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By Gaeil Farrar

The producer and two stars from the award winning Canadian film *The Wild Guys* were treated to a small taste of Cariboo hospitality during their visit to the lakecity last week. *The Wild Guys* producer Robert Frederick along with actors Hrothgar Mathews and Jackson Davies arrived in the lakecity Thursday April 29 and were on the go for two full days.

After an initial interview with Cariboo Radio, the trio were treated to dinner with Mayor Rick Gibson, and other invited guests, says Krista Liebe, who organized the visit for the Rotary Film Festival Finale.

Gibson said making personal contacts is a big part of the film industry and promoting the Williams Lake area as a great place to shoot films. "They were really a great bunch of people, lots of fun." After dinner the trio attended the showing of their movie at the Paradise Theatres, signed autographs and answered questions from the audience after the film. The next morning they made a trip to Alkali Lake Ranch, and returned by noon to talk with theatre students at Williams Lake Secondary. Liebe says the trip to Alkali Ranch was absolutely beautiful and the Mervyns and Twans, although very busy this time of year, were very gracious hosts. Shaw Cable also filmed the visit.

On the way back to town, Liebe says they saw a black bear beside the road and had to make a quick stop for a deer that jumped out in front of them. "They loved it," says Liebe.

She said the visit with the students was a first for them and for the students to talk with Canadian film stars.

The students didn't ask any questions about what it is like to act in a Hollywood movie opposite stars like Goldie Hawn and Mel Gibson, which Davies did in *Bird on a Wire*. "They wanted to know what jobs were available in the film industry the pay scale and how to go about getting training," said Liebe.

Mathews also came to the Cariboo with a few friends and was able to spend a few hours mountain biking. Friday evening the trio attended a reception at Panama Reds with about 50 Rotary Film Club members.

Frederick also had time to talk with potential financial backers. After the showing of *The Wild Guys*, Frederick explained that there are tax incentives for investing in Canadian films. Frederick said he saw the play version of *The Wild Guys* 13 times. "We loved the piece so much and we were determined to make it because we knew Canadians would love it," said Frederick.

The Wild Guys, was directed by William Gereghty, who also directed the television series about pioneers in the Chilcotin called *Nothing Too Good for A Cowboy*.

The Wild Guys is a comedy about three modern men for whom hunting and gathering means looking in the produce section of a grocery store, head north from Seattle to Lone Pine, B.C. for a soul



Gaeil Farrar photo

The *Wild Guys* producer Robert Frederick (left) along with actors Jackson Davies and Hrothgar Mathews ham it up with Mayor Rick Gibson before the showing of their film at the Paradise Theatres.

exploring weekend in the woods. Finally lost in the woods, without food or shelter, their hike takes on deeper meaning as they argue, cope with life-threatening dangers, are stalked by man and grizzly bear, and start to come to terms with their blind spots, bald spots and deeply hidden fears. They are middle-aged men who are confused about where life has taken them. In the process of sharing they become fast friends.

The film stars four acclaimed Canadian actors, Kenneth Welsh as Andy, the guru; Hrothgar Mathews as Robin, the seeker; Jackson Davies, as Stewart the woodsman; and Lochlyn Munro, who is originally from Lac la Hache, as Randall the cynic.

"It's more than a comedy, its a 'drama-dey' really," said Frederick, after the screening of the film. "You are the audience we made it for. It's was great to hear your response."

Davies said he grew up in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, where there are lots of decent guys like his woodsy character. "You take things from your past and reuse them," said Davies, of how he builds his characters.

Mathews and Davies also starred in the stage version of The Wild Guys. "When you do a play you get used to the sure fire laughs. It's different in a film because laughs are coming in unexpected places," says Mathews.

They said they had also seen the film with audiences in different parts of the country and it was interesting that different audiences laughed at different things.

The trio also talked about their experiences working with a trained grizzly bear. Mathews said they were only a few feet from the bear which was pretty frightening even though he is a trained.

Davies said their assurance for safety was a tiny electrified wire between them and the bear. "Oh God I feel so much safer now," said Davies jokingly. He said he also developed a fear of heights during the scene where he had tumbled down a cliff and was clinging to a ledge. "I became petrified of heights half way through that scene when the wind started blowing," said Davies.

"It was a very dangerous day," said Frederick.

Based in Vancouver, Frederick has many productions to his credit including 108 episodes of MacGyver, and 90 episodes of The Beachcombers. He has obtained the rights to many exceptional properties, including Generation X, Ranger and Strange But True. Frederick said it is interesting that the Internet didn't exist when Generation X was written.

Davies also co-wrote The Wild Guys and is co-produced the New Beachcombers, a Movie of the Week for CBC and wrote Welcome Back, The Beachcombers 27th anniversary documentary that aired on CBC. Mathews said most of his film roles have been as police officers. He is now starting a new movie in Victoria called Cable Beach.

The Wild Guys has been invited to be show at the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival in France this spring.