

NEWS & ANALYSIS

B.C. film production booming



Mike Cohen

VANCOUVER - While Montreal's film industry suffers through a difficult summer, with not a heck of a lot happening, business continues to boom in Vancouver. But in an interview, B.C. Film Commissioner **Susan Croome** insisted that she does not see Montreal as competition, nor should we feel the same about her city.

"We are a different animal than Montreal," Croome told me. "Look, we are only two and a half hours by plane from Los Angeles. Stars filming here can go home for the weekends. Here we are blessed with fabulous raw material: oceans, beaches, ski hills and even a desert four hours by car complete with cactus."

I reminded Croome that the original *Night at the Museum* blockbuster, starring **Ben Stiller**, was supposed to be shot at Mel's Cité du Cinema. An entire set had been built when Stiller reportedly insisted that they move to Vancouver. Incidentally, Stiller is in Vancouver now where production is underway on the sequel *Night at the Museum II*. The big budget *Farewell Atlantis* with **John Cusack** and **Amanda Peet**, is also filming. So is *The Thaw* with **Val Kilmer**. Then there are the television series: *Battlestar Galactica*, *Psych*, *Kyle XY*, *The Guard*, *Eureka*, *Stargate Atlantis*, *Samurai Girl*, *Sanctuary* and *Supernatural*. There are also some mini series, pilots and movies of the week setting up shop.

B.C. remained a strong contender in film and television production in 2007, with a record year in domestic film production. Statistics show film and television production in the province contributed \$943 million to the provincial economy.

"Honestly," says Croome. "We do not see Montreal as a city we want to elbow out of the way."

Proudfoot Fund: For the past year Montrealers have been touched by the dramatic battle former Alouettes football player **Tony Proudfoot** has been fighting against Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Proudfoot played for the B.C. Lions as well and as such Vancouverites too are supporting his cause.

Last week the Rosedale on Robson Suite Hotel (www.rosedaleonrobson.com) held a fundraiser to support the Tony Proudfoot Fund and the ALS Society of B.C. It is perhaps no coincidence that two former Montrealers play key roles at the hotel, conveniently located just two blocks from B.C. Place in the heart of downtown Vancouver. **James Miller** is a Lower Canada College

See COHEN, page 5

COHEN

Cont'd from page 4

grad who serves as general manager while **Jodi Gilletz Sprackman** hails from Chomedey and fulfills the role of community relations director. She also happens to be the daughter of noted cookbook author **Noreen Gilletz**. Proudfoot flew in for last week's silent auction, which coincided with an Alouettes-Lions encounter. Former Alouettes centre **Wayne Conrad**, who as a uniform supplier counts the Rosedale on Robson as one of his clients, worked with Sprackman on the fundraiser which raised \$7,000. "Tony and I have remained friends since our playing days," he told me. "He is one courageous individual."

Torch Relay: As the 2010 Winter Olympics draw closer, the Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC) is now entering into discussions with up to 200 municipal governments regarding regional celebrations across Canada. It's an important step in the process to ensure that a maximum number of Canadians will experience the Olympic Torch Relay. The communities on the relay route won't be unveiled until later this year, but I suspect Montreal will be one of approximately 1,000 chosen. VANOC spokesman **Jason Macraughton** would only tell me that the route will be announced later this year.

Item of interest? E-mail mcohen@thesuburban.com, call 484-1107, ext. 307 or fax 483-7213.