



ACTRA Montreal

Grapevine

Spring 2009

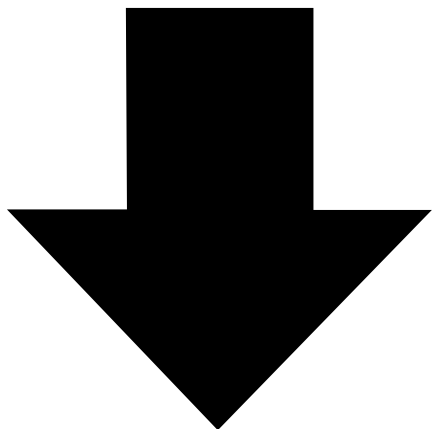
**BRINGING
PRODUCTION
HOME TO MONTREAL
ACTRA'S LOBBYING VICTORY**

**COMMERCIAL
AGREEMENT**

**WELCOME HOME
MICHAEL**

IPA NEGOTIATIONS

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO PERMITS AND CREDITS



NOTICE TO APPRENTICE MEMBERS

ACTRA rules regarding Permits and Credits were recently changed.

Permits under the IPA are still valid for one calendar week per role. If you work on a role on a day beyond the first week, you must purchase a second Permit, also valid for one calendar week.

Previously, subsequent Permits for a role would not count as an additional credit. Now, additional permits will count as a credit toward Full Membership in **ACTRA**.

ACTRA Montreal Grapevine

spring 2009

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If you're an ACTRA member, apprentice member or ACTRA Extra and would like to contribute news, an article or photos to the Grapevine, we'd love to hear from you! Send us an email at gsaxe@actra.ca.

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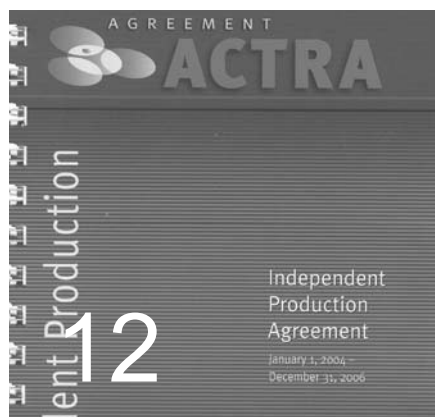
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It Was the Worst of Times, It May Be the Best of Times (With a little bit of luck)

Dear Members,

In the last issue of *The Grapevine*, I wrote about the massive amount of bad luck that had befallen our community. A technician turf war, fallout from the WGA strike, SAG on-again-off-again negotiations and infighting, the rising Canadian dollar, global competition and uncompetitive provincial tax credits, to name a few of the reasons that production declined so drastically. In fact, 2008 was the worst production year since the mid-1990s.

Well, there's reason to believe that 2009 will likely be a much better year than 2008. This year started with a bang. Actually, with two bangs.

After only six months of ACTRA lobbying in coalition with our industry partners, the Quebec Government announced a significant increase in tax credits. More than one producer has confirmed to us that this will result in decisions to film in Montreal.

Round two of the lobby campaign again resulted in victory. The Quebec budget included our suggestions for measures to extend the tax credit increases to a wider range of production.

The coalition that ACTRA Montreal helped to create, *The Quebec Production Committee*, will be focusing over the coming months on lobby

ing the Federal broadcast regulator, the CRTC. We hope to achieve a few changes that will help to stimulate more production in Montreal. Aside from the lobby victories, two television series have been confirmed for production in Montreal. Both series filmed their pilots here as well.

Galafilm's *18 to Life*, about two 18 year old neighbours who get married on a dare, has been green lit by CBC for ten episodes.

The series features two ACTRA Award winners - **Al Goulem** (*The Tournament*, *Stardom*) and **Ellen David** (*Surviving My Mother*, *Mambo Italiano*, *Heist*), along with fellow ACTRA Montreal Members **Jesse Rath** (*Prom Wars*, *Dead Like Me*), **Tiio Horn** (*Indian Summer: The Oka Crisis*) and new Apprentice Member **Arielle Shiri**. And, of course, many more of us yet to be cast.

Blue Mountain State, produced by Lionsgate and picked up by Spike TV, will be back in Montreal filming 12 more episodes. The comedy series about college life, balancing football, dating, hazing and the occasional class, is set to bring about \$60 million of production to our city. Sounds like work opportunities.

You'll all be happy to read about the successful re-negotiation and ratification of the *National Commercial Agreement*. Thanks for all of your hard work to our representatives on the

Negotiating Committee, **Ian Finlay** and **Bruce Dinsmore**, and to ACTRA Montreal Assistant Branch Rep for Commercials, **Daintry Dalton** and Regional Director, **Raymond Guardia**.

The *Independent Production Agreement* (IPA) will expire at the end of 2009. Last time we re-negotiated, ACTRA was forced to hold our first ever strike, lasting seven weeks in January and February 2007. Given the difficulties last time, we were preparing for another tough round of bargaining.

But the process went very smoothly. ACTRA's Negotiating Committee has already reached a tentative agreement with the producers' associations. Watch your mail for ratification ballots, which will be sent out shortly.

On the next page, you'll read about our ACTRA brother, **Michael Rudder**, who miraculously survived four bullet wounds during the Mumbai terrorist attacks last November. I'm sure I speak for all ACTRA Members when I say - Welcome home, Michael. We're thrilled to see you back in Montreal and regaining your health.

In solidarity,

Don Jordan,
President, ACTRA Montreal

WELCOME HOME MICHAEL

by Dawn Ford

Too often we hear news reports about atrocious events around the globe. Bombs explode, planes crash, people die. Then we go on with our lives unburdened by the horrors seen on TV.

Then it happens to a friend.

On November 26, 2008, terrorists attacked Mumbai, India. 170 people were killed and over 300 were injured in a three day rampage which besieged that ancient and beautiful city.

Michael Rudder, my good friend and colleague at ACTRA, was shot four times. We are all grateful that he survived, and profoundly saddened by his ordeal and the loss of two of his dear friends.

Michael is the most peaceful, respectful, understanding guy you could possibly meet. He was in Mumbai on a meditation retreat. It is hard to imagine a less appropriate target of such brutality.

The closest Michael has come to such violence is in the roles he has portrayed, including his Genie nominated performance as a horse-drugging, race-

fixing, heroin-dealing murderer in *Buying Time*, and on such video games as *Splinter Cell* and *Prince of Persia*. Truer to his real character was Michael's portrayal of the lovable *Pastor Van der Veen* in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

I'm thrilled that Michael is now recovering well, back home in Montreal and has begun auditioning and working as a performer. He's even found the time and energy to participate at an ACTRA meeting.

Many of us would be consumed with anger and bitterness at such an experience, which would be perfectly understandable. Not Michael. Here's one of his quotes, from CTV:

"I suggest that we do not bow once again to fear, but bow to love. Just as those people train to hurt other people, we should train ourselves to embrace our world and create a world that allows us to increase the power of the positive energy that's on this planet."

Welcome home, Michael. We love you.



A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL

In November of last year, I had an experience which has changed my life forever. Brought about by hatred, it opened up hearts all over the world. Of the many thousands of good wishes I received, the prayers and thoughts of the many members of ACTRA and its staff had a special meaning to me.

So close to death, I was the witness to so much life teaming from so many cards and messages, and the recipient of such sweet compassion and tenderness. This has been a source of strength and inspiration to me during my recovery. Thank you.



IT'S MY DAMN UNION!

By Holly Gauthier-Frankel

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their Finest Hour.' - Winston Churchill, 1940

I don't have to state the obvious to you, my dear readers, but we are witnessing an era of great change. Through the turmoil in the international political realm, we have now felt the impact in our own local community where the trees bear no fruit. Where the tides of work have shifted dramatically; where the winds of change are blowing cold! Where the eggs of our labour have been counted but there are no chickens to be found! Where are the chickens, my brothers and sisters?! Where are they?!

In times of upheaval or when life throws you a curveball, there is always a choice that can be made: to stay and fight, or to run screaming for the hills. Time and again, what I notice is that our membership, comprised of talented, wonderful, committed individuals who yearn and strive for success, is strong and united. When situations are dire, as we saw at November's AGM, this membership responds with hope and a solid sense of wanting to make change happen.

Despite bleak budget overviews, despite no clear sense of where this coming year was going to bring us, despite all the fear and uncertainty that we now face as performers on the verge of becoming obsolete, there was nevertheless a sense of hope filling the air. I am proud to know that our membership has what it takes to move forward even in the most trying of times. An experience I had soon after the AGM cemented this feeling of unity on an even broader scope.

I was lucky enough to attend my very first

National Council meeting in Toronto last January; it was an awe-inspiring experience, people! The vibe was electric, with everyone engaged and involved in the process of checking in on our vast membership, and everything that daunting task entails. Running around like an over-excited child, I met branch representatives from across the country and got to see the way things run in the T-Dot! I was so inspired that I decided then and there that I wanted to get even more involved, so I decided to join the National Women's Committee and I even spoke my mind about one of the communications initiatives put forth by a member during the meeting, much to my surprise (I have been known to be shy sometimes). The energy coursing through the room (even during the budget overview and the financial reports!) was exhilarating and made me realize how much power we hold as a union and as people committed to fairness and equality in working life. All I could think of was how much I wanted to express this feeling and this work ethic to you, my dear readers.

It is of the utmost importance that everyone do their part in some way, because the decisions we make as individuals will eventually have an impact on everyone sooner or later. If you simply believe in the power that you wield, right here and now, to create positive change, then you've taken the first step.

This coming year, I have decided to commit myself to getting in the S.A.C! No, silly readers, not my bed! Even when things look grim, I will resist the urge to crawl under my fluffy duvet covers and hide for-

ever and ever and I will remind myself of the three simple concepts that I'd like to apply to my life as an ACTRA Council member, and to my life in general:

Service: I will strive to provide whatever service I can to my union and to my community, given my time limits and my personal resources. I will never forget the great services that are provided to me by our hard-working staff and our colleagues all over the nation.

Action: I will become more active in the community at large, by joining committees, writing letters to the government, lobbying when I can and creating tidal waves by putting myself out there, just a little more. I will use my big mouth and my loud laugh to spur myself into action, even if I get a little egg on my face now and then!

Communication: I will communicate my thoughts, my ideas, my problems and my fears with my union representatives, and with my colleagues. I have received some letters from members lately who have run into problems; I will gladly do my best to open the streams of communication by passing along the information I receive to whoever I can that might be able to help. But it is all of our responsibility to make our thoughts known! Talk to me! Talk to other union reps! Talk to yourself! Look deep inside to figure out what it is that you want, and then go for it. By communicating with one another, we strengthen the bonds of COMMUNITY. **And with a strong, open community, anything is possible.**

STORIES FROM THE



Has anything strange, funny or embarrassing ever happened to you at an audition, on set or in studio? Do you want to share the experience with your fellow ACTRA Members?

ACTRA Montreal Member **Janet Lane** suggested this new feature for the Grapevine. **STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINES**, will present *your* real experiences as professional performers.

To submit your experience, just send it by e-mail to gsaxe@actra.ca

Thanks for the idea, Janet!

Our first STORY FROM THE FRONTLINES was sent in by **Donny Quinn**

Many years ago I auditioned for a "thug" role at the Montreal Casting House. I remember a good friend of mine greeting me as he exited the audition room that day. We were up for the same role, and it was one of our first auditions.

I asked him how it went, and he replied, "I think I did pretty good." He seemed confident and full of energy, and I was happy for him, as he has always rooted for me (regardless of the competition between us due to being in same age range.)

Eventually, the assistant Casting Director came out, and called my name. My young actor colleague wished me luck on his way out, and I walked into the room. When I shut the door behind me, I was asked to wait a few minutes so the reader could catch his breath. As I looked over, I noticed his shirt had been torn at the collar, and he was holding his throat. Concerned, I asked them what had happened.

Apparently, because the scene involved some threats going back and forth, my friend didn't realize at the time that he wasn't supposed to *physically* interact with the reader. As they put it, "He went 'method' on on the poor guy."

My friend and I laugh 'til this day about our early lack of experience. He is now considered a Montreal top five working actor in our age bracket, and is underway to starting his own private acting school, with this *faux pas* on one of his courses titled, "*Professional Auditions*".



ACTRA Member Donny Quinn

SHANNON'S ACTRA TIPS

by Shannon Joutel, ACTRA Montreal Steward

Did you know?

- A properly executed ACTRA contract is required for ACTRA to properly defend your rights.
- Under the NCA if you do not write '2' in the number of audition box (in the case of a callback), you forfeit your right to receive your callback fee of \$50.
- It is imperative to provide ACTRA with a written notice for a change of address, telephone number, Talent Agent or any other change to your personal file.
- Updating your Face to Face profile may actually get you more work.
- Contact ACTRA whenever you have a question or concern. It's the best way to ensure that you and your fellow members' rights are protected.



STUNT COMMUNITY ELECTS NEW COMMITTEE

by Michael Scherer

Stunt people are cut from a very specific cloth. If you mix that with strong egos, life threatening challenges and the ability to make large sums of money, you will inevitably have friction in the group.



There is something new yet old in place for the Montreal stunt community; a Stunt Committee. These have existed in the past in different incarnations and for different reasons. Each came and went. For those of

you reading this who are not stunt performers or are relatively new to it, suffice it to say that the history of the stunt community in Montreal has been fractured and more alliances have been formed and dissolved than marriages in a long running soap opera. Sadly, this is common knowledge in the film community. That is not to say that these committees never accomplished anything. In fact some good came from them. But in the end dissent always caused them to fade.

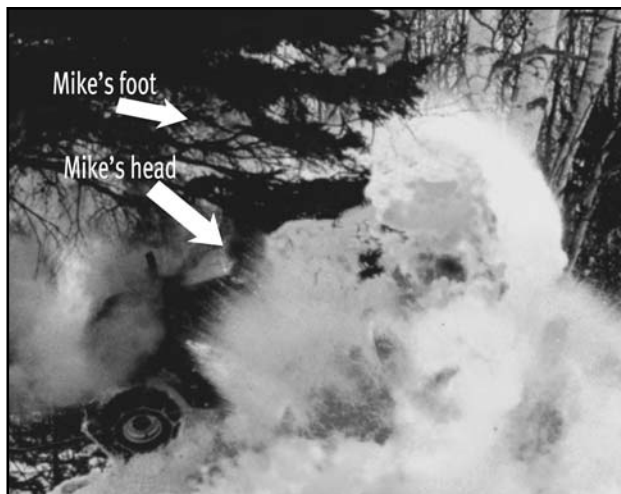
Infighting in our community can result in many problems, the least of which is that the right person for the job does not always get said job. Another result of this situation is that when a problem arises that concerns the whole group, we can't seem to pull together to solve it and in the end we all suffer. The word gets out to the producers down south that the stunt community in this town is a minor player and doesn't get along.

I have it on good authority that, along with most local crew people, some Producers and Production managers are aware of the infighting in our community and don't want to deal with the fallout. They worry they may not get the best people for the job. Their solution is sometimes to bring in a coordinator from elsewhere in Canada, whom they see as being objective. Pretty sad to think that they would pay all that extra expense just to avoid what they see as a problem within our small community.

There have been times when there was peace amongst the stunt clans but it was always a tenuous one. So once again someone came to the conclusion that things were spinning out of control and a reborn stunt committee was needed. It was initially brought up by a veteran member, quietly testing the waters, until word got out. The community reacted strongly to an appointed committee and felt unrepresented. So it was decided a vote was needed.



A. Stephane Lefebvre, Michael Scherer and Dave McKeown; **B.** Participants at Stunt Community meeting; **C.** Michael Scherer and Dave McKeown; **D.** Marc Desourdy
Photographs B. and C. courtesy of Marcello Bezina.



Michael Scherer, blasted upside-down on a motorcycle, in ***If Looks Could Kill*** (1991). Don't worry. Mike's body parts remain attached.

All this begs the question, "What now and how do we keep history from repeating itself?". Well times have changed along with the community. I can remember when there was so much work we could all be employed and never run into each other, no problem. The jobs are now few and far between and our little group seems more focused on the future and is now asking the right questions. And as a result, we presently have a vehicle in place to voice our concerns and have the committee take those concerns to a higher level if required.

established ranks. But the process needs to be monitored so it's not abused. The committee will also work with other committees in other cities on national issues. It will also ensure that local performers get a fair shake when it comes to import productions. We will also be coming up with a format where a performer can voice a complaint without fear of retribution. And last but not least, non stunt performers and ACTRA can query the stunt committee as to whether something constitutes a stunt performance.

To the veterans I say this. Don't hinder new talent, instead encourage the newcomers. Give them the benefit of your experience as it will reflect well on our community as a whole. It just looks better when there is solidarity on set and the best people for the job are out there representing us well.

Its time to show them what we're made of and this new stunt committee is a great start. Let's keep up the momentum.

But a problem arose. Who should vote? Who were the stunt people in town based on the established criteria? The solution was a condensed vote amongst the stunt coordinators to get something in place and form a base from which to work. A list was formed over several weeks, then a meeting was called and all on the list were invited. Having a quorum, a vote was cast at this meeting, and voila, we have a new stunt committee. It comprises Dave Mckeown, Marc Desourdy and myself. I found the results surprising in the sense that I expected one or more newer people to be involved as our community now has many new people. I was encouraged in the sense that perhaps the new generation of stunt people felt that the veterans still had something to offer in terms of experience. I would also like to mention that Tyler Hall, who did a great deal of work on the list, was voted as alternate in case of a conflict involving a committee member.

The history of the stunt community in Montreal has been fractured and more alliances have been formed and dissolved than marriages in a long running soap opera.

What is the mandate of this new committee? First of all, it is a tool, not a club. It is there to fix problems, not start them. To begin with, it will work with ACTRA to advise on the permit process. In our profession permits should be given out when a specific category of stunt or skill is involved or someone has a unique look in terms of doubling or characterization. A stunt permit should be a last resort but it is a necessary process because sometimes the ability or look required is not available within



Stephane Lefebvre testing equipment



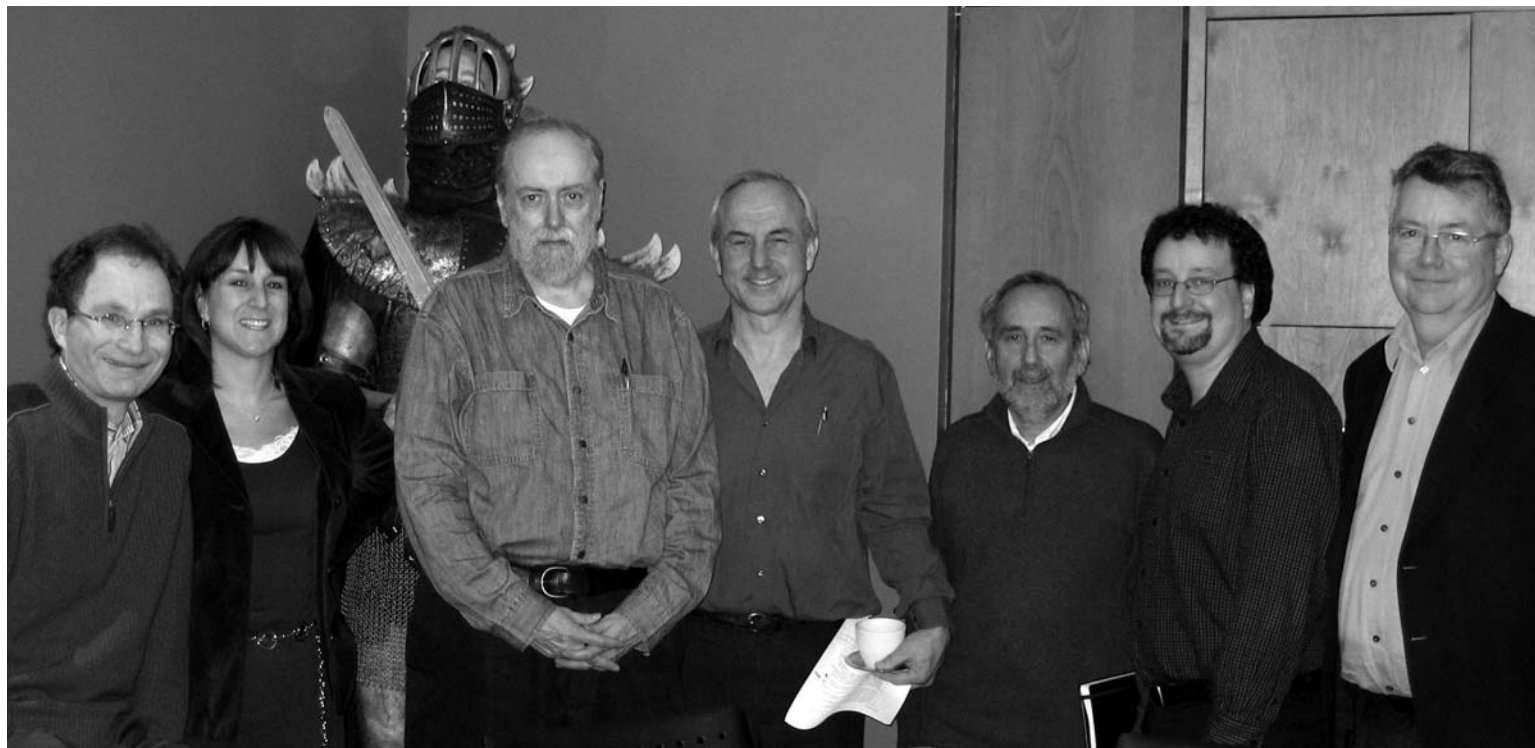
Mike Scherer, flipping a car on ***The Assignment*** (1997)



Dave Mckeown in the police car, leading the pack of stunt performers, on ***The Sum of All Fears*** (2002)



Stephane Lefebvre, flipping a car on ***The Last Exit*** (2006)



VICTORY: LOBBYING RESULTS IN MORE MONEY FOR PRODUCTION

by Gary Saxe

ACTRA Montreal helped create the *Quebec Production Committee (QPC)*, a coalition of local industry partners, which scored an impressive double victory in its first months of existence.

2008 was a crappy, crappy year.

The difficult labour negotiations in Hollywood, coupled with a high Canadian dollar resulted in not one single American production filming in Montreal last year. Making matters much worse, our local producers took their projects overseas and to other cities in record number.

Last spring, ACTRA Montreal started to work with the Quebec wing of the Directors' Guild in order to research why Quebec English language producers were taking their projects to other locations in numbers that were very scary.

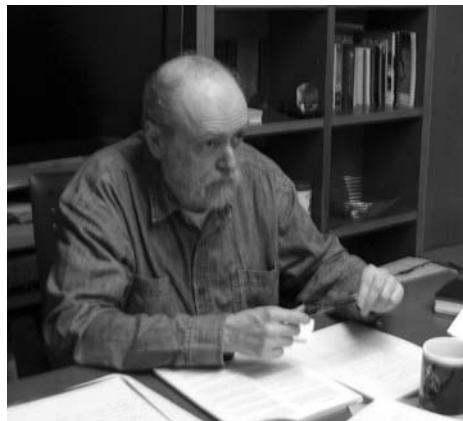
Between 1999 and 2006, English-language production in Quebec dropped by 40%. And the situation is even worse if we look at fiction (drama & comedy) production, which plummeted by 46%. In 1999, there was \$306 million of English-language domestic pro-

duction in Quebec. In 2006, it was \$184 million. That's a drop of \$122 million.

Clearly, this is a significant downturn. Our report, titled *Going, Going, Gone: The Decline of English Language Production in Quebec* identified the main culprit - uncompetitive tax credits. Over the period of the report, tax credits for producers in Quebec went from being the most generous in Canada to being one of the least generous.

As a result of the research, ACTRA Montreal and the DGC-Quebec put together a coalition of industry partners last summer, which included the larger English-language producers in Quebec, the producers' associations and suppliers. As a united team, we lobbied the Quebec Ministries of Culture and Finance as well as Premier Charest. A few hopeful but unclear promises were made during the Quebec election campaign.

Photo above: (left to right) Sam Berliner (Cineflix), Shari Segal (Incendo), Knight from Muse Production's "Never-Ending Story", Kirwan Cox (researcher, and coordinator of the Quebec Production Committee), Michael Prupas (Muse), Arnie Gelbart (Galafilm), Gary Saxe (ACTRA Organizer), Fortner Anderson (DGC).



Kirwan Cox, QPC Coordinator and author of ACTRA Montreal/DGC report *"Going, Going, Gone."*

On January 14, 2009, the Quebec Government announced the changes. It was everything we asked for, exceeding our own expectations (see box below).

This great bit of news was followed by another. The January tax credit changes applied to all types of production, but for some reason, it excluded mini-series productions. At least one producer was planning for several such projects. So we went back to the government with a renewed lobby campaign. And, two short months later, in the March Quebec budget, the tax credit measures were expanded to include mini-series.



Michael Prupas, President of Muse Entertainment and QPC Co-chair.

While it is too soon to say how much new production will result from both of these tax credit changes, producers have already signalled to us that they will definitely be filming more projects in Montreal.

Following these lobby victories, the QPC focused on the CRTC, which is responsible for regulating Canadian airwaves. We have asked the CRTC to treat English-language production in Quebec as "regional production". If granted, this will provide additional incentives for local production.



Fortner Anderson (DGC), Michael Prupas (Muse), Sam Berliner (Cineflix) and Shari Segal (Incendo).



Fortner Anderson, DGC and QPC Co-chair and Arnie Gelbart, President of Galafilm

The Quebec Tax Credit improvements include:

1. Increasing the base tax credit from 29% to 35% for all production.
2. Eliminating the tax credit cap to encourage larger Canadian production to stay in Montreal.
3. Establishing a new 10% bonus tax credit for productions that do not receive other public financial support. This was our main goal. Montreal area producers point to this bonus as the measure which will counteract the competitive advantage of the Ontario regional tax credit.



The 2008 ACTRA MONTREAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

by Randy Duniz

Nearly 200 members turned out Monday, November 17th for the 2008 ACTRA Montreal Annual General Meeting, looking to get the facts on the year we've had and perhaps a glimpse of what we can expect in the year to come.

The meeting was weighty – as one would expect it to be – given the circumstances surrounding the film and television production industry in the past twelve months. While there was some good news on the agenda, like the deal ACTRA achieved in commercial negotiations this past fall, much of the evening focused on the absence of foreign production in 2008 and the threat to indigenous production that Canadian artists face every year.

"The perfect storm" was how 2008 was described by Branch Councillor, Paula Costain in her presentation on American production. The Canadian dollar was trading at par with the U.S. greenback for much of the year and the financial melt-

down in the states has had many investors tightening their belt. What's more, labour instability created by the Writers' Guild of America strike and unending Screen Actors Guild negotiations had Hollywood studios sitting this year out. All of this meant that Montreal did not host a single U.S. project – the first time that has happened in at least 15 years.

Guest speaker at the event, Hans Fraikin, was on hand to help answer the question – what can we expect in 2009? As Film Commissioner at the Quebec Film and Television Council, his mandate is to bring as many foreign on-location projects to the province as possible, creating work opportunities for performers and technicians, in

addition to injecting of hundreds of millions of dollars into Quebec's economy.

That did not happen in 2008. But if there is an 'optimistic' response to this year's dearth of on-location production, it could be the fact that, as Fraikin says, "*It can't get any worse.*" It is very likely, that we have turned a corner. Studios are now on the hook to fill their 2010-2011 production slate and so SAG deal or no SAG deal, most are returning to business as usual and green-lighting projects which will begin filming in 2009.

Will they come here? The drop in the Canadian dollar and possible curbs on tax

Photos by: Robert McGuirk

credits in many states south of the border may make Canada a much more attractive place to shoot. But the new 250, 000 square foot Filmport Studios in Toronto means that competition will be fierce if Montreal hopes to secure some of that work.

On the Canadian front, a report was given on the rise of “run-away production” in Quebec as more and more Quebec producers are chasing the financial incentives from higher tax credits in other provinces and foreign countries. The result has been more than half the production dollars of Quebec based companies being spent outside of Quebec.

Thankfully, the local production community has really rallied in an effort to curtail the problem which has led to a ten-year downward trend of English language production in this city. But the job is far from finished.

For more on the problem and what’s being done about it, please see National Organizer, Gary Saxe’s article, **Victory**, on page 8.

The meeting was well received – as well as could be expected, given the subject matter. And as always, a Montreal AGM provided a great opportunity for members to see other members, speak to each other and share their opinions.

Particularly in these difficult times, the event becomes an opportunity for the members to come together as a community – to show that they are in fact, a community of members.

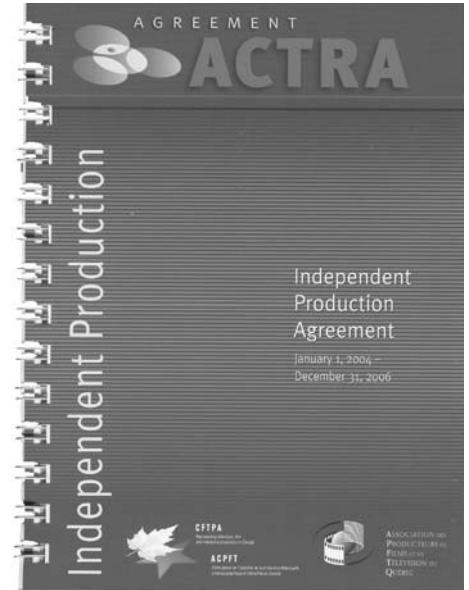
Thank you to everyone who attended.



1. National Executive Director Stephen Waddell, Film Commissioner Hans Fraiken, Montreal President Don Jordan; 2. Branch Treasurer Cary Lawrence; 3. Branch Vice-President Thor Bishopric; 4. Regional Executive Director Raymond Guardia, praying for more production in 2009; 5. Branch Councillor Taylor Baruchel; 6. Branch Councillor Paula Costain; 7. Branch President Don Jordan; 8. Commercial Agreement Negotiating Committee Member Ian Finlay and National Executive Director Stephen Waddell; 9. Anthony Lemke; 10. Patrick Kerton; 11. Pam Koren and Antonina Stabile.

IPA AGREEMENT REACHED

In 2007, ACTRA went on strike for seven weeks in order to secure decent, equitable conditions for internet distribution of our work and to fight off massive roll back proposals by the producers' associations.



Last time, it took a strike. And we won. We established an important world-wide precedent regarding fair wages for digital distribution of film and television production. So this time, with the IPA expiring at the end of 2009, we were preparing for another big battle.

We began a consultation process with ACTRA Members by holding focus group discussions across the country. Four were already held in Montreal. Research was underway. Our Negotiating Committee was formed and began discussions on priorities and strategies.

Then, in the context of the world-wide economic crisis, the decline in production over the past few years, and the desire to protect our hard-fought-for conditions on digital production, we reached a fast-tracked deal.

As ACTRA National President, Richard Hardacre pointed out, "Given these uncertain economic times, both sides agreed that it was in the industry's best interest to work co-operatively to come to a quick, simple deal."

The deal now needs to be ratified by the ACTRA Membership. If ratified, the deal will take effect on January 1, 2010 and expire December 31, 2012, giving performers a 2% increase in each of the three years.

ACTRA's Chief Negotiator and National Executive Director, Stephen Waddell explained, "Both ACTRA and the producers worked long and hard to negotiate the terms of the current IPA. The current Agreement is one of the best in the world. We saw no reason to make substantive changes to it at this time."

Watch for the ratification ballot in the mail, and please vote "Yes".



IPA Focus Group Meeting. Participants, (left to right): ACTRA Award winner Ellen David, ACTRA Montreal Steward Carmella Algeri, Branch President Don Jordan, Branch Treasurer Cary Lawrence, Gordon Masten.



IPA Focus Group Meeting. Participants, (left to right): Doreen Klein, Pam Koren, ACTRA Montreal Steward Carmella Algeri, Ralph Santostefano, Henryk Usakowski, Florence Situ.

NATIONAL COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT 2008-2011

by Daintry Dalton



Ian Finlay

Following eighteen months of intense bargaining, ACTRA and the advertising industry, represented by the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers, reached a settlement on new terms and conditions for the National Commercial Agreement 2008-2011.

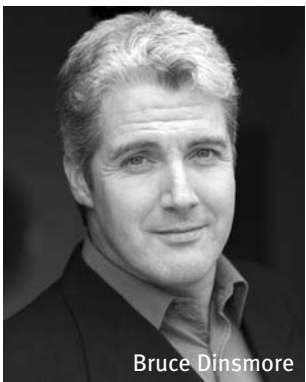
The ACTRA membership overwhelmingly ratified the new Agreement by a vote of 96.6%. Once again, the Montreal membership showed your support, with a vote of 97.1% in favour of the new deal.

The NCA took effect December 1, 2008. Highlights include;

- Three year agreement, with a 2.5% general rate increase in each year
- Elimination of "scale/minimum fee only" on written Casting Breakdowns
- Accident on Set insurance Coverage (note: in Quebec, CSST conditions apply with exceptions; whenever in doubt, AoS will apply.
- New provisions to encourage more commercial production; with respect to,
 - Large cast commercials
 - Foreign service work
 - New Media (Internet)

Our thanks go out to **Ian Finlay** and **Bruce Dinsmore**, who represented ACTRA Montreal on the Negotiating Committee

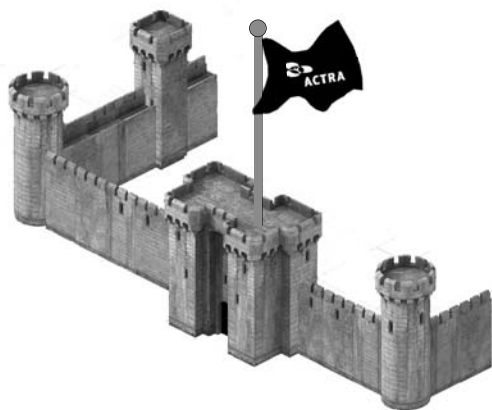
Should you have any questions on the NCA, please contact **Daintry Dalton** at 514-844-3318, ext. 229 or ddalton@actra.ca.



Bruce Dinsmore



ACTRA Montreal Assistant Branch Representative (Commercials), Daintry Dalton, left, presenting the new National Commercial Agreement to Montreal-area advertising industry professionals. Also pictured (left to right) Miryam Champagne (Ogilvy), Jocelyne Dubuc (freelance producer), Anissa Alem (BOS), Roxanne Caron (BOS), Martine Rivest (BCP), and ACTRA Montreal Steward, Shannon Joutel. Photo by Sabrina Gallo.



DEFENDING OUR TERRITORY

by Gary Saxe

A union's jurisdiction is sacred. If taken for granted, it withers. If defended, it becomes a secure source of work opportunities for union Members.

We take our jurisdiction very seriously at Actra Montreal. Non-union production is pursued, and whenever possible, brought under ACTRA contracts.

Some parts of the country have chosen other priorities and have been less vigilant in protecting the jurisdiction. As a result, in the absence of a risk of being caught, we have seen a growth of non-union production, particularly non-union commercials.

At least in part due to ACTRA's organizing efforts, it has become rare to see large non-union commercials attempting to film in Montreal. In fact, a Vancouver-based commercial production company, in a web page used to compare union versus non-union talent costs for potential advertisers, stated the following:

"Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal have large talent pools due to the volume of US and CDN production. However filming non-union in Montréal can be a challenge."

Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal have large talent pools due to the volume of US and CDN production. However filming non-union in Montréal can be a challenge.

B.C. based production company

But, occasionally, we are confronted with a serious non-union commercial challenge. And that happened recently. A large, multi-billion dollar company tried to film a series of non-union commercials in Montreal in April of this year. The advertising agency, already signatory to the Screen Actors' Guild Commercial Agreement in the US, wanted to avoid paying the residual fees required under a union contract. Most performers were offered between \$150 and \$350 for their day of work.

Several of the principal performers negotiated up to \$4000, which seemed like a good deal at the time.

After much work and negotiations, the agency finally accepted that they had to film under ACTRA's jurisdiction. As a result of the very wide distribution across the US and on internet, preliminary estimates have some of the Principals set to earn well over \$20,000 per commercial.

85 ACTRA Members were hired for the three commercials.

While many Talent Agents provided information that helped to bring the commercials under jurisdiction, we discovered that several Agents were more cooperative with the non-union commercial than with ACTRA. We have decided not to promote those agencies on our Talent Agent list. As a result, Agence Scoop and Chaplin Talent (Sergio Panzera) were removed from the ACTRA Montreal Talent Agent List.

Ginette D'Amico was the casting director for these commercials. She, too, was less than helpful. In fact, even after the spots were filmed under our jurisdiction, Ginette placed the ad agency in a position to be grieved by refusing to provide ACTRA with audition information that we have every right to receive. While she finally sent in some information, it was incomplete. We are saddened by Ginette's unwillingness to abide by the rules and we regret that it is ad agencies, the people who sign our agreements, that have to pay for her unacceptable behaviour.



Congratulations
to new ACTRA Montreal
members...

Erin Agostino, Jocko Alston, Pascale Audrey, Seydina Balde, Maria Bertrand, Sacha Bissonnette, Jonathan Bosco, Nancy Bouchard, Marc-André Brisebois, Anne-Marie Cadieux, Martin Champoux, Shan Chetty, Sean Curley, John Dee Delormier, Pina Di Blasi, Jonathan Dubsky, Alan Duggan, Elana Dunkelman, Suzie Etesonne, Karen Feiertag, Audrey Finkelstein, Zach Fraser, Juliette Gosselin, Ethan Gould, Tricia Helfer, Jennifer Kierans, Eléonore Lamothe, Mylène Ledoux, Helena Levitt, Sean Lu, Linda Malo, George Mantis, Oceane Martin, Chris Masson, Joseph Mesiano, Nikki, Isabelle O'Brien, Gustave Giant Ouimet, Jessica Pare, Jan Pivon, Ralph Prosper, Sabrina Reeves, Nathaniel Julian Justin Richards, Andrew Rochon, Niko Romberg, Lauren Roy, Pierre Andre Sigouin, Kirstin Sunshine Stacey, Lisa Suliteanu, Daniel Tadros, Tonia, Evalina Turpin, Lee Villeneuve, Peter Vrana, Jenna Wright

FREESTANDING PRODUCTIONS

A NEW ARTISTIC COLLECTIVE

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

Spearheaded by our own Council member-at-large, Johanna Nutter, and bolstered by fellow Council-member Paula Costain, *Freestanding Productions* is a perfect example of the kind of initiative we can take in order to create change in our lives as performers.

In Zen, it is important to create “space”, both for your practice and for your mind to be able to open up to new ideas. The members of Freestanding are using this principle in the most literal of ways: by finding a space on St. Laurent Street and using it to initiate new creative endeavors. Members **Paula Costain** (*Circle of Friends, Choice: The Henry Morgentaler Story*), **Craig Thomas** (*I’m Not There, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), **Nicole Braber** (*The Dead Zone, The Greatest Game Ever Played*), and **Johanna Nutter** (*A Near Death Experience, Gleason*) explain their amazing story.

Johanna explains how the project evolved: “Most of the members are also clients of the Acting For Film classes offered by **Jock Macdonald** of **CatherThor Studios**. I was in charge of finding a new home for the class - some theatre or studio space that could fit us into their schedule. I had flirted with the idea of finding us a permanent home, a place that could also serve as a theatre and studio for filming. Jock was always encouraging us to do our own projects, but I couldn’t see how we could make it work financially.”

“Johanna developed this idea, which kind of came out of Obama”, Craig explains. “We were hanging out the day that he won the nomination and she called and said ‘I’m so inspired at what you can do, and I’ve always wanted to have a group of actors, writers, people with the same vision to produce plays, to produce movies, to just create among ourselves.’ We’re using it as an opportunity to stretch muscles that are dormant, to explore, to stay in our comfort zone or to explore something else.”

On the group’s objectives, Nicole pointed out that “we wanted a space where we could put up a theatre production if we wanted to, a space that we could go in and film anything, that we could work-

shop. And for myself, I get ideas all the time, but when you’re on your own it seems too much! There are too many obstacles, and I defeat myself before I even get out the door. But then at our meeting last week I pitched this idea and all these voices piped in, ‘Yeah! That’s so cool! Yeah, we could do this and I could that!’, and then your idea carries through and doesn’t just die!”

“So far it’s worked out really well with the allotment of tasks; it’s a very good group. It’s very harmonious,” Paula added. “It’s got a lovely energy, and I think the largeness of it really helps, because it doesn’t rest too much on any one person, and you feel the freedom inside it.”

Pointing out her hopes for the future, Joanna explains: “It’s to tell stories on our own terms. To support each other. To become a place in the community where people can make things happen themselves; where people can try things out, play around, and get feedback from their peers.”

This group is obviously taking all the principles of self-starting and inspiring one another to heart. I can’t wait to

see the fruits of their efforts.

Freestanding Productions staged their first theatrical production, **“Women of Manhattan”** by **John Patrick Shanley**, from April 22-25 and April 29 - May 2nd at the Freestanding room, 4324 St. Laurent, 3rd floor.

If you’d like to contact Freestanding Productions for more info on room rentals and volunteering, you can email them at freestandingproductions@gmail.com



Johanna Nutter



Paula Costain



Craig Thomas



Nicole Braber

fondly | remembered

John Howe 1926-2008

ACTRA Member John Howe suddenly passed away on August 18, 2008 at the age of 81.

John headed The Advance Film Production Workshops at the University of Southern California, where he was also Professor of Cinema and Television.

During his long and productive career, John wrote, directed and produced over 100 documentaries and dramatic film for both the National Film Board and private producers. His films won many national and international awards, the most prominent among these are: *Why Rock The Boat* (1974) - *Do Not Fold, Staple, Spindle or Mutilate* (1967) - *The Sceptre and The Mace* (1957). He also served the community as President of the Society of Film Makers, The Canadian Council of Film Organization and the Syndicat General du Cinema.

Our condolences go to John's wife Beverley and his children, Nicolas, Natalie and Tracy.



Kliment Dentchev 1939-2009

by Venelina Ghiaurov



On March 29, 2009, we lost a dear friend and colleague, Kliment Dentchev - Klimbo, who passed away at the age of 69. For those who met him, Klimbo was one of a kind, a creator.

Talented, inspirational, with richness of culture and experience, his was a mission to help people, to maintain the spirit that encouraged talented souls, and to keep our children smiling.

Kliment was an actor, singer, painter, illustrator, animator and writer. His credits include a long list of roles in films, television, theater, and music-hall, for children most of all. He had a unique way of story-telling, creating different characters and universes within seconds, drawing them gracefully on glass. Aside from countless productions from his native Bulgaria, some of Kliment's films under ACTRA's jurisdiction were *Joshua Then and Now*, *The Assignment*, *Varian's War*, *The Book of Eve* and *A Different Loyalty*.

Kliment became a favorite of thousands of children and his television show, '*Klimbo*' brought him recognition and awards on both continents of North America and Europe.

Klimbo was dearly loved by generations of fans of all ages. The Bulgarian and Cultural Community in Montreal will never be the same.

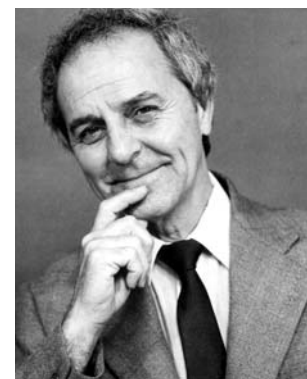
And I lost a precious, irreplaceable and tender friend who kept the flame alive, believed in me and never got tired of telling me: Don't give up, the sun will rise on your side!

Norris Domingue 1925-2009

by Don Jordan

Our community is shocked and deeply saddened by the passing of Norris Domingue on April 12, 2009 after a short battle with cancer. Norris, a long time ACTRA member and originally from Rayne, Louisiana was an actor, singer, clown, and storyteller, who had a career that spanned 60 years. Whether Norris was performing on stage, or in one of his dozens of movie and commercial roles, he faced each project head on with pure love and commitment, all the while encouraging his fellow performers with a kind word and a heart felt smile.

Our condolences go out to his family and friends.



ABOUT OURSELVES...

Congratulations to ACTRA Montreal Member **David Acer**, who had his first book for kid's published in Canada and the U.S. by KidsCan Press. ***Gotcha! 18 Amazing Ways to Freak Out Your Friends*** is a collection of pseudo-paranormal tricks and hoaxes (like apparently making things move with your mind, or catching a ghost on film), based on David's segments as *Doubting Dave* on **Discovery Kids' Mystery Hunters**.

The book is available in all major bookstores.

ACTRA Montreal Member **Dawn Ford** has recently released a CD that covers a quick, simple and effective one-track-at-a-time physical, facial and vocal warm-up to prepare you for the day. ***The Actor's Warm-Up CD*** also includes a voice gig check list to make sure you are fully prepared for your studio session.

The CD was recorded in collaboration with Studio Volume. You can listen to a sample of the CD at www.studiovolume.com (click on "collaboration")

To purchase a copy for \$10 (tax included) please e-mail warmupcd@studiovolume.com

Martin Neufeld, Past President of ACTRA Montreal, recipient of the **YMCA Canada Medal of Peace** and author of the award-winning book ***Hugging Life*** will be embarking on the 90 day/90 country **World March for Peace and Non-Violence** in October, 2009.

To make a donation, or to follow Martin's progress, check out his web site at www.hugginglife.com

Create your demo reel or put yourself on tape for an audition in a relaxed, creative and supportive atmosphere. ACTRA Montreal Member **Bill Rowat** offers his services making ***audition and demo tapes***.

For information, call Bill at 514-932-6382 and at www.billandfelicia.com.

Congratulations to **Richard Dumont** and **Claudia Besso** on the birth of their twins, **Amelia** and **Alec**. The babies were born on April 21, 2009. Claudia and the twins are doing well.

Congratulations to **Bruce Dinsmore**, **Lisa Savage** and big brother **Gabriel**, on the birth of **Tallula Ann Dinsmore-Savage**, born April 21, 2009, weighing 9 pounds 8 ounces. Mother and baby are doing well.

Congratulations to **Nicole Braber**, **Miranda Handford**, **Carlo Mestroni**, **Johanna Nutter** and **Craig Thomas** on their performances in **Freestanding Productions** first theatrical production, ***"Women of Manhattan"*** by John Patrick Shanley.



Emma Stevens - falling very fast

Happy Belated Birthday Emma!

ACTRA Montreal Member **Emma Stevens** celebrated her birthday in a way most of us would prefer not to consider - plummeting Earthward from 2 miles up, with a stranger strapped to her back.

Congratulations, Emma. We're curious about what you'll do to top this next year.

ACTRA Montreal

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