



ACTRA Montreal

Grapevine

Winter 2004

**✓ Best
Performance**

*who are you
going to nominate?*

Letter to the Grapevine

My name is Howard Rosenstein and I am writing to address what we can do to increase local production.

I don't think I need to go into the details of the last couple of years, except to say that almost everyone I've come across has been devastated by the lack of work here in Montreal. I spent most of the last eight months in Vancouver trying to get my almost stalled career off the ground again, and found that although there are more opportunities for work out there, what is available to local talent is severely limited; I went to a callback for a one line role (!) in *Fantastic Four* only to find that although they had changed the line to what I had suggested in my original audition, I did not get the gig. The pond we've been swimming in over the last several years has been drying up, and that pond includes Toronto, Vancouver, New York and Los Angeles. American and Canadian (and Montreal) producers are shooting in North and South Africa, in Australia, in Eastern Europe and now in Iceland where their production dollars go further. It makes business sense.

While I applaud our union's efforts to help restore the Canadian Television Fund to 100 million dollars a year, I am still hesitant of Liza Frulla's announcement that all federal government cultural agencies (including the CBC) will be required to review their budgets to find an additional 5% to cut. We are living during times of a deficit free federal budget and I don't need to tell you that cultural spending will not increase for the foreseeable future as it falls behind established priorities such as Health, Education, Infrastructure, National Defense and Daycare. We also cannot depend on the CRTC to protect and establish us as it has done so beautifully with our music industry.

So what can we do? As a man I respect once said a teacher of his told him: "No quality without quantity." One of the reasons the United States and India have the only self sufficient Film and Television Industries is because of the sheer number of films they produce. Most of them are terrible; some of them are pretty good, and a select few are excellent. My long-winded point is this: we have to begin generating our own saleable work. We have to learn to become less reliant on government money and less reliant on American production. We have to find a way to bring more private investment into our industry by reducing risk by reducing costs by quickly shaping an AIP agreement that is workable for Montreal. I personally think the AIP for Toronto, the TIP, is exactly what we need here in terms of rates and spirit, but I disagree with the amounts paid to performers for Class II Productions involving budgets of less than \$125,000; they're too low. By the way, the lower Toronto rate is 50% less than that paid in Montreal in a town that is at least 30% more expensive to live in.

One of the most important aspects of the AIP is that casts must be 100% Canadian. That means leading roles for us! We need to work for a living wage and almost as important, we need to keep working to continue to hone our craft. Many people I have talked to in the acting and stunt communities are more than willing to lend their expertise to help breakdown scripts into a general language understood by all in order to shore up the limited amount of human resources available at ACTRA Montreal. Our belief is that once this push gets the local industry rolling again, production companies will be able to pay these volunteers a small fee and all issues regarding safety and insurance from the inception will be addressed in a professional and efficient manner.

Just so all of you know what a realistic AIP can do: in Toronto alone, over the course of the last three months there have been 160 submissions. Remember, no quality without quantity. Current and forthcoming technology is transforming our industry, reducing costs to a point where almost anyone can make films of broadcast quality. I believe that it is high time to catch this new wave and help create an environment in which we are all working again.

Yours in Solidarity,

Howard Rosenstein

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the Grapevine

Winter 2004

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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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Gentlemen's Agreement

I recently discovered an interesting audio-visual compilation in the CBC web archives. It's called: "Bright Lights, Political Fights: The Canadian Film Industry" and is a collection of radio and television clips from 1949 to the present, wherein various failed attempts at bolstering the Canadian Film Industry are chronicled; everything from tax shelters and the NAFTA deal-breaker to a laughably naïve occurrence called The Canadian Cooperation Project.

The project, which ran from 1948 to 1958 was described as a "Gentlemen's agreement" between Hollywood and the Canadian government where, in exchange for backing off of proposed legislation which would have significantly strengthened the indigenous film industry in Canada, the government agreed to let the creators in Tinseltown try to boost American tourism to Canada by including many direct references to our country in mainstream Hollywood films. So, for example you'd get Jimmy Stewart in an American Frontier Western remarking somewhat oddly (and repeatedly) that the bird he'd heard warbling around the campsite was "from Canada" and other absurd and ineffective references.

Needless to say, tourism was not greatly affected one way or the other, with the number of U.S. visitors to Canada actually declining in the first four years of the program. It's true that by the time the project quietly petered out in the late '50s, tourism from Americans had increased by 15%, but tourism from other nations had gone up by more than twice that number in the same period.

What we did get was a humiliating setback to our industry and the further reinforcement of our nation as an extension of the American film market, a "51st state" phenomenon that persists to this day. There have been several attempts over the years to legislate a place for Canadian films on the movie screens of their own country, including a modest plan in the '80s to double the market share for indigenous films from an embarrassing 3% to a paltry 6%. However, it was significantly watered down by the Mulroney government to appease the Reagan administration over the Free Trade Agreement. It was said that the timing was wrong.

It all makes me wonder if the current timing could be more right: Telefilm Canada has a new CEO who has proven that he has been a champion of Canadian film; after years of service work for the

Americans, as well as by developing our own low-budget independent films, we have world-class crews, facilities and creators here; Canada is in disagreement with The U.S. government on several domestic and foreign policies and President George W. Bush has just been re-elected. I can't think of a time recently when we've felt less like the 51st state.

I wonder if English Canadian culture is finally ready to take up that mantle of difference too, just long enough to establish a legislative foothold for film and television in this country, to support our creativity in domestic and world markets, and to perhaps forge a new Gentlemen's agreement with the Hollywood machine: give us a level playing field in our own country, and we'll show the world what we can do. Of course, we have nothing to offer in return, at least nothing you don't already have. We can't even promise not to bug you about getting our fair share anymore. This cultural imbalance isn't going to go away anytime soon but all we want is to move more quickly and effectively in the direction of redress. Now is the time.

Happy holidays to all our members and a toast to a healthy, productive and prosperous 2005!

In solidarity,

Matt Holland,
Branch President, ACTRA Montreal

P.S.

"Bright Lights, Political Fights: The Canadian Film Industry"
can be found at:

http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-68-1406/arts_entertainment/film_industry/

Finally!

A Quebec Film Office to Attract Foreign Production

On November 29, 2004, representatives from all sectors of the local film and television industry met and made history.

After years and years of inaction and watching other provinces and countries out-hustle Montreal in the competition to attract foreign production, the industry's key stakeholders approved a plan that will see the creation of the Quebec Film Office. This Office will be charged with the responsibility of promoting Montreal and Quebec as a place to shoot.

The gathering also heard from **Montreal Mayor Gerald Tremblay** and **Quebec Culture Minister Line Beauchamp**. Both pledged their financial and technical support to the initiative.

A working group of government and industry representatives was struck to ensure that the Office is up and running for April 1, 2005.

ACTRA Montreal has been petitioning for the creation of such an office for over a decade. And although it took this year's crisis in production volumes to finally bring everyone together, all we can say is, "better late than never".

We are also conscious that the economic and political landscape has changed dramatically in the past few years, resulting in less production leaving the United States and more competition for those projects that do leave the States.

Nonetheless, we do know one thing; if Montreal doesn't get in there and fight for its fair share of this production, the number of projects deciding to shoot here will continue to decline.

ACTRA Montreal will be an integral part of this Office, with a seat on the Executive that will oversee operations.

Here's hoping that 2005 will be a more prosperous year as a result of our collective efforts.

Raymond Guardia,
ACTRA Regional Director

Committee meets to examine issue of stunts in AIPs

When ACTRA Montreal rolled out the ACTRA Indie Production Agreement, the goal was to encourage the next generation of producers with very limited budgets and offer our members the opportunity to play leading and challenging roles. Two years and 20 AIPs later, ACTRA is ready to make a few changes to the agreement's regulations.

Recently, some members of the stunt community asked the Branch Council to revisit the decision to prohibit the use of stunts on AIP projects.

This initial decision was taken because ACTRA worried that safety could not be guaranteed on these sets. Frankly, the fear was that new producers with next to no money would not have the experience or resources to see to it that the necessary precautions were taken to ensure safety for performers on the set.

The members of the stunt community who approached ACTRA understood this concern, and offered ways to ensure that stunts could be performed safely.

On December 10, representatives of the stunt community, Branch Council and ACTRA Staff came together to discuss the issue.

The meeting was a great success, as the participants hammered out a deal that took everyone's concerns into account. The group was ultimately able to determine guidelines for allowing stunts in an AIP project and strict conditions which must be met in order for the production to use any stunts.

The terms of this agreement will now be submitted to Branch Council, which will meet in January. Once the new guidelines are approved by Council, the new and improved AIP will be ready to accommodate would-be filmmakers who want to incorporate stunts into their projects.

ACTRA would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting for their input in improving the ACTRA Indie Production Agreement.

IT'S MY DAMN UNION!

by Holly Gauthier-Frankel

Hello again, my fellow members. Well, the holiday season is once again upon us! And aren't you excited? I know I am. Just look around you! Oodles of santas clanging for coins everywhere you look, Ogilvy's strange, automated hedgehogs, frogs, and weasels dancing around and the abundance of cranky, crazed shoppers struggling to find the 'perfect' gifts for their loved ones. Oh, and I never tire of the endless serenades of 'Deck the Halls!' Yes, I know, falalalala. It's enough to make me want to hunker down under a blanket with a jug of cider for the rest of the winter! But, I digress.

Though times are tough and everyone is feeling pinched and stretched to their financial limits, we should keep in mind that the holidays are not only about mass-consumerism or alcohol consumption (well, maybe a little bit...okay maybe a lot!), but about spending quality time with your loved ones and knowing that your community is there to offer support and kindness in these troubled economic times. I'm not kidding! Cue Festive Music!!! In all seriousness, folks, I wanted to give a huge thank you to everyone who came out to participate in this year's day of ACTRA activities. It was really wonderful to see everyone and to know that people want to share their innovative ideas and their creativity with their fellow members.

For those of you who don't know, the day in question was the Pitch the Panel/Short Film Fest/Annual General Meeting day, and it was quite a success. It was like a giant sleepover, just like I said! There were exceptionally strong pitches (and a really yummy breakfast...mmm, mini-croissants) in the morning. I'd like to congratulate esteemed member Arthur Holden on his win for best pitch. Let's hope it makes it to the big screen, Arthur. Good luck! In the afternoon, stuffing back popcorn and candy, we got to see some wonderfully imaginative films at the Short Film Fest. Members got to vote for their favourite movie and in the end it was quite a tough call. Too many wonderful choices!

Congratulations to Robert Higden for making us all look at bread in an entirely new way. I'll never eat gingerbread men ever again. Well, no, that's a lie, but I'll feel really bad doing it, I swear!

Now, if you couldn't make the meeting for whatever reason (and I know countless reasons, people, I've made them up myself)...well, too bad for you! It was very informative and, thanks to Randy's hysterically creative Powerpoint presentation, quite funny. There were excellent presentations by council members (ahem!) and informative speeches by Stephen Waddell, Matt Holland and our National president, Thor Bishopric. The speeches in particular resonated with me and I'll tell you why. I know you want to hear it, friends. Bear with me, I'm almost done!

I was struck by the information I was hearing, not only because of the shocking state of our Canadian broadcasting system and the fact that our government should be fighting for more Canadian programming but isn't, but also because of ACTRA's unflagging efforts to fight for members' rights and to make the community aware of what kinds of things need to change in order for us to claim our well-deserved place in the world of television and film. I realize now more than ever that it is our responsibility to our union and to our collective Canadian identity to make an effort, however small, in bringing Canadian programming to Canadian screens. We will never get anywhere if we sit back and let *CSI* and *Law & Order* overrun our screens. I mean, there are three versions of each of those shows! Do we really need to see that many people frowning over corpses all the time? I mean honestly, people, start writing! If I can do it, it can't be that hard, 'cuz my cider's half-gone and you can still understand me...can't you?

If you're still reading, I should also remind you about our two upcoming financial workshops - How to Invest Your Money



(If You Have Any Left) and the ever-popular Tax Seminar. We will also be holding another Art of the Audition workshop, which should be great fun. Please let me know if you'd like to be a panelist, or if you have any other ideas for workshops or courses that members might enjoy.

Thank you all for your support and good wishes. It means a lot to me! I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season, full of rest and relaxation. And mistletoe...lots of mistletoe (nudge nudge, wink wink!). Have good latkes and plum puddings and fresh fruits and veggies and oodles of champagne (if you can fight your way through the line-ups!). See you all in the new year! Now let's hear those festive voices sing out...ready? Remember, my dears...

**It's YOUR damn union too,
falalalala lala lala!!!**

Send good questions or nice comments to
tappyco@yahoo.ca.

Happy 'Holly'-days...hah!

***A note from a satisfied participant of
the Art of the Audition workshop...***

Hello, my name is Nobuya Shimamoto and I attended in the work shop (Art of Audition) last week.

It was very productive work shops for two days with an amazing price of \$20! It was a great opportunity to talk to experienced actors and share their experience and passion for acting. I do believe it will help a lot in furthering acting career. I really appreciate everyone who organized and worked on this project.

Again, it was great experience for me and really productive.

Arigato,

Nobuya Shimamoto

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GILLES PLOUFFE is an experienced professional actor who has studied many years with Mr. Strasberg. He has taught acting at ACTRA, the National Screen Institute, the Algonquin College Theatre Program, Dynamic Theatre Factory and Theatre North America.

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Lies, and the Lying Liars That Tell Them



Why?

Why do they bother telling lies when the truth is so obvious? Couldn't she simply say "Yes, I'm casting a non-union commercial. Sorry, I know you don't like it. Speak to the producer. Here's his name."

I always get the producer's name and number. In fact, they usually call me once they know there's a problem. Producers prefer it that way. The other option is to have me call up their client and start yelling. That embarrasses commercial producers and screws up their chance of being hired again by the client.

All I had was the name of the client, **Maple Leaf Foods Fully Cooked Roasts**. Maple Leaf took in over \$5 billion in sales last year. They can afford to pay performers at least the minimum fees under the Commercial Agreement. So I called the company President and Chief Executive Officer, Michael McCain. I doubt he appreciated the call.

He never called me back. Instead, I received a call from the commercial producer. I explained ACTRA's jurisdiction and the company's responsibility to negotiate with us under **Quebec's Status of the Artist Legislation**.

In the end, the producer decided to cancel the production in Montreal rather than respect our legally recognized jurisdiction.

All that remains is the bitter taste of the useless lies the casting company told me. Which, in my humble opinion, still tastes better than a microwaved pot roast...

Beside, you'll find the text of my complaint letter.

December 13, 2004

Dear Ms. D'Amico,

I am writing regarding the commercial you were casting for Maple Leaf Foods. ACTRA appreciates open, honest and frank communications with other members of our industry, even when we disagree. As a professional Casting Director, your company should be held to such standards.

I'd like to express my disappointment at the blatant and transparent lies told to me by two representatives of your office when I visited the audition on December 8, 2004. When I asked about the commercial, your employees insisted that it wasn't an audition at all, but rather, a "dégustation", or a tasting of a product. They had no clear answers when I asked the purpose of the "dégustation", why a well-known casting director was handling the "invitations" to the "dégustation", or why a camera was present. As I was leaving the building, I met someone on her way in. I asked her why she was there. She answered, without any hesitation, that she was there to audition for the Maple Leaf commercial.

When I spoke to a representative of the production company, The Big Film Company in Toronto, they had no problem admitting the obvious, that they were producing a non-union commercial.

I find this behavior cheap, disrespectful and beneath your company. It is also a really, really bad lie.

Sincerely,

Gary Saxe
National Organizer

c.c. Lucie Robitaille, President - Association des Directeurs de Casting du Quebec



(l to r): Don Jordan with Pitch the Panel winner Arthur Holden, ACTRA Shorts winner Robert Higden and Branch President Matt Holland

More than 400 people came out for the three events in ACTRA Montreal's hugely successful 2004 Members' Conference, November 20th, 2004.

From the Pitch the Panel Breakfast to the ACTRA Shorts Film Festival, from the Annual General Meeting to the cocktail afterwards, after a long year of production lows and jurisdictional battles, it felt good to come together to applaud our members' creativity, find out more about the changes in our industry and enjoy a drink with some friends.

The AGM...

"What's going on and what are we going to be doing about it?" It is fundamentally the question asked at every Annual General Meeting, but it has perhaps never been more poignant than now, in light of the lack of production in 2004. More than 200 members attended the 2004 ACTRA Montreal Annual General Meeting, focused primarily on answering that question while drawing attention to the importance of community building and solidarity in doing so.

Matt Holland opened the evening with his President's Remarks - a very personal response to many of the adversities facing performers today, issues which would be echoed in presentations throughout the meeting.

Always the numbers man, **Regional Director Raymond Guardia** presented the cold hard facts to those in attendance. Global competition for U.S. production is fierce. Combined with state tax incentives, the rising Canadian dollar and the anti-runaway campaign, Montreal - like most branches of ACTRA - was hit hard this year with falling production volumes. As for Canadian production, the question was: where have all the producers gone?

"For four years now, we've addressed our concern with the disappearance of Canadian producers in Montreal at our AGMs. We've discussed with membership the danger in becoming overly reliant on foreign (American) production to sustain this business," says Raymond.

It is a point that was heard, but perhaps not fully understood until this year, when American production saw a 50% downturn in our city.

"This year, we don't need to show our members the effects of relying on the Americans for work. They can see it for themselves in their bank accounts and feel it in their wallets."

One other place the downturn can be seen is in the branch's finances. As newly appointed **Branch Treasurer Cary Lawrence** explained, "the lack of work for our members also means a lack of revenue for our branch." For the third time in four years, ACTRA Montreal will be forced to dip into its surplus to balance the budget and as Cary was quick to point out, "this cannot continue. We have to find some way to retool an operation whose expenditures are \$200 K more than its current revenues."

And if all that wasn't disheartening enough, **National Organizer Gary Saxe** spoke to the room about some of the attacks our organization has come under this past year from a number of producers. From double shoots to dubbing, whether in video games, live action or animation, it has been through the diligence of the council and staff, support of the community and solidarity of the membership that most of these battles can already be put in ACTRA's win column, but the real concern lies in the growing number of these fights and the recent rash of assaults on our jurisdictional rights by the Quebec producers' association - the APFTQ. Without a doubt, this problem will remain an area of interest in the coming year.



1. Branch Treasurer Cary Lawrence 2. Regional Director Raymond Guardia
3. National Executive Director Stephen Waddell
4. Branch Councilor Barbara Bacci and PDC Co-chair Holly Gauthier-Frankel
5. Branch Councilor David Schaap 6. Grapevine Editor Don Jordan



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.



Faced with such adversity, members were reminded of the importance of remaining optimistic. After all, we've stuck together and survived worse in the past. **National Executive Director Stephen Waddell** spoke eloquently about the value of solidarity in confronting these issues and pointed out that Montreal members are - and have always been - the model for solidarity and support in this organization for other branches across the country.

Luckily, not all news was bad news at the AGM as many presentations illustrated some of the key successes this branch has seen in the past year. With regards to Montreal's promotional efforts in luring foreign production to town, **National Councilor Maria Bircher** pointed out that ACTRA has been instrumental in helping to create the new promotional office that will - for the first time - represent all interested parties' efforts in a unified and focused manner.

Political Action Committee Co-chair Dawn Ford spoke of the burgeoning low budget film production scene that has emerged with the advent of ACTRA Montreal's two new agreements - the ACTRA Indie Agreement and the Member Initiated Production Agreement. The investment is a long term one, but everyone recognizes the importance of encouraging these local would-be filmmakers because, after all, they are the future.

Professional Development Committee Co-chair Holly Gauthier-Frankel looked at the success of the Apprentice Member Initiation Course and reiterated the new mandate of the P.D.C., offering workshops which are affordable to members that come at no cost to the branch.

Grapevine Editor Don Jordan was pleased to announce the winners of the Best Pitch and Best Short from the morning and afternoon events - Arthur Holden and Robert Higden, respectively. Don also took the opportunity to announce the branch's latest initiative, the return of the ACTRA Awards in April of 2005. For the first time in over two decades, Montreal members will be honoured for their performances in production in this city. Ballots to nominate members for consideration are already available, both in the office and online, so pick one up and fill it out!

National President Thor Bishopric ended the meeting with a call to arms. Speaking to the room about the disgraceful lack of broadcaster investment in Canadian drama and the CRTC's refusal to do anything about it, Thor stressed the importance of remaining united and active in our pursuit to change these standards. He reminded everyone that our efforts were largely responsible for the successful restoration of the CTF (helping six projects to shoot in Montreal this year) and offered that as an active organization, we can do more. While the recent postponement of ACTRA's third Lobby Day came as a bit of a disappointment, both Thor and Stephen were confident that ACTRA was mobilized, prepared to fight the good fight and win.

The evening concluded with a cocktail and a wonderful opportunity for members to partake in a tradition once practiced on the numerous film sets around Montreal - seeing old friends and talking to each other. All in all, it was a successful General Meeting with a positive outlook to seeing in 2005. We look forward to seeing you then!

7. National President Thor Bishopric 8. National Councilor Maria Bircher
9. PAC Co-chair Dawn Ford 10. National Organizer Gary Saxe
11. Member Howard Rosenstein 12. Member James Rae

BEST PITCH: Arthur Holden's Trial By Fire

Trial By Fire isn't just what the five members went through as they pitched their idea for a feature film or television series to a panel of industry guests and an audience of more than 100 people. It also happens to be the name of **Arthur Holden's** winning pitch from the **2004 ACTRA Montreal Pitch the Panel Breakfast**.

A bio-pic about war hero Arthur Currie's legal battle to defend his reputation against the charge that he needlessly wasted Canadian lives in the Great War, Arthur's pitch for **Trial By Fire** was riveting in both content and delivery, eliciting the most honest response you will ever hear a producer give: "I'm not sure you can ever get that made, but boy - if you do - I really want to see it."

ACTRA Montreal would like to thank our host, **Scott Faulconbridge**, **Centaur Theatre** for providing our prize and of course, the panel - **Anne-Marie Gelinas**, **Andrew Noble**, **Kevin Tierney**, **Rosanne Cohen** and **Robin Spry**.

Congratulations to all five pitchers - **Arthur Holden**, **Gillian Ferrabee**, **Rick Kaulbars**, **Pierre Boudreau** and **Dawn Ford**.

1. Pitch Host Scott Faulconbridge
2. Shorts Host Mike Paterson
3. Panelists Rosanne Cohen and Robin Spry



BEST SHORT: Robert Higden's Breadmen of Respect

The world of organized crime can be a scary place for a little man made out of bread. But a room full of 200 people can be a great place to show a short film about it. **Robert Higden's Breadmen of Respect** was the winner of the **2004 ACTRA Shorts Film Festival**, narrowly edging out **Vanya Rose's City Stories - 1911** for the prize. **Jimmy Chan** took third place for the second straight year, with his short, **Beyond**.

ACTRA Montreal would like to thank our host **Mike Paterson** and all of the members who contributed to the event - writing, directing, producing, editing and starring in all of the short films.

The 2004 ACTRA Shorts:

Viewer Discretion, submitted by **Robert Higden**, **James Malloch**, **Simon Peacock**, **Pierre Boudreau** and **Ryan Kennedy**

Morning is Broken, submitted by **Neil Kroetsch**

Gumble to Gumble, submitted by **Dawn Ford**

Lunch, submitted by **Miranda Handford**, **Suzanna Lenir** and **Adrianne Richards**

Café-in, submitted by **Peter Koussioulas**

A Glass Eye, submitted by **Emma Sara**

City Stories - 1911, submitted by **Vanya Rose**

The Best Days, submitted by **Spiro Maland**

Breadmen of Respect, submitted by **Robert Higden**

The Spoon, submitted by **Michael Cound**, **Daniel Giverin**, **Lena Kleine**, **Carlo Mestroni** and **Michael Murphy**

Beyond, submitted by **Jimmy Chan**



Congratulations!

ACTRA Montreal member **Nemo Turner** was recently accepted into the Ontario Guild of Town Criers - making him the first ever Quebec resident member of the organization.

A stage magician for over 35 years, Nemo was appointed the Official Town Crier for the Olde 78th Fraser Highlander Regiment of the Fort St. Helen Garrison.

This ancient and honourable craft goes back to the days of ancient Greece where runners were considered the first Criers, bringing news and messages from distant locations.

Today, Official Town Criers read proclamations and announcements for the Mayor's Office or Regiments.

Adding colour, tradition and pageantry to various events, the 400 "Brothers and Sisters of the Bell" around the world also compete annually to determine who is the Best Crier.

ACTRA Montreal would like to congratulate Nemo on his achievement.

If you would like more information about Town Criers, feel free to contact Nemo at 514.849.0888.



Nemo Turner receives his official membership into the Guild of Town Criers.

His motto is "Have Bell, Will Travel."



4.



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9.

- 4. Co-creators Pierre Boudreau & Lisa Bronwyn Moore
- 5. Pitcher Gillian Ferrabee 6. Pitcher Rick Kaulbars
- 7. Pitcher Dawn Ford 8. Pitcher Arthur Holden
- 9. Panelists Andrew Noble, Anne-Marie Gelinas and Kevin Tierney

Member Spotlight...

Dave Rigby once earned \$25 000 for just one day's work on a movie. Of course, that day's work involved flipping a truck six times at 100 km/hr across a 200' stretch of highway and bringing it to a dead stop on a predetermined mark. Now that's what I call...

earning your

Shot in Montreal in 2001, *The Sum of All Fears* featured the President of the United States narrowly escaping when a terrorist detonates a nuclear weapon and unleashes a tidal wave of destruction. Who do you get when you want to drive a car into nuclear blast? Dave Rigby. With over 30 years experience as a stuntman, Dave knows a little something about the sum of all fears and what it takes to do a job that more often than not, is a little scary.

Like most professional stunt performers, he will tell you that every stunt is safe, but you're always aware of the danger. He stresses the importance of planning, preparing and never underestimating any stunt because, as he puts it, "It's the little ones that'll get you." Like the little one that got him when he took a car jump lightly on *Les Dangereux* and ended up with a broken back for his trouble. "I just got finished with Sum of All Fears and this seemed like nothing. Jump a car off a pier onto a boat. I took it lightly and it cost me big time." It took three long months, but Dave is back doing stunts. Well, what stunts there are left to do in this city.

"This is the toughest time I've ever seen in the film business up here. Thank God for the royalty cheques that come in. PRS has done a great job and it keeps getting better." It helps to have a resume with more than 200 films on it when you're looking for royalty cheques in the mail, but even those can't pay all the bills.

With the lack of work - especially stunt work - this past year, Dave has had to try his hand at being an extra in a movie for the first time in his life, just to keep the boat afloat. I ask how 18 days as a background performer on *The Greatest Game Ever Played* were and he flashes a big smile. "I had a great time. I got to grow this beard. Hang out. The pay isn't wonderful, but I loved it."

There isn't much that Dave doesn't love about being in this business. After all, this is the same man who, when asked about his worst experience working on a movie, will tell you, "I can't think of one." I remind him about the accident on *Les Dangereux* and he admits with some hesitation, "I suppose that was my worst experience. But even then, I learned a lot from it. So it's not all bad."

***"Pressure is a big thing.
Being pushed to the limit
under extreme circumstances
and giving your best
performance."***

If you ask what his favourite experience was, you may be surprised with the answer. "*Simon Birch*. I was hired to do a stunt and because of my driving skills, I ended up driving a rig for the crew instead on the film. I got to work alongside the kid (Ian Michael Smith) and it was great. That movie means a lot to me because of what it was about. Everyone finding their special purpose in life."

Some people may even find that they have more than one special purpose. After battling an addiction to drugs and alcohol earlier in his career, Dave has found new direction in helping others cope with those same demons - volunteering at the YMCA and often letting substance abusers stay with him as he helps them through the recovery process.

So, 200 films, 30 years and more than a few injuries later, what is it about stunts that keeps him coming back? "Pressure is a big

Dave Rigby at play (left) and at work (below) in *The Sum of All Fears*.



pay.

thing. Being pushed to the limit under extreme circumstances and giving your best performance." Is it any wonder that the man who flips cars for a living, races them for fun? With the extra free time on his hands this past year, Dave recently headed to the *BASI Racing Driver School* in St-Eustache and was recertified for Formula 2000 driving. "My fastest time was one minute 13 seconds," he says proudly. "Not bad for an old guy." He also teaches classes at the BASI School, including an anti-terrorist driving course. "Executing a maneuver to get the best shot in a movie is exciting," he says, "but doing it when you have someone's life on the line is a whole other ballgame." Still, the skills transfer well to the movie business and Dave has also made himself available to young stunt performers looking to improve their on-screen driving techniques, offering private tutorials at great prices. Dave shows a great deal of pride in describing one student who had the entire set applauding after a stunt. "Who do you think taught him how to do that?" he jokes. "I'm not going to be doing this forever, so it's important to teach these kids the skills they need to continue in this job."

He says he won't be doing stunts forever, but you have to wonder - at 60 years old, how is Dave even doing them now? "It's an attitude," he says with a wry smile. Sure, but when do you think you'll quit? "When the phone stops ringing. And I tell you - it better start ringing again soon cause I ain't ready to give it up yet."

Dave isn't the only stunt man in town. Actually, the entire Montreal stunt community has gained quite the reputation - a big part of why giant blockbuster films like *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Timeline* and *Battlefield Earth* choose to shoot here. It is a testament to their talents that world renowned directors like Richard Donner and Roland Emmerich would entrust these men and women with making their million dollar action shots happen and most importantly, making sure that everyone is safe in doing so.



The Art of Watching the Audition

by Randy Duniz

I'm not an actor. But I did attend an audition workshop once! Seriously though, I recently did have the opportunity to act as a cameraman for the PDC's greatly successful **Art of the Audition** workshop and I must admit what an eye opening experience it was watching what performers go through on an on-going basis when they walk into the audition room. But I am not writing this article to praise the nerves of steel most of you must have to do what you do.

I am writing this because I am not an actor - I have never had to go through an audition - and I was surprised at how many elements go into having a successful audition. Watching the instructors and participants interact, I was able to cobble together a short list of some audition tips. And seeing as how I will (thankfully) never be putting them to any use myself, I figured I may as well reveal these little secrets to those who might. Now keep in mind, I am writing from the perspective of an audition room rookie and so that is who these tips are intended for. I would also like to thank those seasoned performers (and one casting director!) in the workshop who shared them with me and now, all of you.

Don't Make Excuses

Auditioning is a nerve wracking affair. Your performance is being critiqued and what's more, you are in direct competition for that role with some of the people waiting in the next room. Do not - under any circumstances - hand the casting director, producer or director a ready made excuse not to hire you and ultimately, give that role to someone else. Don't tell them you think you're too young for a part, even if you are. Don't tell them you're too old, even if you are. If you're called for an audition, someone there thinks you may be right for the role. There's no reason to tell them they're wrong before you even get a chance to show them your stuff.

Have the Tools

Have an updated resume. Have a decent (8 x 10, preferably glossy and not a laser copy) headshot. These are the tools of the trade. Too often, headshots and resumes are thought of as supplementary material by performers. **THEY ARE A NECESSITY.** Going into an audition room without these tools (whatever the excuse) is like playing ice hockey without the skates - it's not a good way to get things started.



Know the Material

Auditions aren't about reciting lines. The director has already read the script. The casting director has already read the script. They know what the lines are. They want to see how you deliver them. It is the performer's job to say those lines in character with meaning. If you are hung up on memorizing, you are forgetting everything else.

Layer Your Audition

Breakdowns come with more than just a description of the character's age and sex. They usually give you a glimpse into the character's psyche, motivation and background. Even if some of these elements don't directly appear in the scene in which you are auditioning, understand they are still in the character's mind, shaping them as a person. Let what's under the surface influence what appears on the surface.

Have an Objective

Regardless of whether it's the title role in a project or Security Guard #4, every character has an objective. Even if it's just wanting to clock out on that boring security job and get home for dinner and some TV. Make sure you deliver your lines with a sense of motivation. What is your character's objective in this scene?

Be Flexible

Obviously, it is important to prepare for your audition - planning out how you want to handle the scene or hit a mark or stress a line. But understand, the director may see something different in the character and they may ask you to run the lines again with a different approach. It is crucial that you are able to be flexible with your approach to the scene: take into account the new direction you are given, rethink the character's new objective and give a new (if only subtly different) audition. If they want to feel safe that you can take direction on set with hundreds of people standing around and millions of dollars being spent, they have to see that you can do it first in the audition room.

Take Your Time

There is no prize for finishing first. And while there is no sense in wasting anyone's time before the audition starts, the 5-10 minutes you get to perform your scene is your time - so use it. Don't just rush to get your lines out.

Interact

There are generally at least two people in a scene so remember, you are not alone. Don't make the mistake of thinking that a scene is all about *your* character and delivering *your* lines. It's a good idea to remember that the reader is still another character with their own objectives and motivation. Listen to them. But keep in mind - your character is just as important. You aren't there for the reader's character to simply bounce their lines off of you either!

Once again, thank you to all the participants in the Art of the Audition workshop and the course instructors, Marcel Jeannin, Simon Peacock, Ellen David, Eleanor Noble, Lucinda Davis and Andrea Kenyon for these tips.

And of course, thanks to Cary Lawrence and Holly Gauthier-Frankel for organizing the workshop. Keep your eyes peeled for another Art of the Audition workshop where I promise you'll learn much more!

You will be fined \$250...

...if you work while on suspension!

Pay your dues. It will cost you less than the fine.

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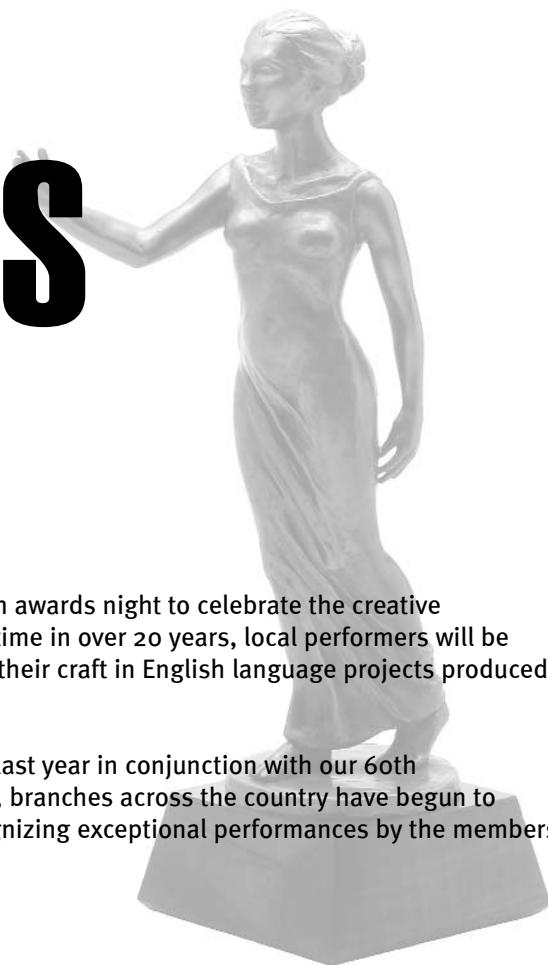
**Wed., February 16, 2005
Tuesday, March 22, 2005
Thursday, April 28, 2005**

Come to the ACTRA office
to register in person or
download the form at
www.actramontreal.ca
and mail it back with
your cheque!

Welcome New Members

Barbara Alexandre
Roch Aubert
Patrick Baby
Caroline Binet
Marilyn Butler
Richard Champagne
Isabelle Champeau
Guillaume Champoux
Veronique Clusiau
Laurent-Christophe De Ruelle
Derek Dugas
Benoît Ethier
Sophie Gendron
Mark David Goldman
Lisette Guertin
Donna Jacobs
Emmanuel "Taz" Labelle
Maude Laurendeau
Mathieu Ledoux
Mei Li
Deepak Massand
Neil Napier
Peter Novak
Trent Pardy
Nadine Picard
Martine Roy
Ralph Santostefano
Jonathan Silver
Vladimir Smith
Bernard Tanguay
Ryan Tilson

ACTRA AWARDS 2005



Early in 2005, ACTRA Montreal will be hosting an awards night to celebrate the creative accomplishments of our members. For the first time in over 20 years, local performers will be honoured for their hard work and dedication to their craft in English language projects produced in this city.

The ACTRA Award of Excellence made its return last year in conjunction with our 60th Anniversary. Now, using that as a starting point, branches across the country have begun to expand the number of awards presented - recognizing exceptional performances by the members in projects produced in their jurisdiction.

Four awards

Four categories have been singled out by ACTRA Montreal in which members may be nominated for an award. They are:

Best Performance, Female, in a Short, Film or Television Project,

Best Performance, Male, in a Short, Film or Television Project,

Best Voice Performance, Original or Dubbed, in an Animated Project, and

the **Award of Excellence**, honouring a member for their contribution to the industry throughout their career.

ACTRA Montreal's first Award of Excellence was presented to writer, director, producer and performer, William Shatner, at the ACTRA 60th Anniversary Gala in 2003.

What you need to do... Nominate your fellow members!

ACTRA Montreal is now collecting Nominations for Consideration from the membership for the Performance Awards. To nominate a member, simply return this form to ACTRA Montreal. These Nominations for Consideration will make up the pool from which the final Nominees are chosen.

A jury made up of members will screen copies of the projects in which members were Nominated for Consideration and a final list of Nominees will be released early in the New Year.

A final jury will then choose a Winner in each category and everyone is invited to the Awards ceremony next year to celebrate our members' achievements.

The key to this, of course, is your participation! We're counting on your nominations.



Terms & Conditions

The following are the terms and conditions for nominating or being nominated for consideration for the 2005 ACTRA Awards.

- Only film and television projects with a first run broadcast or theatrical release between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2004 (the past two years) are eligible. The date of production is irrelevant, except in the case of a Short, which may not have a broadcast date.
- Nominations must be received by the ACTRA Montreal office by January 31, 2005.
- Film and television projects must be produced under ACTRA's jurisdiction, but not necessarily under ACTRA Montreal's jurisdiction to be eligible. Meaning, a performance by an ACTRA Montreal member in a film shot in Toronto is eligible.
- IPA film and television projects (including CIPIPs), AIPs and MIPS (including Shorts) are eligible.
- Any ACTRA Montreal full member, apprentice member or ACTRA Extra may nominate another member.
- ACTRA Montreal members may submit more than one nomination for consideration.
- ACTRA Montreal members may be nominated for consideration for more than one role.
- Nominations may only be made for "Lead" and/or "Supporting" roles; specifically, no background roles.
- Nominees must have been ACTRA Montreal members when the project was produced to be eligible.

Cut this page out and return it to:
ACTRA Montreal, c/o Awards 2005
1450 City Councillors #530
Montreal, Qc H3A 2E6
or by fax: 514.844.2068

NOMINATE A MEMBER'S PERFORMANCE

Only ACTRA full members, apprentice members and ACTRA Extras may nominate another member. Please read the full **terms and conditions** for nominating a member for consideration.

Nominated Member: _____

Nomination Category: ☐ Best Performance, Female
☐ Best Performance, Male
☐ Best Performance, Original or Dubbed Animation

Name of Project: _____

Production Company: _____

Type of Project: ☐ Feature Film ☐ TV Series
☐ AIP ☐ MIP

Can you provide a copy of the nominated performance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Submitted by: _____

ACTRA Number: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Nominate a member for the 2005 ACTRA Montreal Award of Excellence

Nominated Member: _____

Submitted by: _____

ACTRA Number: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



ACTRA Montreal

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