



I N T E R

Spring 2004

# ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

## *TRAILER PARK BOYS*

Acting up on the east coast PAGE 7





**Thor Bishopric**

# The battle rages on

**T**hanks to a number of recent victories, the ongoing struggle to protect our industry and increase opportunities for Canadian performers is a little more hopeful.

In February, we saw the result of a year's worth of relentless and passionate lobbying pay off with the restoration of the **Canadian Television Fund** in the Federal Budget. ACTRA members stood up to tell the government that last year's \$25 million cuts would have a devastating impact on our national identity and our jobs, and the Prime Minister proved to us that he was listening. Thanks to every one of you who helped make noise – especially **ACTRA Toronto** for their leading role and financial support.

While we have pulled back from the brink, our industry will only thrive under the promise of increased, stable funding. The CTF must be enriched and it must be made permanent.

We also found victory in the **CRTC's Public Notice on Drama**. The CRTC has incorporated a number of ACTRA's suggestions in its series of proposals, including giving broadcasters more ad time in exchange for airing Canadian drama. We are pleased with this first step, but we remain steadfast in our conviction that this crisis will not be resolved unless the CRTC also imposes minimum content and spending requirements on broadcasters.

**Telefilm's** policies pose another ongoing challenge. We were nothing less than shocked when we learned that it had signed a secret deal with **Creative Artists Agency** to package Hollywood talent. The message to Canadian performers being that our best shot of being in a Canadian film is to move to L.A. and sign on with a U.S. agent. We find it ludicrous to think that a big U.S. agency can help develop our indigenous film industry. It's in their interest to package their own talent in films aimed at attracting U.S. audiences. As Canadian taxpayers we are outraged; as Canadian performers, we are incensed.

ACTRA is also using its voice to bring attention to the looming prospect that our media and telecommunications industries will be opened up to foreign ownership. It is not an overstatement to say that if U.S. and multinational corporations are allowed to acquire Canadian broadcasting licenses, we will lose control of our airwaves, our jobs, our culture, and ultimately, our country. Period.

I am confident that we are well equipped to confront all of these challenges. In January I was pleased to chair our new National Council, a bi-annual gathering of our elected representatives from across the country. (*You can meet them on page 26.*) ACTRA thanks our outgoing National Executive for their invaluable service, especially Vice President **David Macniven** and Treasurer **Jamie Bradley**. In May, our National Executive met with UBCP in Vancouver for an extremely constructive couple of days, during which we agreed to proceed on a number of joint initiatives between ACTRA and UBCP.

Our recent successes have reminded us how much can be achieved if we work together with one passionate voice. I am confident that the enthusiasm and vision of our National Council and membership as a whole will serve us well as we embark on an ambitious agenda and continue the fight for our industry and culture.



*Thor Bishopric, ACTRA President*



25 March 2004

The Honourable Paul Martin  
Prime Minister  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the 21,000 members of ACTRA, (Alliance of Canadian Cinema Television and Radio Artists), I want to congratulate and thank you for restoring the Canadian Television Fund.

Last May 13, 2003, you and I had a face-to-face meeting along with several of ACTRA's best-known members including Paul Gross and Gordon Pinsent. At that meeting, you looked us in the eyes and promised you would restore the Canadian Television Fund. On Budget Day, you kept that promise and we are very pleased that you did.

The CTF is a critical component in the complex financing necessary for producing Canadian television drama and supports productions that allow our members to earn a living doing what they most love to do. Restoring the CTF is a fundamental first step in helping to develop a sustainable television production industry in Canada.

As you may recall from our meeting last spring, ACTRA remains focused on convincing the CRTC to take a pro-drama stance on developing a unique and truly Canadian television industry. With direction from your government, we hope that the CRTC will adjust its television policy so as to inspire Canada's private broadcasters to fulfil their obligations to all Canadians under the Broadcasting Act.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the interest you've shown in cultural issues that are fundamental to Canadians and to our performing artist members in particular. We look forward to building on our positive working relationship with you, the Ministers in your government and their staff.

Yours truly,



Thor Bishopric,  
President, ACTRA

Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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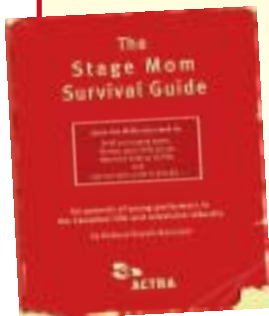
Thor's letter to the Prime Minister, thanking him for keeping his promise to ACTRA to restore the CTF.



# The Stage Mom Survival Guide

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

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



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



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

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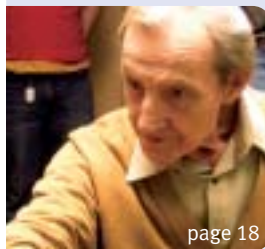
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**Want to receive *InterACTRA* by email?** If you'd like *InterACTRA* in your e-mailbox instead of by mail, email us at [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca) with your membership number.

It's my turn to send you congratulations now on the work and devotion you put into writing and publishing the '60 Years' edition of *InterACTRA*. It was so well done with its photography, it makes an important volume in the scant history of our actors et al, and their place over the years in radio, TV and films. A pity you could not have included the names of the CBC buffoons who continued to bring in American players leading to **The Gold Rush Follies** rumpus! Are they still around?

Again, I shall treasure this book, "Hurray!" to ACTRA. It brings many memories.

– Gerald Pratley, Toronto ON

**Correction:** A name was omitted from the list of ACTRA Presidents and Chairpersons (p. 63): 1982-84 **Joan Gregson**, Chairperson, ACTRA Performers Guild. We apologize for the error.

First let me congratulate you on a job well done in heralding the 60 years we have existed as a union. It brought back those times when about 35 of us made a living solely from acting. The photo of **John Drainie**, **Frank Peddie** and I working on **Jake and the Kid** was a time when CBC originated more outstanding radio fare than anywhere in the world. What prompted me to write to you was the photo in the publication with **Michelle Finney** and I in which it said I was playing *Mister McGarrity* on **Maggie Muggins**. In fact that is from **Razzle Dazzle** and I am playing *Hiram Cornstasse*, cucumber farmer. I have made the correction known at the CBC museum but they failed to act on it hence the wrong information. Oh yes I did work on *Maggie Muggins*, I was the voice of *Clarence the Cow*.

So here I am 88 years of age, a life –member of six unions, still doing the odd movie or TV role if it's fun to do.

– Jack Mather, Toronto, ON

Thank you for sending me a copy of your '60 Years' edition of *InterACTRA*. It was wonderful reading of the past struggles and the many successes ACTRA has had over the past 60 years. I want to pass on my union's congratulations for 60 years of progressive leadership on behalf of the members of ACTRA and compliment you on your role in the broader union movement.

– Basil "Buzz" Hargrove, President, CAW

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

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

## THE ACTORS' FUND OF CANADA

### Join us and make a difference!



A FRESH START  
A BRIGHTER FUTURE  
A CREATIVE VISION  
A VIBRANT CULTURE  
A BETTER CANADA

**THE ACTORS' FUND OF CANADA** provides short-term financial aid to help performers, creators, technical personnel and other entertainment industry workers maintain their health, housing and ability to work after an economic setback. A small amount of money can make a difference. Your support can help to turn someone's life around after an injury, illness or sudden unemployment.

### Join the More Than Applause Campaign

The Fund's **More Than Applause** awareness and fundraising campaign celebrates the best of the Canadian entertainment industry. Here are the few of the many ways you can get involved:

October 18-25 | 2004

more than applause

**ON STAGE:** autograph some posters, give a backstage tour, make a curtain speech, make an Opening Night gift, make voluntary payroll deductions, organize a fundraiser

**ON SET:** meet the fans, give at lunch, hold a 50/50 draw, raise money at your wrap party, have a prop and costume auction

**BEHIND THE SCENES:** sell some crafts, auction your skills, bake some goodies, host a dinner, throw a party, pass the hat, send a cheque, donate online, spread the word

• ORGANIZE • ENERGIZE • CELEBRATE • COMMUNICATE

Make a tax-deductible contribution today and be part of the More Than Applause Campaign.

Call 1-877-399-8392 or visit [www.actorsfund.ca](http://www.actorsfund.ca) for details or to donate online.

## Montreal meeting of minds

The presidents of Canada's three performer unions met in Montreal in February, reflecting the odd coincidence that for the first time in living memory, the three presidents reside in La Belle Province. The meeting, attended by presidents **Henry Gauthier** (Canadian Actors' Equity Association), **Thor Bishopric** (ACTRA) and **Pierre Curzi** (Union des artistes) along with senior staff, canvassed recent events and priorities within each association.

The associations pledged to work together on the independent contractor status of performers and, in preparation for the International Federation of Actors (FIA) meeting this fall in Budapest, the Canadian forces are gathering around a proposed declaration in support of cultural diversity. In an effort to rally the support of the more than 100 FIA affiliates, the declaration will closely model the recently adopted UNESCO declaration, which it is hoped may lead to a treaty protecting cultural pluralism.

## ACTRA PRS: Putting millions in your pockets

ACTRA PRS has put more than \$8 million back into the pockets of performers, doubling the amount distributed in just five years. Now, ACTRA PRS' (Performers' Rights Society) Executive Director **Mercedes Watson** is hitting the road to visit various parts of the country to tell members how she and her staff of 14 are tracking and collecting Use Fees.

Come out and meet Mercedes, along with National President **Thor Bishopric** and National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell**, and learn more about what ACTRA PRS is doing for you. Dates will be posted on the ACTRA PRS section of the ACTRA website ([www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)) as they are confirmed. Stay tuned to find out when you can catch the ACTRA PRS Roadshow at a branch near you. In the meantime – please tell us what you want to hear and questions you'd like answered by emailing us at [prs@actra.ca](mailto:prs@actra.ca).



The three presidents: **Henry Gauthier** (CAEA), **Pierre Curzi** (UDA) and **Thor Bishopric** (ACTRA).

## By-law changes

Prompted by some recent proceedings, ACTRA's Discipline by-laws were amended at January's National Council meeting. Some of the areas affected include: democratic rights, work rules, penalties and appeals.

In short, by-laws 7, 8, 9, 10 were replaced with by-law 7 and subsequent numbering will be updated. In addition the following sentence has been added to by-law 14, V, I: "Voting by Proxy is not permitted."

Special thanks to the members of the National discipline by-laws working group for tackling this challenge: David Macniven (Chair), Wendy Anderson, Lorraine Ansell, Ferne Downey, Glenn Downey and Howard Storey.

An updated version of the ACTRA by-laws booklet will be available shortly, please contact your branch for more information.

## Putting bums in seats

Since theatre owners will only extend a film's release if they have a strong opening weekend, the best thing you can do for Canadian films is to go see them as soon as they open. **The First Weekend Club** is a grassroots marketing strategy aimed at getting people to do just that by spreading the word when a new film is released via email, website or a phone call. Launched in Vancouver in February 2003, the FWC now has more than 2,000 members and chapters in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Halifax.

Let's make sure Canadian films are on more than 2% of our screens, get your bum in a seat.

For more info and to sign up visit [www.firstweekendclub.ca](http://www.firstweekendclub.ca).

## ACTRA-AFBS Working Group

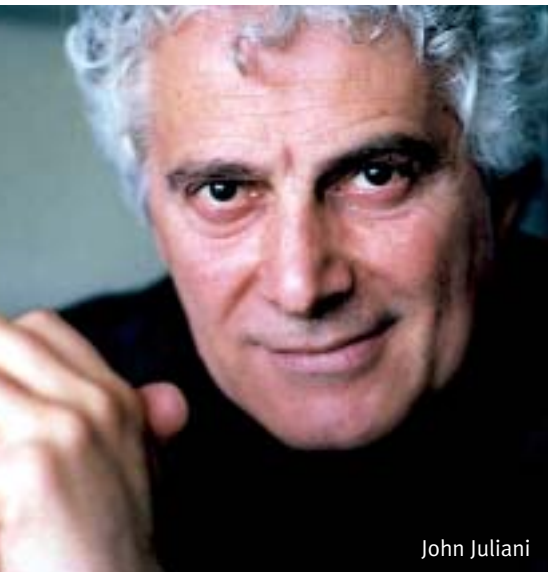
As a result of changes to ACTRA Fraternal policies in the past two years and a number of new charges and fees, many members have been excluded from coverage. In order to address members concerns and to clear the air, ACTRA has set up an AFBS Working Group to research members' issues, report back and recommend options.

If you have questions and concerns about AFBS policies, plans or practices, the Working Group needs to hear from you. Contact the committee directly by:

EMAIL: [afbgroup@actra.ca](mailto:afbgroup@actra.ca)  
 WRITE: ACTRA-AFBS Working Group  
 c/o ACTRA National  
 300-625 Church Street  
 Toronto, Ontario M4G 2G1

Ask Questions. Get Answers.





John Juliani

### John Juliani Endowment Fund

The Canadian creative community lost a sterling example, stellar practitioner and indomitable presence in the passing of **John Juliani** last summer. As well as a memorial service full of passionate performance and personal remembrances and ‘Savage God Day’, set aside by the City of Vancouver on John’s birthday, the greater community is establishing the **John Juliani Memorial Endowment Fund**.

The fund will be in keeping with John’s enormous spirit – always the maverick while remaining steadfast and committed to providing motivation and encouragement to those who feel the call to be a performer. It will support a graduate scholarship in the performing arts at **Simon Fraser University** where John

taught and raised a little hell and consciousness. The vision is to add to the \$18,000 already collected from friends and family and to grow the fund to \$250,000 to guarantee a scholarship of at least \$10,000 per annum.

Please join us in making a tax-deductible contribution. Cheques should be made payable to the John Juliani Memorial Endowment Fund and sent to: **University Advancement, 2118 Strand Hall, 8888 University Drive, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6.**

– Howard Storey



## Performing Arts Lodges of Canada

Under the distinguished patronage of Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada

PAL is a national charitable organization offering assistance to older, disabled or needy members and associates of Canada’s professional performing arts community in the areas of health, well-being and accommodation.

PAL is a provider of services, not simply an assisted housing provider. Thus the establishment of assistance to individuals, such as that provided through Supporting Cast, is vitally important.

Share the PAL vision. Become a PAL member, or make a tax-deductible donation. For information about all our Chapters, you may contact us at:

**PAL Canada, 110 The Esplanade #328 Toronto Ontario M5E 1X9**  
**PHONE: (416) 777-9674 • info@palcanada.org • www.palcanada.org**

*Taking Care of Our Own*

## CHEERS

Anyone who thinks there isn’t a crisis just ain’t seen nothing yet. If those people who shrug at the disappearance of **Cold Squad** and **Blue Murder** think everything is rosy, they’re wrong. It’s not over. In about two months, I’m going to have to write another column making the case for Canadian storytelling on TV. It will probably insist that we can’t call ourselves a country unless we support storytelling in our own culture. I just know it.

– John Doyle  
*Globe and Mail, 24 February 2004*

## JEERS

The minute a Canadian drama gets cancelled our stars and producers point their BMWs toward Ottawa. The parade of whiney cry-babies who lobbied the feds last year when the Canadian Television Fund came up short made the fuss over SARS look like a church picnic... The dramatists here should shut up and stop blaming networks for the ‘death’ of drama.

– Bill Brioux  
*Toronto Sun, 20 February 2004*

# TRAILER PARK BOYS



The residents of Sunnyvale Trailer Park.

Courtesy Showcase

## These are the people in your neighbourhood by Joanne Deer

Now this is reality TV. Take a few well-meaning ex-cons trying to secure retirement by 35, a drunken sexually confused park supervisor, a spandex-clad bottle-blonde single mom, and toss in guest appearances from the likes of Rush guitarist **Eric Lifeson**, and you have **Trailer Park Boys**, one of the most authentically Canadian shows to grace our airwaves in years. Like it or not, robbing convenience stores, drinking until passing out, and cultivating dope are as Canadian as waving wheat fields and maple-munching beavers. Perhaps even more so.

The low-budget mockumentary follows the daily travails of the residents of Sunnyvale Trailer Park. Every season starts with someone being released from prison, most often Julian (**Jean Paul Tremblay**) the ladies man and ringleader, and his best

friend Ricky (**Robb Wells**). They, along with the lovable and underestimated Bubbles (**Mike Smith**) with his signature Coke-bottle glasses continually clash with park supervisor, Jim Lahey (**John Dunsworth**). And of course there's the prospect of romance, with Ricky's on-again-off-again relationship with Lucy (**Lucy DeCoutere**).

Now in its fourth season, *Trailer Park Boys* has officially grown from cult-buzz to official hit. The Showcase premiere of Season 4 drew 43% more viewers than last season's premiere, and fans have snapped up more than 30,000 DVDs of the first two seasons since its release in May 2003 (Season 3 was released this past April). The strangely broad fan base includes **Ivan Reitman**, **Kid Rock** and BBC America, which added the show to its line up in April where it has been slotted

in the same block as that other mockumentary darling **The Office**.

The key to the show's success is perhaps best astutely summed up last summer by **The Globe and Mail's** TV critic **John Doyle**: "The series bears no resemblance to any American sitcom. *Trailer Park Boys* operates on a level of assuredness that is breathtaking in Canadian TV. It doesn't try to be anything other than itself and it certainly doesn't imitate anything."

**Laura Michalchyshyn**, Showcase's Senior Vice President of Programming, says that's what originally attracted her to the show. "*Trailer Park Boys* is happy to be in a trailer park in Halifax, they celebrate that, they laugh at their accents and there's a sort of rituals that are really original in that area of the country," she says. *(continued on page 8)*



# TRAILER PARK BOYS

— continued  
from page 7

While the regional authenticity, such as the expletive-filled Nova Scotian patois, make it seem real, it's the characters and the stories that make it appealing to those who couldn't even locate Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia on a map. DeCoutere insists, "The show isn't about trailer parks or making fun of trailer parks. It's about how each group of friends have idiosyncrasies and you love them despite it. The trailer park is just a backdrop to a love story."

Unlike most U.S. television, which serves to tease audiences with the promise that they too might be rich and beautiful someday, *Trailer Park Boys* is grounded in the British tradition of finding relief in the misery of your next door neighbours – or in this case, the toughs who smoked in the back alcove of your high school. As Tremblay half-teasingly suggests, you don't watch the show to escape reality, you watch to feel better about your own lot.

"Maybe people watch the show who have real jobs, Monday to Friday 9 to 5 and have a hard time paying the bills, living cheque to cheque, and they can watch us and say 'Jeez, you know what, my life's not that bad.'"

The germ of the series was born out of the self-financed feature, **One Last Shot**.

**Director/writer Mike Clattenberg, the man behind the 'Boys'.**



Courtesy Showcase



Courtesy Showcase

Writer/director Mike Clattenberg (who had been directing TV series such as **Pit Pony**, **The Bette Show**), and his high school chums Wells and Tremblay had been goofing off with a video camera for years for their own enjoyment before they decided to get serious and make an improvised feature about two pet assassins. At its **Atlantic Film Festival** premiere, Clattenberg won the prize for Best Cinematography and John Dunsworth was named Best Male Actor for his initial portrayal of Mr. Lahey (then a pet store owner). Inspired by the reception, Clattenberg, Wells and Tremblay decided to morph some of the film's characters into a trailer park setting for a feature.

"Mike, Robb and I worked so well together getting ideas and stuff and we didn't really want to get away from that. We wanted to continue growing together," recalls Tremblay.

While shooting the feature, Clattenberg caught shoot man **Mike Smith** riffing off as his alter ego Bubbles and invited him to try his hand on the other side of the camera. The feature begat the series when producer/actor **Barry Dunn** caught the film's premiere at the Atlantic Film Festival and approached Clattenberg about the possibility of turning it into a TV show. A heap of

**Boys on the run: Julian (Jean Paul Tremblay), Ricky (Robb Wells) and Bubbles (Mike Smith).**

network rejections and one fortuitous meeting with Showcase's Michalchyshyn later, and the *Trailer* was on a roll.

With its gritty realism, one might be forgiven for initially thinking the show is more 'doc' than 'mock'-umentary. Like its improvised-feature ancestors, the series still comes across like a couple of guys loafing off with a video camera. But make no mistake, *Trailer Park Boys* is no off-the cuff fluke. It is the combination of well-written – and re-written scripts (by Clattenberg, Wells, Tremblay and Smith) – tight direction, hardworking crew, and talented performers. And yes, they *are* acting. Along with Tremblay, Smith, Wells, DeCoutere and Dunsworth, the regular cast is rounded out with a blend of newcomers and a number of veterans, including: **Patrick Roache** (Randy), **Sarah Dunsworth** (Sarah), **Jonathan Torrens** (J-Roc), **Cory Bowles** (Cory), **Michael Jackson** (Trevor), **Shelley Thompson** (Barb Lahey) and producer **Barrie Dunn** who doubles as Ricky's dad.



Growing up in Cole Harbour, N.S., Tremblay says he just happened into acting as a result of his friendship with Clattenberg. “I grew up with Mike and had always seen him having such a good time doing it, and I thought to myself, ‘Jeez, I’d love to be doing what he’s doing, he seems to be laughing and enjoying himself.’”

Tremblay also credits Clattenberg with his growth as a performer. “(Robb and I) kind of got the acting bug from Mike, and through his direction, he’s helped us out tremendously over the years. We always used to say we went to the Acting School of Mike Clattenberg.”

As Julian, Tremblay gets to be the king of the park, and despite his run-ins with the law, is arguably its moral core. While he’s been flexing his acting muscles outside Julian’s tight t-shirts and is working on a feature film script, he’s happy to live in the park as Julian for as long as he can. “For as long as people will let me, until we get booted off the network, I guess.”

Lucy DeCouture landed in the park after Clattenberg saw her in a short film at the Atlantic Film Festival. Soon after he met up with her at party and told her he was going to write a part for her. “I thought it was just kind of greasy, like suuuuure,” she recalls. “At the time I didn’t know he was the coolest guy in Halifax, I had no idea he had been around for 10 years directing TV.”

**Dunsworth as park supervisor Jim Lahey (right) and his ever-present side-kick Randy (left) played by Patrick Roache.**



Courtesy Showcase

**“Canadians are making great television, now that we’ve stopped trying to be something that we’re not.”**

The real Lucy doesn’t take Clattenberg’s creation as a personal reflection of his initial impression of her. At least she hopes not. “My character is more negative and bitchier than I am. No one should be able to do what she does, and who would date a guy (Ricky) who’s such a tool?”

DeCouture has also worked on the other side of the camera, from craft services, to driving, to an AD, and now producing with an independent company in Halifax. “Working on both sides of the camera to me is totally complimentary. Because I understand why budgets work the way they do and why sets demand the things they do,” she says. DeCouture is also acutely aware of the challenge of making a living solely as an actor. “I think it would be obnoxious of me to think I could always make money as an actor, but I still want to be able to do that a bit.”

Dunsworth, perhaps the most credited resident of the park, knows a thing or two about piecing together a successful career in Halifax. With a résumé that includes casting director, cab driver, voice-over artist, radio dramatist, and Sears Santa, *Trailer Park Boys* is another piece to the long puzzle of a career he has created while living in the place he loves.

It’s a testament to Dunsworth’s talent that he is able to glide swiftly between the park as Lahey, a drunken authoritarian, recently uncloseted homosexual known for his imaginative ‘shit’ metaphors, and the stage as Ben in **Neptune Theatre’s** production of **Death of a Salesman**. And he’s equally proud of both. Dunsworth counts himself lucky to have landed with his colleagues in the park – along with his daughter Sarah, a seasoned performer in her own right.

“I would like to be able to work until I am old and grey, that’s all I’ve ever really aspired to. Once in a while you do something that you’re really proud of, and sometimes you do things you’re recognized for that you’re not proud of. But when things hang together like *Trailer Park Boys*, it’s wonderful, because I love being part of that team,” he says.

Dunsworth claims similarities between Lahey’s struggle to make the park a nice place to live and his own challenges of being a performer in Halifax. “For years I thought I wasn’t Jim Lahey, but the more times goes on, I think I am. Not the drinking or the sexuality part – but just the part about trying to make it in the trailer park.”

Meanwhile Tremblay confesses that the only thing he shares with the pompadoured Julian is his affection for rum and Coke, making it not such a hassle to be mistaken for Julian in bars. Still, he can’t help but feel a bit overwhelmed by the attention that being on a hit series brings.

“We went up to the Canadian Music Awards in Toronto and it was just insane. We were in shock, Mike Smith, Robb Wells and I. We were given free limousine service all week, and people were handing us drinks left and right.”

For DeCouture, the series’ success means not being able to cut people off in traffic anymore during the summer-production months when her naturally brown locks turn blonde.

“I’m fully aware of how lucky we are. Nobody considered they’d be in a successful Canadian TV show, let alone one that

(continues on page 10)

# TRAILER PARK BOYS

—continued  
from page 9

was on in the U.S.,” says Lucy. “I’m baffled, not that I don’t think the show is good, but its success happened in such an unassuming way, almost by accident.”

While luck may have played a role in the show’s success, the performances that make it to the screen and the words they are based on are no accident. It’s a common assumption that having a small crew and even smaller budget gives the creators more freedom to play around. Shot for just over \$1 million a season, every penny counts – and so does every minute. The set is a tight shop where shooting 6-8 pages a day results in 12 scene days. Although where there’s time, Clattenberg will step back and allow the performers to do a ‘looser’ version.

“We always try to push it, and make it brighter, bigger and faster, while still being true to the script,” says DeCoutere.

Tremblay credits the feel of the show on screen to the intimacy of the set and the level of control (read, absence of network suits) that such a small production allows. “It’s so laid-back and relaxing, Mike can get the best out of you and your performance,” he says.

Like any success, the real magic is in that elusive quality that permeates the screen when everyone shares the same groove.

“With Mike, he knows what we’re going to say before we say it, he knows where we’re going to move, where the scene’s going to head. We have that chemistry, you can really feel it. It helps the performance and keeps it real.”

The camaraderie of the cast and crew off-screen infuses the show, feeding into the feeling that you’re just watching a group of friends amusing themselves. And for the most part, they are. When they’re writing and shooting, they’re not thinking of the audience, but what they think is funny: if it makes them laugh, it works.

“I think that’s why it’s so satisfying, because we’re relying on our own sense of humour,” says DeCoutere. “It’s a team effort, but in the end, it’s Mike Clattenberg’s warped, warped sense of humour and timing, and within that, a sense of compassion. He’s all over the show, it’s his baby.”

And that’s the other common theme: the genius of Mike Clattenberg. Everyone within 50 feet of the show doesn’t hesitate to credit the success back to its creator, writer and director and his love of the story and characters. To make her point, DeCoutere recalls a day last summer after they shot a scene in which Julian’s car rolls, and lo and behold, when the car stops there’s Julian with his rum and Coke still full, and Mike is laughing harder than anyone.

“After shooting for five years, writing, editing, and plugging it – he still finds that drink gag funny,” she marvels.

Michalchyshyn credits Clattenberg’s initiative and willingness to throw out a lot what the industry came to believe was the tried and true methodology. “He worked with non-writer-writers, he worked with a lot of actors who weren’t known to be actors... celebrated Halifax and it became a character unto itself,” she says. “He’s stuck to his vision, he has not compromised much.”

Which brings us to the question of whether *Trailer Park Boys* is the new saviour-model for the struggling Canadian TV industry.

“Sure,” says DeCoutere. “If you can find a person with Mike’s vision, who can make something out of nothing, and can find someone who let him make something out of nothing, and can find the cast he did and the crew that he did, and someone who has a story as great as he did...”

Instead of a recipe for the future of Canadian TV success, DeCoutere sees the show more as an inspiration.

“I suppose *Trailer Park Boys* can prove that not every show has to look like a slick American show. Maybe it will encourage producers and broadcasters to think outside the box and stay true to a vision, instead of compromising it.”

Michalchyshyn agrees. “It isn’t ‘make another show like *Trailer Park Boys*,’ it’s make another show that’s fresh and original and creative. Don’t bring what you’ve maybe learned over the last 10 years to the table, because those norms are all over. The times have changed.”

She also sees a ray of light in the recent successes of *Trailer Park Boys* and **Corner Gas**, shows that celebrate who we are. “My hope is that it’s a time for innovation. It’s not a pleasant time to be trying to fund and make television, but there are new ways of doing it that will be equally successful,” she says. “Canadians are making great television, now that we’ve stopped trying to be something that we’re not.”

Like Jim Lahey and John Dunsworth, if Canadian TV pushes on and continues to stay true to itself, it might just be able to make it in the trailer park.

**Trailer Park Grrls Sarah Dunsworth (Sarah) and Lucy DeCoutere (Lucy).**



Courtesy Showcase



#### EXT. STREET – DAY

*Wide shot:* Exterior of an urban convenience store. A Canadian ACTOR walks into the frame, approaches the front door, and enters.

#### INT. CONVENIENCE STORE – DAY

The Canadian actor surveys the snack selection, chooses gum, and places his desired purchase on sales counter.

**ECU:** The clerk's eyes shift from the gum on the counter to his customer's face.

#### CLERK

Hey! Do I know you? You look like... somebody. Hmm... You've never been in here before?

#### ACTOR

No... but, well, I'm an actor.

#### CLERK

Really? Have I seen you in anything?

#### ACTOR

Well... I just shot an episode of, uh... on CBC, this new show... **This Is Wonderland?**

The Clerk stares at the Actor, blinks.

#### ACTOR

I did some stuff on **Corner Gas**. That one's funny...

#### CLERK

Wait – you're Hemorrhoids Guy! That's it! You're the dude with the inflatable pillow in the restaurant! I LOVE that one, man!

#### EXT. STREET – DAY

*Wide shot:* Exterior of an urban convenience store. The front door flies open. The Actor runs out.

# Our love/hate relationship with commercials



by Karen Ivany

**A**fter talking to performers across Canada who successfully balance their film and TV work with commercials, I've concluded it all comes down to this: LOVE the residuals, HATE the stigma. Almost half the ACTRA members approached for this piece declined to speak or requested their names not be published. The apprehension of being labeled a 'commercial actor' is alive and kicking in 2004.

It's ironic considering that at a recent ACTRA Toronto Performer's Conference in November, I moderated a panel on 'Commercial Auditions' that was packed to the rafters. Although many who regularly book commercial gigs squirm at the recognition, even more are searching for some 'magic bullet' way to get in and still others who choose never to work in this area. It certainly sparks the 'Art vs. Commerce' – or 'Art vs. Craft' – debate.

The fact remains that nearly 30% of members' income comes from on-camera television commercials, voice-overs, radio spots and corporate videos. In our current production climate, where Canadian drama is disappearing from our small screens, our strong dollar is deterring U.S. production and the threat of foreign ownership of our airways looms, the world of advertising remains a soft place to fall for many ACTRA members.

**Harvey Atkin**, one of Canada's most prolific and experienced actors (known to many as simply 'The Voice' – Harvey's, Leon's...), has found great success in the commercial world, along with a source of pride. A 33-year veteran, Atkin's daytimer is overflowing with commercial recording sessions as well as shooting dates for **Law & Order: SVU** and **CSI**. Still, almost 75% of his income is derived from commercials, which he warns, no actor should demean.

"They are an art form and special discipline unto themselves," he says. "You can't prepare for a commercial audition, but you do have to bring ALL of your previous experience to the audition."

Hmmm... like *every* role, I muse. Atkin must know a thing or two. He booked the first commercial gig he ever auditioned for (Salada Tea) and has booked almost every

one since. Not bad for a guy who followed a friend into a high school audition on a lark, and never looked back. (I wonder how the friend is doing...?)

Seasoned actors perform this balancing act with aplomb, and few apologies. They understand that when you make the choice to become a professional actor, you're initially a gun for hire. How many of us have film, TV or theatre credits on our résumés that don't necessarily reflect our personal values, morals, or point of view?

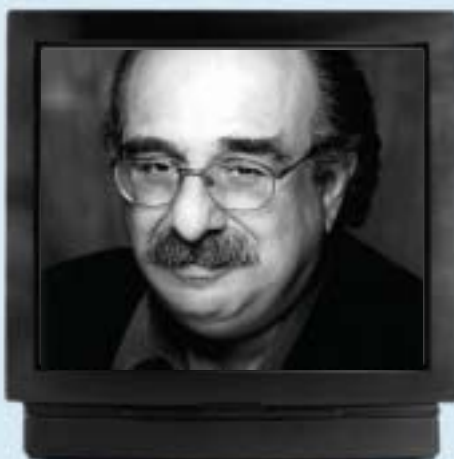
#### Patrick McKenna



As your career advances, you hope to have more control over the contracts you accept, and continue to bring a range of skills and life experience to every project. Take for example, the tale of **Patrick McKenna**, a Second City alumnus, who after many successful years as an amiable TV Spokes Guy (that winning smile, those twinkling eyes!) sat down with his agent **Gail Abrams** in 1995 to devise a new career strategy. It included saying 'no' to commercial auditions, and aggressively pursuing dramatic roles.

"There was a kind of line at that point between being a commercial actor and a TV actor. So I had to make that line, take that road for myself," he says.

The result was a series lead on **Traders** as abrasive hothead Marty, while simultaneously cracking us up beside **Steve Smith** on (continues on page 12)



Harvey Atkin

# Our love/hate relationship with commercials

– continued from previous page

**The Red Green Show.** “That was a while ago, though. I’m not sure I would make the same choice today, with so little TV being made. But it worked well for me, at that time.”

**Christian Potenza** (‘that red-haired guy’) is the most frustrated familiar face. He feels there’s no place for him on episodic TV because his image dominates the ads that carry the shows. He claims he’s not taken seriously for film, even if it’s a comedic role, because of his over-exposure as ‘The Listerine Sidekick’ and others. Though he is in constant demand for commercials and directs commercial casting sessions, he’s eager to take the risks involved in creating his own transitional strategy.

For **Ian Finlay**, a ‘70s National Theatre School grad, a string of part-time acting



Toni Ellwand

The audition process can be exhausting – the buck doesn’t stop with casting directors. What brings us back for all those inane callbacks are the number of decision-makers in the mix. The director, agency producer, production-house producer, writers and the client all have a say. You’re also up against demographic research, and the company founder who doesn’t know diddly about acting, but a heck of a lot about what looks good next to the product!

**Toni Ellwand**, a working performer for more than 20 years, sums up the ultimate, consistently given advice for dealing with audition fatigue; “Getting a commercial is like winning the lottery. Forget about it as soon as you leave the building!”

Still, while some of us complain we are not seen enough, there are some who feel that certain groups, like **Second City** alumni, are seen over and over. When I asked **Kim Everest**, (CDC, **Powerhouse Casting**, and recently credited with casting the first inter-racial couple in a national campaign), why this view persists, she admitted that improvisers are skilled at getting an idea across quickly, their sense of timing is honed. It’s an important element when you are dealing in 15, 30 and 60 seconds. She agreed those skills aren’t limited to improvisers. All good actors have great timing.

## Seeing an actor’s face in a commercial sometimes inspires, or reminds casting directors to schedule them for an audition for a film or series

jobs enhanced his theatre skills for commercial success. “I’ve continued to work in these (commercial) areas for the past 30 years or so, going through very hot streaks, mostly good times, and fortunately for my family and me, very few cold periods,” he says. He worked part-time in radio, and for a TV series doing off-camera cartoon voices, later hosting a TV series and reading the news for CBC Radio. “This

was really helpful in developing another side of the business-industry or corporate narration. I got pretty good at sounding like I knew what I was talking about, even when I didn’t!” says Finlay.

When asked if he feels that his commercial work ever held him back, he had this to say; “It depends on the way people look at you. In my case, in the Montreal market, I’m still remembered from some of my TV work. Sometimes it gets in the way of my believability as both a commercial actor and a screen actor. Other times, I got the gig because they wanted, for lack of a better word, a ‘personality’. It works both ways.”

Canadian casting directors continue to chirp ‘work is work’ when asked about actors doing commercial work. In ACTRA Toronto’s *Performers* magazine, and at members’ conferences, casting directors repeat that any professional booking adds to a performer’s reputation. **Ross Clydesdale**, casting director for **Queer as Folk**, has said that seeing an actor’s face in a commercial sometimes inspires, or reminds him to schedule them for an audition for a film or series.

Ian Finlay



### What’s the big deal? It’s in the numbers...

ACTRA members made **\$35 million** under the Commercial Agreement in 2003.

**28%** of ACTRA members’ income came from commercials.

Those numbers are even higher in Toronto, where commercial production proved to be a reliable place to work when SARS took a bite out of many other areas. ACTRA Toronto members made **32%** of their income in commercial production. With paystubs totaling more than **\$32 million**, that’s just less than half the amount made in IPA shoots.





Albert Howell

## Believe it or not, sometimes the best part of getting a commercial isn't always the money

I asked **Albert Howell**, (co-creator of **The Devil's Advocates**), about the perception his fellow improvisers score all the commercial gigs: "Commercial gigs do NOT go to Second City alumni. Maybe it seems that way because every year there are more and more... I've seen the same five or six actors get lots of commercials and none of them are from Second City. What you WILL see is a lot of (us) at auditions. The name still opens doors, but most spots, in my experience, are decided by look and ability."

Unfortunately, the commercial market has not embraced all actors. Reflecting the reality of our diverse culture in advertising remains a stumbling block for actors of colour, and those who are differently-abled.

Priya Rao



I had a difficult time finding members of ethnically diverse backgrounds who worked with some regularity in commercials.

**Priya Rao**, the Chair of ACTRA Toronto Performer's Diversity Committee has appeared in a few. "The industry is at long last realizing that Canadians want a more realistic portrayal of the community we live in. Progress has been visible, but there is still a long way to go before 'visible minority' actors are viewed as merely 'actors,'" she says.

Director **Andrew Chu** admits that North America, for all its first-world progress, still lacks a modern image of its population. "In Europe, and South America, you see more variety, and generally more edgy material in advertising and promotion. Definitely a more realistic portrayal of what people look like. Not all perfect and squeaky-clean." He adds that the problem is worse in the U.S. where spots are often created to reach either a white or black, demographic.

Actor, writer and producer **Jean Yoon** has shot a number of on-camera spots, all within the past seven years. She has noticed an increased willingness from both casting directors and clients to seriously consider actors of colour, and Asian actors in particular. "Again, it depends on the product or service, right? You still don't see a whole lot of Asian faces in any beer commercials, cuz we Asians don't drink, right? NOT!"

In her view, most colour-blind commercial casting remains in the realm of group shots or SOC category. "Who's the Hero? Most likely one of the white characters. Not always. But most likely."

Yoon's remarks echo the recurring theme 'it's a nice job when you can get it'. "The cash helps offset the poor wages of theatre, and yeah, people actually SEE the darn things!" A principal commercial spot is as welcome as any other role. "When I land a gig, it's because I'm a good actor AND the client has a vision of Canada that is as diverse as the crowds that clamour on to the subway trains each morning. I AM CANADIAN."

Everyone I spoke to echoed the financial relief that commercial work offers. While Ellwand's diverse career takes her from the stage to the TV screen, she has kept one foot in commercial work, grateful for the freedom her commercial work allows. "The money's good. It pays the mortgage and relieves the stress of having to find full-time work when, as in my case, you're a mother with three kids!"

Believe it or not, sometimes the best part of getting a commercial isn't always the money. There are great and fun directors,

## Internet ad explosion means more jobs for performers

The \$7.2 billion dollar Internet ad industry is coming of age, and increasingly, advertisers are tapping into the same professional performers used for TV commercials.

The recent four-minute American Express mini-movies starring Jerry Seinfeld and Superman show why big advertisers and big talent are drawn to the Internet:

**Creative freedom** – greater artistic licence and no time constraints

**Viral** – word of mouth and the power of email can send a catchy or novel internet-based ad around the world in minutes

**Immediacy** – consumers can buy the product on the spot. Watch the film, apply for an AMEX on the spot.

**Unlimited lifespan** – not tied to a specific "media buy", the ads can be seen anytime, day or night for as long as the advertiser wants them to be available.

**Cost** – A website is a gazillion times cheaper than 30 seconds during the *Friends* finale.

short sunshine-filled days, children who in real-life ARE adorable, fellow actors who make you spit-up your fake milk with laughter and 'hot & ready' that's really hot and ready!

Ellwand muses, "When someone recognizes you for being the IDA Pharmacist, and pulls their ear playfully – just like you did in the spot, to show the young girl that she could try wearing an ID bracelet as an earring... That's the best part!"



Jean Yoon

This is the first in a series of articles exploring the Americanization of our airwaves as a result of Canadian private broadcaster's culture-quashing addiction to profits and cheap U.S. programming.

# Runaway broadcasters:

by Joanne Deer

*Playback*, June 9, 2003:

"CTV Senior VP Bill Mustos admits **Cold Squad** and **Cold Case** look very similar. 'Imitation is the highest form of flattery,'" he says with a shrug. "Besides, it was going to go to someone – it might as well be us.' This way he adds, the net can cross-promote both shows and build a franchise."

March 2004:

**Cold Squad** is cancelled.

"The hardest part about covering U.S. networks this fall has been keeping up all the cancellations. **Coupling?** Gone. **Boomtown?** Also gone. **Skin?** **L.A. Dragnet?** Outta here. **The Brotherhood of Poland NH?** **The Lyons Den?** Dead as Betamax. But this year, 'the season from hell' in the words of *Variety* has been more harsh than most, in particular for Global, which had picked up the Canadian rights to almost all of those ill-fated series."

– *Playback*, December 15, 2003

"The struggle for networks is trying to marry business with the cultural responsibility of telling Canadian stories about experiences Canadians can relate to... Not that I have anything against gardening shows, but they don't speak to us as a culture... We are in danger of losing our industry and something needs to be done immediately."

– **Wendy Crewson**, *Hollywood North Magazine*, Feb-March 2004

**CTV**'s newest promos declare "Canada is Watching!" They're right. Since 90% of the TV English Canadians watch is imported, 'watching' is all that's left for us to do, as opposed to say, 'doing', 'creating' and 'working'.<sup>1</sup> Rather than producing original Canadian drama, private broadcasters are taking advantage of the relaxed Canadian content regulations by turning to cheap U.S. product to fill their schedules – minimizing costs to maximize profits. The resulting domination of U.S. product on our airwaves is chipping away at our culture and diminishing our opportunities for creative expression. Broadcasters are seeing record profits, but Canadians are paying the price; we're losing our jobs, our voices, and ultimately, our culture.

Today, the primetime schedules of our private networks are so dominated by U.S. simulcasting that if they went off the air, most of us would see little effect on our viewing choices. During the week of April 26 - May 2, 2004, Global's primetime contribution to Canadian storytelling consisted of one hour of the recently-cancelled **Blue Murder**. CTV fared slightly better, packing in two half-hour episodes of **Degrassi** and 60 minutes of **The Eleventh Hour** on Sunday night. Two-and-a-half hours of Canadian comedy (**Corner Gas**, **Comedy Inc**) rounded out their paltry platter of Canadian offerings for the week. Basically, the only Canadian content on our private broadcasters' airwaves are the revenue-reaping commercials.

In their pursuit of profits, broadcasters seem to have conveniently forgotten about the **Broadcasting Act**, standards they agreed to in exchange for the a condition of their licences. Since 1991, the *Act* has regulated our airwaves by setting out rules affecting programming content, artistic talent, employment practices and ownership. It also lays out a strict set of principles to ensure diversity and protect Canadian culture, dictating that the Canadian broadcasting system should: "serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada and... encourage the development of Canadian expression by providing a

wide range of programming that reflects Canadian attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity, by displaying Canadian talent in entertainment programming."<sup>2</sup>

Instead of a world in which broadcasters protect Canadian identity and provide opportunities for creative expression, we find ourselves in a place where Leonard Asper, head of CanWest Global openly declares: "We are sick of being the punching bags of the regulatory framework."<sup>3</sup>

How did we veer so far off course – in a situation where we no longer have broadcasters, but simulcasters? Where culture is eclipsed by greed? It is no coincidence that Canadian broadcasters doubled their profits in a year when the hours of Canadian drama hit almost record lows.<sup>4</sup> The obligation to nurture Canadian identity and provide a voice to artists has been eclipsed by the increasing power of shareholders. TV, our most influential cultural medium, has become a big business in which the bottom line usurps cultural responsibility.

While private broadcasters have been moving in this direction for some time, the **CRTC's 1999 Television Policy** has fast-tracked the pursuit of profits. The policy relaxed the definition of Canadian content to include cheap reality and magazine-style programming and removed spending requirements, in essence leaving the production and airing of Canadian drama to 'goodwill'. The result: the number of original Canadian dramatic series on the air declined from 12 in 1999 to a low of three in 2003. It is also no coincidence that while English-Canadian broadcasters spent 10% less on Canadian drama in 2001-2002, they spent 15% more on U.S. programming.<sup>5</sup> Broadcasters' argument that they need the profits they get from U.S. in order to produce Canadian programs seems a little tired when the more they make, the less they produce. Instead of reinvesting their profits into the system, they seem to just want more.

U.S. content is a bargain hunter's dream. While some hit shows come with a hefty price tag, most are comparatively cheap, especially when contrasted with the cost of producing from scratch. American



# Short-changing Canadian culture

networks cover the bulk of production costs, what is reaped from lucrative international sales is just creamy frosting for L.A. studios. The relative cost of most of these shows is so little; if we were talking about lumber it would be called 'dumping'. And consider this: conventional Canadian broadcasters earn an average of \$275,000 an hour for U.S. programming.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, not every show broadcasters pick up wins the ad revenue lottery. In fact, almost 65% of them don't make it past the stress test of the first few weeks in the fall season. If the new shows can't compete with the old stand-bys, or don't have '**CSI**' in the title, chances are the U.S. network will rip it off the air before you can say '18-34 year-olds'. Gone are the days of early **Seinfeld** when a network 'believed' in a show and allowed the audience to build on word of mouth and critical acclaim. Remember **Boomtown**? I do, and I cursed profusely when NBC unceremoniously put it on permanent hiatus. How about **Wonderfalls**? A critically acclaimed show shot in Canada with Canadian performers that got yanked off the air after a handful of episodes because Fox wasn't satisfied with the profits.

Remember, Canadian broadcasters don't get their money back when the U.S. network cancels a show, even if their purchases never make it out of their suitcases. They're throwing away money that could be spent making Canadian shows by buying multi-million dollar jeans they only hope they can actually zip up when they get home. Oh, and someone is going to call you every week and tell you exactly when to put them on.

The simulcasting requirements of the U.S. programs means that the few Canadian shows that get made are slotted and shuffled into the few spots left, à la **The Associates**. Its time slot was changed 11 times in 39 weeks. This story is repeated all too often, as Canadian drama is ghettoized to times that aren't exactly enticing to ad buyers: basically, when no one's watching. The broadcasters then have an excuse to cancel them, claiming they're not getting good enough ratings.

Canadian performers are getting caught in the middle of this simulcast-squeeze.

Every dollar spent on U.S. program is another dollar that could have been invested in developing and nurturing a Canadian series – one broadcasters could maintain scheduling control over. Instead, broadcasters cede control of our airwaves in the name of lining their pockets with profits, profits that could be invested into jobs for performers and other Canadian creators. Some quick math tells a disturbing story: one hour of TV drama employs, let's say, 100 performers. Multiply that by 13 episodes, multiply that again by nine, the number of series we have lost since 1999, times that by four years. That's more than 46,000 jobs for Canadian performers, and when we lose our jobs we lose our stage and our voices. Increasingly we are being censored from telling our own stories and from creative expression on all fronts; private broadcasters won't give us the opportunity to express ourselves on our TV airwaves and U.S.-controlled distributors won't give us access to our film screens.

Left to feed on this steady diet of U.S. fare, we are becoming passive voyeurs, ingesting another culture at the expense of our own. The uninformed might, at first glance claim that U.S. and Canadian cultures are no different. Those of us who live here know the truth: we have our own people, our own geography, our own way of life, and our own values. At least for now. If we lose the ability to celebrate and share these unique characteristics, we may well lose them.

Other countries have fought the behemoth of U.S. TV dominance. U.S. fare also dominated the prime time schedules of countries like Australia, Germany, Italy and Spain until their governments took a stand introducing a number of measures including quotas and increased spending requirements. In Europe, half the prime-time drama is homegrown.<sup>7</sup> In Australia five of the top 10 programs are Australian.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile we struggle to get one show in the top 20.

For too long Canadian private broadcasters have enjoyed playing both sides. They're more than happy to lap up regulation and government 'interference' when it suits  
(continues on page 27)

"If you don't have TV for your country, you're not using the most populist medium. If we're going to cede all the television airwaves to American programming, we're going to be screwed, it's important to keep struggling along."

– **Semi Chellas**, Co-creator & Executive Producer, **The Eleventh Hour**, in *Eye Weekly*, 12 February 2004

"Always bitching that they have few dollars for Canadian programming, the private-sector moguls have deep pockets for U.S. shows... Nowhere are U.S. shows more readily consumed than in Canada. So great are the audiences that, for mass purposes, TV being the most important mass culture medium, English-speaking Canada is a colony of the United States."

– **Jeffrey Simpson**, *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 2003

"Canadian drama has been pushed to the margins of the broadcast schedule... The goal must be to create more opportunities and more spaces, to strive for programs that are not only made-in-Canada but also made-for-Canada... The Committee believes that the CRTC's priority programming policy, which does not require broadcasters to air a specific amount of dramatic programming or earmark a certain amount of expenditures on original Canadian drama, needs to be revisited."

– *Our Cultural Sovereignty*, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, June 2003

# Off to a running start

by Kelly Lynne Ashton  
Director, Collective Bargaining and Research

For the first time, ACTRA National has set up a **Collective Bargaining and Research Department**, and I am pleased to be heading that up. We have a lot of work ahead of us as we strive to improve the quality and quantity of work opportunities for performers.

Some of the tasks that we'll be pursuing are: supporting all of the negotiating committees, assisting Branches in administering ACTRA's collective agreements, supporting grievances and special projects where requested, overseeing the editing and printing of new and renewed collective agreements and directing ACTRA's efforts to increase opportunities for members in digital media.

The main focus of our attention so far has been on negotiating better wages and conditions for members under a number of ACTRA's collective agreements, including:



### National Film Board Agreement –

Terms of settlement were concluded late last year. We secured general increases in minimum fees of 3%, 2% and 2% in each of the 3 years of the agreement; as well as a 1% increase in the NFB's contribution to your insurance plan (from 4% to 5%); and a 32% increase in the cap on the NFB's maximum contribution to your retirement plan. Members ratified the deal and it should be in effect by the time you read this.



### Vision TV –

Negotiations got under way in February 2004. It is expected that terms of settlement will be agreed to by the parties by the time you read this.



ACTRA's Kelly Lynne Ashton (Director, Collective Bargaining and Research) with the NFB's Jacques Bensimon (Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson) and Linda Smith (Manager, Staff Relations) sign the ACTRA NFB Agreement.

### National Commercial Agreement –

Our agreement with the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and Institute of Communications and Advertising (ICA) is set to expire on June 30, 2004. ACTRA has commenced negotiations with an eye to concluding a new deal before the current one expires.

### Audio Code –

We're very excited to be updating the Audio Code which covers audio-only productions, and has been used primarily to engage performers doing voice-over work. There have been quite a few changes in the industry since the Code was last updated in 1978! After consultations with members, staff and voice agents, we are now finalizing the revised Code, which provides higher rates, Use Fees for certain categories of

production, and broader definitions to encompass more audio formats. As well, working conditions have been brought into line with our other ACTRA collective agreements. The Audio Code will be circulated to the membership for ratification once approved by the National Executive.



### IPA and CBC Agreements –

These were both renegotiated last year. Editing is almost complete and copies of the new agreements will be available in print and electronic form shortly. In the meantime rate increases and terms can be found at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).

## Breaking News! Commercial Agreement Negotiations

At press time, ACTRA's negotiators, who have been meeting with ACA and ICA (the trade associations representing Canada's advertisers and agencies) report that efforts to negotiate an expedited settlement have not been successful.

As a consequence, ACTRA's member-driven Negotiating Committee will be undertaking full negotiations with ACA and ICA and remain determined to conclude an equitable settlement prior to the Agreement's expiry date of June 30, 2004.



# Fighting foreign ownership by Ken Thompson, Director of Policy and Communications

When you live next to an elephant you might not want to invite it into your parlour. Canada developed foreign ownership policies for broadcasting and telecommunications industries early in the 20th century to keep our cultural identity safe from broadcasters that hail from our pachyderm neighbour. All this could soon change.

Corporate interests in the form of cable companies and telecommunications conglomerates are driven by the belief that more investment from foreign sources would increase their ability to compete. They are asking the government to relax foreign ownership rules that protect Canadian ownership of our airwaves by saying that our broadcasters and telecommunication companies cannot be owned by a majority of foreign investors.

If powerful multinationals south of the border become controlling owners of Canadian companies, they will be able to out gun the cultural community at the

CRTC and on Parliament Hill. They will stack up their financial experts, economists and lawyers from New York and L.A. to whittle down the little Canadian programming currently on the air; already weak content regulations and cultural policies will be eroded even further if the rules against foreign ownership are relaxed.

The corporate lobby has so far been able to convince the **Department of Industry** and the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology** to get behind their program. The Industry Committee's recommendations, however, have failed to take into account that the crisis in Canadian drama will get even worse if the ownership rules are relaxed. It is a very short leap from letting foreign companies control the means of distribution of broadcast programming to controlling the content. Without regulation to encourage the carriage of Canadian drama, opportunities for Canadian performers will bottom out as foreign owners get

cheaper programming from their own domestic (mostly U.S.) markets.

We do have some allies that provide a ray of hope in this otherwise gloomy picture. **The Parliamentary Committee on Canadian Heritage** released a report on the state of Canadian broadcasting last spring that said 'No' to foreign ownership of cable companies and broadcasters. As well, the **Macerola Report**, mandated to review public funding of Canadian television and film, also recommended that the current requirements for Canadian control of ownership not change.

Foreign ownership of our airwaves is also on the radar of the Minister of Canadian Heritage **Hélène Scherrer** who is responsible for broadcasting policy. In the presence of a room full of culture hawks she committed her energies to upholding Canadian content regulations in the face of foreign ownership. And with an election coming the foreign ownership of cable companies and could become the number one culture issue.

While the bureaucrats push this issue back and forth, there is a rising ground swell of opposition to foreign ownership from those who care about preserving Canadian culture. Already the grass roots opposition to greater integration with the United States of Canada's social and economic system is growing as we approach an election. The **Our Canada Project** and a coalition of ACTRA and **CEP** with the **Friends of Canadian Broadcasting** have been spreading the message to say no to foreign ownership. At the fore of this battle are the creators of Canadian programming who will not give up the right to tell their own stories. ACTRA's voice is one of the loudest.

Protecting Canadian Sovereignty: ACTRA has joined the **Our Canada Project**, an unprecedented coalition of 25 diverse organizations including major environmental, women's, labour, student, arts and social justice groups concerned about the future of Canadian sovereignty and values. Go to [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) for more info.



- As organizations and citizens, we join together to express alarm that Canada is entering a new era that may change forever — and for the worse — our place in the world.
- We are concerned that Canada is moving away from its great traditions of fairness, compassion, peace-keeping, and strong public programs toward a much closer relationship with the government of George W. Bush.
- We want Canada to move in a very different direction. The Canada we want is a place in which:
- Public health care is strengthened, not threatened by privatization and underfunding.
  - Our government is accountable and transparent, not a means for funneling public money to politicians' friends.
  - We invest the federal surplus in public programs such as pharmacare — a prescription drug plan — a quality national childcare program, and accessible public education. The government's current policy of gutting social programs is creating more inequality, especially for women, Aboriginal people, and minorities.
  - We create an economy that promotes innovation, sustainable development, and decent jobs, drawing on the creative talent of all Canadians — both those who were born here and new immigrants.
  - Aboriginal land, treaty, and inherent rights are recognized and implemented.
  - We strengthen civil liberties and freedom of the press.
  - We reduce pollution, global warming, and the health problems they cause, by rapidly implementing the Kyoto Protocol.

MARITIMES

We've been relatively busy here in the Tri-Province Branch. It's not the Golden Age of television but we're getting by.

We're still struggling to get an hour-long drama out of the region. There were high hopes that **Snakes and Ladders** would be secured for another season but as we all know, nothing in this business is secure as CBC decided not to renew this smart series.

The new clay-animated CBC Kids series, **Poko**, is a success and is renewed for another season and another children's stop-motion series with the working title **Lunartown** is presently in pre-production. The fate of **This Hour Has 22 Minutes** is still up in the air but **Mary Walsh's** literary series **Open Book** is a go.

The above productions were all out of the now-defunct Salter Street Films, the multi-award winning and highly successful production company shut down by parent company Alliance Atlantis. Out of the ashes have risen smaller companies that will continue with many of the projects.

There have been a rash of MIP, AIP and Training agreement projects through the Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op, Centre for Art Tapes and the new film schools at the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. I have had the pleasure of performing in two of these productions and it is our hope that these students will become the 'Filmmakers of Tomorrow'.

Maritimes' Branch Acting for Camera workshop: **Angela Vermeir** (facilitator), **Louise Renault**, **Jeannine Bakeef**, **Kate Killam** and **Sandra Larson** (camera-person).



ACTRA Maritimes has just declared its first unfair engager: **Bruce Dennis** of New Brunswick's Trillium Films. We've had a long-standing rocky relationship with this company and the latest production entitled **Steve's Lucky Day** was the proverbial last straw.

The prequel to the **Trudeau** miniseries, tentatively titled: **Trudeau: The Early Years**, has just begun pre-production and will go to camera in mid-May. Produced by Halifax's Big Motion, it will feature a majority of French-speaking performers.

The co-pro MOW **Elena & Vara** (formerly **Sex Traffic**) wrapped a few weeks ago and the British producers were amazed at our dedicated background performers when they all showed up for work in the middle of 'White Juan', the worst blizzard ever.

**Trailer Park Boys** is exploding! They have just launched a new season and are preparing to shoot again this summer. On top of their national triumph, besides the merchandise you can buy, the Boys are infiltrating the United States through the specialty network BBC America. We're pretty proud of our all-Maritimes success story.

The ACTRA Maritimes Political Action Committee is awaiting the release of the Nova Scotia Government's strategic study on the N.S. film and TV industry. Our breath is bated and pens drawn for an immediate press release.



**Joseph Rutten**, ACTRA Maritimes Life Member working on the AIP production **Recollections**.

A few months ago, the New Brunswick government released a statement declaring that many tax credits, including the N.B. Film and Tax Credit, would be under the guillotine in their upcoming budget. ACTRA Maritimes immediately sent out a release condemning the threat and supporting the tax credit. Then, Branch President **Jeremy Webb**, Representative **Gary Vermeir**, N.B. Councillor **Paul LeBlanc** and yours truly hauled ourselves to Moncton to loudly protest to the N.B. Finance Minister in a public forum. President Webb gave an eloquent and firm speech and, as a result, the tax credit remained intact.

Due to the continuing downturn in substantial production, the Maritimes Branch is sad to announce the lay-off of our beloved branch clerk, **Sandra Larson**. Sandra, using her deadly talents of being a nice, sweet, helpful person, was the first face and voice of the Maritimes office. She was a great asset to the Branch and consistently went above-and-beyond the call of duty for the membership.

In Solidarity,  
*Jamie Bradley*  
National Councillor  
ACTRA Maritimes





## MONTREAL

ACTRA Montreal finished 2003 on a high note with our 60th Anniversary celebrations held November 22 at the elegant Windsor Hotel. The day began with a well-attended event called the Pitch-the-Panel Breakfast, wherein a handful of members pitched their film and TV ideas to a panel of industry professionals. It was followed by a screening of the short films created as part of our first-ever ACTRA Shorts Competition. There were some stunning films submitted, and top honours went to the roommate comedy, **Chute**, which was screened again during the Gala Awards Ceremony that evening.

A few hundred dignitaries, members and guests donned their finest and enjoyed a lavish soiree of dining, dancing and merriment. Local jazz luminary, **Ranee Lee**, performed with her trio; the late Cancon-champion producer **Nicolas Clermont** was honoured with a posthumous Award of Recognition; and the Award of Excellence was bestowed upon long-time ACTRA member and Montreal native son, **William Shatner**, who regaled the crowd with a hilarious acceptance speech. Dancing began in the stately ballroom shortly after dinner, and continued until the wee hours... Special thanks to the members from ACTRA Toronto Council who advanced the cause of inter-branch solidarity and camaraderie with their welcome presence at the event.

We have several new faces on Branch Council, and we all met early this year for a one-day retreat to exchange ideas and discuss our mandate for the next two years. Plans are underway to repeat both the

**Jennifer Kierans**, winner of ACTRA Montreal's ACTRA Shorts Competition for **Chute** and the film's star, **Barry Julien**.



Pitch-the-Panel Breakfast and the ACTRA Shorts Competition this year; and we're looking at another Awards Ceremony, though likely as part of a more modest event, scheduled for early in 2005.

Service to the members continues to be a top priority for our branch, yet we are forced to focus our efforts more and more in the area of public policy, as our indigenous film and television industry deteriorates at the hands of misguided funding agencies, unsupportive broadcasters and distributors, and a seemingly indifferent Federal government. But staff, council and (as we've seen with our 60th Anniversary events) our members are up to the chal-

lenge of continuing to make this vibrant acting community thrive.



In solidarity,  
*Matt Holland*  
President,  
ACTRA Montreal

## SASKATCHEWAN

A long winter has brought little discontent for ACTRA Saskatchewan members.

ACTRA members were busy through the coldest months of the year on the Time Code Pictures 3 pack of MOWs **Mary Higgins Clark Presents**. This production marked the first time that our community has stayed active through the prairie winter and after everyone thaws out (sometime around June) we will all reflect positively on the experience.

This all comes as a cherry on top of the cake that was 2003 in Saskatchewan. It was the second biggest year ever for production

**Candace Fox (Candy) and Landon Montour (Jonathan) in Moccasin Flats.**

in the province, but more importantly the biggest year ever for ACTRA membership. This means Saskatchewan actors are getting a larger share of the roles. Saskatchewan actors are hitting screens across the country in three unique and successful series.

**Corner Gas** is the surprise hit of CTV's sked, **Moccasin Flats** is a gritty inner-city drama for APTN and **Renegadepress.com** is a smart multicultural teen – themed drama also on APTN and TVO.

**Moccasin Flats** brought us seven new full members of aboriginal descent, a happy result of our local organizing efforts and the tenacity of producer and ACTRA member **Jennifer Podemski**. On the year, the branch saw a jump in full membership of nearly 20%.

There were films too. **The Pedestrian** featured our very own National Councillor Wendy Anderson in the lead and can be seen on Movie Central. Other productions include **I Accused**, **Caught in the Headlights**, **Lost Soul**, **Youkali Hotel**, **Lost Angels** and **Hollywood Flies**. All this was happening while our biggest producer, Mindseye Pictures was out of action due to financial difficulties.

With Saskatchewan actors getting a more equitable share of the acting opportunities in 2003 we are optimistic that this trend

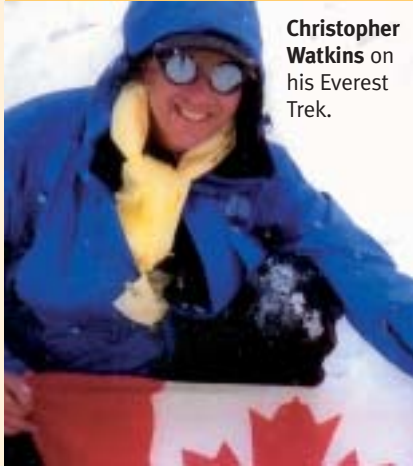
will continue for our membership through 2004 and beyond.



*Mike Burns*  
Branch Representative  
ACTRA Saskatchewan



# applause



**Christopher Watkins** on his Everest Trek.

## Member climbs Everest for disability awareness and accessibility

ACTRA member **Christopher Watkins** climbed Mount Everest as guide and climber with Team Everest03. The expedition was led by right-arm amputee **Gary Guller** to raise awareness and funding for people with disabilities. Chris helped guide the Challenge Trek team of 17 individuals with diverse disabilities including five in wheelchairs on their three-week trek to Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,500 feet above sea level. Despite having cerebral and pulmonary endema, Chris climbed the infamous Kumba Ice fall. Several team members went on to successfully reach the summit.

Injured in a serious auto accident in the late '80s, Chris spent a year in and out of hospital recovering from significant hip, back, shoulder and head trauma. Chris returned to alpine sports and has hiked extensively in the Rockies, Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro, and on Mt. Elbrus in Russia, all to raise money and awareness for children with illness or disability. Next up, Chris hopes to go to the North Pole with a paraplegic friend, and is considering a transatlantic balloon crossing with Gary Guller and two quadriplegic friends.

## Douglas & Shaver take a walk of fame

ACTRA members **Shirley Douglas** and **Helen Shaver** are among the 2004 inductees to Canada's Walk of Fame.



The inductees will receive their stars on the Walk in Toronto's Entertainment District and be feted at a public gala tribute on June 23.

Shirley Douglas



**Eugene Levy** and co-star **Catherine O'Hara** in *A Mighty Wind*.

## 2004 Grammys

**Eugene Levy** rocked it out at the 2004 Grammys in February taking home the award for Best Song Written For A Motion Picture, Television Or Other Visual Media for the theme to **A Mighty Wind**. Eugene shared the award with co-writers **Christopher Guest** and **Michael McKean**.



Presenter **Adam Beach** gives **Sarah Polley** her Genie.

## 2004 Genies

Congratulations to all of ACTRA's Genie nominees! ACTRA member **Scott Thompson** hosted the May 1 awards show.

PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR  
IN A LEADING ROLE:

- ★ **Rémy Girard**, *Les invasions barbares*
- Barry Pepper**, *The Snow Walker*

PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS  
IN A LEADING ROLE:

- Rebecca Jenkins**, *Marion Bridge*
- Molly Parker**, *Marion Bridge*

- ★ **Sarah Polley**, *My Life Without Me*
- Karine Vanasse**, *Séraphin, Un homme et son péché*

PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR  
IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:

- Benoît Brière**, *La grande séduction*
- Christopher Plummer**, *Blizzard*
- Roy Dupuis**, *Séraphin, Un homme et son péché*

PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS  
IN A SUPPORTING ROLE:

- ★ **Marie-Josée Croze**, *Les invasions barbares*
- Emily Hampshire**, *A Problem With Fear*
- Meredith McGeachie**, *Punch*

★ Indicates Award Winner

© 2003 Warner Bros.



Kiefer Sutherland

## Sutherland scores SAG Award

**Kiefer Sutherland** picked up a Screen Actors Guild Award for his portrayal of 24's man with nine lives, Jack Bauer.



Eric McCormack

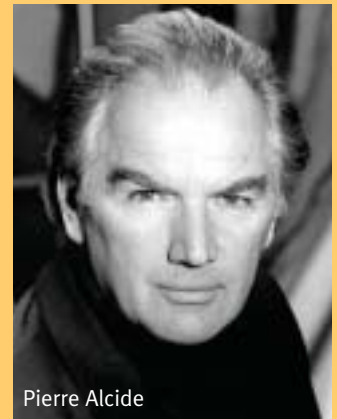
Fellow ACTRA members **Eric McCormack** (*Will & Grace*) and **Matthew Perry** (*Friends*) were nominated For Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series.

## Barbarian continues to invade

**Barbarian Invasions** added an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film to its growing list of honours. The film's honours to date include: three wins at Cannes, a Golden Globe nomination, two BAFTA nominations, six Genie Awards, and six Jutras (including Best Actress for ACTRA member **Marie-Josée Croze**). It also dominated France's Cesars, winning best film, best director and best screenplay. Marie-Josée Croze was nominated for Most Promising Actress.



Marie-Josée Croze



Pierre Alcide

## France honours Pierre Alcide

France honoured ACTRA member **Pierre Alcide** with the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite. The honour was created in 1963 and recognizes those who have achieved distinguished merit in either the public or private sector. Pierre is also a recipient of the Médaille d'honneur du Sénat, Paris.

Born in the Jura at the beginning of the Second World War, Pierre joined the army after high school and took part in the French war in Algeria. Returning to France, he worked with an architect and began university studies in Caen. He then came to Canada where in the '60s, he helped organize evenings with French organizations in Canada and in the '70s, joined the Ontario section of the Veterans' Association of France. He currently serves as President. He was an instructor at Ryerson and U of T where he encouraged his students to study the French language and culture and to spend time in France. As an ACTRA member, Pierre has appeared in more than 140 films.

## Tina Keeper honoured at Aboriginal Achievement Awards

ACTRA member **Tina Keeper** was among 14 honourees at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards presented on April 14 in Calgary.

Best known for her Gemini Award-winning portrayal of RCMP constable Michelle Kenidi on **North of 60**, Tina has also been a host of **The Sharing Circle** and **Hot Topics** and gives much of her time to community-based initiatives and as a role model to Aboriginal youth.



Tina Keeper

Photo courtesy CBC Television



# applause

## Kudos for young performers

Some of ACTRA's most talented members have been recognized with nominations at the 25th Annual Young Artist Awards. The Young Artist Awards honour performers under the age of 18 for their accomplishments in film, television, music and all areas of entertainment.

**Katie Boland, Marc Donato, Jake Epstein, Tajja Isen, Jamie Johnston, Jacob Kraemer, Hannah Lochner, Joseph Marrese, Amber Marshall, David Sazant, Talia Schlanger, Gregory Smith, Alex Steele, Emily Vancamp, Calum Worthy.**

## GG's Performing Arts Awards

**Dave Broadfoot** and **Douglas Campbell**, both ACTRA Life members, were among those honoured with Governor General's



Dave Broadfoot

Performing Arts Awards in November. The awards are presented annually to artists who, over a lifetime of achievement, have made an indelible contribution to Canada's cultural life. The awards are presented at a ceremony at Rideau Hall then, the following evening, the recipients are celebrated at a tribute gala at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.



## Canadian Screenwriting Awards

Several multi-talented ACTRA members were winners at the Writers Guild of Canada's Canadian Screenwriting Awards. **Susan Coyne, Bob Martin** and **Mark McKinney** won in the Drama Series category for their collaboration on **Slings and Arrows**, "Outrageous Fortune" while **Howard Busgang's** script **The Blobheads**, "The Blobs Drop In" was named

**Bob Martin, Susan Coyne** and **Mark McKinney** with their award.

best in Children's & Preschool.

**Mark Farrell's** episode of **Made in Canada**, "Bestseller" tied with yet another Made in Canada script for best Comedy/Variety.

ACTRA member **Sean Cullen** hosted the hilarious and record-breaking succinct awards ceremony at Toronto's *This is London* nightclub on April 19.

## ACTRA Maritimes honours five members

**F**ive ACTRA Maritimes members were honoured at the branch's Annual General meeting on Saturday May 1, 2004. National President **Thor Bishopric** presented ACTRA Awards for Outstanding Male and Female to **Dennis Envoldsen** and **Hollis McLaren**. Hollis received the award for her chilling portrayal of Wanda Barzee, one of the two kidnappers in the U.S. **MOW The Elizabeth Smart Story** and Dennis won for his gem of a performance as telegraph operator Vince Colman in **Shattered City**.

Maritimes Branch President **Jeremy Webb** presented the ACTRA Award of Excellence to **David Renton**, citing his 40-year contribution to the performing arts in Halifax. President Webb pointed out that he and David share the same birthday, but on the day Jeremy was born – 36 years ago – David was the sitting President of ACTRA Maritimes. David continues to serve on Branch Council as Treasurer. During the presentation, Jeremy announced that Branch Council had elected to rename the award the ACTRA Maritimes David Renton Award of Excellence.

Long-time members **Deborah Allen** and **Gloria Langlands** were presented with Life Memberships in recognition of the pivotal role each has played in the history of the Maritimes Branch.

– *Gary Vermeir*  
ACTRA Maritimes Branch Representative



**David Renton** receiving the ACTRA Award of Excellence.

# Stars shine at Toronto awards



Peter Keleghan hosting the awards ceremony.

Nominee **Debra McGrath** and **Angie Gei**.



Nominee **Mark Rendall**.



ACTRA National President **Thor Bishopric** with Award of Excellence recipient **Sonja Smits** and **Seaton McLean**.



**Brent Carver** and **Diane D'Aquila** in *Elizabeth Rex*.



**Gordon Pinsent** and **Charmion King**.

The 2004 ACTRA Toronto Performers Awards drew a sold-out crowd to the Carlu on February 20. Member **Peter Keleghan** entertained the audience of more than 600 during the formal part of the evening, before the crowd broke into full-on celebration mode, dancing and catching up with colleagues into the wee hours.

During the sweetly-short awards show, **Diane D'Aquila** and **Brent Carver** took the two-juried awards for Best Performance – Female and Male, for their work in **Elizabeth Rex**, the CBC presentation based on **Timothy Findley's** stage play adapted for broadcast.

The 2004 Award of Excellence was presented to **Sonja Smits** by last year's recipient **Gordon Pinsent**. A Gemini Award-winning performer, Sonja is well known to audiences for her roles in **Street Legal**, **Traders**, and most recently, **The Eleventh Hour**. She has also given back to the ACTRA community, starting in the '80s when she served on ACTRA's women's caucus. More recently she has worked with ACTRA to save Canadian TV drama, lobbying federal politicians and cabinet ministers to reverse the decline in Canadian television drama.

## 2004 Awards nominees

### OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE – FEMALE:

**Wendy Crewson**, *The Many Trials of One Jane Doe*

★ **Diane D'Aquila**, *Elizabeth Rex*

**Debra McGrath**, *Expecting*

**Sarah Polley**, *My Life Without Me*  
**Sophie Traub**, *Pink*

### OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE – MALE:

★ **Brent Carver**, *Elizabeth Rex*

**David Fox**, *The Saddest Music in the World*

**Mark McKinney**, *Falling Angels*

**Mark Rendall**, *The Interrogation of Michael Crowe*

**Michael Riley**, *DNA*

★ Indicates Award Winner



# We share our sadness at the passing of the following colleagues

Peter Brocking  
Arthur Cole  
Claire Crawford  
Patrick Crean  
Jack Creley

Jason Edmonds  
Harry Elton  
Cliff Gardner  
Paul Brian Harding  
Reg Harvey

JW Hunter  
George Josef  
Eugene Kash  
Tom Kneebone  
Monty McFarlane

Barbara McLeod  
Laura Press  
Guy Provost  
Eric Smith House  
Paul Sutherland

Carolyn Tweedle  
Daryl Wells  
Billy E. Williams  
Austin Willis



## HELENE WINSTON

1922-2004

Our dear friend **Helene Winston** drew her last breath on March 6 at the Motion Picture Home in L.A. She had battled cancer courageously for some years, determined to do so in the comfort of her home in Van Nuys where many Canadian actors were welcomed and entertained.

Helene was an artist in the theatre and in life. I recently had the privilege of spending an afternoon with her. She lay glamorously atop her bed in a floral gown looking out on the veritable jungle garden she had created, a perfect haven for her adored cats. The walls of her sunroom were covered with the mementos of shows and friends, spanning her career from its beginning in Winnipeg, pictures of her playing Gladys, **Al Waxman's** mother in **King of Kensington** and her many L.A. triumphs – Madame Arnfeldt in **Gigi** at the Anaheim Music Theatre and Rummy Mitchens in **Major Barbara** at the Mark Taper Forum.

She was a talented sculptress and in recent years devoted herself to poetry. In 2001, at a sold-out fundraiser for the Performing Arts Lodge, Helene regaled us with anecdotes both hilarious and poignant from her career interspersed with poems from her book **From Sleeping Libido to Geriatric Sex**.

With all of her creativity, Helene was also a top notch bridge player and could be quite reckless at a Las Vegas gaming table!

The spotlight has dimmed.

– Corinne Conley

## ALEX BARRIS

1922-2004

He shone the showbiz spotlight on all but himself. **Alex Barris** spent a lifetime creating pictures with words – on paper and on the air. As a journalist, columnist, reviewer, chronicler, TV and radio host, jazz reviewer, lyricist, raconteur, author of 10 books and screenwriter of at least 800 scripts for radio, television and film, he always gave credit where he felt it was due, including to his wife, Kay.

“I appeared,” he would say as he signed off each **Barris Beat** TV show in the ‘50s, “through the courtesy of my wife, who’s home looking after the kids.”

Alex Barris died at 82 on January 16, 2004. He had suffered a massive stroke almost a year before at his home in Toronto while at the computer working on his next book about some of his favourite people – composers and lyricists – writing to the very end.

Oh, he basked in the limelight through a half-century of show business activity too. Most remember his pioneering work on camera as host of the **Barris Beat**, **Front Page Challenge** panellist, MC for **One of a Kind**, host of **Barris And Company** and much later as the writer/host of CBC TV’s **Rear-View Mirror**. He actually performed publicly for the first time in New York as a childhood crooner, or as he explained in an early bio “Sang like a bird, but was also paid like one.”

As whimsical as Alex was about his own stints in front of an audience, he had the greatest respect for those who did it in pursuit of artistic excellence and professional survival. Several of his peers said so during an upbeat memorial at Toronto’s Arts and Letters Club in February.

“Alex Barris launched my career,” recalled **Joey Hollingsworth** of his first appearances on the **Barris Beat**. At the time, the tap dancer said he was living hand to mouth at the YMCA in Toronto for \$6.50 a week. “But after I appeared on



Alex’s show... I didn’t have to worry about my rent anymore.” Hollingsworth became a successful performer on shows as diverse as **Ed Sullivan** and **Mr. Rogers**.

If he admired dancers and singers, Alex adored musicians.

“All musicians in Toronto were fond of Alex because he was fond of us,” said trombonist and **Boss Brass** leader **Rob McConnell**. “He never had a newspaper column, a radio or TV show where he didn’t introduce musicians, help musicians or give musicians credit.”

Alex himself earned deserved praise in the U.S. via Emmy nominations and in Canada with numerous ACTRA nominations; most cherished praise came, however, at the 1994 Geminis, when he received the **Margaret Collier Award for Life Achievement** in Television Writing. He gave back to his fellow artists, serving on ACTRA committees and as a Vice-President for two terms.

“When I think of Alex, I think of how incredibly good he was at making people happy and enlightening them at the same time,” said comedian **Roger Abbott**, who worked with Barris behind the scenes on everything from ACTRA Awards shows to performer/writer caucus sessions. “All the great things he did for everybody else, I think that’s where he got his greatest satisfaction in life... Alex Barris is probably the one person I know who was lucky enough to make all his dreams come true. And what a remarkable epitaph that is.”

– Ted Barris



## AL FOSTER 1918-2003

**A** Foster was the first ‘star’ I met when I started as a receptionist 49 years ago in the old Theatre Arts Building on College Street that housed CBC-TV in Halifax when the station first went on the air. It was a magical time, I was 18 and just out of Mount Allison University, an ‘innocent’ suddenly cast among the weird and wonderful characters who pioneered CBC television in Atlantic Canada.

One of the wonderful ones was Al Foster. His sleek dark good looks, crisp curly black hair and easy bonhomie gave him an air of showbiz sophistication; and he was oh so kind, even to naive newcomers like me. He was the perfect gentleman, no dramatic outbursts, just smiling, pleasant Al, no matter what the chaos as we all learned how to put live TV on the air.

Al starred in a half-hour live musical variety show **The Alibi Room**, produced and directed by another memorable character from radio, **Peter Donkin**. Al’s partner in the show was a tall, gorgeous blonde named **Madrienne Small**. (I was so in awe of her, I tried to bleach my hair, with awful results). Every episode was an adventure. One time rats ate through a power cable and we went to black halfway through the show.

We improvised special effects to add ambience and so one night I watched as Al and Madrienne gazed into each other’s eyes crooning *Autumn Leaves* to each other and the viewers in Halifax. What those viewers couldn’t see was 6’ 6”, 250lb stagehand **Stan Scallion** crawling in the rafters of the rickety building, balancing an apple basket full of leaves to be released on cue, allowing them to drift gracefully upon the singing couple. When the cue finally came, Stan shifted his body and wafted the first few handfuls of leaves downward – and then came the sound of something breaking, a yelp of pain, a light exploding as it crashed to the floor... followed by Stan, still clutching his basket. Al didn’t miss a beat. He deftly manoeuvred himself and Madrienne away and finished the song:

*“And I miss you most of all, my darling,  
When Autumn leaves begin to fall.”*

Al Foster was a pro, and no hurtling 6’6”, 250lb body was going to take his big finish away from him.

– Barbara MacAndrew



## RACHEL DAVIS

1981-2004

**R**achel Davis, the 23 year-old daughter of Gemini-winning actor **Janet Wright** and **Bruce Davis**, was shot and killed in Vancouver on January 4, 2004 while trying to save a man from being kicked to death. The hearts of so many of us ache for Janet and her family as they mourn the loss of this most courageous, loyal and loving woman. According to her father, she had been a peacekeeper all her life, intervening in fights and trying to mediate arguments. “It’s always worked, until now,” said Davis.

*She could not ration her strength.  
She could not tolerate things that  
insult the dignity and the light in us all.  
She would not calculate what she  
could afford to give, or in any way  
stand by, hold back, or remain  
silent in the face of danger or deceit.  
She was like all people with strength;  
open and vulnerable and not afraid  
to be afraid.*

– Rachel’s Family

### Memorial Fund

A trust fund has been created that will go to charities Rachel held important. If you would like to make a contribution, please make cheques payable to: Investors Group (In trust), Referenced as: Rachel Davis Memorial Fund and send to: Investor’s Group, c/o Ray Wallis, Senior Account Consultant, 200-1200 Lonsdale Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7M 2H6  
For further information, contact: Ray Wallis at 604-986-1200, ray.wallis@investorsgroup.com or Janet Land at 416-406-1574, outlandishj@sympatico.ca



## JOHN RIVET

1922-2003

*“A fellow of  
infinite jest, of  
most excellent  
fancy.”*

– Hamlet

**J**ohn Rivet was an active participant in theatre, radio and film in Calgary and Edmonton. He died on December 3, 2003 and will be much missed.

John developed a love for theatre in his youth in Calgary, and after serving in the Canadian army, he enrolled at the University of Washington, where

he obtained his B.A. degree in Theatre. Upon returning to Calgary, he was an actor and director with **Workshop 14** and also did considerable work in radio.

In 1954, he went to the University of Alberta in Edmonton for his teaching certificate, and later his M.A. in Educational Drama. He acted and directed at the university’s Studio Theatre and Walterdale Theatre Associates. He later became a Drama Supervisor for the Edmonton Catholic School System where he made a significant contribution to theatre arts education.

An ACTRA member since 1972, John continued to be involved in radio and film work and in 2001 and 2003 he acted with fellow seniors at the Edmonton Fringe.

– Frank Glenfield



**ACTRA** is governed by a National Council of your peers, made up of the President, Past President, and 24 Councillors appointed by the branches. Every member of National Council is a professional performer who volunteers their time and energy to work on your behalf. They are your direct link to your union – please don't hesitate to contact them and share your concerns – or applause – at [national@actra.ca](mailto:national@actra.ca).



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# Runaway broadcasters

– continued from page 15

## Show your card and save your money



All ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA members (Full, Apprentice and ACTRA Extras) are entitled to a number of **discounts** when you show your member card. For a full list of discounts and details on how to access these deals and more, pick up a copy of the benefits guide at your ACTRA branch, or download a copy from the members' section or the SiteSeer role at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca). Questions? Contact Joanne Deer at [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca) or 1-800-387-3516 EXT 4045.



### Lush – 25% discount

Calling all Lush fans: Present your membership card at the cash and get a 25% discount at Lush's 22 locations across Canada.



**VIA Rail Canada** – ACTRA members get **up to 5% off** VIA Rail's best available fares in all classes by booking directly with VIA Rail using the group discount number '9950'.

There are no service charges or additional fees when you book directly with Via Rail by phone at 1-888-VIA-RAIL or in person (not through a travel agent).

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**Variety** – **48% off** first-time subscriptions to Variety! Get a year of Variety and access to [www.variety.com](http://www.variety.com) for just US\$168.00 when you quote code **8AADW04**.



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them: enjoying protection from foreign competition and relying on generous tax cuts and public money to pay for the minimal Canadian content that they are obliged to air. Yet they also claim the right to make full-fledged free-market profits, vilifying all attempts to force them to reinvest some of the profits back into the system that has served them so well.

So long as shareholders are calling all the shots, we can't rely on goodwill to get broadcasters to live up to their obligations under the *Broadcasting Act*. The CRTC must add some teeth to their licensing regulations by bringing back spending requirements, and requiring broadcasters to air a minimum number of hours of original Canadian drama during prime time hours.

However, the health of our industry needs more than regulatory measures from the CTRC, it needs a long-term commitment from private broadcasters to invest in and nourish Canadian talent and storytelling.

While we know that broadcasting is a business where shareholders are king, we also know that it is public airwaves and the regulated environment that allow their profits to flourish. Broadcasters must be dissuaded from driving south for filler and stifling Canadians with the bill.

Until that happens, we'll be tuned into their every move. Canadian performers are not going to go quietly away and allow our voices to be drowned out by corporate greed and its cacophony of U.S. network schlock. We have too many experiences to share, too many stories to tell.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 CRTC, *Broadcasting Policy Monitoring Report*. December 2003.
- 2 *Broadcasting Act*, 1991
- 3 Leonard Asper, President & CEO, *CanWest Global Communications Corp. AGM*. January 29, 2004.
- 4 CRTC, *Television – Statistical and Financial Summaries, 1999-2003*. February 2004.
- 5 *Broadcasting Policy Monitoring Report*. December 2003.
- 6 Glenn O'Farrell, President & CEO, Canadian Association of Broadcasters. "Putting Audiences First", *Playback*, January 19, 2004.
- 7 Barry Kiefl, *International TV Programming and Audience Trends 1996-2001*, May 2003.
- 8 Canadian Coalition of Audio-Visual Unions, *The Crisis in Canadian English-Language Drama*, March 2003.



# Face to Face: Giving you even more Face time

**Face to Face** is ACTRA's free online talent catalogue that lets you show the world what you've got to offer. When you use **Face to Face**, you get the power to take control of marketing your unique skills and experience. Unlike other talent catalogues, **Face to Face** lets you instantly email your résumé, headshots and video and audio clips to producers and casting directors around the world. For free.

## Will anyone see me?

You can increase the amount of exposure you get by keeping your profile updated and detailed, adding photos and video and audio clips. The amount of exposure you can get is endless if you take matters into your own hands and send producers and casting agents your portfolio.

## Cool. How do I get in on this??

You're already in! All ACTRA members automatically have a basic profile and if ACTRA has your photo, even from previous catalogues, it is included in **Face to Face**. The trick is to make it your own by building your profile, posting your résumé, adding up to 10 photos, video clips, audio clips. You can even add a hyperlink from your profile to your own personal website, if you have one. Once your profile is set up, you can update it at any time, or authorize your agent to make changes.

## Can ACTRA Members search each others' profiles?

Previously, only ACTRA-approved industry partners could search the profiles on **Face to Face** – generally signatory producers, or non-signatory producers working within ACTRA's jurisdiction. This past March, access opened to include a whole new group of industry partners that you've worked with your entire career: your fellow ACTRA members. A group of ACTRA's leading members asked for this important change and it was endorsed by National Council. Now you can raise your profile and build links within your professional peer group.



## Online at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)

### What if I prefer to keep my profile hidden from other members?

We want you to feel in control of your profile – hey, it's yours! We've therefore added some new features that allow you to decide whether your fellow members can see it.

Members 18 years of age and over can restrict access to their profiles by activating a new prompt. You will be asked upon your initial login to **Face to Face** to indicate whether other members can access your profile. You can change your mind any time by activating the new toggle on your **Face to Face** homepage.

Child performers do not need to 'opt out' – they have automatically been excluded from the expanded access. Parents/guardians of child performers can choose to 'opt in' by submitting a written request to ACTRA. When a minor turns 18, he/she will automatically be included in member searches and be accessible to other members unless they select the 'opt out' feature that will appear on their **Face to Face** homepage on their 18th birthday.

Naturally, ALL profiles, including those of minors, will remain fully accessible to ACTRA-approved industry partners with a **Face to Face** password.

### Um, my brain ate my password...

If you've lost your password you can use the handy "Lost your password?" button at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) or contact [ftf@actra.ca](mailto:ftf@actra.ca).

More questions? Need help getting started? Contact your local branch, or email [ftf@actra.ca](mailto:ftf@actra.ca).

### Share your Face to Face success story!

Have you received any calls or an audition as a result of your profile? Send your stories to [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca) and we'll help you brag in the next issue of *InterACTRA*.

# Women in the Director's Chair 2004



Tammy Bentz (r) directs Jeanie Calleja (l).



Christine Lipka directs Paul Haddad.

## 2005 The Women in the Director's Chair Workshop

STORY INCUBATION MODULE (SIM)  
December 3 to 6, 2004 (*open to the directors participants only*)

PREP, PRODUCTION, POST MODULE (PPPM)  
January 20 to February 6, 2005  
(*all ACTRA actors eligible*)

The deadline for applications for WIDC 2005 are: DIRECTORS: September 30, 2004, ACTORS: October 31, 2004, CREW: October 31, 2004

For more information contact  
Carol Whiteman, Program Producer  
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[www.banffcentre.ca/bnmi](http://www.banffcentre.ca/bnmi)  
[www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)

The annual Women in the Director's Chair workshop gives eight woman directors a chance to hone their skills in this acclaimed program that takes participants through the components of a production with professional performers and crews. For two intensive weeks at The Banff Centre, directors, actors and crew are given the chance to stretch their creative muscles in a supportive, educational environment.

InterACTRA asked a few members to reflect on their experiences at WIDC 2004:

"I've seen the workshop from three very different perspectives, as a script supervisor (1998), actor (2002) and now as a director. I think that sets some record somewhere. I've also witnessed it morph into the technical achievement it has become. Now there's a writing component sponsored by CBC Television, the Story Incubation Module, which takes place in December, well ahead of the actual workshop to facilitate script revisions.

In January the WIDC simulates a real-life set experience. Luckily the workshop focuses on 'process' not result. The only pressure is to experiment. That's what's so great – you are encouraged to take risks to realize your wildest ideas. The hot team of excellent mentors (including ACTRA's own **Rosemary Dunsmore**), offer practical tips and pearls of wisdom along the way. On set I worked with **Greg Middleton**, DP (**Better Than Chocolate, Kissed**) and a slew of experienced, talented actors and IATSE/DGC crew. Working with these skilled people was only half of the highlight because the social bonuses were also inspiring and thought provoking. The work continued even in our 'fun times'.

I stressed, I worried, I rejoiced, I was frustrated. I panicked, but more than anything I soared. All those people working to make my idea better. I sucked out everything I could from all those knowledgeable mentors, crew and actors. And then I inhaled all I could from the choice location – Banff. When you think of it, in 2½ weeks, the workshop manages to produce eight short films that are compiled into an hour-long drama plus 2 'gag' reels and many million magic moments. It's exhausting and exhilarating all at once.

More than anything the workshop produces directors. Whatever we eight were before, we have now earned our seat in the director's chair and then some. As graduates of the program, we are all embarking on a collaborative project, facilitated by Creative Women Workshops, which we plan to pitch at the Banff Television Festival. That's how motivating the program is.

It was a big thrill going to the workshop this time as a director knowing how much ACTRA supports the WIDC. I am most grateful for our member scholarship fund, which helped make the WIDC a financial possibility for me. What a bonus – thanks ACTRA and all its parts!

Of all three times I've been to the WIDC this was the time it all clicked and made the most sense, like coming home. I found the place where I've always longed to be and realized it's also where I belong – in the director's chair."

– Tammy Bentz, Director Participant, Vancouver BC

"As an actor struggling to find her place within this crazy business my experience at the WIDC Workshop was invaluable. It reminded me of why I'm doing what I do which is to help bring a story to life. As a sponsor, (ACTRA) should be very proud and happy to know that (we) are helping shape the skills and confidence of an amazing and talented group of directors. We need more women telling our stories."

– Jeanie Calleja, Acting Ensemble, Toronto ON

"WIDC is building a future for women in our industry. The quality of knowledge and experience the women leave the workshop with may very well shape the face of our film and television industry. It's not only that the evolution of our industry is begging for more participation by women in key positions, but also that our industry is begging for a more cohesive, united, and collaborative process for storytelling. WIDC is taking great strides towards these goals."

– Shaun Johnston, Acting Ensemble, Edmonton, AB



# John Drainie

**O**rson Welles once called **John Drainie** the greatest radio actor in the world. Few would disagree. Undoubtedly, John Drainie was one of Canada's most well-known and distinguished actors.

A self-taught actor, John Drainie started out as part of a group of Vancouver radio artists that included fellow greats **Fletcher Markle, Alan Young, Lister Sinclair, Len Peterson, Arthur Hill, Bernie Braden** and **Andrew Allan**. They made Vancouver stand out in early radio drama, before moving on to Toronto during the Second World War to be central to the CBC's drama revolution during the Golden Age of Radio.

John's versatility was showcased in literally hundreds of productions – including playing Matthew in the original 1956 CBC-TV production of **Anne of Green Gables**, as well as hosting **This Hour Has Seven Days**. However, he was perhaps best known for the five years he spent playing hired man Jake Trumper in CBC Radio's **Jake and the Kid** by **W.O. Mitchell**.

John died in at the age of 50 in October 1966, leaving his wife, Claire, and six children, including daughter Bronwyn, a writer and broadcaster who wrote his story *Living the Part: John Drainie and the Dilemma of Canadian Stardom*, published in 1988.

Shortly after John's death, ACTRA published a commemorative book containing tributes from performers, writers and directors. Here is a small selection of that testimony to the impact that John Drainie had on his fellow performers and Canadians as a whole.

*I learned my craft, week by week, watching this kind-hearted, sincere wonderful human being John Drainie, as he brought understanding, warmth, and life to the role of Jake. Under his paternal gaze, The Kid blossomed into reality. What a debt of gratitude I owe this versatile creative artist. I cherish the friendship between John Drainie and the Kid. I shall miss him.*  
– Billie Mae Richards

*For any actor with an agile tongue and a flexible voice, it's easy to play a wide range of characters and be a man of a hundred voices. What John Drainie did was something much greater than that: he played a thousand characters with only a few voices.*



John Drainie

*When you listened to him on radio, your ear would tell you: "That's John," but your heart and mind believed it was Jake, or the Brass-Pounder or Leacock or Sir John A. MacDonald – or whatever he wanted you to believe. In Tommy Tweed's two-hour scripts in which Drainie played Sir John A., a character kept yelling at meetings: "You'll never die, John A.!" Perhaps in our acting company we might change the A. to D.* – Alan King

*I am personally convinced from frequent observation... that he was, beyond a doubt, the lousiest impromptu reader it has been my anguish to hear. Indeed, his first readings were so awkward as to cause newcomers, who didn't know him, to shake their heads sadly and mutter "even with no lessons I could do better than that." But give Drano time to commune with the text; to think about its meaning; to get himself into that character's particular frame of mind; to shut out the studio; to forget his worries, his family, his friends, his commitments, and finally, to mark that script with his own brand of cabalistic but unintelligible hieroglyphics, and there was none to come near his final performance.*  
– Tommy Tweed

*Other actors perhaps have had superficially the same dexterity; but the ability to speak 197 dialects accurately at any age-level is not often accompanied by the two other prerequisites of greatness, a profoundly compassionate insight into character and a ceaseless concern with what the play means: Drainie has all three gifts in abundance.* – John Reeves

John Drainie's legacy lives on in the annual award established in his name two years after his death. The first recipients **Jesse Ljungh, W.O. Mitchell, Tommy Tweed**, and **Jean Murray** have since been joined by some of Canada's leading performers and broadcasters: **Andrew Allan, Harry J. Boyle, Lister Sinclair, Graham Spry, Rupert Caplan, Len Peterson, Robert Weaver, Jane Mallett, John Reeves, Johnny Wayne & Frank Shuster, Ruth Springford, Norman Campbell, Frances Hyland, Mavor Moore, Lucio Agostini, Robert Christie, Fred Diehl, Bernard Cowan, Pat Patterson, Ross McLean, Davidson Dunton, Peter Gzowski, Allan S. McFee, Gordon Pinsent, Barbara Frum, Max Ferguson, Knowlton Nash, Dodi Robb, Joe Schlesinger, Peter Herrndorf, Bernie Lucht, Pierre Berton, Shelagh Rogers, David Suzuki, and Jim Murray.**



Drainie Award Medal, sculpted by **Dora de Pédery-Hunt**.

This year's recipient, chosen as always by a jury of past recipients will be honoured at the Banff Tribute event and presented with a bronze medal cast by renowned medallist **Dora de Pédery-Hunt**.

**John Drainie, Jack Mather and Frank Peddie in Jake & The Kid.**



ACTRA's new Statuette makes her entrance (continued from back cover)

## THE ARTIST: **Adrienne Alison**

**A**drienne Alison has been sculpting for 18 years and has studied both in North America and in England. Her unique background spanning art and art as applied to reconstructive medicine allows her to combine artistic sensitivity with a disciplined, professional process and anatomical accuracy. Adrienne is a leader in this highly specialized field making advances in maxillofacial prosthetics (rebuilding or replacing the

face or neck). She established and operated a clinic at Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital for more than a decade.

Her understanding of human anatomy is carried over in her same attention to detail and spirited realism in sculpture. Adrienne has done portrait busts for private collections in England and Canada, working in a variety of mediums including plaster, terra cotta, bronze and bronze-resin.

*"As a fan and an artist, I wanted to create sculpture to honor the long tradition of acting and dramatized story. The actor brings life to the written word and gives voice and physical expression to universal emotions. For this reason, I chose a realistic rather than an abstract form. I also chose to honour the fact that the actor is a living, breathing person with a sculpture in the human form. The piece is deliberately lyrical; to embrace the sensitivity an actor must bring to his or her profession. I used several visual links to the origins of performance in ancient Greece. The faces and hairstyles used in the pieces are from classical and classically derived sculptural traditions. I followed the*

*approach of Malliol, the early 20th century French sculptor, who draped the nude sculpture lightly, so as to show off its form.*

*The pose was selected to capture the movement of an actor when embracing the audience and expressing the emotion in a role.*

*I hope these sculptures will strike a chord with those who have dedicated their professional lives to acting, by visually honouring this great artistic tradition, and that recipients will enjoy the aesthetic pleasure of looking at the pieces as sculpture, in addition to valuing them as awards, for many years."*

– Adrienne Alison



Award sculptor **Adrienne Alison** with husband **Loudon Owen** at the ATP Awards.

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# ACTRA's new statuette makes her entrance



by Ferne Downey

It was a mission that became a quest. Actors and staff had a yearning: we sought a small and beautiful statue to honour the outstanding work of our members in ACTRA's 60th year. It was decided that for a number of reasons, including prohibitive costs, ACTRA's previous award, the beloved **Nellie**, would not be revived. It also seemed appropriate to celebrate the revival of our awards and our monumental anniversary with a new statuette, a symbol of our creative and collective evolution.

The Communications Committee undertook an extensive national search. Our initial fantasy was that we would find actor/ sculptors, and much to our collective delight we did. We found actors who worked in all forms – mixed-media, blown and cast glass, wood, bronze, etc. – and we excitedly exchanged digital photographs of many talented artists' work electronically. We found an intriguing piece at a leading Toronto gallery but the costs of obtaining rights to reproduce the sculpture would have been sky high. That's when the penny dropped: we realized that ACTRA needed to commission a new work created especially for us. Ta da! That was a certainty.

**Jackie Laidlaw**, ACTRA Toronto Performers' Awards Chair, helped us search far and wide, visiting artists' studios in the city, in the country – literally. It was her good luck that she mentioned our quest to internationally renowned sculptor **Adrienne Alison** at a book club. Adrienne was keenly interested in the challenges posed, and Jackie asked if she'd like

to submit a sketch or idea to the committee. She assented immediately, and went a step further by creating two exquisite clay maquettes instead! Adrienne had gone off on her own doing a mountain of research and unearthing the ties that bind actors together universally. Her first clay models utilized the masks of comedy and tragedy, which we found too resonant of the **SAG** Award, The Actor. She heard us, was inspired and came back with the statue you see today. It was the furthest thing from our minds that we might fall for the traditional form of bronze sculpture, but we were smitten with this lyrical and bold beauty. It was a fabulous entrance.

## Help us name our statuette!

We have a beautiful award, but now she needs a name. All members are invited to send in suggestions for consideration.

If your suggestion is chosen, you will become a legend in the ACTRA Awards history books... and we'll also throw in 10 Cineplex Odeon movie passes.

Send your suggestions before July 16, 2004, to: [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca)



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