

The Harold Greenberg Fund

BCE Place
181 Bay Street
P.O. Box 787
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 2T3

Tel.: (416) 956-5431
Fax: (416) 956-2087
hgfund@tv.astral.com



For Immediate Release



**ASTRAL MEDIA THE HAROLD GREENBERG FUND'S
INVESTMENT PROGRAMS SUPPORT 24 PROJECTS**

Toronto, July 11, 2006 – Astral Media The Harold Greenberg Fund announced the funding for **24** new and ongoing projects through its **Equity Investment Program, Script Development Program** and **Family Film Program**.

The slate features **22** English-language script development projects and **two** equity investments including the feature film *The Stone Angel*, to be directed by Kari Skogland based on the classic Canadian novel by Margaret Laurence, and the third season of the tween comedy series *Life with Derek* created by Daphne Ballon.

Through its Script Development Program, The Fund also supported Thom Fitzgerald's *Cheesecake*, a docu-comedy looking at pin-up girls in the 1950s and 1960s. Combining archival footage, interviews, and pastiche recreations, *Cheesecake* is a companion piece to Fitzgerald's 1999 muscle magazine exposé *Beefcake*.

"From the story optioning of some of Canada's most well-known literary works to a family comedy series, our new line-up of supported projects reflects a diverse range of stories and themes at varying stages of the story-telling process." said John Galway, President, English-language Program, Astral Media The Harold Greenberg Fund.

Projects approved this quarter include:

EQUITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

THE STONE ANGEL, Buffalo Gal Pictures Inc. and Skogland Films Inc.,
Screenwriter/Director: **Kari Skogland**. Based on the Canadian literary classic by Margaret Laurence, the story tells of the irascible, witty and proud Hagar Shipley, who in her dying days embarks on a journey to reconcile herself to her tumultuous past.

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

These projects are at various stages of development. The Program's recipients are:

STORY OPTIONING PHASE

ALL HAT, New Real Films Inc., Novel by Brad Smith. Screenwriter: **Brad Smith**. An ex-con returns to his rural Ontario roots and outwits a corrupt and wealthy horse owner trying to take over a slew of local farms.

CLARA'S WAR, Corey Marr Productions Inc., Novel by Kathy Kacer. Screenwriter: **Jonas Chernick**. Imprisoned with 40,000 other Jews in the ghetto of Terezin, 13-year-old Clara finds hope by participating in a secret children's opera, all the while plotting a daring escape.

CRETE ON THE HALF SHELL, Yarmadillo Films Inc., Novel by Byron Ayanoglu. Screenwriters: **Sharon Corder** and **Jack Blum**. This sunny adventure follows a disgraced Montreal restaurant critic who is enticed by a volatile Greek chef into starting a restaurant on the island of Crete.

A DISCOVERY OF STRANGERS, New Real Films Inc., Novel by Rudy Wiebe. Screenwriter: **Leonard Farlinger**. A chronicle of John Franklin's first northern expedition and the ensuing adventure of love, innocence, greed and passion, set against the terrifying arctic landscape.

THE LAST COWBOY, Sienna Films Inc., Novel by Lee Gowan. Screenwriter: **Paul Fox**. Left on the side of a prairie highway by his wife, small town banker Sam McMahon tries to get home to save those he loves from the unpredictable forces of nature.

THE TIME IN BETWEEN, Crescent Entertainment Ltd., Novel by David Bergen. Canadian veteran Charles Boatman returns to Vietnam 28 years later in search of love, absolution and forgiveness. The effects of war influence his new encounters and his relationship with his now-adult children.

FIRST DRAFT

CHEESECAKE, Emotion Pictures Inc., Screenwriter: **Thom Fitzgerald**. This docu-comedy looks at the glamorous pin-up girls of the 1950s and 1960s through archival footage, interviews, and pastiche recreations.

A HARD CHANCE, Palpable Productions Inc., Screenwriter: **Chaz Thorne**. Based on the Tom Gallant novel. In this true story, a husband rediscovers his love for his wife after she has a catastrophic brain injury on the final night of their marriage. He tries to reassemble the pieces of their life together – a life that she can no longer remember.

LOVING LENA, Crescent Entertainment Ltd., Screenwriter: **Scot Morison**. Based on the David Bergen novel, *The Case of Lena S*. An off-beat coming-of-age story exploring the relationship between Lena, a troubled, free-spirited girl, and Mason, the bookish, straight-arrow boy who falls for her.

SECOND DRAFT

AFTERIMAGE, Susan C. Rynard Inc., Screenwriter: **Su Rynard**. Based on the Helen Humphreys novel. The arrival of a young, Irish maid at the country house of a freethinking, aristocratic, Victorian couple creates tension culminating in tragedy.

CHARMING GRACE, Media Brat Productions Inc., Screenwriter: **Will Pascoe**. Now in their late 20s, four friends wrestle with a childhood pact they made to never let a woman come between them – as one incredible woman begins to do just that.

DEAD MONEY, Tribute Films and Grana Productions Inc., Screenwriter: **Ron Base**. Based on the Perri O'Shaughnessy short story. After an insurance agent and \$800,000 goes missing, local cop Tim Breen finds himself embroiled in a murder investigation, and haunted by his past.

DERMOT'S GHOST, The Film Works Ltd., Screenwriter: **Jefferson Lewis**. Based on the Jefferson Lewis novel. Recruited at age 13 as an assassin for a violent IRA splinter group, Jimmy Quick, now 37, has been given a second chance, and must choose between old loyalties or the promise of a new life.

EMERGENCE, Raven West Films Ltd., Screenwriter: **Monica Hilborn**. A video game programmer grapples with his sanity when parallels between his work, and real-life violence and conspiracy, blur his sense of reality.

RAW, Finkelfilms BC Inc., Screenwriter: **Eric Finkel**. Although he works in his family's Italian restaurant, Dante aspires to be a sushi chef, and must balance his new ambitions with his overbearing mother's expectations in this romantic comedy.

THE SACRIFICE, Howe Sound Films Inc., Screenwriter: **Tarique Qayumi**. In eastern Afghanistan, a wounded U.S. serviceman is rescued by a teenage boy, hidden and cared for by an entire village, and ultimately saved at a tragic cost.

FINAL DRAFT

RED VELVET GIRLS, Creative Engine Pictures Inc., Screenwriter: **Claudia Molina**. A vampire mother prepares her daughter to marry and be impregnated by a male vampire. Instead, the young lady develops a fierce passion for a servant girl, and the two lovers escape to Vancouver.

SENIOR PROJECT

THE PUCK HOGS, Protocol Entertainment Inc., Screenwriter: **Eric Lunsky**. A distinctively Canadian documentary-style comedy about hockey, men, and stick-handling the puck over the goal-line of life.

FAMILY FILM PROGRAM - EQUITY COMPONENT

TV SERIES

LIFE WITH DEREK (SEASON 3), Shaftesbury Films Inc., Screenwriters: **Daphne Ballon** and **Jeff Biederman**. A live-action comedic series about two self-obsessed teenagers whose parents have recently married, and who fight a take-no-prisoners battle for control of the house, the school and possibly the world, as they are forced to cope with their new sense of family.

FAMILY FILM PROGRAM - SCRIPT COMPONENT

FIRST DRAFT

GET OUTTA TOWN, D. Nightingale & Assoc. Ltd., Screenwriter: **Heather Conkie**. Seeking companionship for their widowed grandfather, a loving family posts a personal ad on the internet looking for the perfect grandmother. Little do they know, this offer is the perfect escape for a con-grandmother on the run from the mob.

I WISH I COULD..., Milagro Films Inc., Screenwriter: **Roger Cantin**. Surviving a plane crash, a brother and sister manage to stay alive in the wilderness by remembering tricks they saw in video games, films and on television.

PUJA'S BAT MITZVAH, pUNK Films Inc., Screenwriter: **Anais Granofsky**. Puja Solokowski is half Jewish and half black Baptist. When both sides of her estranged family meet at her Bat Mitzvah, cultural fireworks ensue.

SECOND DRAFT

BANNOCK & BRATWURST, Screenwriter: **Shannon Olson Masters**. A teen devises a plan to get off the reservation by becoming an international exchange student, but his family decides to host a German student instead, resulting in a riotous clash of cultures.

The ***Equity Investment Program***, funded by Astral Media's **Viewers Choice**, was established in 1992 to invest in the production of quality Canadian dramatic movies made for theatrical release and/or pay television. The ***Script Development Program*** was created to assist in the development of quality Canadian feature film scripts. The program receives a yearly contribution of \$1.3 million from Astral Media's **The Movie Network**.

The ***Family Film Program***, sponsored by Astral Media's **Family Channel**, finances the development and production of high-quality films for children, youth and family audiences. The Fund also has an equity investment component within its Family Film Program, which invests in feature films, as well as TV series with a license from Family Channel.

The script development applications are reviewed each quarter by the English-language Committee of Astral Media The Harold Greenberg Fund that includes **Suzette Couture, Camelia Frieberg, Melanie Friesen, John Galway, Shane Kinnear, Bryn Matthews** and **Domenic Vivolo**.

Astral Media The Harold Greenberg Fund/Le Fonds Harold Greenberg is a national funding organization established to contribute to the development and production of high-calibre film and television productions while encouraging the emergence of new talent. Supported by Astral Media, The Fund/Le Fonds has invested close to **\$48.8 million** in the Canadian film and television industry since its inception in 1986. For more information, please visit www.astralmedia.com.

-30-

For more information, please contact Lila Karim at 416-956-8680 or lkarim@tv.astral.com.