

OWL builds nest for kids' film and TV

TORONTO - The federal government and the Province of Ontario - through a special Economic Regional Development Agreement (ERDA) grant - are contributing a total of \$1.5 million towards the development of a Centre for Children's Film and Television in Toronto. Matching funds are to be raised from the private sector and the project is being launched with a \$4.25 million fundraising drive. Paul Marshall, vice-chairman of Brascan Limited, is the chairman of the fundraising activities.

The Centre is the brainchild of Annabel Slaight, president of the Young Naturalist Foundation, the non-profit organization behind *Owl TV*, and *Owl* and *Chickadee* magazines for children. Slaight told *Cinema Canada* that "the idea came from the enormous difficulties we discovered when we became an independent producer several years ago. *Owl TV* was an unusual kind of TV series. Each of the segments were produced for us by independent producers. These people had their own projects on the go and the idea of having a support system, not only financial support, but creative, marketing and administrative as well, started to take shape. It evolved over two or three years talking to people about their needs."

The purpose of the Centre will be to develop high-quality Canadian films and television programs for children, provide financial, administrative, creative and marketing support, train professionals in production for children, and foster related Canadian children's publications and products. When the centre gets up and running, it anticipates two to four projects of varying size and scope making their way through development and into production each year.

Christopher Wootten has been appointed president of the Centre. Most recently, he was executive director of the Ontario Arts Council.

Drabinsky sells Film House

TORONTO - Cineplex Odeon Corp. chairman Garth Drabinsky has announced that Cineplex is selling 49 per cent of its wholly owned film laboratories and post-production facility, Film House Group Inc., to Rank Organization PLC for about \$73.5 million (U.S.).

It is reported that under the deal, the big British company has a one-year option to buy the

remaining 51 per cent for about \$76.5 million in cash. In the meantime, Cineplex will continue to manage and control the lab. Cineplex paid only \$15 million (Canadian) in stock for Film House two years ago. The money will be used to pay down Cineplex's huge debt load, estimated to be \$450 million.

Under the terms of the deal, the lab's assets are being transferred to a partnership of Rank and Film House, which is to receive \$53.5 million from the sale. The other \$20 million will go directly to Cineplex.

Canadian television pioneer dies at 80

MONTREAL - J. Alphonse Ouimet, a Canadian television pioneer, a chief executive of CBC for 15 years and a Companion of the Order of Canada, died Dec. 20 at age 80.

Ouimet joined CBC's predecessor the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1934 as an engineer. He became president in

1953 until 1967 when he retired.

During those years at the helm of CBC he presided over the introduction of television in Canada in 1952.

After retiring Ouimet headed a UNESCO conference on satellite technology in broadcasting. He was president of Telesat Canada from 1969 to 1980.

Ouimet is survived by his wife Jeanne Prévost, daughter Denise Vincent, and two sisters, Lucille Forget and Jeannine Dufresne.

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