

## SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

Dear Diary, I haven't written in ages. Here are the highlights for the month of May.

May 1-10: Jack Wynters and Fil Fraser are selling public shares for 4x4, the madcap trucking comedy that almost made it to the road last year. Wynters tells me this is the first time Alberta-based producers have offered shares to the public. Also 4x4 units are handily priced at \$1,000. When the shares are sold, director Ken Jubenville will commence the six-week shoot on Vancouver Island with star Jamie Farr and a western cast and crew. The script (by Pete White) sounds like fun...

ITV is moving ahead with the *Lonely River* series. Bette

Chadwick is handling casting for directors Michael Berry, Ken Jubenville and Arvi Liimatainen, and writer Warren Graves...

CBC casting director Linda Russell is in Calgary to audition for the ninety-minute special *Chautauqua Girl*. Producer is Jeannine Locke and the director is George McGowan. According to the grapevine, only star Lally Cadeau will be imported. Will the rest of the cast be from the west??...

Talked to Wolfgang Richter. He and his lawyer Harvey Korman are launching a lawsuit against the CFDC for breach of contract. Richter says it's a "totally scandalous situation." He says the CFDC entered an

oral agreement and contract for funding his project (*Nails*) and then refused him the money. Richter is suing for \$35,000, plus costs and expenses...

May 11-17: Talked to Art Kent. (He's the ex-journalist who made that documentary on Afghanistan.) Now Kent wants to fund a feature (*Battle Zone Adams High*). Kent says it's a "really good story" with "violence and drug deals." Director for the August shoot would be Mark Lester for Guerilla High Productions Ltd. Although he's raising money in Calgary, Kent wants to shoot in Toronto, "from a business and creative standpoint"...

Then I received a fascinating call from Toronto. The fellow asked me if Calgary was the capital of Alberta. Oh, well. It's been that sort of week...

Went to an NFB screening of *In Search of Farley Mowat* at the Calgary Public Library on May 14. Director Andy Thomson attended the reception hosted by Gary Reading. Thomson's next project will be a series of films on the world arctic with Mowat. Said Thomson, "Although I've done drama, I prefer documentaries. The potential for personal growth is much greater. In features, three or four years of your life is consumed by one project. In that time I could make six documentaries in all corners of the world." Thomson added, "Each documentary is like taking a full credit course at university... a fantastic opportunity to learn and study and be exposed to things." Thank you, Andy. You saved the week.

May 18-24: NABET is out on strike. CBC's *Chautauqua Girl* (and everything else) is on hold. We'll probably never find out if they would have hired western talent...

Joe Thornton has departed Cinemax, and has joined forces with Cal/Can Distributors and Selected Pictures of Cleveland,

Ohio. The new production company is The Select Group...

May 25-31: Hymie Singer held a press conference. Singer is the seventy-one-year-old millionaire who bankrolled a contemporary version of *Dante's Inferno*. The three-week non-union shoot was helmed by Philip Marshak of *Dracula Sucks* fame. Singer announced his next project: *Svengali the Producer*, a tale of the white slave trade set in Vancouver. (Did I really hear that?)

AppleBear came to town. I dropped in on the hearings at the Glenbow Museum. Topic: Our Country's Culture. Gertrude Laing spoke of the need for decentralization of funding and support. Amen. (Rudy Wiebe made a neat point: poverty-level actors are underwriting the culture of our country while administrators are paid well.)...

Interesting contrast in the two previous notes: a fabulously wealthy man contributes \$1 million to an impromptu film staffed by first-timers under the pretext of promoting a Canadian industry, while committed professional artists and bureaucrats debate our culture and the future direction of funding. Now if only we could get those two groups together!...

Oh! I almost forgot to tell you... Neilsen-Ferns/NFB's *The Wars* flew in for two days of shooting on John Scott's ranch, then fled the snows of Alberta for Toronto... ACCESS is shoot-

ing *Come With Me*, a thirteen-hour series for pre-schoolers starring Jack Peach... Thunder Road Studios Ltd. has opened in Calgary. This sound recording and film mix studio and motion picture lab has also officially taken over the Calgary operation of CineAudio. President Ron MacCallum says, "The sound studio and film mix rooms are acoustically designed to digital standards." Vice-President Steve Fouce designed the studio. Vice-president of film operations is Frank Griffiths. Vice-president of sound operations is Neil MacCallum... Video Pack in Edmonton has moved to plush new offices... Tineke Wilders will summer in Toronto for a new television series on plants and people for Canadian and U.S. distribution... Tri-Media Studios Ltd. announces the appointments of Terry Wyman and Bob Aylesworth as project managers... Audrey Cole (associate producer on the upcoming feature *Special People*) was in town with Inuit artist Kenojuak... Syd Sniderman of Roke Distributors predicts "more titles than ever before from the majors this summer"... The Provincial Film Development Office was credited in both *High Country* and *Death Hunt*...

Dear Diary, I have to sign off. CBC-TV is airing *AMPIA At Work*, a series of films featuring the work of Alberta filmmakers, and I don't want to miss it. Bye for now...

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## Singer makes Inferno without producer

CALGARY - Hymie Singer, Calgary millionaire who recently bankrolled the low-budget feature *Dante's Inferno*, recently hosted a press conference to announce his next project.

The first script for *Dante's Inferno*, a 'camp,' contemporary version of the classic, was written by Singer, who then hired the U.S. team of Martin Dorf and Philip Marshak (*Dracula Sucks*). A second script was written by Calgarian Michelle Stirling (with a background in commercials and documentaries) with guidance from Marshak.

The budget, first reported to

be \$500,000, is now closer to \$1 million, says Singer. Also, although initial press releases listed Dorf as producer, Singer now states that Dorf was merely an employee of Marshak, and that there was no producer on the project.

Asked about Canadian certification, writer Stirling affirmed it was being sought, while Singer seemed to think he already had Canadian certification.

Although the script was originally rumoured to be near porn in nature, Marshak has described it as a "camp, tongue-in-cheek comedy with threads of wisdom," and stated the rating would probably be PG, or at the very most, R.

Discussions with DGC, IATSE and ACTRA representatives did not lead to an agreement, so there was no union involvement with the picture. An open call for cast and crew was held at the Trade Winds disco, which Singer owns.

The three-week shoot utilized Calgary locations, many of them owned by Singer's real estate development company, Warner Holdings (United Management).

In the meantime, Singer announced his next project: *Svengali the Producer*, based on the white slave trade in Vancouver.

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