

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

It's springtime in the Rockies. The cameras are rolling again. The oil patch may revive. And long-distance bouquets have landed on some Alberta doorsteps.

At the ACTRA Awards in Ottawa April 3, Alberta moved into the spotlight several times. Calgarian Don Truckey won a Nellie for best dramatic script for television with his *For the Record* script, *Rough Justice*, produced by Maryke McEwen. Truckey, 29, an editorial writer at The Calgary Herald, claims his long-distance breakthrough with network CBC was "a classic case of someone (Peter Lower) pulling something out of the mail." Since then, Truckey's *Tools of the Devil* has also been broadcast on *For the Record*, and his half-hour *Next Year Country* produced by CBC Calgary.

In competition for the award with Truckey was Jeannine Locke's script for *Chautauqua Girl*. That CBC movie, shot on location in southern Alberta, won the Nellie for Best Television Program of the Year for veteran producer Locke. *Chautauqua Girl*, set in the prairie towns of the 1920's, drew a record viewing audience of nearly 2.6 million for its January '84 telecast.

Another final nominee for best television drama script was Sharon Riis of Lac la Biche, Alberta, for *Change of Heart*, produced by Anne Frank for *For the Record*. Riis has two projects in the near future: a mini-series on Metis women, and a feature, *Loyalties*, to be directed by Anne Wheeler in June.

Fred Diehl was the recipient of the John Drainie Award for Distinguished Contribution to Broadcasting. Diehl, a veteran producer/director, spearheaded the revival of national and regional radio drama, and was responsible for establishing Calgary as a radio drama centre over a decade ago.

In Jasper, Wendy Wacko is in pre-production on *Striker's Mountain*, for a five-week shoot with a start date of April 13. The \$1.5 million made-for-television feature about a family-run mountain resort will be directed by Al Simmonds, with Richard Leiterman as D.O.P. Participants are Telefilm, AMPDC, Superchannel and private investors.

In Calgary, Garry Toth and Helene White of HBW/Toth Co-productions have completed taping nine episodes of *Connecting*, a Phil Donohue-style talk-show for teenagers.

Artists in Alberta united in

March to oppose the Mulroney government's cuts to the CBC and federal cultural agencies. In Edmonton March 10, a crowd of more than 700 overflowed the Shocter Theatre in a highly successful rally. The Alberta

Ballet Company, the Edmonton Symphony, the Edmonton Art Gallery, Northern Alberta Performers Branch of ACTRA, the Phoenix Theatre, the Directors Guild of Canada, the Playwrights Union of Canada, Canadian Actors Equity and others joined forces in an evening of entertainment and presentations.

In Calgary on March 20, a

news conference timed to coincide with the national protest in Ottawa, bloomed into a mini-rally. Organized by the Southern Alberta Branch of ACTRA, the conference featured speakers from the Playwrights Union of Canada, the Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC), Equity, ACTRA, Dancers Studio West, American Federation of Musicians, the Off-Centre Cen-

tre, and the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers. Although the CBC facilities in Edmonton and Calgary were relatively unscathed by the cuts, it is generally acknowledged that this is because the CBC services here already operate on such a lean budget that further trimming would dissipate them - as a region - and as a voice.

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