers knew from whence they came and recognized the sacrifices of those who went before. Sylvia was instrumental in ensuring the continuation of ACTRA's Bernard Cowan Award and, following her husband's death in 1996, spearheaded the creation of the Ben Lennick Archives. A success in all media, Sylvia Lennick uttered the classic line, "I told him, Julie, don't go!" in an *Ed Sullivan Show* spoof of *Julius Caesar*. The line instantly became a universal catchphrase. Both of the Lennicks championed numerous causes in various capacities during many years service on ACTRA councils, and are survived by their children, Michael, David and Julie and by grateful colleagues.

– Dan MacDonald



## Joan Orenstein

Nova Scotian actor Joan Orenstein began her acting career in her 40s. Orenstein was born in London, England, and came to Nova Scotia just after the Second World War. A Genie nominee for her portrayal of grandmother Grace in Thom Fitzgerald's film *The Hanging Garden*, she earned best actress honours at

the Atlantic Film Festival for the same performance. She also appeared in the films *The Event* and *Never Too Late*, the TV show *Emily of New Moon* and the mini-series *Shattered City*.

Joan played lead roles on stages across Canada, including at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Belfry Theatre in Victoria, the Shaw Festival in Ontario, Halifax's Neptune Theatre, the Tarragon and Canadian Stage in Toronto, Theatre Calgary and the Manitoba Theatre Centre. In 2005, ACTRA Maritimes presented her with the David Renton Award of Excellence.



## Les Lye

When my old friend and longtime partner Les Lye left us on July 21 we also said goodbye to a cast of incredible characters, created for the *Willy and Floyd Show* and *You Can't Do That on Television*. Born in Toronto, in 1924, he graduated from Lorne

Greene's Academy of Radio Arts in 1947 and joined CFRA in Ottawa. In '61 he made frequent appearances on CJOH TV with Rich Little which led to their best-selling album *My Fellow Canadians*. In 1958 Les was a founding member of ACTRA Ottawa and in 2003 was presented with an ACTRA Lifetime Achievement Award. He was also a gifted comedy writer providing material for TV, radio and newspaper columns. At the Ottawa Little Theatre we played the feuding vaudevillians in *The Sunshine Boys*... these lines echo my feeling about Les... "He was terrific, nobody could say a line the way he said it... I knew what he was thinking and he knew what I was thinking... he was the best."

– Bill Luxton



## Claire Drainie Taylor

Claire Taylor was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, on Sept. 11, 1917. She was an actor and a writer, who acted under her first married name, Claire Murray. Among her many roles, she played Ma in *Jake and the Kid*, Aunt Mary on *John and Judy* and Ma Parkin

on *Barney Boomer*. Plays include, *Santa Had a Black Black Beard* and *Flow Gently Sweet Limbo*, which she co-wrote with her second husband John Drainie. She flourished in the golden age of radio with steady work on soap operas and original radio dramas from the Second World War to the launch of network television.

Claire played an essential role as a catalyst in the forming of RATS, the radio performers' group, which eventually became ACTRA. She was also part of the Jupiter Theatre group founded by Mr. Drainie, Lorne Greene and Len Peterson in 1951. In 1998 Claire wrote an autobiography, *The Surprise of My Life*. Claire leaves six children and seven grandchildren.



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# What ACTRA is about

When you're part of ACTRA, you're part of the biggest, full-service cultural union in Canada. Think of it like a 21,000-member family that's got your back. We have negotiated some of the strongest collective agreements for performers in the world and we stand together to make sure engagers deliver the pay and protections that we've been promised.

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