



ACTRA Montreal

Grapevine

Spring 2006



**Turf War makes Montreal a
No Shoot Zone**

letter from | the editor



by Don Jordan

Hello All,

No it is not a figment of your imagination, you are actually holding a hard copy of The Grapevine in your hot little hands. I know that it has been a while since you've received one, and for that we are deeply apologetic, but I felt that the membership deserved to know why there has been such a delay in it's issue (drum roll please)... it's called financial difficulties.

We all know what kind of slump our industry has endured of late, so much so that we have had to say goodbye to three of our wonderful staff persons within the past three years. Being faced with limited funding plus the subsequent reduction in manpower (it takes quite a few people to help put The Grapevine together), we've had no choice but to cut our usual four issues per year down to three. Last year being a most trying one within our branch (I'm sure for us all as well), we experienced further delays enabling us an output of only two issues.

Our goal for the Grapevine was to create an essential service for the membership, keeping us informed of our news, our events, and our community. We are proud and very committed to The Grapevine and hope that you are too.

Financially, it seems that times will undoubtedly continue to be tough for our branch in 2006 as production has all but ground to a halt here in Montreal. It is my belief that in these difficult times it is even more imperative to maintain a steadfast level of communication with our members to maintain our sense of community and solidarity, After all, we are all suffering through this predicament together.

As editor of The Grapevine and a National Councilor representing the Montreal branch of ACTRA, I would like to be the first to apologize for the lack of correspondence and communication from your branch. I promise that we will do our utmost to return our Montreal services to a level that can again be considered the envy of every other branch of ACTRA across the country.

Sincerely,

Don Jordan
ACTRA Montreal Grapevine, Editor

If you have something you would like to submit to the ACTRA Montreal Grapevine, please send it c/o **The Grapevine, 1450 City Councillors #530, Montreal, Qc H3A 2E6** or email it to rduniz@actra.ca.

We appreciate your comments!

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ACTRA
Montreal

the Grapevine

Spring 2006

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If you're an ACTRA member or apprentice and want to write an article, contribute original cartoons, artwork or photos, we'd love to hear from you! Send us an email at rduniz@actra.ca.

HERE'S AN IDEA

Done reading your Grapevine? Well, why not share with it someone else! Leave your copy of the Grapevine in a public place (coffee shop, movie theatre seat, etc.) and let someone else have a look. It's a great way to increase awareness and raise the profile of ACTRA and the acting community in Montreal!

Contents

President's Message

Page 2

ACTRA Montreal's New Branch Council

Page 3

It's My Damn Union

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

Page 4

Treasurer's Report

by Cary Lawrence

Page 6

ACTRA Members for a Good Cause

by Richard Jutras

Page 7

Cover Story:

Turf War

AQTIS vs IATSE makes Montreal a 'No Shoot Zone'

Page 8

And the Winner Is...

ACTRA Awards 2005

Page 10

Letter to the Grapevine

by Richard M. Dumont

Page 12

ACTRA Shorts 2005

Page 13

The Annual General Meeting

Page 14

ACTRA Members News

Page 16



The Vagaries of this Business

I wrote a president's letter a few months back, that was destined for a Grapevine that never materialized. It did, however, make it to publication (or at least, posting) on the ACTRA Montreal website. I urge you to take a look at it if you can, if only to contrast it with this one. This business of performing never ceases to surprise; at the time of writing that last missive to the membership, the state of the union seemed very different indeed. We now have a new Conservative government, the CRTC is acting up again, putting broadcaster interests before cultural ones, and we have a doozy of a union battle going on right here in *La Belle Province*.

If you haven't already heard, the reason why there is no U.S. feature film work in town (a mainstay for the past ten years or so) is because of a jurisdictional raid by one technicians' union (IATSE) over another's (AQTIS). IATSE wants control of English-language shoots in Quebec and AQTIS is, understandably, not willing to relinquish it. Now, AQTIS, it must be said, has been a dysfunctional union from the get-go; an unhappy marriage of two former rival organizations that never quite gelled in the short time they've been united, hence they were vulnerable to poaching.

The current stand-off is being mediated, but without any legal means to enforce a settlement, it will likely remain a stalemate for some time. Ultimately, any change will have to be occasioned by the membership, the majority of which have been feeling the pinch for more than six months now. And both unions know that their squabble loses momentum the longer there's no work to fight about. But they're both deeply dug in, and the resulting dearth of American service work hurts our members too.

In the meantime, we deal with the labour void in the same way performers have always dealt with the vagaries of this business: we focus our energies elsewhere. Rest assured that the ACTRA leadership will continue to do all it can to increase indigenous English-language film and television production in this country, so that when the Americans decide to stay home or go elsewhere, the economic pinch that we feel will be less painful.

Speaking of economics and the business of our business, ACTRA will soon sit down with the APFTQ, CFTP and AMPTP to negotiate a new Independent Production Agreement. Although, the timetable has been delayed by the ongoing negotiations of our sister union, UBCP, we will undoubtedly be at the table for that first round of bargaining before the summer.

Some months ago, I was pleased to participate in a number of focus groups with my fellow ACTRA members and I was considerably encouraged by their contributions and support. I would like to thank them for their commitment to ACTRA. After all, the Negotiating Committee relies on all of us to tell them what we, as working members, want to see happen in our collective agreements.

Finally, I want to include a paragraph from that letter from the abortive Grapevine because there have been a few changes to the Branch Council, and some important acknowledgements that need to be reiterated:

Though the numbers were such that an election was not warranted, our Branch Council welcomes two new members by acclamation: Paula Costain and Howard Rosenstein - congratulations to them. Congratulations as well to acclaimed returning councillors: Thor Bishopric, Don Jordan, David Schaap, Tyrone Benskin, Cary Lawrence, Gillian Ferrabee, Barbara Bacci, and Holly Gauthier-Frankel. We're sad to say goodbye to two long-serving councillors: Maria Bircher and Dawn Ford. They have our gratitude and heartfelt thanks for their many years of dedication and hard work on behalf of the members.

In solidarity,

Matt Holland,
Branch President, ACTRA Montreal



(l to r) Members Simon Peacock, Susan Glover and Mark Camacho participating in an IPA Focus Group

representing | you

MEET ACTRA MONTREAL'S NEW BRANCH COUNCIL

'06 is the start of a two year term for a new Branch Council at ACTRA Montreal.

We welcome two new Members-at-Large, by acclamation - Paula Costain and Howard Rosenstein - and one new Alternate in Johanna Nutter. Congratulations to them.

Congratulations as well to acclaimed returning councillors: Matt Holland, Thor Bishopric, and Cary Lawrence - acclaimed as President, Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively - Members-at-Large David Schaap, Gillian Ferrabee, Barbara Bacci, Holly Gauthier-Frankel and our elected National Councillors Don Jordan and Tyrone Benskin.

We're sad to say goodbye to two long-serving councillors: Maria Bircher and Dawn Ford. They have our gratitude and heartfelt thanks for their many years of dedication and hard work on behalf of the members.



Matt Holland
President



Thor Bishopric
Vice-President



Cary Lawrence
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Tyrone Benskin
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Don Jordan
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Barbara Bacci
Member-at-Large



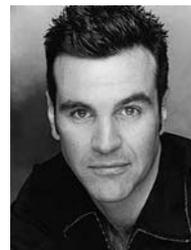
Paula Costain
Member-at-Large



Gillian Ferrabee
Member-at-Large



Holly Gauthier-Frankel
Member-at-Large



Howard Rosenstein
Member-at-Large



David Schaap
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Johanna Nutter
Alternate



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IT'S MY DAMN UNION!

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

"Ennis Del Mar: If you can't fix it Jack, you gotta stand it.

Jack Twist: Fer how long?

Ennis Del Mar: Fer as long as we can ride it."

(Brokeback Mountain)

Hello once again, my dear fellow members! It's been a while, hasn't it? I bet you thought I was gone for good, didn't you?

Well I almost was, buckaroos; after a brief foray into the wilds of Southeast Asia to seek fortune and fame and unlimited bowls of noodles, I am back in time for the great, smelly Montreal thaw. I'm back where I belong, and there's nothing you can do about it! So there! If you didn't know I was gone in the first place, disregard the previous message and just be happy that you get to read yet ANOTHER fantastic installment of my addled brain-ramblings! Oh, and I've decided to go with the Cowboy thing this issue, in honour of a wonderful movie that I saw a while back. And until I get emails telling me to stop, I'll keep amusing myself! Yeehaw!!

I apologize if I seem overly excited; it's just that I am! I cannot fully express how thrilled I am to be back in town to see what you've all been up to, and to approach the coming season with a fresh outlook and a light heart. This past year has been one of transition for me; I have spent many hours asking myself countless questions about my future, career-wise and otherwise, and what exactly it is that I want to do with my life. It's been an interesting few months, pardners, but I've learned a lot and that, I think, is the point of all this ink on paper.

I know that times have been exceptionally rough for our community these past few years. I have felt the purse strings tighten, felt the nagging doubts get stronger and have made choices based solely on surviving another day trying to do what I am meant to do as a creative person. It

hasn't been easy; I don't want to pretend that this is a simple path for any of us. But, having had an amazing opportunity to step away from everything and everyone I know and love to look at another path and another life for myself, I know that this city is exactly where I want to be right now, for a myriad of reasons.

Our community is full of promise. That may sound trite, and potentially useless as we all try to make ends meet and to feel fulfilled and content. I firmly believe, however, that 'promise' is the key in any difficult situation. All we can do as human beings is try our very best to be who we are, honestly and fully. If we make a promise as a community of performers to devote ourselves to preserving our craft and our culture, then we are one step ahead of the game. Sound familiar, compadres? It is the grand ol' theme of unity, pure and simple, that I am trying to promote and gently beat you over the head with yet again!

I see this unity at work when I meet colleagues around town, or at random gigs, but mostly I see it when I go to council meetings, or ACTRA events. It is inspiring to me; I was thrilled with the way our last AGM and Awards Night went. I felt truly lucky to be a part of such a fantastic, talented and, most importantly, supportive community of performers! I am proud of Montreal's long-standing tradition of excellence in our endeavors as performers, and in the amount of compassion and respect people have for one another within the community. I want to uphold that tradition, and I promise that I will do my very best to make magic happen in this city on as many levels as I can.



►► My fellow council members work hard to come up with solutions and strategies to uphold our standards as well. With much respect and lots of sadness to see them leave our group, I want to thank **María Bircher, Dawn Ford** and **Ivan Freud** for their excellent work on our local and national councils. Without their strong voices and endless energy over the years, this branch would not be what it is today. The foundations they have laid for the next generation of members inspire me, and I am proud to have served on council with them. Yay!!

I would also like to welcome **Paula Costain, Johanna Nutter** and **Howard Rosenstein** on board; they are already proving to be indispensable to council, and I am excited to see what we will be able to come up with in the next little while. There is one thing, however, that I'd like to put out there to you caballeros.

Our lovely council members serve on committees; they volunteer their time and energy to provide you with workshops and events; whether it's to help you hone your craft, to make you feel like you're part of a community, or to facilitate your understanding of the way ACTRA works so that everyone is protected and informed, we work for you.

It is imperative that, in the spirit of unity, members have their say in terms of how things should be. I know I'm constantly urging you to speak up, write to me, let me know what you want to see, to do, to hear, blahblahblah! It may be tedious, and I may not be the outlet for all of your queries and problems, but that's what council is here for.

The AGM is a good way for us to let you know what's been going on all year, and though the microphones are out for your comments and problems, you can always use the Grapevine and the council as another kind of outlet.

I don't want to seem like your opinions at AGM-time don't matter. Very far from it. I simply want to commend Johanna and Howard for stepping up to the plate and joining us; they are the only two people who spoke out at the last AGM who ALSO joined Council.

We have had 3 successive Councils without proper elections, which means that nobody sent in nomination ballots for themselves or for their colleagues.

I would love to see more of the collaborative spirit from the Awards night and other fun events seep into the new council dynamic! I would love to see more letters from you guys, telling us what to improve upon, or what to look at for next Grapevine issues.

Mainly, I'd just like to feel more of your presence, and to get a better sense of what the community needs. So talk to me, Buddies! I'm here for you, and want to hear from you!

And that is the end of my mini-diatribes. But I do have some excellent news to report! In order to celebrate summertime and all things new and exciting, we are going to be having an evening in late June where we can all meet up and hang out, just for fun! Huzzah!

It's going to be a Variety show! Yep, you heard me right, folks! A fantastic Variety Show held at the Comedy Works club downtown, where you'll get to watch your fellow Council Members sing, act and strut their stuff onstage! You will also experience the improvisational genius of the mind-bogglingly funny **On The Spot Players**.

It will take place on **Tuesday, June 27th**, and it will be loads and loads of fun. Tickets are **\$10** and all of the proceeds will be donated to The Actors' Fund of Canada. The show starts at **9pm** and you can only reserve your tickets by paying for them at the ACTRA Montreal office.

Everyone is welcome, so bring all your friends! I sincerely hope that you'll come out to say hello and have a laugh.

Thanks always for reading, compadres! I hope that this new season brings you happiness and abundance, and that you will make a promise to yourself to always be the very best that you can be...which is pretty damn great, in my humble esteem.

Remember, and I want to hear your best Cowboy drawls, ya'll...

IT'S YER DANG UNION TOO!! YEEHAW!!

Questions? Comments? Rants? Random gifts? Send it all to Holly, at **tappyco@yahoo.ca**. Or, if you dare, to the wonderful Randy at **rduniz@actra.ca**. Just make sure the gifts go to Holly.

She looves gifts! Happy Spring and summer! Keep smiling...

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by Cary Lawrence

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

ACTRA Montreal Ends 2005 in the Black

It has been a bit of a challenge to manage the branch's finances during the past five years. Since becoming Branch Treasurer, I have learned to number crunch with Raymond's help. He has been invaluable. As I am sure you are aware, the production scene in Montreal has been on a steady decline from its peak in 2000 and our finances have reflected this.

ACTRA Montreal's finances operate on a fiscal year which begins March 1 and ends the following February 28.

We ended the fiscal year of 2004-2005 with a \$187,000 deficit...in the red. And so, when we sat down to prepare for the fiscal year that just ended (2005-2006), we made a commitment to avoid another deficit.

To do this, we made some difficult decisions to reduce our overhead. We laid-off our receptionist, Carmy Renda. Our organizer Gary Saxe went on a four-day work week. And we did not replace Assistant Branch Representative, Micheline Russo, when she retired.

These painful decisions have helped us to meet our objective.

Although the numbers are not yet final as I write this note, I am pleased to announce that we will close the 2005-2006 fiscal year in the black.

This means that we won't have to dip into our accumulated surplus - which was generated during our 1994 to 2000 heyday - to pay for any shortfall.

This is particularly good news considering that Montreal's production scene is going through a bit of a crisis at the moment. The conflict between two technicians' unions - AQTIS and IATSE - has scared much of the American production away from Montreal.

The consequence is that members will have access to fewer work opportunities and the Branch's revenues will take a real hit. So, I think that it's safe to say that we'll be relying on our accumulated surplus to get through the current fiscal year.

Let's hope this crisis doesn't go on indefinitely. There are still lots of commercials and MOW's happening. Let us not despair. Rest assured that we are monitoring its effect on our finances very closely. Hang in there everybody, the ride is bumpy but there will be smooth sailing ahead.

Cary Lawrence,
Branch Treasurer, ACTRA Montreal

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The Tournament scores for AFC

by Richard Jutras

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www.actorsfund.ca

The Tournament : the little show that could and DID !

After being challenged by the cast of This is Wonderland, the cast of CBC TV's The Tournament raised over \$ 4,700.00 (with more to come) for The Actors' Fund of Canada.

On October 23rd, after a long day of shooting, the Gemini-nominated cast of The Tournament decided to put their vocal stylings to the test : holding a Karaoke Night and Auction at Jimbo's Comedy Nest on Bishop street. The room was generously donated free of charge. A 50 \ 50 draw was also held on set that day.

ACTRA Montreal and Toronto members joined forces at this very special event: Emcee **Christian Potenza**, Producer \ Karaoke Tech **Alain Goulem**, Doorman **Richard Jutras** and Money Fairy **Tracey Hoyt** helped make the evening a great success.

Some of the items that were auctioned off included: An autographed Hockey Stick by Habs player Richard Zednik, official Hockey Night in Canada jerseys autographed by Don Cherry and Ron Maclean and a Farqueson Funeral Home jersey autographed by the cast of The Tournament.

The highlight of the evening was, by far, a bidding war for a pair of tickets to a Habs \ NY Rangers home game with a tour of the dressing rooms to meet the players after the game. **Marty Putz** and **Howard Busgang** (creators and producers of the show) cross-checked ACTRA Montreal member **Fanny Lacroix** for the tickets. After a power play that lasted over 20 minutes, the tickets were sold to Howard

Busgang and Marty Putz for a whopping \$700.00. Howard and Marty then donated the tickets to be raffled off on set, where another \$530.00 was collected. The tickets were then won by none other than Richard Jutras, who then gave them to Fanny Lacroix and **Cas Anvar**.

Many thanks to the cast and crew for their support and to the folks at **Muse Entertainment** and **Adjacent 2 Entertainment** for their generous donations to the Actor's Fund.

"Go Warriors!!!!!!!"

Richard Jutras (Hal Farqueson)

Congratulations to the cast of The Tournament, nominated at the 2005 Gemini Awards for Best Ensemble in a Comedy Series.



TURF WAR

by ACTRA Regional Director
Raymond Guardia

Things have not been going our way when it comes to encouraging American production to shoot in our fair city. Now a turf war between two technician unions has taken Montreal's fortunes from bad to worse.

We have been continuously out-hustled by our main rivals - Toronto and Vancouver - as well as smaller centres like Halifax and Winnipeg in the competition for these projects. And when projects do come here, the Quebec producers' association - the APFTQ - greets them by extracting a \$14,000 toll-fee, providing nothing in return, and oblivious to the consequence this has on Montreal's overall competitive standing.

So when the news broke that a turf war between two technician unions was scaring American production from Montreal, with one Hollywood studio declaring Montreal to be a "no-shoot zone", ACTRA members could have been forgiven for thinking that maybe they should have listened to their parents and pursued a career in dentistry or accounting.

ACTRA members may have been subject to a lot of misinformation about the conflict between AQTIS and IATSE. And so I want to lay out a chronology of events and then offer my thoughts on the nature of the conflict and how it can be resolved.

I do so with some reluctance, as it is considered poor form for one union to tell another how to manage its affairs. But I believe that this conflict has reached a crisis point and ACTRA members have both

the right to know what's going on and what their Regional Director's views are. I don't promise to be 'neutral' and 'objective'. I do hope to be faithful to basic union principles and the interests of the ACTRA membership.

The Conflict So Far

1. A large segment of the technicians who work in film and television have been very unhappy with their union for a very long time. ACTRA members may know this from having been on set, listening to technicians complain about AQTIS and the STCVQ - the union that merged with the video union to create AQTIS.

2. For years, many technicians unhappy with their union have been urging IATSE, which already represents technicians everywhere else in North America, to set up shop in Montreal and represent them.

3. In August 2005, IATSE decided that the time had come to see if those appeals from technicians would translate into something more concrete.

4. IATSE opened an office and created two locals in Montreal - one to represent the camera department and second for the other technician positions.

5. By the end of 2005, IATSE had signed up over 800 members, the overwhelming majority coming from the AQTIS membership that works in film and television.

6. As the Montreal film community looked ahead to the 2006 production season, rumours about IATSE preparing to 'make their move' began to circulate.

7. AQTIS responded to these rumours by having their lawyer tell the Hollywood studios' association - the AMPTP - that injunctions and legal proceedings under the Quebec Status of the Artist legislation would be launched against any American producer who signed a collective agreement with IATSE and went with an IATSE crew on their shoot.

8. The Hollywood studios - through the AMPTP - made it clear that they were only interested in making films. They were not prepared to come to Montreal and get entangled in this turf war and costly legal proceedings.

9. The nascent Quebec Film Office - of which ACTRA is a member - intervened in an effort to get the production season going without any labour disruption.

10. The effort to convince the two unions to sign a common undertaking that would have ensured labour peace was not successful.

11. The Quebec Film Office then lobbied the Provincial Government to name a mediator/facilitator to see if a settlement could be negotiated. Former Federal Cabinet Minister Francis Fox agreed to serve.



12. After many meetings, a significant development occurred. The week of April 17, IATSE offered a final compromise that proposed to let the American producer determine which union they would prefer to work with. The proposal then stipulated that the two unions would abide by the producer's decision.

13. The hope was that this proposal would be submitted to the AQTIS Council on April 20th and then to a Special Meeting of the AQTIS membership on Sunday, April 23rd.

14. Instead, the AQTIS leadership submitted a resolution asking the membership for a mandate to use 'all available means' to defend its turf and reaffirm a hard-line, no concessions approach towards IATSE.

15. The official quorum for the meeting was 280 - 10% of the total membership. About 325 members attended the meeting. The overwhelming majority of the AQTIS membership present was supportive of the IATSE compromise.

16. Supporters of the IATSE compromise began moving amendments to the main resolution and winning the votes. Confronted with the prospect of losing all subsequent votes, those faithful to the 'no compromise' position responded by walking out of the meeting.

17. This tactic brought the number of members present below the 280 threshold for quorum, and put an end to the meeting before anything could be determined.

So What's This All About?

At its core, two unions are competing for the hearts and minds of Montreal's technicians. The union that is under siege - AQTIS - is paying for its past sins, real and imagined, while the insurgent union - IATSE - is capitalizing on technicians' unhappiness and offering another way of doing things.

We at ACTRA know that a union is only as strong as its membership. When a union loses the support of its members it has nothing. Period.

To maintain this support, a union must listen to its membership. And so what occurred at the AQTIS Special Membership Meeting on April 23rd is very troubling.

The members of AQTIS were invited to decide on a course of action regarding IATSE: to compromise or not to compromise. And when those faithful to the AQTIS leadership realized that the members did not support their 'no compromise' position, they chose to pull the plug on the meeting. In doing so, they denied their members of the right to decide the future of their union.

This kind of behaviour is inconsistent with democratic unionism and inappropriate in an industry that generates hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity.

It is out of place when actors, directors, technicians and writers are struggling to pay their rent and mortgages and wondering how they can continue to make a living in the industry.

So What Now?

I said at the beginning of the article that it was poor form for one union to tell another what to do. There have to be some compelling reasons for this rule to be broken. There are two: the current leadership at AQTIS has blocked its members from deciding what to do about IATSE, and these actions are having a devastating effect on the other workers in the industry and eroding our city's infrastructure.

And so AQTIS should seriously reconsider IATSE's compromise proposal. Under this proposal, AQTIS would keep its jurisdiction in the video world - formerly represented by the APVQ - and it would also keep its jurisdiction in indigenous French and English production.

The longer it takes AQTIS to realize this, the more other areas of its jurisdiction will be jeopardized and the more the rest of us will pay for the consequence of Hollywood declaring Montreal to be a 'no-shoot zone'.

Accepting IATSE's compromise proposal offers a way forward for AQTIS. It will also permit Montreal to once again host American productions and get back on track as a major production centre.

This conflict between AQTIS and IATSE reminds us that ACTRA will remain a strong and healthy union only as long as members stay informed, are able to discuss important issues in an open and democratic manner and communicate their hopes and aspirations to their union; that is how ACTRA will continue to be a part of building a better industry.

Please direct questions or comments to:
rguardia@actra.ca, or call at the office:
844-3318, ext. 227.



AND THE WINNER IS...

With a mix of excitement and anticipation, more than 300 ACTRA Montreal members and guests turned out to celebrate our own and honour the momentous achievements of some very fine performers at the 2005 ACTRA Montreal Awards.

There may not have been a red carpet, but there was plenty of glamour in the room as **Branch President Matt Holland** welcomed the many members and industry guests in attendance at the evening event. Befitting ACTRA's first awards show in years, a wonderful montage of some of our members' great performances in film and television projects from the past five years flickered on the big screen - reminding all of us in the audience how thrilling this business can be.

For their own contribution to this industry, **Vlasta Vrana** was honoured at the ceremony with the **ACTRA Award of Excellence**, presented by past **National President Thor Bishopric** and **Victor Knight** was given the **ACTRA Community Builder Award**, presented by **National Executive Director Stephen Waddell**. Both gave moving acceptance speeches and with true humility, thanked many others in the room for making it possible to get to this point in their careers.

In addition to these two honours, three performance awards and the award for **Best ACTRA Short** were presented at the ceremony. There was electricity in the air as everyone waited with baited breath to hear those illustrious words, "and the winner is..."



Victor Knight
ACTRA Community Builder Award



Claudia Ferri
Ciao Bella
Outstanding Performance, Female





Vlasta Vrana
ACTRA Award of Excellence



Bruce Ramsay
Baby For Sale
Outstanding Performance, Male



Robert Higden
6 of 1
Best ACTRA Short

Claudia Ferri received the Outstanding Performance Award (female) for her comedic role in *Ciao Bella* only moments after taking the stage as a spokesperson for the Actor's Fund of Canada, imploring the audience to contribute to this worthwhile cause and praising the organization for their hard work and good deeds.

Bruce Ramsay took home the Outstanding Performance Award (male) for his evil turn as a baby broker in *Baby for Sale*.

Terrence Scammell won the Outstanding Voice Performance Award for his work in *Tripping the Rift*.

And for the second year in a row, **Robert Higden** claimed the Best ACTRA Short, as voted by the audience at the afternoon screening, with his musical piece, *6 of 1*.

The evening was a momentous celebration and was followed by a great party that saw everyone enjoy some fine food, good wine and great music on the dance floor.

Congratulations are in order to all of the winners, honourees and nominees at the 2005 ACTRA Montreal Awards.

We hope to see you all again at the next ACTRA Montreal Awards!



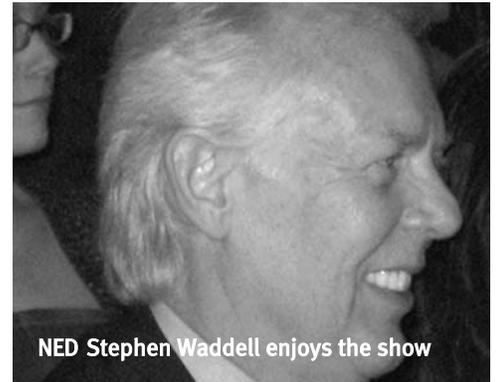
Terrence Scammell
Tripping the Rift
Best Voice Performance



Barbara Bacci & Gillian Ferrabee present the Outstanding Male Performance Award



Holly Gauthier-Frankel & David Schaap present the Best ACTRA Short Award



NED Stephen Waddell enjoys the show



A round of applause



Dancing the night away

letter to the | grapevine

Richard M. Dumont was nominated for an ACTRA MONTREAL AWARD (2005) for Outstanding Voice Performance.

He lost.

Horribly.

Below, is the Speech that he never gave that night...

SPEECH

(Richard M. Dumont is carried, on other member's shoulders, up to the podium. Rose petals flutter down, like red kisses, from the skies.)

Thank you... thank you... No...please...sit. Thank you... thank you.

I remember back in the 1920s, when Victor Knight and I would play as boys in the streets of London, I would dream about a night like this.

...Good times.

I also remember that night in 1953 when Donald Sutherland, William Shatner, and I sat around my apartment in our underwear drinking Wild Turkey, doing Blue Angels, and watching two fresh-faced comics named Wayne and Shuster on my black and white RCA.

...Good times.

Shatner turned to me and said: "Dumont..."

He could never remember my first name... or any of Sutherland's.

"Dumont," he said. "Why don't you come out to Los Angeles with...(pause) this guy... and me?? We're going out there to make our fortune. We're going to be millionaires. And we'll never say, "eh?" again."

Well, I said to him, "No... you go on to Lotus-land without me... for there is a talking cartoon bear that desperately

wants a voice right now... and after him a dancing, lisping, gnome could use a bit of a leg up... and I know a cardigan-wearing aardvark who needs a helping hand. No, you two go off to L.A. without me. You go there and seek the fame and fortune that you so desperately want... for I, my friends... I am needed here. "

What a moron I was!

But still, good times... good times.

I wish to personally congratulate my fellow Voice Actor Nominees - What's-His-Name, and That-Guy-With-The-Curlyish-Hair - and remember guys that just being nominated is an honour... yeah... right.

Thank you MONTREAL ACTRA... thank you dancing gnomes.

But, seriously...

I wish to congratulate everyone - Council, staff, membership, who worked so tirelessly on organizing that evening for ACTRA MONTREAL. You did a truly wonderful job and all of us there that night thank you for your time and effort(s).

...Kudos!

I truly hope that Montreal Council will continue to celebrate ACTRA MONTREAL's creative accomplishments each and every year with just such an Awards night.

Thank you... it was, indeed, an honour.

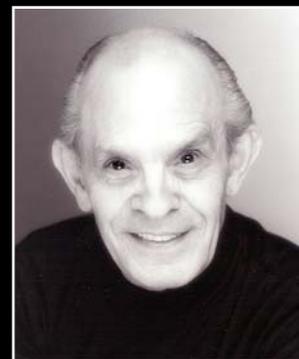
Fraternally yours,

Richard M. Dumont



Richard M. Dumont,
ACTRA Award nominee

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actra | shorts 2005

Hosted by Gemini nominated (and quite possibly the funniest man on the planet) **David Acer**, the 3rd Annual ACTRA Short Film Festival was a resounding success, showcasing a nice blend of comedic and dramatic shorts, a couple of musical numbers and even one documentary - all written by, directed by, produced by and starring ACTRA Montreal members.

An enthusiastic crowd voted Robert Higden's hilarious musical number **6 of 1** Best ACTRA Short at the 3rd Annual Festival, narrowly edging out finalists **The Director's Cut**, submitted by Jimmy Chan and **Alice is Falling**, submitted by Mariah Inger and Cha Cha da Vinci.

ACTRA Montreal would like to thank the participants on all eight shorts and our host, David for kicking off the Members' Conference in style.

The 2005 ACTRA Shorts were...

- Wired for Sound**, submitted by Neil Kroetsch and Bill Rowat
- The Rose's Thorn & the Warmth Within the Stone**, submitted by Dawn Ford
- Blame Game**, submitted by Shiloh-Sheray
- Get Away**, submitted by Bill Rowat
- Language Test**, submitted by Paula Costain, Marc Nadeau and Maria Worton
- Alice is Falling**, submitted by Mariah Inger and Cha Cha da Vinci
- 6 of 1**, submitted by Robert Higden
- The Director's Cut**, submitted by Jimmy Chan



Hosted by **DAVID ACER**

David Acer



2005 Best ACTRA Short

Robert Higden's 6 of 1

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What kind do you play?

Looking back Looking forward

An unusually low turnout of just over 100 members attended the 2005 Annual General Meeting, as Montreal Branch Council and staff presented a review of the year that was and highlighted a number of areas as opportunities for the future.

As is custom, **Branch President Matt Holland** chaired the meeting, opening with his personal remarks on the state of the industry in our city and taking time to congratulate a number of honourable members on their ACTRA and Gemini Award nominations as well as thanking some of the past and present staff for their immeasurable contributions to the branch. From there he went on to point out the goal of this - and fundamentally, all our Annual General Meetings. First, to strive to understand why things are the way they are here in Montreal. And second, to identify where ACTRA can make a difference in making things better.

The year in review

With **Branch Treasurer Cary Lawrence** absent (and working!), **Councilor Dawn Ford** stepped in to inform the members of the branch's financial status. Revenue is somewhat up and expenses are down, due in large part to the reduction in staff in 2005. And so, half way through our fiscal year, the branch found itself \$23K in the red, compared to a \$178K deficit at the same point last year. It wasn't exactly a cause for celebration, but the financial situation was reason for, at the very least, a little optimism for our year end.

Regional Director Raymond Guardia once again had the daunting task of delivering the production and workday numbers to the audience and his message was clear -

although things are marginally up from last year, Montreal is not experiencing the return to form seen in other production centres across Canada - most notably, Vancouver and Toronto.

Why? A number of reasons. For one, we are what one might call "geographically-challenged" with respect to L.A., a point which may have cost us at least one \$140 million film, *Night at the Museum*. If the star of a film would rather be three hours away from home than six, there really isn't much anyone here can do. A more pressing and affectable matter is that of Montreal's inadequate promotional efforts in luring foreign production here. Hopefully, that is going to change now that the Quebec Film and Television Promotion office is finally here; government funding has been secured, the search for a Commissioner is on and the office is set to open early 2006.

Looking ahead

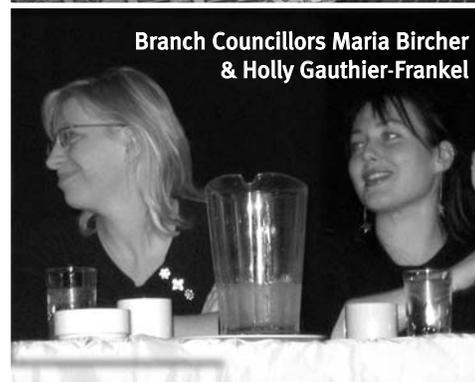
The 2005 Annual General Meeting was also the Montreal members' first opportunity to hear from ACTRA's new **National President, Richard Hardacre**. Richard spoke eloquently on his desire to maintain the standard set by the incomparable **Thor Bishopric**,



Branch President
Matt Holland



Dawn Ford
with the Treasurer's Report



Branch Councillors Maria Bircher
& Holly Gauthier-Frankel



Regional Director
Raymond Guardia



National Executive Director
Stephen Waddell



National President
Richard Hardacre

▶ continuing to make ACTRA a forward-thinking organization, prepared to take the lead in cultural and professional issues concerning artists across Canada.

Three issues in particular were singled out and presented at the meeting, the first of which was ACTRA's upcoming Independent Production Agreement (IPA) negotiations.

National Executive Director Stephen Waddell spoke of ACTRA's preparations for what, based on the recent negotiations of other cultural unions, will undoubtedly be a difficult round of bargaining. Members across the country have participated in a number of focus groups and the Negotiating Committee feels confident that they understand what the membership wants.

The second area of discussion was Montreal's burgeoning low budget production scene.

Councilor Maria Bircher and staffer **Shannon Joutel** spoke of ACTRA's response to the members' desire for low budget agreements, the need to encourage the next generation of indigenous filmmakers and some of the resulting success stories like *Pure*, *Hero By Nature*, *Recon 2020* and *The Festival*.

Finally, **Councilor Don Jordan** and staffer **Claire Martell** delivered a presentation on another blossoming area: the video game. As the voice community continues to lament the loss of our animation industry, it appears that the video game may offer some comparable work opportunities - at least, for half of our members. While the revenue generated by members working on one video game is nearly equal to that generated from an entire season of a major animation series, the roles are predominantly male in most games - in contrast to an even split in animation projects. Still, there is hope that this will change as the industry itself has acknowledged the need to be accessible to a broader (female?) audience.

The meeting closed with questions from the audience and one final thank you from the Montreal membership for the tireless effort of former National President Thor Bishopric over the course of three terms in transforming this ACTRA into a first class organization.



National Councillor
Don Jordan



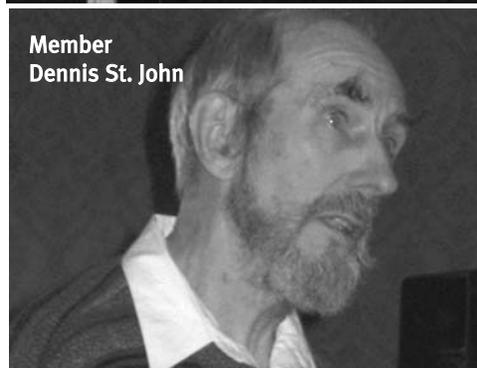
Low Budget Steward
Shannon Joutel



Matt presents former National President
Thor Bishopric with a thank you gift



Member
Pamela Koren



Member
Dennis St. John



Member
Stuart Myiow



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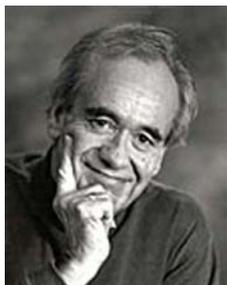
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actra | members

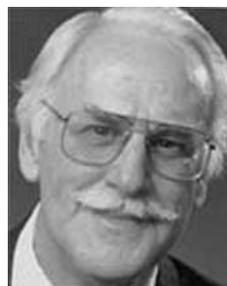
Our condolences go out to the friends and family of Montreal members, **Harry Hill, Gordon Atkinson, Steven Grise, Steve Michaels, Armand Laroche** and **Pierrette Beaudoin**. They will be sadly missed.



Harry Hill
1940 - 2005

Harry Hill was a highly regarded actor with a mellifluous voice who was a mainstay at the Centaur Theatre for more than a decade. Harry was also a professor of English Literature at Concordia University and a writer of an

indispensible actor's manual entitled, *A Voice for Theatre*.



Gordon Atkinson
1922 - 2006

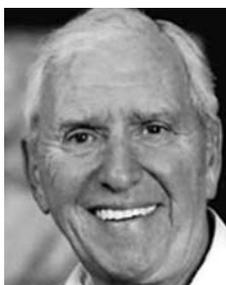
Gordon Atkinson was a Life Member of ACTRA, an outspoken and colourful broadcaster and actor who enjoyed a career in politics as well. At the age of 83, Gordon had amassed a considerable list of accomplishments including

serving as an infantryman in the Second World War, working for the CBC, advising Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and even being forced to apologize for giving the finger to a legislative seatmate on live television.



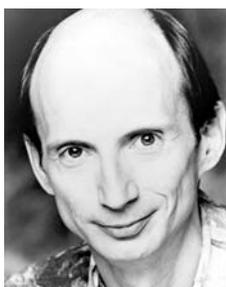
Steven Grise
1975 - 2006

Steven Grise was an exuberant and positive young performer with ambitions in writing and directing in the film and television industry. In addition to ACTRA, he was a member of DGC, IATSE and AQTIS.



Steve Michaels
1930 - 2005

Saul Michael Shade or **Steve Michaels** as he was better known was a top band leader in the Jewish community for many years, an actor in movies and commercials and a late night talk show host for CJAD.



Armand Laroche
1949 - 2006

Armand Laroche was a member of ACTRA Montreal for over 20 years.



Pierrette Beaudoin
1935 - 2006

Pierrette Beaudoin was a member of ACTRA Montreal for over 30 years.



Ranee Lee
The Order of Canada

Congratulations to **Ranee Lee** on being named to the Order of Canada - the country's highest civilian honour. One of Canada's most popular jazz vocalists and recording artists, **Ranee** is also a Dora Mavor More Award recipient and a mainstay at the Montreal International Jazz Festival.



Robert Burns Jr.
Proud father

Congratulations to **Robert Burns Jr.** and his wife on the birth of their son, **Sebastian Dario Burns Lopez** - born October 28 at 5 lbs. 11 ounces.



Liz MacRae
Blushing bride

Congratulations to **Liz MacRae**, who married John Oriettas in a small ceremony in Pierrefonds, Quebec on December 10th, 2005.



Nemo Turner
Global Citizen

Congratulations to stage magician **Nemo Turner**, a member of ACTRA Montreal, on receiving a "Global Citizen" Award from the United Nations Association in Canada at a ceremony on November 17, 2005.

Congratulations to **Raymond Guardia**. Our own Eastern Regional Director, **Raymond** played a big part in the success of the New Democratic Party in the recent elections, serving as the NDP's war room chief.





Congratulations
to new ACTRA
Montreal members

Sergio Apuzzo, Ellis Arch, Yann Bernaquez,
Noah Bennett, Yanick Bousquet,
Robert-Paul Chauvelot, Giovanni Cipolla,
Maria Coletta, Laurence Dauphinais,
Antoinette Dejong, Stephane Demers, Tony
Junior Di Capua, Ryan Drudik, Francois
Gallant, Patrick Huard, Jerome Huerta,
Stephan Ishmael, Ariane Jeudy, Nicole
Monica Jones, Jonathan Krespil, Orphée
Ladouceur-Nguyen, David Lawrence,
Sandra Lee, Mathieu Legault Charette,
Alan Keiping Legros, Kaoru Matsui, Gordon
McCall, James Milvain, Olga Montes,
Viviane Nguyen, Sylvie Pelletier, Joaquin
Perez, Gaston Petit, Victoria Reuter, Jack
Repper, David Reynolds, Geneviève
Sabourin, Donald Shepherd, Mig Shot,
Haley Tasha Smirnow, Nadege St.
Philippe, Craig Thomas, Carolyn-Fe
Trinidad, Valerie Valois, Melanie Venne,
and Heidi Waters.



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Thursday, July 20, 2006

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Raymond Guardia
Deep in thought

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\$10 for tickets (must be purchased at the ACTRA Montreal office, no reservations)

All proceeds will be donated to The Actors' Fund of Canada!

Everyone is invited, so bring all your friends!

