

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

Two Canadian features and a prestigious U.S. television series are shooting in Alberta, creating an environment of happy chaos in which working crews are lobbied for future assignments while talent moves from audition to audition, and Alberta government location scouts market the province to interested producers, checking out Alberta because of overcrowding in Vancouver and Toronto.

The Haunting of Hamilton High, a Simcom film production by Higher Education Film Productions Inc. (a subsidiary of Simcom Ltd. of Toronto) began principal photography Aug. 6 (wrapping Sept. 22) in Edmonton, directed by Bruce Pittman (**The Painted Door**). Shot entirely on location, **Haunting of Hamilton High** is the first of three feature films to be produced by the company for Simcom this year. Executive producer is Peter Simpson; supervising producer is Ray Sager, and production executive/associate producer is Ilana Frank.

The \$3.5 million production was written by Ron Oliver, with special effects by Jim Doyle. Director of photography is John Herzog. Michael Ironside, Wendy Lyon, Justin Louis, Lisa Schrage and Bev Hendry play leading roles, with local talent coordinated by Edmonton casting director Bette Chadwick of The Other Agency Casting Limited. **The Haunting of Hamilton High** is being made with the assistance of Allarcom Limited of Edmonton, which has attracted a number of productions to Edmonton by offering financial assistance as well as coordination of local production, and supplying equipment, facilities and personnel.

Simcom's other recent forays into the West include **Bullies**, an action/suspense movie scheduled for August release by Universal Pictures; **Mania**, a television series produced in Edmonton last fall; and **High Stakes**, a feature film shot in Vancouver.

Paper Marriage, an action-comedy about the misadventures of a couple wed for immigration motives, will shoot extensively at the bast tourist attraction, West Edmonton Mall. A special effects/stunt scene will burst through a window into the Waterpark, and will end with the two stars sliding down the Sky Screamer.

Stingray, the dark but stylish NBS series starring Canadian Nick Mancuso as a champion of good in a world of evil, began shooting seven episodes August 7 in Calgary.

Larry Hertzog is executive producer of the popular series, with David Hemmings as producer. Stephen J. Cannell Productions has established a Canadian subsidiary for its 12-week foray onto Canadian soil, with a pledge to hire as many locals as possible.

"Our producers were very encouraged by the enthusiasm and cooperative spirit of the people up there," comments Mike Dubelko, executive vice-president, Stephen J. Cannell Productions, noting the company also looked at Toronto and Vancouver. "The overall attraction of Canada is that it is more economically feasible to produce a series there."

The Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation hosted the Alberta section of a Canadian tour by delegates from the Chinese film industry, hosted nationally by the National Film Board. Alberta, the first province to establish an International Trade Ministry, also pioneered with the opening of a film commission office in the early seventies. Caryl Brandt, vice-president of the AMPDC, predicts the signing of a Canada/China co-production agreement this fall... Calgary-based Amin Bhatia, award-winning synthesizer musician-composer (**Storm**) has signed an album deal with Capitol/EMI Records... The 11th Annual Banff Festival of Mountain Films takes place November 7 to 9... ACTRA award-winning writer Don Truckey (**Rough Justice**) will move from Calgary to Toronto to become head writer and story editor of the CBC series **Street Legal**... Pat Byers is the new branch representative for the Southern Alberta Branch of ACTRA.

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Paper Marriage, a Canadian-financed Chinese feature film, is shooting in Edmonton and Hong Kong July 2 to August 25 for Boho Films (Alberta). A subsidiary of Hong-Kong-based Golden Harvest Group, Boho produces eight to 10 films a year, landing in Alberta last year to film portions of **Millionaire Express** at Marmot Basin in Jasper. Boho has established an Alberta company for **Paper Marriage**.

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