

The magazine from ACTRA Toronto

Volume 17 • Issue 3 • Feb

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Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union
open for business

perform

Flashpoint

Commercial Agreement,
tentative settlement
reached

2008 Labour Day
parade

Extra! *This Hour has 22 Minutes'*
Extra! Geri Hall
gives us the scoop

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President's Message

A pause for reflection.



By the time you read this there will be two months left in my final term as President of ACTRA Toronto. Before stepping down I had hoped to secure independent wealth and international stardom for each and every one of you. I failed. Nevertheless, I am proud of some of the things that we have accomplished together in the last four years.

You elected enormously dedicated and enthusiastic Councillors who planned effectively and reported to you clearly, accurately and regularly at well-run and informative conferences. You supported these same councillors when they proposed and championed our national union's important and effective strategic alliance with the United Steelworkers and again when they led our union in its first, and highly successful, strike. By working to launch the Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union, ACTRA Toronto created the first Canadian full service financial institution designed to meet the needs of freelance professionals in our industry. And lots more.

We were able to do these things because we worked hard to learn how. We learned a lot. We learned how to protest. We learned how to lobby. We learned how to bargain. We learned how to strike. And we learned how to win. As I leave office, I'm proud of our union. ACTRA Toronto works and it works for its members. I have no doubt that it will continue to do so.

And now, a last look around. Let's talk about work opportunities. Let's talk about bargaining. Let's talk about politics.

I'll start with the obvious. There's not enough work. Yes, we have increased the amount of domestic production in town. Yes, we have secured an increasing number of significant roles for Canadian performers and yes, through bargaining, we have improved both pay and working conditions for performers. Still, the fact remains that most of us are having a lousy year.

The biggest single reason for this is the continued absence of foreign service production caused by the bargaining impasse between SAG and the Hollywood studios. We are, in effect, enduring a capital

lockout by the studios as they attempt to ram a crappy new media deal down the throats of our brothers and sisters south of the border.

The good news is that the current standoff will not last forever. One way or another, the SAG contract will be settled and foreign service production work will return to take advantage of our spiffy new studios at Filmport.

And speaking of standoffs, at eleven o'clock on a Saturday night in October, after a 14 hour last-ditch bargaining marathon, ACTRA's Negotiating Committee leveraged the power of a strike mandate referendum to reach tentative terms of settlement for the National Commercial Agreement (NCA). This groundbreaking deal required a massive 17 month effort and the threat of a work stoppage to achieve. In the end, it was worth all the work. Your Negotiating Committee won back the 8 hour day and achieved their long-stated goal: to protect performers while responding to a competitive environment and attracting more work. Now the deal is in your hands. Please, vote **YES** on the terms of settlement.

Let's talk politics quickly. Stephen Harper and his Conservative government broke their promise and called an early election, less than a week after quietly cutting arts funding by fifty million dollars. These cuts, it should be noted, were made without any consultation with stakeholders in the cultural sector. That's not just bad policy. It's bad process. It's bad economics. And it's bad government.

And then something amazing happened. Harper dismissed artists as gala-going whiners whose work is irrelevant to "ordinary" Canadians, provoking a storm of indignation which made culture a key issue in the leadership debates, firmly established its importance to Canada's economy and forced the PM to back down on Bill C-10.

My parting advice? Let's remember the lesson and work together through our union to make things better. Because collective action works.

In solidarity,

Karl Pruner
President
ACTRA Toronto

Karl Pruner at the 2008 Labour Day parade with (L-R) Jake Chalmers, Samantha McCombs and Dan Cole.
Photo: Chris Faulkner



Performers

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Geri Hall
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Geri Hall
Photo: www.mckennaphoto.com



"Television ripped from the headlines" - Globe & Mail

Flashpoint

Negotiating success.
by Chris Owens

POLICE

"Cop drama *Flashpoint* burns up TV ratings" - The Gazette

"CBS renews *Flashpoint* for second season" - Toronto Star

"Series-high 9.66 million viewers" - Variety

"Flashpoint sold to U.K." - Globe & Mail

"Series sold to more than 50 countries worldwide" - Playback

FLASHPOINT

In case you've been hiding under a rock or finishing up that Nunavut tour of Chekhov shorts, there's a new kid in town and he's got prime-time by the scruff of the neck. *Flashpoint* is a one-hour drama about the Strategic Response Unit (SRU) and the professional and personal lives of its elite police force. The show has been putting up some impressive numbers as it marches through its first season. When the situation calls for hostage negotiators, special tactics, snipers and psychologists, these are the guys you call on.

It's been over fourteen years since a Canadian-made television show was picked up by a major US network. *Due South* was essentially about the differences between Canada and the United States. It pitted a Canadian Mountie against the realities of American life, teaming the upright Constable Benton Fraser, **Paul Gross**, with the impetuous Chicago Detective Ray Vecchio, David Marciano.

Flashpoint is a very different kind of cop show but it too has a unique homegrown perspective. Created by Mark Ellis and Stephanie Morgenstern, starring **Enrico Colantoni** and **Hugh Dillon** and introducing Toronto as, well, Toronto. The series follows an elite police unit modeled on our own Emergency Task Force. Now when helicopters swoop overhead to give us those glossy shots of the urban landscape, there's no need to hide the CN Tower. It's all part of the action.

"I like the fact that Canadians are getting excited about watching a Canadian television show," says Enrico Colantoni, who plays Sgt. Parker, the chief negotiator of the SRU.

If anyone can relate to the contrast between Canadian and American culture, it's Colantoni. Having grown up in Toronto and Etobicoke the die-hard Leafs fan left to pursue an acting career in New York after spending a year at the University of Toronto. A stint at Yale, followed by years of making ends meet through odd jobs and theatre, eventually led to work in L.A. Now, having returned to Toronto, he is acutely aware of the difference.

"I've lived twenty years in Canada and twenty-five years in the States" says Colantoni, "I know as an American I found that my world had become isolated and a little more self-centred, a little more driven. There is a palpable American

FLASHPOINT

“Now when helicopters swoop overhead to give us those glossy shots of the urban landscape, there’s no need to hide the CN Tower.”

dream that people are pursuing or are angry against not achieving.”

With three previous series under his belt, *Hope & Gloria*, *Just Shoot Me* and *Veronica Mars* does Colantoni feel any difference between working on set in L.A. and working on *Flashpoint* here? “No. The crews here are as hardworking as any I’ve ever experienced. The one main difference is that they have a sense of their life outside of work. They talk about family a lot more in my experience. They don’t define themselves by what they do. It’s refreshing for me because they seem to be having a little more fun, they talk about the weekend, they want to go to the cottage, they want to see their kids, they’ve got stuff planned and they’re excited about it. Here, I am more aware of life outside of work.”

Colantoni also enjoys the ensemble feel of the cast and he appreciates the willingness of producers and directors to welcome performer input. “In L.A.,” he says, “you are more of a gun for hire.”

In his portrayal of Sgt. Gregory Parker, Colantoni welcomes the opportunity to “pay homage to all the policeman I grew up knowing.” His brother, Hector, is a retired 30-year veteran of the Toronto Police Service. “He loved the pilot. It struck him as beautifully authentic. His reaction to it was the biggest reason I wanted to do it.” Did Colantoni ever think of following in his brother’s footsteps? “I remember that conversation some twenty-five or thirty years ago. He seemed to think that I was too sensitive to be a cop.” Fortunately for the veteran actor his years in the Big Apple



The cast of *Flashpoint* (L-R)
Hugh Dillon, Amy Jo Johnson,
Mark Taylor, Enrico Colantoni,
Sergio Di Zio, Gabriel Hogan
and Michael Cram
Photo: Ben Mark Holzberg/
Photo Courtesy of CTV

helped to toughen him up. "The spirit of the actor/warrior is alive and well and living in New York City."

Some action shows are like video games. The cost of human life is trivialized and the viewer is numbed to the consequences of violence. *Flashpoint* pries under the bulletproof vest to reveal the beating heart beneath. "What I think this show has," says Colantoni, "is an accountability to a police action. Some of my American friends didn't like the pilot because of that very reason. They're used to seeing shows where people shoot and kill without remorse, without consequence. 'What are they doing? He already killed the guy. He had it coming.' What I love about this show is all of that takes a toll. We're held accountable for our actions. The characters are affected by this and we see it. We try to save lives and that's why coppers who come up to me are proud of what we're doing."

Trying to protect yourself while performing your job to the best of your ability creates an inner conflict that each officer must deal with in their own way. "We're human," says Colantoni, "there is a shell, an armor that they wear and sometimes it cracks. I saw it crack in my brother right near the end when he started working child abuse. He started seeing things that just didn't make sense. That's why he's in the mountains of Italy drinking wine and enjoying his retirement."

In every episode of *Flashpoint* a violent act, or potentially violent act, creates a kind of chaos and within that chaos Sgt. Parker must be the calm in the eye of the storm. There are no easy answers. In a recent episode he says to his lead sniper, Ed Lane, played by Hugh Dillon, "Okay, okay...you figure out how to get into the impossible building and I'll go talk to the killer with nothing to lose."

It's about taking in information and assessing the situation clearly. Instructing a younger member of the team, Sam Braddock played by **David Paetkau**, on the fine art of negotiation, Parker says, "Look, you can kick ass like nobody's business and you look great in the cool pants but as long as you're out there and you're trying to talk to somebody you've got to be able to listen. You've got to be able to connect."

There are many ways to lead and Colantoni has some specific ideas about guiding his troops. "It's not about yelling, it's not about intimidation, it's not about being the toughest, strongest, fastest guy. The leader is the guy who's got your back. He's clear and says this is this. He doesn't get caught up in the madness. The young guys, they just react - 'let's go in, let's go in!' That's why every great hockey team needs its



Enrico Colantoni and Hugh Dillon, defusing a tense situation. Photo: Ben Mark Holzberg/Photo Courtesy of CTV

"I like the fact that Canadians are getting excited about watching a Canadian television show"

veterans. You need your Gary Roberts - he's worth every penny. Parker's the same way."

Fourteen years apart, two very different Canadian-made police shows have found popularity at home and abroad. Sgt. Gregory Parker and Constable Benton Fraser would never be mistaken for each other but they do have things in common. They rarely jump to conclusions. They avoid reacting without reason. They listen for clues and sift through details. They'd rather negotiate than fight.

"There's an ideology, a Canadian-ism that allows us to take in the bigger picture" says Colantoni.

I don't think Fraser would ever exchange in his red serge for the black on black uniform of the SRU but something tells me he'd get along fine with the man in charge.



Chris Owens is editor of *Performers* magazine. He is currently working on season two of George Walker's *The Weight*. He plays hockey in Toronto.

FLASH
POINT

GERI HALL

Ayumi Iizuka sits down with fellow Second City alum **Geri Hall** to talk with her about working on the east coast, life after improv and a career that has touched nearly every aspect of Toronto's film and television industry. Just don't bother with the Mick Jagger jokes.

AI: *I know that when your name is mentioned, there's always the hubbub of, 'Geri Hall, really?' Have you ever considered changing your name?*

GH: Oh, yes. When I was doing background work, there would be days when they'd give us a marker and have us write our name on a piece of paper and hold it up for the wardrobe shots. I remember one woman saying, 'Yeah, right Geri Hall, I don't have time for this, write your real name.' It always made me laugh, because if you're going to try to make it in this industry I can't imagine scanning names of famous people. 'Jodie Foster seems presumptuous, Mary Pickford's a little dated, I think I'll go with Geri Hall.' I was named after my dad and I refused to change it because of that and it's really never been a problem, other than some very boring Mick Jagger jokes that keep surfacing.

AI: *How did you first become interested in the business?*

GH: The first memory I have of being interested in this, as a life choice, was when I was about 9 or 10 years old. We started watching reruns of *The Carol Burnett Show* with my mom and after every single episode my sisters and I would run up to our toy room, grab costumes and run back downstairs and try to recreate all of the sketches for my mother.

AI: *What projected you into professional status?*

GH: Well, when I graduated from high school I chose the route of 'I'm just going to be a waitress for one year while I save some money and figure out my path in life.' One year of waitressing turned into nine years of waitressing and the whole time I was doing that I so desperately wanted to be acting and I was a miserable, not-very-nice, waitress as a result of that. When I got back from my honeymoon, of all things, I had this epiphany moment of, 'If I don't pursue acting right now, I will never do it and I will hate myself for it.' So, I signed up for

classes at Second City and signed up at a background agency to do background work so that I could make money in the industry and not serve waffles anymore.

AI: *Nice. Did you enjoy background work?*

GH: I loved it. I remember at the time people cautioned me, almost daily, about the danger of doing background work if you want to be an actor who gets speaking parts. I was told, 'Be careful, you're going to get typecast as a background actor and you'll never do anything more.' But my experience was totally different than that. I got to watch people like Ed Harris and Tom Berenger and Walter Matthau, working as professionals and it was a great way to observe how professional sets work and to pick up the terminology that's used on set. Years later when I booked my first speaking part, it made that experience much less terrifying because it wasn't an environment that was completely foreign to me.

AI: *Some of your first work was on stage with the Second City. What is it about comedy that appeals to you?*

GH: I think I love the immediacy of comedy, that sort of instant gratification you get when you're performing comedy well. You know right away if it's working because people laugh and they laugh loudly.

AI: *How did you make the transition to the on-camera role? How did you find it going from stage to camera?*

GH: It was an incredibly slow process. I left Second City in 2000 and while I was there I was auditioning for television commercials. It took two and a half years of constant auditioning to book my first spot, and I was going out at least three times, sometimes five times a week back then. I remember so many days of just driving into Toronto and thinking, 'Clearly I don't know what I'm doing. I don't have anything to offer this aspect of the industry because I'm not booking.' Finally, I booked a spot and after that they just started coming. The only thing I can think in retrospect is that it took me that long to learn how to audition well for commercials and to figure out what specifically I had to offer the commercial world and how to showcase that very quickly in a two-minute audition.

AI: *Do you still perform live theatre?*

GH: It's been a little while. The last show I did was *Death of a Salesgirl*. Not long after finishing Second City, a close friend,



Selected Credits Geri Hall

Film and Television

Puck Hogs

This Hour has 22 Minutes

Wide Awake

Death of a Salesgirl

Split City

The Jane Show

At the Hotel

The Blobbeads

To Die 4

GERI HALL

Geri detained, in the midst of a *22 Minutes* sketch, after interrupting a Stephen Harper press briefing during the recent federal election.

Photo: Tony Bock/Toronto Star

Jen Robertson, approached me and two other girls, because all of us were suffering through a really slow time. She had this concept for a show and we all went off and wrote monologues in what was just a way of exercising ourselves as actors and keeping busy in a depressingly slow period. It actually ended up being purchased by the CBC as a comedy special and in a weird twist it also helped to get my spot on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* years later.

AI: *How did that happen?*

GH: I was doing *Death of a Salesgirl* when **Lorne Perlmutter** from Diamondfield called and said that the Executive Producer of *22 Minutes*, **Mark Farrell**, was coming into town to do a showcase to look for new talent for the show. Lorne, who had just seen me in *Death of a Salesgirl*, because he was representing Jen at the time, called me and said, 'If you'd like to perform in the showcase, I'd like to invite you to be a part of it, but if you're going to suck, don't come because this man's really important.' I can remember just that incredibly horrible chest-

tightening terror again. 'Oh, God, what if I'm not funny and I say yes?' But I decided that I would take that monologue from *Salesgirl* and shorten it down and do this character piece. So Mark saw it that night and months later I got a call to come out and play for two weeks on *22 Minutes* which led to another guest spot and last year was my first full season.

AI: *What is it like working on 22 Minutes?*

GH: It's so fun and it's exhausting. All of the positive stereotypes that you hear about east coasters are incredibly true. What makes it challenging is also what makes it so exciting, because on a week-to-week basis you don't know if you're going

to be trying to impersonate a politician that you may or may not have heard of, or whether you'll be half-naked trying to do Shakira.

AI: *You've had an amazing career arc so far; you've been able to do TV, film, theatre, commercials, what are some of the notable differences you've experienced working in these very different formats?*

GH: What I think I notice more is the similarities between those things. Before I booked on-camera work I always worried that it would be so very different from my experience at Second City that I wouldn't quite know what I was doing. I think all of the things that make a good performance great are true in all of those media. When you get to do a good commercial, I think the performances people remember are the ones where the character choices have been strong, because you only get 30 seconds to meet that character.

AI: *So working on commercials first sort of helped you get your bearings.*

GH: It did for me. When you are holding a chocolate bar in frame and having to remember your continuity in a 30 second spot, you become more aware of continuity issues, which helped when I had to tackle more challenging roles. So I'm always grateful for every acting job I've had. I know that there are people that don't love doing commercials, but I love doing commercials. I love it all because there's something to learn from every single time.

AI: *So, your personal life, juggling family and work, how do you find this balancing act? What do you do to keep your sanity?*

GH: This profession makes us so unreliable. Any time I have committed to emceeing a cousin's wedding or attending my own honeymoon, without fail on those days, even if they've been booked a year in advance, I will book work for that day. I'll get a call, 'We know you are emceeing your cousin's wedding, but we've got this great role for you.' It's always a horrific moral dilemma, but I figure my cousins will be in my life all the time and if my marriage can't withstand this fabulous booking, then it's not worth being married any way, so I usually take the booking.

AI: *The arts in Canada are going through a rough time right now, with Bill C-10 and the recent arts funding cuts, any thoughts on that?*



The cast from *Death of a Salesgirl*
(L-R) Erin Keaney, Jennifer Whalen, Jennifer Robertson and Geri Hall.
Photo: Jacquie Harris-White

Geri Hall on the set of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*.
Photo: Chris Reardon



22 Minutes cast members Geri Hall, Gavin Crawford, Cathy Jones and Mark Critch.
Photo: Chris Reardon

“I had this epiphany moment of, ‘If I don’t pursue acting right now, I will never do it and I will hate myself for it.’”

GH: One of things you learn as an improviser is never to censor yourself. Whatever thought occurs to you, whatever impulse you have in a scene, don’t censor yourself and don’t quiet that voice. Even if you are about to say something shocking or controversial it probably means that half the people in the audience have also had that thought. With *Bill C-10* it worries me that there would be government interference in that flow of free thought that has to happen in creativity. It scares me that anybody would have the control to stop actors and writers from expressing thoughts and I just find that terrifying. We mustn’t be censored.

AI: *What are you doing next? What can we look forward to seeing you in?*

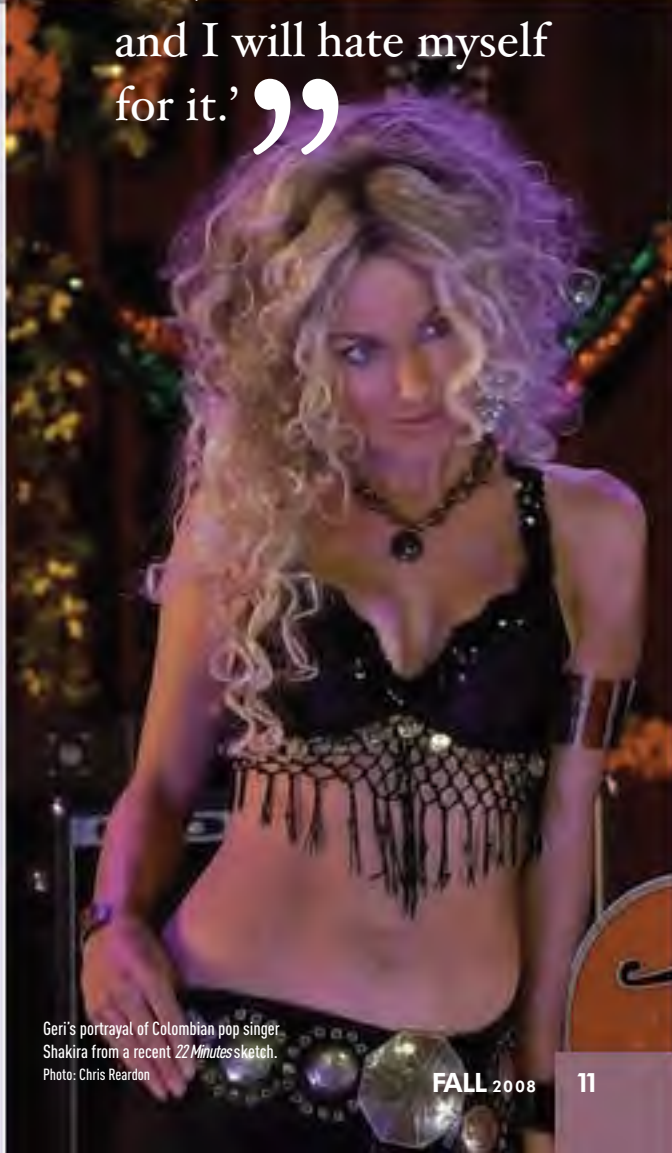
GH: I’ve few ideas for some sitcomie series ideas that are running through my brain. I want to work on that because I think, it would just be so great to have even a little more control over what sorts of things I’d like to play and explore as an actress.

AI: *People must approach you all the time asking, ‘What are the secrets to cracking the industry?’*

GH: Oh my gosh. **Scott Yaphe**, summed it up best to me, years and years ago when I was feeling kind of weak because I wasn’t working as often as I wanted to. He referred to acting as the last man standing club. There are way more days in a year when you don’t work than when you do. Just do anything you can to stay standing. Eventually, people in the industry will know who you are and figure out what you can offer them, as long as you stay in the game long enough. So, whenever I have a moment of doubt, I just picture the last man standing club and I make sure I pay my membership dues.



Ayumi is a multiple Canadian Comedy Award winner and an alumna of Second City, where she met Geri and they became fast friends. Selected credits include: *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye* and *Hollywoodland*. Watch for her in **Howie Mandel**’s new ‘unscripted’ television show, *Howie Do It*.



Geri’s portrayal of Colombian pop singer Shakira from a recent *22 Minutes* sketch.
Photo: Chris Reardon

AN INSTITUTION

for all of us

After four years of planning, the Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union prepares to open its doors for business.

By Peter Keleghan



(L - R) Maurice Dean Wint, Gordon Pinsent, Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union CEO Steve Mumford, Wendy Crewson, Peter Keleghan.

Well here we are. We've had the task force. We've done the market survey. We've been through the consulting teams. The steering committee, including yours truly, has done the credit union management directors course. We've hired a Chief Executive Officer. We've incorporated. We've been very particular when designing our by-laws and policies. We've applied for and received government regulatory approval. Thanks to you and some especially dedicated and talented people at ACTRA - notably **Brian Topp, Karl Pruner and Steve Mumford**, The Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union will be finally opening its doors for our business in October.

That last paragraph contained about 100 words, but the events it describes took almost four years to happen. You may remember **Heather Allin** interviewing me in the Fall 2006 ACTRA magazine about how the idea for our own credit union was initially hatched. I talked about living in Los Angeles and marveling at how the AFTRA/SAG credit union perfectly addressed the needs of the self employed. Specifically, actors. More specifically, me! With a \$50.00 membership fee, I joined in 1993 and remain a member to this day. I have an AFTRA/SAG credit card, I've had car and personal loans and use them for my everyday American banking. Their savings and chequing accounts are every bit as competitive and secure as a major bank's. So what was the problem here, why couldn't we have our own? That was the question I corkscrewed into Karl Pruner's ear many years ago and this is where we are today. It is very exciting indeed.

For me one of the most exciting features of a credit union is its structure. Whereas a bank's power is based on the for-profit agenda of a select board of directors, a credit union upends that model and puts the power squarely in the hands of its members. The credit union's management and directors work for us - the members. The by-laws and policies are geared for the members' welfare. The profits we make go, not into any cloistered few's pockets, but back into our credit union for our benefit. That benefit could be almost anything. It could be lower rates or free chequing, or more Interac machines or a greater ability to loan to an industry that could do something good for performers. Our diligence and commitment is our gain.

So it's happening. But what happens next? Under the guidance of our very talented Chief Executive Officer, Steve Mumford, we have started to sell shares in the credit union. In order to open our doors we must raise enough money to satisfy the legislated minimum of capital startup based on our submitted five year business plan. The amount we need is 2.5 million dollars



Gordon Pinsent and Wendy Crewson listen to Steve Mumford, CEO of the Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union, as he talks about the challenges of raising investment shares.

and the entity watching all of our progress and dealings is FSCO or the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. For extra security we ensured we were members of Central 1 - a credit union trade organization which can provide operational assistance and a liquidity pool to keep us afloat. While all deposits are fully insured by the Ontario government, up to \$100,000 in each account, these organizations closely monitor and measure the performance of every credit union to ensure their guidelines are being upheld. Also, a credit union, unlike a bank, can structure accounts in such a way as to insure unlimited amounts of registered deposits like RRSPs and RRIFs.

It should be noted however that when we're talking about start-up investment shares they are just that; an investment. They carry a preferential rate of return, but they are not insured. So, once we achieve the 2.5 million in shares we open our doors to business. With our seed money we will have chequing and savings accounts, personal loans, mortgages, home equity lines of credit, mutual funds, our own credit card, RESPs, RRSPs and RRIFs. In the future the sky is the limit, and who knows, we may be even offering home and car insurance.

While this banking, designed by and for us, is exciting, we must also remember that we are all in this together and there will be no 'free ride' for anyone. After all, would you want your deposit money jeopardized by delinquent loans even though they are made to our brothers and sisters? Due diligence will be measured out equally for all members to ensure our stability and greatest possible collective welfare.



“I have always embraced my choice to become an actor and most of the choices I have made as an actor with great pride. My experience with traditional banks has been workable but by no means harmonious. I sense that the perception on their part has always leaned towards suspicion or scepticism. Self-employed is one thing, but self-employed and creative? I look forward to exploring a relationship with a personalized financial institution that will allow me to feel completely understood.” — **Maurice Dean Wint**



“Here is another way that we can make our money work better for both ourselves and our community, as members of our own credit union. It’s a badly needed move that can help strengthen our ACTRA family and bring us all closer.”
— **Gordon Pinsent**

This brings me to another exciting feature of the credit union; education and financial counseling for the self employed. The phrases ‘hand to mouth’ and ‘feast or famine’ pop up regularly in our business. I speak from experience when I say the financial picture on the other side of a TV series is hard to imagine and plan for. But plan for it we must, using facts, figures and statistics about our self employed game.

Our credit union management is devising an educational program to show what must be done to ensure financial security in good times and bad. I somehow imagine any young actor entering a traditional bank with a first paycheque looking for financial planning isn’t going to get the same attention that a person with a million dollar portfolio will. That’s where we will be different. We know actors aren’t in any way purposely financially irresponsible. If we were so reckless we probably wouldn’t make it in this incredibly competitive business. We are generally well educated and under-employed but when the money does come in, starting at an early stage of your career, this credit union aims to look out for our own. The health of our union, and credit union, depends on the welfare of future generations of members, and plans are in place for the welfare of this vision.

The AFTRA/SAG credit union’s motto is ‘*Outperforming at every stage.*’ This is also very much where we’re at. A few months after opening we will have wealth management and financial planning services available to all, including tax planning, accounts familiar with actors’ concerns, when to become incorporated and GST information.

“We are generally well educated and under-employed but when the money does come in, starting at an early stage of your career, this credit union aims to look out for our own.”

Who can join? When designing our framework we decided to include several other associations in our ‘bond’. By bond we mean other groups, a commonality of creative arts professionals, who can join under our auspices and strengthen the credit union and, by extension, our industry. The bond is made

the Creative Arts S



“It is a reality for women, especially those in the performing arts, that there is a somewhat limited earning window. It is a critical lesson and one best learned early. The women I know who were able to get even a toe into long term investing during those years have been able to provide some security for themselves and their families. The credit union is an opportunity to take advantage of experts who understand how we earn and help guide us into smart money management.”

— **Wendy Crewson**



“After dealing with banks for most of my life and being asked, even well into my thirties, to have my father co-sign for loans and mortgages, it’s been exciting to know that we will finally have a financial institution that empowers us and respects us.”

— **Peter Keleghan**

up of ACTRA, DGC Ontario, agent’s associations TAMAC and EICAA, IATSE, NABET and EQUITY. This means that a member of the above unions can join with a \$25.00 membership fee and take part in any banking services. In addition, these unions’ staff are also able to join. The bond also encompasses family members of all the listed groups including parents, children, siblings and partners and spouses.

Credit unions got their start in Canada many years ago. The main thrust of starting credit unions in Canada was to look out for the ‘little guy.’ It started as a co-operative of farmers and small businesses shaping a business to serve and further their own specific financial needs that weren’t being fulfilled by the banks. Today there are 452 credit unions in Canada, most of which are in western Canada. Credit unions are also incredibly popular in Quebec as well. In fact the market share for credit unions in Quebec approaches 50%, which explains why many of us in Ontario are not too familiar with them. Check out www.creativeartscu.com or www.cucentral.ca for more information on the history of credit unions.

So here we are, all set to establish our credit union on a very firm foundation and for very deserving reasons. Steve Mumford

was kind enough to reserve investment shares 001 and 002 for myself and **Leah** and **Gordon Pinsent**. Gordon is making a significant investment in our start-up on behalf of **Charmion King**, his wife who passed away recently. He’s doing it, not only because he knows its value, but because he once heard Charm say of the credit union’s startup, “What a great f@%&ing idea!”

We hope you think it’s a great f@%&ing idea as well! It certainly is time. And how exciting it is to think we now have a way to empower ourselves with enlightened financial futures and our very own banking system.

Join in, it gives a whole new significance to the phrase ‘the more the merrier.’



Peter Keleghan has three Canadian feature films: *Eating Buccaneers*, *The Bend* and *Cooper’s Camera* due for release in 2008 and just shot *Eighteen To Life* - a series pilot for CBC. Peter has been a licensed private pilot since 1976 and currently resides in Toronto with his partner Leah Pinsent.

An inside view from the negotiating table.

By Marium Carvell

Have you ever been convinced by a friend to jump into a large pool of water, agreed, and then realized mid-jump that you hadn't checked to see how deep the water was? That was my introduction into the National Radio and Television Commercial Agreement (NCA) Bargaining Team. The water looked deep, but I jumped in anyway. However, upon entry, I found that negotiations were to be halted before they even began, as the Institute of Communication Agencies and Association of Canadian Advertisers (ICA/ACA) asked for a year long extension of the current contract, and gave us a three percent pay raise, plus a one percent bump to our insurance and retirement, to ensure they got it. Yes! Jump to almost a year later and we're back, and the entire committee is being trained in Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). IBB means that a mediating team leads ACTRA and the ICA/ACA in a special training session as a single group - no sides! We played games of strategy and survival, helpful for this process, believe me. And it was all very nice. But when the training ended we all went back to our particular side of the table.

Finally, after the IBB training was finished, we got to hear what the ICA/ACA's 'interests' were and they got to hear ours. And folks, after that, the games were over. The bottom line had reared its ugly head. Let's face it, advertisers and producers like

to save money and performers like to make money. (Ay, there's the rub.) And we had to squeeze past that particular elephant in the room just to get to our seats every meeting!

We had a pretty savvy team, though I was a novice in the process. Fresh blood, so to speak. I still needed to perfect the poker face and to remember not to nod while the other side speaks. However, if I got lost I could rely on my fellow members of the negotiation committee to jump in and explain things in terms that I could understand, most of the time. Occasionally I heard myself saying, 'So, just to clarify....' Seriously, I needed to make sure I was clear on a lot of issues that members who've been doing this for a while just take for granted.

Contract negotiations can be a tricky subject, especially when you're trying to amend one. It's not quite like going to set and checking the agree or disagree box on your background voucher. We're our own bosses on set, armed to the teeth with our talent and accountable to no one else. But on the negotiating committee we're representing not just ourselves, but all ACTRA's membership as well. As a black woman would my grievances be the same as those of a white male? These are just some of the issues that you have to keep in the back of your mind.

It isn't an easy job. You have to give something to get something and try your best not to damage anyone's career in order to bolster the greater good. For this reason, I'm glad I volunteered to be a part of this committee. Knowing you're making a difference and working to gain something for your union is a good feeling, and I recommend you all give it a try at some point in your careers. You'll gain a new appreciation for your profession as a whole. Our recent settlement includes the return of the eight-hour day! That's money in our pockets folks! Don't forget to check the ACTRA Toronto website for updates.

In solidarity.



Marium Carvell is an actor and writer who has worked in television, film and theatre for twenty years. She is currently trying to pitch her MOW, *From Ship To Shore*, about her great-great uncle in World War I, but is waiting for the hype of 'that other World War I film' to die down.

National Executive Director, Stephen Waddell, Paul Constable and Howard Storey
Photo: Chris Faulkner



L - R Heather Allin, Marium Carvell, Joanna Bennett
Photo: Chris Faulkner



National Commercial Agreement bargaining report

By Judy Barefoot

After a long and difficult process negotiating with the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) we have reached a tentative settlement. ACTRA's bargaining team worked hard for 17 months to get a fair deal. A deal that will provide more work opportunities, improve working conditions, and tighten up compliance by engagers while ensuring proper compensation for performers.

We had some truly excellent actors on our bargaining team who gave a great deal of time and energy to these negotiations. In Toronto, **Heather Allin, Joanna Bennett, Marium Carvell, Paul Constable, Doug Murray**, ACTRA Toronto President **Karl Pruner** and **David Sparrow** were outstanding contributors to the talks. In from the west, **Rob Morton** and **Howard Storey** and, from the east, **Bruce Dinsmore** and **Ian Finlay** and, of course, our National President **Richard Hardacre**. These members worked tirelessly on our behalf and deserve our heartfelt thanks.

When we first started to discuss universal goals and interests we grouped our issues into four main themes – use, compliance, working conditions and large cast productions.

We first looked at our use structure, a very complex topic. Television, new media and other forms of media exposure were all closely examined, through tons of data and reports from media experts, and we have established a working group which will examine these areas carefully over the next few years. This will be done with a view to re-organizing our use models to more accurately reflect the current reality and future trends in all advertising mediums, while ensuring that performers are appropriately compensated.

While looking at use compensation models, we also tackled other important topics. Compliance is a big issue in this agreement. There are some Canadian ad agencies that opt in and out of the agreement, in order to produce non-union commercials, while their competitors abide by the rules. We have made significant legal changes to the sections of the NCA that deal with signatory status and adherence. These agencies will no longer be able to use signatory front companies to hide behind.

Improving our working conditions provisions is also crucial. We have made some proactive moves in that area, such as ensuring the use of healthier makeup, wardrobe cleanliness provisions and revising and updating our equal opportunities policy.

Discussions around the large cast production issue were a very interesting, although frustrating, experience. Buzz phrases like 'repatriating our commercial industry' and 'bringing production back to Canada' were used in large doses. To this end meticulous work was done to find solutions to increase performer work opportunities that satisfied both parties.

On Saturday, October 4, we reached a tentative agreement, an agreement that gives members a significant rate increase, a return to the eight hour day, new accident on set insurance and provisions that put strong curbs on non-union production.

As Director of Commercial Production, I am proud of the deal our negotiating committee achieved. Thank you for supporting your union and your negotiating team. I encourage you to vote **YES** on ratification of this agreement and have your completed ballot into the office of the official scrutineer by Wednesday, November 26.

We stand united.



Judy Barefoot is the Director of Commercial Production at ACTRA Toronto.



ACTRA Toronto President, Karl Pruner and ACTRA National President, Richard Hardacre
Photo: Chris Faulkner

The 2009 ACTRA Awards in Toronto Submit now!

It's not too late to submit your favourite performances of the past year for consideration in the 2009 ACTRA Awards in Toronto. The annual ACTRA Awards are a way of celebrating our own and were re-instituted in ACTRA branches across Canada in 2003, as part of ACTRA's 60th anniversary.

Performers can submit any lead or supporting performance, by a Toronto member, in productions that have aired between December 1, 2007 and November 30, 2008. Submitted performances can be from any type of film and television production, international or domestic, as well as any genre. There are three categories in which a performance may be submitted for consideration, **Outstanding Voice Performance**, **Outstanding Female Performance** and **Outstanding Male Performance**. Awards from each category will be handed out in a spring ceremony, along with the **ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence**, which is presented to a distinguished ACTRA Toronto performer who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the entertainment industry.

It's important that members remember to put forward the names of their fellow actors, as performances are evaluated through the nomination process only because you thought enough about their work to submit them in the first place. Industry figures can't nominate a performer, only their peers can.

Nominations for The ACTRA Awards in Toronto close **November 30**. For more information, and to submit a performance, go to www.actratoronto.com/Awards/2009.html

Audited financial statements for the 2007 - 2008 fiscal year now available online

We're saving trees at ACTRA Toronto and, as a result, a more detailed account of this year's financial statements can be found online.

It's been another flat year. The first two quarters were very poor with a fair recovery in the second two. Troubled U.S. contract negotiations, and the rise of the Canadian dollar, kept foreign service production away. In spite of this, we were able to control expenses and finish the year with a small operating deficit of \$367,262, which we can comfortably manage within our operating reserves.

Highlights of this year's statements

Revenue

Income from dues, permit fees, and administration fees remained at essentially the same level as fiscal 2006/07. Investment income was significantly lower at \$679,482 compared to \$1,106,146 in fiscal 2006/07 where we were able to recognize \$459,360 in capital gains.

Expenses

Total branch expenses were \$5,133,803 in fiscal 2007/08 compared to \$5,157,537 in fiscal 2006/07. This year transfers to ACTRA National increased to \$2,010,067 from \$1,850,675 in the prior year.

New accounting standards

We are now required to adjust our investments to market value at year end. The result? Unrealized (paper) losses resulting from a falling market show up as a write-down of \$581,121, bringing our total net loss to \$948,383. Of course, as the market recovers, the same accounting practice will mean that unrealized (paper) gains will show up on the revenue side.

Remember: Subtract the paper loss of \$581,121 from the reported total net loss to find our operating loss of \$367,262.

Should you have any questions or would like further information about our financials please contact

Austin Schatz, ACTRA Toronto's VP Finance,
at aschatz@council.actratoronto.com.

Please visit www.actratoronto.com to view ACTRA Toronto's Auditors Report and the Audited Financial Statements for fiscal year ending February 29, 2008.





It can be easy being Green

by Heather Allin

It feels like everywhere you turn there seems to be an emphasis on green products, recycling and how corporations need to be more environmentally friendly. Gone are the days when I'd get looked at sideways for picking a glass bottle from the garbage pail and moving it to the recycle bin. A new (green) day is dawning. Reduce, reuse and recycle, the three "R"s of our 21st century, are starting to hit home. It's cool to be green!

Last summer a select group of Toronto industry members saw the writing on the wall and used an opportunity to turn the coming change into an industry-wide asset. Getting a jump start in developing a standard, putting into play sustainable practices and greening the film industry would add significant value in proclaiming Toronto as a cutting edge location to shoot, because we developed the ground breaking green standards first.

This proposal now has a name, Green Screen Toronto. Their mandate is to "facilitate the long-term growth of Toronto and Ontario's entertainment and creative cluster through industry-wide participation under a unique partnership arrangement by creating a mechanism that is adaptive to new environmental demands affecting the industry."

Originally envisioned by the Environment Committee of IATSE 873, the fledgling initiative met with Ken Ferguson, civil engineer and President of Toronto Film Studios, early on and quickly took

on a life of its own. The initial idea was so inspiring that it soon swelled to a group of 14 industry players, with ACTRA Toronto asked to be one of its founding partners. I've been fortunate to represent our union in this ground breaking endeavour.

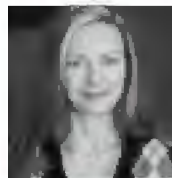
Attending the initial meeting one year ago, I realized these folks weren't just talking about plastic water bottles and recycling garbage. They had a plan that addressed every aspect of the production end of our business, from recycling sets, to using environmentally friendly paints and reducing unnecessary printing. Little changes, like these, will have a real and lasting affect on our world and the legacy we leave our children.

This fall Green Screen Toronto is looking to launch the Green Best Practices Guide and the Green Products and Services Resource Guide. We are well on our way to establishing a baseline understanding of current industry practices. (You gotta know where you are before you can get where you're going.) Over the course of the coming year we will develop a certificate program that will establish a list of environmental practices a production must follow in order to qualify for certification. And we will have done it first.

So what can you as an individual do? You can educate yourself, starting with simple things, such as determining what is recyclable, what is biodegradable and what is garbage. You can practice printing less and walking more. You can change your buying practices, favouring products with less packaging. You can car pool, use the TTC, turn off your air conditioning and lights when you're not home, share newspapers and most importantly encourage other actors to practice green behaviour as well.

Every asset that this city has, such as Green Screen Toronto, makes us a more attractive place to shoot. We hope being a more attractive place to shoot will turn into work, more work, lots more work.

Its not just easy being green, it's essential!



Heather Allin, a working actor and VP External Affairs at ACTRA Toronto, has been an avid environmentalist since she met her Grade 10 science teacher, who taught her to see the big picture and how it all connects.

Green websites

www.greenscreentoronto.com

www.toronto.ca/garbage/index.htm

www.toronto.ca/greenguide/index.htm

www.60percent.blogspot.com

Bigger is better!

New three-day conference format cascades into ACTRA Awards.

From our very first conference in February 2002, it was clear we had a hit on our hands. You liked it, you really liked it! We've had 19 conferences since then and nearly 8,000 of you have attended them. Over the past six years you've had breakfast with an array of stars from the mighty **Maury Chaykin** to the angelic **Linda Kash**.

You've participated in informative free workshops on everything from looping to casting. You've been inspired by outstanding guest speakers from Filmport's Ken Ferguson to film and television industry champion Mayor David Miller. You've learned from directors and writers and stars, oh my! The conferences are a success. So how do we improve on success? Let's kick it up a notch.

Introducing the new and improved three-day member conference and ACTRA Awards.

So what's new? Two more days of great stuff - just for you. New seminars and speakers focusing on the special interests of our diverse membership: actors with disabilities, visible minorities and the women of ACTRA. Individual caucus meetings allowing your caucus to make reports and vote-in leadership. But don't worry, we're not throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We'll still offer the workshops, panels, stars, master classes, prizes and plenary session you've told us you want.

That's not all. We also know you like to socialize and be entertained. To that end we hope to add evening events, including a daily wine and cheese get together where you can unwind, shmooze, network and discuss the day's workshops over a glass of chardonnay and wedge of Gouda.

What about the entertainment? Plans are in the works to present a nightly ACTRA film festival featuring the nominated work of our very own ACTRA Award nominees. We will give you a chance to catch the performances that may have eluded you.

How about a big finish? Capping off the three day intensive you get to dress up, witness awards handed-out and party at the best bash of the year: the ACTRA Awards.

Sound like a lot? It is, but you're worth it. Take a deep breath... Coming soon in 2009.

David Gale



ACTRA TORONTO PERFORMERS

Breakfast with... Sarah Polley

To kick off our June conference in our new locale, the Hart House at the University of Toronto campus, our *Breakfast with...* segment featured the incredibly beautiful, maddeningly multi-talented, and richly articulate **Sarah Polley**, fresh from knocking them out at the Oscars with her own screenplay and self-directed movie *Away From Her*.

Self-confessed to be "by nature, too shy" Sarah quickly warmed up to the filled-to-capacity audience and covered the gamut of questions from directing to acting to the Canadian film industry to politics.

We can only bless her mother **Diane Polley**, who imparted Sarah with the importance of being in the moment and enjoying life to the fullest, and to Sarah's Grade 2 teacher who encouraged Sarah to write and who told others within Sarah's earshot, "This one's going to be a writer!"

Well, as we all know, 'this one' has become much more than just a writer.

She has evolved into a consummate international actor, a political activist and a proud ACTRA member.

Of great interest for everyone during the talk was her development and experience with her most recent success, *Away From Her*. After learning through earlier failures with other projects, Sarah was determined not to take no for an answer and eventually got what she wanted, her funding and Canadian distribution. The next challenge after casting was the actual directing. She admitted to spending the first few days of shooting hiding behind the monitor concerned by the "toxic mixture of aggression and fear," but finally she discovered one of the joys of directing was collaborating with each actor, learning the unique language for each one and learning that a director must have a healthy balance between control and trust. As to the mystery of what drew her to this story and these characters, it was only recently she discovered that the "subconscious motivation was a fascination with a decades-old affair losing one of its partners" was really an allegory for the tragedy of her father losing her mother and the need to grieve.

She has no grand plan but to go where her talents and interests take her and to be true to herself. But judging by the two standing ovations at the conclusion of our talk, we fellow actors will follow 'our Sarah.'

Art Hindle

Art Hindle listens as Sarah Polley describes her experiences on the set of *Away From Her*.
Photo: Jag Gundu



Toronto members Andre Anthony and Joanna Mohammed enjoy the outdoor lunchtime barbecue.
Photo: Chris Faulkner

SUMMER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Chris Potter provides some feedback during the *Cold Road with the Stars* session at the summer conference.
Photo: Jag Gundu

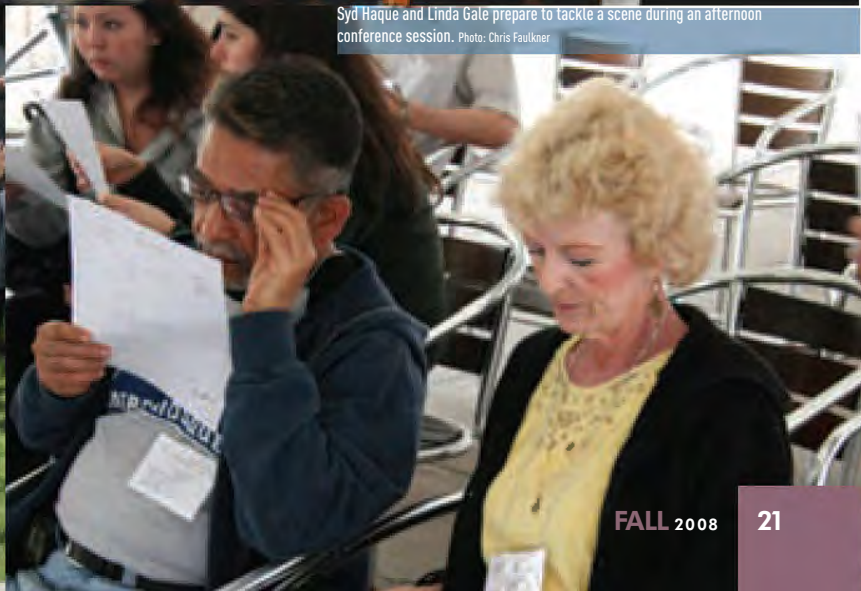


Jamie Ferenczi rehearses a scene with *Rent-a-Goalie* star, and Toronto member, Chris Bolton.
Photo: Jag Gundu

Members warm up in preparation for a demanding day as a part of the *Actor's Boot Camp*.
Photo: Jag Gundu



Syd Haque and Linda Gale prepare to tackle a scene during an afternoon conference session. Photo: Chris Faulkner





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The 2008 Canadian TV
charity challenge,
coming soon to a set near you

As part of the Actors' Fund of Canada's 50th anniversary celebrations, casts, crews and producers of TV series shooting in Canada are challenging each other to raise money for the Fund through auctions, karaoke nights, pool tournaments and many other fun activities, raising money for the charity that benefits the entire production community. Want to start the challenge up on your set? It's easy! Just call the Actors' Fund office and let them know you're in. The Fund will help to find your show a worthy opponent, issue your challenge to another production and help to keep the competition fun and exciting by sharing fundraising ideas and providing play-by-play results as the contest progresses. Producers and production offices can join in the fundraising events or match the dollars raised by cast and crew.

For more information,
visit www.actorsfund.ca/charitychallenge/
or call the Fund toll-free at 1-877-399-8392.

2008 Labour Day Parade



John Nelles and daughter Emma helped keep parade attendees cool by making water deliveries throughout the day. Photo: Chris Faulkner



ACTRA Toronto members pause for a group photograph before taking in the sights of the CNE. Photo: Chris Faulkner

ACTRA
TORONTO
MARCHES
FOR
WORKERS'
RIGHTS



A family affair, getting ready to march in the Labour Day Parade. Photo: Chris Faulkner



Eagerly waiting for the parade to start. Photo: Chris Faulkner



ACTRA Toronto members march proudly along Queen Street. Photo: Chris Faulkner

In Memoriam

We share our sadness at the passing of our beloved colleagues

Bill Banks

Jo-Anne Emily Lang-Hannah

Harry S. Haughton

Cyril H. Leonard

Carl Luff

R. Eric Stine

1947 - 2008



On May 27, 2008, the entertainment industry lost a talented actor and musician. News of the sudden death of **Eric Stine**, as a result of a heart attack, brought me disbelief and much sadness. Eric was 60 years of age, a well known personality and had acted

for many years in motion pictures, commercials and television series. His death was indeed a shock to me. I had worked with Eric, just two days before, on the production *Puck Hogs*. He had kindly driven myself and another actor home after the shoot that night.

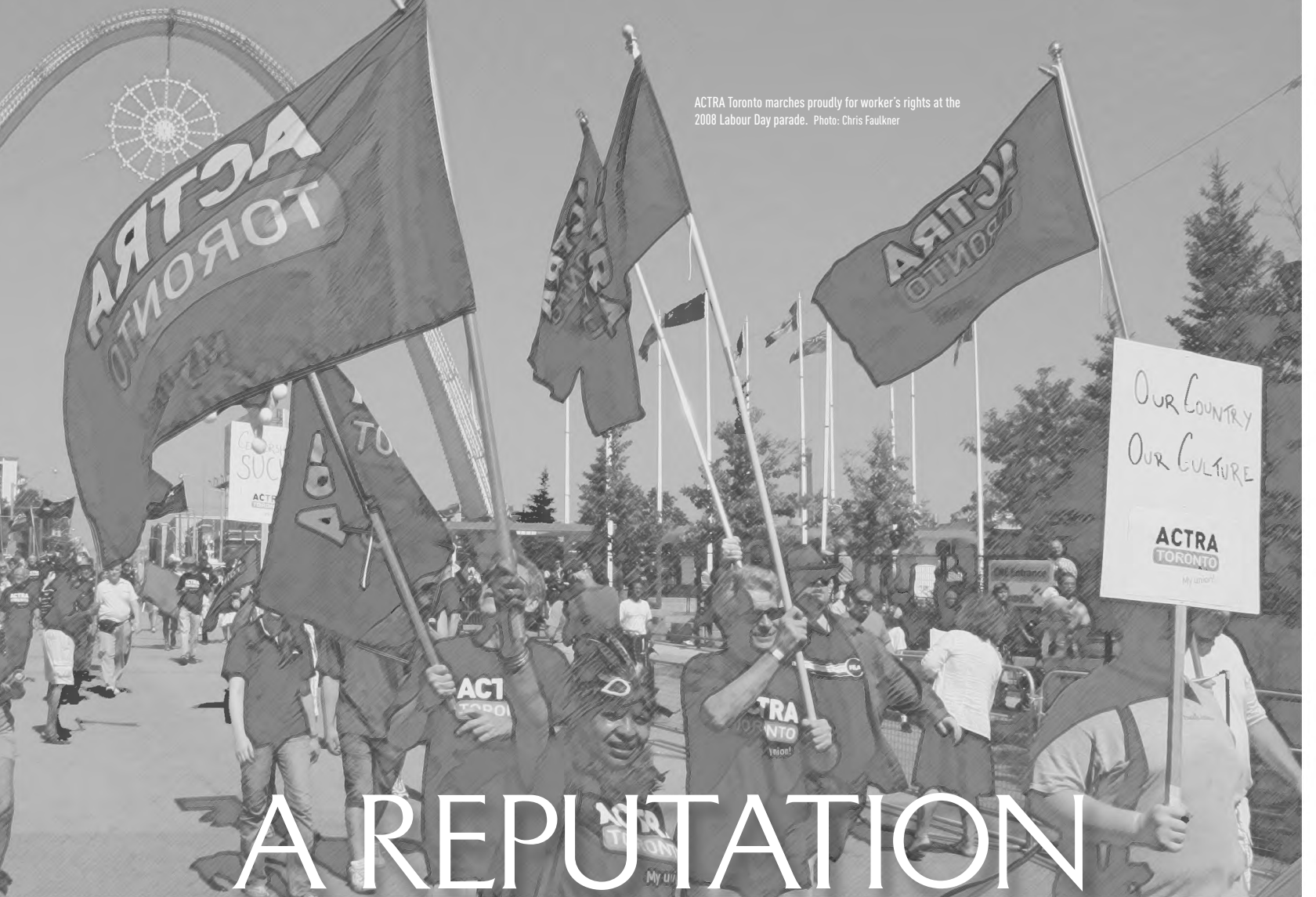
Eric was a good friend of mine. I first met him while shooting *John Q* some years ago. He was a happy person, always willing to help other people. During a break on location he would often entertain his fellow actors by playing one of the many instruments which he was accomplished in. He liked to entertain. He was a very good musician, a professional actor and just fun to be with.

As a fellow actor, and a long time friend, I will never forget Eric. He will be missed by all who had the privilege to know him. Eric Stine is survived by his wife and daughter.

Wilbert Headley

Welcome new members

Korlla Abdul	Nicholas Cirone	Léonie Gagné	Laurie Ma	Tamina Pollack-Paris	Aron J Tomori
Nick Abraham	Tanya Clarke	Alexandra (Ali) Garrison	Melody Mac Dougall	Tim Polley	Costa Tovarnisky
Aruna Adhya	Sasha Clements	Rachel Gassi	Catherine Joell Mackinnon	Janna Polzin	Liam Tully
AndrÇ Alcasid	David Connolly	Jojo Glass	Ryan M Malcolm	Marek Posival	Todd Van Allen
Salome Alexander	Trevor Covelli	Lyndie Greenwood	Amandeep Malik	Ann Powell	Sydney Van Delft
Bradley Allan	Adam Damelin	Deedra Hatton	Taylor Montana Mansillo	David Powell	Anthony Michael Vani
Paul Amos	Elisa De Angelis	Bill Hermans	Josie Marasco	Natalli Reznik	Amberley Waddell
Hayley Andoff	John De Toro	Marnie Hill	Steve Markle	Italia Ricci	Harmon Walsh
Jaiscelle Aristorenas	Julia Desotto	Dwayne Holness	Tessa Marshall	Jermaine Richards	Ben Watson
Matthew Armet	Riva Di Paola	Jordan Hudyma	Winston Marshall	Laura Ricketts	Lynn Williams
Rob Baker	Emberly Doherty	Benjamin Israel	Tommy Matejka	Paula Rivera	Melissa Williams
Joshua Barilko	Andrew Dollar	Judy Jiao	Laura Mcalpine	J. Bud Roach	Gabriel Wolinsky
Nadia Barroso	Charles Domenic	Amy Jo Johnson	Katie Amanda Mccrory	Natalie Robitaille	David Alan Wong
Emily Bartlett	Jennifer Donison	Shelby Lynne Johnson	Jay Melendres	John Paul Ruttan	Jeff Woods
Alexandra Beaton	Sam Earle	Dallas Jokic	Brandon Miles	Vasanth Saranga	Michael Xavier
Rebekah Boisvert	Bren Eastcott	Chloe Jones	Douglas Millar	Brittany Scobie	Lee Yankou
Michael Bradley	Elias Edraki	Sarah Josipovic	Shawn Molko	Melinda Shankar	Stewart York Horsley
Tricia Braun	Sasha Epp	Harry Judge	Benjamin Morehead	John Sheehy	Francis Zhang
Robbie Campbell	Tova Epp	Argiris Karras	Elizabeth Morris	Amardeep Singh	
Liam Card	Elfriede Erzen	M. John Kennedy	Perry Mucci	Sarah Slywchuk	
Lana Carillo	Mateo Estrada	Jayne N Krane	Ken Neumann	Liam James Stanley	
Addy Chan	Jacob Ewaniuk	Christine Kwon	Zaa Nkweta	Calvin Sweers	
Ada H Chan	Janette Ewen	Markus Laczko	John Obercian	Mackenzie Tan	
Richard Chan	Stephen Farrell	Kat Lanteigne	Mark Parr	Jazz Testolini	
Joanne Chapin	Lynn Filusch	Ben Lewis	Alex Paxton-Beesley	Savannah Thomas	
Lawrence Chau	Luc Forgeron	Jessica Liadsky	Erica Peck	Shannon Todd	
Hannah Cheesman	Aaron Forward	Michelle Lindo	Alex Pedersen	Julia Tomasone	
Kimmy Choi	Susanna Fournier	Adrian Lloyd	Kathleen Phillips	Elliot Tomlinson	



ACTRA Toronto marches proudly for worker's rights at the 2008 Labour Day parade. Photo: Chris Faulkner

A REPUTATION TO BE PROUD OF

A look at ACTRA Toronto's political struggles in the months ahead.

by **Norm MacAskill**

Political action is about working together to influence the decisions made by our governments. At its most effective, it brings together thousands of people who share common goals despite diverse backgrounds, interests and concerns.

A good example of this can be found last May, when ACTRA sent its first full delegation to a Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) convention. This was a significant step towards broadening the political interests of our union. The CLC meets every three years. Each convention is a week long policy debate punctuated with remarkable guest speakers from Canada and around the world. Sitting alongside our strategic alliance partners, the United Steelworkers, we joined with teachers, autoworkers, public service workers, machinists, nurses, retail workers and technicians to discuss and debate weighty issues affecting all aspects of our society.

Among that gathering of 2,000 trade unionists, ACTRA members received solid support for our passionate plea to protect and promote Canadian culture. Equally important, we demonstrated our support for the important issues brought forward by our sisters and brothers in other unions. As you might imagine, hundreds of issues are brought forward for discussion at these conventions. Affiliated unions submit many resolutions, some specific to the work of their own members and many more with far reaching implications for society as a whole.

In light of such huge demands on the convention's time, ACTRA delegates were honoured that a resolution on culture and foreign ownership was placed first on the list for debate. The resolution raised ACTRA's points of concern and called on the government to support our cultural industries and workers. Speakers from many unions, including those representing

workers in the cultural, media and communications industries, made their way to one of eight microphones dotted around the convention floor.

ACTRA Toronto's own president, **Karl Pruner**, spoke first, kicking off the debate with an impassioned plea for support for actors and other artists. Karl brought the convention delegates to their feet in a standing ovation – ACTRA had arrived in the House of Labour with an undeniable impact.

Our resolution was passed unanimously and the convention moved on to the rest of its business, with ACTRA delegates playing an active part throughout, reciprocating the solidarity shown to us by our fellow trade unionists. When the convention wrapped our delegation, rejuvenated by the inspiring experience, vowed to return and continue to stand alongside our courageous sisters and brothers in our shared ongoing struggles.

In other political activity, ACTRA Toronto will, once again, reach out to provincial politicians in an attempt to secure improvements to the employment rights and conditions of artists. To help get the ball rolling in preparation for the hard work ahead, the slogan on our Labour Day T-shirts this year was **"Artists are Workers Too – Employment Rights Now."**

We all remember the disappointment we felt when the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act* was enacted last year. The legislation promised so much, but delivered so little. While the Act didn't actually provide anything for artists other than a 'Celebrate the Artist Day' it did allow us to get our foot in the door, giving us the opportunity to lobby vigorously for additional improvements to the lives of artists.

Through the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act*, the government can undertake to facilitate training programmes, promote artists' health and safety and strengthen the ability of organizations such as ACTRA to provide needed support to artists. Our job over the coming months and years is to turn these possibilities into probabilities, and finally realities. Knowing now what the government 'can' do, we need to focus on what it actually 'will' do. We don't expect that to be easy, but we know what we have

to do and that we are not alone in this fight.

Through the Arts and Labour Committee of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), ACTRA works with other artist unions and organizations, including Canadian Actors Equity, the American Federation of Musicians, CARFAC, the Writers Guild, Writers' Union, NABET and IATSE. Together we campaign with a united voice for changes to Ontario labour law that will establish a collective bargaining framework for all artists. This advocacy will continue, but we also need to reach out to our Members of Provincial Parliament as individual citizens.

Politicians are more likely to act on an issue if voters continue to talk to them about it. When faced with decisions about health-care, education or the environment, issues such as income tax averaging and the collective bargaining rights of artists are sometimes overlooked. We can't go on allowing that to happen. That's where ACTRA Toronto's members come in. Watch for notices alerting you to sample letters that you can send to your MPP or government ministers and take part in the organized campaign we have planned.

In the meantime, if you want to do something right away, give me a call at **416-642-6711** or contact me via email at **nmacaskill@actratoronto.com**. We can have a chat about what it is you want to say and who you should say it to.

ACTRA Toronto members can be proud of our achievements. We have built a solid reputation as a union who speaks loudly and unceasingly on behalf of its membership, the film and television industry and Canadian culture. Through our political efforts in the months to come, we plan on making you proud, by living up to that reputation.



Norm MacAskill is an Organizer with ACTRA Toronto.



ACTRA delegates at the Canadian Labour Congress convention. Photo Chris Faulkner



Mayor David Miller and famed Canadian director, David Cronenberg, at the recent Filmport grand opening.
Photo: Janesse Leung



ACTRA Toronto on the scene as Filmport opens for business

In August Toronto council members **John Nelles**, **David Sparrow** and ACTRA Toronto President **Karl Pruner** joined industry players and local politicians for the long-awaited launch of the waterfront film and media 'convergence district,' known as Filmport. Hemmed by a thick ring of news media, Mayor David Miller snipped the ribbon along with David Cronenberg, the Canadian director, once affectionately tagged the 'King of Venereal Horror' and whose works include *A History of Violence* and *Crash*. Filmport is anchored by the world's largest purpose-built soundstage, inviting large-scale action and effects projects to take advantage of 45,900 square feet of sound-proofed, obstruction-free space. Developers can count on Filmport attracting big-budget productions to Toronto, although no firm bookings are yet in place. "We know we're going to go through a tough time for a while," said Filmport president Ken Ferguson. "But", he added, "We're very confident we'll get our share."

Stars challenge politicians to stand up for Canadian culture

On September 24th, some of Canada's biggest film and television actors assembled for a press conference to address arts and culture issues in the run up to the federal election. Several performers took exception to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent comments that "ordinary working people" don't care about the arts and called on all political leaders to start taking Canada's cultural industry seriously. Members also spoke out against the Conservative government's \$50 million in cuts to arts programs and the alarming potential for increased foreign ownership of Canada's media industry. Press conference attendees included **Colm Feore**, **Chris Potter**, **Wendy Crewson**, **Michael Seater**, **Leah Pinsent**, **Martha Burns**, **Peter Keleghan**, **Gordon Pinsent**, **Julie Stewart**, **Maury Chaykin**, **Charlotte Arnold**, **Alberta Watson**, **Chris Bolton**, **Art Hindle**, **Raoul Bhaneja**, **Tabby Johnson**, **Jayne Eastwood**, ACTRA National President, **Richard Hardacre**, **Maurice Dean Wint** and ACTRA Toronto President, **Karl Pruner**.

ACTRA members gather at the Glenn Gould studio in downtown Toronto to speak out on arts and culture issues.
Photo: Michelle Gibson



Federal government slashes arts and culture programs

Late in the summer, the federal Conservative government unexpectedly made a series of deep cuts, totalling over 50 million dollars, to a handful of programs that support arts and culture in Canada. Programs affected by the cuts include the **Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund**, the **Canadian New Media Fund**, the **Audio-Visual Feature Film Preservation Trust** and the **Trade Routes Program**. News of the cuts leaked out just a week before submissions were due to the Finance Committee as part of pre-budget consultations. In August ACTRA Toronto hosted a roundtable discussion on the cuts that included representatives of local arts and culture groups as well as Peggy Nash, NDP MP for Parkdale-High Park. Before the federal election was called ACTRA had asked to appear before the Heritage Committee that was planning emergency hearings on this issue in early September.

NDP MP for Parkdale-High Park, Peggy Nash, ACTRA Toronto President, Karl Pruner and NDP candidate for Don Valley West, and Toronto member, David Sparrow talk about the recent cuts to arts and culture. Photo: Chris Faulkner



Actors' Fund charity golf tournament hosted by Steve Smith

Comedian and ACTRA Toronto member **Steve Smith** hosted the 2008 Big Swing Charity Golf Tournament, presented by the Actors' Fund of Canada and DGC Ontario, on Sunday, September 21, 2008. Now in its eleventh year, the tournament attracts members of Canada's film & TV production community to some of the GTA's finest courses. The Actors' Fund is the lifeline for Canada's entertainment industry and is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2008. The Fund provides vital aid to workers in film & TV, theatre, music and dance to help with their recovery from an illness, injury or other circumstances causing severe financial hardship.

Tournament participants,
(L - R) Ron Lea, Aidan Devine, Shawn Lawrence



ACTRA TORONTO PERFORMERS

TIP at TIFF

Six years after launching the Toronto Indie Productions (TIP) guidelines, TIP filmmakers continue to garner accolades in the industry. This year the TIP program is proud to announce that five productions were featured during the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). *Cooper's Camera*, *Cat Sitter*, *How Are You?*, *The Green Door* and *Us Chickens* all had screenings throughout the festival's run. To date, 340 productions have been produced under the TIP program, including an unprecedented 75 features. The TIP program is unique in that many of the principals involved start at ground zero in producing, directing and writing their first production. In fact 95% of TIP films are created without public government funds. With well over 2,300 festivals screenings, and over 300 awards later, TIP continues to allow artists to create and exhibit uncompromising visions of work they can call their own.



Jason Jones as Gord Cooper in *Cooper's Camera*. Photo: Guy Porter

Justin Landry wins Kari Award

Congratulations to **Justin Landry** for winning the Kari Award for Best Actor at the 2008 Bessie Awards. Established in 1981, The Kari Award is presented to the Best Actor in a commercial and is named after Kari Hannikainen, an actor who was tragically killed in a car accident after appearing in an acclaimed Heinz spot. Justin won this year's Kari Award for his work on *Elevator Small Talk Tony* – a Diet Seven-Up spot. Justin's work, and many other notable performances, can be viewed at www.thebessies.ca/2008.



Justin Landry

Carol Off, 2008 ACTRA John Drainie Award recipient

Toronto member **Carol Off** was the 2008 recipient of ACTRA's John Drainie Award for distinguished contribution to Canadian broadcasting. The John Drainie Award has been presented since 1968 and past recipients include many noted Canadians such as **David Suzuki, Shelagh Rogers, Pierre Berton, Mavor Moore, W.O. Mitchell, Knowlton Nash, Peter Gzowski, Joe Schlesinger, Barbara Frum** and **Vicki Gabereau** among others. Carol has won numerous awards for television and radio work, among them a Gemini, two gold medals from the New York Festival of Television, several awards and citations from the Columbia Television awards, a Gabriel Award and a citation from the National Radio and Television Association. Her award-winning documentaries include *Fatwas and Beauty Queens*, *Of Crimes and Courage*, *In the Company of War Lords*, *Playing with Fire*, *Children of Chernobyl*, *Flight from Bosnia*, and *Thou Shalt Not Kill*. The award was presented to Carol on September 24th at ACTRA's offices.



Carol Off

CFC introduces new program for professional actors

The Canadian Film Centre (CFC) announced the creation of Canada's first professional level training program for onscreen talent. This exciting new endeavour is the first of its kind in Canada and should launch in the Fall of 2009. The announcement was made at the annual CFC film festival barbeque. The CFC Actor's Conservatory will offer up to eight experienced Canadian actors advanced on-screen training including exploring the technical side of screen-acting, on camera experience, exposing actors to project development, engaging actors in the creative process and business considerations of film and television and providing actors with a significant body of produced onscreen work in a variety of formats. Participants will collaborate with industry experts through a series of workshops and master classes with internationally acclaimed actors, directors, writers and producers with a primary focus on the acting process. For more information, and application details, please visit www.cfccreates.com.



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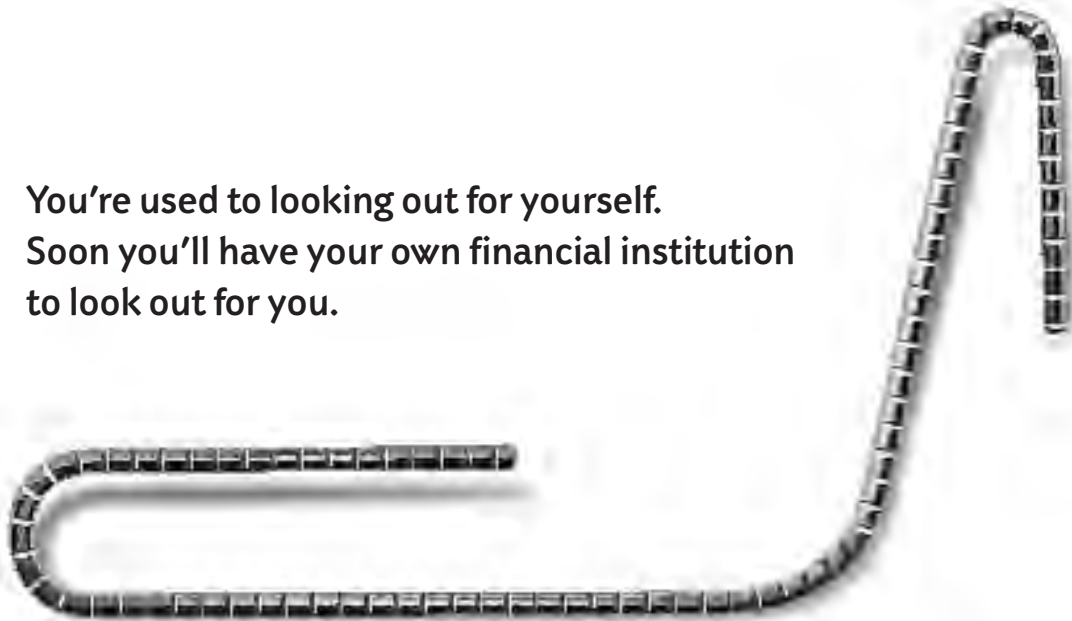
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ACTRA Toronto Fall Member Conference Sunday November 2

There's still time to register for the ACTRA Toronto Fall Member Conference, now at our new location, Hart House at the University of Toronto campus. Conference registration is free to all Toronto members. Through our conference workshops and master classes members have an unparalleled opportunity to network with their peers, hone their craft and stay informed about important industry developments.

Our Fall conference, which is built around addressing the concerns of child performers and their parents, will feature workshops in web design and digital issues, a master class organized by Art Hindle and an early bird question and answer panel with the cast of *The Border*, one of Canada's hottest shows.

To register online simply go to www.actratontoronto.com/conference/09fall.html and choose the workshops and classes that interest you. You can also reach us by fax at 416.928.0699 or drop your workshop choices off in person at our offices on 625 Church Street. Please note that the deadline to register for master classes is October 24, 2008.



It's your conference,
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