

DESIGNERS.CA



Volume 12, Issue 1

February 2010

ASSOCIATED DESIGNERS OF CANADA

President's Report **by Phillip Silver**

A belated but enthusiastic Happy New Year to you all! I hope that you managed to refresh yourself with whatever break your projects allowed and that you came into 2010 with energy and good health!

This is a busy year for ADC and the executive has a lot on the go. First up is the ADC/PACT contract negotiations which take a first step in February with follow up meetings in late March.

I'm very pleased with the members who have agreed to serve on the ADC team. We have two relatively new members,

Melanie McNeill and Patrick du Wors, joining Renee Brode, Dennis Horn and me, all of whom who could charitably be called long-standing members. Dennis and Renee served recently on the ADC-NAC negotiations and know "the dance steps"!

Our goal in the negotiations is to reach an agreement that we can put before the membership at the AGM in June. Among the issues we intend to address with PACT are: clarifying nature of relationship between PACT and ADC under CAPPRT; revising the agreement format; revising the contract format; adding

Projection Design Criteria; improving designers' rights re production photographs; increasing RRSP contribution from Theatres; improving travel, accommodation and per diem clauses; improving provisions re billing; and establishing a discounted ticket policy, similar to Equity.

In addition, we will be working on an understanding re the employment of non-Canadian designers; clarity on Fees and Royalties; and the establishment of Minimum Fees and Royalties, including the addition of Projection Design in the Fee Schedule.

(Continued on page 2)

Out-of-Pocket Might Mean Out-of-Luck **by April Viczko**

As I was standing in the fabric store while shopping for costumes for one show, I spotted the perfect upholstery fabric for the next show. "I'll just buy it and get the theatre to pay me

back", I thought. I know we've all done it! It's easier, right? Sometimes it seems that way, however, it's bad practice and it's risky.

There is nothing stopping the theatre from claiming that was an unauthorized expense and to refuse to pay me back.

(Continued on page 3)

Inside this issue:

President's Report Continued	2
Website Update	2
Out-of-Pocket Might Mean Out-of-Luck	3
Employment Insurance Rules	4
Regional Rep Committee Reports	4

Mentorship Applications Now Available from
Director of Member Services
and Communication!
Email jaime@designers.ca for
more information.

President's Report by Phillip Silver

Interested in volunteering with ADC?

Become a Student Liaison and help ADC attract Student Members;

Work with ADC to build an Education Caucus;

Help with ADC's AGM in Edmonton;

Write for this Newsletter;

Or, come to us with an idea!

(Continued from page 1)

One of the issues that members have identified to me is what appears to be an increasing use of foreign designers, particularly at several of our major companies which position themselves as "national" in stature.

I've begun some investigation into this matter with HRSDC (newly re-named as Service Canada) and hope to be able to report on progress in a future newsletter.

If you have examples of this in your area, please send a note about it to president@designers.ca.

As you know, we recently asked the membership to express their views on the question of minimum fees in an online survey. The results of the survey provide a lot of food for thought for the board.

The survey was completed by 47 members (which compares with 58 who voted in the recent ADC-NAC ratification). Of those who completed the survey, 93.5% supported an ADC minimum fee schedule and 84% felt that the schedule should be available to both members and producers. Close to 80% felt that ADC should push for a minimum fee clause in the upcoming ADC-PACT negotiations. A similar number encouraged ADC to develop a minimum fee schedule for use in "fringe" and "co-op" conditions. Close to 90% of those surveyed felt that fees should continue to relate (in part) to the Equity/PACT house size categories.

Several members contributed comments that have been very helpful in

understanding the varied views members have of these issues. The Board appreciates the input we've been given. And, of course, please continue to let us know your thoughts.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the U of A in Edmonton on June 11 and 12 and much of the work is falling to board member April Viczko, who is working with Lee Livingstone, Guido Tondino and other Edmonton-based ADC members to provide a suitably hospitable Alberta welcome. As a born-and-bred Edmontonian, I know how wonderful that can be! Try not to miss it!

Your board and I are always interested in hearing your thoughts on any issues relating to your/our work.

New Website!

ADC will finally get its long-promised, much-anticipated improved website!

After an extensive vetting process, the Board decided to contract Hired Guns to redesign the website.

The decision was made easy by the Hired Guns team's experience designing artist-centered websites. For an example of their work check out the Alliance for Arts and Culture website [here](#).

The new website will feature, among other things, a directory that will allow members to upload and update their own information; fillable contracts; and a Paypal account for dues and fees.

Out-of-Pocket Might Mean Out-of-Luck by April Viczko

(Continued from page 1)

Then what do I do with five yards of fabric that is really only good for upholstering Lady Bracknell's settee? I'm stuck with it, because I can't take it back to the store.

And the same thing goes for those great finds at Value Village and Goodwill, as many costume designers know.

What is the way out of this purchasing dilemma? Petty cash.

Designers are neither expected nor required to finance productions. When you sign a contract a simple, frank discussion about petty cash procedures with the production manager will help solve this problem. This includes asking how long he or she needs to turn around a cheque request. If you don't ask for petty cash, no one will give it to you.

If you have agreed to do some shopping on a show, or you know you will be doing the shopping by the simple fact you know no one else will, then ask for petty cash. Especially if you think there will be purchases of hundreds of dollars. If you wind up in a situation where, the general manager is away on vacation and is needed to sign cheques, you might be waiting weeks to get reimbursed. Or worst case scenario if you purchase something without advance permission or request from the theatre, you could simply be stuck with the expense.

Some key things to consider when dealing with petty cash:

1. Anticipate the need for petty cash.

Ask what the procedure for petty cash is at the theatre. The production manager should know. Put in your request to him or her for slightly more than you think you might need. If you don't request the cheque early, you might not get the money until too late. Remember that these cheques often require two signatures so they cannot always be turned around in a day.

2. Ask for cash not cheques.

When asking for petty cash, always ask for cash. Yes, that means someone from the theatre has to go to the bank. So what? You will have to go to the bank to cash the cheque they give you. Are they paying you extra to shop? If not, the least they can do is save you a trip to the bank. If you do get a cheque, then DO NOT cash it through your personal account. Ask your bank to simply cash the cheque but not deposit it into your account.

In the event you are audited, Revenue Canada can (and likely will) count that petty cash cheque as income. If you cash enough cheques that way, you could find yourself owing a lot more in taxes. Also, beware of depositing the money into your account and paying for things with your debit card.

Imagine how you will explain to Revenue Canada that it was a business expense when you don't have any of the original receipts.

3. Carry a petty cash wallet.

I carry my petty cash in an old pencil case, one with two zippered pockets. Receipts go in one pocket and cash goes in the other. It's simple to organize and it keeps my cash separate from the theatre's cash.

4. Large purchases.

If a purchase is going to be a significant amount of money, over \$500 for example, ask the theatre if they have an account with the business. I hear all the costume designers laughing.....yeah, I know an account with every little fabric store? Costume designers can spend a significant amount of cash on fabric in a short period of time. Sometimes it's best to swatch it and get the theatre to pick it up on their credit card later. All the more reason to ask for cash in advance.

5. And.....

Don't forget to ensure the GST number is on every receipt you get. Most stores have a stamp with their GST number on it and will stamp the receipt only if asked. As well, it's a good idea to photocopy all of your receipts and totals. This way you have a record in case of questions or misunderstandings.

If you would like more information about what you have read in this newsletter contact Jaime Mellott, Director of Member Services and Communication, at jaime@designers.ca or toll-free at 866.497.4209.

ASSOCIATED DESIGNERS OF CANADA

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

jaime@designers.ca

866.497.4209

ADC BUSINESS OFFICE

adc@designers.ca

416.410.4209

800.361.2721

New Employment Insurance Rules for the Self-Employed

Service Canada (the erstwhile Human Resources and Social Development Canada) has instituted new rules that allow Self-Employed individuals to opt in to Canada's Employment Insurance scheme.

The self-employed will now be able to access "special benefits," which include maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits.

For more information go to http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/self_employed_workers.shtml.

Regional Representative Committee Reports

British Columbia and the Yukon by Ereca Hassell

Vancouver has been bursting with cultural energy over the past month, in the lead up to the 2010 Winter Olympics. The Cultural Olympiad takes place between January 22 – March 21 and the city is buzzing with art installations, live theatre, dance, opera and music, featuring artists, designers and performers from across Canada and around the world.

It has been widely reported in recent months that the support

within British Columbia for the 2010 Olympic Games is the lowest in the country. For over six years the people of BC have been dealing with concerns about the financial fallout from the games, and most recently arts and social services organizations have been hit with massive cuts to funding from the British Columbia government.

These cuts have had, and will continue to have, a devastating effect on many arts organiza-

tions and individual artists. As a result, there has been anger and frustration within the arts and cultural sector in BC, with some of that being directed at the Olympics – the perceived cause of these deep arts cuts.

Despite trepidation, there is now a great buzz in the city, and a sense of excitement downtown. City streets are filled with people from all around the world, enjoying all that this beautiful part of the world has to offer.

Alberta and the Northwest Territories by April Viczko

The dark days of winter on the Prairies.....trudging through the snow in the dark to that 10 out of 12 rehearsal, to spend all day in a dark theatre, only to arrive home in the dark.....

Sunshine however, happens onstage with new play festivals like High Performance Rodeo in Calgary and the Canoe Festival in Edmonton.

AGM planning in Edmonton is underway and we are hoping for a good turnout with lively discussion! The venue will be at the University of Alberta Drama Department who has agreed to be our host.

I've fielded a number of questions from new members regarding use of the ADC con-

tract, particularly the Independent Producers contract. As theatres begin announcing their next season, and designers are contracted, there will be more questions to answer.

Please keep the questions coming! It's far better to ask before you sign an agreement than after.