ACTRA TORONTO

THE MAGAZINE FROM ACTRA TORONTO SUMMER 2012 Volume 21 • Issue 2

performers



LEADING LADIES



Eight ground-breaking performers reveal their thoughts about our business, our union and the power of women in our industry.

Performers

The magazine from ACTRA Toronto

Volume 21 * Issue 2 * Summer 2012

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Photo: www.mckennaphoto.com **Make-up:** Stacey Martin. **Stylist:** Kirsten Reader

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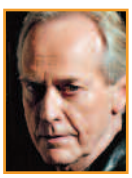

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Heather Allin
President, ACTRA Toronto

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

An update on IPA bargaining, our fall communications agenda, and my reflections on our Leading Ladies cover.

Bargaining

The current Independent Production Agreement expires this December. We've been diligently preparing for negotiations. We held over 16 focus groups, an open mike at our AGM plenary in February, and invited comments by email on **ipa@actratoronto.com**. You told us what you wanted to fight for: health and safety, dignity and respect, dubbing, care of minors, series optioning, and fair pay for stunt coordinators for the work they do keeping us safe. We heard you will stand firm against rollbacks and want wage increases and residual rights strengthened and improved. Bargaining is happening at a time when our industry has grown by over 30 per cent. Is it finally our time to share?

With no supporting business case, the Hollywood studios have asked our brothers and sisters in UBCP ACTRA to take significant roll backs in wages, residuals and benefits. As I write, UBCP ACTRA is preparing for another round of talks and expects to face even more extreme demands. This time, however, UBCP ACTRA has included ACTRA National Lead Negotiator **Stephen Waddell** on their team as well as our own **Brian Topp**. A united front. By keeping faith with performers across the country, UBCP ACTRA is demonstrating the theme of our own 2012-2013 Operating Plan - **Solidarity is Power**.

We are hopeful that negotiations, which will begin in the fall, will go well. The CMPA has hired a new lead negotiator and we look forward to making a good deal that works for everyone, building a strong industry with fair pay and work opportunities for all.

Communications

This fall we're gearing up for an integrated communications and public policy campaign. We'll kick it off at the Labour Day parade – a great event to attend and walk in solidarity with all working folks. At our Members' Conference on September 22 you can hear the reports from your executive on critical successes and issues. Then we head into bargaining and top it off with a lobby day at Queen's Park. **Respect the Artist** is our theme. Stay tuned and watch for calls to action. Find out how you can help make improvements for performers, artists, and our culture, as multi-varied as it can be.

Cover

This brings me to the fabulous cover of our magazine. On a beautiful Friday in May, I had the pleasure of walking into a studio filled with energy, excitement and camaraderie. Eight high-powered women were gathered to tell a story in a photograph or two - a story of conviction, vision and dedication. At *Performers*, we feature our stars on the cover in tribute to their commanding artistry. Our cover women (and many others) have carved significant careers. They bring audiences to our stories.

It is no secret that our industry is harder on women. There are fewer roles, fewer days - in short - less money. Women in Film and Television's 2012 report on Canada's screen-based workforce found that the 'old boy's club' still dominates at the highest levels of decision-making. At our union, however, for the first time in its 70-year history, there is a female president at *both* National (the second in our history) and Toronto (the third in our history) and the chairs of many of our committees are strong, articulate, dedicated women.



Heather Allin addresses The ACTRA Awards in Toronto, 2012. Photo by Jag Gundu

When I ran for President, one of the key focuses of my campaign was inclusion. Inclusion means many things to me: ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation and gender. This cover illustrates beautifully how the inclusion of women of all diversities is key to a healthy industry and a healthy society. It's not easy or comfortable to shine, to break new ground, to claim equality, inclusion and parity. It is, however, wholly our joy to harvest the results; we are all richer when everyone fully participates. This cover looks like what I envision for our union - community, leadership, a just society. It struts with the promise of an industry that tells all our stories - stories that remind us who we are and what is possible. This is what I want to see – all the time, everywhere. ●



Heather Allin
President, ACTRA Toronto
Summer, 2012

YOUR TORONTO IPA BARGAINING TEAM!



Heather Allin



Clé Bennett



Catherine Disher



David Gale



Sarah Gadon



David Sparrow

LADIES WHO LEAD

by Karen Woolridge, Public Relations Officer, ACTRA Toronto

Finding one day when these eight busy women were all available to play dress-up in photographer Monica McKenna's studio was a challenge. But it was worth it. These über-talented women laughed and enjoyed communing with each other through hot rollers and false eyelashes on the full-day photo shoot.

Let me tell you, these glorious actresses are no divas; these are down-to-earth gals. It seems to me that Canada's stars are an awful lot like Canadians: nice and wickedly funny.

I could be wrong but I can't seem to find another magazine in Canada which regularly puts Canadian stars on its covers other than the one you are holding in your hands. There is no Canadian counterpart to *Vanity Fair*. *Playback*, Canada's première industry magazine, has moved primarily online and now publishes a print version only twice a year, as often with a graphic cover or a photo of a producing, directing or broadcasting leader as one from the world of performing. *Hello! Canada*, which is really more of an international magazine with a Canadian insert, will often feature Royals and Hollywood stars on its covers.

All of which is symptomatic, of what **David Gale**, V.P. Communications and Publisher of *Performers*, has identified in a recent issue as a failure of Canada to promote its own stars. One of Mr. Gale's primary objectives for our magazine is to contribute, while remaining true to our union roots, to the development of a Canadian star system. When Canadian talent become household names, it is reasoned, the shopworn box-office justification for casting foreign performers might hold less sway. To that end, *Performers* has stepped in to fill the void, showcasing different Canadian stars on the cover of each issue. This has been the "cover" mandate of *Performers* since 2007.

There are many more female stars who could and should be on our covers. Truly, if we could, we would have a fold-out cover the length of a red carpet. For this issue we've asked these eight ground-breaking women to think about and comment on this business of ours and the power of women within it.



Wendy Crewson

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

Write. More and more I see the importance of creating your own work. Content needs women's voices. And have way more confidence in yourself. You are ten times more talented, original and beautiful than you think you are. Guaranteed. (Okay that's two pieces of advice)

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

Content requirements. We should be able to see our stories on our screens during prime time hours. I'm not talking about wall-to-wall Canadian content. We've been asking for three hours a week during prime time. That's it. Three. Is this too much to ask? Apparently.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

(See # 1) Women need to be creating content. (See # 2) Do you think that women aren't well represented in film and television? You aren't imagining things. Try the Bechdel test on films by asking these three simple questions. Are there two or more women in the movie - with names? Do they talk to each other? Do they talk to each other for more than 60 seconds about something other than a man? (And it's not just all those lousy B pics aimed at adolescent boys. Try it with the list of the Oscar nominated best picture movies of the past few years. Frightening. (Editor's note: The Bechdel test is attributed to cartoonist and author Alison Bechdel.)

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

That's difficult to say because there's so much - from making sure we get paid, to lobbying for our content on our screens. Our union gives us strength and voice and I am proud to be a member.

What has been your favourite role to date?

Sort of like asking who's your favourite child. That said, the role that most changed me was Sue Rodriguez. She helped me discover the true heart of a character in me. But they all have been meaningful in some way and I am endlessly grateful for the opportunity to do the thing I love most. Every time.

Wendy plays Dr. Dana Kinney in *Saving Hope*. Other selected credits: *Winnie*, *ReGenesis*, *Away From Her*, *The Santa Clause*, *The Many Trials of One Jane Doe*, *Sex Traffic*, *24*, *Better than Chocolate*, *At the End of the Day: The Sue Rodriguez Story*, *Air Force One*.



Janet–Laine Green

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

Start a savings account. You never know what each year will be like financially, so get in the habit of saving something from each paycheque.

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

As Canadians, we don't value our culture, or our stories. We need to identify and reflect who and what we are as a "distinct society." It is time for the government and the people of Canada to fall in love with our incredible country. Canadian talent needs to be appreciated as a resource as much as the oil sands!

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

We need more opportunities and easier access for Canadian artists to produce and broadcast Canadian stories. I would like to see a greater percentage of Canadian content on our screens.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

ACTRA loudly advocates for Canadian culture and Canadian content. They protect the rights of Canadian artists as they work in the industry.

What has been your favourite role to date?

'Iris' in She's The Mayor *- produced for VisionTV by* ***Sudz Sutherland*** *and* ***Jennifer Holness****. I loved playing the feisty mayor who had to recreate a new chapter in her life after her marriage breakup.*

Janet recently starred as the Mayor in *She's the Mayor*. Other selected credits: *M.V.P.*, *This is Wonderland*, *Traders*, *The Shower*, *The Beachcombers*, *Seeing Things*, *Cowboys Don't Cry*.

LADIES WHO LEAD

Arsinée Khanjian

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

Never worry about being truthful. You can't. You're a performer. Just be real. And remember, it's more important to focus on lines in the text than lines on your face.

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

Producers and Directors believing more in our talents. An all-Canadian cast can ensure a great production and engage perfectly both home and international audiences.



What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

We need more women Directors both in Television and in Film.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

Keep a vigilant eye on the industry.

What has been your favourite role to date?

*Playing **Bob Hoskin**'s mother, 'Gala', in* Felicia's Journey.

Arsinée works in both Canada and France and recently appeared in the French film *Nobody Else but You*. Other selected credits: *Adoration, Where the Truth Lies, Ararat, Sabah, Felicia's Journey, The Sweet Hereafter, Side Effects, Exotica, The Adjuster*.



Shauna MacDonald

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

*Find a mentor! I am eternally grateful to have had the brilliant actress, **Babz Chula**, be a mentor to me. She was an incredibly inspiring acting coach and she became one of my best friends too. Babz demanded authenticity. Sometimes I still hear her voice, calling me out on stuff, like she always would, encouraging me to go beyond my comfort level. She is still very much alive in each and every one of the performers she took under her expansive wings.*

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

I would like to see an overhaul of the Tax Credit system – specifically changes to residency rules – which limit a performer's access to work nationwide. We've all seen this in breakdowns -- "Must be a resident of Ontario." As we are all Canadians, I would like to see the best person get the job, no matter what province gets their tax dollars.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

More and more women are assuming top positions in the industry, so I think there is no question about what women can accomplish if given the opportunity. I think real progress would occur if we were to elect a Prime Minister who champions the Arts and commits to promoting and nurturing our culture at home and abroad, thus creating more opportunities for all people in the Arts. This kind of leader would help our entire nation progress. And if this leader were female, even better!

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

ACTRA creates community – we are collectively a "family of performers." We pay our dues and we protect each other, we support each other and celebrate each other. Like most families, occasionally we argue… but then we vote and make up! And we throw a great party!!

What has been your favourite role to date?

Playing 'Officer Erica Miller' in Trailer Park Boys. *Hands down, this was the most fun I've ever had. And years later, it even got me off of a traffic violation!*

Shauna has been a series regular on *Aaron Stone, Majority Rules!* and *Trailer Park Boys*. Other selected credits: *The Guys who Move Furniture, Saw VI, Production Office, Breakfast with Scott, Undercover Brother, The Porcelain Pussy, Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion.*

Wise Words: *•Write. •Start a savings account. •Focus more on the lines in the text than the lines on your face. •Find a mentor. •Find out what makes YOU stand out from the crowd. •Recognize that art is a business. •Nurture a life outside of the industry.*



Sheila McCarthy

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

Carve out your own unique identity. Be yourself. Find what make YOU stand out from the crowd. Don't take no for an answer and do something EVERY day to achieve your goals. Believe you can. Imagine you can. Talk to old broads like me!

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

Not sure.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

They are progressing!!!!

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

ACTRA represents us and celebrates us wonderfully. They believe in us. I have enormous respect for all those behind the scenes doing all the unglamorous work to keep our industry thriving.

What has been your favourite role to date?

The one I'm playing right now: 'Gert' in Lost in Yonkers. *But on TV and film, I loved Aunt Laura in* Emily of New Moon. *Best, deepest, saddest, most rounded role ever.*

Sheila played Sarah on *Little Mosque on the Prairie.* Other selected credits: *The Stone Angel, Emily of New Moon, Lotus Eaters, Picket Fences, Die Hard 2, I've Heard the Mermaids Singing, A Nest of Singing Birds.*



The Leading Ladies Wardrobe

Cover set-up

Janet:
Jacket, Greta Constantine
Blouse, Calvin Klein
Pants, Pink Tartan
Necklace, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Manolo Blahnik @ Davids

Jackie:
Shirt, Lafayette 148 @ Toni Plus
Earrings, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Pants and shoes, Jackie's own

Wendy:
Jacket, Blouse and Pants, Pink Tartan
Hat, Club Monaco
Earrings, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Sergio Rossi @ Davids

Shauna:
Shirt, Pink Tartan
Pants, Calvin Klein
Necklace, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Bracelet, Dannijo @ The Narwhal
Shoes, Sergio Rossi @ Davids

Karen:
Shirt, Theory @ the Bay
Pants, her own
Bracelets, Jenny Bird

Sheila:
Dress, Pink Tartan
Cuff, Jenny Bird
Shoes, Christian Louboutin @ Davids

Arsinée:
Jacket, Theory @ The Bay
Shirt, Free People @ The Bay
Pants, ALC @ The Narwhal
Shoes, Valentino @ Davids

Melanie:
Jacket, Helmut Lang @ The Narwhal
Tank, stylist's own
Pants, Helmut Lang @ The Narwhal
Earrings, Jenny Bird
Necklace, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, René Caovilla @ Davids

Gown set-up

Wendy:
Gown, Maxi Boutique
Earrings, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Bracelet, Dannijo @ The Narwhal
Shoes, Sergio Rossi @ David's

Jackie:
Dress, Toni Plus
Earrings and Necklaces,
Carole TannenbaumVintage Couture
Shawl, stylist's own
Shoes, Jackie's own

Shauna:
Gown, Maxi Boutique
Earrings, Dannijo @ The Narwhal
Bracelet, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Sergio Rossi @ David's

Melanie:
Dress, Maxi Boutique
Earrings and Bracelets,
Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, René Caovilla @ Davids

Sheila:
Gown, Greta Constantine
Earrings & Bracelets,
Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Christian Louboutin @ David's

Arsinée:
Gown, Greta Constantine
Earrings and Bracelets,
Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Valentino @ David's

Karen:
Dress, BCBG @ the Bay
Earrings and Bracelet, Jenny Bird
Necklace, Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Balmain

Janet:
Gown, Maxi Boutique
Earrings and Bracelet,
Carole Tannenbaum Vintage Couture
Shoes, Manolo Blahnik @ Davids

LADIES

Melanie Nicholls-King

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

I always say to young aspiring actors; if there is anything else that you're passionate about, DO IT!!!

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

I would like the residual system to be revisited.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

We need to be in more executive decision-making positions so that when decisions are made we'll be there to make them.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

Lobbying and advocating with the government on behalf of Canadian actors.

What has been your favourite role to date?

It's hard to choose because they feel like my children. (smile)

Melanie plays Noelle on *Rookie Blue*. Other selected credits: *One Life to Live*, *How She Move*, *The Wire*, *Mercy*, *Traders*, *Goosebumps*, *Rude*.





Jackie Richardson

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

Do not enter this business unless you have a passion for it. That said, I would advise that you recognize that art is a business and in order to free your creative side, there must be a balance between the art and the business. We are fortunate to have a strong union that can help guide and assist you so I also encourage new artists to join ACTRA at their first opportunity.

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

Right now, I think public awareness of the importance of our industry to the country should be a priority. The Arts generate billions of dollars to the economy and we need public support to stop the downsizing and the eroding of our culture.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

We women must encourage and rally around any of our sister artists who have the passion and skills to pursue producing, directing and certainly writing.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

ACTRA provides an anchor in our otherwise 'living on the edge' state of being. Whatever your concerns are, you can call ACTRA and get assistance and/or advice. This is a blessing not to be taken for granted. Most recently, the union helped me through my medical situation and I wish to thank everyone who gave me advice, assistance and caring support.

What has been your favourite role to date?

I get so excited about each new role that I take on and so I feel the so called cliché 'whatever role I'm doing is my favourite' applies to me. They all provide challenges and growth potential.

Jackie has been called Canada's Reigning Queen of Jazz and Blues.
Other selected credits: *The Gospel According to the Blues*, *The Incomparable Jackie Richardson*, *Majority Rules!*, *Doodlebops*, *Sins of the Father*, *RoboCop*, *Catwalk*, *Milk and Honey*, *T and T*, *Turning to Stone*.

WHO LEAD

Karen Robinson

What one piece of advice would you give to a young woman starting out in the business?

If this is the only thing you can be happy doing with your life, then be kind to yourself and others, nurture a life outside of the industry, and save your money.

What one thing would you like to see fixed about the business in Canada?

That Canadian networks support and promote quality Canadian product. Same for our government.

What needs to happen next for women to progress in our industry?

More women in the writing rooms and directors' chairs.

In your opinion, what is the most important thing that ACTRA does?

Ensuring safe and respectful working environments for its members. And fighting for fair pay.

What has been your favourite role to date?

If I have to choose, it's got to be a tie: 'Billie' in the play Harlem Duet *and 'Ingrid' in the series* King.

Karen plays Ingrid on *King*. Other selected credits: *Ghett'a Life, The Gospel According to the Blues, The Line, Lars and the Real Girl, Slings and Arrows, Love, Sex and Eating the Bones, Soul Food.*



NOTICE TO ALL ACTRA MEMBERS

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" You are my lotto for old age"
— Steven Walsh

"Thank you Jim for teaching me about my finances" **— Maria del Mar**

" Your management has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders" **— Shawn Lawrence**

" More ACTRA members should be managed by you. Thanks Brother"
— Maurice Dean Wint

NO CONSULTING FEE FOR ACTRA MEMBERS

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Female-Driven Global TV Series Gets a Second Season



Bomb Girls

By Natasha Greenblatt



Antonio Cupo ('Marco'), **Charlotte Hegele** ('Kate'), **Meg Tilly** ('Lorna'), **Ali Liebert** ('Betty') **Jodi Balfour** ('Gladys') in *Bomb Girls*

Photos courtesy of Shaw Media

No, *Bomb Girls* is not about those really cool girls in high school. Set during World War II, the number one new Canadian series which premiered last fall tells the stories of women working in munitions factories and has been renewed for another 12 episodes. What is it about this new drama from Back Alley Films that has generated such appeal? Is it the portrayal of strong female characters in a traditionally male workplace?

"*Bomb Girls* is a feminist story." Co-creator and head writer **Michael MacLellan** doesn't shy away from using the "F" word. "We are looking at the roots of feminism, we are looking at how those women paved roads that in the ´60s the next generation was able to build on."

The 1940s was certainly a time of massive upheaval for women, especially in Canada. Women were moving from more traditional jobs, such as child rearing and garment making, to working with steel, and pouring explosive materials to send to war. It was a time when, as *Bomb Girls* co-creator and director **Adrienne Mitchell** puts it, "Women were going from baking cakes to making bombs."

Is it surprising that a show about women's emergence in the workforce should have such an unusually high percentage of women directing, writing, producing and acting, a percentage that's still unusual in the film and television industry?

"Working with so many women would have been absolutely ordinary in every way were it not for the fact that it's all too rare," notes actress **Lisa Norton**. Norton plays Edith, a factory worker who becomes a single mother when her husband is killed in the war. "All the female actors working on the show were a little giddy to find we were on our own turf for once." And, she adds, "everyone kept asking about it."

According to the *Globe And Mail* in 2011, only 32 per cent of the active members of the Writers Guild of Canada are women. Women in View, a Canadian non-profit organization dedicated to fostering racial and gender equity in Canadian media, tells us that only 17 per cent of directors on Canadian prime time series are female.



"... it's really important that women's stories are being told by women. When this happens women are portrayed with more complexity, more fallibility, less objectification."
—Kate Hennig

And down south the numbers are falling. The percentage of female writers on prime time television fell from 29 per cent in 2010 to 15 per cent in 2011 and the number of female directors fell from 16 per cent to 11 per cent according to a recent study from San Diego State University. Sobering statistics that make *Bomb Girls* seem all the more relevant.

In its first season, the *Bomb Girls*' writers' room included three female writers and two males and its six episodes were directed by two females and one male. Out of the first 15 characters on the call sheet, nine are women.

Actress **Kate Hennig** plays Adele, a "rich bitch who drinks and smokes." She remarks, "I think it's really important that women's stories are being told by women. When this happens women are portrayed with more complexity, more fallibility, less objectification. And I really think this appeals to both men and women. We all want to witness the stories of fully realized characters."

Award winning actress and novelist **Meg Tilly** was convinced to return to the (small) screen after a long hiatus, to portray the lead role of Lorna, in charge of the women factory workers. A woman in her 40s, Lorna is a complex character. Fiercely demanding and protective of her girls, she is suspicious of 'foreigners' and unafraid to stand up for her beliefs, even when they are misguided.

"What I love about Lorna is her humanness. That's what I like about all of Michael's characters; you don't have the villain, and you don't have the good guy, everybody has their challenges and everybody has their strengths."

It's not just her humanity that makes Lorna an unconventional leading lady for mainstream television. She also has a healthy sex drive, something uncommon in older female roles. As well-known comic **Tina Fey** writes in her recent memoir *Bossypants*, "I have observed that women, at least in comedy, are labeled "crazy" after a certain age…. I have a suspicion – and hear me out, 'cause this is a rough one – I have a suspicion that the definition of "crazy" in show business is a woman who keeps talking even after no one wants to f… her anymore."

But is being sexual on camera as an older woman necessarily empowering?

Meg Tilly didn't initially think so. "I thought yes! Now I'm middle-aged, I won't have to make out with strangers any more. That's one of the things I was celebrating - that I was past that age where that would be required." So she was surprised when she first read her character's love story with Marcos, a younger Italian factory worker. "It's funny because love scenes are the hardest thing for me," she confides.

"But it's true to life, and I think that was right, and I think that was brave. And I think that was perhaps part of the appeal. I have so many women my age and older coming up to me and they get into arguments about which guy is better for her, and some like neither, and they talk about her like she's a real person."

MacLellan adds, "(Lorna) has a power and a poignancy to her experience that appeals to a vast number of people that are sitting at home deciding what to watch on television. That's one of the reasons the show had the ratings that it did. There was a way in for many different types of people. You had the 20-year-olds, but you also had the 40-year-olds. "

Bomb Girls is always authentic to the 1940s, he says. "I wanted to have a very unabashed look at female sexuality but still appropriate to the time. You have for example a very tentative love story between Betty and Kate but they never go anywhere. Betty would never use the word lesbian. They might be making certain choices but they don't have a language to describe what they're doing."

Actress **Jodi Balfour** plays Gladys, a rich girl who goes against class convention and her father's wishes to make explosives. She responds joyfully to the contradictions in her character. "Gladys doesn't have a box. She isn't a stereotype. She has a huge, complicated, generous heart. But she also makes giant mistakes."

"All of the women in *Bomb Girls* are trying to break free of the fetters that chain them – both external and self-imposed," so says actor **Jim Codrington**. He plays Leon on the show, a musician and factory worker who forms an unlikely friendship with the naïve factory girl Kate, played by **Charlotte Hegele**.

And it's not only the women who challenge the status quo. Lorna's husband Bob, a veteran of the First World War, calls into question the ide-

Actor **Jim Codrington** plays Leon on the show, a musician and factory worker who forms an unlikely friendship with the naïve factor girl Kate, played by **Charlotte Hegele**.





Charlotte Hegele ('Kate'), **Ali Liebert** ('Betty'), **Anastasia Phillips** ('Vera'), and **Jodi Balfour** ('Gladys'). Photo courtesy of Shaw Media

alism of war. And Leon risks his job by teaching Kate to sing Jazz.

"Leon's character has so many possibilities because his struggles are as real and substantial as those of the central female characters," explains Codrington. "He is an outsider by virtue of his race and yet he is a singer/sax player who is comfortable and confident within himself and viscerally wants to -and does- connect with people through his music."

"The '40s was not this sweet old-fashioned sepia-toned time of history that we generally see it presented as," MacLellan insists. "What was in fact going on was a time of incredible freedom, a real sense that we didn't know whether Hitler was going to show up on our doorstep tomorrow, so tonight we're living for it, we're having fun. When you hear these oral histories of women and men who lived through that time it is really shocking how modern their behaviour was. They were in some cases more audacious and courageous then we are today."

So what's changed since 1940? According to the 2006 census, women now make up 48 per cent of the workforce, from underpaid labour to highly paid, powerful government positions. But have things changed as much as we'd like to think?

Says MacLellan, "The crazy stuff that's going around about women's control over their own reproductive health, how this is bizarrely back in the news. Looking at the story that Lorna goes through, what would her options be? We are talking about a woman who was living in a time that certain people are arguing to go back to."

But perhaps, at least in the world of television, things are slowly starting to change. While the statistics clearly show us how far we have to go, many Writers' Rooms are becoming more inclusive. Canadian shows such as *Rookie Blue* and *Saving Hope*, both co-created by **Morwyn Brebner**, are written by a host of female writers and feature strong female parts.

As Balfour says, "When something like *Bomb Girls* comes along, it is huge. It is so refreshing. So important. *Bomb Girls* isn't afraid to offer mainstream television audiences a group of women who don't automatically fit into categories. They're whole, fleshy, interesting women."

Codrington echoes this sentiment. "I think that any story which shows historically disenfranchised people having the courage and tenacity to try to realize their dreams can be inspirational for others in similar situations. *Bomb Girls* is a "period" piece but the themes transcend time, gender and situation." ●



Natasha Greenblatt is an actress and writer. Most recently she played Bastian in Roseneath Theatre's *The Neverending Story* and Sheila in *Bomb Girls*. Her writing has appeared in *SummerWorks Works* magazine and *The McGill Daily*. Her first full-length play, *The Peace Maker*, inspired by her travels in Israel and Palestine, has been featured in Theatre Passe Muraille's Buzz Festival, Nightwood Theatre's Groundswell Festival and The Harold Green Jewish Theatre's In the Beginning Festival.



My feet still hurt

What I Remember from 5 Years of Chairing the ACTRA Awards in Toronto

by Karen Ivany

February 27, 2003, 6 p.m. in the sparkling foyer of the Royal Ontario Museum. I'm alone and already pacing. Clutching my smudged, hand-written list, I'm sure my wobbling heels on the polished, marble stairs will send me tumbling into Canada's largest totem pole.

Did I own a cell phone then? My dial-up internet service ensured my emails flew at the speed of carrier pigeons. How had I managed to wrangle 24 ACTRA members to volunteer on this prestigious, unprecedented night? And why didn't I bring extra shoes?

Other details of our inaugural ACTRA Awards are murky, although, looking back, I remain awed by the accomplishments of original Co-Chairs, **Jackie Laidlaw** and **Ferne Downey**. However meticulously planned, these women essentially improvised their way, setting the standards for what has become our landmark event, the map I would follow years later.

From its original inception in 1972, the ACTRA Awards focused on performance, a recognition given to members by members, in celebration of our craft. The original statuette, known as the "Nellie," proudly graces the shelves of many talented recipients. 1986 marked the final year ACTRA awarded Nellies.

In September, 2002, ACTRA Toronto's Executive Member-At-Large, Jackie Laidlaw, was asked to recreate the ACTRA Awards in Toronto, part of the 2003 ACTRA 60th Anniversary celebrations. There was no blueprint, no vision, not even a trophy. The only guidelines were to have three awards: Outstanding Performance – Male, Outstanding Performance – Female, and The Award of Excellence.

After a national competition to find an artist to design the new statuette, world renowned sculptor, **Adrienne Alison**, created the beautiful woman we now present. (In 2003, plaques were presented in lieu of statuettes, which were not completed until later that year.)

The first suggestion was that a trophy and a PowerPoint presentation with nominees' headshots be presented at a luncheon ceremony. Ferne and Jackie fought for performance clips (which arrived on DVD, Beta, ¾ inch and VHS) and a glamourous evening gala!

As the years passed, attendance grew and we established our home at the beautiful Carlu. I graduated to corsage pinner and trophy presenter. Every year Jackie and Ferne kept me busy and every year I wondered what the hors d'oeuvres tasted like and how the show looked from the auditorium. Every year my feet were killing me before the Host appeared onstage.

Until 2008, when Ferne suggested I put my name forward for Chair.

Like Jackie, I would spend five shows backstage on headset in running shoes.

My vision for the awards continued to be to shine a light on our entire membership. Each year saw unique innovations. Single musical acts grew to full bands.



Paul Ledoux and **Ferne Downey** (2010)
Photo: Jag Gundu



Jackie Laidlaw (2005)

Underscoring for *In Memoriam* went from recorded to live. Multiple presenters emerged. Opening montages were created featuring hundreds of additional faces in the show. Your faces.

My goal was simple: involve more members in submissions and as jurors, guests, participants and creators of the show. In essence: more YOU. And try to shorten the bar lines.

Host, **Elvira Kurt**, must have been reading my mind for five years. Her energetic playful ranting monologue repeated my theme for the 2008 awards: "It's all About You." And you loved it.

I've been astounded by the generosity of all our hosts and musicians who've donated their talent with pleasure. And the graciousness that our nominees have displayed inspires me.

Selected ridiculous and fond memories include: not knowing where the trophies were at the five-minute call (twice); standing over (some would say, straddling) a fainted guest in the Round Room doorway to prevent throngs of stampeding feet from trampling her; seriously doubting the giant rented bear head would fit in the Carlu elevator; testing lava lamps; watching 320 freshly printed mini member headshots dry on my kitchen counter; rewriting the Award of Excellence intro with **Gordon Pinsent** over the phone the night before the show ("More jokes, Karen!"); and watching hundreds of still-smiling guests gliding over the dance floor long after the music had stopped, reluctant to leave the party.

One element remains unchanged: your diligent staffers who effortlessly bring every idea the Awards Committee dreams up to life. Without **Karen Ritson**, **Eda Zimler**, **Karen Woolridge**, **Kim Hume**, **Chris Faulkner**, **Joanne Deer**, **Carol Taverner**, **Freda Merritt-Gambrill** and all the staff volunteers on the check-in desk, there would be no ACTRA Awards in Toronto.

Oh, and my feet still hurt.

After months of shadowing me, I have endorsed and Toronto Council has confirmed the appointment of **Kirsten Bishopric** as your new Awards Committee Chair. I look forward to her fancy footwork! ●



Janice Hawke (Voice Jury Coordinator and Backstage Voice) and **Karen Ivany** (2011) Photo: Tricia Clarke



Staff Volunteers L to R: Janesse Leung, Ruth McKinnon, Cindy Ramjattan, Wendy Rostern. Photo: Jag Gundu



Kirsten Bishopric, new Awards Chair (2012)
Photo: Jag Gundu

Did You Know?



Awards Trivia

For the 2003 inaugural awards, Host **Peter Keleghan** was replaced by Show Writer **David Huband** due to a last minute scheduling conflict. (Other Hosts have been: **Patrick McKenna**, **Colin Mochrie**, **Teresa Pavlinek**, **Geri Hall**, **Ennis Esmer** and **Elvira Kurt**)

Peter Keleghan has hosted the awards three times (2004, 2005 and 2006), been nominated twice, received the Award of Excellence and presented the same to friends **Colin Mochrie** in 2010 and **Rick Mercer** in 2012.

Attendance has grown from 500 to over 1200.

Media coverage of the Awards has included *Toronto Sun*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Metro News*, *CBC*, *Playback*, *Hello! Canada* and various online sites.

2012 Host Elvira Kurt memorized her monologue, adding another half dozen jokes between leaving rehearsal at 5 p.m. and the show start at 9 p.m.

Every featured musical performer in the show has been an ACTRA Toronto member, and so are the DJs.

The Outstanding Performer – Voice category was added in 2007.

In Memoriam was added in 2008 and has been produced by David Gale since 2010.

The original jury consisted of four (4) ACTRA Toronto performers and now includes 32 members participating as Nominating and Final Jurors for both On-Camera and Voice categories.

All music played while the audience files into the auditorium is Canadian, often featuring more ACTRA members, such as **The Elastocitizens**, **The Pocket Co.**, **Jully Black** and **Drake**.

The show Hosts, Musical Performers, DJ and Presenters are selected by the Awards Committee.

The Awards Committee consists of volunteer members, some of whom have been volunteering since 2003, the V.P. Communications, and the President. Members on the Awards Committee: **Cayle Chernin** & **Wayne Robson** (deceased), **Heather Allin**, **Janet Bailey** (past member), **Gina Clayton**, **Toni Ellwand**, **Kelly Fanson** (past member), **David Gale**, **Janice Hawke**, **Jani Lauzon**, **Lyn Mason Green** (past member/past VP Communications), **Elizabeth McCallum** (original and returning committee member), **Jocelyne Zucco**.

The Awards Chair oversees all elements of both the show and party: confirming hosts, establishing the show running order, scheduling rehearsals, booking the DJ, choosing nominee performance clips and creating the Award of Excellence career retrospective reel.

After official photos are taken, the media room is opened for all guests to congratulate the winners and pose for personal pics.

The awards submissions are now **OPEN ALL YEAR LONG** at: **www.actratoronto.com**! If you've recently seen a truly outstanding performance, visit the Awards page to submit, before you forget!

BILL & SONS TOWING HOOKS NICHOLAS CAMPBELL

by Marsha Mason

In triple Gemini winner **Nicholas Campbell** you have one of the finest character actors in Canada. From gritty anti-hero Domenic Da Vinci on *Da Vinci's Inquest*, to shady ex-con Martin Poole on *Republic of Doyle*, Campbell's work lures viewers to their sets.

His role in *Bill and Sons Towing* is that of Bill Vanderchuck, owner of a small teetering-on-bankruptcy tow truck company forced to hand over the reins to his four sons after suffering a heart attack.

It's a comedy.

And it's a comedy you won't find on the small screen, though you will find it on the small-er screen: *Bill and Sons Towing* will be shown exclusively on the internet.

"It was a long shot," admits co-creator **Mark De Angelis** (*The Ron James Show*) on the idea of landing Campbell. De Angelis and partner **Charles Ketchabaw** (*The Tale of a Town*) were already building their web series around the dynamic of multi-Canadian Comedy Award winners *The Imponderables* and Campbell was at the top of their minds to play the head of their dysfunctional family.

Credibility being crucial, and knowing they'd be battling a common 'anyone with a camera' mindset, the pair strove to raise the bar on their production from the outset. They surrounded themselves with top-notch talent like Director **Vivieno Caldinelli** (*Picnicface*) and AD **Mark Pancer** (*Degrassi: TNG*) and made sure there were completed 'bibles,' scripts, budgets and schedules.

They scored a major victory when their Independent Production Fund Application was approved. "Our evaluators were really enthusiastic about the comedy potential in *Bill and Sons Towing*," says **Andra Sheffer**, Executive Director, IPF Toronto. The IPF, which funds independent producers, recently committed to channeling all funding into web series for the next three years.

Their second victory was becoming an ACTRA signatory. Along with the creative freedom of working on the internet, going ACTRA gave them greater legitimacy to approach a higher level of talent.

Scripts in hand, the duo pitched Campbell's agent.

And hope became reality.

"The writing was superb," states Campbell, "Bill is a terrific part. Mark and Charles bring a wealth of experience to the table."

Other impressive ACTRA talent making appearances on the project include **Sonja Smits**, **Jayne Eastwood**, **Daniel Kash**, **Angela Asher**, **Mary Ashton**, **Sandy Jobin-Bevans**, and **Allana Harkin**.

And Campbell reveled in the experience.

"It was a happy place to work. It's easier to be good when the other cast is so talented. I think it has a really good chance of becoming something bigger."

Episodes are on **billandsonstowing.com**. Feel free to leave a 'customer' rant on their 1-888 number. ●









From top:
Nicholas Campbell
Jayne Eastwood and Sonja Smits
Daniel Kash

Marsha Mason is an actor-soldier/writer who gained membership playing the mother of a family that had a balloon dog for a pet. She likes the funny. She loves her job.



The Imponderables with Nicholas Campbell

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Still Enjoying the Ride

The making of an ACTRA Toronto Stunt Performer

by Angelica Lisk



I remember the first time I rode my uncle's motorcycle. I was 13 and full of spunk. His place had a lot of land and was a fun place to go and just let loose.

The ride that day didn't turn out very well. I ended up going way too fast and losing control. I was speeding straight toward a thick wire fence that ran alongside the Trent-Severn Waterway, all the while hearing my mother screaming in the distance. I somehow managed to lay the bike down on its side and slide under the cable, just like they did in the movies. It was awesome and I was hooked!

Given my family history, I suppose it was inevitable that I would be drawn to both sports and the arts. My father (Joe Williams) was a professional NFL and CFL football player, my uncle (Alfie Lisk) a professional stock car racer and national motorcycle climb champion, my great-uncle (Cornelius Opthof) sang Baritone for the Canadian Opera Company for over 50 years and my mother, Ann Lisk, was a model.

It was amazing growing up in a small town with the security of your community: trees to climb, lakes to swim in and tons of places to play. Unfortunately for me there was one underlying problem; I was a little girl of mixed race living in a colourless town and was picked on repeatedly. I always felt a little alone and fully immersing myself in sports was my only real escape, my only true remedy.

After mastering pretty much every sport, I became quite the jock in my small town of Trenton, winning Public School, High School and Regional titles in everything from Gymnastics to Soccer. 'Athlete of the Year' was heard around the house more than a handful of times and, in time, I noticed the teasing start to subside. My mother tried to keep me in modeling and dance class but all I wanted to do was get dirty and beat the boys at sports!

In my teens, I was scouted by a track coach to move to Toronto and train for the Olympics in Track and Field. I realized a few things after moving to the big city. First, there wasn't a real career in being a Heptathlete, and second, I finally felt like I was in a place where I really belonged - I saw people who looked like me. It was great.

I was quickly drawn to the Arts and booked a few commercials and videos. Guess Mom was right about those dance and modeling classes after all! I started taking some acting classes and did some background work to get experience on set. Then in my 20s, I moved to L.A. and taught gymnastics and dance to celebrities' kids while honing my skills.

When I returned to Toronto it seemed like the acting thing wasn't going to happen for me or any other of the ethnic girls I knew in the business. There were not a lot of shows with ethnic ladies as leads or even supporting roles. I was very discouraged and tried a few "real jobs" which I was terrible at because I would daydream about being on TV all day.

After booking a few more commercials, I finally booked an actor role playing a 'Henchwoman' in the movie *Half Baked* starring **Dave Chappelle** and was approached by the Stunt Coordinator, **Branko Racki**, to see if, "any of us ladies could do anything other than act." This guy had a way with words. He was larger than life and I liked him immediately.

I told him about my athletic background and showed him some gymnastic tricks and a few punches (I thought I was so cool!). He smiled and pulled me aside to say that being an actress was okay, but being a stunt woman was really where it was at. He also explained that there weren't a lot of roles for ethnic actresses at the moment but if I honed my skills at stunts I would be one of the only ones and could become very successful.

So I did just that – kept up with my gymnastics, worked out at the gym, took martial arts training, got my motorcycle licence — and Branko sent my name around the industry and calls started coming in for stunt jobs. I was so grateful, and still am.

Forward to 16 years later and I have stories that you would never believe! I've been able to shoot guns, slide cars, jump through windows, beat up guys (a personal favourite), scuba dive, get set on fire, put out fires, fight a Predator, run from a Hulk, ride a motorcycle, get shot in the head and be eaten by Zombies. All of it has been amazing for me, and I've enjoyed the ride immensely. There are so many opportunities in stunts and to push yourself athletically is the most amazing and empowering feeling you can ever have! It's a career, it's a sisterhood, it's a place to expel your creative energy and it can take you places that most people only dream about. I have had the pleasure of working with some of the most talented people I have ever met and I'm still constantly learning something new on every show. I am often in awe of the things I have seen, and am very proud to be a part of this community of such amazing performers! I feel lucky to have found the perfect balance, the best of both worlds, being an actor and a stunt performer.

In a kind of adolescent way, I always say in the back of my head before performing a stunt, "Anything you can do I can do better." This, of course, is directed at the boys of my youth. Then I think to myself, 'I wonder where I would be today if I had never tried my Uncle's motorcycle?' ●



Angelica Lisk-Hann is an ACTRA Toronto Actor and Stunt Performer. Recent credits include: *Warm Bodies*, *Resident Evil*, *Total Recall*, *Cosmopolis*, *Sacrifice*, *Saw 3D*, *The Incredible Hulk*.

I've been able to shoot guns, slide cars, jump through windows, beat up guys (a personal favourite), scuba dive, get set on fire, put out fires, fight a Predator, run from a Hulk, ride a motorcycle, get shot in the head and be eaten by Zombies. All of it has been amazing for me, and I've enjoyed the ride immensely.

Members Conference

Here's what you missed!



If Award of Excellence recipient, **Rick Mercer**, keeping you in stitches during the "Lunch With" session wasn't enough to entice you out to our best-attended conference —our Winter 2012 Conference— here are a few more highlights to have you itching to get out to our next one.



Question Period at the Plenary Photo: Jag Gundu



Sarah Hansen demonstrates Performance Capture. Photo: Jag Gundu



Art Hindle directs nominee **Shawn Doyle** in workshop. Photo: Jag Gundu

- I received an enthusiastic email from a member who had attended the DIY "Self-Taping" session. Immediately upon leaving the conference he went out and purchased the materials needed to self-tape like a pro and save big bucks.

- People are still getting in touch with some of our "24-hour Co-op Challenge" participants to congratulate them on their films, shown at the plenary before our over 300-member audience, and discuss possible projects.

- Casting Directors are pitching us about sessions they'd like to hold at future conferences to guide our members through valuable, common, and yet rarely touched-on audition situations like: how to audition with one line or even one word!

- Some big-name members were in the audience for our "Fly on the Wall" session with **Jason Knight** and **Michael Kennedy** and were delighted by how informative the session was and how well-prepared our members were. Way to represent!

- **Arsinée Khanjian** beautifully articulated her process and put it into action when playing with her scene partners in scenes from *The Sweet Hereafter*, *Adoration* and *Sabah*.

- **Michael Cohen**'s "Auditioning for TV Comedy" session had many Oh! Aha! moments that left participants howling and wanting more.

It is gratifying to hear from many members requesting that sessions and guests be brought back. Stay tuned for information about our Fall 2012 Conference in September which will throw some focus on our younger members and re-run a few of our popular sessions. I promise you - it will pack a punch! — **Nicole St. Martin**, Conference Committee Chair

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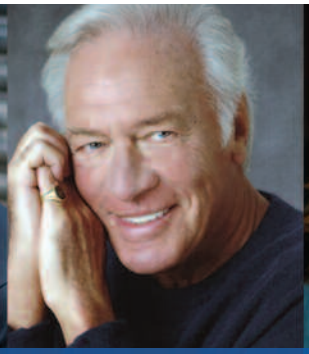
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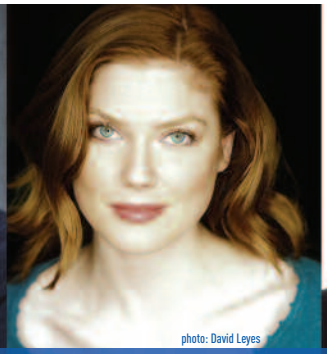
Outstanding Achievement in a Stunt Speciality — **John Stoneham Sr.**



Outstanding Performance — Voice
Billy MacLellan



Outstanding Performance — Male
Christopher Plummer



Outstanding Performance — Female
Amy Price-Francis



ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence
Rick Mercer

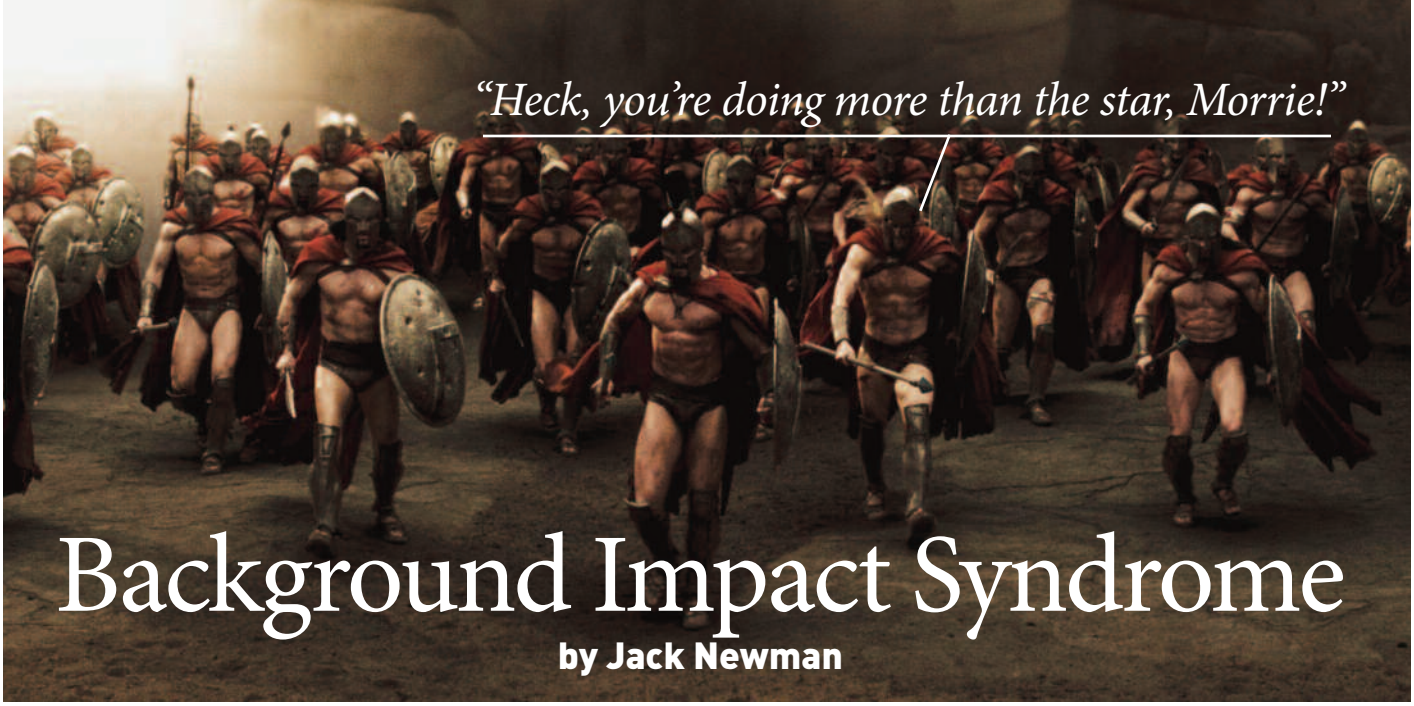
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"Heck, you're doing more than the star, Morrie!"

Background Impact Syndrome

by Jack Newman

I've always been interested in science. Reading about the Red Shift in Background Radiation holds a poetic mystery for me and leads me to reflecting on my 25 years doing Background work. I am inspired to understand the components of being part of a team and at the same time wondering, "What am I doing here, anyway?" It helps that I minored in Reverse Psychology as an undergrad.

I'm thinking of doing a study on what I call Background Impact Syndrome. How often have I sat in Background holding feeling like Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* waiting for my close-up? "Hey, wait a minute, what do you mean, don't make eye contact with **Jennifer Jason Leigh**? No, I won't get off **Madonna**'s lap. This story doesn't make sense if I don't walk in front of Denzel. This is all about me, isn't it?"

One thing is certain: the planet of Background upgrades can be a bit obscure. I have been upgraded a couple of times as a Background performer. Often I'm surprised when I'm upgraded. Sometimes I'm surprised when I'm not. Blurring matters further is the true Urban Myth that on **Jim Sheridan**'s movies many Background got upgraded. There are so many variables in what constitutes an upgrade that there is likely not a 'Grand Unified Theory' to help us understand the physics of the phenomenon.

To begin with, the criteria for an upgrade can change with each re-negotiated collective agreement. For example, in the National Commercial Agreement, an upgrade to S.O.C. is now closer to the SAG model and requires that the performer be recognizable **and** illustrate or react to the commercial message.

In IPA land, the on-set discourse can sometimes get us all worked up for nothing. Co-workers encourage each other, asserting that they are doing significantly more than Background work, with supportive words like, "Heck, you're doing more than the star, Morrie!"

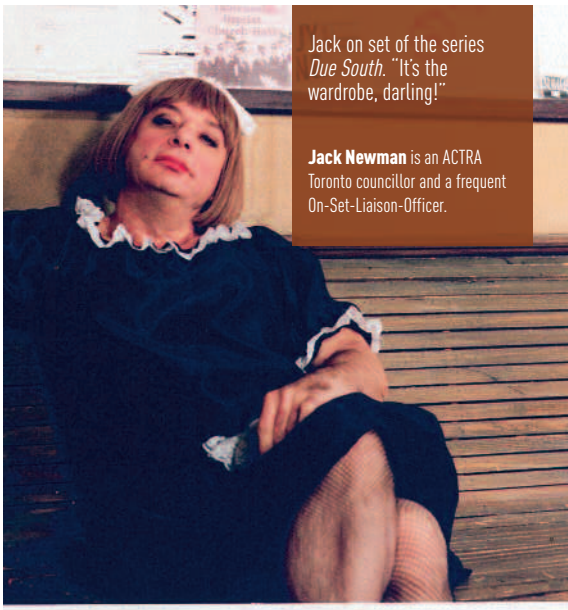
But subjectively, we don't always know the impact of our work, referring sometimes to mythical criteria that may not be valid or current, e.g.: "My character has a name in the script, the director talked to me, **Billy Bob Thornton** looked at me."

ACTRA Stewards in both the Commercial and IPA departments tell me that all requests for upgrades are taken seriously. Unfortunately, sometimes the performer's reason for thinking they should be upgraded is not supported by any language in the collective agreement on which the steward can hang their argument. Some upgrade requests are accepted by producers without argument. Others that are in the less-obvious-but-perhaps-legitimate category are considered by a committee of stewards and other department staff to determine whether the performer has a winnable case. The stewards consider **1) the performer's written reasoning for pursuing the upgrade 2) whether their reasoning is supported by the relevant collective agreement 3) the rough footage from the day which must support the performer's claim 4) any other written eyewitness testimony.** The committee members look at the footage and rely upon their considerable joint experience viewing thousands of requests (not unlike a judge referencing case law and precedent). When the committee agrees that the claim has merit and is supported by the agreement and the evidence, the steward makes the case to the producer, who will often as not (you guessed it) rebut the claim with evidence and reasoning of their own. Resolving the claim is a negotiation between two opposing parties and sometimes, as with all negotiations, the best solution is a compromise.

Upgrades aside, some people make a good living from Background work alone. Professional Background Performers who are in high demand have an excellent grasp of the skill of performing in the Background. They don't pull focus so as to put themselves in the foreground. As Background agent John Pearson used to say, Background performers are really mime artists. A Background performer I see frequently on set works with effortless professionalism and humility and makes her living at it. When asked for her secret she will only say with modesty, "It's the wardrobe, darling!"

For myself, I put my nose to the grindstone and my shoulder to the wheel, though I admit I haven't been asked to do that on set lately. And when I need a laugh, I remember that funny movie *Memories of Me,* co-written by **Billy Crystal**, about "extras." In the movie, his father (**Alan King**) played the Background role of 'King of the Lobsters.' It ain't Richard the Third, but still, you would think it was more than a Background job. How good could a movie be without the 'King of the Lobsters?'

My scientific conclusion is that doing Background work can sometimes feel like *The Myth of Sisyphus* - rolling a rock up a hill forever. Oh well, at least it's Continuity. ●



Jack on set of the series *Due South.* "It's the wardrobe, darling!"

Jack Newman is an ACTRA Toronto councillor and a frequent On-Set-Liaison-Officer.

ACTRA Additional Background Performers (AABP)

Standing Proud with ACTRA

As the new Chair of ACTRA Additional Background Performers (AABP), I'd like to point out a few things you might not know about AABP.

We've been proud members of ACTRA since 2001. We joined the picket lines when ACTRA went on strike in 2007 over New Media rights. Our members travelled with ACTRA to Ottawa in 2009 to demand better Canadian Content rules from the CRTC. We've walked in Labour Day Parades, picketed Canadian Broadcasters, and have supported our ACTRA brethren at all kinds of events in defense of our industry.

The AABP Caucus reflects the diversity of our community: ethnicity, gender and age, of course, but also experience and work background. While many of our members are young and dipping their toes into the film and television world for the first time, others are retirees or people whose jobs are in transition who come from fascinating careers in, for example, the Ministry of Natural Resources, advertising, and safety equipment supplier to the Olympics. Others, like me, have worked or still work in other parts of the entertainment industry. I've worked in animation for almost 30 years and there are Production Assistants and Make-up artists too, all using background work to keep themselves afloat between gigs.

I like to tell the story of **Shereen Airth**, because it shows how involved an AABP member can become. Shereen joined in 2001 when the AABP was called ACTRA Extras. Soon she became Chair of the ACTRA Extras Caucus and then of the ACTRA Apprentice Caucus. Now she is a full ACTRA member and in November 2011 she successfully ran for ACTRA Toronto Council where she also serves as the Apprentice Advocate.

Lately, the AABP Committee helped to work a few initiatives through ACTRA National. The four year time period for accumulating hours toward a first Apprentice credit was eliminated, opening the door to some who have been doing background for many years. The number of white vouchers needed to join AABP was reduced from 24 to 15, which means we can grow our numbers and help shrink the non-union talent pool. And we have begun to collect $30 in annual dues, as required in the ACTRA bylaws. This is something that many AABP Committee and Caucus members have wanted for a long time and was met with overwhelming support when announced at the AABP Caucus Meeting at the Winter Conference.

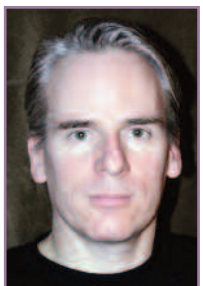
Next time you're on set, take a moment to meet an AABP brother or sister. You'll find an interesting fellow performer who cares about our business and supports your union. •



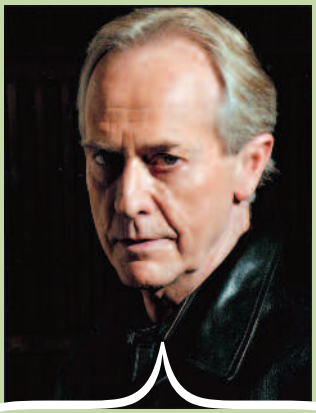
In solidarity,
John de Klein
AABP Committee Chair

John de Klein has worked in the Animation Industry for over 30 years, as an Animator, Storyboard Artist, Overseas Animation Supervisor and is a Gemini Nominated Scriptwriter.

AABP Committee L to R: **Indrani de Silva**, **Chris Gauthier**, **Draake Herd**, **George Perkins**, **Allan Wainio**.



Get to know your Ombudsman

My name is **Shawn Lawrence** and I am your Ombudsman for ACTRA Toronto. For the benefit of the hundreds of new members since my last article, let me give you some background on myself and what the position entails.
I have been a member for over 30 years and have served on both the National Board and the Toronto Council for many years. As I've had many years of experience with ACTRA and understand how our Council and staff function together, I was appointed to this position about 10 years ago. In this position I serve as a problem solver, an educator and a sometime mediator. If a problem can't be solved by staff or Council, or if you have questions or problems with how an issue was dealt with, you can come to me and I will do my very best to answer your questions or attempt to solve your problem. All of the issues I deal with are kept confidential. •

Yours,
Shawn Lawrence

Email: slawrence@actra.ca
Voicemail: 416-642-6604



RESIDUALS 101



What does PRS do? What is a Use Fee? How does PRS calculate my residuals?

ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement (IPA) defines two kinds of payments for performers – one for doing the work in front of the camera or behind the microphone and another for the use of the work when it is shown or distributed to audiences. The IPA calls these latter fees '**Use Fees**' but performers often use other terms like **residuals** or **royalties**.

How are Use Fees paid and when?

Under the IPA, Producers must elect, before they go into production, one of three options to pay performers for any uses beyond the Declared Use that is included in your session fee. Whichever option the Producer elects applies to all performers in residual categories working on that production. Background Performers are not in a residual category.

Some USE-ful Lingo:
Acronyms, definitions and terminology or **Words Matter**

IPA – Independent Production Agreement
DGR – Distributor's Gross Revenue. In other words, gross sales
PRS – Performers' Rights Society, the separately incorporated, not-for-profit arm of ACTRA National set up in 1983 to collect additional Use Fees from Producers and Distributors and pay it to eligible performers in the production.
Declared Use – One type of Use specified in your contract which is included in the payment of your session fee. On your contract it is the ticked box under Nature of Production.
Session Fee – (A term in the Commercial Agreement but not in the IPA) Used colloquially in the biz to mean Daily Fee plus overtime, penalties etc.
Prepayment – A Use Fee paid in advance for certain Use rights for a defined period of time - currently four years.
Advance payment – A Use Fee payment advanced to the performer against anticipated sales revenue.
Buyout – A slang term, often wrongly used to mean Use Fee. The IPA does not permit a Producer to 'buy out' a performer's Use Fees forever. 'Buyout' is an open-ended term implying that Performers rights can be bought outright rather than rented. **So, yes, words matter.**

Three Use Fee Options available to Producers under the IPA

1. Prepayment – paid on your cheque for the session and calculated on your Net Fees.

There are two types of Prepayment:
a) **105%** allows the Producer to broadcast or distribute the program on television and DVD, worldwide, for 4 years.
b) **130%** allows the Producer to broadcast or distribute the program **in theatres**, on television and DVD, worldwide, for 4 years.

What happens after 4 years? – If there are further sales after 4 years, 3.6% of Distributor's Gross Revenue (DGR) is owed to all residual category performers and divided up (see **How the IPA tells PRS to calculate your Use Fee payment** facing page) and distributed by PRS to you.

2. Advance – also paid on your cheque for the session and calculated on your Net Fees.

An Advance is a down payment against sales. Every time the Producer/Distributor makes a sale, the percentage of the sale they owe to performers is deducted from this down payment. Performers will only get more money if/once this down payment is depleted. Unlike the Prepayment, there is no fixed time period by which the Advance is considered depleted. It's only gone when it's gone.

There are four kinds of Advance:
25%, 50%, 75% and 100%
Each level of Advance is associated with a different percentage of participation in sales.

Performer participation in Distributor's Gross Revenue (DGR)

Advance	Percentage of Participation in DGR
100%	3.6%
75%	4.6%
50%	5.6%
25%	6.6% (this option is limited to productions with Canadian pre-sales only)

3. Residuals - This option is rarely used by Producers because it is possible that the money owed to performers would be more than the money they earn on the sale.

The Most Important Thing to Understand In This Article

"Under ACTRA's IPA the 'backend' is most often paid up front!
ACTRA members get the bulk of their Use Fees, either as a Prepayment or as an Advance Payment, included with their initial 'session' cheque for days worked. That is the first tier of our residuals and, in most cases, it represents the lion's share of what we earn in Use Fees.

Unlike the SAG model, our Prepayment or Advance is guaranteed money in our pocket. It's not dependent on sales of the production.

The cheques you get later on from PRS are your second tier of residuals and are often smaller because they represent payment for less lucrative uses, after the first 'window' of exploitation."
Heather Allin, President, ACTRA Toronto

How the IPA tells PRS to calculate your Use Fee payment.

1. Calculate each Performer's number of 'Units': Divide each Performer's Gross Fee for the production by the Minimum Daily Fee for an Actor Category at the time of the shoot. The number of Units is capped; no performer can be assigned more than 20 Units. (Why? Reportedly, when that clause was first negotiated, nobody wanted the U.S. star to make off with all the residuals.)
2. Total the Units of all Performers in the production.
3. Calculate the value in dollars of one Unit for that Production: Divide the monies collected by the total Units.
4. Calculate each Performer's payment: Multiply the dollar value of One Unit by the Performer's number of Units.
5. Subtract: deductions for dues, insurance and retirement and service charges.
6. Send a cheque, or better yet, directly deposit the funds into the Performer's bank account which they set up with PRS! For example, if you are a member of the Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union (CASCU), you can ask PRS to directly deposit these payments to your CASCU account. You'll get an email telling you the good news and…Presto! The money is in your account. Sweet!

Wrinkle: If you end up on the cutting room floor, you don't get any second tier Use Fee distributions from PRS because your image isn't being used. But they can't take back your Prepayment or Advance. Another advantage to the IPA approach.

Want to know more? For further detail about Use Fees consult the IPA, Section B. But not before bed.

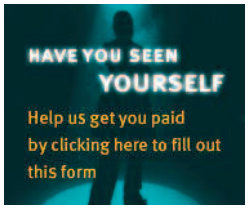
Surprise Quiz

Question: In the IPA, which Use Fee option has a fixed time period of 4 years – a Prepayment or an Advance?
Answer: Only the Prepayment has a fixed time period of 4 years. An Advance has no fixed time period.

Why is it so complicated?

The IPA isn't the clearest or best collective agreement language we can imagine. It's just the best that could be negotiated in previous rounds. All language in the IPA has to be agreed upon between the parties to the agreement: ACTRA and the Producers' Associations. **Bargaining (which is happening right now!)** is the only time changes can be renegotiated.

We hope we've made this section of the IPA clearer for you. Write to us at editor@actratoronto.com if you'd like an explanation of other sections of ACTRA's agreements. ●



Go to www.actra.ca and click on PRS to find this tool to report where you've seen your work.



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Members' News


Leslie Ann Coles

Always Honest, Not Always Pretty

The Female Eye Film Festival which ran from June 20-June 24, celebrated its 10th Anniversary this year. The festival, featuring works directed exclusively by women, is helmed by its founder, ACTRA Toronto member Leslie Ann Coles. Brava!

Congratulations


Collette Micks

Congratulations to member **Collette Micks**, the winner of the inaugural Cayle Chernin Award. Created in memory of the late *Goin' Down the Road* star, the Cayle Chernin Award is an annual prize of $1,000 and is intended to support an emerging or transitional female artist's creation, development or production of a new work. Ms Micks has appeared in many TV and film productions, including *ReGenesis*, *Degrassi*, *Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye*, *The Kennedys*, *Family Biz* on YTV, and *Naturally, Sadie*. She is transitioning into social media, cinematography and directing with *Redheads*, a comedic multi-genre web series. The award was presented by Ms. Chernin's *Goin' Down the Road* co-star, **Jayne Eastwood**.

Tuning Canadians into Canada



On April 19th, ACTRA Toronto's Young Emerging Actors Assembly (YEAA) held an insightful panel and mixer on how to get more Canadians to watch the fabulous film, television and web content that Canada has to offer. With an audience of ACTRA members, Directors Guild of Canada members and participants from the Canadian Film Centre, the panel included a who's who of the industry such as **Rob Salem**, Television Critic for The Toronto Star, **John Doyle**, Television Critic for The Globe and Mail, **Marvin Kaye**, Co-Creator and Executive Producer of the TV series *Less Than Kind*, **Geoff Lapaire**, Co-creator of the web series *Pure Pwnage* and writer/producer of the web series *Space Janitors*, **Isabel Gomez-Moriana**, CFC's Executive in Charge of Project Development & Marketplace. Moderated by YEAA Co-chairs **Bryn McAuley** and **Richard Young**, assisted by ACTRA Toronto V.P. Communications **David Gale**, and organized by YEAA members **Katherine Barrell** and **Sarah Hansen**, the panel was passionate with both the audience and speakers having vastly different opinions on this multi-faceted issue.

Be it an issue of marketing, Canadian Content rules, establishing a Canadian star system, or how the media covers Canadian content, it was obvious that everyone in the room deeply cared about Canadian product and about our need to champion our successes to the country at large, and to make sure politicians at all levels know how important arts and culture are to Canada.

Richard Young, Co-Chair, YEAA


Panellists L to R: **Geoff Lapaire**, **Isabel Gomez-Moriana**, **Marvin Kaye**, **John Doyle** and **Rob Salem**.
Photo: Andrew Ahmed

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OAZ is delighted to announce that as of July 9th, 2012, Daniel Abrams will be promoted to the position of Talent Agent.

Abrams joined OAZ in 2003 working summers while completing his Bachelors degree at Dalhousie University. After graduating in 2007, Abrams began assisting manager Perry Zimel working with Zimel's talent on both sides of the border.

Abrams assisted with respected talent like Christopher Plummer, Wendy Crewson, Sharon Gless, Lucas Bryant, Peter Outerbridge, Sheila McCarthy among others.

Abrams is excited to use the wealth of experience he has acquired and build a roster that works worldwide.

For submissions for representation please send a demo link, photo and resume to daniel@oazinc.com. All inquiries will be held in the strictest of confidence.

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Making TiPster history

The TiP Legacy Project



Tasso Lakas

Everyone knows that, at a certain time in history, something happens to change an art form - a business, political, union, artistic agenda, whatever it is - something happens. Often when good things happen, and after all is said and done, there follows a general lament that someone should have made a movie, written a paper, or simply documented it for others who follow. Not this time. TiP is about to enter Canadian Cinema history.

When I launched ACTRA's TiP program, no one knew how successful it was going to be. We just knew, or at least I thought I knew, what was needed to make the program a success. Before coming to TiP I had worked in development at Telefilm and CBC and I often promised myself that, if given the opportunity to show them how it should be done, ('them' - you know, the guys you believe should know what they are talking about) I'd take a good shot at it. TiP has come through, and many of you know and have told me, how great the TiP Program has been for you, no matter what your role in the film industry might be.

Knowing how important it is to document the experience of running TiP with so many wonderful eclectic filmmakers, now commonly known as TiPsters, ACTRA received the nod from the OMDC to document 10 years of TiP and to show how it has changed the filmmaking business model in the low/micro budget community from an amateur affair into a profitable business.

Ten years ago - no YouTube, no smartphone, films were still circulating on VHS, barely a flat screen to be seen, no digital TV, no digital theatrical releases, digital video tape was being used in cameras, films were shot on film, no film produced for under a million dollars got theatrical distribution or was taken very seriously as a commodity. Yes, production techniques have changed and the business of filmmaking has expanded beyond what many would have thought possible 20 years ago, and that is what the TiP Legacy project is going to be about - exploring the change and its results as a working experiment in filmmaking, not only as it applies to Ontario and Canada but in international markets as well. When all is said and done this open-ended study will prepare us for what we need to do in the future to maintain the integrity of the art form and at the same time profit from the experience economically and socially.

The next phase of the project, if funded, will be an interactive tool on how to shoot low-budget films and make a profit. Feel free to send in your thoughts on how TiP changed your world of filmmaking to **tlakas@actratoronto.com.** •

Tasso Lakas, TiP Coordinator, ACTRA Toronto

Lives Lived

Jack Anthony
Joe Botond
Barb Brovac
Ben Charles
Robin Chetwynd
Susan Fletcher
Trent Frayne
Glenn Gardiner
Jacques Gorrissen
Sylvia Graham
Ted Loviscek
Les Nirenberg
Dave Nichols
Paul O'Sullivan
Larry Solway
Saul Stolovitch
Marc Strange
Mika Ward



Stephen Andrews Adams

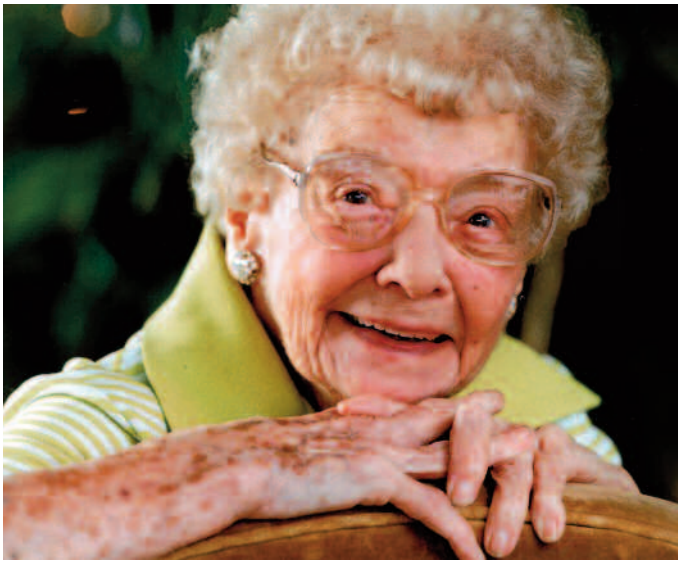
September 4 1960 – January 23 2012

Steve made his final curtain call far too soon. With fierce determination and gracious spirit, Steve's valiant battle with cancer ended on January 23, 2012. Having moved to heal in Kelowna, BC, he passed with his ever-loving wife, **Tracey Hway** at his side and leaving his precious young son, Finley. He journeyed this life with big dreams, unshakeable optimism, steadfast determination, creative talent, and an infectious sense of humour. All who knew him will always remember his brilliant smile, twinkling eyes, open arms and a huge heart full of generosity, warmth and kindness. He was a seeker and a traveler, always curious about the unknown and unexplained. He lived for his dreams, found inspiration in helping others attain theirs and celebrated when anyone's dreams were realized.

Of special interest to ACTRA members was Steve's tenure as ACTRA B.C. President in 1994-1995. It was a critical and difficult time since ACTRA B.C. and UBCP were competing in B.C. Steve was the right person in the right place at the right time. Subsequent to Steve's term as President, ACTRA and UBCP were able to negotiate a settlement agreement in 1996 that recognized the autonomy of UBCP, and brought UBCP back into ACTRA.

All the while, Steve racked up a sizeable résumé, working with many splendid creative talents - famous, not so famous and up and coming. Actor, writer, producer, director, teacher, husband and father, he was always a dedicated believer. Steve gifted us with his time here and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Kirsten Bishopric, member, Councillor





Gladys O'Connor

Gladys O'Connor, Lifetime ACTRA member, died at age 108 on Feb 21, 2012

At Gladys's 100th birthday party, her sister gave her $100. Gladys's arms shot up in the air. "Wow! Just wait till I'm 200!"

She didn't get to 200, but she had a lot of fun trying.

When she "retired" from Empire Wallpapers, she began a new career as an actress. "Acting makes me feel like I'm 20-years-old again," she said. People remember her quotable zingers in her commercials: shouting to an annoying driver from under the hood of her car, "I know a dipstick when I see one!", swearing to a judge that she drank a certain diet soft drink "just for the taste of it," spreading real butter on a muffin for a guy courting her granddaughter… then marrying him herself!

She pronounced it "buttah" because she kept her British accent … and her Cockney sense of fun. She traded quips with **Paul Gross** on the *Due South* series, served tea to **Dame Wendy Hiller** in *Anne of Green Gables*, was one of the Helens on the infamous *Kids in the Hall* sketch, and pulled out a shotgun to protect **Jeff Daniel**'s geese in the movie *Fly Away Home*.

On the set of a **Geena Davis** movie, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, the cast and crew celebrated Gladys's 90th birthday and gave her the jewelry she wore in her role. On the **Sidney Lumet** feature, *Critical Care*, shooting stopped while everyone toasted Gladys's 94th.

In 2004, Gladys was made a lifetime member of ACTRA. Acting gave her "thrills like an electric shock through my whole body. It's a lot more fun than shipping wallpaper!"

The secret of Gladys's longevity? An apple every morning and a brandy every night ("they say there's a lot of medicinal value in brandy"), walking everywhere (except when **Adam Sandler** sent a limo to bring her to set), an eternal enthusiasm (her favourite expression was, "Isn't that rich!"), and the excitement of her late-blooming acting career.

Anne Tait, Producer and Casting Director

A Humble Tribute to Gord Paynter, 1955-2012

I met **Gord Paynter** around 1995, at the first road gig that I ever had away from Montreal, where I began my stand-up marathon.

The show was at a Legion in Toronto, a fundraiser for a junior hockey team or something. The M.C. picks me up at Union station and on the way he says, "It´s going to be a tough audience, they surely have never seen a Latin woman, with an accent, on stage, and with all of her clothes on." I got crazy nervous, 'Dios mío! I won't do well and the marathon will end at the bottom of a cliff.'

Anyway, we get there and I meet the headliner: curly-haired, cherubic-looking, tall, blond, and blind. He introduced himself with a huge smile and I immediately felt at ease in spite of the fact that the audience did seem as rowdy as Vikings on a pillaging binge and there was not another ethnic person in the room. But Gord's smile said, 'You'll be fine,' and that made all the difference.

That was his tremendous gift - to make people feel comfortable on and off stage. You saw his cane but you didn't see, well, that he didn't *see*. Because he may have lost his eyesight but he never lost his vision. He went blind at 22 and after his initial depression he followed his life-long dream of making people laugh for a living, and became a master at it. Then he became a master motivator making people laugh while improving the way they looked at life.

Last time I saw him, in 2010, we shared a room at a friend's cottage. Gord and his beloved Catherine slept in the double bed and another comic and I shared the bunk bed. Next morning at breakfast he goes, "You snored the whole night."

"How do you know it was me?"

"Because I'm blind, not deaf and you snore with an accent." And off he went to play ball with the rest of the boys. That's how I will remember him - mischievous, joyful and fearless. The Canadian comedy community lost one true gem.

Martha Chaves, member, stand-up comic



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TESSA BENGER
DOMINIQUE BISSON
JON BLAIR
STEVE BOYER
ADAM R. BRADLEY
CHRIS BRIDGES
MARIO BRUNI
THEO CALDWELL
NIKKI CARTER
MADISON CHEEATOW
NICHOLAS CHO
ROGAN CHRISTOPHER
REED CLARE
KEVIN CLAYDON
BRENNAN CLOST
SASCHA COLE
MANNING COLES-BUDRYS
WAYNE CONROY
ROBERT COUGHLER
LISA KAREN COX
JOSEPH D'AGUANNO
WOLE DARAMOLA
LADA DAREWYCH
SHEELAGH DARLING
DAN DELLA PENNA
JAYME DESJARDINS
VICTORIA DIGIOVANNI
VICTORIA DIXON
FEFE DOBSON
ALLISON DAWN DOIRON
NICOLE DORSEY
JORDAN DUARTE
SAM EFFORD
VICTOR FANTACCIONE
HOPE-RENEE FLEURY
MARTIN FOOTE
JANEL FORDON
DERRICK FRANKLIN
KRISTI FRIDAY
CARA GEE
NOAH GILLINGHAM
MARK J. GRANDMONT
BRENDEE GREEN
MICHAL GRZEJSZCZAK
ADAM GULLUSCI
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ROGER WONG
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Omissions:
This photo of outgoing council in the Spring 2012 issue is the work of **Lisa Mininni**.

Ask a Steward will return

ACTRA Toronto Staff is here for YOU.

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Connect with Us



Join us in the Labour Day Parade

Monday, September 3



Photo: Carol Taverner

Respect the Artist

ACTRA Toronto is proud to join other unions in this parade in celebration of the history and struggle of working people and the achievements of organized labour.

Meet us on the corner of University Avenue and Dundas St. West at 9:00 a.m.

The parade marches west along Queen Street and south on Dufferin Street to the CNE.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ALONG AND GET INTO THE EX FOR FREE!

Performers are Artists

watch our work on film & tv
Your eyeballs can "Buy Canadian" for free.

talk about us
Comments, letters and "likes" needed!

support Canadian content rules
They give our stories a fighting chance.

protect copyright
Artists' paycheques rely on rights.

remember the economics
Investing in the arts pays off.

Respect the Artist



For more information, check out
www.actratoronto.com

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