

SASKFILM CLIPS

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Season's Greetings!

As the 2007 year draws to a close, SaskFilm extends congratulations to the film and television community in Saskatchewan for a year of milestones, accomplishments and excellence.

For the team in the SaskFilm office, it has been a pleasure and an honour to be part of the process and to witness the growth and successes of the community. We extend Season's Greetings to all and wish all the best in 2008.

SASKATCHEWAN ROLLS UP THE RED CARPET



SASKATCHEWAN
ROLLS OUT THE
RED CARPET
REGINA HOSTS THE GEMINI AWARDS

The celebration is over and the red carpet has been rolled up but Saskatchewan's film industry is still basking in the star light of the 2007 Gemini Awards.

Corner Gas and **Little Mosque on the Prairie** received Gemini Awards in front of an enthusiastic hometown crowd on October 28th. **Wapos Bay** and **renegadepress.com** brought their home from earlier ceremonies in Toronto. Congratulations to the producers, cast and crew of these productions!

Industry members from across the country gathered in Regina for the event. They



22nd Annual Gemini Awards - Gemini Awards Gala Best Ensemble Performance in a Comedy Program or Series Nancy Robertson, Eric Peterson, Gabrielle Miller, Brent Butt, Fred Ewanuick, Tara Spencer-Nairn (missing: Lorne Cardinal and Janet Wright). Courtesy of Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television. FUJIFILM Canada / Narvali Digital Photography

lodged in Regina's fine hotels, visited local restaurants and nightclubs and attended events at Casino Regina, Conexus Arts Centre and the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios.

For SaskFilm, the event provided more than accolades and parties. It was an opportunity to promote our burgeoning film and television industry to Saskatchewan residents and to industry players from across Canada.

Nearly two hundred fans attended screenings of Gemini nominated productions in La Ronge, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Swift Current and Regina and over one hundred communication production technology students toured the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios and visited the sets of *renegadepress.com* and *Walled In*.

Saskatchewan industry members took advantage of local and visiting expertise during the week leading up to the Awards Ceremony. Acting, directing, script-writing and special effects workshops provided industry members the opportunity to learn from the best in their home province.

SaskFilm hosted a breakfast session to introduce local producers to broadcasters from CBC, CTV, Global, Showcase and SuperChannel, explore opportunities and develop working relationships.

Following the awards ceremony, guests attended the Gemini After Party in Stage 2 of the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios. It allowed SaskFilm to showcase the production facility to out-of-town guests in conjunction with the fifth anniversary celebration of the facility. Thanks goes to the band Stepchylid for the

SaskFilm
and video development corporation

great dance music; to La Bodega for the amazing appetizers; and to Fosters Wine, Great Western Beer and Slava Vodka for providing complimentary drinks to the guests.

Although the red carpet is rolled up for now, Saskatchewan has shown the country that our local industry, our facilities and our volunteers are more than up to the challenge of hosting an event of this magnitude.

SASKATCHEWAN PRODUCTIONS ARE IN THE SPOTLIGHT - IN CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to its Gemini Award, **Wapos Bay** was the recipient of the Canadian Association of Broadcasting's Gold Ribbon Award for Aboriginal Programming. The November 7th ceremony honoured excellence in private broadcasting.

Regina-based Zima Junction Productions' documentary **To Be Romeo & Juliet** received the Audience Award as the most popular film of the Possible Worlds Film Festival in Sydney, Australia where the film had its world premiere December 1st.

Mark Wihak's **River** was one of six finalists for this year's \$15,000 Borsos Competition for Best New Canadian Feature Film. Regina-based Maya Batten-Young, who starred in **River**, won the Borsos Competition Award for Best Actress.

Doug Cuthand's **Hidden Plague** was nominated by the American Indian Film Institute in the Best Public

Service category. The documentary examines the AIDS epidemic in the Aboriginal community and how First Nations culture and healing are being utilized to combat it.

Two shot-in-Saskatchewan productions have been accepted into the Sundance Film Festival, the premier showcase for the best new work by American and international independent filmmakers. It will be the world premiere for both productions. The first, **Downloading Nancy**, has been entered into the Dramatic Competition. It is one of 16 films that were selected from 1,068 submissions. Production took place February, 2007 in Regina. The second, **Sleepwalking**, is part of a showcase of contemporary, independent and highly-anticipated films. It was shot in Regina, Moose Jaw and rural Saskatchewan in November, 2006. Both were co-produced by Regina's Stephen Onda, shot at the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios and crewed by Saskatchewan personnel.

2007 SASKATCHEWAN'S BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: PARTNERS IN MOTION



Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's ABEX Awards are the most highly respected symbol of business excellence in Saskatchewan and, for the first

time, a film and video company, Partners in Motion, has received its highest honour: *Business of the Year*.

Chamber CEO Steve McLellan believes that Partners is well-deserving of the title. "They're innovative, they're competitive and they're on the leading edge of technology," says McLellan. "Partner's has an aggressive business plan and they've put together a top notch team that is creating world class product and selling it around the globe."

It wasn't that many years ago that the cultural industries were on the fringe of the business community; seen as having more cultural value than making a real contribution to the provincial economy. "This honour is recognition from Saskatchewan's business community that the cultural industries have great merit both economically and socially," says McLellan, "they are succeeding and they're here to stay."

Established in 1993, Regina-based Partners in Motion, is a multi-purpose entertainment organization. Employing more than 50 individuals, the company is actively producing documentary, dramatic, commercial, and multimedia productions that are seen in more than 150 countries. They have quickly moved into the high definition era; purchasing HD cameras and opening state-of-the-art HD post production facilities.

In addition to *Business of the Year*, the company received an ABEX award for *Community Involvement* for its ongoing support of the arts, culture and education. Organizations such as the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival, Saskatchewan Filmpool Cooperative and the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Association have benefited from the company's support and involvement.

Throughout the years, Partners in Motion has received a number of key international awards, including the television industry's highest honour, the Emmy Award, for its documentary presentation, **13 Seconds: The Kent State Shootings** in 2001.



Wapos Bay

SPOTLIGHT ON THE TRADES
PUTTING UP THE
WALLS FOR *WALLED IN*

The most recent production that made Regina its home was a feature titled *Walled In*. It's the story of a young engineer, played by Mischa Barton, who, while supervising the demolition of a mysterious building, discovers horrifying secrets and past inhabitants entombed within its walls by a vicious murderer.

The production required the construction of several sets to be constructed: a grand hotel foyer with 'marble' walls, dirty grungy walls seemingly deep in the bowels of a building, the interior of a run down apartment building and the exterior walls of a hexagonal building towering 40' high. In total the production required eight separate sets to be built in three studios at the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios. It was the equivalent of building several houses over a ten week period then tearing them all down at the end of shooting.

Construction Coordinator Danny Scavuzzo was responsible for the creation of all those sets. Getting his direction from the production designer, Danny and his team of 40 painters, carpenters and labourers turned the designers' elaborate visions into a temporary reality.

"We were prepping, building and tearing down at the same time in an effort to keep up with the shooting schedule - it was like choreographing an elaborate dance of scaffolding, lumber and equipment," reports

Scavuzzo. "In most movies the construction schedule is determined by actor availability but, because this production was very set-heavy and we were competing for space in the studios, we had to work very closely



Danny Scavuzzo

with other departments to coordinate schedules."

Scavuzzo has been working on film sets since the mid 90's. He came from Toronto to attend the film program at the University of Regina and stayed because of the opportunities offer to him in Saskatchewan's growing film industry. He found his niche in the construction department. For years he was splitting his time between film sets and general contracting but during the past five years there has been enough production in Saskatchewan to keep him steadily employed on a full-time basis.

Scavuzzo realizes that with the current building boom in Saskatchewan he could be making higher wages in the construction industry. "I choose to work on film sets because each production is an adventure; each requires me

to use unique techniques and a variety of skills," he says. "Working in film challenges my creativity and resourcefulness and I love a challenge."

Walled In is a Canada / France treaty co-production between Minds Eye Entertainment of Canada and Forecast Pictures/ Experience Films of France. The film will be released world wide in September 2008.

THE FIFTH AND
FINAL SEASON OF
***renegadepress.com* WRAPS**

For five years, the series *renegadepress.com* has followed the story of Jack Sinclair (Bronson Pelletier) and Zoey Jones (Ksenia Solo) as they exposed what's going on in the lives of today's youth through their e-zine 'renegadepress.com'. The series has pushed traditional television boundaries as the characters struggled with the raw,

harsh truths facing teenagers today with sensitivity, humour and heart.

Production of the final season wrapped on December 2nd and is currently in the post-production phase at Java Post Production and Talking Dog Sound Studio – two Regina-based businesses that have grown in step with the local industry. *Renegadepress.com* Season Five will begin airing early in 2008 on APTN, SCN, The Knowledge Network and TFO, and Global.

Renegadepress.com has earned a total 18 Gemini Award nominations and was honoured with four in writing and performance categories. It was also recognized by the Directors Guild of Canada for Outstanding Team Achievement in a Television Series (Family) in 2006.

In addition to the television series, Vérité Films has developed an active web site that allows television and web audiences to discuss the controversial questions presented by the series.



Renegadepress.com Season IV cast and Executive Producers Virginia Thompson and Robert de Lint. Photo credit: Allan Feildel

During its five-year run, the series has produced 52 episodes, directly employed over 100 people each season and provided steady business for local hotels, restaurants and equipment suppliers.

It has also been an important training ground for young actors and production personnel. The series' co-creator, writer and director, Robert de Lint reports, "crew members who started with us five years ago have graduated from trainee positions and moved along to become full members of their respective unions and guilds and fill some of the gaps in Saskatchewan's crew base."

He believes that series work is the ideal training ground to build the local industry. "Series television provides continuity in the training process and allows for upgrading positions as skills are developed," says de Lint. The same holds true for some of the young local actors who got their start in the series, "from bit parts on the series they have developed their talents and are now competitive on the national stage."

Even though *renegadepress.com* has reached the end of its run, de Lint is confident that there will be work for cast and crew in the coming years, "we are currently in development on four projects and hope to have broadcast licenses and financing in place sometime during 2008." With Vérité Films' solid track record in series production – they also produce *Corner Gas* – Canadian and international audiences can look forward to more innovative series originating in Saskatchewan.

POLISHING THE SCRIPT

Four feature length scripts have been completed with the help of SaskFilm's Screenwriter in Residence Program. Under the guidance of veteran screenwriter and story editor Bill Boyle, four Saskatchewan writers spent ten months developing and polishing their original script ideas.

"The program is tapping into Saskatchewan's vibrant writing community and helping cultivate

the art of storytelling for film and television," says Susanne Bell, SaskFilm CEO and Film Commissioner.

The completed scripts were pitched to a group of Saskatchewan television producers in Saskatoon on December 4th for feedback and with the option to acquire the rights to the projects. The writers and their projects are:

Brent Braaten, Regina

Emily Dethridge

Sean Hoy, Saskatoon

The Eighth Man

Scott Parisien, Saskatoon

Feral

Kenneth T. Williams, Saskatoon

The Red Majesty

SUPER CHANNEL COMES TO SASKATCHEWAN

Will Dixon has been appointed the Super Channel Creative Development Representative for Saskatchewan. He's part of a cross-Canada team working to develop long-form drama and

documentary programs for the newly resurrected premium movie network owned by Allarco Entertainment in Edmonton.

Launched in November, Super Channel offers six channels specializing in daily movie premieres and HD programming. Super Channel (superchannel.ca) is also committed to developing and airing high-end Canadian productions.

Dixon will be working with Saskatchewan producers to identify suitable product and support the development process. Regina-based Dixon has been writing, producing and directing Canadian television for over twenty years.