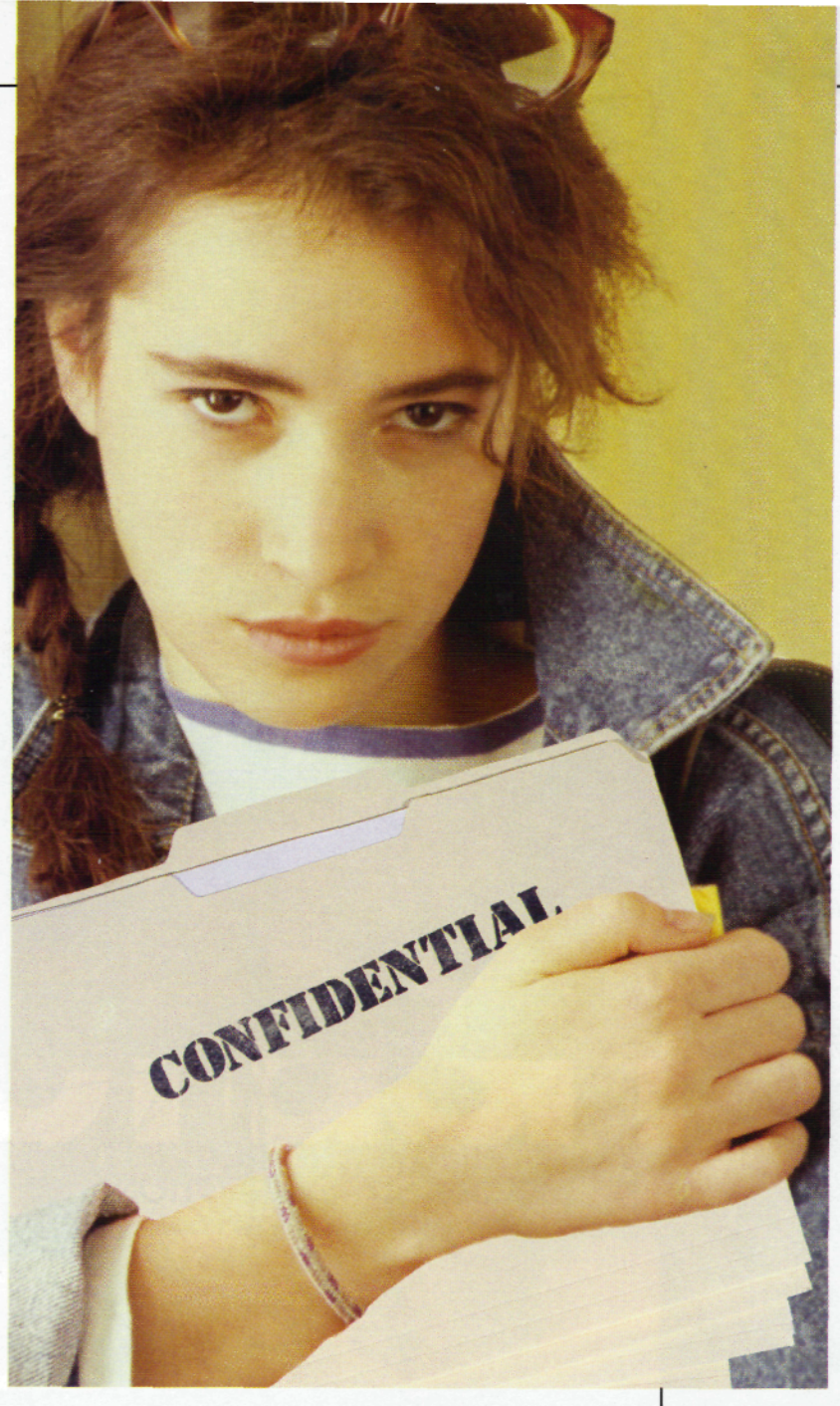

A BRAVE NEW WORLD?

Protecting the Guild's Youngest Members in Cyberspace

All actors face the daunting task of protecting one's career and image while confronting the need for prolific exposure of their likeness and name to sustain that career. And while new technologies are creating great opportunities for all Guild members, it is important to take pause and recognize that the Internet does, in fact, leave our youngest members most susceptible to peril. We've all heard stories about innocent cyber exchanges and Web postings gone bad. The realities of promoting the careers of young performers in cyberspace leave these children more vulnerable than most.

The SAG Foundation, in cooperation with the Guild's Young Performers Committee, The Actors' Fund, and BizParentz hosted a very informative evening on protecting minors in cyberspace October 25 in Los Angeles. Recognizing that families in the entertainment industry face unique situations in dealing with Web sites, fan sites, chat rooms and message boards, the panel explored and identified those risks, citing a variety of threatening behaviors and dangerous online scenarios to be aware of.

The evening offered guidance and sound advice to parents and guardians of young performers in dealing with producers, managers, photographers or Web sites that, on one hand, might appear to be wonderful tools to promote promising careers but have left many conscientious parents with second thoughts. In cyberspace and, specifically, in the world of show business, the gamble to advance the career of one's child or charge may indeed not outweigh the outcome.

Moderated by SAG Director of Member Education Todd Amorde, the panel participants included SAG Young Performers Committee Chair Justin Shenkarow, California State Assemblywoman Cindy Montañez, *Malcolm in the Middle* star and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Spokesperson Bryan Cranston, BizParentz Co-Founders Paula