

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

Shout "action" in Alberta this summer, with (finally) a flurry of location shooting, as well as a number of Alberta-based productions on the go.

Alberta has been rediscovered as a location site, with *Rad*, a teenage adventure set in the world of BMX bicycle racing, on the track August 15 in Bowness, a suburb of Calgary. Hal Needham (*Cannonball Run*) will helm the seven-week shoot.

Loyalties, \$2.7 million feature for Lauron Productions Ltd. (Toronto) and Wheeler-Hendren Enterprises Ltd. (Edmonton) with a July start in Lac la Biche, is funded by the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC) Telefilm and private investors.

The television series, *The Little Vampire*, also funded by

the AMPDC (with Polyphon, Primedia and CITV) is also in production in Edmonton. Director is René Bonnière, and associate producer is Patricia Mahon for Norflicks Productions Ltd.

Striker's Mountain completed principal photography May 14, ahead of schedule and on its \$2.3 million budget, according to producer Wendy Wacko. The two-hour feature was directed by Alan Simmonds on location in Jasper and the Caribou Mountains, with leading players Leslie Nielsen, Bruce Greenwood, Mimi Kuzyk and Tom Peacocke.

Other projects (in varying stages of production) added to the AMPDC lineup are: *Shooting Stars: the Story of an Amazing Basketball Team*, a \$325,000 one-hour docudrama

produced by Allan Stein (completed); *Hail Alley*, a \$1.8 million adventure TV feature about a weather research station, to be produced by Peter Campbell of the Dreamland Picture Company in Edmonton, and written by Michael Mercer; *Connecting*, a nine-episode videotaped television series for young adults, produced by HBW/Toth Co-productions of Calgary (completed); *Wildcat*, a half-hour television pilot, a Tinsel Media and Atlantis Film Ltd. co-production (completed); *Whispering Willow*, a \$1.5 million TV movie mixing kung fu and computers in Vancouver, to be produced by Bradshaw MacLeod and Associates of Calgary; *Escape*, a \$700,000 feature to be produced by Montesi and Haynes of Trapped Productions (the team that swooped through with *Birds of Prey*); *Who Killed Sir Harry Oakes?* a mini-series co-production of Great Oaks Productions Limited (England) and

the King Motion Picture Corporation (Edmonton); *Riders of the Plains*, a \$4 million mini-series from the team of Marie-Josée Raymond, Michelle Stirling and Claude Fournier; *By Special Appointment*, a television feature about Burmese, the lead horse of the RCMP Musical Ride, now the ceremonial mount of Queen Elizabeth II, to be produced by Pat Ferns and Judith Crawley, written by W.O. Mitchell; and *The Dream Horses*, a \$7.5 million romance adventure to be produced by Ronald Cohen, written by Harvey Spaak and Allan Stein.

Dramalab, a three-phase program for young producers, directors and writers with the sponsorship of the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, and the Department of Communications, is underway in Edmonton and Montreal under the leadership of Allan King.

Seven teams from across the country worked creatively in a workshop situation in phase one (Alberta) with a discussion piece to follow in Montreal (phase two). Tom Radford is executive producer of Dramalab... CBC reports its local evening newscasts are drawing a quarter of a million viewers in Alberta, with the children's program, *Switchback*, produced in Calgary drawing a provincial audience of 85,000... Fred Keating, host/writer of *Mailbag*, aired nationally on First Choice/Superchannel on a daily basis, has departed his post at Alberta Culture to freelance with his new company, Lindisfarne Productions... Thunder Road Studios in Calgary, in receivership for two years, has closed its doors and put its equipment up for tender, leaving Smooth Rock Studios as the remaining 24-track facility... The Independent Motion Picture Association of Calgary (IMPAC) is sponsoring "Personal Computers in the Film and Video Industry", a workshop given by specialist Mary McGuire...

Border scenes: A crew from NFB Studio D landed in Regina in May to shoot a documentary on disabled women and employment, helmed by Anne Henderson, with a.d./researcher Margot Ouimet, cameraman Carlos Ferrand, soundperson Esther Auger, camera assistant Nastaron Dibai and electrician Normand Lecuyer... The Golden Sheaf Awards, North America's oldest continuous short film festival, is gearing up for 1985, with deadline for entries September 30. A treasure in the middle of Saskatchewan, full of good short films and good never-ending fun, the Golden Sheaf Awards are slated for October 30 to November 3.

Pearson appointed

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The Tar Sands; he also co-authored the screenplays for *One Man* which won a Canadian Film Award, *Insurance Man* and *Snowbird*, the latter with Margaret Atwood.

Pearson said of himself in 1973, "I'm sort of the Mike Marshall of Canadian movies. I took over from Al Waxman on my current film (*Only God Knows*) and of course Peter Carter on *Paperback Hero*. Mike Marshall is the relief pitcher for the Montreal Expos who always comes in and saves the Expo's baseball games."

So Mike, a.k.a. Peter Pearson, is on the mound again. This is one game which deserves to be won.

Pearson is married to Suzanne Vachon, is the father of Louis-Charles de Beauce Vachon-Pearson, and is 47 years old. The family is expected to move to Montreal, where Telefilm Canada has its head office, shortly.

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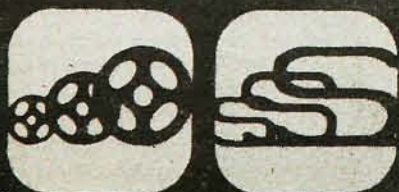
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