



ACTRA Montreal

# Grapev

Spring 2007

*The Good News Issue!*

**MONTREAL'S 2007**

**ACTRA AWARDS**

**AN END TO THE**

**TURF WAR & STRIKE**

**ACTRA MONTREAL'S**

**NEW PRESIDENT**

**DON JORDAN**

# Don Jordan ACTRA Montreal's New President

At the February 20th Branch Council meeting, **Don Jordan** was elected President of ACTRA Montreal, replacing distinguished past President, **Matt Holland**.

Just two hours into Don's term as the new President, there was an end to the strike, a new collective agreement and a reported resolution to the technician turf war that has plagued the city for over a year. Sometimes, in politics - as in acting - timing is everything.

After serving tirelessly as President of the Branch for over seven years, Matt stepped down in order to pursue an opportunity at CTV in development - bringing his talents to the other side of the table. It was a decision that will undoubtedly be beneficial for everyone working in this industry in Montreal.

In addition to the election of a new President, February's Council meeting was primarily concerned with the issue of ACTRA's strike and the on-going negotiations meant to resolve it. With a tentative deal on the table between ACTRA and the Canadian producers (CFTPA), everyone anxiously awaited the response of their American counterparts (AMPTP).

Minutes into Don's term, while everyone was still enjoying Matt's "good-bye cake," the call came in from **National Executive Director Stephen Waddell**. The Americans had signed off on the agreement. ACTRA had reached a deal, ending the first-ever strike in the organization's 64 year history.

And there was more good news. As **Regional Director Raymond Guardia** reported, IATSE and AQTIS - the technician unions locked in battle over jurisdiction in Quebec for over a year - had a tentative agreement that would ensure labour stability in the province.

All in all, not bad for a first day on the job!

With his years of steadfast service as a Branch and National Councillor, Montreal members can be confident in Don's resolute commitment to ACTRA and the office of the President.

ACTRA Montreal would like to thank Matt Holland for his dedication to this Branch, the organization and its membership. His hard-work and dedication was exemplary and appreciated by all. Thanks Matt.

Cover photo by Rob Daly



ACTRA Montreal  
**Grapevine**

Spring 2007

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# contents

Grapevine | Spring | 2007



## 2 A LA PROCHAINE

by Matt Holland

## 3 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Don Jordan

## 4 THE IPA DEAL

Strike's over. We won. Check out the terms of settlement.

## 6 INSIDE MAN

by Tyrone Benskin

A unique first-person perspective on what it was like to be on the IPA Negotiating Committee.

## 8 COVER STORY: THE 2007 ACTRA AWARDS IN MONTREAL

Find out who got nominated and who will be honoured at the Awards show in June.

## 11 IT'S MY DAMN UNION!

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

## 12 IT'S A NEW DAY FOR MONTREAL

by Raymond Guardia

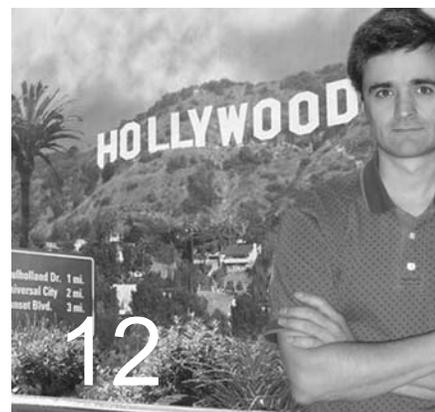
With the strike and turf war settled and U.S. projects coming back to the city, things may finally be looking up for film and T.V. production in Montreal.

## 14 A WOMAN'S TOUCH

by Dawn Ford

With picturesque Banff as a backdrop, Dawn was a participant in this year's Women in the Director's Chair program.

## 16 ACTRA NOTES





## A La Prochaine...

**D**ear ACTRA Montreal Members,

Late last year, I was offered a full-time, temporary position as the Quebec Manager of Development and Production for the CTV Network. After more than a little deliberation, I decided to accept. Unfortunately, the optics of this new job dictated that I could no longer serve as Branch President and councillor. In late January of this year, I stepped down. Your council, in its wisdom, has elected council veteran, national councillor, consummate performer and all-around class act, Don Jordan, to succeed me. I'm relieved that the branch will be in good hands for the foreseeable future, but I am sad to be saying goodbye for now.

This office, this staff, this council and these members have meant a great deal to me over the past decade. The entire ACTRA organization has been kind, generous, resourceful and forward-thinking; and it's been a pleasure for me to be a part of it. I am indebted to wise, dynamic leaders like Thor Bishopric, Stephen Waddell and Raymond Guardia for setting such brilliant examples of political savvy, intelligence, heart and vision in their efforts to make ACTRA what it is today: the strongest artists' union in the land.

I am beholden to the excellent Montreal staff too, for their unwavering support and fierce defense of our members. Their contributions to the success of our negotiations, lobby efforts, meetings and day-to-day smooth operations of the office are both admirable and immeasurable. I hope that more members will come to recognize and appreciate what a treasure we have in the fine people who serve us.

I will miss the interaction with members that this position afforded me; either through meetings with the sharp, dedicated performers on the branch council, or through encounters with members at large at our AGMs and other social functions. Of course, I will undoubtedly run into members at auditions in the future; and will continue, as always, to listen and look for examples of their unparalleled work on the airwaves, on stage and on screens large and small (our recent strike victory will help insure that - as digital media platforms shrink exponentially in screen size).

I am grateful for the confidence and faith you have shown me in my nearly seven years as Branch President, and the three years as councillor before that. This has been a wonderful, important period in my life. During my time at ACTRA Montreal, I have grown so much as an artist and as a person, and this organization has been an invaluable and integral part of that development.

I have learned a lot from all of you and count my blessings that I've been able to make a modest contribution to the strength, scope and soul that make up this great union.

I'm going to miss this, miss you...

Break a leg, ACTRA Montreal,

In solidarity (and gratitude),

**Matt Holland,  
Past President, ACTRA Montreal**



**Matt at the  
60th Anniversary Gala.**



**Matt at the 2005  
ACTRA Awards in Montreal.**

## And The Times They Are A-Changin'

**D**ear Members,

As your new Branch President, I would first and foremost like to thank our past President Matt Holland, for all his years of guidance and dedication to the membership. I'm sure that you all join me in offering best wishes to Matt for success and happiness in all his future endeavours.

I hope to be able to fill his shoes with equal enthusiasm, attentiveness and success. While he was President, Matt had to see us through some very difficult times and I applaud his composed and purposeful leadership of our Branch throughout his term.

I must say, these have, indeed, been a trying, often harrowing, past few years in our industry for many Montreal ACTRA members, the Montreal Branch and much of the film and television community here in this city.

Even before the drama of the recent IPA negotiations, we had already been through a considerable downturn which had forced us to make some drastic cuts to our budget and branch services.

We have also had a technician turf war being waged on our front lawn (or rather, in Quebec courts) for over a year that could be blamed for scaring away quite a bit of U.S. Production.

And finally, we had our worst fears realized in January when we were compelled, for the first time in our 64 year history, to take strike action in order to negotiate a fair and equitable deal in the Independent Production Agreement.

Thanks to the fervour and relentless pursuit of our leadership and negotiating team, a new deal for the IPA has been reached and the strike is over.

We stood our ground in solidarity and our unity is what makes this organization exceptional. We have, in the past, threatened to strike, but we have never had to see it through to fruition. In this round of bargaining, we had to take a very difficult stand and though there were no picket lines, it is still something of a weighty demand to ask members to possibly refuse work in the interest of solidarity. In this business, particularly, it can be a lot to ask. And so, I would like to congratulate all of you for your dedication to this organization throughout the strike.

The other bit of good news is that it appears we may also have a resolution to the IATSE/AQTIS issue. Both parties have a temporary agreement in place and if I may be so bold as to look for a silver lining in this mess, it is that the dispute has helped repeal the APFTQ's exclusivity in this province - something that is good for everyone.

There are already clear indications that productions are indeed coming back to our town. It may be a result of U.S. Producers ramping up before their difficult negotiations with the Writers' Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild or it may be they just love Montreal and want to come back now that these obstacles are gone. In either case, it's very encouraging and with any luck, we should see a promising Summer and Fall.

One thing I know for certain is that June will be a time of celebration, as we host the 2007 ACTRA Awards in Montreal - recognizing your achievements as the talented professional performers you are. I am very excited and honoured to be a part of the event and I look forward to seeing all of you there.

In truth, I feel very fortunate to be taking over as President of ACTRA Montreal at this point in time. From the moment I first sat in the President's chair it seemed that many of the clouds that had settled over Montreal these past few years were finally beginning to part and we could now, with cautious optimism, turn our attention to attracting projects back to our fair city and continue to build our industry to new heights.

Hopefully, what appears to be the peace in the valley that we are experiencing will last. But then, in this cyclical business of ours, that isn't to be expected. As your President, I have an obligation to use this time wisely; to accomplish what we can while we're not busy putting fires out and to ensure that we are as prepared as possible for whatever curveball the world throws our way next.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for your talent, dedication, and fortitude. You are second to none in this industry and given the opportunity, we can prove it to the world.

In solidarity,



**Don Jordan,  
President, ACTRA Montreal**



# SUCCESS IN SOLIDARITY

ACTRA's first ever strike is now over. So, was it worth it??? To sum it up in a single word... Yes! We achieved two very significant unprecedented gains.

**F**irstly, this is the only strike that we know of, in all of history and in any industry, where all members continued to work under the union's terms and conditions. During our strike, each and every production signed on to ACTRA's "Interim Agreements". This provided all performers with a 5% increase to wages and a 2% increase to Insurance and Retirement benefits. And there was more than a small handful of these productions. In Montreal alone, 62 producers signed the interim agreements, many for multiple productions.

As a result of the strike, producers ultimately accepted our terms for internet production. This victory was our other, and more important, unprecedented gain. For the first time ever, a performers' union has won a fair share of revenues for its members when a producer distributes a project on the internet.

So, how was this all possible??? Again, we can sum up the answer in a single word... Solidarity! A union is only as strong as its membership. If ACTRA Members did not support the "Interim Agreement" tactic, or if Members agreed to work during the strike on productions that did not sign on to our terms, then we would never have been able to win what we, together, have won. Instead, we would have been forced to accept the producers' associations original proposals, which included internet for free as well as wage rollbacks of up to 25%. Thanks to all ACTRA Members for your support and solidarity!

We must also thank another very important group of people; your Talent Agents. During the strike we were in constant communication with over 50 Montreal and Ottawa area agents, who were all remarkably diligent in assuring that productions were signed to ACTRA's interim agreements before booking performers or submitting you for auditions. Our victory would have been impossible to achieve without the support of these people. A huge thank you to all Talent Agents!

Now, on to the Commercial negotiations...

## Highlights from

Here are some of the highlights from the terms of settlement for the IPA. For a complete list, please check the National website at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).

- A 3 year agreement
- 3% increase in all rates and fees in year 1
- 3% increase in all rates and fees in year 2
- 3% increase in all rates and fees in year 3
- 1% increase in Producer contribution to Retirement in year 1

### Improved language to protect you and your rights

Stronger language was negotiated pertaining to working conditions for performers and the obligations of the producer. The language speaks to everything from providing an ample supply of drinking water to ensuring that minors receive proper tutoring to adequately training performers before they are asked to fire a prop weapon.

These terms will further ensure that all performers - from actors to minors to stunt performers - are given the safest and fairest environment in which to work and do their job.

### More background vouchers in Montreal

For feature films with a budget of \$35 million or greater, the number of background vouchers available on set each day in Montreal will go from 15 to 25. On projects with a budget less than \$35 million, the number will increase from 15 to 20. The number of vouchers will stay 15, however, on projects which qualify as purely Canadian (10 out of 10, in the tax credit sense). Super Low-budget projects won't require vouchers at all.

### Easier access to low-budget agreement

In the interest of encouraging more indigenous production, ACTRA eased requirements for accessing parts of the low-budget agreement. Hopefully, this will help make it easier for the next generation of Canadian producers to produce more and use more of our members.



A round of applause for solidarity at the 2006 AGM.

# the Terms of Settlement

## New Media

The collective agreement now gives producers two options to choose from concerning the production and distribution of New Media content (e.g. projects on the internet). Option A is intended to be used by Canadian producers and Option B, for all intents and purposes, is only open to U.S. producers.

## Under option A...

Moving old projects over to new media platforms Producers can now take a project that's already been on T.V. or in theatres and move it to a new platform like the internet, cell phones or what have you. They'll need to get the consent of the performers in the project (or try their best to, at least) and it'll cost them 3.6% of all revenue generated by the project on its new platform - from the first dollar it earns.

## Making projects directly for a new media platform

Producers have two options when they create dramatic projects destined directly for new platforms like the internet.

### Option #1

Pay performers their daily fee for one day's work and a producer can use any of the material they shot that day in up to five "episodes". If they want more than five, they can pay an additional 25% of the daily fee for each additional "episode" or just buy another block of five (for a total of ten) by paying twice the daily fee.

### Option #2

If a producer is interested in making just one production that's five minutes or less, they can pay a performer 50% of the daily fee. But then they only get a performer for 50% of a normal workday (4 hours, instead of 8).

For projects which are not considered to be dramatic (e.g. reality shows or corporate videos), ACTRA will negotiate a rate with the producer and their association on a case-by-case basis.

When it comes to use for these "made for the internet" type projects, producers get 6

months use before they start sharing 3.6% of the revenue. And if they decide to take "made-for-the-internet" type projects and put them on a conventional platform (that's what we call T.V.), they can choose between paying the traditional Advance Option or Pre-payment Option.

Producers can also edit any project into a new project and pay the performer an additional 25%.

## Under Option B...

Option B is much closer to the proposal on New Media that ACTRA originally tabled, namely, sending much of the New Media negotiation to committee for discussion. ACTRA, the CFTPA/APFTQ and the U.S. studios will participate in the committee and work towards establishing rates for productions in New Media.

Until those rates are established, however, producers who qualify (U.S studios) can still choose Option B and work under the following terms.

## Moving old projects over to new media platforms

Producers can take their existing project and show it on the internet without paying more up front as long as they agree to retroactively compensate the performer (with interest) for the Use Fees once they've been negotiated by ACTRA and the producers' associations.

Once again, producers will also need to get the consent of the performers in the project (or try their best to, at least).

## Making new projects directly for a new media platform

When a producer wants to make something directly for a new media platform like the internet, ACTRA will negotiate terms with the producer and their associations. It is a practice which ACTRA has successfully had in the past with producers. Of course, producers will still have to agree to retroactively compensate the performer (with interest) if higher rates are negotiated at a later date, coming out of the committee discussions.

# On to the Commercial Agreement

With the negotiation of the IPA finally wrapped up, ACTRA will be turning our attention to the up-coming negotiation of the National Commercial Agreement. The current NCA expires June 30, 2007.

ACTRA has given notice to bargain to the Institute of Communications and Advertising (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA). The first set of NCA bargaining dates will be May 8-10, 2007.

In the meantime, ACTRA is preparing for the process, collecting proposals from members and talent agents, through the National and Montreal websites, as well as through various focus groups.

On April 25, the Negotiating Committee - including Montreal's representative - will meet to review and prioritize ACTRA's proposals as they head into negotiations.

Please check on our websites for the latest NCA negotiations info.



Preparations for the NCA negotiations are already underway with focus groups across the country.

# INSIDE MAN

by Tyrone Benskin



For almost every member across the country, the IPA negotiations were a grueling, rollercoaster ride of emotion. For Tyrone Benskin and other members of the Negotiating Committee, being a part of it as it unfolded, was an eye-opening experience.

It was a large room - the conference room at the Intercontinental Hotel in Toronto - and as we began to flow in and find our seats, I looked around and saw the faces of such Canadian icons as **Gordon Pinsent** and **Eric Peterson**. It hit me then that I was part of a team representing these people and their livelihood! I think that was the first time I said to myself - and not so under my breath as maybe I should have - "what the ---- am doing?!"

The room is filling with our supporting cast: **Art Hindle**, **Wendy Crewson** and so many more of these amazing Canadians whom I grew up watching. There they were! Here to support me... well us - in what would turn out to be an incredible (hindsight kicking in) rollercoaster ride.

Eric Peterson and Mr. Pinsent are in the house! Eric gives what can only be referred to as our "we shall never surrender" speech of the negotiations. Met with thundering applause afterwards, Eric has more of a "how did I do?" look on his face as opposed to one of sounding the battle cry. And it is that look of unpretentious honesty that finally settles me.

I realize, that except for our incredibly skilled and gifted staff negotiators, we're really just a group of performers who care about our future. As unsettling as that maybe should have been, it was actually empowering.

So, day one: the tone is set. Prior to this first day, we had gone through months of weekly meetings sifting through members'

concerns and issues, those of staff and even our agents. We took those concerns and packaged them into what was felt to be a comprehensive block of proposals.

We had each of those proposals researched - looking at the overall increases in costs to a production and viability across the table i.e. would they really go for this? Most importantly we looked at the cost benefits to the membership.

Now this wasn't about being able to get the next Lexus hot off the line, this was about being able to make a living as a performer in this country; this was about being able to say with pride I am an actor and yes, I am Canadian.

I was particularly excited about the fact that we were finally going to put it out there that as Canadian performers we were no longer willing to be treated as second class citizens in our own country; to declare once and for all that our work was second to none. After all, this was the chosen battle cry, if you will.

So, after firing the first volley across the bow of the combined Canadian and American fleets, we were met with a rather apologetic - our proposals aren't ready yet! So they went away and spent what seemed like forever "putting their proposals together". Talk about anti-climactic!

This is how we were introduced to what would be the theme and practice during these negotiations. A phrase that as film and television performers, we are all used to... hurry up and wait! Between the buns

and the well... buns, anybody who was on a low-carb diet was... not so much any more! The tone was set for these negotiations: long, airless, bad for the body, but as I like to refer to them - righteous!

There was a lot of time spent together over the next number of days, weeks and months. Over the course of that time, there was much discussion, sometimes in the form of heated debates, about where we were being taken (the term garden path came up in one form, or another) and sometimes about odd little videos on **YouTube**.

During this time however this little group of performers were taken to task and took each other to task. Nothing was taken at face value. Nothing was accepted out of hand or without uber-discussion. We waded through frustration, anger, futility and exhaustion. Some of us battled through personal loss. Sometimes we would wander out just to see what daylight looked like! But through all of this we began to bond.

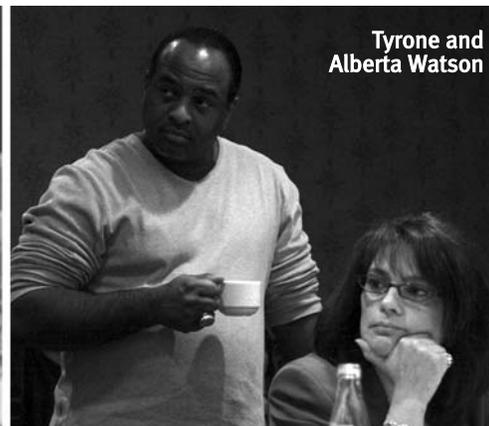
The stronger they pushed, the more we held on to what we believed in and ultimately, we believed in each other. We believed that what we were doing was not only important, but necessary. So through those moments of doubt we found a way back to what was important. My respect for those sharing the stale air in the blur hotel conference rooms grew.

We had many visitors who would come in and lend their voice. We and representatives from our sister unions who already

Peter MacNeill with Eric Peterson



Cary Lawrence



Tyrone and Alberta Watson

knew what were facing, as they had been set upon prior to us. They sat in those fluorescent lit conference rooms as long as we did. One representative from **NABET** owes his girlfriend big time! The **DGC**, **IATSE**, **SAG** and **TAMAC** were watching closely, as was the case with much of the international entertainment industry.

We had our stars shine down on us; and as the **Maury Chaikin's**, **Wayne Robson's**, **Jason Blicker's**, **Peter Outerbridges's** flowed in and out I noticed how our little group was growing and how our little union was growing up.

Picture Maury Chaikin and **Peter Keleghan** on phone trees, calling fellow members to get involved! I saw our little union coming out. It was declaring publicly that it was ready to take its place as the premier union representing entertainment workers in this country. The grassroots nature in how support and awareness was raised was one of the many elements that fed many of us on the team and helped us to hold on to our confidence in the face of what sometimes seemed like absolute insanity.

We were forced into an impossible time frame with what seemed like an impossible task. Keep the Canadian industry viable, allow our members to raise their families and, oh yes, come up with a new media agreement that neither sets a precedent nor leaves our members on the outside looking in!

All of these elements came to bear in what for me was the climax of these negotiations; the last day of scheduled talks, December 21st, 2006.

Between October and December, it seemed like we had occupied every hotel in Toronto and a few in Montreal. We were at the Royal York Fairmount on this the last

scheduled day for negotiations. We had been pulling our hair out, trying to understand why time seemed of no value to our partners across the table - why we had not heard word one about the two most significant issues still left unresolved by those across from us. But while we pondered and pulled, we planned.

The phone trees were bearing fruit. So, while awaiting the 10 pm deadline - where we were finally given their response to our pay package request and the new media issue - a steady flow of Canada's elite came from out of the warmth of their homes and loved ones to stand with our little group.

10 pm came and went; they stayed. **Sarah Polley**, **Justin Louise**, Jason Blicker, Peter Outerbridge, Gordon Pinsent and his dear wife **Charmion King**, (we would receive word, just weeks later, of her passing), Wendy Crewson, and many, many more filled our room.

We finally received word that the other side was ready to present. The image of their negotiator telling the brightest and most celebrated in our industry that they were not worth either a pay increase - at least not in the first 2 years - or a share in the profit of their labours when used in new media, was nothing short of heart stopping.

The reality of how we were seen was made clear. The reality of how much or rather, how little, we were respected was expressed in, ironically, digital fashion; ones and zeros.

What should have been a discussion between two partners who, in every other way, support each other, at that moment, turned not into a story of adversary and dissolution, but into a coming of age story. The image of the actor as a spoiled child to

whom one gives a lollipop to be quiet was shattered. We were becoming grown-ups and ACTRA was the house that we built for ourselves. And I remembered "what the ---- I was doing".

Some years ago, when I first participated in ACTRA politics, it was because I was taught that when there's a problem in your world you can do one of two things; complain and expect someone else to fix it, or do something about it yourself. This was my second time participating in our contract negotiations - the first time was as part of the group of member supporters.

I became a part of the core negotiating committee for this round for those reasons; I could either complain about what we're not getting or I can be apart of the fight to try to get the best for my colleagues and thus for myself.

One of the members of our legal counsel quoted a saying within unions: that you are not a union until you have a strike. The patter leading up to December 21st was not the sound of baby steps, but the sound of feet being planted firmly and a not-so-little group standing up.

This article is not meant to be a play-by-play dissection of these events, but just to give a sense of the feelings of one member of this negotiating team. As brief and as lacking in detail an observation as this was, I'm sure you can pick up on a sense of pride throughout this tale.

And as unapologetically as I can say it, I was extremely proud - as I still am - to have been a part of it. And as unapologetically as I possibly can submit, you should be too. We done good!

**Tyrone Benskin**

# ACTRA AWARDS IN MONTREAL



It begins with a spark of imagination and the words on a page. But it is in the delivery of the clever line of dialogue, the side-ways glance during the tearful confession and the heart-racing thrill of the explosion, that the imaginary world is finally brought to life, through the craft of a performer.

**O**n June 9th, at the 2007 ACTRA Awards in Montreal, members and invited guests will celebrate you, the performer.

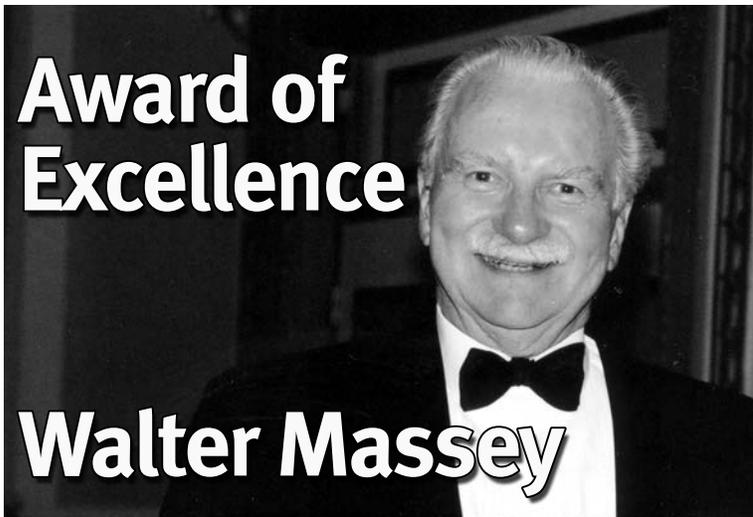
It will be an evening of anticipation and excitement, glamour and style, as we come together to honour ACTRA Montreal members for their exceptional performances in projects produced throughout Canada.

"Last year's awards show was a tremendous success and we expect to capture the same spirited energy and enormous sense of pride with the event in June," said Don Jordan, President of ACTRA Montreal.

It is with great esteem and immense pleasure that we announce the nominees and honourees for the 2007 ACTRA Awards in Montreal.

## Award of Excellence

## Walter Massey



Walter Massey (right) with Don Scanlan (centre) and Ian Devoy (left) in *Compassion Circuit*, a 1970 CBC teleplay.

The ACTRA Award of Excellence is bestowed upon a member in recognition of their accomplished career in the film and television industry.

The 2007 recipient of the ACTRA Award of Excellence is **Walter Massey**.

Walter Massey first joined ACTRA Montreal in 1963, having already firmly established his career in theatre in Broadway and off-Broadway productions on both sides of the border. His performances earned him several Best Actor Awards, including three from the **Dominion Drama Festival**.

In addition to his extensive work on-camera in such acclaimed projects as *Lassie*, Walter is an accomplished voice performer, having worked on everything from national CBC radio dramas to hit children's animation series like **Arthur**.

For 25 years, Walter was an elected representative of the **Canadian Actors' Equity Association** and has been a member of several Boards of Directors, a visiting lecturer to various colleges and universities and a consultant to theatre groups - passing on the experience he has amassed from half a century in this business.

In 1988, Walter was awarded the **Larry McCance Award** for a lifetime of outstanding service to CAEA and he was presented with a Life Membership from ACTRA in 2002.

ACTRA Montreal's first Award of Excellence was presented to writer, director, producer and performer, **William Shatner** at our 60th Anniversary Gala. In 2005, the ACTRA Award of Excellence was bestowed upon **Vlasta Vrana**.



# Community Builder Award

## Arden Ryshpan

The ACTRA Montreal Community Builder Award acknowledges an individual's contribution to the local film and television community - specifically, their work in improving the quality of the profession for all ACTRA members in Montreal.

This year's recipient of the ACTRA Community Builder Award is **Arden Ryshpan**.

Arden Ryshpan has worked in the film industry for 30 years in a variety of capacities, with production credits on over 30 feature films and televisions projects. She has also written and directed hundreds of hours of dubbed programming.

While Chair of the **National ACTRA Women's Committee**, she wrote and

presented a paper on the status of female performing artists, which led to the development of a charter of rights for female performers, now endorsed by actors unions in over 50 countries.

Arden was on the Board of Directors of the **Dome Theatre of Dawson College** and was a faculty member in the drama department. In her previous capacity as Eastern Regional Executive Director for the **ACTRA Performers Guild**, she was one of the union's senior negotiators.

After a period of time as Assistant Director General of the English Program of the **National Film Board**, she became the On Location Production Liaison for ACTRA Montreal and the **STCVQ**, representing

their interests in their dealings with the Hollywood majors.

Currently, Arden is the Executive in Charge of Directors Affairs for the National Directors Division of the **Directors Guild of Canada**, where she is responsible for negotiations, lobbying and international representation of Canada's film and television directors.



# Life Members

Periodically, a Branch will recognize a member or members who have distinguished themselves in the service of the organization for a number of years. These individuals are awarded Life Membership in ACTRA.

Some of ACTRA Montreal's Life Members include **Merlee Shapiro, Norris Domingue, Griffith Brewer, Mary Morter**, 2005's Community Builder Award recipient **Victor Knight** and this year's recipient of the Award of Excellence, **Walter Massey**.

At the 2007 Awards, ACTRA Montreal will honour the following members with Life Membership:



**Arthur Grosser**, a member for 38 years and past President.



**Kathleen Fee**, a member for 37 years and past Councillor.



**Bill Haugland**, a member for 42 years.



**Bronwen Mantel**, a member for 34 years and past Councillor.



**Kelly Ricard**, a member for 36 years and past President.



**David Rigby**, a member for 28 years and past Councillor.



**Jeannie Walker**, a member for 22 years and past President.

# OUTSTANDING FEMALE PERFORMER



**Miranda HANDFORD**  
*Tripping The Wire*



**Ellen DAVID**  
*The Business*



**Laurence LEBOEUF**  
*Human Trafficking*



**Sarah CARLSEN**  
*The Festival*



**Isabelle BLAIS**  
*Human Trafficking*

# OUTSTANDING MALE PERFORMER



**Nobuya SHIMAMOTO**  
*The Business*



**Nicolas WRIGHT**  
*The Festival*



**Stephane DEMERS**  
*Trudeau II*



**Alain GOULEM**  
*The Tournament*



**Gian Paolo VENUTA**  
*Pure*

# OUTSTANDING VOICE PERFORMER



**Daniel BROCHU**  
*Postcards From Buster*



**Holly GAUTHIER-FRANKEL**  
*Monster Allergy*



**Bruce DINSMORE**  
*What's With Andy?*



**Jane WHEELER**  
*Prudence Gumshoe*



**Michel PERRON**  
*Monster Allergy*

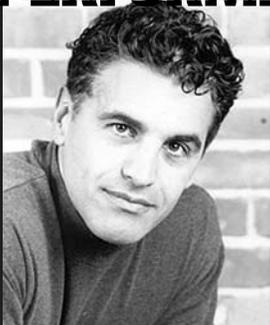
# OUTSTANDING STUNT PERFORMER



**Thomas LICCIONI**  
*The Covenant*



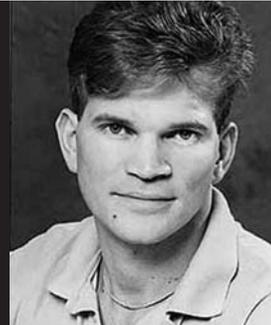
**Stephane LEFEBVRE**  
*The Last Exit*



**Marcello BEZINA**  
*Deaden*



**France RAYMOND**  
*10.5 Apocalypse*



**Patrick KERTON**  
*Bon Cop Bad Cop*

# IT'S MY DAMN UNION!



*"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop."*  
-Confucius, Chinese philosopher & reformer (551 BC - 479 BC)

**J**oin me for a moment, if you will. I am about to lead you into a guided exercise on the merits of perseverance and positive thinking. Don't be alarmed. I know that you're all raising quizzical eyebrows, asking yourselves, "What the heck kinda hippy-dippy weirdo stuff is she talking about now?" but bear with me. Have I ever let you down before? Uh, don't answer that...listen, we'll all do it together...no need to be shy. Ready? 1...2...3...

PHEEEWW!! WOOHOO!! HAAAA!! Go on! Let's see you all with arms-afailing and souls soaring! Shout as loudly as you can; do this as many times as necessary until you collapse on the floor in a paroxysm of giggles. Rinse and repeat. Now go look up "paroxysm" and meet me back here. Just kidding.

Well, fellow members, congratulations on your first guided collective sigh of relief. There's nothing like a bit of metaphorical soul cleansing to put a smile on your face, huh? Anyone with me? I know you're there; I can hear you panting and chuckling quietly to yourselves on your floors, grins plastered across your little punims.

These last few months have put our entire membership through some incredible hardships, to put it mildly. At our Council meetings I got the chance to observe the ways in which everyone approached the troubling news from an inside perspective.

Though at times things seemed insurmountable, I was constantly buoyed and cheered by the determination of everyone involved in negotiations and strike prepara-

tions both at the ACTRA offices and outside in the working world.

As IPA negotiations screeched to a grinding halt, I watched our fantastic negotiating team slog away, despite the infuriating and insulting circumstances.

I was also proud to discover the membership standing by in solidarity when I made phone calls to a great number of you to please vote "Yes" to the impending strike (you guys are all so friendly and sweet!) and at our Town Hall meeting, which was both enlightening and upsetting. Though news seemed bleak, I still felt comforted knowing that everyone was doing everything they could to help. Now that the worst is over we can embrace this defining moment and proceed into a new phase. See? Change isn't ALWAYS bad!

And before you decide to pummel me for my unendurable optimism (I just read that last sentence back and almost slapped myself!), I'll elaborate.

There is a changing of the guard as our former Branch President, **Matt Holland**, steps down to pursue a new career at CTV. I'd like to thank Matt for his incredible work as our President, and to congratulate him on his new position. It was a privilege to work with Matt on Council. I appreciated his positive attitude, humour and wit, and know that he will surely go far. Thank you Matt, and good luck.

As for our new President, **Don Jordan**, I am honoured to continue to work alongside such a great individual. Don's numerous contributions to committees and to

National Council make him the perfect choice. He is an inspiration and we are lucky that he's our President. Congratulations, Don.

As the lengthy AQTIS/IATSE crisis finally comes to a close, new movies are coming into town to begin production! That's got to put smiles on your mugs! And if it doesn't, the upcoming Awards Ceremony has got to make you want you to jump for joy, right?

What better way to celebrate all these recent happy events than with a rollicking Awards ceremony honouring our community? As usual, your favourite Council members and all sorts of special nominees and honourees will be there, so please come out and enjoy the evening with us. I can't really think of anything better actually...if anyone can, please let me know.

I'd also like, if any of you are still awake, to thank you so much for reading my column. I appreciate that my voice can be heard in these pages, and I am honoured to be able to express my thoughts in such a nurturing forum. As always, feel free to write to me with your opinions, questions, comments, rants, ideas, winning lottery combos, etc, etc. You know I love to hear from you, and want your voices to be heard as well. Because, as you well know, my dearest, darlingest members....

## IT'S YOUR DAMN UNION TOO!

Send your happy springtime thoughts to me at [hollygf@mac.com](mailto:hollygf@mac.com), and your mean, leftover wintry ramblings to Randy at [rduniz@actra.ca](mailto:rduniz@actra.ca). Heeheehee...

# IT'S A NEW DAY FOR MONTREAL

by Raymond Guardia

I've just returned from the most productive trip to Hollywood that I've ever taken. After doing the rounds at the major American studios and networks, I can say without any risk of exaggerating, that Montreal is on the radar screen as a place to shoot in a way that it never has before.

**F**rom March 12 to 15, I, along with **Fortner Anderson** and **Brian Baker** from the **Director's Guild**, **Michel Charron** from **IATSE Local 514** and **Christian Lemay** from **IATSE Local 667** visited **Warner Brothers, CBS, ABC, Paramount, Fox, Universal/NBC** and **Sony**, along with other key industry players, to spread the message that Montreal was open for business.

These meetings are organized in conjunction with the people who handle labour relations for the studios. They are the ones that we deal with directly when their studios send projects to our city and so they're the ones we have a relationship with. Normally, these labour relations folk take the time to meet with delegations like ours and politely reflect upon the state of the universe and, in a very non-committal way, their studio's production plans.

This trip was different. What many of these labour relations people did was invite the real decision makers from the production side of their studios to join us. This time, the heads of production and physical location - the people who green-light projects and ultimately decide where they're going to shoot - were in the room.

And unlike many other trips to L.A. where the studios would simply offer us platitudes about what a nice place Montreal is to shoot, this time, across the board, we were told in very concrete terms that Montreal was being seriously considered as a shooting location for very real film and television projects going into pre-production.

While you can't bank on every one of those projects just yet, this was certainly more of a commitment to Montreal from than studios than we've seen in quite some time.

Even more encouraging was the fact that some of our best meetings were with the studios and networks who are not accustomed to considering Montreal as a place to shoot; companies like ABC, Universal/NBC, Warner Brothers and Sony.



Fortner Anderson, Christian Lemay, Michel Charron, Brian Baker and Raymond Guardia.

It appears Montreal is now positioned to compete with any other production centre and - unless we make a mess of it - the future is bright regarding our ability to convince American productions to come here.

## So, What Happened?

Now, this is not what we're used to seeing. So, what happened? What happened to all of those irritants and obstacles that American producers complained about and pointed to as the reason Montreal was not hosting more of their projects?

It's not a stretch to say that the rules that govern production in Montreal have undergone a profound transformation during the past year-and-a-half. And the consequence of this transformation is that the irritants and obstacles which used to undermine our ability to attract more American projects have been washed away.

Let's review the highlights of this transformation:

- 1.** The **APFTQ's** effort to legally enshrine its position as the only entity that could negotiate collective agreements with guilds and unions crashed and burned. Thanks in large part to **ACTRA's** opposition, the tribunal that administers the Status of the Artist Legislation terminated the proceedings that the **APFTQ** had initiated over seven years ago to achieve this legal exclusivity.
- 2.** The agreement that was in place between the two producer associations - the **CFTPA** and **APFTQ** - that obligated producers filming in Quebec to become members of the **APFTQ** in order to access the **ACTRA IPA** was scrapped, and U.S. studios are now permitted to shoot in Quebec under the **CFTPA** banner.
- 3.** **IATSE** made it clear that it was committed to being a part of the Montreal production scene following an invitation from over one thousand local technicians to set up shop in Montreal.



**4.** The provincial government appointed a mediator - **Gilles Charland** - who imposed a peace treaty on the two warring technician unions - **AQTIS** and **IATSE**. Under this agreement, **IATSE** would get jurisdiction over Studio pictures - projects like *Whiteout*, *Benjamin Button*, *Get Smart*, *The Mummy 3*, *The Pink Panther* and *Death Race 3000* - while **AQTIS** would retain jurisdiction over projects from independent producers - like *Dead Zone*.

These four events have turned the production scene upside down.

Prior to the transformation, American Studios coming to Montreal were; a) forced to become members of the **APFTQ** - who then slapped the now-infamous \$14,000 toll-fee on them - and; b) forced to do business with **AQTIS** - the technician union that had an exclusivity deal with the **APFTQ** - even if their crew structure differed greatly from what existed everywhere else in North America.

Now, American Studios coming to Montreal can access the **ACTRA** IPA as members of the **CFTPA** - thereby avoiding the **APFTQ**'s \$14,000 toll-fee - and do business with **IATSE** - thereby avoiding **AQTIS** and a crew structure that is foreign to them.

### So, what does this all mean to the industry players?

#### The Hollywood Studios

The studios are happy because all of the irritants that kept them from coming to Montreal in greater numbers have been eliminated. The studios want Montreal to be on the radar screen - it is in their economic interest to have access to a mature and adept production centre like Montreal - and that is why there was so much interest in us during our recent visit to Hollywood.

#### The APFTQ

The **APFTQ** are the big losers. Their quest for exclusivity is in tatters and the new reality permits the Hollywood studios to shoot in Montreal while avoiding the **APFTQ** entirely. And what's more, the **APFTQ**'s last-ditch attempt to maintain some semblance of exclusivity over technicians by using its dominance over **AQTIS** to scuttle any agreement with **IATSE** failed miserably when a provincial mediator stepped in and forced them to sign a pledge to not undermine the peace treaty.

#### AQTIS

While **AQTIS** loses some turf, the labour peace will permit them to regroup and restructure their operation. Indeed, **AQTIS** was so brutally bullied and traumatized by the **APFTQ** - blasted by the **APFTQ** when they did not contest **IA**'s certification bids under Labour Law and then grieved when they certified sets to protect themselves from **IA** - that it's hard not to feel some sympathy for them. **AQTIS** will now have the time to decide what kind of relationship it wants with the **APFTQ**.

#### IATSE

**IATSE** wins big. They are now firmly established on the local scene. And if they succeed in negotiating salaries and working conditions that are superior to what **AQTIS** had negotiated with the **APFTQ**, they will truly conquer the hearts of local technicians and demonstrate the benefits of being represented by a real union.

#### The Directors Guild

The **DGC** is also a winner in this affair. As a result of the deal that it negotiated with **IATSE**, the **DGC** will now represent a whole bunch of positions that were previously represented by **AQTIS**. On Studio pictures, the **DGC** will now represent more positions, including the **A.D.s**.

#### The Quebec Film Office

The new film office established itself as a player by pressuring the provincial government to intervene in the turf-war. It may be early days since its inception, but already the film office has proven that it is capable of solving problems that undermine our ability to encourage U.S. production to come to Quebec.

#### And ACTRA?

**ACTRA** members win big. There is now peace in the valley. And if this peace results in more Hollywood pictures coming to Montreal, then that will translate into more work opportunities for **ACTRA** members.

And isn't that what it's all about?



Shooting in Montreal, from the top: *Whiteout*, *The Dead Zone*, the sequel to *The Pink Panther* and the third in *The Mummy* franchise.

# A WOMAN'S TOUCH

by Dawn Ford

Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, the Women in the Director's Chair program has graduated nearly 100 female Canadian directors and offered a unique opportunity to countless other performers, writers and technicians. For ACTRA member Dawn Ford, the chance to participate in the program this year was an experience she will never forget.

**T**ruth be known, when I was invited as an actress to participate in the WIDC program, I had no idea just how spectacular it would turn out to be. But from the moment my feet landed in picturesque Banff, Alberta at the Banff Centre, I knew this would be a magical experience.

In a nutshell, the program works like this: eight female directors are chosen each year and given the opportunity to produce a scene from a script they are working on, in the setting of a full scale film production/training ground.

Mentors arrived early - plus two of the actors - to facilitate workshops for lighting, camera, working with actors and editing. Everyone involved in the program prepared during this stage by going through the steps of the filmmaking process in a studio setting. Five days later, the rest of the actors joined the group and immediately, we started to audition. All of the actors were cast in scenes - one of the only things at WIDC that doesn't happen in the real film world! And then the fun/work really began!

The excitement built as more and more crew members arrived - professionals and volunteers, apprenticing as grips, A.D.s, lighting technicians and every other imaginable position on set. In all, 77 participants and 15 more volunteers, including Banff Centre staff, worked together in their respective fields to serve the creative process for the eight directors; every single one of them an integral part of these daring directors' projects.

Before work could begin on each director's chosen scene, however, everyone was asked to participate in a more spontaneous, "guerrilla-style" shoot. It was a chance for the director to experience being thrown into the fire on a real set - without the benefit of being involved in the casting process and completely new to the script they are working with.



It was all impromptu and involved absolutely no prep time. In that kind of environment, you could almost feel a whirlwind of energy sweep you off your feet as everyone pushed to get the job done in just five hours. It was tough, but a great warm up, that really prepared everyone for the principal scenes that we'd been prepping to shoot the following week.

Of course, being warmed up doesn't mean shooting the prepared scenes was an easy task. The hours are long (just like the real deal) and could often be intense in the program. But then, this is what we love to do. And I, for one would do it again in a heart-beat.

As beautiful as Banff is, everyone was eager to use what precious little "R & R" time we had to take in the sights, while the directors were busy with the editing process. Finally, on the last night, the eight finished scenes were premiered to the delight of everyone, followed by a fantastic (but low budget ;-)) wrap party in a chalet overlooking the gorgeous Rocky Mountains.



For more information on the WIDC visit



Looking back on what we all accomplished in those two and a half weeks, it was nothing short of astounding. It was truly inspiring to be around so many talented artists; living together, working together and creating together at the Banff Centre. My craft as an actor has been changed forever and I am so very grateful that I had this opportunity to be a part of the Women in the Director's Chair program.

With the 2007 session just finished, **Carol Whiteman**, the non-stop, relentless producer of WIDC, is already planning for next year. She is an inspirational maverick in her own right, ensuring the WIDC continues to go on and on. I would very much like to thank Carol for having the spirit and courage necessary to support such an important and arduous undertaking each year.

I'd also like to thank ACTRA Montreal for continuing to contribute to such an outstanding program and I hope Montreal members will submit applications to be a part of the experience next year!



[www.creativewomenworkshops.com](http://www.creativewomenworkshops.com) on the web.

# Video Games Bring Big Business to Montreal

U.K. based **Eidos Interactive**, best known for creating the *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* franchise and a world-leading publisher of software entertainment, has decided to build a new development studio in Montreal.

"Montreal is the ideal location to open a new studio because of its thriving game development community and favourable economics," said **Bill Ennis**, Commercial Director at Eidos.

The news comes just weeks after **Ubisoft**, makers of the hugely successful *Prince of Persia* and *Splinter Cell* franchises, announced their own plans for a massive expansion of their Montreal studio. The \$450 million, six year investment, will see the videogame-making giant double its workforce, increase its production volume and make its first move towards its goal of one day producing feature films.

"In 1997, Ubisoft made the decision to wager on Quebec's immense creative potential," said **Yves Guillemot**, CEO and cofounder of Ubisoft. "Ten years later, the Montreal studio has been the driving force behind the conception and development of legendary brands."

The opening of an Eidos studio and Ubisoft's expansion come as welcome news to many ACTRA members, particularly in the voice community, as work opportunities in videogame production continue to grow considerably each year.



# AGM '06

Long before there was a deal, long before there was a strike, long before any of the drama that unfolded over the past few months, ACTRA Montreal held its 2006 Annual General Meeting - giving members a glimpse of the tough road that lay ahead.

**W**ith hot-button issues on the agenda like the technician turf war in Quebec and our difficult IPA negotiations, nearly 300 members turned out to show their support for ACTRA at the 2006 Montreal Annual General Meeting on November 20th.

The presentations were often entertaining and enjoyable, even as they led the audience through some complex and alarming issues - like the particular disadvantages Montreal members often face as a result of the actions of the Quebec producer's association (APFTQ) and the regressive demands that had already been made by the producers on ACTRA in those first few early days of IPA bargaining.

Whether it was a Branch Councillor speaking, **Regional Director Raymond Guardia** or invited guests, **National President Richard Hardacre**, **National Executive Director Stephen Waddell** and **AFBS CEO Robert Underwood**, the message from the head table was clear: being a performer is difficult enough without having to deal with these added challenges.

Throughout the agenda, presenters pointed to ways in which ACTRA is doing its best to tackle the obstacles that reduce or hinder the work opportunities of performers in the city. Some were good news stories with happy endings and some were areas where there is still much work to be done to improve the lot of Montreal members.

What was very apparent, judging from the comments of performers at the microphone, was that the membership in Montreal is solidly in support of ACTRA - a strong argument as to why this organization prevailed in the labour dispute.





**This is Sparta!** Kudos to everyone who worked on **300**. The blockbuster movie, shot in Montreal last year, earned a whopping \$70 million in its opening weekend - shattering the previous record for a March debut - and has already well-surpassed the \$100 million mark.



**Kudos to Bill Haugland** on his retirement. The veteran newscaster anchored his last broadcast of **Montreal CTV News** on November 30, 2006 after 30 years behind the desk. We wish him all the best.



**Thanks for nothing, Federal Government.** With the announcement of their second budget, ACTRA is disappointed that the Conservative Government has once again failed to increase support for Canada's film and television industry. We suppose they disagree with the notion that storytelling through film and television is essential to our national identity. Their failure to increase support is a blow, not only to Canadian performers, writers, directors and producers, but to all Canadians across the country.



**To the adorable couple!**

Congratulations to **Andrea Sadler** on her marriage to American Storyteller **Jonathan Kruk**. The happy couple tied the knot in an enchanting forest in Garrison, N.Y. on August 26, 2006.



**Congratulations**

to new ACTRA Montreal members **Colin Scott Balzer, Armand Beaulieu, Catherine Bérubé, Dominique Bourassa Brown,**

**Jean Robert Bourdge, Jean-Sébastien Côte, David Di Carlo, Marie-Aude Doyon, Francois Xavier Dufour, Jude Ferus, Ralph Francois, Dan Gauthier, Anna Hopkins, Tiio Horn, Francis Jalbert, Sam "Sugar Sammy" Khullar, Otshetokon King, Dominique Labelle, Ricardo Larivée, Dominic Laurence James, Carinne Leduc, Kenneth Leonard, Sylvia Louis, Marie Matiko, Jacqueline McClintock, Kevin McCoy, Julie Nesrallah, Atif Siddiqi, Nathalie Slight, Joseph R. Taylor, Karine Tousignant, François Trudel, Stephane Verdieu, Michelle Wallis, Jessica Welch**



**A real goodfella...** Special thanks to **Martin Scorsese** for his plug at this year's **Academy Awards**. After nabbing his first-ever Oscar, for directing **The Departed**, Scorsese professed his fondness for shooting films in Quebec. "We are trying to find a way to get back to Montreal," he said backstage. "We shot some of **The Aviator** there and we would like to get back up there."



**Congratulations to Matt Holland**, past President of ACTRA Montreal, on his appointment as CTV's new manager of development and production in Quebec, where he will be responsible for fielding pitches for the network and its many specialty channels.



**Welcome to Nicolas Wright**, the newest Alternate on ACTRA Montreal's Branch Council. The ACTRA Award nominated member first took an interest in union politics during the negotiations, taking time out of his shooting schedule to attend the bargaining days in Montreal. Nicolas was invited to sit on Council and was named an Alternate.



**Our condolences** go out to the family and friends of **Jacques Thuad**, who passed away December 19, 2006 at the age of 72.



**Our condolences** go out to the family and friends of **Guy Crevier**, who passed away October 2, 2006 at the age of 66 after losing his battle with cancer. He had recently starred in the short film **Wildflowers** and was featured in the film **The Ecstasy Note**.

**ACTRA Montreal**

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Join us for the 2007  
**ACTRA Awards in Montreal  
& Short Film Festival**

**Saturday, June 9th, 2007  
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**ACTRA Shorts @ 1pm • ACTRA Awards @ 7pm**

**Open to ACTRA members, apprentice members, ACTRA Extras & invited guests ONLY.**