

ACTRA



ACTRA MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2017

ACTRA.75

Mark your calendars!
We're celebrating ACTRA's 75th
year anniversary in 2018!

The Friendly Giant's opening for each show started with the camera panning over a small model of a village and continuing up the giant's big boot while he said, "Look up, waaaaay up!" then he would invite everyone to come visit him and his friends in his castle. Show creator Bob Homme played the giant named 'Friendly,' and Rod Coneybeare was the puppeteer for both 'Jerome' the giraffe and 'Rusty' the rooster. Over 3,000 episodes of the popular CBC children's program aired between 1958 and 1985.

We're celebrating!



On the cover are *Mohawk Girls* stars Maika Harper, Jenny Pudavick, Heather White and Brittany LeBorgne. Pictured here is Eugene Brave Rock. Check out Candy Palmater's feature story on page 8 about our new generation of Indigenous performers.

Cover photo courtesy of Rezolutions Films. Photo: Éric Myre.



We all—as individuals, as performers—bring something to it. You're advancing the game, you're making something better, you're creating an opportunity, you're going down a new path.

Ferne Downey, page 22

4 President's Message

Introducing David Sparrow

6 Adapting to Digital Disruption

By Stephen Waddell

8 ReconciliACTION

By Candy Palmater

14 Men of Action

Q & A with Rob Hayter & Mike Scherer

By Angelica Lisk-Hann

20 Political Action, Strength in Numbers

By Elliott Anderson

22 Ferne Downey's "exit" interview

By Jeremy Webb

24 ACTRA's Woman of the Year

Q & A with Tina Keeper

26 Applause

30 WIDC celebrating 20 empowering years

By Carol Whiteman

32 Farewells

Facing our challenges head on

By David Sparrow
ACTRA National President

Hello ACTRAvists across Canada. We have a great union! For almost 75 years, members just like us have worked hard to build a strong and active recorded media industry in Canada. We bring life to Canadian ideas and voices, and we project our culture and stories to the world. Our work results in a stronger Canadian identity and a stronger national economy. These are the messages we bring to governments at every level from St. John's to Vancouver...

Artists matter. They make a difference. Culture matters. It is our legacy. Canadian performers brand and market Canada across the globe.

My name is David Sparrow and I am humbled to join our Vice President, Alvin Sanders, our Treasurer, Theresa Tova, and National Councillors from across the land to lead our union of professional performers over the next two years. We have a lot of work to do to ensure our contracts and business practices keep pace with evolving technology; to address the growth of non-union

work; and to continue to improve our own union solidarity in every corner of our wonderful country.

For many years now, my goals around our Council tables have been to champion success for the middle-class actor, to ensure your union card is not a barrier to your creativity and to improve work opportunities for every member of ACTRA no matter where they call home. Simplifying and modernizing our agreements and how our industry partners can access them will make us stronger as we move further into the 21st century—because regional issues are National issues and local challenges demand National support.

We have been working hard together too. We have prioritized gender and diversity equity on screens and in our own governance; we secured a 105 per cent prepayment for IPA work produced for the Internet; we fought to reinstate a full session fee for made-for-commercial work; we created flexible pilot projects to promote voice work; we developed a Digital Self-Promotion Guideline so members can market their

“Simplifying and modernizing our agreements, and how our industry partners can access them, will make us stronger as we move further into the 21st century.”

skills using social media and YouTube; and much, much more. Your Councils have been busy anticipating the future and adapting to it while also making sure you are properly and fairly compensated when you work.

This year the theme for the Canadian Labour Congress Convention was “Working for a Fair Future,” and that’s what we do every day at ACTRA. The approved CLC resolution on Media, Culture and Communications included components specific to the work done by ACTRA members, with Alvin Sanders, Ayla Lukic-Roman and myself stepping up to speak passionately at the Convention about these issues. Clara Pasioka spoke about the issues faced by precarious workers—especially how young performers are affected. The resolution on Women’s Economic Justice was passed, with Ferne Downey speaking about critical issues affecting all women workers.

I want to shine a light on the work of the excellent Ferne Downey. She served as our National President for eight years. She has been an example and an inspiration. She

raised the bar and took us forcefully on to the international stage. Her work as President of FIA and her efforts to build a stronger relationship with SAG-AFTRA have made us stronger and allowed us to punch way above our weight. I am glad she will remain part of our leadership team as Past President where she will be able to continue to share her wisdom and help guide my steps in the early going.

I know our work empowering performers and promoting Canadian culture will never be done, but I believe there are exciting times ahead for ACTRA over the next 75 years and beyond. And, as Canada celebrates 150 years, we must recognize the history of this land is thousands of years old and the stories of this land are just as old and must be told. That is part of the important, inclusive work we must do together. Yes, I am optimistic about our future as a union, and as a cultural voice and leader in Canada. I know when we stand together and face challenges head-on, we can make a difference. I know when we have unity of purpose and focus on our primary goals, we can achieve great things. If you have a constructive idea or concern, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. I look forward to working with you. Thanks for your confidence.



An ACTRA member since 1992, David Sparrow has served on ACTRA National Council since 2007 and as a member of several ACTRA negotiating teams. With over 100 Canadian and U.S. film and TV credits, and extensive experience in commercials and animation, David is equally at home in front of the camera or behind the microphone. David is also a proud member of EQUITY and SAG-AFTRA.



The ACTRA delegation represented our membership and the Canadian cultural sector proudly, and professionally promoted our 'Go ACTRA, Go Union' campaign among more than 3,000 Canadian workers at the 2017 Canadian Labour Congress Convention in Toronto. Clockwise from top left: Candy Palmater delivered an inspirational speech to CLC delegates; Clara Pasieka spoke in support of precarious workers; David Sparrow talked to delegates about the benefits of hiring professional performers; Alvin Sanders spread our 'Go union' message to CLC delegates; Dom Fiore, Sedina Fiati and Barry Blake.



Adapting to Digital Disruption

By Stephen Waddell

The digital revolution has taken over our lives, made it easy to access information and content, and buy products online. It has changed the way we communicate and engage in social interaction. This new digital era has had a tremendous impact on individuals, on society; on the way business is conducted, particularly with respect to advertising. As we renegotiate our National Commercial Agreement (NCA) with the ad industry, represented by the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and the Institute of Communications Agencies (ICA), professional performers in North America face significant challenges in maintaining their competitive advantage in commercial production. Gone are the “Mad Men” days when agencies had the freedom to create ads for advertisers without much regard to costs and ads aired on network television in 13-week cycles.

Today, advertisers are laser-focused on: controlling and limiting their ad dollars; engaging experienced production consultants to bottom-line their budgets; employing non-signatory digital media, not full-service agencies; and even producing in-house—creating content that can be made into multiple ads for use on multiple platforms for local, national and global distribution using members of the public (or their employees) instead of professional performers. Unfortunately, “good enough” has become a standard in digital advertising, much of which is considered by advertisers to be the modern version of direct mail marketing.

This is why it is imperative that we adapt to the evolving advertising environment in this year’s round of NCA bargaining.

With the current NCA expiring on June 30, 2017, our goal is to negotiate an agreement

“Digital platforms have made it easier to reach both wide and narrowly-targeted audiences; but digital has also drastically disrupted advertising nationally and internationally.”

that maintains ACTRA members’ professional advantage in commercial production while balancing the needs of today’s advertising world.

Digital platforms have made it easier to reach both wide and narrowly-targeted audiences; but digital has also drastically disrupted advertising nationally and internationally.

While these new technologies have made it simpler and cheaper to produce commercials, advertisers are bottom-lining their ad budgets and demanding more for less as they scramble to have their messages viewed on multiple platforms.

Each year, ad budgets decrease and non-union production increases, resulting in fewer work opportunities for professional performers.

Yet, despite this, employment overall under our NCA appears to be steady. In

1999, ACTRA was the first performers’ union in the world to cover digital advertising in its NCA. For six years, ACTRA agreed to a digital media pilot project that provided reduced rates and Use fees to encourage the engagement of ACTRA members. That experiment ended in the last NCA, and the results are that engagement of ACTRA members in digital ads have steadily increased. What has now become clear to ACTRA and our industry partners is that in this round of bargaining, we have to simplify and modernize the NCA to create an agreement that suits the way business is conducted today—search, click and hire.

We know we have the best performers in the business, but now we have to make it easier to engage the best.

In addition to developing a simplified, streamlined commercial agreement, we’ve been working hard on *ACTRAonline*, our digital portal to hiring ACTRA.

ACTRAonline will not only allow companies to cast talented ACTRA performers online, it will make it easy for those companies to become signatory to the NCA, estimate the cost, and contact, engage and contract you...all with the click of a button.

As this article is being written, your NCA negotiating committee is deep in bargaining with the ACA and ICA. We have an excellent team that is eager and dedicated to getting the best contract possible for you.



Stephen Waddell, ACTRA National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator.

Photo: Jag Gundu.

ACTRA's NCA bargaining team: front row sitting: Alvin Sanders (UBCP/ACTRA), Ferne Downey (Past President), Theresa Tova (Toronto) and David Sparrow (National President & Chair of Negotiating Committee); back row, standing: Amanda Barker (Toronto), Jeff Lumby (Toronto), Joanna Swan (Toronto), Keith Martin Gordey (UBCP/ACTRA), Safiya Ricketts (Toronto), Miranda Handford (Montreal), Ian Finlay (Montreal), James Madge (Toronto) and Richard Young (Toronto).

At press time the NCA negotiations were well underway. For bargaining committee updates visit actra.ca. Stay informed, get involved and show your solidarity.



By Candy Palmater

ReconciliACTION



This year many Canadians are celebrating 150 years of confederation. It is interesting the celebration falls on the heels of the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action. As a Mi'kmaw person, I know my people have walked on this land for at least 13,000 years; that's what we can prove scientifically. So I am not necessarily celebrating 150 years as a nation. I am, however, celebrating a marriage this year.



Photo: Eric Myre. Courtesy of Revolutions Films.

Mohawk Girls cast Brittany LeBorgne, Jenny Pudavick, Maika Harper and Heather White.



Rhymes for Young Ghouls stars Glen Gould, Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs, and Brandon Oakes.

Photo: Jan Thijs.

We, newcomers and Indigenous people, have had a long relationship together. It has spanned from our “just shacking up” stage to making it a formal marriage through treaties and later, confederation. The marriage has not always been great. There have been more than a few nights when we’ve cried ourselves to sleep.

What I know for sure about this marriage, however, is that it is worth saving. I don’t think we can consider divorce: we have to stay in it for the kids. So in this year of celebration, I hope all Canadians contemplate how we can make this marriage stronger and more fulfilling for both parties.

With that spirit in mind, I was thrilled when ACTRA National asked me to take a look at the new guard of Indigenous players in this country. In doing that, it is important to look at where we have been, where we are now and what we might look forward to in the future.

Like most Indigenous people, I have a misty memory of watching cowboy and Indian movies as a child with a feeling of confusion and wonder. Although I knew those “Indians” were in some way meant to represent me, there wasn’t much about them that was familiar. Mi’kmaq people never rode horses, nor have very many Canadian Indigenous nations for that matter. We weren’t mean and aggressive people; in fact, we laughed and joked a lot... mostly at ourselves.

And most confusing for my young mind was the way those movie Indians looked. Neither their skin tone nor their facial features seemed familiar. As I grew up, I came to realize the confusion stemmed from the fact that those actors were not actually Indigenous, but instead actors of other races badly depicting us.

I wish I could report those days are long behind us, but to do so would be to ignore

As I grew up, I came to realize the confusion stemmed from the fact that those actors were not actually Indigenous, but instead actors of other races badly depicting us.

Hollywood indignities like Johnny Depp playing Tonto in *The Lone Ranger* or current Canadian television productions that have non-Indigenous actors playing the parts of Indigenous people.

But, in spite of those misappropriations, we have come a long way. I remember the moment when I was seated in front of the TV and Buffy Sainte-Marie appeared on *Sesame Street*. The profound impact that experience had on my life and career can't be measured, but I can tell you it was the first time I had the thought, "oh, I could be on TV too."

As the tide started to change, more and more incredible Indigenous actors found their way through the politics into film and TV roles. Those roles weren't always perfect and very rarely were they written from an Indigenous perspective, but those ground-breaking actors persevered and became the role models of the young actors

who are lighting up the screens today.

Tantoo Cardinal was presented with the 2015 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence and recently the Academy presented her with the Earle Grey Canadian Screen Award. Two years ago she received the inaugural August Schellenberg Award at the IMAGINATIVE film festival. This year ACTRA named Tina Keeper Woman of the Year. I'm so happy to see these people honoured for their impressive and important bodies of work. I am always proud of Glen Gould, from my own nation, who appeared in over 30 television and film roles in his long career.

In 1992, *North of 60* brought Indigenous centered drama into the homes of city and suburban residents alike. A high percentage of the cast were activists, including Order of Canada humanitarian Tom Jackson and (former) MP Tina Keeper. A number of talented youth performers got their start on *N60* such as Nathaniel Arcand, Adam Beach,

Dakota House and Michelle Thrush. The hugely successful series ran for six seasons on CBC plus several TV movies.

This article, however, is not about those well-established icons of the Canadian entertainment industry, but instead a celebration of the new guard. A new generation of actors who are being blessed with parts actually written by Indigenous writers and they are certainly making the most of these opportunities.

Tracey Deer is no stranger to Indigenous people. After a lifetime of watching documentaries about us but by "other", Tracey hit the scene with documentaries like *Mohawk Girls* and *Club Native*, which really gave voice to the experience of being young, Indigenous and female. But then she pushed the boundary one step further and created the television series *Mohawk Girls*, which has proven to be a huge hit for the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN).

The series has created an opportunity for the lead actors to really shine in roles both complicated and real. The series is a dramedy based around four 20-something women trying to figure out how to be Mohawk women in the 21 century. Brittany LeBorgne, Heather White, Maika Harper and Jenny Pudavick are not only visually-diverse but also portray characters as diverse as Indigenous people truly are.

In an interview with LeBorgne a few years ago, I asked her about the sexual scenes she has played in the series, and how her family and friends have responded. Open discussions of sexuality, historically so common in our communities, have been stifled by the double-edged sword of colonization and Christianization.

LeBorgne laughed and shared that she does get calls from the grannies and aunts after some of the episodes, but she also knows how important it is to her generation

to depict the reality of life as an Indigenous person today.

The power of seeing Indigenous stories told by us is profound. A few years ago, I attended the View Finders Film Festival premier of *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, an experience that still excites me when I recall it. Mi'kmaw filmmaker Jeff Barnaby wrote a heartbreaking and uncompromising script about a fictitious Mi'kmaw community called Red Crow set in the year 1976.

Barnaby managed to show both the harsh reality of reserve life under the Indian Act while at the same time revealing the strength required of a people to survive such conditions.

It was a powerhouse performance by established actor Glen Gould but also a vehicle to shine light on some amazing young actors. Barnaby insisted that all the actors involved [in the project] had to

have grown-up on a reserve so as to capture as much authenticity in his movie as possible. Cast in the role of the main character, Alia, is Mohawk actor Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs. Her performance is both tough and tender.

Devery won the Borsos Award for Best Performance in a Canadian film at the 2016 Whistler Film Festival for *The Sun at Midnight*. This ACTRA production was the first full-length feature film to be shot in the N.W.T. For her work in *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* Devery was nominated for a Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role at the Canadian Screen Awards. Her TV series' appearances include *Mohawk Girls*, *Cold* and *This Life*.

No talk of what is new and interesting in Indigenous country would be complete without mentioning the APTN series, *Qanurli*. It is not yet an ACTRA production.

Eugene Brave Rock
as The Chief in
Wonder Woman,
a Warner Bros.
Pictures release.



I remember the moment when I was seated in front of the TV and Buffy Sainte-Marie appeared on *Sesame Street*. The profound impact that experience had on my life and career can't be measured, but I can tell you it was the first time I had the thought, "oh, I could be on TV too".

Stacey Agluk MacDonald has accomplished what many may think is impossible. She has managed to shoot a comedy sketch show in Iqaluit entirely in Inuktitut. She shoots outdoor scenes in a climate that only gives her about four hours of daylight and temperatures of 40 below!

She wanted to honour both her language and her land while furthering the long-standing Indigenous celebration of comedy. The series, now in its sixth season, combines sketch, news parody and a myriad of other high jinks pulled off by the two main actors, Vinnie Karetak and Thomas Anguti Johnston. And it has been drawing new players to the fold by holding auditions in the North for supporting actor roles.

Besides the weather and light, the challenges of making TV in the North also include having to fly your equipment into

a remote community. Sometimes the weather hinders those flights, which result in costly delays. In spite of all the challenges, these young actors are making their mark and making people laugh. They even had Tom Green tweet about the show this past season!

The success of Canadian Indigenous actors is also crossing the border and heading to Hollywood! The much anticipated *Wonder Woman* movie tells the back-story of Wonder Woman, when she was a warrior of the Amazon and the fight that drew her out into the wider world.

Among the cast is Canadian Indigenous actor Eugene Brave Rock. Originally from Alberta, he is an experienced stunt person who has worked in that capacity in *Hell on Wheels* and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, and trained the stunt people in *The Revenant*. Now, in this Hollywood block-

buster, Eugene steps squarely in front of the camera in the role of Chief.

If you cast your mind back to the *Batman vs. Superman* movie, there was a moment when Bruce Wayne sees a photograph on his computer of Wonder Woman standing next to a mysterious Indigenous character. That character is Eugene Brave Rock.

Recently, ACTRA members attended the Canadian Labour Congress, Together for a Fair Future, at which it was declared that reconciliation is a union issue. As ACTRA continues to support Indigenous actors in Indigenous roles and as those roles get more and more complex, I believe the Canadian entertainment industry is indeed on the road to reconciliation.



Candy Palmater is a broadcaster, comedian and actor. Most recently she has written the *Aboriginal Day Live* broadcast for APTN and narrated the CBC series *True North Calling*. She had her own TV show (*The Candy Show*) on APTN for five seasons and had her own radio show (*The Candy Palmater Show*) on CBC Radio One. Candy, a member of the Eel River Bar First Nation, is a former lawyer who is originally from Point La Nim, New Brunswick. She now lives with her wife, Denise, and two dogs in Toronto.



Men of Action

Q&A with Rob Hayter & Mike Scherer

By Angelica Lisk-Hann

Rob Hayter

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

If you own a television or have gone to a movie theatre there is a very good chance you may have seen the work of these two gentlemen. One of them has been on the stunt coordinating team of the last three instalments of the *X-Men* franchise in Montreal. The other stunt coordinated the highly-rated TV series *Lucifer* in Vancouver. And he had an amazing cameo in *Deadpool* when Ryan Reynolds calls him by his name in the middle of the scene to ask him how he and his family are doing. Yeah, both Mike Scherer and Rob Hayter are way cool. Here's a snapshot of some of their thoughts and experiences.

Angelica: Describe the moment you realized that a career in the stunt business was about to become a reality for you?

Mike: I didn't consider myself a professional stunt performer until I could survive a year doing only that. I was lucky early on because my size and look got me work. I guess I would say that although I started in 1987 with some good jobs out of the gate, it [my success] sank in during the early '90s. **Rob:** I'm not sure I've ever really had that kind of a moment as it's been a slow and steady road for me. For about 10 years after my first stunt job, I always told people that I was only an "aspiring" stunt performer because there are a lot of exceptional stunt people in Vancouver. In 2010, I remember walking off the stage at the Taurus Awards and thinking, "Huh... well, I guess maybe it's okay if I call myself a real stunt performer now." A career in stunts can literally end at any time so I try not to ever take it for granted. I appreciate each and every day I have on set, learning new things and keep moving forward.

Describe some of the pressures and rewards of coordinating a huge franchise, like *X-Men*?

Mike: Those really big-budget shows are like a society unto themselves. Changes can come quick and without warning, especially with an ensemble cast whose schedules are fluid. This has a trickle-down effect to all around so you need to be able to think fast, solve problems and juggle everything. You learn early on to hope for the best and

prepare for the worst. You do this by having a plan B, C and D. Take nothing for granted and anticipate potential problems—be ready for them. The rewards come when the pieces fall together and you get through it. There are the little things too, like finding that perfect double or coming in on-budget. Being able to give talented people a platform on which to showcase their skills feels pretty good too.

Can you outline some of the challenges you face in keeping the actors, stunt performers and even the crew safe on action-heavy projects, like *X-Men*?

Mike: Safety is job one. Many of the big action sequences in film these days, while fleeting on the screen, can take weeks to rehearse, set-up and deploy. From the initial concept phase safety is always the main parameter.

There are many actors who are quite physical and can perform a good deal of their own action—others, not so much. This needs to be established early on. It can affect how the action is shot and who does what. In some cases, an actor can go through some training so they can take it to the next level. Also, sometimes an actor can't help but get caught up in the scene or in the moment, it's what they do, and the action begins to drift too far from the plan. You have to be able to recognize this and step in before it escalates. You need to be prepared to hold your ground if there is pressure to go outside of an actor's, or your, comfort zone. The same holds true



In this *Deadpool* action sequence with Ryan Reynolds and Rob Hayter, Deadpool headbutts Bob then asks, “How are the kids? Good?”

if there is pressure from above to do something in a way other than what was previously agreed upon. Better to put the brakes on a shot than to take a chance. Best to plan the shoot and shoot the plan.

For stunt performers, it’s best to hire the right person for the job both in skills and attitude. This decision will cover a good chunk of the safety aspect. They may not always be your friend but it’s not a popularity contest.

As for the crew, this can be tricky. For big stunts, you have to constantly be diligent about where they are and what they are doing. For example, the set stills photographer may not realize that the new spot they have located for a great shot now puts them in danger. The C camera decides to change position, for whatever reason, and is now right in the potential deflection zone

of the car going off the pipe ramp. Deploy any extra eyes at your disposal. Sometimes we place off-camera stunt people near crew to help gauge the situation as it unfolds. There are many situations that can develop in very subtle ways and you have to be on your toes to catch all of them. Assume nothing.

Have you had any injuries on set? If yes, how has the Accident on Set (AOS) or workman’s compensation helped you get back on your feet? **Rob:** I’ve had a few, yes... I had a potentially career-ending injury back in 2005 when I ruptured my meniscus and had to go on disability. The union’s disability coverage enabled me to “keep the boat afloat” while I did my rehab. Eventually I was able to make my way back into performing.

Mike: As for dealing with those entities, for

me, it usually happens when a chronic injury finally takes it to the next level and repairs are in order. For the most part, I have had decent experiences with that type of coverage and oversight. In some cases it led to a speedy recovery, getting me back to work. The industry can be harsh, and rumours can spread quickly and get twisted. You want to get back out there as soon as you can and let folks know you’re good to go. These support systems help with that.

You are both very cognizant of casting diversity in your projects. Please explain why this so important to you as well as our community.

Mike: I have a personal pet peeve with action crowd scenes where everyone looks the same. It’s a diverse world and that needs to be reflected in our industry. There are times when requests are made from higher ups, based on the time period and political situation of the era portrayed, that can tie your hands a bit. But there is always a way to work it and the effort should be made. Recent instances in film have proven the viewing public can take a dim view of things like “whitewashing” and justly so. **Rob:** As far as I’m concerned, it’s something we shouldn’t even have to be discussing at this point. It’s 2017 fer gawd’s sake... There is no place in this industry for discrimination, sexism or racism. Our society is diverse and that should be reflected on screen. It is essential for our community to set the bar for this. It just makes sense. As a stunt coordinator, one sometimes has the opportunity to make direct decisions about diversity in stunt casting. When we have that choice, it is important for both

the community and the industry that we cast diversity when we can.

Explain what it feels like to flip a van upside down? (lol) **Mike:** I’m guessing you’re talking about the flip from *xXx: Return of Xander Cage*. I would have to say that it’s the lead-up time that I feel the most. It gets real when I start getting into my safety gear. When I get strapped in, I try to get as comfortable as I can. I obviously get a little nervous. But for me the worry is more about screwing up than getting hurt, odd as it may sound. One comfort in that particular situation was knowing that my old friend Jamie Jones was driving the car next to me and was integral to the outcome. It was one thing I knew I didn’t have to worry about. After a lot of planning and waiting, suddenly you have your foot in it and you commit. It’s over pretty quick. And because everyone involved did their jobs so well, prepared for everything, you crawl out of there without a scratch. In this particular case, the sensations were a little odd because after the initial impact the van went airborne again and pulled a funky move. I was a little surprised to jump from the back door and land on the roof of a parked car—not asphalt. But that’s why they call them “catch cars.”

Tell us about that cameo in *Deadpool* and what it was like to work on the project. **Rob:** I sometimes joke that *Deadpool* was the biggest indie film I’ve ever been a part of. It was the type of environment where you could just tell that everyone was personally invested in the success of the project and really wanted to put their best foot forward.

It was a pleasure to work with Ryan. He's a class act—intelligent, thoughtful, funny and a consummate professional throughout the process. American coordinators Rob Alonzo and Phil Silvera were organized, innovative and imaginative. They made full and effective use of our Canadian stunt performers throughout the project. *Deadpool* is a good example of the level of professional stunt action being executed in Vancouver right now—an excellent showcase for of our community. And definitely one of the best experiences of my career.

Tell us what would you be doing if you had chosen another career path? **Rob:** I can't really imagine myself doing anything else. I joke with my wife sometimes that I'm gonna start a flower shop if I ever retire but that's just me being funny. I feel that all of the other jobs and my experiences over the last 27 years prepared me to be doing exactly what I'm doing right now. I can't think of any other profession that would provide me with the same level of challenge and satisfaction. **Mike:** I have many interests but if I had a choice I would probably be involved in some form of earth science or physics. It's what I was majoring in while in college. I have always been interested in "the big picture." Writing would have been a consideration as well.

If you were forced to pick between coordinating or performing, what would it be and why? **Rob:** That's a tough one. I really enjoy the puzzles and creativity that come along with coordinating and choreographing, but performing is what originally brought me

to stunts. As a martial arts/fight performer, you eventually bump into the fact that your body has a time limit—that certain parts of your skill-set are perishable. Things like family and work become a higher priority than your personal goals as a performer. I guess if I could choose between being a 20 to 30-something stunt performer and a 40-something coordinator, I would likely choose performing. But I also enjoy coordinating a lot. **Mike:** Performing. It's what drew me in and it's what I will always be. The only people who really get me are people who are like me. I like the challenges of coordinating but sometimes I just want to grab one of my dirt bikes and hit the trails. While I do get to interact with my stunt brothers and sisters as a coordinator, the relationship is different.

Sometimes I will see the stunters sitting in a group telling stories, cracking jokes and waiting for the call to go to set and wish I was over there with them. Don't get me wrong. I am grateful for the work I get as a coordinator and the trust productions place in me, but I want to answer honestly. I will always consider myself stunt infantry and proud of it.

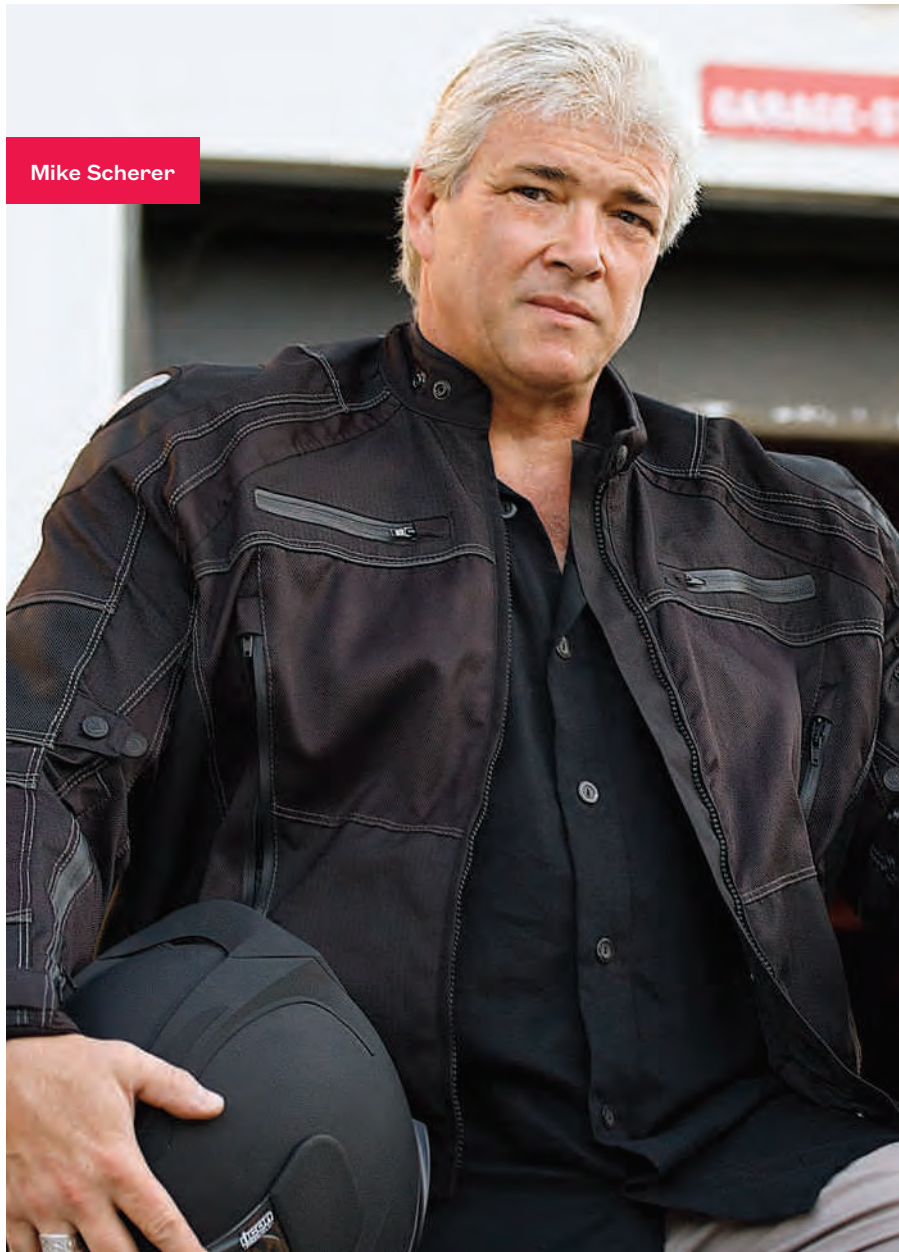
During your off time, what makes you happy?

Mike: I am a fabricator. I have a big shop behind my house where I am always tinkering, or building cars or bikes. I like to do creative welding/metalwork as well as wood-working. My wife and I have a large wooded property, and we like maintaining the trails and keeping the forest healthy. I can't believe I am going to admit this, but I'm also a huge gamer. I take my Xbox time very seriously.



Angelica Lisk-Hann

Mike Scherer



Rob: I like going to movies with my son. I like to sit in the kitchen and have a coffee with my wife in the morning. I like to train. I like to go for walks in the forest.

What would you say to someone who wants to get into the stunts business? Mike: It's tougher now than it once was. I sometimes ask people why they want to do it. The answers can be enlightening and a pretext to what kind of performer they will become. Be good at whatever skill you're pushing. Don't bend the truth about your abilities when asked. Play to your strengths. The rest will come with time. Train and try new things when the opportunity arises. Taking two or three classes at something new will not make you an expert in those disciplines, but will enhance the skills you already have. Sometimes the most innocuous talent will put you ahead of the rest for a potential job. Have a good demo reel ready. Nothing fancy or too long but enough to get the point across. Five minutes may not seem like a long time but when you're staring at a pile of demos 30 or 40 deep, it can be a bit much. Use an Internet link for videos as they are easy to pass around. Lastly, invest in yourself and that includes getting some basic gear. **Rob:** It takes a lot of hard work, dedication and persistence to become a professional stunt performer. You have to be patient. Be ready to face injury, rejection, adversity and hardship. You will need a bit of luck, a solid day job and a level head. If you are a good listener, have a good work ethic and are a decent human being, you will have a better chance of succeeding. No matter how successful

you may become, always remember that your opportunities are a direct result of the hard work by the people who came before you. Be humble. Work hard. Be kind and respectful to everyone—not just to the people who can offer you something.

How have you seen the business change in the last 10 years? Rob: I think the biggest change in stunts has been the increased presence of visual effects and elite-level stunt rigging in the creation of stunt action. Things that were once, literally, death-defying can now be executed with relative safety. It's exciting. It has really changed our business at a fundamental level. I feel that people are starting to appreciate and respect the level of science, dedication and technical expertise that goes into executing high-level, action-packed shows. **Mike:** The main change I've noticed is the move away from mechanically-assisted stunt work to wirework. The technology available now in terms of high-speed computer winches and the top-notch skills of the stunt rigger community has made it possible to execute complex setups and actions. I feel these advancements evolved hand-in-hand with advancements in digital filming technology and computer-generated imagery. There was a time when your basic stunt kit used to comprise of knees, elbows, hips, a good back pad and a Nomex (flame and head resistant). Now the essential item is a good harness.

One significant difference between being a stunt coordinator in B.C. (working under the BCMPA) and being a stunt coordinator across

the rest of the country (working under the Independent Production Agreement) is that the IPA requires hiring a Canadian stunt coordinator. Any foreign stunt coordinator hired is in addition to an ACTRA member. Please share with us your thoughts on this.

Mike: In Montreal, this system has worked out well for both parties. When a stunt coordinator comes from another part of the world, she or he may not know the community. It's in the production's best interest to have a Canadian coordinator on board to help streamline the task of hiring performers, and sourcing riggers and equipment. For example, when I've worked on shows overseas, joining forces with a local coordinator on the process of vetting performers was a timesaver. And that applies to all the resources you need to get the job done. Here in Quebec, there is the added nuance of needing to be bilingual to deal with these aforementioned things and even internally to communicate with other departments which can be a safety issue. There is also the chance the foreign productions will see that locals are quite capable of handling the task and may simply go with a local as key on future projects. **Rob:** Having a Canadian coordinator working alongside a foreign coordinator is an intelligent, practical, functional choice. It is an essential part of the success of any production shooting in Canada. We all know this to be true. It just makes sense. This is why ACTRA's IPA includes specific wording that makes this position compulsory. Unfortunately, that specific wording is not included in UBCP/ACTRA's BCMPA. The practice of having a Canadian coordin-

ator has been "common practice" for years but there is no actual requirement for a production to have a Canadian coordinator on sets in B.C. unless the production qualifies as Canadian content.

The Vancouver stunt community has lobbied strongly for this detail to be changed, but the issue has always been deemed a low priority by producers at the bargaining table. The Vancouver stunt community feels this needs to be a high-priority item in the upcoming BCMPA negotiations, and that it is essential that we establish a nationwide standard for this practice. Having a Canadian coordinator on sets is the best way for us to ensure that foreign coordinators achieve successful results on productions that are shooting in Canada. We feel strongly that this policy should be an industry standard nationwide.

Rob and Mike are unfazed and widely respected in our stunt community. We thank them both for sharing with us their personal experiences, their advice and especially for taking every precaution to keep our members, crew and everyone (in between) safe on set.



Mike Scherer is driving the yellow van and Jamie Jones the black SUV in this xXx: Return of Xander Cage stunt vehicle sequence.

Rob Hayter is a Vancouver-based stunt coordinator, performer and actor. Currently, he is the stunt coordinator on the series *Supernatural* (The CW) and has just completed his second season on *Lucifer* (Fox TV). Rob is a recipient of the Taurus World Stunt Award, and has performed on projects such as *Arrow*, *The 100*, *Deadpool*, *Star Trek Beyond*, *Night at the Museum* and *Elysium*. He began his professional film/TV career in 1989 as an ACTRA Alberta member and began pursuing stunts in Vancouver in the late '90s. Rob is Chair of the UBCP/ACTRA Stunt Committee and a member of the ACTRA National Stunt Committee.

Mike Scherer started working in the stunts business in 1987. His credits include *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*, *Riddick* and *xXx: Return of Xander Cage*. Mike was an Applied Sciences major at college, and worked as a marine engine and transmission technician for eight years. He once owned a performance motorcycle

shop called Hyperion Racing. Mike now lives in Montreal. He has been married to Charlene Francique since 1987. Both she and their son Warren are also ACTRA members. Mike is an ACTRA National Councillor, Treasurer of ACTRA Montreal and member of the ACTRA National Stunt Committee.

Angelica Lisk-Hann has been a stunt performer for over 20 years and an actor for more than 25 years. Credits include: *The Book of Negroes*, *Kick Ass 2*, *Slasher*, *Taken*, *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter*, and *Quantico*. Angelica is not only the first black female stunt coordinator in Canada but she is currently one of a mere handful in the world. She is an Olympic-trained athlete who set a number of track & field records. Angelica is an ACTRA Toronto Councillor, an ACTRA National Councillor, Chair of the National Diversity Committee and a member of the ACTRA National Stunt Committee.

Political action, strength in numbers

By Elliott Anderson

Across Canada, ACTRA members have experienced tremendous success in a growing film and television industry. A key part of that success is due to federal, provincial and municipal governments stepping up to the plate. Smart policies have helped grow and sustain the industry. Smart politicians know how to listen and act on what they've heard. However, when politicians stop listening, or when they ignore what they're hearing, the results can be disastrous. That's why ACTRA members have to stay active in the political arena.

Like Saskatchewan in 2012, Nova Scotia received a devastating blow in April 2015 when the province's Liberal government delivered its budget to the legislature and dropped a bombshell on Nova Scotia's \$180-million-a-year film and television industry: it would be gutting the film and television tax credit, and scrapping the Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia office.

Not only did these changes come without warning, in the fall of 2014 the Liberal government had passed legislation to maintain and build upon the tax credit's success. That's certainly what voters had hoped for. The tax credit and the film office had been cornerstones of an incredibly successful strategy to bring and keep film and TV production in Nova Scotia. Not only was the strategy effective, it was working beyond anyone's expectations. 2014 was a banner year for production. However, following the disastrous 2015 budget, business essentially dropped by half.

As ACTRA Maritimes member Jonathan Torrens aptly put in his article, "Demolished Film Communities" (*ACTRA Magazine*, winter 2016), the government's decision "took just 20 minutes to undo what had taken 20 years to build."

This was what led to ACTRA Maritimes' Political Action Training, which was held on April 23. ACTRA Maritimes performers had been front and centre in protests that rocked Nova Scotia throughout 2015 and had forced Premier Stephen McNeil's Liberal government onto the defensive, scrambling to develop measures to fix the damage caused to the industry. Now, on



After experiencing a banner year in 2014—and then following the disastrous 2015 Nova Scotia budget—business for the rest of the year essentially dropped by half.

the verge of another provincial election, ACTRA activists were gathering to strategize and share tactics to ensure their voices will be heard by all parties in the coming campaign.

The first morning, those of us from central Canada got to meet with members of ACTRA Maritimes' executive led by their impressive and effective new President Francine Deschepper. We had a very productive exchange of ideas, information and strategies. Outgoing ACTRA National President Ferne Downey had

been immersed in the challenges facing Nova Scotia for some time and, as a Maritimes-born performer, emphasized the need for performers to be heard by all levels of government. ACTRA's Federal Outreach Co-ordinator, Chris Cornish, who has spearheaded multiple lobbying efforts to Parliament Hill, shared practical tips on how to organize those efforts and engage politicians so that messages are heard and heeded.

Michal Hay, a seasoned political organizer who had worked with ACTRA's Toronto branch to organize a day of political action, explained the importance of mobilizing the incredible power of ACTRA members. She noted that progressives in organizations like ACTRA don't always have access to the millions of dollars needed to buy influence or ad campaigns. However, Michal noted that ACTRA had one advantage: "What do we have that they don't have? People. When enough people organize around a common goal they have real power."

That afternoon, ACTRA members gathered to put that idea into effect. They learned about strategies to get ACTRA's issues on the agenda for the upcoming campaign. They also got to hear from politicians from all parties. The focus was not just about party platforms but about how politicians think about issues and how best to get their attention. Conservative MLA John Lohr spoke frankly about his experience as a candidate and how political decisions were always a team effort for him. Liberal MLA Joachim Stroink was somewhat on the hot seat, given the Liberal government's track record. However, Stroink made it clear that Liberals had learned important lessons after the

fallout from their decision and pledged to work hard to regain ACTRA members' trust. ACTRA member and New Democrat MLA Lenore Zann was the final guest of the day. As a performer who made the leap in to politics, she was able to emphasize how important being active and loud was to the members seeking to influence the coming campaign.

Election night yielded some pleasant changes. ACTRA Member Susan LeBlanc was one of many new MLAs elected (and ACTRA member Lenore Zann was easily re-elected). Early in the evening, it seemed like a minority government was certain but, in the end, the Liberal government won a razor-thin majority government. Pundits noted that McNeil's poor treatment of the film industry in 2015 cost many Liberal MLAs their jobs. This is something they'll be reminded of as ACTRA members mobilize: holding the Liberal government to the commitments they made, ensuring the Opposition parties work equally hard to hold them to those commitments, and building a strong screen industry in Nova Scotia.



Elliott Anderson,
Director Public Policy
& Communications



Nova Scotia's film and television industry rallied outside the provincial legislature on April 15, 2015. Pictured here are Jacob Sampson, Mary-Colin Chisholm, Andrea Dymond (and baby Lydia), Jeff Schwager, Geneviève Steele, Richard Hadley, Ferne Downey, Jeremy Webb, Jamie Bradley and Gordon White. Rally photos by Stoo Metz.



David Whalley, Randy Boliver and ACTRA Maritimes Past President Jamie Bradley.



Patrick Roach, Mike Smith, Robb Wells and John Paul Tremblay.



Maritimes Past President Deb Allen, current President Francine Deschepper and Past President Sherry Smith.



Jonathan Torrens, with nearly 5,000 people, protested the cut to the provincial film tax credit.



Ferne

Outgoing National President, Ferne Downey, sits down with ACTRA Maritimes National councillor Jeremy Webb. They stare at each other, assessing the situation.

Ferne Downey: Good morning Jeremy
Jeremy Webb: How are you? Superb.

Along with being our National President, you simultaneously took on the role of activist. What is it about the activist role that gives you a thrill? It's actually getting things done. I believe that all this activism is quite a creative act. We all—as individuals, as performers—bring something to it. You're advancing the game, you're making something better, you're creating an opportunity, you're going down a new path.

This isn't the end of your activism on behalf of the labour movement—what is coming next for you? I'll be FIA [International Federation of Actors] president until September 2020, my international work continues.

You've accomplished a lot in the almost decade you've spent leading our union. What are the high points of your eight years as our National President? Making it a shorter pathway for members to become full members of the union; that was one of the first things I got done.

I felt really good working with Alvin Sanders, who became my National Vice President and the President of UBCP/ACTRA—the deepened national solidarity he helped us build.

I'm proud of the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) work that we got done. I'm really proud of our agreements, like our IPA and our NCA, and working with Stephen Waddell and our executive members. We're one of the few unions in the world that has really been able to protect performers' rights in all forms of exploitation online.

“We all—as individuals, as performers—bring something to it. You’re advancing the game, you’re making something better, you’re creating an opportunity, you’re going down a new path.

Ferne Downey

If ‘they’ were going to write one thing under your name on the ACTRA wall, (Ferne starts laughing)... your photo goes up, and there’s one thing. “Ferne Downey did...?” What would it say? Ooooh, that’s a really good question. I do have a sense of what it is that I bring, but I don’t know what it’s called. **JW tries to talk, but is overruled.** What do I bring is... connecting the dots, you know all those old metaphors about singularly we all go our independent ways, and as artists we certainly did that, but collectively we focus and harness the power, and I think, somehow, I’ve been able to find different ways to get people going in the same direction. I feel like I’m a unifier.

I’ve sat in dozens of meetings now that you’ve chaired... (Laughs) Yes, you have. (Teasing) Dozens of hours, hundreds, thousands of hours of watching you lead

National Council. Whenever members talk of you, the word that comes up is “inspiration.” Oh! That’s nice.

It’s true. You inspire the people you’re working with to follow you down that passionate, gutsy, ballsy, ‘roll up your sleeves’ path. I like that, that’s wonderful to hear.

That’s what we think. I never got jaded. After all these years, eight years as National President, five as the National Treasurer, all the years at Toronto... you know, I think having that energy that renews itself is because of the people you’re working with.

Right. So I guess finally then, if you could send a final presidential message out to the universe, what do you want to say to our members as you pick your coat up off the back of the door and put your hat on and



pick up your briefcase and slowly stroll out the door onto Church Street... I need a trench coat and sort of a jaunty cap.

I was picturing exactly that! You got right into my head. OK good.

Exactly. You’re walking off towards the plane, the fog is rolling in, there’s a piano playing somewhere, what do you turn around and say to the camera, to the members? That I loved them well. It was work worth doing, because—Oh! My god, you’re going to make me cry—it really was work worth doing because of the relationship with the members I had across the country. I mean it’s my people! It’s my community, it’s my creative space, and I got a little bit good at the leadership part of it, but it makes me feel proud that we kind of, advanced the game a bit. I feel good about that.

JW hands FD a Kleenex. And you’ve got friends now across the world, because of the work you’ve done. I do. And members across the world who still look to you. I do.

Thank you Ferne. Thank you for crying at the end of the interview, so I can say I did that. I’m going to miss it like crazy. And one more thing, at least between you and I, it would have been impossible to do if [my partner] Paul Ledoux wasn’t such a massive supporter of my political life. He really stepped up in a big way.

So, the membership owes Paul a huge debt. Thank you, Paul.

Thank you, Ferne.

2017
ACTRA
Woman
of the Year

Tina Keeper

“It has been a privilege to work as an actor—a critical role within our country. I am especially grateful and proud, now, to participate with my sisters and brothers and support the voices and stories of Canadian creators. Ekosani, thank you.

An active member of Canada’s film and TV industry for over thirty years, Tina Keeper is well-known for her role as RCMP officer Michelle Kenidi on the CBC series *North of 60* for which she received a Gemini Award for Best Performance. From 2006 to 2008 Tina was the elected Member of Parliament for Manitoba’s Churchill riding under the Liberal Party of Canada, and went on to serve as the Official Opposition’s Critic for Public Health and Canadian Heritage. She is actively involved in producing public education initiatives to build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Tina is a member of the Norway House Cree Nation.

How did you start your acting career? As a visual artist, I started as the set and costume designer for an amateur youth acting troupe—we called ourselves the Native Theatre Group. Of the members in the group, most went on to work as actors or technicians in theatre and in television, or as journalists, and one academic and one

politician. It was an exploration of our space in this physical space of Canada, and the political and cultural landscape. I was greatly influenced by the artists, Odjig, Jackson Beardy, Norval Morriseau and Buffy Sainte-Marie. I was also raised in an environment where both my parents were active members of the political and social activity of the day as institutions and Indigenous political organizations were being formed. It was at that little Native Theatre Group in the Winnipeg Indian & Metis Friendship Centre in the late ‘70s that I found a deep interest in theatre and acting. I then went on to work in theatre for a number of years before going to the University of Winnipeg where I earned a B.A. with a major in theatre.

You worked on the *North of 60* CBC TV series for five years in Bragg Creek, Alberta. Fans are still petitioning to bring back the show. Tell us about this. *North of 60* (*N60*) was Canada’s first television series with Indigenous leads. CBC aired six seasons of

N60 plus five TV movies. We had no APTN at the time. The series spoke to a great number of Canadians across the country who lived in smaller cities, towns, hamlets and reserves. I am very proud of everyone who made this show happen—the creators, actors, producers, network executives and our fans. I am also forever grateful for the generosity of the South Slavey people of the NWT who shared with us their stories. And we never did have an actual finale, so ... who knows?

You served as an elected Member of Parliament. How did this leap into politics come about? I had to leave TV series work when *N60* ended because I didn’t want to miss seeing my children grow up! I was based out of Winnipeg and had a home up in northern Manitoba. I double majored with my B.A. so I also had a major in history with a special focus on our Canadian Indigenous history. I went to work with Indigenous organizations, working on the self-governance process and the development of the treaty commission. Through this work, I became deeply involved in suicide prevention for Indigenous youth, and the work on violence against Indigenous women and children. As First Nations, our education, health and public funding is through programs of the federal Indigenous and Northern Affairs Department. Though provincial laws and standards apply, there are no mechanisms in place to ensure disparities do not happen.

First Nations children’s services in education and health, including specialized services and infrastructure, are severely

underfunded by the federal government. For these reasons, I saw the role of a federal MP as critical—I took the opportunity to run in the 2005/06 campaign. I was proud to win the seat the late Elijah Harper had won in 1993.

You are an actor, producer, creator and activist. What is next for Tina Keeper? Producing and maybe politics again.

What does being named ACTRA Woman of the Year mean to you? It is such an honour to be named in this group of women. Tantoo Cardinal was my inspiration long before I knew her. She is a spirit sister—part of my family. I remember meeting Mary Walsh in the wings of the Gemini Awards one year and I couldn’t believe it—she was such a star and inspiration to me. These women love their craft. They have changed Canada, and participated in the creation of our unique and incredible industry. Of course, I must mention Shirley Douglas who has inspired generations of women—she is a goddess who gave us the inspiration to be strong, funny, creative, thoughtful and imaginative creators.

Tina Keeper is President of Kistikan Pictures, which is a partner company of Buffalo Gal Pictures. Recent productions include the feature film, *Road of Iniquity*; the critically-acclaimed *Royal Winnipeg Ballet*; *Going Home Star*; *The REDress Project*; and the APTN drama series *Cashing In*. In 2004, Tina received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award (now the Indspire Awards) for her work in the arts and has also won three American Indian Film Festival Awards. In 2002, she was named to the Order of Manitoba. Tina graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre, and has also trained at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, the Banff Centre and the Sundance Film Institute.



Tantoo Cardinal

The Academy's 2017 Canadian Screen Awards

ACTRA member Howie Mandel hosted the 2017 *Canadian Screen Awards* show, which aired on CBC Television on March 12. *Orphan Black* garnered nine awards, with Tatiana Maslany winning Best Actress in a Drama Series for her performance (or, rather, performances). Tatiana also won the Best Actress Canadian Screen Award for the feature film, *The Other Half*. *Kim's Convenience* won four awards, including Paul Sun-Hyung Lee winning Best Actor in a Comedy Series. Catherine O'Hara won Best Actress in a Comedy Series for *Schitt's Creek*. Adrian Holmes won Best Actor in a Drama Series for *19-2*. For feature film, Stephan James won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Actor CSA for *Race* and Molly Parker Best Supporting Actress for *Weirdos*. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners.

Tantoo Cardinal received the Earle Grey Award for her significant body of work. Natasha Negovanlis won the Fan's Choice Award for her role in the web series *Carmilla*. A highlight of the Canadian Screen Awards included Christopher Plummer accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award stating, "I've spent almost 70 years making a fool of myself in this crazy, mad profession of ours and I've had the time of my life."

ACTRA is a proud sponsor of the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television's Canadian Screen Awards. For the full list of winners, visit www.academy.ca



Christopher Plummer

Tatiana Maslany

Natasha Negovanlis

Adrian Holmes

Paul Sun-Hyung Lee

Stephan James

ACTRA Maritimes Award Winners

Screen Nova Scotia hosted its third annual awards show on May 4 at Casino Nova Scotia. For the third year in a row, Mike McLeod won the ACTRA Maritimes Award for Best Male Actor in a Leading Role for playing the priest in the series *Forgive Me: Web Confessions*. Molly Dunsworth took home the Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role Award for her work in the short film *Ingrid and the Black Hole*. Bette MacDonald picked up the Best Female Actor in a Leading or Featured Role Award for her role as Trudy Walsh, the outspoken school secretary on *Mr. D*. Nathan D. Simmons won the Best Male Actor in a Supporting Role Award for *Hustle & Heart*. Mary-Colin Chisholm was presented with a Life Membership Certificate. Visit Screennovascotia.com for more information.

Molly Dunsworth, Bette MacDonald, Mary-Colin Chisholm, Francine Deschepper and Jeremy Webb. Photo: Stoo Metz





Mary Black

Kirk Caouette

Sam Payne Awards

Mary Black was the recipient of the 2016 Sam Payne Lifetime Achievement Award. An accomplished Canadian theatrical, film and TV performer, Mary restarted her acting career at the age of 60 and has accumulated a number of credits along the way, including *Man of Steel* and *Elf*.

Kirk Caouette received the 2016 Sam Payne Award. He is a multi-award-winning filmmaker and actor as well as an accomplished stunt performer, fight choreographer, screenplay writer, teacher and musician. Presented by UBCP/ACTRA, the legacy left by Sam Payne continues to be applauded 33 years after his death by the British Columbia acting community.



Winners of the ACTRA Awards in Toronto

At the 2017 ACTRA Awards in Toronto, Jean Yoon won the award for Outstanding Performance—Female for her work in *Kim's Convenience*; Joey Klein won Outstanding Performance—Male for *We're Still Together*; and Linda Kash won Outstanding Performance—Voice for *Fugget About It*. The ACTRA Toronto Stunt Award was presented posthumously to Joel Harris and accepted by his spouse, stunt performer Alicia Turner. The inaugural Members' Choice Series Ensemble Award went to the cast of *Kim's Convenience* and Joel Keller presented the 2017 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence to Yannick Bisson.

Alicia Turner, Simu Liu, Yannick Bisson, Theresa Tova, Joey Klein, Linda Kash, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee and Jean Yoon. Photo: George Pimentel Photography



Eric McCormack receives 2017 Leslie Yeo Award for Volunteerism

AFBS recognized Canadian actor and AFBS member, Eric McCormack, as this year's recipient of the Leslie Yeo Award for Volunteerism. Alongside his wife Janet Holden, Eric creates awareness and raises money for many organizations, including Stand Up To Cancer and Plaid For Dad. Eric donated his \$5,000 award to the Joy Coghill Legacy Fund at PAL Vancouver. Each year, AFBS honours its founding members' legacy by recognizing a current member's exceptional volunteerism. Know an AFBS member whose voluntary contributions deserve to be celebrated? Learn more about eligibility at afbs.ca/our-community.

ACTRA Awards in Montreal

ACTRA Montreal kicked off the summer with an awards show everyone will be talking about 'til next year. Congrats to Charlotte Rogers for Outstanding Female Performance in *LARPs*, Jesse Camacho for Outstanding Male Performance in *We're Still Together*, Mich Todorovic for Outstanding Stunt Performance in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, Jennifer Seguin for Outstanding Voice Performance in *2 Nuts and a Richard*, Victoria Sanchez for Outstanding Videogame Performance in *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* and to Fred Nguyen for Best Short Film, *Grip of Death*. Honoured with a Life Membership at the event were Past President Lynne Adams, Tyrone Benskin and dubbing innovator Hubert Fielden.

Mich Todorovic, Victoria Sanchez, Jennifer Seguin, Charlotte Rogers and Jesse Camacho. Photo: Nadia Zheng



Alberta's 'Rosie' Awards

Jesse Lipscombe won the Best Performance by an Alberta Actor Award for the feature film *It's Not My Fault And I Don't Care Anyway*. The Alberta Film and Television Awards ceremony was hosted by Michelle Thrush. Celebrating excellence and outstanding achievement in Alberta film, TV and new media, the Rosie Awards are presented annually by the Alberta Media Production Industries Association. ampia.org



A photograph of three women on a film set. The woman on the left has short, styled red hair and is wearing a patterned blouse. The woman in the center has blonde hair, wears glasses, a dark cardigan over a maroon top, and has headphones around her neck. The woman on the right has blonde hair pulled back and is wearing a dark, short-sleeved top. They are all looking at a large, open map on a table in front of them. The background is a wooden wall with a staircase on the left.

Looking back with pride— Moving forward with excitement

Women In the Director's Chair
Celebrating 20 empowering years

By Carol Whiteman

On the set of *X Company* (CBC),
ACTRA member and WIDC alumna
Stephanie Morgenstern (centre)
directing lead cast Evelyne Brochu
and Lara Jean Chorostecki.

“We wanted to inspire the creation of more and better roles for women on screen by empowering the women leaders behind the camera—to create authentic, female-driven stories. Twenty years ago we could not have predicted the success of the Women In the Director’s Chair program—and that it would be just as essential today.”

The pilot session of the Women in the Director’s Chair (WIDC) in 1997 was led by acclaimed filmmaker Anne Wheeler as the inaugural mentor director, facilitated by The Banff Centre’s Sara Diamond, WIFTV board members Peg Campbell and Gabrielle Rose and me representing ACTRA. Since then, WIDC’s Canadian female director alumnae have gone on to direct thousands of hours of quality screen entertainment, with over 40 feature films that include *Amazon Falls*, *Random Acts of Romance* (Katrin Bowen), *The Anniversary* (Valerie Buhagiar) and *Brown Girl Begins* (Sharon Lewis), all starring ACTRA members. The impressive alumnae list is posted on the widc.ca website. As part of our anniversary celebrations we recently launched a new alumnae directory featuring profiles of 220 of our women director alumnae from coast to coast to coast at widc.ca.

WIDC alumnae have created six network fiction television series, including two by ACTRA Toronto member Stephanie

Morgenstern, with partner Mark Ellis (*Flashpoint*, *X Company*).

“I owe so much to Women In the Director’s Chair,” says Stephanie Morgenstern, who recently directed the two-hour season finale of *X Company*. “This program made a powerful impression on me. Working closely with an inspiring mentor, a committed crew and a fine ensemble of actors, I felt emboldened and I found myself capable in a way I never had before... WIDC was a critical threshold toward my life as a director.”

UBCP/ACTRA member and WIDC Feature Film Award winner for her debut fiction feature *Red Snow*, Marie Clements, said the award is “... a legacy passed forward by an incredible canon of women filmmakers who have made Women In the Director’s Chair a vibrant touchstone for giving voice and championing the storyteller by creating change.”

Through tailored mentorships with industry professionals, including ensembles



ACTRA member and WIDC alumna Alison Reid on the set of *Saving Hope*. Alison is a seasoned stunt coordinator and 2nd unit director. This past season she directed episodes of *Heartland* (CBC) and *Saving Hope* (CTV).

of ACTRA actors selected from across the country as well as project development, career advancement and feature film production awards, WIDC has helped change the face of Canada’s screen industry. The WIDC program has created an industry recognized space that has empowered and developed a generation of stories by women storytellers.

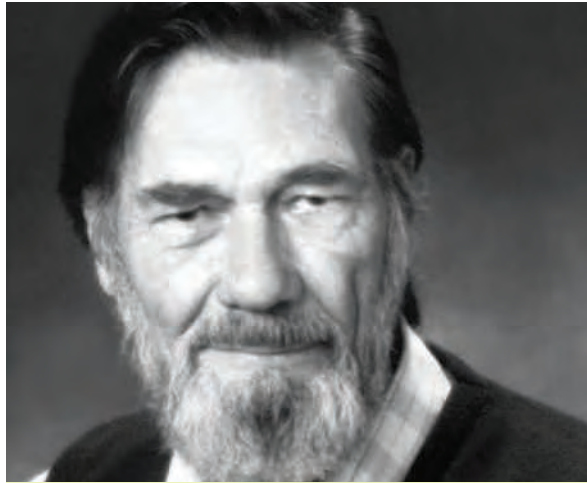
Participants tell me that what makes the WIDC special is the professional collegiality and sense of belonging it generates. Having facilitated WIDC sessions since the beginning, I know that it takes work to maintain that safe creative space. It’s worth the effort as people can be positively transformed when they feel respected and heard.

WIDC now delivers offerings in Vancouver, Whistler, Toronto and St. John’s with plans for upcoming events to celebrate WIDC’s 20th

anniversary. The support of our industry stakeholders has been and will continue to be crucial to our success. I thank our governing board members who include ACTRA National Women’s Committee Chair Heather Allin and Past ACTRA President Brian Gromoff (emeritus) and look forward to our continued journey of storytelling, exploration and growth.



Carol Whiteman is a UBCP/ACTRA member and co-creator/producer of the internationally respected Women In the Director’s Chair (WIDC) program. She has been recognized by two Governor General’s award nominations and multiple awards for promoting women’s equality in Canada’s screen industry including WIFT Toronto’s Crystal Award for Mentorship and WIFT Vancouver’s Woman of the Year. Carol is completing her doctorate in Transformational Change at Simon Fraser University.

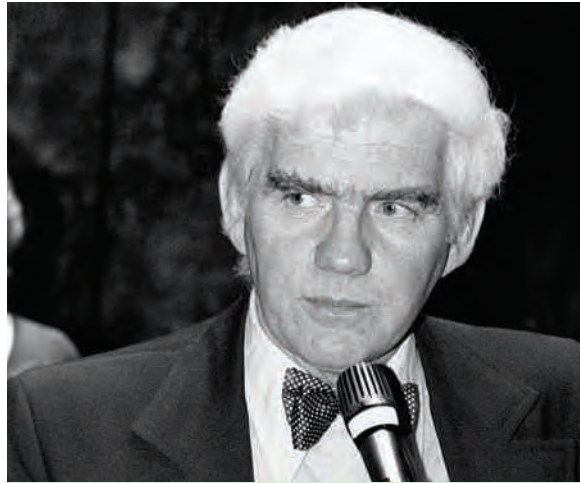


Lloyd Edward Berry
1926–2016

A great friend and an unselfish advocate for the arts, Lloyd gave freely of his time, his talent, his creativity and his energy to encourage others with an emphasis on young people who wished to learn and perform in the theatre. After WWII he became very involved in the establishment of theatre, including children's theatre throughout Western Canada. He was also a strong advocate for ACTRA. After helping establish ACTRA in Alberta, Lloyd settled in Vancouver where he went on to become a major part of the theatre as well as the burgeoning TV and movie industries. He was not hesitant to stand up and express his opinion when he saw something that was required to improve the stage, studio or set in order to improve the working conditions for artists. He wanted artists to be proud of their performance, and the audience to be entertained and leave wanting more. For the whole story and the good stuff go online to www.mem.com and click on Lloyd's name.

Lloyd, you were one of the good guys, you left us wanting more!

Bruce H MacLeod



Jack Gray
1927–2017

Jack Gray was an active and devoted member of ACTRA until 1991, when he led the writers to pursue their autonomy by establishing the Writers Guild of Canada. Jack spent more than a quarter of his life fighting for the rights of artists. First as a member of ACTRA and later as a member of the WGC, he bargained, wrote policy papers, testified at CRTC hearings, appeared before parliamentary committees and forged international agreements. Among his top accomplishments: negotiating the production fee, which allows writers to make a living wage; founding (along with others) the International Affiliation of Writers of Guilds; ensuring writers retain copyright of their own scripts; and helping to develop the point system that requires productions receiving public funding and are considered "Canadian content" be required to engage Canadian artists. We all salute Jack's vision and tenacity. He helped build an industry in which Canadian writers and actors continue to thrive today. Love and gratitude to Jack's wife Sandra MacDonald, and his children and grandchildren for sharing him with us.

Jill Golick



Betty Kennedy
1926–2017

Betty loved her work and her family in equal parts, and she succeeded at both. A journalist, radio host, producer, TV personality and author, Betty Kennedy remains one of our celebrated Canadian broadcasting pioneers. Her career took flight at CFRB Radio, then one of Canada's top stations, where she became known as a gentle, insightful interviewer who always did her homework. We saw each other regularly when we both worked on *Front Page Challenge*, she as the sole female panelist and I on the CBC production team. She sat beside Gordon Sinclair and the guest panelist, who both risked looking rude when they had to jump in with their question because Betty was always ready with the next question to ask. Working on the show for more than three decades, Betty Kennedy was a household name.

Betty represents a success story in our radio and television industry that encouraged women (and all journalists) to do their research, to develop an inquiring mind and to not take "no" for an answer. She may be interviewing Saint Peter right now!

Lorraine Thomson



Alan Thicke
1947-2016

Actor Alan Thicke, who was most well-known for his role as Jason Seaver on the '80s sitcom *Growing Pains*, was also a songwriter, producer, and game and talk show host. He worked on CBC shows beginning in the late 1960s, including *The Tommy Hunter Show*, *Time for Living* and *That's Showbiz*. His producing credits included variety shows featuring music performers Anne Murray, René Simard, Bobby Vinton and Mac Davis. From 1980 to 1983, Alan hosted the afternoon CTV talk show, *The Alan Thicke Show*.

Alan was nominated for three Emmy Awards for his work in the late '70s as a writer for Barry Manilow's talk show and for the satirical show *America 2-Night*.

In 2013, Alan was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame and he received the 2016 Canadian Icon Award at the Whistler Film Festival. He is survived by his three sons, Robin, Brennan and Carter, and his wife Tanya Callau.



Joy Coghill
1926-2017

She packed the house at her Celebration of Life in Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral. There were people of all ages from near and far, folks who had not seen each other in decades, reconnecting amid tears and laughter. Joy often said "there is a family you are born into and a family you earn along the way." And there we were, members of the extended family that Joy and her husband Jack, engendered through a lifetime. Speakers shared how Joy had nudged them into career and life paths, and told of her longstanding specific instructions on what to do at her memorial—she was always specific. As Joy was never shy about encouraging support for a cause she believed in, I am sure she would approve of me suggesting the Joy Coghill Legacy Fund at her beloved PAL Vancouver (palvancouver.org) and the Joy Coghill New Works Fund at the theatre company she founded to employ senior artists (westerngoldtheatre.org). The spark that ignited has winked out but the creative fires still rage.

Keith Martin Gordey



Bob Robertson
1945-2017

When little Bobby Robertson from Newcastle, England, landed in Canada, kids laughed at his short pants and strange Geordie accent. He insisted on seeing a speech therapist, making a "Canadian accent" the first impression my father mastered at the age of seven. He grew up, bought himself some regular pants and began working in radio. Later, he partnered with Linda Cullen to create the CBC Radio show *Double Exposure*. Canadians faithfully listened to *Double Exposure* every Saturday for over a decade. My Dad and Linda's work partnership became a life partnership, and I am proud to call Linda family. My father tirelessly supported my creative ambitions but he wasn't just my cheerleader, countless others in the community saw my father as a friend and mentor. A tall man, with a booming voice and a big heart, Bob filled a room with positive energy. My father remained that beautiful, positive person throughout his agonizing battle with cancer and its complications. One of the bravest, funniest and kindest people I've ever known, I was lucky enough to call him Dad.

Jennifer Robertson

Andrew Phung, Nicole Power,
Simu Liu, Andrea Bang

Be a Member.
Play a Role.

Photo: George Pimentel

**ACTRA
Member Special**

Contact
membership@academy.ca
for your discount code

ACADEMY

OF CANADIAN CINEMA & TELEVISION

Save 25% on a new Academy Membership. Join now! Offer expires August 31, 2017

**STAY IN TOUCH
WITH YOUR UNION**

ACTRA NATIONAL
416.489.1311
1.800.387.3516
actra.ca

ACTRA PERFORMERS'
RIGHTS SOCIETY
416.489.1311
1.800.387.3516
actra.ca/prs

**ACTRA BRANCHES
ACROSS CANADA**

UBCP/ACTRA
604.689.0727
ubcp.com

ACTRA Alberta
403.228.3123
actraalberta.com

ACTRA Saskatchewan
306.757.0885
actrasask.com

ACTRA Manitoba
204.339.9750
actramanitoba.ca

ACTRA Toronto
416.928.2278
actratoronto.com

ACTRA Ottawa
613.565.2168
actraottawa.ca

ACTRA Montreal
514.844.3318
actramontreal.ca

ACTRA Maritimes
902.420.1404
actramaritimes.ca

ACTRA Newfoundland/
Labrador
709.722.0430
actranewfoundland.ca



ACTRA National



@ACTRANat



@actranational

**ACTRA MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2017
VOL. 24, ISSUE 2**

ACTRA Magazine is the official publication of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), a Canadian union of performers affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the International Federation of Actors (FIA). *ACTRA Magazine* is free of charge to ACTRA members.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Elliott Anderson, Ferne Downey, Keith Martin Gordey, Daniel Libman, David Sparrow, Carol Taverner, Theresa Tova, Stephen Waddell, Jeremy Webb

CONTRIBUTORS

Tina Alford
Elliott Anderson
Lesley Bradey
Daintry Dalton
Ferne Downey
Rob Hayter
Alistair Hepburn
Tina Keeper
Emma Kitchen
Angelica Lisk-Hann
Jennifer McGibbon
Candy Palmater
Mike Scherer
Champi Sevathiar
David Sparrow
Alison Stewart
Theresa Tova
Stephen Waddell
Tony Walsh
Jeremy Webb
Carol Whiteman
Karen Woolridge

Design
Lauren Wickware

Imaging
Paul Jerinkitsch

Printed in Canada by union labour at Thistle Printing.

All contents are copyright © 2017 ACTRA. All rights are reserved and contents, in whole or in part may be reprinted without permission. The points of view expressed do not necessarily represent those of ACTRA.

Please return any undelivered mail to
ACTRA
300-625 Church Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 2G1

1.800.387.3516
actramagazine@actra.ca
www.actra.ca

Publication mail agreement #40069134 ISSN19262590



“Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union was created by us, for us. This is *our* financial institution, one that understands the needs of self-employed artists who work in the Canadian entertainment industry.”

—Tyrone Benskin

Tyrone Benskin is a Montreal-based performer. He has served as Vice President of ACTRA National and as an ACTRA Montreal Councillor, and is a founding member of Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union.



CREATIVE ARTS
SAVINGS & CREDIT UNION

Call us at 1.877.643.3660
and visit creativeartscu.com.



ACTRA's newest advocacy video

REEL WOMEN SEEN

Congratulations to our National Women's Committee

To organize a screening/info visit: actra.ca/reelwomenseen

 @ACTRAwomen

 ACTRAwomen



ACTRA

PLATINUM SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



LOCAL 669
CINEMATOGRAPHERS GUILD

Shaftesbury



WILLIAM F. WHITE INTERNATIONAL INC.
A COMWEB GROUP MEMBER