



ACTRA Montreal

# Grapevine

Summer 2008

2008  
ACTRA  
AWARDS

NCA  
NEGOTIATIONS

AFC  
TURNS 50

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ACTRA Montreal  
**Grapevine**

summer 2008

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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 [rduniz@actra.ca](mailto:rduniz@actra.ca).

**ACTRA MONTREAL**

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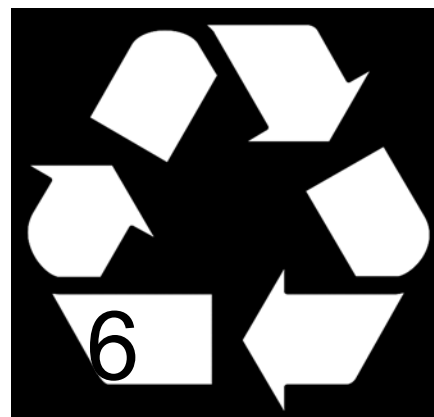
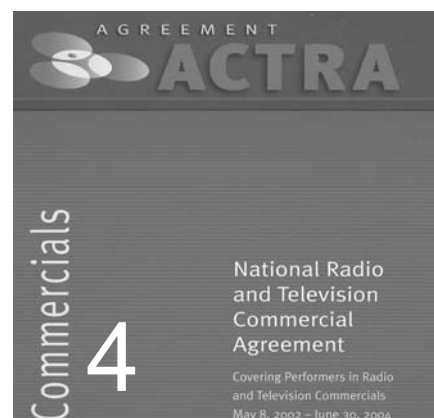
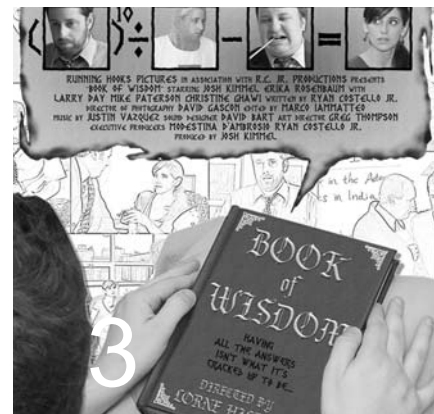
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## Credit Where Credit is Due

**D**ear Members,

Just as Montreal began to shake off the rust that came with nearly a year of sitting on the sidelines while a technician turf war made us a 'no shoot zone,' we ran head-long into the fallout from the WGA strike – which directly led to us losing at least one project (thanks, DDL). The industry has since followed that up with a torturous round of SAG negotiations that have had everyone in a holding pattern for more than half a year now.

Add to these woes, the rising Canadian dollar, global competition and national competition (goodbye, 2012) and believe me, I understand why it's easy to feel like if we didn't have bad luck, we wouldn't have any luck at all in this city.

You will forgive me if I say, I don't really want to talk about U.S. production (or the lack thereof) anymore. For years, we have been foretelling the danger of an over reliance on foreign production. And now you see why. So let's focus on Canadian production and where it's at.

Essentially, there are two substantial producers left standing in this city; two companies we can rely on each year to create work opportunities for our members as well as the writers, directors and crew in this Montreal – Incendo and Muse.

Part of the problem is that two isn't nearly enough. We've seen other companies like Cinar, Telescene and Blackwatch disappear over the years and it's been well documented that the 1999 CRTC Television policy has made it easier for Canada's broadcasters to invest in anything except Canadian dramatic television production - which is no incentive for other producers to get in the game.

ACTRA has created low-budget agreements to encourage that next generation of local producers and we're continuing our lobbying efforts regarding the CRTC issue, but we at ACTRA Montreal found ourselves wondering, is there another reason for the decline in Canadian production, specifically in this city? And if so, is there anything we can do to address the problem and bring Canadian production back to Montreal?

To begin with, the answer to the first question is unequivocally, yes. Yes, there is another reason for the decline. And it is a very significant decline, indeed.

Over the past few months, ACTRA Montreal teamed up with the Quebec wing of the Directors' Guild of Canada (CQGCR) to research the drop in Montreal area English-language production between 1999 and 2006. The findings were very alarming.

Over this period, production in Quebec dropped by 40%. And the situation is worse if we look at fiction (drama & comedy) production, which plummeted by 46%. In 1999, there was \$306 million of English-language domestic production in Quebec. In 2006, it was \$184 million. That's a drop of \$122 million in production!

Clearly, this is a problem. This is frightening. And it is also very dangerous. Looking at the report, there is no reason to believe the trend will not continue and that English-language production in this province will decrease until, I dare say, without exaggeration, it disappears completely.

So why is it declining at such an alarming rate? The research pointed to the fact that 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.

What's more, we interviewed several Montreal based producers who openly acknowledged that they have moved productions elsewhere because of the higher tax credits in other provinces.

Simply put, the other provinces caught on to our idea and are now doing it better. Which brings us to our second question: Is there anything that can be done to increase the amount of Canadian production in Quebec?

Thankfully, yes. As a result of this research, ACTRA Montreal and the DGC in Quebec called together other industry partners to lobby the provincial government for increases in Quebec tax credits.

On Thursday July 10, ACTRA Montreal, DGC, and a few local producers met in Quebec City with representatives of both the Quebec Finance Ministry and the Quebec Culture Ministry. We presented a common front and presented the report, demonstrating the necessity of increased tax credits.

While nothing can be done during the summer holidays, the response from the government has been very encouraging thus far. We hope to have these changes in place within the next few months. And hopefully, we can expect a few more Canadian productions shooting in Montreal – to help during these lean times...

In solidarity,



**Don Jordan,**  
President, ACTRA Montreal

# LOW BUDGET SUCCESS

There may not be much film and T.V. in production these days. But for **Josh Kimmel** - an enterprising ACTRA Montreal member, that's alright. He just produce his own.

Josh has spent August producing a pilot called, *The Future Life of Jake* and there is already interest from some U.S. networks.

Life of Jake is the third project produced by Josh to find success. *Going Up*, produced under the low budget MIP agreement has been screening on MTV Italia while *Book of Wisdom* (also a MIP) was named Best Short at the Tupelo Film Festival in Tupelo, Mississippi and is being considered for selection at festivals in Savannah, Austin and Oxford.

In addition to producing, Josh has also had a lead role in each of his own projects.

Congratulations to Josh and all of the ACTRA members who participated in these low budget success stories.

Some other recent low budget success stories...

## Who is KK Downey?

Directed by Darren Curtis and Pat Kiely  
Starring **Darren Curtis** and **Kristin Adams**

Riffing on the infamous literary hoax of J.T. Leroy, this outrageous feature savagely skewers pretentious, directionless hipsters and the cults of personality they create.

Produced under the AIP agreement, Downey made its Canadian premiere at this summer's Fantasia film festival, having already nabbed awards at Cinequest and the Boston Underground film festival.

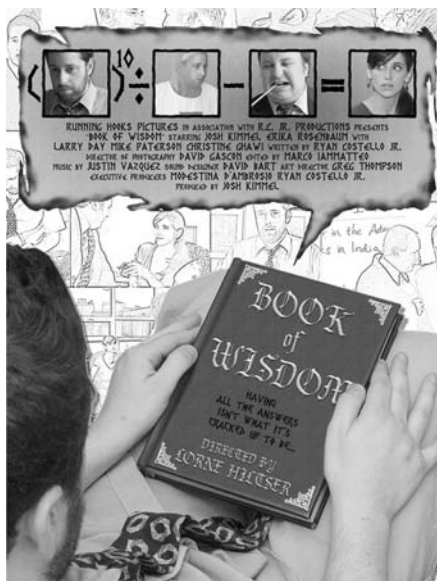
## Zackary Samuel: Illusionist

Directed by Benjamin Steiger Levine  
Starring **Andrew Shaver** and **Adrianne Richards**

Zackary Samuel is a talented illusionist who has been avoiding people his whole life with his disappearing act – until a chance romantic encounter leaves him questioning how he connects with the people around him.

A short produced under the AIP agreement, Illusionist has received a great deal of attention from numerous international festivals including the Raindance Film Festival in England, Mecal International Short Film Festival in Barcelona and Montreal's own Festival des Films du Monde.

Low budget hit *Book of Wisdom*, producer and star, Josh Kimmel



**Congratulations**  
to new ACTRA Montreal  
members...

**Don Anderson, Allison Angelo, Christine Aubin Khalifah, Jean Baudoin, Teale Bishopric, Alexandra Cohen, Brigitte Coutu, Katia Di Perna, Thierry Dubé, Marie Pierre Dury, Marie-Michele Dury, Julien Elia, Mary-Pier Gaudet, Christine Ghawi, Heidi Hawkins, Kim Henry, Nancy Hood, Vincent Hoss-Desmarais, Jason Hsu, Genevieve Jodoin, Jowanna, Albert Kingston, Albert Kwan, Mark Lambert, Alison Louder, Michael Mando, Christine Pinard, Ryan Robertson, Emma Sara, Robert Sharpe, Meg Sheppard, Jennifer Suliteanu, Patricia Summersett, Rebecca Windheim, Holden Wong, Jason Xiang**

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# NCA DEAL: NEGOTIATORS STILL HOPEFUL

Dear ACTRA member,

We are writing to bring you up to date on our negotiations with Canada's advertising industry towards a new National Commercial Agreement (NCA).

As your commercial negotiating team, we have been in bargaining on your behalf for 15 months, since May 2007, doing solid, steady work towards a new agreement.

As you may know, both sides agreed to a one-year extension from July, 2007 to June 30, 2008, with a 3% increase in rates and 1% into insurance. Both sides also agreed to enter into talks on a list of key issues. The ACTRA membership voted to approve these terms and this approach.

You haven't received an update before now, because although the process was moving, there wasn't much to report.

**Here's the good news: we've made some important progress in negotiations on some key issues: non-union production and new media.**

**Here's the bad news: as we write, we are deadlocked over some equally important issues, about performance categories and pay.**

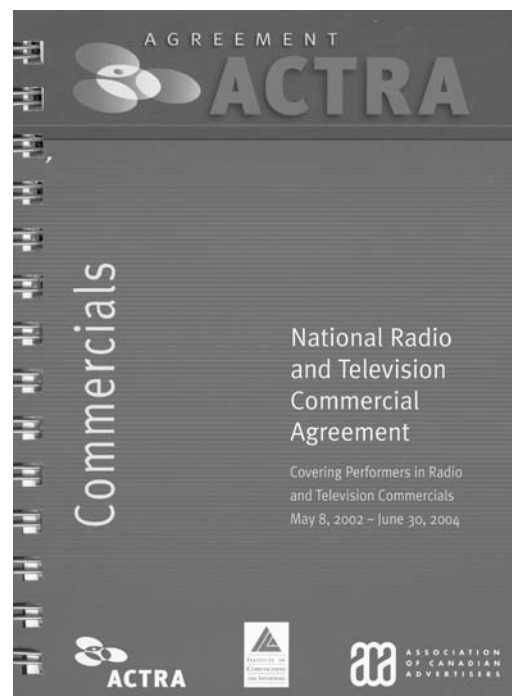
As a result, on July 28, ACTRA and the advertising industry jointly asked for government conciliators to step in and help us complete this agreement.

Hopefully we'll succeed. Otherwise, we may be in a serious dispute over this agreement in the fall.

Let's start with the good news. In discussions with advertisers, we have persuaded them, tentatively, to agree to the following:

**Canadian signatory advertising agencies will stop shooting non-union commercials.**

This is not a small issue. In recent years, several adhered engagers have tried to build side-businesses shooting non-union commercials. We are looking for a new agreement that ends this practice.



**Rules for new media will be harmonized with the groundbreaking terms ACTRA achieved in the 2007 Independent Production Agreement (IPA).**

This is also not a small issue. We're looking for a new agreement that applies our successful film and television new media model to advertising in new media – so that this type of work, the future of advertising, is done through ACTRA at fair rates.

Now the bad news:

**Advertisers came into this negotiation determined to eliminate some of our performance categories – specifically, the "Silent On Camera" category – without compensation or any offsetting changes.**

ACTRA and advertisers have been debating this for months.

Our position is that we will not agree to eliminate or fundamentally change our performance categories.

We ARE prepared to consider redefining categories clearly and appropriately based on today's production environment – provided that there is a substantial offsetting gain for all members in pay.



▶▶ The advertisers refuse. We've reached a deadlock. So what happens now?

After months of negotiations, both sides have agreed that we're not going to settle this agreement by ourselves. So we have jointly applied for conciliation, naming Reg Pearson, Director of Labour Management Services for the Ontario Ministry of Labour, as conciliator.

We're hopeful that we will complete these negotiations through conciliation with the help of Mr. Pearson when we next meet on September 3 and 4, 2008. In the meantime, the industry will continue to operate under the terms and conditions of the current NCA.

If we succeed, we'll be sending you a detailed report on a proposed agreement in mid-September. If we do not succeed, there may be a test of wills between ACTRA members and the advertising industry this fall.

In that circumstance, you'll be getting a very different, detailed report in mid-September, outlining why we still disagree, and asking you to give your bargaining committee the power they need to prevail in this negotiation.

One of the options your committee will consider is to ask the membership for a mandate to strike. If it comes to that, your union will need your support to ensure we succeed in bargaining acceptable terms.

Throughout this long process, your bargaining committee remains a solid team. We bring our collective experience and understanding of the industry to the table and are doing our best to represent your interests.

Please keep an eye on [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) for further news and information.

In solidarity,

#### **ACTRA's NCA Bargaining Committee**

Richard Hardacre, ACTRA National President &  
NCA Committee Chair

Stephen Waddell, ACTRA NED & Chief Negotiator

Heather Allin (Toronto)

Joanna Bennett (Toronto)

Marium Carvell (Toronto)

Paul Constable (Toronto)

Bruce Dinsmore (Montreal)

Ian Finlay (Montreal)

Rob Morton (UBCP)

Doug Murray (Toronto)

Karl Pruner (Toronto)

David Sparrow (Toronto)

Howard Storey (UBCP)

## ACTRA WELCOMES EIDOS TO MONTREAL

Following an amiable process of negotiation, ACTRA Montreal is pleased to announce an agreement has been reached with a local studio, recording voice work for video game publishing giant Eidos.

Deus Ex 3 will be the first game voiced by Eidos in Montreal and it will be done entirely on union contracts.

Video game production creates many job opportunities for performers. On average, a video game puts as much money in the pockets of ACTRA Members as a whole season of an animation series.

In Montreal, we've had a very good collective agreement with game company Ubisoft. We've also negotiated contracts with other smaller companies.

Eidos has also informed us of imminent plans for the development of a second game, so we can assume that there are many more work opportunities ahead.

## ACTRA MONTREAL STUNT COMMITTEE FORMED

In an effort to increase the professionalism in the stunt community, the local stunt coordinators have resurrected the ACTRA Montreal Stunt Committee.

It is a process which is being done across the country, with various other branches involved in similar efforts. The mandate of these committees is to establish criteria for being designated a Stunt Performer or Coordinator.

Montreal's committee is made up of veteran stunt coordinators **Stephane Lefebvre**, **Dave Mc Keown** and **Michael Scherer**, as elected by their colleagues in the stunt community.

If you would like to learn more about the committee, please send an email to [montreal@actra.ca](mailto:montreal@actra.ca).

Montreal stunt performers hard at work on *The Sum of All Fears* (2002)





# GOING GREEN

by Marie-Marguerite Sabongui



As most other industries warm to the idea of being more environmentally friendly, one concerned ACTRA member asks, how long before the film and T.V. biz in this city does the same?

**W**e actors are known as touchy-feely types. We want to eat organic and save the world one MOW at a time. So on set, when we ask for things to be run in more sustainable ways, we risk being dismissed as self-satisfied, diva-esque, do-gooders. Or, worse still, we say nothing for fear of reinforcing stigmas.

Okay, so maybe I should just speak for myself. But there is something fundamentally wrong with associating environmentalism with flakiness. I'll give you two reasons:

1) climate change is real. It's no longer just a quality of life, tree-hugging issue;

2) sustainability and economics are not at odds. Going green saves money, makes money, feels great, and is so hot right now.

It's time for a paradigm shift. It's time for us to change our way of thinking and to encourage others (read: the productions we work on) to follow suit.

The debate over global warming is over. I was having a conversation with a guy that still insisted that the global warming movement was a hoax. That is so passé! He argued that there still exist scientists who don't believe in global warming (There are also scientists who will still argue smoking is ok for your health, if the price is right).

Rarely has there ever been such overwhelming consensus among the scientific community. Granted, they will always disagree on the details. Here's a few statistics that really hit home for me.

- Number of scientific studies dealing with "climate change" published in peer-reviewed scientific journals during the previous 10 years: 928

- Number of studies that disagree with the global consensus that human induced greenhouse gas pollution has caused most of the warming of the last 50 years: 0

- Articles in the popular press about global warming: 636

- Percentage in doubt as to cause: 53%

As Al Gore would say, "no wonder people are confused." In attempts to be objective, media outlets feel pressured to air both sides of the debate, when evidence for the 'other side' often comes from much less reputable sources.

Evidence of climate change is all around us here in Canada. Global warming isn't something far off in our distant future. It is happening now. A common symptom of climate change is an increase in storms and precipitation due to increasing ocean and air temperatures. To say our winter this year sucked would be an understatement. And to say that it was unilaterally caused by climate change would be false- meteorology is a complex science. But our winter was on average warmer, and there was certainly more precipitation- a pretty strong correlation.

And outside of our little Ville, global warming's effects are scarier and more evident. For the first time in our planet's history, the entire arctic ice cap is set to melt this summer. It will come back this winter- but we are at risk of losing the arctic and its biodiversity completely. Some estimates say this could happen as early as 10 years from now. It's not too late to bring it back, but we're getting there.

The view that sustainability and profitability are at odds is dated.





▶▶ Really, sustainability means choosing more durable and efficient options. Going green means cost-saving and increasing profits.

Think back to when more and more companies were beginning to use computers. Companies that invested in new technology were able to work more quickly and efficiently and were able to attract more consumers. Those that didn't fell by the wayside. Everyone is going green now. If our industry doesn't we risk falling behind.

Jeffrey R. Immelt, CEO of GE (not exactly a radical enviro-activist) said "We think green means green. This is a time period where environmental improvement is going to lead toward profitability. This is not a hobby to make people feel good."

The fact that going green makes people feel good, though, is not negligible.

Our industry is constantly being scrutinized and held to fairly high standards by the general public - and rightly so. Leading the charge on environmentalism is one way to earn good will.

Okay, so what can we do? The film and television industry is surrounded by a culture of luxury and excess. We've got to start small, by reducing our consumption and fighting the idea that being environmentally-friendly is inconvenient.

There is no foolproof way to reduce our carbon footprint except one step at a time. British Columbia is creaming us on this. The BC film commission hosts [Realgreenbc.ca](http://Realgreenbc.ca), a website with best practices for each department. Vancouver Film Studios is now running carbon neutral.

There are lots of ways that we as a union can use our collective strength to encourage the productions we work on. ACTRA-Toronto has an Environmental committee, and we should too.

Here's some easy fixes we can start with to immediately encourage our industry to be more eco-friendly:

- 1) Ban Styrofoam. Instead, encourage the use of reusable plates at Craft.
- 2) Ban plastic water bottles. Instead, issue everyone on set a reusable aluminum water bottle with their name on it. (Only 12% of plastic water bottles were recycled in 2005. 25 billion bottles ended up in landfills, litter, or were incinerated.)

3) Use Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) and other fluorescents and set lights on dimmers.

4) Print only when necessary and print double-sided on recycled paper.

5) Enforce a zero-idling policy for transport.

6) Encourage responsible rentals such as hybrids, electric, ethanol, biodiesel vehicles.

7) Use eco-friendly cleaning (phosphate-free) and disposal (not storm drains).

8) Make recycling and composting more prominent and accessible than regular disposal.

9) In trailers and in studios, only use air conditioning and heating when necessary.

10) Purchase carbon offsets.

We're on the cusp of major change. Businesses are getting onboard with environmentalism, and it's time we did too.

If we in the film and television industry in Quebec commit to serious action we will be leaders – not only in Canada, but across North America. Productions will save money and the industry will attract major investors who see that the future of filmmaking is both greener and more efficient. It's a win, win, win situation.





# The 2008 ACTRA AWARDS IN MONTREAL

When it comes to the ACTRA Montreal branch, one thing we can always count on at our events is a great party. And the 2008 ACTRA Awards in Montreal was no exception!

Photos by: Tom DiSandolo



by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

Held at the Just For Laughs Museum, the ceremony was everything I expected it to be and more. The room sparkled with delicate lights and as the 300-plus guests filed into the room during the cocktail hour beforehand, the energy and spirit of fun was undeniable. Everyone's outfits were stunning, the faces beautiful and luminous, and the mood jovial.

The presenters were great and our well-seasoned host, Richard M. Dumont, was in fine form as he guided us all through the intricacies of such an intimate gala; his witty quips and jokes were welcoming and thoroughly amusing and his polished professionalism shone through.

But on awards night, it is the honourees and award winners who take centre stage. **Rick Jones** nabbed the Outstanding Voice Performance award for his work on *Fred's Head*, **Andrew Walker** took Outstanding Male Performance for his riveting turn in *Steel Toes* and the supremely talented **Ellen David**, with her third nomination, earned the Outstanding Female Performance award for *Surviving My Mother*. Her acceptance speech was a highlight – candid, filled with emotion and applauded by both friends and colleagues.

The 5th Annual ACTRA Short Film Festival, held earlier in the day was well attended – to say the least. There was barely room to breath as more than 150 guests piled into the screening room. At the evening event, two winners were named: **Vanessa Matsui's** *Call Back* was named the Audience Choice for Best Short while **Robert Higden's** *Haley's Gals: Checkmate* scored the Jury Selection Prize.

The evening also saw **Una Kay** and **Neil Shee** named Life Members by ACTRA. And of course, two very fine contributors to our industry were singled out as **Robin Spry** was posthumously honoured with the ACTRA Montreal Community Builder Award while the incomparable **Ranee Lee** was given our Award of Excellence.

These two awards in particular, are dear to my heart because I feel that they best represent what we as performers and members of an organization like ACTRA, strive for every day. Robin's career is one which served to remind us all that we must be fearless in this business and stand together if we are to succeed.

As an actress, author and internationally renowned singer, Ranee is a dedicated and wonderfully positive force of nature in a city that goes through so many ups and down. Her glowing smile and heartfelt words cheered everyone that night, as her voice does all around the world. She opened up her heart to us that night, and it was wonderful to get to share the experience with her.

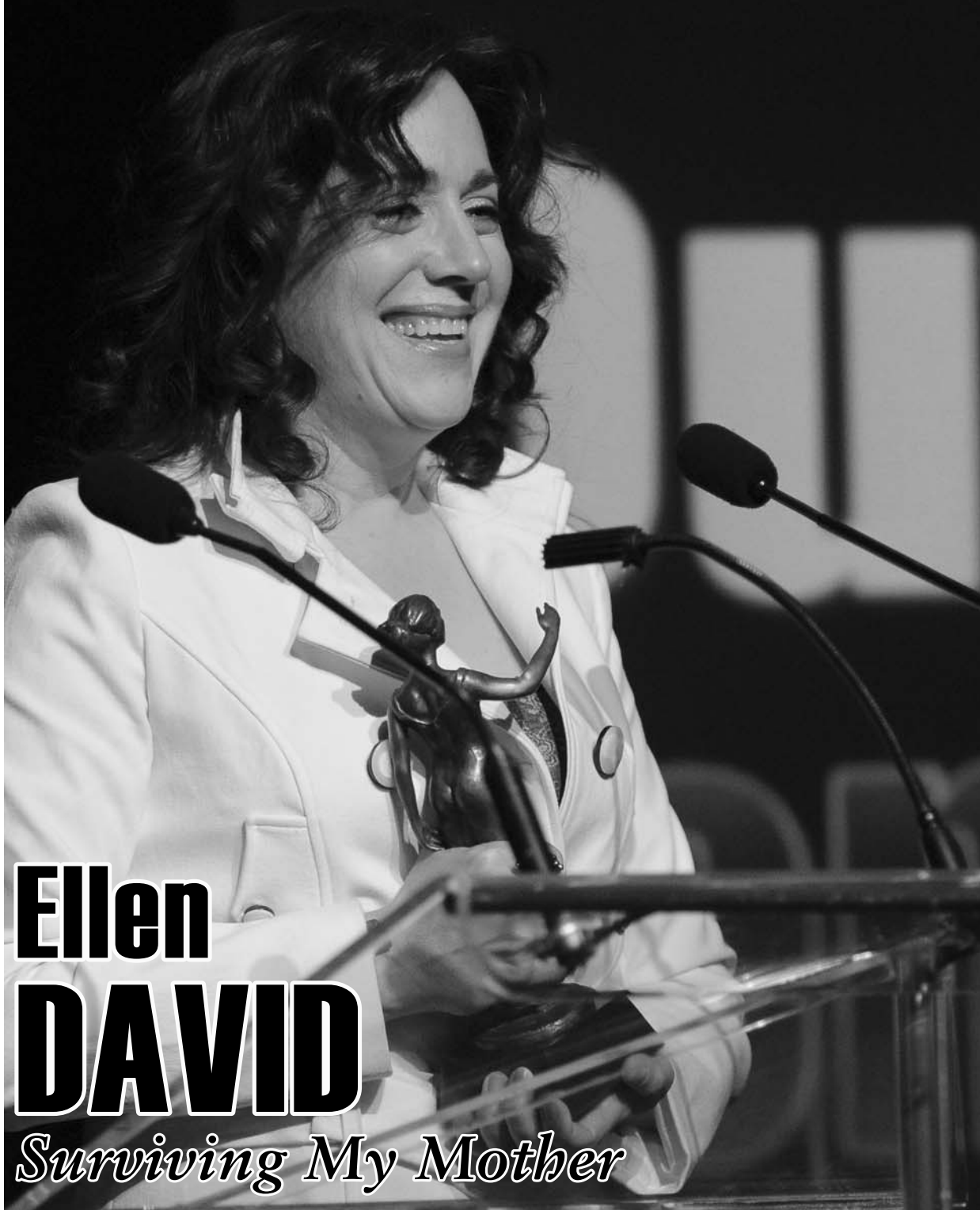
It was a fantastic night full of joy and I, for one, would like to thank all of you for that. I thank you for making ACTRA Montreal what it is. I thank you for continuing to challenge yourselves and those around you in this business of ours. And I thank you all for coming to the awards. See you next year!



1. Montreal President Don Jordan; 2. presenters Holly Gauthier-Frankel (also a nominee) and Taylor Baruchel; 3. Don with last year's Award of Excellence recipient Walter Massey; 4. Host Richard M. Dumont; 5. National Vice-President Tyrone Benskin; 6. presenters Johanna Nutter and Michel Perron, winner of last year's Voice Performance Award; 7. Nominees Mark Camacho and Arthur Holden with Arthur Grosser; 8. National Executive Director Stephen Waddell; 9. presenters Nicolas Wright and Barbara Bacci

# OUTSTANDING FEMALE PERFORMER

ALSO  
NOMINATED



**Ellen  
DAVID**

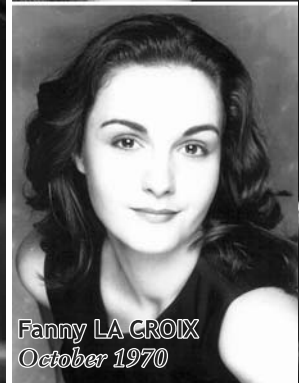
*Surviving My Mother*



Karine VANASSE  
*October 1970*



Caroline DHAVERNAS  
*Surviving My Mother*



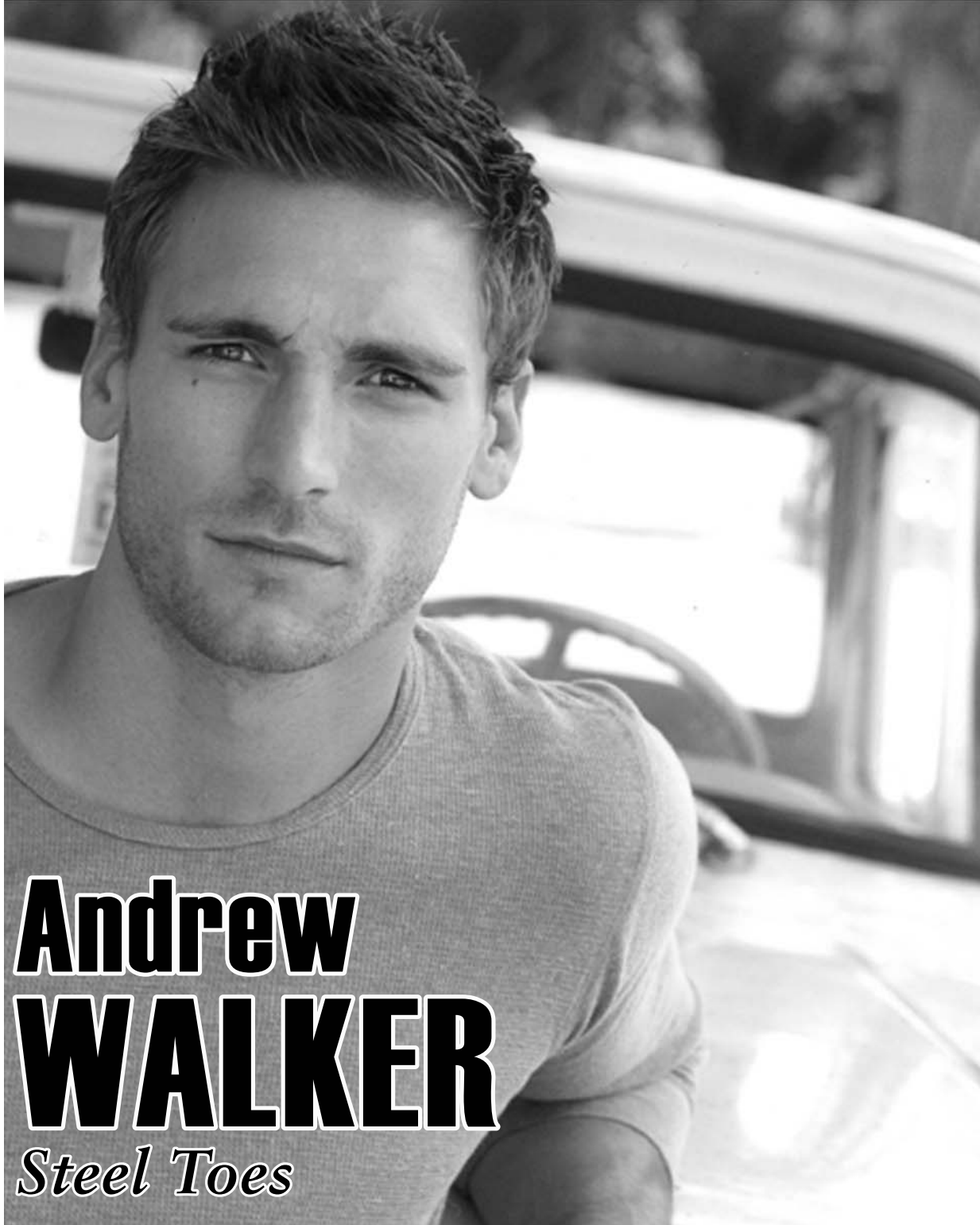
Fanny LA CROIX  
*October 1970*



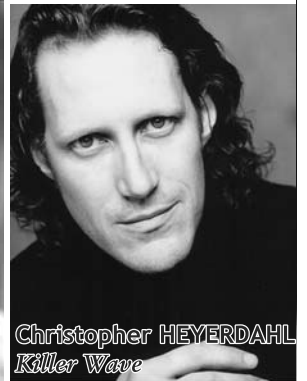
Laurence LEBŒUF  
*Durham County*

# OUTSTANDING MALE PERFORMER

ALSO  
NOMINATED



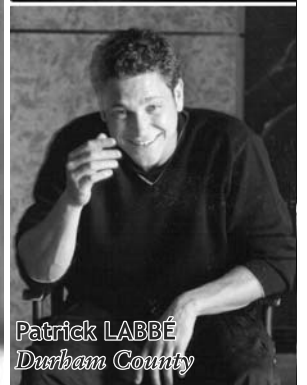
**Andrew  
WALKER**  
*Steel Toes*



Christopher HEYERDAHL  
*Killer Wave*



Cas ANVAR  
*Superstorm*



Patrick LABBÉ  
*Durham County*



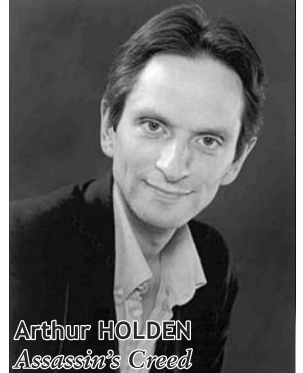
Mark CAMACHO  
*The Ecstasy Note*



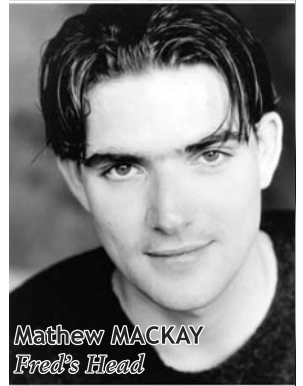
# OUTSTANDING VOICE PERFORMER

ALSO  
NOMINATED

**Rick  
JONES**  
*Fred's Head*



Arthur HOLDEN  
*Assassin's Creed*



Mathew MACKAY  
*Fred's Head*



Liz MACRAE  
*The Bellflower Bunnies*



Holly GAUTHIER-FRANKEL  
*Fred's Head*

## LIFE MEMBERS



*Una Kay*



*Neil Shee*

## BEST ACTRA SHORT

*Jury Selection*



**HALEY'S GALS**  
*Robert Higden*

## BEST ACTRA SHORT

*Audience Choice*



**CALL BACK**  
*Vanessa Matsui*





# ACTRA MONTREAL GIVES \$5,000 TO AFC - AND ASKS YOU TO DO THE SAME!

ACTRA Montreal saluted the Actors' Fund of Canada at the 2008 ACTRA Awards, marking the organization's 50th anniversary with a \$5,000 donation. Now, the race is on for members of the branch to help raise up to \$10,000 more for AFC.

**A**CTRA's Montreal Branch is offering its members an opportunity to double up on their contributions to the Actors' Fund of Canada with the ACTRA Montreal Member Challenge.

Launched with a \$5,000 contribution from the branch that was presented at the ACTRA Montreal Awards by Montreal member Claudia Ferri, the branch is challenging its members to match its initial \$5,000 contribution with their own personal donations totalling \$5,000, which the branch will then match with a further \$5,000 contribution to the Fund. Member contributions received up to October 31, 2008 will qualify for matching by the branch.

The Actors' Fund is the lifeline for Canada's entertainment industry. Over 10,000 professional members of the industry from all over Canada and in the fields of film & TV, theatre, music and dance have been helped by the Fund, which provides emergency financial aid to assist cultural workers in recovering from an illness, injury or other circumstances causing severe economic and personal hardship.

Performers and those working behind the scenes can apply for assistance from the Fund, which recently set a new record for the amount of financial aid delivered to the performing arts community in a single year, topping \$500,000 in the 12-month period that ended on March 31.





The Fund marks its 50th anniversary in 2008 with a campaign focused on raising awareness of its emergency financial aid program and uniting Canada's arts community in support of the organization.

Commenting on the contribution, ACTRA Montreal president Don Jordan said "On behalf of ACTRA Montreal and its members, I want to congratulate the Fund on its 50th anniversary. We have been big fans of the Actors' Fund for many years here at ACTRA Montreal. We are pleased to support the Fund through the Member Challenge and we look forward to working with the Actors' Fund for many years to come."

Actors' Fund Executive Director David Hope was enthusiastic in his reaction to the ACTRA Montreal initiative: "We were thrilled about the profile we received at the ACTRA Montreal Awards this spring and we are delighted that the branch has committed to donate up to \$10,000 in total through the Member Challenge. The Member Challenge idea is really powerful, especially as it coincides with our 2008 Canadian TV Charity Challenge in which we are inviting casts, crews, and producers of TV series shot anywhere in Canada to raise money on set through friendly competitions between productions. With these two challenges in effect through the height of this year's production season, ACTRA Montreal members can make a huge impact on the lives of their colleagues who are struggling through some extremely difficult circumstances."

The Actors' Fund of Canada is a registered charity that has paid out over \$3.5 million in rent payments, grocery money, utility payments and other basic living expenses in the last 10 years. Performers, creators, technical staff and other production team members can benefit from the Fund, which receives no government funding and is wholly sustained by support from individuals and entertainment industry organizations.

Updates on the ACTRA Montreal Member Challenge will be available at [www.actramontreal.ca](http://www.actramontreal.ca). News about the Canadian TV Charity Challenge will be posted at [www.actorsfund.ca/charitychallenge](http://www.actorsfund.ca/charitychallenge).

## Make a contribution to the ACTORS' FUND OF CANADA!

Drop by the office or mail your donation to

ACTRA Montreal  
c/o The Actors' Fund of Canada  
1450 City Councillors #530  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 2E6

And remember, get it in by October 31st and  
ACTRA Montreal will match your contribution!



Claudia Ferri



David Hope

# Don Kirk 1942-2008

by Leisa Reid

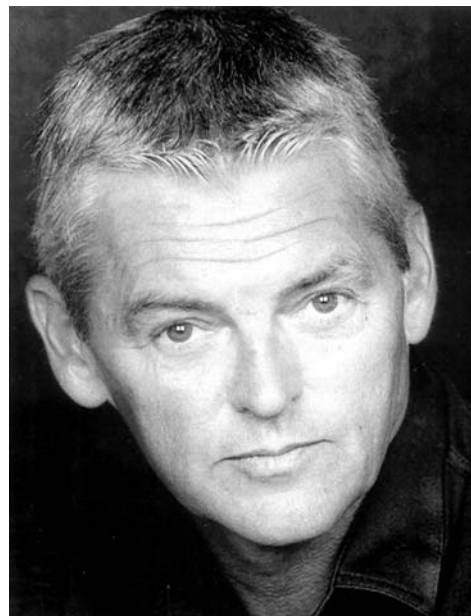
I met Don in 1996, the same year he retired from the Montreal Police force after many years of dedicated service. He seemed strict, stern and serious. However, as I got to know him from taking several of the same acting workshops together, I found out he was actually a subtle, sensitive guy with a great sense of humour.

An old-school gentleman of the highest order. Whenever he was my scene partner in class, he was always professional, prepared and interesting. We all wanted to work with Don. I also had the pleasure of watching him perform on stage. Who knew a retired cop could be so good! He once told me that even his friends and family had noticed a difference in him because he seemed happier and more relaxed.

In his retirement, Don enjoyed two passions: Golfing and Acting. I'll even flat out say it: Acting was Don's second career! In fact, he was very proud of becoming an ACTRA member, especially after spending so many years being a policeman. It was proof to him that he was being taken seriously as a professional actor.

Don was often sought after for roles because of his handsome face, imposing stature, wonderful booming voice and twinkle in his eye. He had the privilege of working with such legendary stars as Alan Alda, James Gardner and Julie Andrews. In fact, he often told the story of the time when during a break from shooting in a production with Julie Andrews, she was so comfortable working with Don, she sat beside him, put her head on his shoulder and proceeded to take a nap! He was just so astonished that "Mary Poppins" was sleeping on his shoulder! Even though he may have been "star-struck" on occasion, Don was always respectful, professional and humble.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and colleagues in both the law enforcement community as well as the entertainment community. Don, keep working on your golf swing and keep your eye out for the next great script...



# Mary Morter 1924-2008

by Claire Martell, ACTRA Montreal steward

I knew Mary Morter as a warm, personable woman, in the later stage of her career – running into her on the bus or at a local hamburger joint in our neighbourhood and watching as she danced the night away at ACTRA Montreal's 60th Anniversary Gala (in her late 70s, I might add).

So, it came as somewhat of a surprise to me and many of my colleagues when we learned of Mary's earlier work, helping to establish the foundation for English theatre in Montreal in the mid-sixties.

She founded Instantheatre, the precursor to Centaur, which performed one-act plays in Place Ville Marie and eventually Fairview Shopping Centre in Pointe Claire. She would go on to create other touring theatre companies - Pendulum Theatre Company and Foundation Touring Company and was even the driving force behind l'Atelier des double Masques, which invited inmates at the St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary to try their hand at acting.

Friends of Mary fondly recall the feasts at her cottage and the stimulating discussions that would ensue. I will remember Mary as a very engaging and worldly lady who always made time for other people and I'm sure many of you will as well. God-Speed Mary.



# Sam Gesser 1930-2008

by Alan Hustak

Sam Gesser, the Montreal impresario whose career in show business spanned almost six decades, passed away at the age of 78.

Once described by Harry Belafonte as the best impresario in North America, Gesser brought some of the biggest names in show business to Montreal including Janis Joplin, Nana Mouskouri, the Peking Opera and touring Broadway musicals like *The King and I*.

Gesser once compared his job to "playing dice in Las Vegas. Aside from a few tested favourites," he was fond of saying "There are no sure bets at the box office."

Sam Gesser, the son of Polish immigrant parents, was born in Montreal, Jan 7, 1930. He grew up on St. Urbain St. and studied at Baron Byng High School. He spent the first ten years of his professional life working as a graphic artist. From the time he was 14 years old, however, he had as a hobby, taped indigenous Canadian folk music on a battered tape recorder.

By 1951 he had compiled a large enough collection to start his own record label, Allied Records, in order to market his collection of folk songs commercially. He also had his own radio program about folk music on CFCF and on the CBC. In 1953 he booked his first stage act, Pete Seeger, and made \$200. The following year he started a folk dance troupe, Les Feux Follets.

Gesser was official booking agent for the Canadian Pavilion at the Expo 67 World Fair in Montreal where he presented 400 artists. Three years later he did the same thing for Canada at the World Fair in Osaka, Japan.

Gesser produced the 1984 musical version of Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* that had its world premier at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. He was also a playwright in his own right. Eight years ago he produced his own show, *Fineman's Dictionary*, a comedy starring Fyvush Finkel.

In 1993, Sam received the Order of Canada for "contributing to Canada's cultural fabric."

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Publication Mail Agreement #40613589



**ACTRA**

**Actra Montreal congratulates the  
Actors' Fund of Canada on its 50th anniversary.**



**The Actors' Fund of Canada**

The lifeline for Canada's entertainment industry

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*Together we can make a difference!*