



ACTRA Montreal

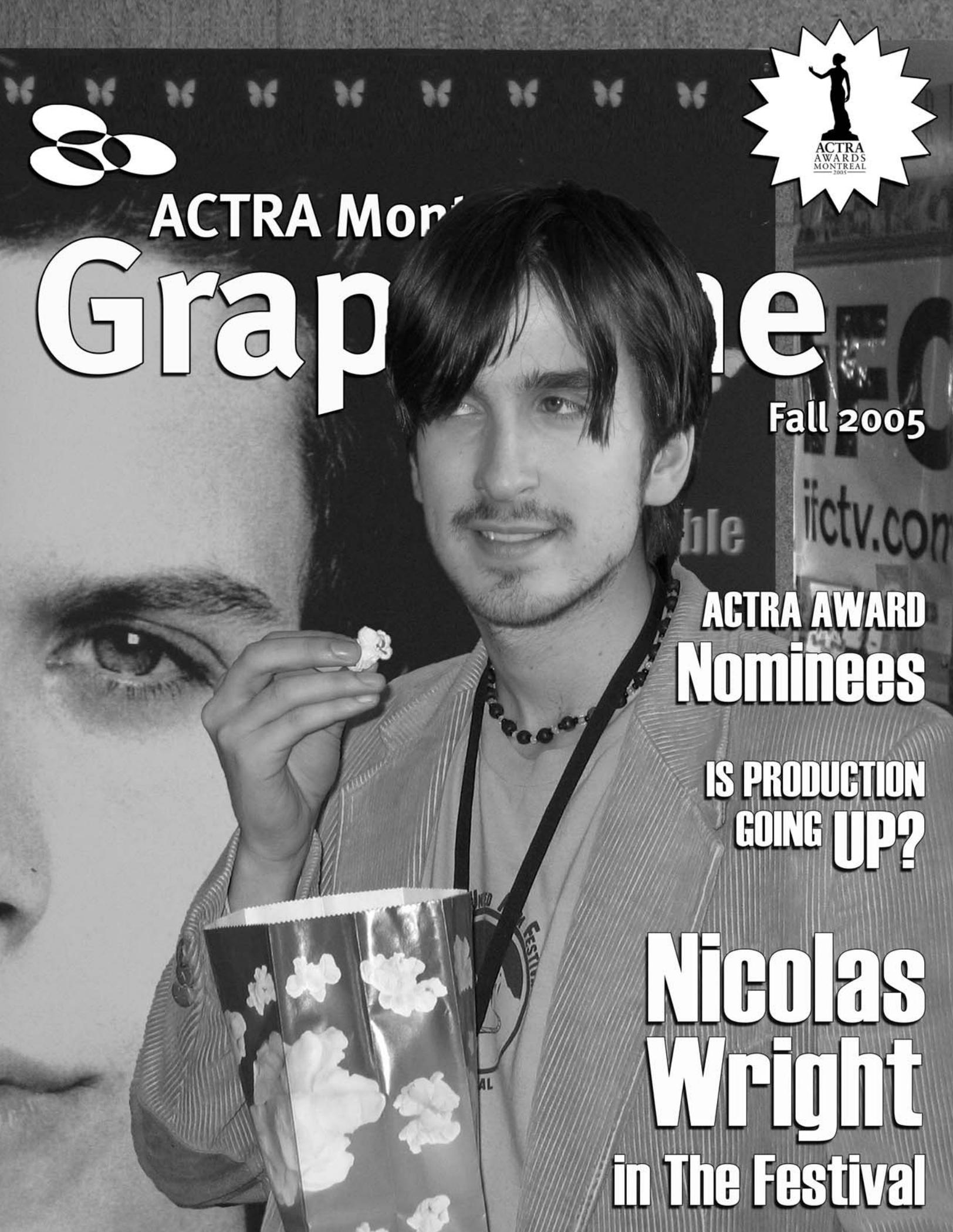
Grappone

Fall 2005

ACTRA AWARD
Nominees

IS PRODUCTION
GOING UP?

Nicolas
Wright
in The Festival



ACTRA MONTREAL BRANCH COUNCIL ELECTIONS: A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It is time, once again, to elect the eleven (11) members of our local Branch Council.

Once elected, the new Montreal Branch Council will elect - from amongst its members - our President, Vice President and Treasurer.

As well, the new Branch Council will elect - from amongst its members - two (2) National Councillors, who will represent the Montreal Branch on ACTRA's National Council.

The first step in this process is to identify those members who wish to stand for election.

Below, you will find a nomination form.

Only Full Members may nominate a member.

Only Full Members may stand for election.

Full Members in good standing who wish to stand for office must sign the form - indicating their willingness to serve if elected. As well, the names, membership numbers and signatures of the members (also in good standing) nominating and seconding them must be included.

The completed nomination form must be returned to the ACTRA office no later than Friday, November 11, 2005.

The ballots, as well as information on the candidates, will be sent out shortly after the nomination deadline.

NOMINATION FORM: ACTRA MONTREAL BRANCH COUNCIL

NOMINEE: _____ MEMB #: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

PROPOSED BY: _____ MEMB #: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

SECONDED BY: _____ MEMB #: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

(If you wish to nominate additional candidates, please contact the Montreal office for additional forms)

ACTRA Montreal Council REPRESENTING YOU

PRESIDENT
Matt Holland

VICE-PRESIDENT
Thor Bishopric

TREASURER
Cary Lawrence

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Maria Bircher

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Holly Gauthier-Frankel
Gillian Ferrabee
Dawn Ford
Don Jordan
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Ivan Freud

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Cary Lawrence, Co-chair

PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION COMMITTEE
Tyrone Benskin, Member
Maria Bircher, Member
Don Jordan, Member
Cary Lawrence, Member



ACTRA
Montreal

the Grapevine

Fall 2005

EDITOR
Don Jordan

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Randy Duniz

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Randy Duniz
Holly Gauthier-Frankel
Raymond Guardia
Matt Holland
Shannon Joutel
Etan Vlessing

ACTRA Montreal Staff

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
Raymond Guardia

ASSISTANT BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE,
COMMERCIALS
Daintry Dalton

IPA STEWARDS
Carmela Algeri
Claire Martell

IPA STEWARD/ADMIN. ASSISTANT
Shannon Joutel

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS
Cheryl Alleyne
Donna Tinman

NATIONAL ORGANIZER
Gary Saxe

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR
Randy Duniz

JOIN THE TEAM

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

HERE'S AN IDEA

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

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by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

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ACTRA
AWARDS
MONTREAL
2005



Tribute

This Fall ACTRA will be honouring its own in an Awards Ceremony that will coincide with our annual Membership Meeting and ACTRA Shorts Film Festival. We will be presenting 5 awards in all: one for best female performance; one for best male performance; and another for best overall voice performance; Victor Knight will receive special recognition for his long-time contribution to this organization (and to ACTRA Fraternal) as a community builder; and our Award of Excellence will go to Vlasta Vrana for his prolific and distinguished acting career. It promises to be a heady day for our branch as we convene to celebrate ourselves as members of an organization that has done so much to further the rights of performers and to improve the working lives of actors across the country.

With such a charged Awards Night agenda, there likely won't be an opportunity to add another important tribute to the list, so I would just like to write a few words now about an extraordinary ACTRA member who also happens to be a mainstay of our Branch Council. Last Spring marked the end of the third consecutive term as ACTRA National President for Thor Bishopric. There was an elegant dinner in his honour in Toronto where words of appreciation flowed and gifts were given; Thor himself gave a heartfelt farewell speech at the National meeting, wherein he spoke of his lifelong affection for ACTRA and the pride he felt at seeing the union strengthened so significantly during his tenure.

While his National Presidency is over, we at ACTRA Montreal are still fortunate to have him sitting on our Branch Council as Vice-President. Thor's extensive experience, keen intelligence and organizational know-how have made him an indispensable member of our team; his sense of humour, warmth and generosity have made him a good friend. ACTRA Montreal is known at the National level as being an innovative and exemplary branch, a place where great ideas and new initiatives are born and take shape. This reputation is largely due to Thor, whose leadership example has encouraged and stimulated this creative environment, allowing our staff and Branch Council to think about issues locally and nationally at the same time.

He has weathered tough situations with aplomb over the years: challenging negotiations with producers; disharmony within branches; indifferent and even hostile media coverage; and the sometimes-stubborn resistance to the much-needed organizational changes he advocated. His able leadership has bolstered and modernized ACTRA; his vision has helped shape our public policy;

and his concern for the well-being of actors has led to the rededication of services to the benefit of our members. He sees the big picture and is able to translate it into concrete terms that can be implemented or worked towards. The ACTRA Plan that he spearheaded and championed more than five years ago, is just one fine example of his many political accomplishments.

Thor is a consummate performer too; a triple-threat writer, director and actor. The fact that he has managed to maintain his career while devoting so much time and energy to ACTRA (not to mention starting a family and finding occasions to exercise his quite considerable green thumb) is a testament to his skill, talent and perseverance. And he cooks a mean chicken curry too! When our son was born last year and my wife and I were stumbling around, joyful but bleary-eyed in typical new-parent fashion, we were grateful to receive a much-needed care package of ready-made meals from Thor and Maria. It was a humble, selfless and effective gesture that, I think, captures the spirit of what Thor has been bringing to the ACTRA table for more than a decade now.

Congratulations and thank you, Thor, on behalf of all of us at ACTRA Montreal.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Holland'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Matt Holland,
Branch President, ACTRA Montreal

actra | members



Congratulations Howard Bilerman on the success of *Funeral*, the debut album of indie darlings, The Arcade Fire. Not only did the Montreal member engineer the album that Rolling Stone magazine describes as "aching with elegiac intensity," he also played drums on it. If you haven't heard it yet, run out and get (that's buy, not burn!) yourself a copy right now. It's fan-freakin'-tastic.



Congratulations Richard Hardacre, acclaimed as the new ACTRA National President. Richard had previously served as President of the Toronto branch for two terms in his 10 year run as a National Councilor. Outgoing National President Thor Bishopric praised Hardacre's acclamation. "I'm confident in Richard's ability to lead this organization and to fight for the rights of performers across the country."



Thank you, Thor Bishopric. After serving the organization tirelessly for the past 6 years, Thor made the decision this summer to not pursue a fourth consecutive term. As immediate outgoing

President, he will still carry on participating in National Council matters and will undoubtedly continue to actively pursue improvements for members here in Montreal as the local branch Vice-President. Thor deserves an abundance of praise and gratitude for his efforts in making ACTRA a performers' union respect around the world. Once again, thank you, Thor.



Congratulations to Irene Litinsky on her Emmy Award nomination for producing the William H. Macy scripted made for television movie, *The Wool Cap*. The primetime Emmys will be telecast September 18, 2005 on CBS. Best of luck!



Happy Anniversary, Daintry Dalton. The Montreal Assistant Branch Representative, Commercials and steward has been faithfully serving the membership for 25 years now. When asked how she would celebrate the momentous occasion, she replied, "I'm going to go bill some late payment penalties." Good ol' Daintry!



Our condolences go out to the friends and family of beloved Montreal member, **Thomas Karle**. Thomas, who believed strongly in the importance of unions, was always the first one in a seat at every ACTRA Montreal General Meeting. He was regular on film sets and picket lines, if need be - always willing to stand up for his fellow brothers and sisters in the hotel industry as well. He will be sadly missed.



Thomas Karle front and centre on the picket line.



Congratulations to new ACTRA Montreal members **Melissa Anderson, Marc James**

Beauchamp, Monia Bellisle, Isabelle Blais, Brandon Blue, Nicole Braber, Cindy Busby, Melissa Carter, Natalie Choquette, Neon Cobran, Michael Cound, Sofia De Medeiros, Jesse Aaron Dwyre, Cory Fantie, Etienne R Filion, Chantal Fontaine, Matthew Kabwe, Lena Kleine, Alexei Kudrytsky, Pascale Létourneau, Maya Lourenço, Marc Marans, Anne Marineau, Philippe Martel, Michael McNally, Holly Mendel, Bjanka Murgel, Marc Nadeau, Marc Poirier, Aphrodite Salas, Andrea Sheldon, Emily Shelton, Nobuya Shimamoto, Melanie St. Pierre, Andrea Stefancikova, Emily Tilson and Nicholas Wheeler Hughes.



Apprentice Member Initiation Course

Have you taken it yet?
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Tuesday, October 18, 2005
Saturday, November 19, 2005
Thursday, December 15, 2005

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- Canadian Independent
Production Incentive Program •
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514.844.3318 Ask for Shannon Joutel.

ACTRA AWARDS *2005*

On November 5, 2005, for the first time in over 20 years, ACTRA Montreal will be celebrating the creative accomplishments of our own members - honouring local performers for their exceptional performances in English language projects produced in this city.



AND THE NOMINEES ARE...



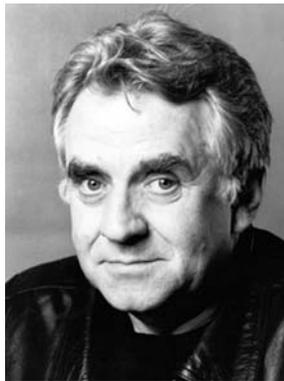
The 2005 ACTRA Montreal Awards will be the crown event in this year's Members' Conference. ACTRA members and industry guests are invited to join in the celebration November 5th, 2005 at the Delta Centre-ville as we honour our own for their outstanding work in the film and television industry.

It is with great pride and immense pleasure that we announce the honourees and nominees for the 2005 ACTRA Montreal Awards.

Award of Excellence

Vlasta Vrana

The ACTRA Award of Excellence is bestowed upon a member in recognition of their accomplishments throughout their career. ACTRA Montreal's first Award of Excellence was presented to writer, director, producer and performer, William Shatner at our 60th Anniversary Gala. The 2005 recipient of the ACTRA Montreal Award of Excellence is Vlasta Vrana.



**ACTRA
AWARDS
MONTREAL**
2005

Community Builder Award

Victor Knight

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. The first such award was bestowed upon the late film producer, Nicolas Clermont, at our 60th Anniversary Gala. The 2005 recipient of the ACTRA Montreal Community Builder Award is Victor Knight.



Best ACTRA Short

As part of the 2005 ACTRA Montreal Members' Conference, we will be showcasing the talents of our members in front of and behind the camera in the 3rd Annual ACTRA Montreal Short Film Festival. This year, the audience will cast their vote for Best ACTRA Short and the winning film will be screened at the awards banquet.



Outstanding Performance, Female



Michèle-Barbara
Pelletier
The Favourite Game



Ellen
David
Ciao Bella



Jeanne
Bowser
Fries with That



Caroline
Dhavernas
Wonderfalls



Claudia
Ferri
Ciao Bella

Outstanding Performance, Male



Bruce
Ramsay
Baby For Sale



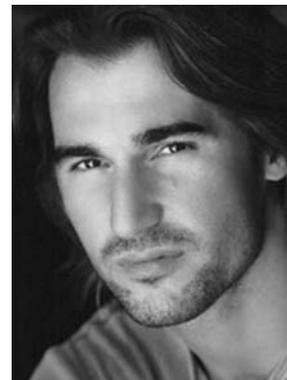
Tony
Calabretta
Ciao Bella



Nicolas
Wright
Hatley High



Romano
Orzari
Baby For Sale



Peter
Miller
Mambo Italiano

Outstanding Voice Performance



Rick
Jones
Tripping the Rift



Eleanor
Noble
Malo Korrgan



Terrence
Scammell
Tripping the Rift



Sonja
Ball
The Tofus



Richard M.
Dumont
*Iron-Nose:
The Mysterious Knight*

On behalf of the ACTRA Montreal Branch Council and the entire Montreal membership, we would like to congratulate all of the honourees and nominees on their momentous achievements. Please join us for the presentation of the **ACTRA Awards Saturday, November 5, 2005.**

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BUZZ

by Randy Duniz

As many in this city are bemoaning a lack of work, the finicky nature of foreign production and the near collapse of the local industry, a few Montreal filmmakers are using a little money and a lot of creativity to make things happen. Small budget films and T.V. shows are on the rise in Montreal and every once in awhile, the story of "the little project that could" has a happy ending. Like it did for the *The Festival*.

A six-part mockumentary series, *The Festival* follows the trials and tribulations of Rufus Marquez, a young writer/director played by Montreal's Nicolas Wright, as he rubs elbows with stars, networks with other would-be industry players and chases every filmmaker's dream - a big hit at a film festival.

For writer/director Phil Price and producer (and ACTRA Montreal member!) Brandi-Ann Milbradt, making the series may seem a case of art imitating life, imitating art. It was just one year ago that the duo brought their own independent film, *Hatley High*, to the **Hamptons International Film Festival** where it caught the eye of a producer from the **Independent Film Channel** out of the U.S.

Two months later, IFC was watching a trailer for Phil and Brandi-Ann's *The Festival*. In March, the pilot got the greenlight and by May of 2005, Phil, Brandi-Ann and Nicolas were shooting the series. How's that for a fairy tale story come true?

Inspired by the hit British mockumentary series, *The Office*, *The Festival* was an actor's dream to work on - and a sound guy's nightmare. "There was a lot of improvisation," says 23 year old Nicolas Wright, who, as Rufus Marquez, becomes the subject of a documentary being made for, who else, but...the IFC. "We'd shoot the script first and then Phil would give us a chance to go off. He was really open to our ideas. We had a pretty big cast and they were all fantastic at improvising. I just felt bad for the D.P. and sound guy trying to keep up."

One member of that fantastic cast is Miranda Handford, who as Cookie Armstrong, the lesbian, documentary filmmaker following Rufus, carries the audience through the insanity of a film festival and the egos that populate it. Egos like Lance Rawly, played by James A. Woods. The star of Rufus' film, "The Unreasonable Truth of Butterflies" (that just about sums it all up, right there!), Lance is a former childhood friend who believes he's on the brink of hitting it big in Hollywood. ▶▶



Brandi-Ann Milbradt and Phil Price finding success with *Philms*.



Miranda Handford having a laugh on set.

“I believe in making things in Montreal - building an industry in Montreal,” says Phil Price.



Cast and crew, busy on the set of *The Festival*.

Okay, his character dies in the first ten minutes of the role he's up for, but as a delusional Lance quickly points out, "that's what sparks Brad Pitt's rampage and violent spree through the rest of the movie!"

It isn't any wonder that everyone had a blast shooting the series. "Having a great team is critical," says Nicolas, "and that's what made *The Festival* great. We had a really tight cast that was always supportive. And Phil and Brandi-Ann just made everything so easy."

The Festival is the third project produced by Phil and Brandi-Ann's production company, Philms. Both *Hatley High* and their first feature, *Summer*, were produced with relatively small budgets with the help of Telefilm financing - a process that can often be slow and frustrating. The speed at which *The Festival* went from concept to series is a testament to Brandi-Ann and Phil's ambition; the fact that they managed to do it without the help of government funding, even more so. The entire series was produced for less than \$1 000 000, but for Phil and Brandi-Ann, the most important thing is - they were able to produce it here.

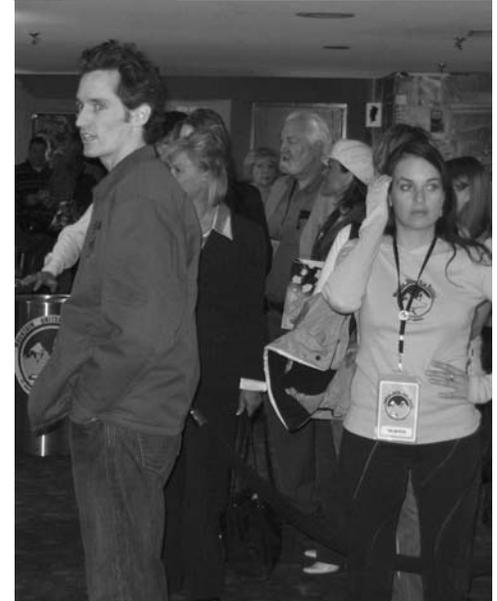
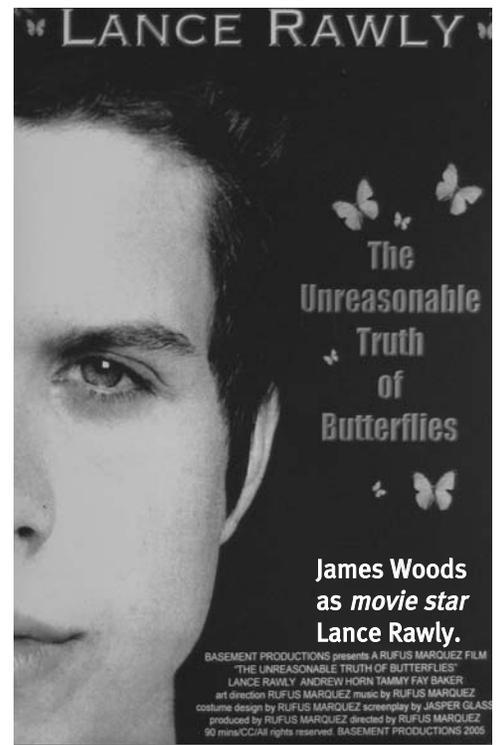
"I believe in making things in Montreal - building an industry in Montreal," says Phil. "But sometimes it's just harder to do

that. There just isn't a lot of money here and not a lot of people are interested in taking big risks." Currently, Philms is waiting on word from Telefilm about their next project, a feature called *Prom Wars*. But with all the fun and success they had with *The Festival*, it's no wonder the team is also working hard on developing another series.

The Festival began airing on August 19th, making it the first original scripted series on IFC - a station most Canadians have no access to. So when can we expect to catch a glimpse of this Canadian success story, up here in Canada? "We're optimistic about finding a Canadian distributor," says Phil. Optimistic? You'd imagine a television series written, directed, produced and starring Canadians would find its way to a Canadian television screen at some point, *eh?*

So until it does, we'll just have to wonder - does Rufus Marquez find the same kind of success at his festival that Phil and Brandi-Ann have found with theirs? "I can't give that away," offers Nicolas with a wry smile. "But I will say the story seems to have a nice ending."

A nice ending, indeed.



What would a festival be without festival-goers?

spotlight on | nicolas wright



On his resumé

The Festival, King's Ransom, Delta State, Hatley High and Undressed.
"I joined ACTRA before I even graduated theatre school. I've just been very f@#!ing lucky. I've been very fortunate enough to make a living from acting. And I haven't had to take that second job waiting tables yet."

On learning his craft

"I trained at John Abbott College, but I would have to say that attending the British American Drama Academy's Mid-summer in Oxford program was something I'll always cherish."

On working behind the camera

"Without producers, you don't have anything to work on." Nicolas has already produced, written, directed and edited a 35 mm short film - *Toutouffe*, an Official Selection at the 2004 Just For Laughs Festival. He and two co-creators are currently developing a couple of shows for their own production company, DNM Films. "You have to find a group of people that you can jive with creatively. That's the key."

On the video versus film debate

"Film wins. Digital video is great. It makes things easy to make something. You can pick up a camera. Shoot. Edit. And in the case of *The Festival*, the medium fit the nature of the story and Phil's [the director] style. But you can't replace 35 mm film yet. It's all about combining art, business and technology. In the end, hopefully, you end up with something you're proud of."

On the cast of *The Festival*

"They are fantastic people. This is the first time I've had the chance to work with seasoned actors that have 10, 20, 30 years experience under their belt. There's this ease about the way they perform. A confidence that comes with that kind of experience. It just left me in awe."

On his character Rufus

"He's a sad, sad character. I have a lot in common with him I guess. Seriously though, we're cut from the same cloth. Trying to break conventions and learn about this business. We're both more or less introverted and shy. He's just a lot more incompetent. At least, that's what I like to think."



key things to remember when you're working on a low-budget project by Shannon Joutel

Check with ACTRA. As a member, it's your responsibility to make sure that you are always working on a union approved project. How do you make sure? Ask us. Call Shannon (514.844.3318 ext. 233) to verify the status of the production and to ensure that its financial/legal securities are in place.

The decision to work is yours. Working on a low-budget project may sometimes feel like you're being short-changed, but these projects are paying a rate approved by ACTRA - and it's all they can afford to pay. That is, after all, why they call it low-budget. It's up to us to ensure that even producers with very little money have access to professional talent in our membership. It is up to you, the member, to decide whether or not you are willing to work for that rate.

Professionalism is a must. Regardless of how small a project may be, you have an obligation to treat that project with respect. As a member of ACTRA, you are compelled as per ACTRA's By-Laws & Constitution and our collective agreements to be prepared, punctual and professional at the audition and on set. Just remember, the people putting their hard work and money into the project are taking it very seriously and so should you.

Low-budget means opportunity. Many low-budget productions offer you substantial roles that may prove very rewarding - something you do not often see in a big budget project. Consider low budget projects as an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience, hone your craft and add a performance to your demo reel. Not to mention, they can be a lot of fun to work on!



Got Questions?

Practical help for young adults and parents of young performers who are seriously pursuing an acting career in film and television.

Contact Robyne Baruchel
(514) 919 - 9720
www.justastagemom.com

more buzz on low-budget successes...

Recon 2020

When was it made? 2004.

Who made it? Written and directed by Christian Viel and produced by Blood 'N' Bullets Productions, with ACTRA member Howard Rosenstein acting as production coordinator.

How much did it cost? \$50 000 - \$100 000, produced under the ACTRA Indie Production agreement.

Who's in it? Anderson Bradshaw, Kevin Kelsall, Patrick Sabongui, Gillian Leigh, Valerie Wiseman and Johnny Goar.

What's it about? When the human race takes to the stars in their struggle for survival, an elite squad of the Galactic Marine Infantry is given what looks to be a suicide mission in a distant galaxy to save all mankind. All they have going for them are their guns, their guts and a mouthful of tough-guy talk...

What's the buzz? It won Best Sci-Fi/Action Movie at the Sci-Fi London Film Festival 2005.

Where can you see it? It's being commercially distributed around the globe (just released on DVD in Italy!) and will be appearing on Movie Central this fall and on Space here in Canada in 2006.

What's next? Blood 'N' Bullets' latest AIP, *Painkiller*, is already getting the attention of distributors. Maybe a prequel or sequel to Recon 2020...?



Hero By Nature

When was it made? 2005.

Who made it? Viking Film - written and produced by ACTRA member Luke Bélanger and directed by Roger Cantin.

How much did it cost? \$150 000 - \$200 000, produced under the ACTRA Canadian Independent Production Incentive Program (CIPIP).

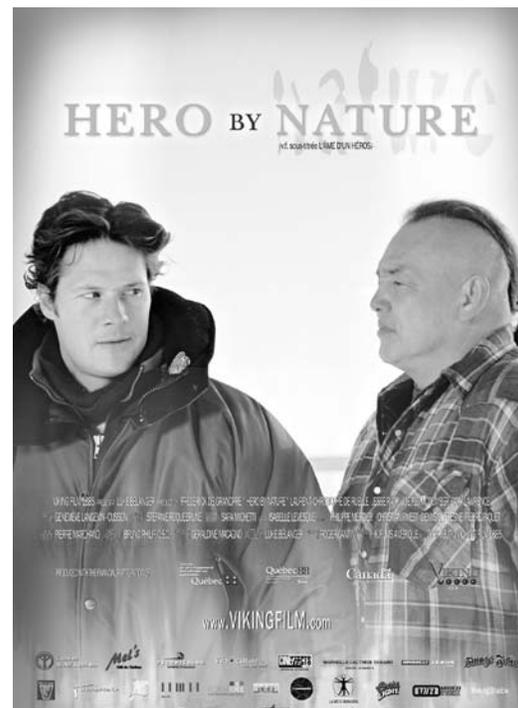
Who's in it? Frédéric De Grandpré, Laurent-Christophe De Ruelle and Joe McComber.

What's it about? The 15 minute short looks at racism in the aftermath of the Oka crisis through the eyes of two young friends.

What's the buzz? It was selected for Official Competition at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Where can you see it? Starting November 4, 2005, *Hero* will be screened before the theatrical release of *Pure*, another Montreal low-budget film which recently earned its director, Jim Donovan, a nomination for Best Director at the 2005 Directors Guild Awards.

What's next? Viking is developing a feature based on another of Luke's shorts, *Ice Cold* as well as a couple of other features.



Are you on Face to Face?

Every day, casting directors are using Face to Face to find performers to audition or hire as extras. If you haven't logged on and updated your profile then you might be missing out on an opportunity!

Call the membership department at ACTRA Montreal to get your username and password and log on today!

514.844.3318, ext. 226 (if your last name begins with A-L) OR ext. 225 (if your last name begins with M-Z)

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Things might just be looking up.

For the first time in nearly two years, it appears that Montreal is going to see an influx of big American films this fall. With *300 Spartans* (\$70 million), *Sunrise* (\$100+ million), *The Covenant* (\$18 million) and *Midnight Meet Train* (\$8 million) all set to shoot in our fair city over the next four months, it may be safe to say that the drought is over.

Montreal is finally back in the blockbuster business. Epic battle scenes and special effects laden screenplays are coming to a film set near you. Many Montreal performers should soon be enjoying more work days than they've seen in some time and at the very least, we can all agree that for the stunt community, Christmas has come early.

Of course, grateful as we are, one might ask what took so long?

Vancouver and Toronto's production scene has been bustling for some time now as they've enjoyed a renaissance in foreign production volumes - while most of us in Montreal have been hoping for something of a resurrection in our contribution to the Hollywood movie machine. For months now, we've been left wondering: what about us?

It is possible that much like old St. Nick himself, the U.S. studios, with their gifts of multi-million dollar productions, moved

across the country from west to east, one city at a time - filling Vancouver's stocking with goodies, then Toronto's, before finally coming down our chimney. Or perhaps it was just the nature of the projects being produced that dictated the location. Maybe Bruce Willis couldn't find, in all of Montreal, the right 16 blocks on which to shoot his latest action/thriller, cleverly titled, *16 Blocks*. Or maybe it was just bad luck.

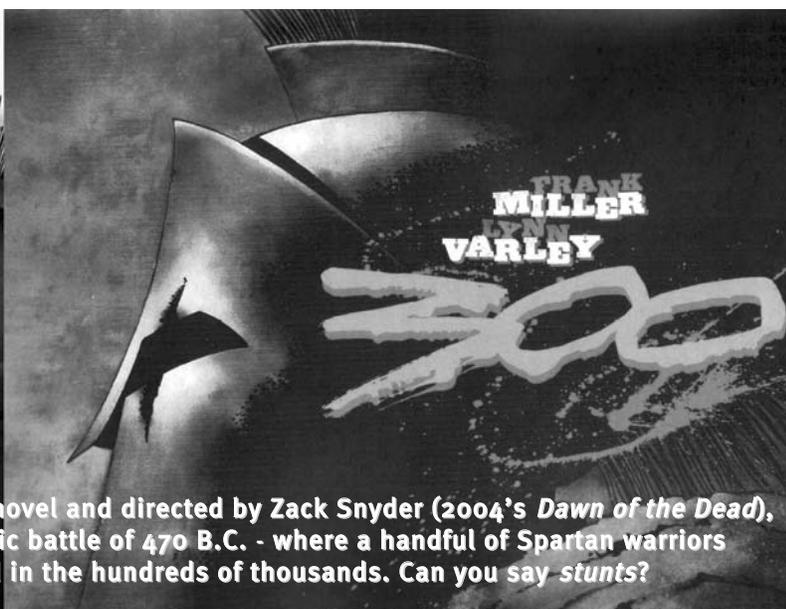
And then, there's always possibility that it was the Association des Producteurs de Films et de Télévision du Québec. One prevailing theory has it that the American studios just decided to teach Quebec a lesson; that after years of suffering the APFTQ's inflexible politics, unproductive interference and absurd - some may say, extortionate - administrative fees, enough was enough. They decided, we're just not going to shoot here anymore. And you could understand their frustration.

Whatever the reason (ahem...APFTQ), it appears there may finally be a light at the end of the tunnel. Undoubtedly, the hard work and dedication of the Montreal film community has gone a long way to bringing American production back and for now, at least, we can breathe a little easier. But that's only half the battle. The task, difficult as it may be, is to make sure that what happened over the last two years does not happen again.

Better late than- well, you know the rest...



Based on the Frank Miller (*Sin City*) graphic novel and directed by Zack Snyder (2004's *Dawn of the Dead*), *300 Spartans* brings to the big screen the epic battle of 470 B.C. - where a handful of Spartan warriors bravely fought a Persian army that numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Can you say *stunts*?



Read **Playback**'s article on the difficulties American producers face when they try and shoot in Quebec.

July 4, 2005

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Turf war in Quebec

by Etan Vlessing

Foreign production has gone flat in Montreal this summer, having hit what appears to be not one, but two road-blocks put up by the APFTQ.

Hollywood has balked at shooting in la belle province, say sources, because of the \$14,000 entry fee put up by the Quebec producers association and to protest its ongoing efforts to represent U.S. film and TV shoots.

The long-running turf war reached a new stage late last month as Hollywood moved to block an application before Quebec's labor tribunal that, if approved, would hand exclusive bargaining rights for all film and TV shoots in the province to the APFTQ.

Slow summer in Montreal

The dispute "is a preoccupation for everyone working in Montreal," says Fortner Anderson, business agent for the Directors Guild of Canada's district council in Quebec.

The standoff has made for a very slow summer in Montreal, which has hosted only a handful of service shoots this year, while Toronto and Vancouver, bouncing back from last year's Canada-wide slump, are bursting at the seams.

The few studio projects in Montreal so far this year include *Lucky Number Slevin*, which shot during the winter with Bruce Willis and Josh Hartnett, and *The Last Kiss* starring Zach Braff. Vincent Perez is also currently directing David Duchovny and Lili Taylor in *The Secret*.

Montreal is used to hosting at least one would-be blockbuster per year - something on par with *The Sum of All Fears*, *The Day After Tomorrow* or *The Aviator*. This year's pictures are more modest. Toronto and Vancouver, meanwhile, are hosting the new *X-Men*, the Michael Douglas thriller *The Sentinel*, the videogame adaptations *Dungeon Siege* and *Silent Hill*, and the cop story *16 Blocks*, again with Willis.

Montreal studio operator Michel Trudel of Mel's Cité du Cinéma insists that the major studios simply went elsewhere on creative grounds.

"They found the location they needed in another city," he says.

But privately, studio and producer reps insist that Hollywood wants to stop the APFTQ from taking control of production rates in Quebec. They fear the APFTQ wants to stop the major studios from paying higher fees for experienced actors and technical crews - fees that local producers feel hard-pressed to match.

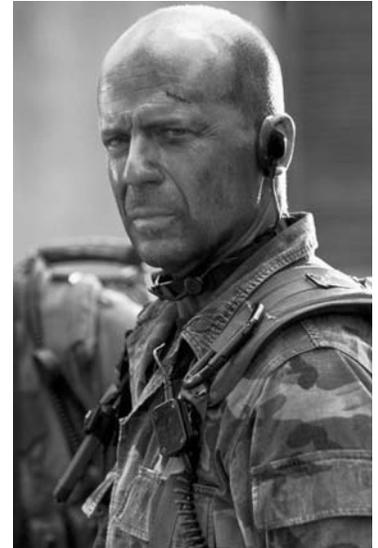
"The studios love Montreal. But they're upset and they want to make a point that they want to control their own house," says one Toronto-based production executive.

Quebec's labor tribunal, the Commission de reconnaissance des associations d'artistes et des associations de producteurs, is considering the APFTQ's application. Quebec is alone among the provinces in having laws that grant collective bargaining rights to self-employed artists, and the CRAAAP has jurisdiction over workplace rates and conditions for provincial film workers.

The Alliance of Motion Picture Television Producers, which represents U.S. studios, was recently to appear before the CRAAAP tribunal to oppose the APFTQ's application, but that hearing has now been postponed to late-November.

The U.S. studios intend to tell the status tribunal they want the right to bargain directly with local actors and technical crews, and not be forced to rely on the APFTQ.

In 2003, the AMPTP threatened to boycott Quebec if the APFTQ succeeded in its bid. Don Cott, VP of the group's Canadian affiliate, insists that the current slump is not part of a boycott. ▶▶



Bruce Willis had been in Montreal to film *The Whole Nine Yards* in 2000 and *Lucky Number Slevin* this past winter before shooting *16 Blocks* in Toronto.

APFTQ spokeswoman Céline Pelletier:
"[Major studios] might like more choice and control in working with artists. But that's not the way it works here."

"There are productions headed to Montreal, just not at past volumes," he says.

There was \$399-million worth of foreign film and TV location shooting in Quebec from April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003, according to the CFTPA. That number shrunk by more than half in the following year.

ACTRA is also opposing the bid on the grounds that jobs are being lost because major studios are apparently shunning Montreal, and because the APFTQ is encroaching on the performers unions' jurisdictional rights.

"The producers asking for a status that the law provides for is a possibility. But the producers also have a responsibility not to chase away production and not to harm the industry," says Gary Saxe, a national organizer for ACTRA, based in Montreal.

But APFTQ spokeswoman Céline Pelletier says the application conforms with current Quebec laws protecting local artists that everyone, Canadians and Americans alike, must respect.

"[Major studios] might like more choice and control in working with artists. But that's not the way it works here," she says, noting that the laws in Quebec differ from the rest of Canada.

Pelletier also defended the APFTQ's \$14,000 preproduction fee, another sore point, noting that foreign producers can receive a \$2,000 rebate if they opt to contribute \$12,000 to a government-certified training program for local technicians.

She adds that the majors would see no big changes if CRAAAP certifies the APFTQ because most U.S. producers shooting in the province already operate under collective agreements negotiated by the Quebec producers association.

So what are Montreal's prospects?

The DGC's Anderson sees the launch in June of the Quebec Film and Television Council, with a mandate to keep Hollywood business around, as a sign that the province's production sector is, at long last, serious about ending the studio-APFTQ dispute.

"It's all about creating climates of stability and certainty and collaboration, and this problem doesn't contribute to any of those," he says.

Service producer Michael Prupas, president of Montreal's Muse Entertainment, also points out that the APFTQ recently agreed that major studios could negotiate directly with members of AQTIS, the Quebec technicians union - another positive step forward.

Direct negotiations with technicians was a key concern for the major studios when Prupas unsuccessfully attempted to broker a peace deal between the AMPTP and the APFTQ last year.

But there is still a cloud hanging over the city. Veteran producer Don Carmody, a Montreal native, says he and U.S. studios that employ him continue to find the city's production climate frustrating.

"You have to know what you're getting into, and what really annoys a lot of American producers is they don't like having the floor shift on them," he says.

With files from Mark Dillon

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CLARIFICATION:

The Man with the Plan
(Spring 2005 issue)

Daniel Bissonnette is the current Montreal Film Commissioner and an integral member of the executive of the new Quebec promotion office. The Director of the promotion office has yet to be named. We regret any confusion pertaining to Mr. Bissonnette's position.



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IT'S MY DAMN UNION!

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

*'Now it is autumn and the falling fruit
and the long journey towards oblivion...
Have you built your ship of death, O have you?
O build your ship of death, for you will need it.'*

D.H. Lawrence 1885-1930

Now, hang on a second, people! I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that the quotes are not working for me anymore; you think I've gone off my rocker; that the long, vodka-soaked summer has dulled my sense of hope and happiness; that lack of work has atrophied my brain and my ability to be the best darned cheerleader I can be! Right? Well, think again! I'm still your friendly neighborhood optimist, dishing out 'happy thoughts' like gumdrops. And though this summer was indeed filled with sorrow-drowning excursions, and though the work situation still may not be thriving, there are plenty of opportunities to make the coming year fruitful and--dare I say it?-fun! So get ready to build your proverbial ships, mateys, because there are many exciting events afoot, and I don't want you to miss the...proverbial... 'boat,' as it were. So hang on to your sailor caps, because off we go!

Actually, we're not really going anywhere, but I thought maybe we could pretend. I'm all for the 'boat' theme, so bear with me! Alright, let's sail through the crystal-blue ACTRA waters and see what we can find:

Egads! It seems as though we'll be having some more thrilling workshops for you, dear members, ranging from the ever-popular audition workshops to tax and computer seminars. There will also be a few surprise additions to this year's lineup, such as...well, I can't tell you because then it wouldn't be a surprise, would it? But stay tuned, and always send me ideas for classes or workshops you might find

worthwhile to present to your fellow buccaneers.

Yaargh! What be up ahead, me hearties? Well, it looks like a festival of sorts, with many different films! That's right folks, the ACTRA Shorts festival is coming back in full effect, so get your cameras rolling, your pens a-scratching and your acting chops a-chopping! This year, I anticipate a slew of fantastic selections, having been approached throughout the summer by several members with questions and comments and ideas. I can't wait to see what you'll come up with this year! Along with the Shorts festival, we will be having our fantastic General Meeting, which I just know you will all come out for in full force (wink wink, nudge nudge!). I mean, what better way to voice your opinion, see your favourite council members, get a free drink AND watch Randy's excellent Power-Point presentations? It's heaven, I tell you, just like this crazy boat ride! Are we having fun yet? Say it with me, people....Yaarrgghh!

Avast ye, mateys! (That means 'stop,' by the way.) Here comes something exciting and widely anticipated: The ACTRA Awards! We will be honouring several of our fellow members in a fun little ceremony to show our thanks and appreciation for all their hard work and talent. It should be a lovely time and I'm looking forward to seeing you all there, so no excuses or it'll be the plank for you! Or maybe a taste of me cat o'nine tails! Or maybe just some deck-swabbing. Or something.



And here, me buckos, is where we drop anchor and I leave you with a final thought. We will be holding our council elections this year, and there will be ballots available in this fabulous newsletter, as well as at the office. If you would like to run for council, or elect someone to be on it, fill out a ballot, have two full members sign it, and submit it by November 11th. Elections will be held in December, and then we will see what new and exciting things take shape! I urge you all to at least consider your options in terms of running and being a part of the action! As I'm sure you can tell, I'm still hell-bent on getting as many people on board (Hah! No pun intended!) for this community-building obsession of mine. It's important for our careers, our city, and our own senses of self-worth and happiness! The council and its wonderful members work hard to ensure that we all continue to thrive in a city where the soil has long been dry and unyielding; it's important to always keep in mind how we can improve and mold our own futures as talented, innovative performers. I have faith that anything is possible if we put our minds to it, and that's saying a lot considering I've been pretending to be a pirate this whole time...

Let's make this year incredible my friends. I'll leave you with a final pearl of wisdom on the merits of faith, and just how far I think we can go:

'Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe. It is not enough that a thing be possible for it to be believed.'

Voltaire 1694-1778

Yo-ho-ho, fellow members! Have a beautiful, crisp autumn, and I'll see you all soon. Now, squint your eyes and get your best pirate-faces on, 'cuz I want to hear you scream...

**SHIVER ME TIMBERS!!! IT'S ME DAMN UNION TOO!!
YAARRGGHHH!!!**

If you have any questions, comments, ideas or requests that Holly be institutionalized, please direct them to Randy at rduniz@actra.ca or, if you dare, to Holly herself at tappyco@yahoo.ca.



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Questions? Contact Randy @ 514.844.3318 x223 or rduniz@actra.ca

