2008 David Billington Award awarded to White Iron executives on November 1st

As reported briefly last month in Keep it Rolling, the Board of the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association has named Lance Mueller and Jean Merriman as the co-recipients of the 2008 David Billington Award.

Mr. Mueller and Ms. Merriman are the unique and dynamic partnership behind The White Iron Group of Companies, a content creation powerhouse located in Calgary. Founded in 1990, the company has created many award-winning programs, commercials and corporate communications for clients including from Imax, ESPN, ABC and NBC to CBC, HGTV the Discovery Channel and CTV.

"Their close and effective working relationship made it natural for AMPIA to present its first joint Billington in the Award’s twenty-one year history," says AMPIA President and Board Chair Joe Novak. "We are very proud of what they have accomplished and contributed."

The Award will be presented at a gala lunch on 1 November 2008 in Calgary.

Lance Mueller, President and CEO of White Iron, began his career as a cinematographer and Director of Photography. He has held management positions in Maclean Hunter, Rogers and was Executive Producer for all CTV affiliates. Mr. Mueller has served on the boards of the Canadian Film and Television Producers Association and AMPIA, as well as various community organizations focused on social issues.

Jean Merriman, Executive Vice President of the White Iron Group began in the creative industries as a graphic artist, writer, director and producer. Before the launch of White Iron, she honed her strategic and innovative people management skills at Maclean Hunter and Rogers Communications. Ms. Merriman has contributed to many elements of the Calgary community, serving on the boards of The Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts, the Glenbow Museum, The Banff Television Foundation and the Calgary Museum of the Regiments. In 2001, she received the YMCA ‘Women of Distinction’ Award for Professions and Entrepreneurs.

The Billington Award is presented annually to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the growth of Alberta's television and film industry. It is named after David Billington, an award-winning journalist and active proponent of the industry who was presented the first award posthumously in 1988.

Mueller and Merriman are the 21st recipients of the annual award and this marks the first time the honour has been awarded to more than a single individual.

Tickets are now available for AMPIA’s annual Billington Award Luncheon, which will take place on Saturday, November 1st in Calgary.

New this year, the 2008 Billington will feature more videos, a tighter show and, in place of reserved tables, the annual "Roast & Toast" Luncheon will provide more opportunities for everyone to visit, mingle and network with other industry players. The event will be held at the Flames Central on Stephen’s Avenue in downtown Calgary from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

If attending please order your tickets soon, as we are expecting another sold-out event.

To order your tickets, please complete the order form included in this issue and send it by fax to the AMPIA office or call the office at 1-800-814-7779. Additional Ticket Order Forms can be found on the AMPIA website <www.ampia.org>.

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DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR DOC FUNDS - producer members are reminded that Wednesday, October 15, is the next deadline date for applications to the 2 new documentary production funds created by CanWest – a $3-million completion fund and a $1-million development fund. The Completion Fund is a grant program that provides up to $100,000 to complete specific projects (to a maximum of 20% of a project's budget) and is available to all producers who have generated market interest in their documentary projects. The Development Fund provides non-interest loans averaging between $10,000 - $15,000 in the early development stage, when projects are at the highest risk and may have not yet secured a market partner. To apply, download and complete the application form at http://www.hotdocs.ca. For more information, contact Jonathan Da Silva at <jdasilva@hotdocs.ca>.

UPDATE ON BILL 18 – as reported last month, AMPIA submitted a detailed brief to the provincial government expressing its concerns on the proposed new Bill 18 which makes sweeping changes to Alberta's Film and Video Classification Act. On September 18, AMPIA Board member Neil Campbell, COO of Landmark Cinemas of Canada, appeared in person at a hearing with the Bill 18 Review Committee, pointing-out the vagueness of the overall intention of the new Act and indicating our concerns over missing regulations that have not been included in this new Act. Other organizations also appeared at the hearing including MPTAA, MPTAC, CMPDA along with Ted East, representing the Canadian distributors. Bill 18 will have a major impact on Alberta's Film and Video Classifications, including all feature film exhibitions as well as DVD's and video games. For more information on this, contact Neil Campbell at <info@ampia.org>.

FAVA CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY – Alberta’s Film and Video Arts Society (FAVA) is celebrating its Silver anniversary on Thursday, November 20 at the Metro Cinema in downtown Edmonton, showcasing 12 short films produced by FAVA members. The filmmakers featured are a diverse group, from the emerging filmmaker to the professional veteran, from experimental to narrative. Themes range from Bollywood to offbeat romances to dark, philosophical journeys. For more detailed information on this event, contact Melissa Thingelstad at FAVA at 780-429-1671 or visit the website <www.fava.ca>.

SUPER CHANNEL FIGHTS FOR AUDIENCE – the new Pay-tv service based in Edmonton is quickly becoming the primary destination for Canadian fight fans with programming that was not previously available in Canada. On Saturday evening, October 11, IBF Light Heavyweight champion Antonio “Magic Man” Tarver defends his crown against undefeated ex-champion “Bad” Chad Dawson and on the same card, WBC Heavyweight champion Sam Peter risks his title against former WBC champion Vitali Klitschko. These special events are available exclusively on Super Channel, owned by Allarco Entertainment, an Edmonton-based media company.
Second season of *Mixed Blessings* launches October 21

“Mixed Blessings,” the half-hour dramatic comedy series set in Fort McMurray and produced by Ron E. Scott of Prairie Dog Film & Television, airs on APTN and APTN HD starting October 21. Six episodes were shot this summer and feature numerous local actors, a mix of industry newcomers and Hollywood talent. The series, the first to feature an honest portrayal of life in the booming Alberta city, has been widely acclaimed by critics for delving into one of Canada’s oldest traditions – the sometimes comical, sometimes dramatic union of two distinct cultures.

This season, the mayhem continues as Hank Kowalchuk (a Ukrainian plumber) and Josie Fraser (a Cree waitress) and their kids become one big happy family. This season, their extended family steps into the action as Josie’s sister comes back to town, shocked by the new marriage. Now, Hank has to fight two Frasers for approval.

“Mixed Blessings” stars Gary Basaraba (“Charlotte’s Web,”) as Hank Kowalchuk, and 2008 Alberta Film & Television Awards Best Actress Tina Lameman (“Road to Saddle River”) as Josie Fraser. And Francis Damberger (“Due South”) directed all six episodes for the second season.

In addition to locally born Basaraba, other homegrown actors on the show include Kirklin Maclise (“Fear Itself”) as Hank’s daughter; Jesse Frechette (“Passchendaele”) as Hank’s son; Emma Duncan as Hank’s sister and Allen Belcourt and Griffin Powell-Arcand play Josie’s sons. The cast is rounded out with Michelle Thrush (“Moccasin Flats”) as Josie’s sister; Emma Ashbaugh as Josie’s daughter; and stand-up comic Big Daddy Tazz as Hank’s best friend.

The series was created by Ron E. Scott (“My Green House”), Ric Bearisto (“Close to Home”) and Drew Hayden Taylor (“Street Legal”).

“Mixed Blessings” is produced in association with APTN, and produced with the participation of the Canadian Television Fund created by the Government of Canada and the Canadian cable industry. The series is produced with the assistance of the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Film Development Program, the Canwest Alberta Fund and the assistance/participation of the Canadian Film or Video Tax Credit.

For more info visit <www.mixedblessingstheseries.com>.

**Heartland season 2 on CBC offers up 18 new episodes**

The adventures of the Fleming family on their ranch for rescued horses continue as a new season of “Heartland” airs on CBC Sunday evenings at 7:00pm. The season premiere aired October 5 and will be followed by 17 brand new episodes. If you miss an episode you can view it online at the revamped Heartland website, located at <www.cbc.ca/heartland>.

The popular series has developed a fan base that has as much passion for the show as for any show on television.

“Heartland” stars Amber Marshall (“The Elizabeth Smart Story”) as Amy, Graham Wardle (“In the Land of Women”) as Ty Borden, Chris Potter (“The Pacifier”) as Tim, and Michelle Morgan (“Diary of the Dead”) as Lou. Gemini Award nominee Shaun Johnston (“Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee”) also stars as Grandpa Jack, Jessica Amlee (“My Life Without Me”) is Mallory, Nathaniel Arcand (“Moose TV”) is Scott Cardinal, Cindy Busby (“Picture This”) returns as Ashley and Kerry James (“On the Other Hand”) joins as the new series regular Caleb.

Country music fans will be thrilled to hear new music from Juno Award-winning George Canyon on “Heartland” in advance of the release of his new album, *Classics*. Canyon joins the cast for several episodes as Charlie Wells, father of the overly friendly neighbour Mallory.

Filmed in and around Calgary, “Heartland” is a co-production of SEVEN24 Films of Calgary and Dynamo Films of Toronto. The executive producers are Heather Conkie along with Jordy Randall and Tom Cox of SEVEN24 Films and Michael Weinberg of Dynamo Films. The series, available in HD, is produced by Tina Grewal.

**Cam Christiansen is 2 for 2 at CIFF**

Last year at the Calgary International Film Festival Cam Christiansen’s first short, “I Have Seen the Future,” won the Alberta Shorts Award and went on to play at Sundance.

This year his 5-minute animated tribute to John Murrell, a NFB short entitled “The Real Place,” won the same Alberta Shorts Award at CIFF. Congratulations, Cam!

The National Screen Institute is now accepting films for its year-round festival. The deadline for submissions is Friday, November 7, 2008. Get the application form by going to <www.nsi-canada.ca>.

**NSI accepting entries**
A West coast office for Anaid

Anaid Productions is pleased to announce the opening of the Vancouver office. Joining President Margaret Mardirossian and VP Factual Production, David Way in Vancouver are Debbie Brown, Director of Factual Development; Michele White, Director of Drama Development; and Chloe Eckert, Executive Assistant.

The Edmonton office continues its operations under the management of VP Business Affairs, Helen Schmidt.

Anaid is currently in post-production for season 3 of “The Family Restaurant,” featuring Edmonton’s Lingnan Restaurant and Quon family, and is also casting for season 4 of “X-Weighted: Families.”

Contact information for the two offices for Anaid Productions is as follows:

**Vancouver Office:**
889 Harbourside Drive, Suite 350
North Vancouver, BC V7P 3S1
Phone: 604.982.9285
Fax: 604.628.3866

**Edmonton Office:**
3132 Parsons Road, Suite 208
Edmonton, AB T6N 1L6
Phone: 780.413.9285
Fax: 780.465.0580

Pyramid series gets 4th season

Pyramid Productions is proud to announce that the much-loved TVtropolis show “Whatever Happened To?” has been renewed for a fourth season. The show catches up with our favourite television and film stars from the past. Profiled stars include Adam West from “Batman,” Priscilla Barnes from “Three’s Company,” Lou Ferrigno from “The Incredible Hulk” and Dawn Wells from “Gilligan’s Island.” Season IV will include 26 more episodes, bringing the grand total to 104.

Pyramid is proud to be producing a video for Travel Alberta about Alberta’s 1988 Winter Olympic legacy. The video will showcase Alberta as a tourist destination and a training ground for Canadian athletes aiming to “own the podium” at the Vancouver Winter Games in 2010. Ken Read, one of Canada’s greatest downhillers and a member of the Crazy Canucks, will narrate. The video features interviews and behind the scenes training with Canada’s top Olympic stars including Kristina Groves, Jan Hudec, Shona Rubens, Pierre Lueders, Chandra Crawford, Duff Gibson as well as two 88 Olympic participants, Karen Percy Lowe and Jim Peplinski. Watch for it in schools across the province, and in front of this year’s touring Warren Miller ski movie.

Having played CIFF, Pyramid’s “In a World Created by a Drunken God” will be opening the American Indian Film Festival on November 7 in San Francisco. The star of the film, Trevor Duplessis, has been invited by the festival organizers to represent the movie at the award show. Fourteen awards will be presented to honour filmmakers and Native American talent including Best Film, Best Actor and Best Documentary.

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**Chanti Productions is rocking**

In BC, AMPIA member Deb Munro and her company - Chanti Productions - has had a fast paced year. Although it's been a slower year for video, she has managed to sell their industrial, "The Trades" nationally across Canada and has interest from BCIT to produce several more. Her company has recently rebranded and now has a new website <www.debsvoice.com>. There you can meet Gladys, the site's virtual assistant and check out their three sites.

Munro has had great success this year in voice projects, coaching, demo production and more. She was honoured to represent Canada at VOICE 2008 in LA in August and was joined by 24 top coaches and voice talent from around the world. Currently she is busy teaching several workshops, private sessions and demo productions across Canada and now into the US. See her site <www.MicnMe.com> for more info.

Munro has been extremely busy so far this year, serving as the pre-show announcer at the Juno Awards, the narrator for Global’s series “True Pulp Murder,” as well as hundreds of commercials and several narrations. She has also written her 2nd publication of The Voice Biz Handbook, a guide designed to help those wanting to break into the voice over industry.

**A busy time for Panacea**

Panacea’s comedy sci-fi feature film "Freezer Burn: The Invasion of Laxdale" screened at both the Calgary and Edmonton International Film Festivals to sell-out crowds. The 90-minute Alberta-made film stars Tom Green and Crispin Glover and was directed by Calgary’s Grant Harvey. The film is being distributed in Canada by Equinox Films, with international sales being handled by Film Bridge International. And "Wait Time" - a short dramatic film co-produced by Panacea AMPIA intern Julie Debeljak also screened at both Alberta festivals.

Also, the Edmonton-based production company’s animated/live-action youth series "Anash and the Legacy of the Sun-Rock" has been green lit by APTN for seven more episodes, which will complete Season One. Production is slated for May in Whitehorse and Edmonton. Fremantle recently acquired the series for international broadcast sales, as did McNabb Connolly for the Canadian educational market.

The University of Alberta’s China Institute recently hosted a gala premiere at the Timms Centre for the Arts for "Seeds of Change: the ECO story." This one-hour program documents the compelling story of two expatriate scientists who give back to their Chinese homeland by working selflessly to restore the Yangtze river to health and in so doing, improve the lives of the subsistence farmers who live along its banks. Produced for ACCESS and SCN, the program has also been chosen to screen at the 9th Annual Ojai Film Festival in California this November.

Panacea President Josh Miller is off to the annual IQ Conference to be held in Quito, Ecuador from October 25 to November 2. IQ (International Quorum of Motion Picture Producers) is the only global organization dedicated to film production company owners. With representation in more than 45 countries, members share their work and catch up with new business developments at the legendary IQ annual conferences. And before Miller travels to a city a mere 20 kilometres from the equator he will be in Whitehorse from October 3 to 5 teaching a producing workshop as part of a comprehensive industry training initiative for Yukon film and video-makers. The project is entitled Yukon Miseen-Scène and its objective is to develop local directors, writers and producers and increase the Yukon film industry capacity to effectively conceive, plan, and execute short dramatic high definition production.

**A new series from Reel Girls airs**

"The Lie Detective" is a character-driven documentary series following the work of independent Polygraph Examiner and self-professed truth seeker Ken Donaldson, as he helps people from all walks of life in their quest for honesty, resolution and freedom from deception.

Whether it’s feuding couples embroiled in he-said she-said battles, accusation-slinging families or even athletes hoping to prove they are drug-free, Ken sees it all. Since opening ITR Polygraph Service five years ago, his business has grown steadily, and the series reveals the fascinating variety of cases that come his way. Watch as he cracks a new case each week, using his skills and his polygraph equipment to bring us the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The premiere episode aired initially on CLT last month, but it, along with the other episodes will air several times this month on CourtTV Canada. For more information on this series, including when it airs, go to <www.theliedetective.ca>.
News from Helene White

“Alpha Species” is the first of seven CanCon films to be produced in Alberta (AB) by Calgary’s HBW Entertainment Inc., helmed by producer Helene White (“Caitlin’s Way”; “Stray”), in association with Dragon Thunder Entertainment of Hollywood.

The screenwriters, Ed Yee (aka Edo Matsuhashi-Louie) and Joseph P. Sinda, both formerly with Warner Bros., say they penned this first screenplay because they were fascinated with what can be done working in cutting edge digital cinema.

The second of the seven film picture package, is entitled “Splatt!!!”. It is to be shot in Edmonton with some second unit filming planned for Victoria. The producers have just begun talks with Canadian directors so talent is yet to be announced. Stay tuned for more information as production start dates near.

NFB Images features images from around the world: classic and contemporary material on war and conflict, industrialization, rural and urban lifestyles, celebrities, wildlife and a treasure trove of film footage on the Arctic. NFB IMAGES also represents the world-renowned National Geographic and Gaumont-Pathé archives in Canada, as well as private producers. And the collection gets better all the time, with new shots added daily.

The NFB’s team of bilingual stock footage experts can provide you with superb research assistance and rights clearance support. For more information about the collection or to contact one of our researchers, visit their site, or email them at <images@nfb.ca>.

New documentary fund launches

Astral Media’s Harold Greenberg Fund has announced the launch of a new documentary fund. Worth $585,000, the fund will be aimed at assisting producers in the funding of docs with a Western Canadian focus. The objective of the new fund is to be able to support two to three high-quality feature length projects that will be selected from a single review process. To respect the spirit of the initial commitment by Standard Radio, the documentaries should have a subject matter focus that emphasizes music in some manner. The Harold Greenberg Fund will launch the process with an initial application deadline in January 2009. For more information, please contact Darlene Lim at (416) 956-5431 or by email, at <dlim@tv.astral.com>.

From left, some of the actresses from “The Kois,” Johanna Roy, Sierra Jamerson, Laura Seabrook, Jesse Mossop and Renee Bencic. They, along with over 180 guests at NAIT’s SHAW Theatre, were treated to a private screening of the series pilot, “Fish out of Water,” on September 20. The episode was enthusiastically received by all those attending.

Photo credit: Paul Thurlin, Edge Photography
Canwest Alberta Fund 1 Year Old

The Canwest Alberta Fund (CAF) is ready to celebrate its first birthday with a new round of investments in Alberta productions. The fund’s next application deadline is 15 October 2008.

The $10.5m Fund, established by Canwest Media as a result of CRTC Decision 2007-168 and operated as a program of the Independent Production Fund, supports priority television production from Alberta’s producers for Canadian broadcasters. The Fund is operated at ‘arm’s length’ from Canwest through a Selection Committee of representative industry experts.

In its first year CAF invested in over forty hours of new programming, ranging from documentaries, dramatic series and mini-series, to adventure programming, comedy and more. The CAF projects also brought a wide variety of broadcasters to the table, including CBC, Food Network Canada, Global, History Canada and APTN.

Some of the successful applicants are in the first year were “Ride Guide Snow” (Ride Guide Productions for Global), “Family Restaurant” (Anaid Productions for Food Network Canada), “Fish Out of Water” (Joe Media Group for APTN), “Mixed Blessings” (Prairie Dog Productions for APTN) and “Caution: May Contain Nuts” (Mosaic Entertainment for APTN).

Two teams of Alberta’s award winning documentary filmmakers are in production with very different projects supported by CAF. Tom Radford and Niobe Thompson of Clearwater Media are putting together “Inuit Invasion” for CBC, and Michael Jorgensen and Carrie Gour of Calgary’s Myth Merchant Films are producing “Hitler’s Stealth Bomber” for History Canada.

The CAF also supported the Global/BBC miniseries “Burn Up,” produced by SEVEN24 Films, and also the new dramatic series for the CBC “The Wild Roses, also produced by SEVEN 24 Films.

“It’s obvious the Fund is interested in variety,” says Managing Director Jane Bisbee. “But if there’s anything that characterizes all these projects, and demonstrates what the CAF is looking for, it’s good storytelling.”

Canwest Alberta Fund guidelines and application forms are available at <www.ipf.ca>.

WIFT-A news

Join the Women in Film and Television on Saturday, November 22 as they celebrate 10 years of serving the Alberta Film and Television community. Along with a wine reception the event will feature guest speaker Stephanie Morgenstern, co-creator and co-writer of the hit CTV/CBS series “Flashpoint.” Stephanie will share her experiences with moderator Carol Whiteman (co-creator and producer of the Women in the Director’s Chair Workshop). “Flashpoint” is a one-hour police drama, inspired by Toronto’s Emergency Task Force. The series premièred on CTV this past July.

WIFT-A board members, past and present, will be on hand to chat with any non-members interested in learning about WIFT-A, what the organization is all about, and how to join.

The event takes place at the Delta Calgary South, 135 Southland Drive SE at 7:00pm on Saturday, November 22, 2008.

In other news, outgoing WIFT-A President Smita Acharyya is pleased to pass the torch to WIFT-A’s new President Deborah Osborne and the current board of directors including Astrid Kuhn (VP South), Sherry Klimow (Treasurer), Diane Bennett (Past VP), Signy Oleson-Cormack (VP North), Anita Bonstrom (Membership Committee Chair) and Patricia Turanich (WIFT-International Rep). Go to <www.wifta.ca> for full details and happenings at the organization.

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CanWest Alberta Fund application deadline

The 3rd Annual Reel Femme Film Festival
(780) 489-2189

The 2008 David Billington Award in Calgary
1 800 814-7779

The American Film Market
(310) 446-1000

Global Visions Film Festival (Edmonton)
(780) 414-1052

WIFT-A 10 year anniversary celebration in Calgary
(403) 827-7482

Global Visions Film Festival (Edmonton)
(780) 414-1052

The American Film Market
(310) 446-1000

Global Visions Film Festival (Edmonton)
(780) 414-1052

The Whistler International Film Festival
(604) 932-0606

Arts and Education Awards Available at Grant MacEwan College
The Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) at Grant MacEwan College is calling for applications for a variety of awards. Application forms and guidelines are available from URDC. The application deadline is November 30, 2008. For full details click on 'Resources,' when you visit <www.macewan.ca/urdc>.

3rd Annual Reel Femme '08 Film Festival in Edmonton
The Edmonton Women's Film Society presents their third annual two-day festival of film made by women, about women, for everyone. To be held at the Metro Cinema (9828-101A Ave., Zeidler Hall, Main Floor Citadel Theatre) Friday October 17, and FAVA - Exhibition Suite (2nd floor, 9722 – 102 Street) on Saturday evening, October 18. Admission is $10.00 per screening for adults and $5.00 for students and seniors. For full information on the festival visit <www.ewfs.ca>.

An opportunity to keep up with image capture evolution
Join Panasonic Canada for a P2 High Definition Workflow Seminar, coming in November to Alberta. Fresh from the success of the seminar held in Vancouver, Panasonic is bringing the seminar free of charge to Calgary. This will be an opportunity to gain a greater understanding for the P2 System workflow and essentials of HD terminology in pre-production, production and post production. The Panasonic P2 system will be used as a case study. Dates for mid-November seminars will be confirmed soon. Watch the AMPIA website for more details as they are confirmed. Or contact: Cathryn Robertson, Western Account Manager, Panasonic Canada <crobetson@ca.panasonic.com> or Deborah Osborne, <deboraho@joemedia.tv>.