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AMERICAN CINEMEDITOR

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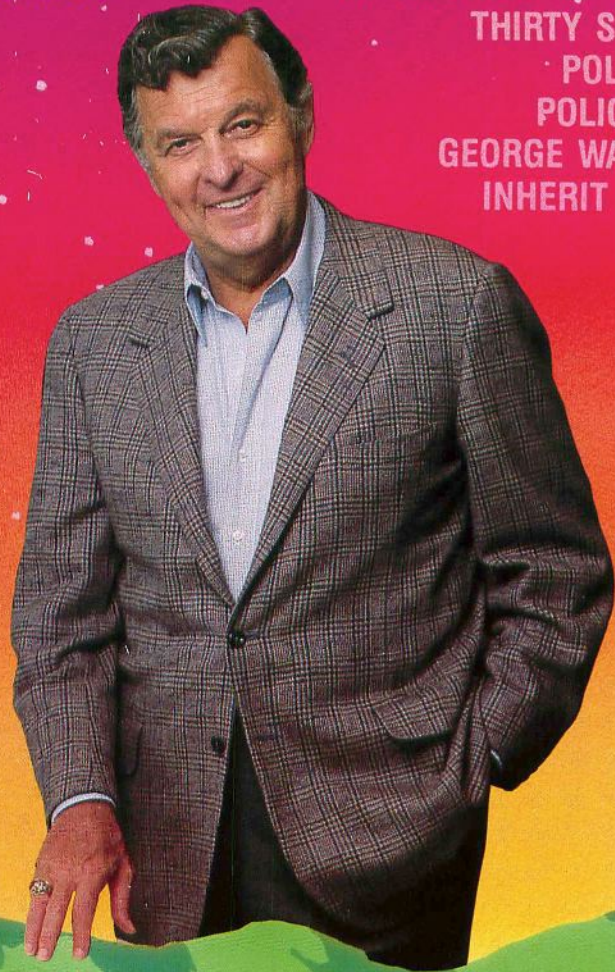
ARTICLES OF POST-PRODUCTION IMPORTANCE

GENERAL DYNAMICS FILM & TV:
Editing at the
Hidden Film Factory

THE IMAX SYSTEM
Cutting, Dubbing
And Printing
The Really Big Picture

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT
THIRTY SOMETHING
POLICE STORY
POLICE WOMAN
GEORGE WASHINGTON
INHERIT THE WIND

SPECIAL REPORT:
POST PRODUCTION
ADVANCES



DAVID GERBER

An Executive with a Passion
For Post Production

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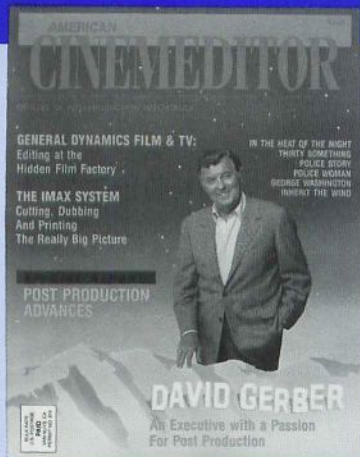
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ACE CREDO

The objectives and purposes of the American Cinema Editors are to advance the art and science of the editing profession; to increase the entertainment value of motion pictures by attaining artistic pre-eminence and scientific achievement in the creative art of editing; to bring into close alliance those editors who desire to advance the prestige and dignity of the editing profession.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Standing with both feet firmly on the dock, the houseboat proprietor displayed a little bar of metal while giving my family the tourist course in houseboat engineering.

"This is called a shear pin. Its sole function is to break and fall out when the boat motor is being strained. That disengages the motor so it doesn't burn itself up if there are foreign objects caught on your propeller. But then all you do is clear your propeller, pop in the new shear pin like this, and you're back on your way. A child could do it."

"A piece of cake," said my eldest son, a self-confident graduating ninth-grader in junior high school.

"Frosting on the cake! I could pilot this thing," exclaimed #2 son, a twelve-year-old technology fan.

"Hot dog! Can I drive too?" said #3 son, an eager eight-year-old.

"I'm hungry," added #4, the youngest son, who was still one year away from beginning his nursery school education in our high-tech society.

We unfolded our beautiful maps and headed out into the channel. The water, sun, trees, and peopleless environment were giving us an experience in nature's domain just like all the brochures had promised. Leisurely, we approached the Three Forks intersection, where all we had to do was steer into the correct channel. BUT there were FOUR channels AND NO SIGNS on the waterway. No landmarks. Nothing.

A family conference pooled our limited knowledge, but we were all confident that the channel second from the left looked a lot like the pretty dark blue finger of water that was marked as our route on the map. Our young helmsman steered perfectly into the serene waters.

Unfortunately, it turned out to be a bad decision...and our path got deeper...and faster...and soon the swift channel seemed to grab control of the shallow bottom houseboat, paying no heed to our frantic steering and motor manipulations. Horror of horrors, I looked straight ahead in our path and noticed an approaching railroad bridge with big concrete piers and one narrow passage in-between...and some kind of precipitous waterfall drop a few yards beyond!

This was no longer child's play; yours truly took the helm, and as a safety precaution, quickly beached the craft along the riverside jungle of bushes, vines, trees, and creature sounds. Then I slowly inched us in reverse back around the bend in the direction of safer waters. My cautious backtracking seemed to be getting us out of danger, but all of a sudden the propeller stopped moving the boat, even though the motor was still running. The shear pin had broken!

As previously instructed, I pivoted the propeller out of the water and freed it from the entangled vines. But when I tried to casually pop in the shear pin, I realized my "training" would only work from dockside. I would have to stand in 10-foot-high water to load the pin from the back of the houseboat. It was a sure sign that our condition was serious when my wife stopped grinding fresh carrot juice and said with some concern, "We've got to get help."

"I'll find someone," said #1, who jumped onto what appeared to be a leaf-strewn, shallow sand bank next to the boat and headed for the nearby shore.

But this was a bit more difficult than a short lap in a backyard pool. "I'm sinking!" he soon screamed as his body was drawn lower and lower into the quicksand/river muck.

I took a long emergency pole and extended it out for my son to grab, but he was too far out of reach.

"Help!" came another frantic plea. A father does what a father must do; I clutched the pole and jumped onto the bottomless expanse. And by working my way near the roots of a sturdy tree, I was eventually able to use the pole to get both of us onto the solid river bank.

Covered from head to toe with dark mud, we two creatures from the "black lagoon" came upon a fisherman, deep in concentration. Grudgingly, he took his eyes off the motionless fish line and studied our pitiful appearance. I asked him if he would give us some assistance, but he answered my question with his own question.

"You fellows from Hollywood? said the fisherman, carefully appraising our very realistic horror "make-up."

"Well, yes, as a matter of fact," I answered.

"Ain't going to lose my fish, just to gab with a coupla' slickers from Hollywood," he muttered while turning his back to us.

Eventually, the story had a happy ending. The engineer of a passing train saw our disabled houseboat near the dangerous rapids and notified the sheriff, who in turn dispatched assistance immediately, and we all lived happily ever after.

You might say all of this misery grew from the all-too-common weaknesses of the technological revolution in today's society: knowledge, or the lack of it...training...communication. The boat owner assumed someone paying money to use his boat actually knew how to use it. Furthermore, he assumed I could change the shear pin just like he demonstrated on the dock (eventually my shear pin was changed from another boat—none of our rescuers even attempted to do it from our boat or the water as the real in-the-field conditions demanded).

This issue of the *American Cinemeditor* looks at some of the new equipment and procedures affecting our field of post-production. No matter how well a piece of equipment or procedure or computer program has been designed, we must remember that any marvel of engineering is never going to be of much value in the control of someone who doesn't understand how to use it.

Eastman Kodak is about to introduce the KEYCODE™ system of machine-readable key numbers. In the process of educating the industry, Kodak has thoroughly publicized the system in the media and special meetings. In addition, the *American Cinemeditor* readership was polled for ideas on how to make the system better...and the very large number of responses from our loyal audience has been most gratifying.

You have to feel comfortable with the products of a manufacturer who not only educates you about its product, but also asks for your ideas in bettering the design of it!

Now if they would only rent houseboats in Rochester.. □

by Howard Kunin, A.C.E.

Big Time Hosts Demonstrations

Big Time Picture Company, Inc. will be hosting a hands-on demonstration and seminar on Tuesday, August 8th and Thursday, August 10th from 7:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M. at the Big Time Picture Company, 12210½ Nebraska Avenue, West Los Angeles.

Demonstrations are:

- The Compeditor (Pic Sync)—Presented by Keith Thomas, the new owner of Acmade International
- Kem Temp-Dub System—Presented by Will Furman, Furman Films

Susan Klos and the Big Time Staff will be available for information and assistance.

Please call Laura Fisher at (213) 207-0921 for further information and reservations.

Visiting Editors

On February 24th, Rod Stevens, using video tapes and slides, lectured on the subject *Film and Video Tape Editing Technique* for Dr.(Prof) Michael J. Stanton's class at Cal State University, Northridge.

June 30th saw George Grenville at San Diego State University discuss the *Philosophy of Film Editing* for Instructor John Gray's film department class. Shown were featurettes George produced and edited, along with clips from *Tom Horn* and *Iron Eagle* to show the comparison of the old western versus the new western.

Tina Hirsch is scheduled to speak to John Gray's class on July 28th.

The A.C.E. Visiting Editor program provides visiting lecturers, on a short term basis, who share their experience and expertise on the art and craft of film or video editing. Film schools are obligated to pay only costs for the duration of the stay of the visiting editor.

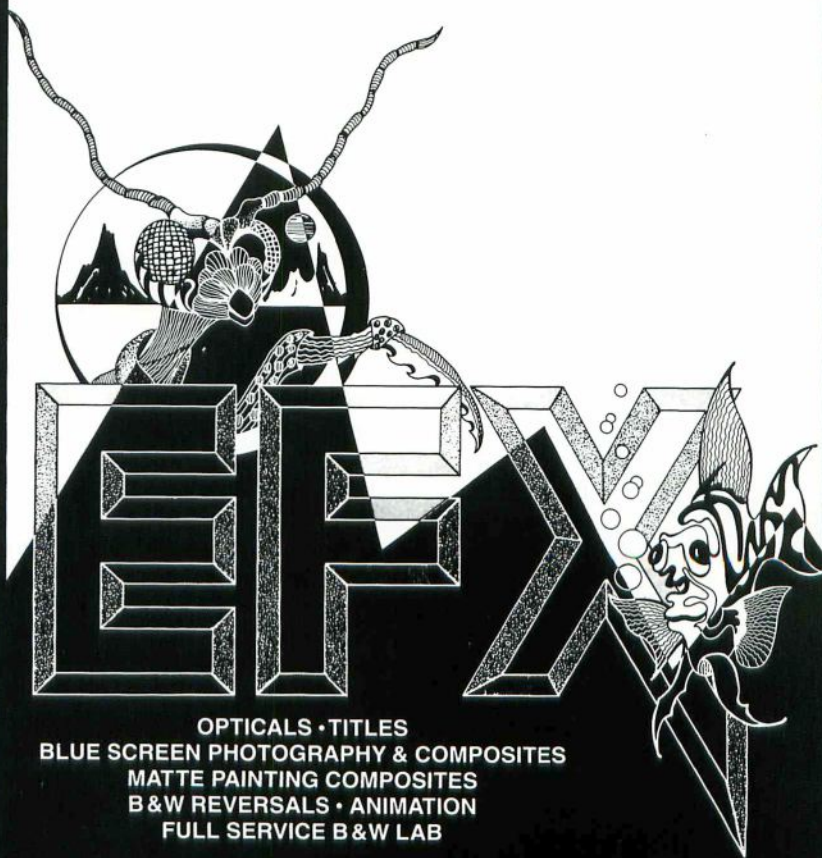
Interested schools should contact the A.C.E. office at (213) 660-4425 for additional information.



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DAVID GERBER

AN EXECUTIVE WITH A PASSION FOR POST PRODUCTION



Photography by Georg Kushner

David Gerber is sitting on top of the world—literally and figuratively. From his corner penthouse office at MGM overlooking a smog-shrouded Century City, he rhapsodizes about one of his favorite subjects—post-production and, specifically, editing.

Having moved up the ranks—from packaging and sales at 20th Century Fox, to a producer of ground-breaking shows such as *Police Story* at Columbia, to president of MGM-TV, where he currently oversees *thirtysomething* among others—Gerber retains an unabashed enthusiasm for the editing process. The idea of manipulating images, voices, and dialogue, and creating sequences that weren't there to begin with, utterly fascinates him. "Fixing something in the cutting room," he beams, "is like kicking a field goal in the last few seconds of a championship game."

Now that he's in the upper echelon of executive producing, what he misses most is day-to-day, hands-on editing. He smiles as he recalls how, "Lee Rich (former MGM/UA head) convinced me to get

the hell out of the editing room because he said the money was up here in front management. But when I first came to MGM, I'd sneak into the editing room and tell everyone, 'If Lee Rich calls, tell him I'm off the lot.' I could never admit to Lee that I was back in the editing room."

On a recent afternoon, Gerber took time away from his busy schedule to discuss his work, his relationship with editors, and the future of television. He believes television editors face different challenges from feature film editors and that they must be prepared to wear different hats. More often than not, TV editors are stuck with the unenviable task of turning a poor picture into a representative one, and a representative picture into a pretty good one. "But you can

never make any of that into a great picture," he concedes.

As he sees it, the problem stems from the fact that TV directors have very little input as far as scripts are concerned, since the characters and concept have already been laid out. Furthermore, "They're up against the gun with budgets, tight scheduling, and demands from the network and program practices (TV censorship). When shooting finishes, there're off to their next job while the editor and producer are left figuring out how to help or augment the show."

All this notwithstanding, Gerber maintains he enters the editing room with an open mind and no preconceived ideas. "I believe and hope everything will be shot right. I don't approach it as an auto shop with a bunch of wrecks coming in. The editor and I review what we have, and decide how to better it. I ask the editor's advice—'Should we flop the film, bring in a second unit, do an insert?' Before you know it, he's taken on the duties of a director, certainly a producer, in terms of his thoughts. Sometimes he doesn't want that responsibility...I'm sure he's thinking, 'Why don't you pay me like a producer?' I do treat editors tough, but they get my respect along with that."

Gerber expects his editors to oversee every phase of post-production, all the way through to dubbing. The editor, after all, is closer to a picture than anyone, since he's read the script, seen the dailies, and lives with the series concept from week to week. "I want my editor on the sound stage with the sound people, director, and line producer. I depend on him, his eyes and ears."

All the editors who work with David Gerber are experienced, solid, and un-intimidated by what he has to say. "Each editor brings an individuality to the work, just as the director does. I try to hire a personality that fits that particular project."

When Gerber joined Columbia in the 70's, he turned the studio away from half-hour sitcoms to some important hour-long dramas. As producer of the critically acclaimed *Police Story*, he initiated several trends in the industry, starting with reality-based programming. "Most TV cops shoot 20 bullets from a six-bullet gun, and criminals drop like flies. We took a more realistic viewpoint. We were not so much interested in the cases as in personal drama of the cops involved in the cases." Because the violence of the show evolved from the reality, Gerber was

never bothered much by program practices. "We made it tough, hard, violent and vicious, but it was over in six to eight seconds. That's how it really happens. The emotion comes in the aftermath, in the knowledge of what's happened."

He's proud of the physical production of *Police Story*, which he approached more like a mini-feature than episodic television. "I cut for effect, for rhythm. Our scenes had to move; they were rarely longer than three pages. But when the moment of truth came, we stayed with it. The contrast worked, audiences responded."

"Fixing something in the cutting room...is like kicking a field goal in the last few seconds of a championship game."

Influenced by Lenny Freeman's work on *Hawaii Five-O*, Gerber tried some innovative cutting techniques, particularly time cuts to accelerate the pace of the show. Time cuts were practically nonexistent in TV in those days, so he had to convince editors that the cuts would work. "I'd say, 'Trust me. Let the guy get out the car, then cut to his hand on the door knocker.' I won a lot of dollar bills betting them it would work."

Gerber fought to shoot extra film for editing purposes. "Shows never come out like you want them to," he says. "If you've got four or five minutes of extra film, you can play games, tighten it and make a better show." He's purposely tight on budgets at the outset so he can have money for pick-ups, voice-overs, and reshoots during post-production.

Back in the days when TV editors worked endlessly in projection rooms, Gerber simplified things by introducing the Kem, common in a feature cutting room, into the TV cutting room. "Now we don't even use the Kem," he says with a shrug. "They bring me a tape of the first cut, and we run it on a large TV set in my office."

Gerber's interest in film began as a youngster in Brooklyn where he went to the movies two or three times a week. "I'd pick up on things... that a grain or dot on the corner of the screen meant a reel change-over. All the input stayed with me

and incubated." He first entered the business at Fox, where he was the only person on staff to stay and watch dailies (without fast-forward) until midnight. "When I first got into post, I had no idea how much time and effort went into getting things done. I must have been a pain to those around me because I was working more on instinct than knowledge. Technically, I wasn't too proficient."

In addition to *thirtysomething*, Gerber currently oversees *In the Heat of the Night* and *The Kid*, a new western. He anticipates working closely with Fox Broadcasting and HBO, for which he's just started a half-hour suspense terror show called *The Edge*.

How does he determine whether a series concept will work? "You never really know," he says, shaking his head. "You just hope. I feel like an archaeologist, studying what sold or didn't sell last year, reading magazines to see what's popular in music, fashion, etc. You try to figure out what's making it now and what the networks need...though they may not agree with you."

So what's in store for next season? "I don't see any breakthroughs," he replies. "It's the year for recognizable situations, familiar concepts done well. Viewers want identifiable characters, strong relationships, and an uncomplicated plot with a beginning, middle and end. Most importantly, don't insult their intelligence. It's a thin line—shows can be fun, but not silly. People are looking for more emotional experiences and," he adds, "there's a move toward older, mature leads now that the public is graying a bit."

In spite of his lofty position, Gerber remains very close to the production of his shows. He reads every script, watches dailies nightly, and approves every segment before it airs. "That's why my wife took me to Hawaii for a week—so she can talk to me." Necessity, however, has forced him to delegate a good portion of the post-production responsibilities to Bruce Popjoy and Andy Gonzalez, who have his confidence and are "as good as they come. I pretty much go with their choices."

"But I still get such a kick out of the editing room," he says wistfully. "My wife worries that I work too hard but whenever I'm in the editing room, no matter how long, she knows I'm enjoying myself. Sometimes," he concedes with a grin, "the editors tell me, 'Don't enjoy yourself so much. Just get the hell home.'" □

by Denise Abbott

EDITING AT THE HIDDEN FILM FACTORY

by Constance Terwilliger and John Gray III

The largest single civilian employer in San Diego is General Dynamics, with offices and factories all over the county. And hidden away for over thirty years in the basement of a large think tank—filled with labs and office areas overflowing with brain cells and pocket protectors—is the GD/Convair Motion Pictures & Television Department. We're just a bit different from the rest of the company—they make missiles and rockets—we make movies about missiles and rockets. Our relatively obscure location, teamed with the mystery of our function has contributed to the fond nickname—"The Hidden Film Factory."

Today, of course, it should be modified to "The Hidden Film and VIDEO Factory." Undeniably, time and technology have had a profound effect on the way the department does business. Ma-

ny long-time members of the department were dragged into the video age with much kicking and screaming and gnashing of sprocket holes...swearing that the

"95% of (our) programs are now shot and edited on tape."

magnetic media was third rate, uninspiring and dull. Times have changed.

While we still produce the occasional film from shooting to projection, video has certainly taken the lead (95% of the programs produced are now shot and edited on tape). Thankfully, video technology has finally had a chance to mature and, at the same time, learn from the proven methods of traditional film-

making techniques.

Though Convair is our "home" division, we support the film, video and multi-media needs of all the General Dynamics divisions and subsidiaries in the San Diego area. The schedule boards are always juggling status reports, sales and marketing pitches, public relations statements, employee communication and motivational training programs, product test engineering support, or trade show exhibit media dis-



plays—to name just a few of the ever-increasing flood of requests.

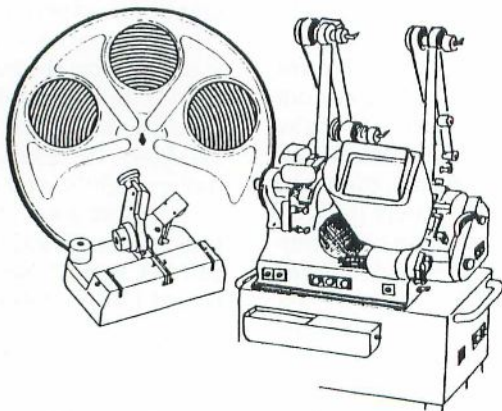
Test support, in the way of high-speed film, is still a primary function of the department (thirteen camera set-ups with film speeds ranging from 200 fps to 4000 fps are not uncommon). But even here, in the instrumentation world, video is making its play, with many tests calling for video support as well as film.

While the trend is to shoot and edit productions on tape (there are two video editing suites in the basement—a BetaCam to 1" bay and a 3/4" bay), we still have an upright Moviola and a Kem 8-plate universal flatbed editor...and a senior editor, John Gray III, who knows what they're used for. Due to the reduction in film editing requirements, John has expanded his horizons and has become the department multi-track sound editor. And to think that a few short months ago, he was one of those who stuffed his pockets with celluloid, just to be near his roots.

Multi-functional responsibility is the norm in most industrial film and video departments. John, for example, is also a producer and director. Nearly all members of the Hidden Film Factory are proficient in several production areas. One day a person might be directing a

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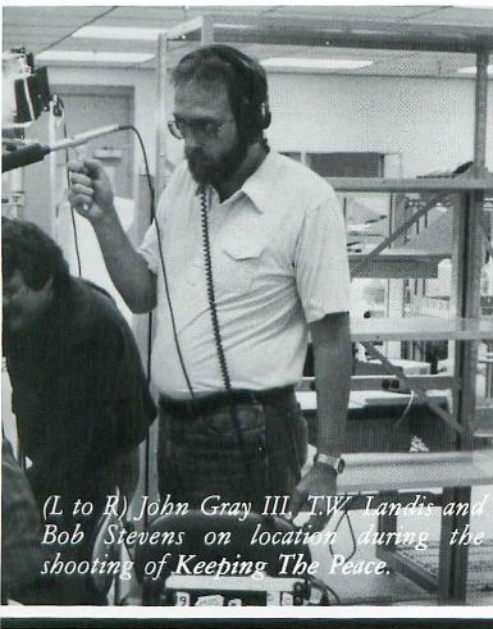
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project—the next, recording sound for another project—editing yet another project the third day—while playing phone tag with clients on a 4th project in pre-production. In between phone calls, there is time for a short trip or two out to a test facility to set up and burn off 2,400 feet of color reversal at 400 fps. It's rarely dull.

And every once in a while we still get



(L to R) John Gray III, T.W. Landis and Bob Stevens on location during the shooting of *Keeping The Peace*.

to do a film. A real honest to goodness shoot and cut it on film "film" with dailies and answer prints. The last one that found its way onto John Gray III's Kem was an awareness piece designed to motivate the job performance of employees and subcontractors working throughout the United States on the advanced cruise missile. John was tapped as Co-producer/Director/Editor—a pretty full dance card from the very beginning of the project.

The film took a three-man shooting crew on location to 16 cities across the U.S. for a total of 5 weeks, shooting on-camera interviews and location footage. Traveling with John was one of the executive producers Bruce LaPier (actually the "Client"); one of two cinematographers, either T.W. Landis or Mark Elder; and doing sound/continuity, Bob Stevens.

The schedule was rough—travel one day, ½ day of scouting and prep, shooting for one or two days, then travel to the next location. Exposed film was shipped to TVC in New York every three days for processing.

Upon returning to San Diego, John switched gears from director to editor. Working together with sound recordist Bob Stevens, the 1/4" sync and wild

sound was transferred to 16mm full coat. Dailies were screened, sunk and logged in preparation for shipment to the LA lab for coding.

Computers have become another vital tool in the department over the past several years and John used an electronic spreadsheet to automate the master record book. After entering various information about each shot, John was able to locate, for example, all exteriors of Baltimore or all footage processed at TVC. The system proved very helpful in finding background scenes for titles and in pulling the negative for A/B rolls.

The bulk of the footage was of sync interviews with 2 to 3 employees in each location. From off-camera, the director asked questions designed to elicit complete, succinct statements. "There were a few very camera-shy people," John commented. "We interviewed about twice as many employees as we used in the final film."

With the coded dailies back in house, John was able to start putting it all together. "This project was very easy to cut on film. I'd probably still be in edit if this had been a video project," John said. "But with film I was able to do a complete rough cut, have it reviewed for content, time and pacing, and then just cut,

Continued on page 16

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Our industry is no longer easily separated by the former simple divisions:

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Technology has spawned so many distribution niches that there is now a potpourri of audience image delivery systems with special post-production considerations. In the theatrical market alone, we can ask is it 35mm or 65mm film... Is it a dramatic feature or an audience experience?

One of the most intriguing new methods of image delivery involves special features shot with special cameras in special wide formats and projected in special theatres in a special manner. This issue of the American Cinemeditor delves into the post-production of the leader of this genre: IMAX.

IMAX pictures are shot on 65 millimeter negative stock, with the camera magazine running horizontally, as opposed to the more traditional 65mm or 35mm magazine that feeds vertically through the camera. Each IMAX frame is 15 sprockets wide, about three times larger than even the wide-screen 65mm frame (which is 5 sprockets high). Dailies are provided to the editor on 35mm stock that has been optically printed down from the much larger original negative.

All that film and all that optical work mean a lot of time and money have been invested in the dailies before the editor even touches his film. It's not an easy format to process; no matter how many negative rolls go into the lab from a location shoot, no more than four or five reels of dailies are usually printed in a day.

Editing Considerations

Eye travel, focus, attention span and pacing are completely altered by the size and enormity of the IMAX screen and the viewer's involvement within the IMAX sound system. Because the audience's senses are being bombarded from above, below, peripheral left and right as well as from behind, it's extremely important to keep all these factors in mind while editing an IMAX movie. It is all too easy to confuse an audience with sensory input and distract from the overall aesthetic involvement.

The frame, shape, and size of the image is so different from other formats that Steve Judson, an editor who has specialized in IMAX, will spend considerable time in the projection room just studying the film. To approximate an audience view, he will sit about 7 feet from a normal screen hoping to get the big-screen sense of pacing and eye travel so necessary for editing an IMAX movie.

Sound In The Cutting Room

Normal dialogue scenes are provided to the editor on mag-stripe, although frequently special sequences end up with 6 channel full coat work track, for which

the editor has a special Kem head.

Sync sound is shot on production with standard Nagra ¼" equipment and sometimes with a Sony Pro Walkman fitted with a special synchronization device. Mike booms for dialogue recording are impossible to hide from the audience because of the huge frame, so using a radio microphone or planted mike is the only way to record the sync dia-

"...a faint printing streak can look catastrophic on the huge IMAX screen."

logue. However, the camera is extremely noisy (sounding more like a tractor than motion picture camera). "The camera sound can be so overpowering that in some shots I can't see on my Kem if the actors are talking," remarks Judson. "I get very involved with music, sound effects, and the mix of the show once the work picture has been turned over to sound. We know that the sound is so great in the IMAX theatres that standard library sound effects can't be used much; most effects are recorded again after production, sometimes as digital recordings."

Because of the special nature of each project, it is not unusual for Judson to use his own temp dubbing arrangement to make a track while he's cutting the film. A projector has been rigged to slave a Kem and a dubber, and sound can be added from a CD player and a cassette player to make scratch mixes for cutting or demonstration purposes.

Opticals

Opticals are done on a 65mm/5 perf printer since no lab in our hemisphere has a full frame IMAX optical printer. The image is turned on its side, and a 15 perf optical frame of IMAX is accomplished by a configuration such as a 5 perf exposure, 10 perfs of blank, a 5 perf

Editor's Art

exposure, 10 perfs of blank, etc. It could also be 5 perfs of blank, a 5 perf exposure, 5 perfs of blank—and then a continuous repeat of that perf pattern, or any other combination that relates to 5 perfs and 15 perfs.

Sometimes the opticals can be elaborate split screen panels, such as were done for the *Dance of Life* feature. It can take weeks to design and then film such an optical. Afterward, the color timing can be a time-consuming process simply because the enormous screen creates its own density problems. In multi-panel split screens, the IMAX projection system gives the center panels the brightest light. That means optical shooting and lab printing have to brighten the top and bottom panels to provide the viewing audience a balanced image.

Negative Cutting

Negative cutting can easily take 5 weeks to accomplish and is a very labor-intensive process because of several factors. Edge numbers on 65mm occur every 80th perforation, which is every 16th frame on a normal 65mm project. However, the IMAX 15 perf configuration doesn't divide out evenly to the 80 perf standard.

The size of the negative mass creates other complications. A 35mm reel of IMAX cut work print can't be over 317 feet long to match its equivalent 1250 foot reel of IMAX negative. All reels containing dissolves or fades are mounted A/B separately between the non A/B footage. It's not unusual for a 30 minute IMAX feature to contain only 3 reels of 35mm work print, but 15 reels of cut negatives.

The Dub

Pre-dubbing is quite extensive for an IMAX picture. A recent IMAX show, *To The Limit*, took two months to pre-dub. Basically, this is due to the large effort put into point of source sounds. This extensive spacialization of elaborate sounds that move around the screen, or even around the audience, contribute greatly to the IMAX experience.

Foley sounds are brought to the stage on a 24 multi-track unit, as are sound effects, music, narration, and dialogue.



Mixer/composer Michael Stearns at his M'Ocean Studio Photo by Ron Peterson

"We put a lot of effort into the spacialization (located geographically on the screen) of tracks."

They are mixed to pre-dubbs of 6 channels each, which are then extensively balanced to achieve the directional quality in the eventual mix. The speaker systems in the exhibiting theatres allow for some magnificent sound realism. Michael Stearns, the mixer on recent IMAX pictures explains, "A helicopter flying in from the top of the screen can be dubbed into a speaker five stories above the main speakers, and that realism can be placed directionally on the sound track. We put a lot of effort into the spacialization of that kind of track."

Scored music is mixed down to a minimum of four, and sometimes all six, channels that represent theatre speaker locations. The speaker locations are left rear, left front, center, right front, right rear, and top center. The "four corner" mix yields a quadrasonic, surround-feeling to the music. Occasionally the music is panned around the theater, heightening its dramatic effect.

The finished tape off the dubbing stage is a one inch 8 track Dolby SR, using 6 channel sound. It is a discrete stereo sound system, meaning that each channel is its own sound, not encoded and not a matrix.

The sound of the release print is not

striped on the individual print, but is run in interlock from a 35mm full-coat magnetic 6-track sprocketed piece of film.

Lab Printing

The sizes of the negative and screen create immense quality control considerations. "What might be considered a faint printing streak on a 35 or 65 mm print can easily look catastrophic on the huge IMAX screen," notes Matthew Muller of MacGillivray-Freeman Films. Titles are often reshot because they can easily look unstable on the big screen. Bill Pine is the IMAX color timer in the Metrocolor Laboratory.

From the cutting room to the dubbing stage to the laboratory and into the theatre, there's a lot of technology inherent in the post-production of every IMAX production. The format is attracting larger and larger audiences as the years go by and has definitely become one of the bright spots in the future of our business. □

Contributing to this article were:

Matthew Muller, MacGillivray-Freeman Films

Stephen Judson, MacGillivray-Freeman Films

Michael Stearns, M'Ocean Studio

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rearrange and splice it back together." The cutting was merciless: entire interviews were reviewed, rearranged and sometimes dropped.

Narration, music and effects were cut separately on 35mm single stripe, the department standard since the early days. For the mix, the 16mm sync track was split and then transferred to 35mm full coat (tracks 1 & 2). These 5 tracks were then mixed down to 16mm full coat.

"An era came to an end with this film. It was the last film to be mixed with a work print in interlock with magnetic tracks," John commented only somewhat wistfully. "A few weeks following the completion of this picture, the department received two Otari multi-track machines and an Adam-Smith 2600 synchronizer."

The film had a few titles, but a very limited budget precluded opticals. As a result, a modified "reversal" burn-in technique was used. A contact IP was printed from camera original of the selected background scenes. Traditional title cells were prepared and photographed on hi-contrast 16mm film. "The trick," John says, "is that they are shot flipped—

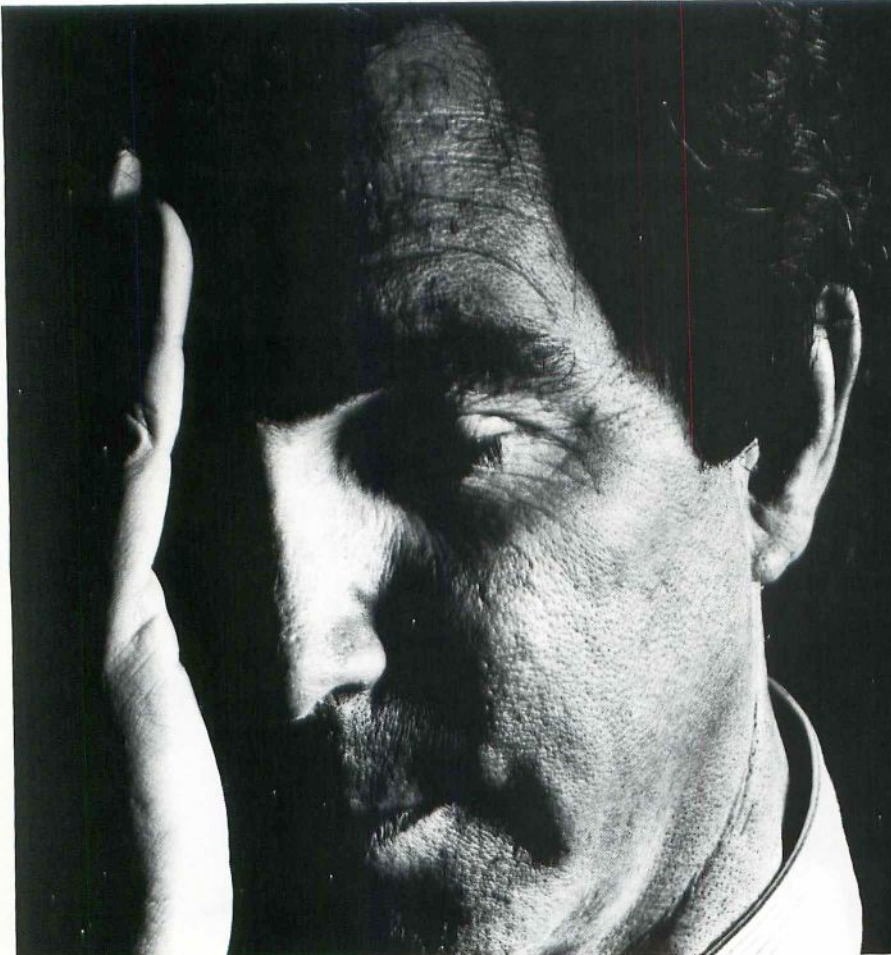
resulting in a white title on black in the A-wind (print) position. The IP and the titles were then printed in a traditional A/B fashion, resulting in a dupe neg with white titles on a moving background."

"...we still have those long nights—only now they're in the video edit bays."

The film, titled *Keeping The Peace*, is now in distribution and getting great reviews from employees across the country at the various subcontractor locations.

As a final thought on the good ol' days, John relates a story of an all-night editing session (actually, that's something that hasn't disappeared with the introduction of video). "Once I was cutting negative for a 20-minute film that had to be in the lab the next morning to meet a deadline. The lab, of course, was in L.A. I would cut several minutes of the A/B rolls, lift those out and hand them

to my assistant who hot-spliced them together. By the time he had finished, I had several more minutes of film for him to splice. We worked back and forth like this until 5:45 AM ... just as the courier service arrived to pick up the negative. My 'assistant' is now the manager of the department and was one of the executive producers on the film we've just been talking about. Things sure do change. Even though we're not cutting film as much anymore, we still have those long nights—only now they're in the video edit bays." □



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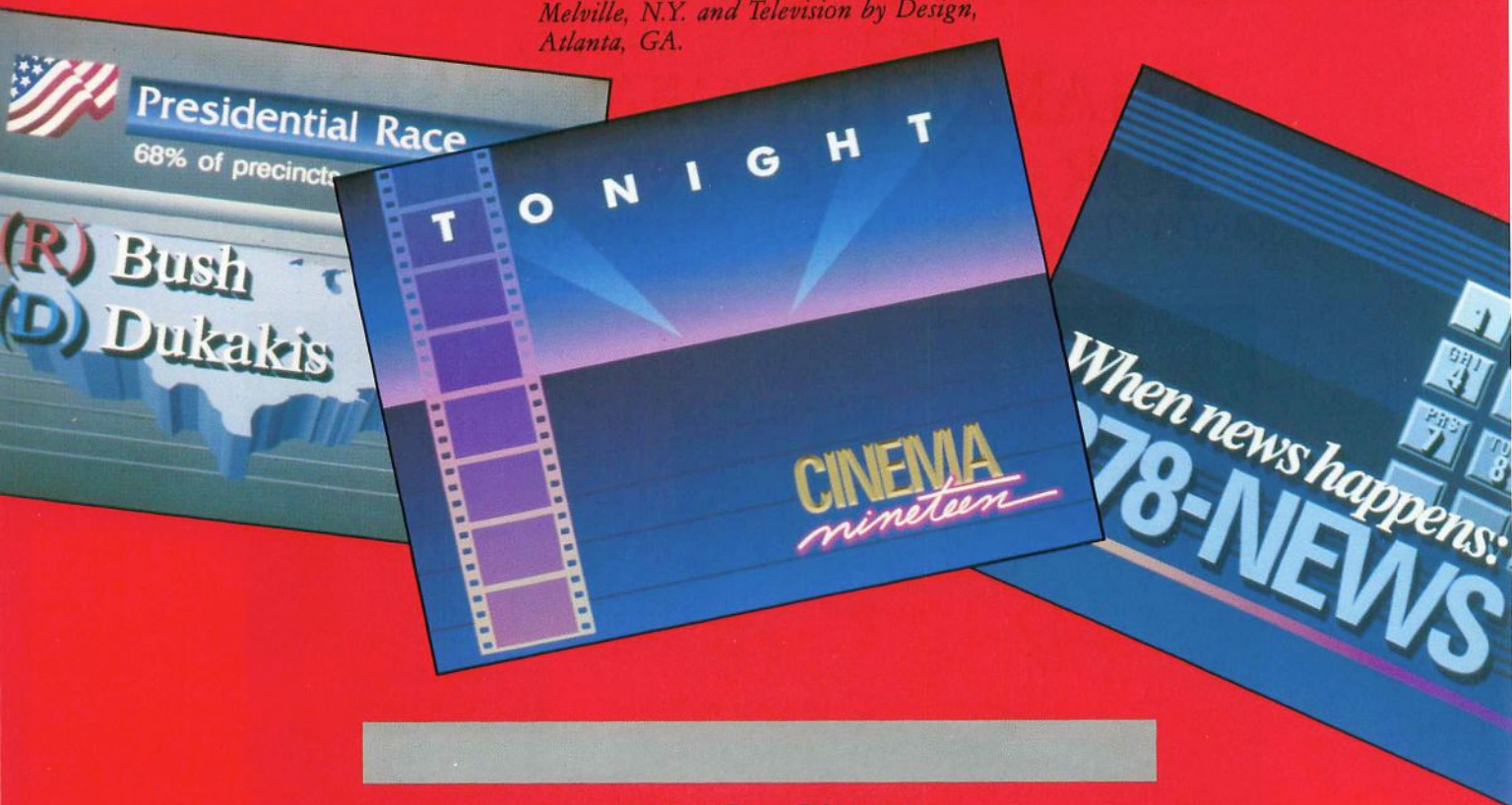
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POST PRODUCTION ADVANCES

It wasn't too many years ago that images were only recorded on black and white film, they were only printed on explosive nitrate film, and they only lasted a generation or so.

It wasn't too long ago that editors measured fades by holding film an arms length from their nose, people reluctantly worked with mag tape only if they could see optical track striations scratched on the tape, and dubbing rooms had back rooms crowded with workers loading and unloading rows of track dummies.

*It's a revolution. Computers, programs, miniaturization—a multitude of innovations have combined to drastically alter our work environment. This issue of *American Cinemeditor* looks at some of the latest equipment and/or techniques that are changing the post-production workplace.*

A VIEW FROM THE BAY
**CHARACTER GENERATION
 FOR MY SECOND COUSIN**
 (AND OTHERS WHO HAVE BECOME TERMINALLY CONFUSED)

by Laura Luceford



Graphics courtesy of Chyron Corporation, Melville, N.Y. and Television by Design, Atlanta, GA.

Less than ten years ago my second cousin asked, “Exactly what *is* a character generator?” In answering, I fumbled around with some overblown technospeak about **pixels** and **scan lines**—**raster formats** and **dot matrixes**—**typefaces** vs. **fonts**—**nanoseconds** and **effective start-point resolution**.

You may have gathered by this point that her eyes had glazed over at the mention of **pixel** and by the time I hit the ever-popular **effective start-point resolution**, tears were about to flow. Needless to say, I finally fell back on the old standby. “Well, actually, when you watch television and you see words or numbers on the screen—uh—you know, program credits or sports scores or weather information? Well, that’s what a character generator does.”

At the mention of “television,” I observed a swift transformation. Her eyes widened, her face lit up, and she became animated to the point of near-hysteria. “Oh, sure—television—yeah, I see that stuff all the time. So *that’s* what a character generator does ...”

Okay, okay, it wasn’t a prize-winning answer. *You* try explaining it to *your second cousin*. Try explaining it to *anyone*.

While that may have been a forgivable explanation of character generators ten years ago, it is not so anymore. Originally, character generators were destined to replace information available only via camera image. To witness a camera panning back and forth between a barometer, a thermometer and a 3” X 5” typewritten card advertising a ’62 Pontiac—would be to witness the obsolete past.

Using a keyboard that looked much like a typewriter, character generator operators could manually type alphanumeric information directly into the system’s random access memory

for later display on air. Direct input for automatic display of newswire services, stock tickers and weather instruments soon replaced much of the manual input.

Equipment advanced from monochrome displays to a dazzling array of 8 to 16 background and character colors. A variety of automated programming features like rolls, crawls, character flashing and page sequencing provided interesting options to static page displays. You can still see vestiges of the past when all of these effects are displayed on one page of late night advertising featuring the wildly flashing toll-free number.

Users soon demanded improvements in the selection of type styles, character sizes, and variable character edges to improve display aesthetics, but for all these added features and advancements, these were still **text generators**. They were a communications tool then, and remain so today. Basic titling still accounts for the vast majority of character generator use. It became clear that the resolution and clarity of the characters had to be improved beyond the simple dot matrix format common at the time. After all, if you couldn’t read the information on the screen, then all those colors and type styles and sizes and edges really didn’t mean much.

While terms like **digital video effects**, **electronic video paint**, **3D solid modeling**, and **real-time animation** were entering the market, character generator manufacturers were integrating portions of those technologies into their own systems, thereby elevating the lowly titling system into the lofty (and sometimes confusing) realm of a full-blown graphics system.

With the advent of these advanced graphics devices, a new

Continued on page 26

THE LARTEC ADR SPOTTING SYSTEM

by Stephen Potter

The process of preparing a soundtrack for motion pictures and television involves many people working on different parts of the whole puzzle. One of the most difficult parts of this puzzle is what is called "ADR" (Automated Dialogue Replacement) or among some older industryites, "looping." Actually, the two terms do not really describe the same process, they refer to the same result achieved by either of two well-defined procedures. Both use new dialogue recorded in a studio in order to replace original dialogue recorded on the set or location.

Old-style "looping" (using hand spliced loops of the original line recorded on mag stripe or full-coat stock) is not practiced much anymore; it has given way to the "new" technology of ADR in most every facility. ADR has been around for some time itself and is by no means "new." But that is not to say there aren't some new things happening on the ADR scene.

There Is Something New

The LarTec ADR system, produced by Larson Technology, Inc., of Burbank, California, updates the computer potential in ADR usage. LarTec is comprised of two main parts: an offline ADR spotting system, and an online console/machine control system for recording the spotted loops (I will use "loops" here to mean an individual line of dialogue to be replaced). This article will look mainly at the offline spotting system and how it can make the ADR editor's job easier.

The system doesn't require a video picture (it's immaterial whether it originated on video or not), but LarTec usage is easier when spotting loops with a video picture. This is due to its use of VITC, or Vertical Interval Time Code. Without explaining what VITC is, just suffice it to say that it allows a frame-accurate loop point to be entered with a *single key-stroke*.

A Typical Spotting Session

Whether you arrive at the required loop lines by yourself or by committee, the actual footages (or Time Codes) of the loops have to be translated from the picture to the printed page, or in this case to the computer screen and then to the printed page. The basic information for each loop consists of:

- 1) The IN footage or time code
- 2) The OUT footage or time code
- 3) The LOOP number
- 4) The CHARACTER name
- 5) The DIALOGUE to be replaced
- 6) Optionally, some NOTES about the loop may be entered to assist you later.

All of this basic information is not necessarily typed in for

each loop. For instance, each time you enter a new loop, the numbers are automatically carried over from the previous loop you created. Chances are that the current loop entry is quite close to the last one. The system allows you to enter only part of a number, preserving part of what was already there. For instance, a loop was at 270 + 8. The next loop is at 279 + 5. All you would have to enter for the new loop would be "9 0 5." This may seem like a small savings but with a little experience, even the non-computer types will shave valuable time off each IN and OUT entry.

Loop numbers themselves are automatically generated starting with 100 and incrementing with each new loop, but real ADR is seldom so predictable. That's why the system allows you at any point to override the automatic selection and enter any number you want.

A basic loop number is just a number, but by adding a prefix letter, say "G101," now you

can spot "group" ADR right along with the principle actor ADR. Just by giving the group lines a "G" prefix, the computer automatically keeps them sorted separately from the plain numbers. A very important feature is the ability of the computer to insert a new loop between two consecutive loops, thus causing the loop numbers to ripple down.

If you're like me you're not very good at remembering names. But the computer never forgets. Once you've typed in a CHARACTER name you never have to type it again. You can simply pop up the list of names and with one keystroke put the name in the new loop. The list can hold 100 names and lists can be stored and loaded separately from the rest of the information for the show. This is a big advantage to anyone doing episodic television. Just keep that list of regular characters and use it from week to week. All you have to add each time are the guest characters. You can even "merge" lists (as long as the 100 limit is adhered to).

The Printed Page

So far all we've talked about is information that's been stuffed into the computer. What about that list of loops the director wants by five o'clock? Printing his list can be done with an almost endless number of options. The system can show you the loops in 3 basic ways: by TIME, LOOP number, and by alphabetic CHARACTER. When it comes to printing these same 3 options exist. Printing by TIME and by LOOP are fairly obvious, but when printing by CHARACTER something nice happens. Each character ends up on a separate page or pages. This means that you won't have a page with more than one character name on it, and the computer automatically skips to a new page each time it comes to a new character.

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*"...the computer never forgets a
CHARACTER name...you never
have to type it twice."*

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AMERICAN
CINEMEDITOR

OFFLINE EDITING MATURES

by Tony Hayman Vice-President, Laser Edit East

Offline editing. What is it, why do we need it, and how far toward a final product should it go? These are good questions with answers that are changing as the abilities of offline systems increase. For the show producer the answers are obvious, but for the commercial producer who has been doing limited offline for years, the time for a change is about to arrive.

At Laser Edit East in New York and Laser Edit in Burbank it is possible for both the show and commercial producer to increase productivity and at the same time decrease costs by using Spectra Image's disc offline system.

Several years ago I was an opponent of offline because its inaccuracy and list problems usually cost the client more money and always cost me, the editor, more time. Today I have become a big fan of offline, especially the Spectra System. Its accuracy allows the editor to work quickly and be more creative, and it even saves the client money.

Offline History

The history of offline started in the 1920's or 30's, when someone made the first film work print; this system of editing has continued virtually unchanged even to the present day. In the 70's, when video timecode became popular, CMX and CDL introduced video editing systems, which allowed the operator/editor to create and store an edit decision list. This list could then be saved onto punched paper tape, recalled, and

used at a later date to do what became known as an auto-assemble.

With the growth of computerized edit systems and the introduction of less expensive videotape machines, it became possible to create an edit bay in which many of the creative decisions could be made. These decisions were displayed with poor visual quality and without dissolves or effects, a short-coming shared by the work print they replaced. But these systems had one additional fault unlike film—they could build a scene or commercial only in a linear fashion.

Even with non-linear edit systems a serious problem exists. Although it is rather easy to make a change to a program while it is within the system, it is necessary to reassemble the program before it is possible to screen it completely or view it at a different location. Given the limitations of tape, the Spectra System using laser video discs rides the fine line between linear and non-linear systems and gives the editor a screening copy quicker than any other means. At the same time, Spectra allows multiple cameras, two channels of audio, video and audio dissolves, and incredible list management.

Quality Improving

Today quality is coming to offline, pictures look better, and sound has improved with the introduction of laser disks. Many offline systems now offer dissolves, non-linear editing, ste-

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SPECIAL REPORT:

OFFLINE EDITING

Continued from page 21

reo audio and today's buzz word, random access.

The time and need for "super offline" has arrived. The increasing cost of using online rooms with all the bells and whistles means two things. First, it is necessary to be even more prepared before the online edit session. Second, it makes sense to pay a little extra in offline to create at least some of your effects.

The next steps in offline will be doing limited effects, character generation, and possibly even making decisions toward color quality. In the future we can expect that there will be the following variations of what is now known as offline:

- 1) Low level "cuts only" systems
- 2) A/B roll systems with dissolves
- 3) Non-linear and random access systems
- 4) "Super offline" systems complete with all of the above as well as some effects and graphics

Offline users will probably divide their time between one or more of these systems depending on their ultimate needs and budgets.

The direction we are aiming for in our New York market is to enhance the existing Spectra system and create an offline which not only does cuts and dissolves, but also incorporates a digital video effects unit like the new Ampex ADO. At the same time, we plan to include either a graphics camera or an inexpensive character generator for placing and sizing temporary supers.

It is my hope that in the not too distant future it will be possible for the commercial client to be able to make all of his creative decisions in an offline room, a similar privilege now available to his counterpart in programming. This offline room, which will probably be located at the client's own office, will show a product finished enough so that he will be able to accept the fact that the online room works the same as the lab does in film.

This big order is now possible with the Spectra System. In talking with commercial producers and editors here at Laser Edit in New York, I've been told that they feel that this concept will give them a big boost. The system, as it has existed for several years in California, is now available to clients in the New York area. If the demand for "super suites" with digital effects and graphics continues, we hope to be able to supply them to our clients sometime this fall.

Digital Arriving

Even as we speak about increasing the capability of the offline room, the day of the digital edit bay has arrived. The quality and possible effects will be much greater than ever before. However, this increase in power is not without its increase in costs. In the new environment it will no longer be financially possible for a producer to "play" with effects; he must know, at least within reason, what the result will be before he enters the online room.

The introduction of digital video and HDTV (High Definition Television) will probably keep the online edit bay one step ahead of the offline room. However, since the cost per hour in these new online rooms will probably be a lot higher than present, it will be still very necessary to make preliminary decisions on less expensive offline equipment. □

MUSIC, MAN AND MACHINE

A VISION OF MUSIC EDITING FOR THE NINETIES

by Laura Cohen

“Apples and oranges,” a music editor was recently telling me. “That’s music editing.” On one particular day, a music editor might be slaving away over his or her Moviola doing some tracking (editing temporary music for a movie in preparation for a temp dubb). Next day, he or she’s at the scoring session, operating the clock, keeping notes, and lending support to the composer. Day number three and the music editor is pounding away at his or her old Underwood typewriter, hacking out the breakdown notes for a new show (00.0: criminal grabs his gun; 00.3: criminal shoots victim in the head). These are notes that will enable the composer to locate cue points he or she might want to emphasize with the score.

When talking about music editing and how it’s being affected by all the new technologies, you’re really going to be getting into some heavy-duty “apple and orange” talk because each different aspect of music editing is affected by an entirely different kind of technology.

The Synthesizer

Even a music editor who still slaves over a hot Moviola and has an Underwood typewriter in the closet has very strong ideas about “new technology.” Music editors function as the right-hand men and women for composers, and the field of motion picture composing has practically been revolutionized by new technology. New technology that comes in the not-always-welcome form of the electronic synthesizer.

Ken Hall, music editor for blockbusters like *E.T.*, *Rambo III*, and the new *Star Trek V*, has this to say about synthesizers. “Sure, Jerry Goldsmith (a composer with whom Hall works a great deal) will use synthetic music in a temp situation to give some idea how his score will sound. But the computers still don’t have the warmth—the depth—that a real orchestra has. The Synclavier has a cold sound.”

“John doesn’t like any of the synthesizer stuff,” music editor Ken Wannberg tells me, referring of course to composer John Williams, with whom he has worked on movies such as *Star Wars*, *Revenge of the Jedi* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. As far as Wannberg is concerned, “I think synthesizers have their place. But I don’t like a pure synth score. It’s one-dimensional. It all sounds the same. Strings sound like an organ to me. I think an orchestra is the most beautiful thing.”

Well, what place do synthesizers have in the life of a motion picture composer? Wannberg, who, in addition to his music editing work, has composed scores for such movies as *The Late Show* and *The Philadelphia Experiment*, cites convenience as a reason to rely on the new technology. “I was doing a temp for *Beaches* (a movie on which Wannberg was a music editor) and they needed some calliope stuff for the beach sequence and instead of searching for it in the library, I just came home

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MUSIC, MAN AND MACHINE *Continued from page 23*

and played something on my Yamaha keyboard. I did an organ that way too." Curt Sobel, music editor for motion pictures such as *Tap*, *Everybody's All American* and *La Bamba*, who has just recently broken into composing with his score for *Alien Nation*, felt the synthesizers in his home studio helped earn him his first big break. "I was asked to do a demo for *Alien Nation*—a love theme and a chase cue—so I did them at home using my sequencer and synthesizers and I got the job!"

Computer Systems

Synthesizers may not necessarily be embraced by all music editors (or composers) with open arms, but several new computer systems that can aid music editors in their prep work have earned unanimous rave reviews from these professionals.

This last spring, when Bob Badami and Dick and Bill Bernstein, developers of the Offbeat music editor's system, asked music editors to write testimonial letters to the Motion Picture Academy in behalf of Offbeat, letters from pleased editors came pouring in. And the obviously popular system won the Technical Achievement Award of the Academy.

This music editor's dream, oddly enough, does not perform any actual music editing. It (like its two competitors Auricle and Cue) is a software program for "everything but." And "everything but" includes preparation of breakdown notes and "streamering" (inscription of colored bands on a section of film to function as visible cues for a conductor during a scoring session). In the "olden days," wooden boards, scribes and pockets full of Band-Aids were the means by which streamering was accomplished, but Offbeat—and the magic of chroma-key matting—has ended all that.

Both Curt Sobel and Ken Wannberg were among the advocates writing to the Motion Picture Academy in behalf of Offbeat. Sobel wrote, in praise of Offbeat's Spellbinder section (word processing for the breakdown notes), "Prior to acquiring Offbeat's editorial program, I would spend many tedious hours at the typewriter revising a four or five minute cue for what would amount to minor, 'a frame here, a frame there,' picture changes." After purchasing Offbeat, Sobel boasted that it took him as little time to make the written changes as it took to run the changed scene on his Moviola!

Wannberg, a man of reserve, submitted a two-page letter to the Academy offering this high praise of Offbeat's Streamline process (streamering): "It is in the area of film scoring that the program has broken new ground." And then he re-

vealed that streamered cassettes are now produced for John Williams so the award-winning composer, after penning his rough sketches, can check his work against the marked film to be certain of the flow of each piece.

Another weary task music editors were saddled with in days of yore was physically cutting together those tracks that nobody but the musicians would ever hear: click tracks. "I'd go to Europe," Ken Hall remarks, almost shuddering, "and I'd

have to take my click tracks with me or I'd have to get everything transferred over there." Hall adds: "Jerry Goldsmith is a wonderful, complex composer, and with a fellow like this, a music editor can't just throw up a twelve-frame click and four eight-frame clicks and hey, let's make it. You have to splice everything together on the Moviola." But now, with his cherished Auricle program, Hall finds the computer can do everything.

And apparently it does it with such pizzazz that *Good Morning, America* recently arrived at a scoring session to do a story featuring the amazing Auricle.



such pizzazz that *Good Morning, America* recently arrived at a scoring session to do a story featuring the amazing Auricle.

Cutting Electronically

How has the "new technology" affected actual music editing (laying in, shortening, lengthening, and rearranging of finished music)? It's made inroads there too, to differing degrees in the worlds of television and motion pictures.

"Preplay" is the music editing process used to lay down music in television shows that are being finished on tape; whether or not this activity is actually music editing at all is a matter of some dispute. Dallas music editor Pat Peck complains that this process is frustrating for a Moviola-born-and-bred music editor "because it's so linear. You can't cut out pieces of things and move them around." To make matters worse, at Peck's studio (Lorimar), the music editors aren't allowed to do their own prelay but have to rely on operators who oftentimes aren't musically oriented. Peck tells, "When you're playing a cue and cuing an operator, you're adding up your reaction time to his reaction time. All we Lorimar music editors just wish we could do it ourselves."

Feature music editors Ken Hall, Ken Wannberg and Curt Sobel are still cutting, quite happily, on their Moviolas, but both Hall and Sobel admit that they've flirted with opportunities to perform their editing electronically. In their cases, the Synclavier (which not only is a classic synthesizer, but an editing tool with elaborate "cutting and pasting" capabilities)

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MUSIC, MAN AND MACHINE *Continued from page 24*

was selected. Sobel almost edited the production tap tracks for the motion picture *Taps* on this system before budget considerations finally caused him to end up on the Moviola. And Ken Hall almost cut the music for the motion picture *Burbs* using the same tool.

Pat Peck affirms that if you must cut music electronically, a digital method like the Synclavier (as opposed to prelay, an analog process) is certainly the way to go. "The Synclavier (as an editing system) is neat because you help make the music fit sometimes by creating a musical bridge, bending your sound, or altering the pitch or speed."

What exactly do all these new innovations mean to the music editing profession? Composer Harold Faltermeier gave a most eloquent tribute to the new technology in a testimonial letter he wrote to the Motion Picture Academy.

"The synthesizer and all the computers are responsible for a revolution in the way music is made. The Streamline system (Offbeat) gives the music editor the tool he needs to stay current with the radical change that surrounds him. It is arguable," composer Faltermeier affirms, "that the job of the music editor could have slowly disappeared. The new technology helps make the music editor an important part of the technical and creative team." □

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CHARACTER GENERATION

Continued from page 18

term came into widespread use. It came to be loved and admired everywhere. For all we knew, it leapt tall buildings at a single bound. It certainly *seemed* more powerful than a locomotive. What was it? Well of course, it was *anti-aliasing*. The mere mention of the term commanded immediate respect. So what is *aliasing* anyway? Why do we all hate it so much? Why did it have to be eradicated by *anti-aliasing*?

By way of explaining the *anti-aliasing* mania, it's probably important to recognize that the endeavor for superb character resolution and typeface integrity is tantamount to nirvana in the world of character generation. The challenge was stated in the near-beginnings of development, when disbelief was expressed about whether "these character generator things" would ever really "catch on." Were they ever going to be perfect enough in resolution to replace art card titling? The challenge had been issued—the goal was clear. Well, "catch on" they have, in prodigious amounts. And if they were going to replace traditional art cards, improved resolution was the way.

Now look, you already know what *aliasing* is—even if you don't use it in everyday conversations. You've heard it called *jaggies* and *stair-stepping* and a number of other unattractive words which inspire shudders in graphic artists. It basically describes the process of trying to cram a round character or graphic into the square-pixel format of a television display. It isn't pretty. Those thousands of square pixels that make up the screen have never lent themselves very pleasingly to the high-quality representation of curved, rounded, or diagonal areas of a typeface. The only character that ever fit well into

that arrangement was a block.

Picture a black and white display with a crude character matrix made up of large, square pixel elements. If you were to draw the letter "O" on top of this grid arrangement, just imagine that every pixel completely covered by a portion of the character turns black, while any pixel left uncovered by the character turns white. Those pixels left partially covered will turn black or white depending upon what percentage of the pixel is taken up with character information. That's a pretty limiting and blocky image, but that's basically what the early character generators allowed. Eventually, the character matrix contained many more pixel elements (8,000 X 8,000), which showed proportionally smaller (and therefore less obtrusive) *stairsteps*—but they still appeared jagged nonetheless.

Anti-aliasing allows some fairly sophisticated things to take place within this admittedly limited pixel framework. One of the improvements allowed what amounted to a division of each pixel into minute portions (sub-pixel elements) and further allowed them to be shaded from black to white in variable shades of gray—depending upon their relative location on the screen.

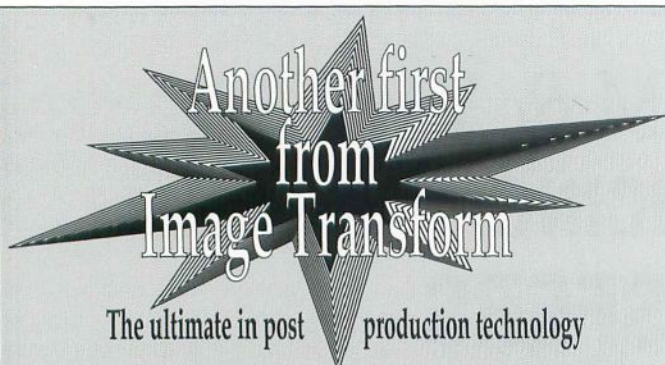
Since our eyes cannot perceive such delicate distinctions from dark to light, let alone the subtle variations of color shading available with 16.7 million color selections—the characters appear to have no ragged edges, but appear to follow a perfect curve or diagonal. Okay, we may not have hit nirvana, but that's only a small part of the advancements gained with *anti-aliasing*. Suffice it to say that the goal of creating a character generator with the necessary quality of resolution required to replace art cards has already become a reality. Some brave users even profess to the belief that titles done on today's high-end character generators look *better* than art cards.

Anti-aliasing shouldn't be perceived as the most important, or even the most recent, technological advancement in graphics equipment today. In order to provide the level of refinement available in this new age of character generation and graphic systems, *anti-aliasing* must be accompanied by a variety of features.

When you choose a character generator, pay attention to linear keying abilities in particular. After all, what's a perfect graphic without the ability to cut a perfectly formed key? It's important to check out the manufacturer's ability to provide hundreds of digital typefaces along with the accompanying hardware and software to create, size, and manipulate the perfect typeface or custom logo art work within a totally *anti-aliased* environment. Find equipment with a track record of continued advancements like font utilities which allow for the creation of characters and graphics that can be rotated in 3D, light-source shaded, texture mapped, or even animated. Remember, I told you at the outset it was terminally confusing.

You may well wonder what I'll do now when some unsuspecting soul asks me about all these "character graphics things." No problem. I've devised a sure-fire plan. I'll carry pictures in my wallet. Look, it's a visual medium, right? And they say one picture is worth a thousand words, right? So one picture of a thousand words ought to be worth...let's see now...Oh well, maybe I'll just give 'em my second cousin's phone number. □

Ms. Lunceford is currently the Director of Marketing for Chyron Corporation, Melville, N.Y. Chyron is one of the leading manufacturers of character and graphics equipment and systems.



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ELECTRONIC EDITING AND FEATURE FILMS

AN EVALUATION

by Milton Forman President, Cinedco, Inc.

I first became familiar with electronic editing in 1983 when Adrian Ettlinger described what later became *Ediflex*. Up to that time, I had been involved in feature films. I could clearly see a very substantial contribution that electronic editing could make in editing feature films.

I remembered only too well the frustrations we had with normal film editing. The delays—when revised cuts were recommended and the editor asked us to come back in two hours in order to look over his shoulder on the Moviola. I'll never forget the delays we had when we required dupes, and the delays we had in getting them. Also, I remember the insecurity we felt when we did the "final" cut on the work print, and we still had the feeling that we could do better.

As I see it, electronic editing has the following advantages:

- It liberates the editor from the physical tedium of handling the film itself.
- It substantially reduces the time to execute the editing decisions.
- It permits the editor to recall any selected material and keep various versions available for preview. The editor can conveniently modify and change his cuts.

- Because of the ability of electronic editing to keep in memory the various options, it provides excellent communication between the editor and the director and allows them to come to the best agreed upon decisions.
- Electronic editing allows the editor and director to take a tape of the various cuts and assemblies and even daily material and quietly review these in the office or at home using a standard VCR.

Electronic editing is the tool which allows the editor to concentrate on his creative decisions. Electronic editing allows for the execution of all of the present requirements of film editing.

My feelings were that electronic editing was a

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In addition, each printout generates a "Summary" page (or pages) that list all the characters in alphabetical order with each of their loop numbers and a total for each character. It also totals the entire printout. This is very handy for checking off as the lines are recorded. You don't have to print an entire list either. You can select which characters you want to include, which range of loop numbers and which range of footages. The default is the entire list, but if only one character had changes, you can just reprint that character's loops.

A printer doesn't have to be available right where you do your spotting. You can copy the list to a disk and then take that disk to any other IBM compatible computer and get it printed out exactly as you wanted it, without doing anything more than typing "PRINT" and the name of the list you created.

In Conclusion

LarTec Spotting systems are currently in use at the Larson Sound Center, Echo Films, Modern Sound, and Ryder Sound Services. And if you happen to be working at a facility with the LarTec online console system (at present they are Larson Sound Center, Disney Buena Vista Studios, Ryder Sound Services, and Paramount Pictures), you can bring your entire show on a floppy disk. The crew will love you because they won't have to enter any numbers manually. A couple of keystrokes is all it takes to go from one loop to the next for recording.

Demonstrations or more information can be obtained at 4109 W. Burbank Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505—(818) 566-9797. □ *Stephen Potter is the Vice-President of Systems, Larson Technology*

ELECTRONIC EDITING AND FEATURE FILMS

Continued from page 27

perfect tool for feature films. Yet, it was first massively accepted in editing of films for television release. This was because it easily fulfilled the critical pressures for such productions as episodic series, Movies of the Week, pilots, etc.

The application of electronic editing for feature films, whether it be with tape or disk, has other requirements. These requirements can now be fulfilled. They are:

A) Feature films usually require that the director looks at 35mm print dailies on a large screen. In addition, it also usually requires that critical assemblies be viewed in the same manner. And of course it requires an accurate negative cutting list for the final negative cut. In order to accomplish this, there must be conformance of time code information between the tape or disk and the work print or negative. There are three methods of accomplishing this:

- 1) The manual execution of keying in the edge numbers.
- 2) The use of the Aaton system, which exposes the negative while shooting with time code information.

- 3) The use of the Eastman Kodak KEYCODE numbers which are supplied on the negative. Readers are now available which interface the time code on the tape and negative or work print.

B) The cutting list for the work print or the negative should be absolutely frame accurate. This can only be done when the editing is done at 24 fps in order to conform to the shooting at 24 fps.

It is true that when the negative is cut for films produced for television, certain frame inaccuracies are tolerable. All electronic editing systems (except *Ediflex Model 24*) edit at 30 fps. Therefore, there is a variation between the video frame and the film frame.

It is to be noted that a few films have been edited electronically, some at 24 fps, some at 30 fps. Some have been very low cost films where electronic editing provided the fastest and cheapest method of editing the film.

The methods used for cutting negative are now well-refined. The basic technology exists to provide a reliable system for the electronic cutting of films. It includes

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SPECIAL REPORT:

ELECTRONIC EDITING AND FEATURE FILMS

Continued from page 28

frame accuracy (at 24 fps) and time code conformance permitting convenient and accurate cutting of the work print and the negative. With these problems solved, the feature film editor and director can feel comfortable.

Special Comments

Electronic editing is only a tool. The quality of creative editing varies with the skill and talent of the editor. The use of the electronic editing tool makes it easier to use that skill and talent.

One of the reasons electronic editing was applied so quickly to film for television post-production is that it was cost effective. Some of this applies to feature film editing.

It is to be noted that probably there can be substantial savings in certain editing functions such as dupes, etc. It is certainly true that electronic editing always provides the work to be done on clean, virgin material instead of the marked, work-worn prints of film editing. It is also possible that with individual editors, individual productions can be done much more quickly.

However, it is my opinion that the most important single contribution of electronic editing for feature films is that it enhances the ability of the editor and

director to arrive at the optimum edit. It is not necessary to be dependent on one's memory. Now all versions, all cuts, including the final cut, can be evaluated against variations and other cuts almost simultaneously.

The quality of the script, the skill of the director, and the talent of the performers are enhanced by the editing process, and it therefore plays a very important role in the success of the film. The creative role of electronic editing of feature films cannot be underestimated. Its contribution to medium and large budget films is probably greater than with very low budget films.

Conclusion

The full utilization of electronic editing in feature film post-production is dependent on the acceptance by the feature film editor and the understanding of the director that its proper use will result in a film which expresses his concept. All of this requires a program to allow editors and directors to become familiar with electronic editing. □

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the rest of our family, I would like to thank you for the recent article appearing in the *American Cinematographer* on my grandfather, Jack Foley.

My uncle, Jack Foley, Jr., subscribes to the magazine and articles such as yours enable us to acquaint our newest generation with their great-grandfather and the wonderful person he was—very special indeed.

He too would be proud as he so loved the industry. "Foley it!" and Foley sound stage would be music to his ears!

Many thanks again.

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There's A Bottom Line Below The Line:

Hollywood's Post-Production Entrepreneurs

Bee Ottinger: SKYLIGHT VIDEO by Paula Lombard



Bee Ottinger

It's a common belief that there is a dichotomy between the artistic professions and the more linear world of business. However, the entertainment industry has produced many exceptions to this rule, with writers and directors frequently crossing over into the more commercial arenas of high-level production and executive management. But the merging of creative talent and business acumen also happens below the line. Bee Ottinger, founder and owner of Skylight Video, is one of those people.

A small woman with explosive energy and a seeming voracious appetite for work, Bee came to work in Hollywood

19 years ago. After earning an MFA in photography from Cal Arts, she saw herself as an artist and did street photography, supporting herself by managing a health food store. Bored with artistic poverty, Bee took up a friend's suggestion and looked into film editing. Not knowing anything about it, she went back to school and began to learn. "I could not believe anyone would pay me to do this. It was wonderful, and I thought this was the most fun I had ever had. It was better than taking pictures. It was color. It was movement. It was sound. I never took another serious picture again."

Pushing herself, Bee worked for the next five years as an assistant editor and eventually became an editor and department manager at a broadcast promotion company. In 1979, a fellow worker approached her with the proposition of starting their own company. They put together \$20,000 and opened an office. "My main reason for starting a business was to have the control to determine my working environment. To be able to work with the people I wanted to work with. It was not to earn more money. I didn't think I could earn more money than I could being on staff or freelancing. It turned out to be good because I made

some decisions that led to more money. Going into video as early as I did, we fulfilled a market need for people with a film mentality who were accomplished in video. We learned the video language, we kept one step ahead of the technology and we served as a buffer to the video world for film people. We helped our clients adapt to a new world. We were also small and therefore less intimidating, and most of the offline houses in 1979 were part of a big facility."

A year later, just after Ottinger had bought out her partner (who wanted to go back to writing), Video Transitions located next door to her and rented space from her for an offline system. Bee began to bring in jobs and edit on the system and would occasionally accept overflow work from next door, continually using her profits to upgrade and purchase additional equipment. Skylight Video grew steadily each year.

Ottinger attributes her constantly expanding client base largely to "word of mouth." In the early years, Skylight edit bays were doing jobs for the major studios. However, as the majors purchased their own equipment, the burgeoning music video industry provided a demand for Skylight's offline services, thus filling the gap the studios had left behind. As more and more commercials were being cut on tape, and with the rapid expansion of the music video industry, Ottinger soon made a name for herself and for Skylight in those two worlds. Within five years, Skylight expanded to five edit bays and a staff of editors.

Ottinger plunged herself and Skylight into this commercial world, and in fact

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developed a great passion for the medium. "We have so much media around us, and so much music. It is the design environment of our lives. I love the fact that they (projects) are commercial because they respond to real needs. The need to sell a product, or to introduce an artist." It is Ottinger's keen mind and attention to detail that has made Skylight a continual success over the past decade. She trains all her own people and does not have a sales representative but instead believes in a hands-on marketing approach by being in the edit bay with her clients. "I can see (first hand) people's disappointment if we don't have a piece of equipment or service. I can see those things that we may do and clients don't care about. By being directly involved with clients, I stay connected with our industry. I'm right in the marketplace, seeing what people need and selling Skylight every day."

There have also been dark moments for Skylight. Five years into the venture, Ottinger realized she was in a financial crisis. Clients were not paying their bills and Skylight was skidding. Ottinger made the decision to revamp her client load—credit checks became standard procedure as did C.O.D. business. "I realized that I could not give the service that

I needed to give if I didn't have reliable clients. I am in partnership with my clients; if they cannot collect on a job, they don't pay."

Ottinger is sought after for her editorial style. She has recently cut music videos for Al Green, Belinda Carlyle, the Bangles, and Atlantic Starr. One can see commercials, industrials, show opening promotions, and music videos being cut around the clock at Skylight. Always on the lookout for what is new in post-production, Ottinger recommends prospective entrepreneurs consider entering the sound field and believes sound design is an arena of great potential and business possibilities. She also suggests looking into tape animation and graphics. "There is more going on in post-production than ever before. Telecine is like an optical lab because the editor operates the equipment and can manipulate images. He/she is becoming, in essence, an optical designer."

Her advice is specific for getting started: cut your personal overhead, be leery of partners. "The reason people usually take a partner in the beginning is they often can't afford another salary, and they need that extra hard-working person. The problem is when you start making money. Unless the partnership is real-

ly well-defined and you have different skills, the minute you start making money you can employ that same (type of) person for no profit sharing. You begin to think you don't need that other person and in fact you don't."

Skylight continues to grow and expand; edit bays are now open for rentals with or without an editor. Ottinger is mulling over the possibility of taking on a management team so that she can consider editing longer format projects. There is no doubt both Bee Ottinger the editor and Bee Ottinger the entrepreneur will continue to flourish. □

Paula Lumbard is President and owner of FILM BANK, located in Burbank, California

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THE TRIM BIN

In an effort to better acquaint our readers with current credits for the ACE members, Bob Bring asks them . . .

WHAT PICTURE

ARE YOU CURRENTLY EDITING?

The following responses were received by the deadline for this issue.

Byron "Buzz" Brandt

Making The Case For Murder: The Howard Beach Story

Producer: Ken Kaufman
Director: Dick Lowry
Cast: Daniel J. Travanti, Bill Daniels
"The true story of the incident in New York, where 3 black fellows are spotted in an all-white area (their car had broken down). They are set upon and chased onto a freeway where one is hit by a car and killed, the others subsequently badly beaten. Editing at C.F.I."

Dann Cahn

The Old Dick

Producer: Andrew Fenady
Director: Lee Katzin
Cast: Robert Mitchum, Ernie Borgnine, Stella Stevens, June Allyson
"Mitchum as the old dick (private eye), comes out of retirement to take on a big case, aided by Borgnine. Post-production at Gomillion Studios for U.S.A. Cable."

Craig McKay

She-Devil

Producers: Susan Seidelman, Jonathan Brett
Director: Susan Seidelman
Cast: Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, Linda Hunt, Ed Begley, Jr.
"Never underestimate the power of a woman's revenge. Editing at Sound One in New York. For Orion Pictures."

Noelle Imparato

Hollywood Dog

Producers: Laura Schrock, Scott Stone
Director: William Dear
"This is a new breed TV pilot, one half live action, one half cartoon. It's a take-off from the cartoon, designed by Over Meyer, and published in the L.A. Weekly and other publications. Editing at KTLA."

Anne V. Coates

I Love You To Death

Producers: Charles Okun, Micheal Grillo
Director: Lawrence Kasdan
Cast: Kevin Kline, William Hurt, Tracey Ullman, River Phoenix
"Editing at Raleigh Studios."

Joe Ann Fogle

Doogie Howser, M.D.

Producer: Steven Bocho
Director: Rick Wallace
Cast: Neal Patrick Harris
"Pilot for Steven Bocho Productions at 20th Century Fox. I will be supervising editor and co-producer on the series and edit every third episode."

Duane Hartzell

Angel Town

Director: Eric Karson
"Editing at the nice, new rooms at Ryder Sound. It's an action feature set among East LA street gangs."

Alan Heim

Quick Change

Producer: Bob Greenhut
Directors: Bill Murray, Howard Franklin
Cast: Bill Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, Jason Robards
"Editing in N.Y.C., for Devoted Productions."

Paul Hirsch

Coupe De Ville

Producers: Larry Brezner, Paul Schiff
Director: Joe Roth
Cast: Patrick Dempsey, Daniel Stern, Alan Arkin
"Editing at Big Time Pictures."

John (Jack) Davies

Dallas

Producer: Len Katzman
"For Lorimar Telepictures."

Robert Seppey

Cold Sassy Tree

Producers: Don Ohlmeyer, Faye Dunaway, Karen Danaher-Dorr
Director: Joan Tewkesbury
Cast: Faye Dunaway, Richard Widmark
"Two hour movie for Ohlmeyer Productions and Turner Network Television."

Herbert L. Strock

Detour

Producer: Wade Williams
Director: Wade Williams
Cast: Tom Neal, Lea Lavish
"Remake of the 1945 B & W PRC production, shot in six days. Tom Neal is the son of the original lead. Exteriors were shot in California, interiors in Kansas City."

Neil Travis

Dances With Wolves

Producer: Jim Wilson
Director: Kevin Costner
Cast: Kevin Costner
"Kevin is taking on the incredible challenge of directing and playing the lead in a big period western. Shooting in South Dakota."

Jack Tucker

Fate

Producers: Steven Paul, Stuart Paul
Director: Stuart Paul
Cast: Stuart Paul, Cheryl Lynn, Susannah York, Kaye Ballard
"A comedy feature in the style of Frank Capra. For Preferred Films."

Jack Wheeler

Impulse

Producer: Al Ruddy, Andre Morgan
Director: Sondra Locke
Cast: Teresa Russell, Jeff Fahey
"An undercover policewoman finds herself trapped in a murder—great direction and performances. For Warner Brothers."

Frederic Knudtson

Falcon Crest

Executive Producer: Jerry Thorpe
Cast: Jane Wyman, David Selby,
Susan Sullivan, Lorenzo Lamas
*"Remember that trip you were
going to take through the
California wine country? Well
don't. Watch the much more
exciting T.V. series Falcon Crest."*

Paul LaMastra

Caroline ?

Producer: Dorothea Petrie
Director: Joseph Sargent
Cast: Stephanie Zimbalist, Pamela Reed,
George Grizard, Patricia Neal,
Dorothy McGuire
*"A Hallmark Hall of Fame for
C.B.S. Editing at C.F.I."*

Jerrold L. Ludwig

Stella

Producers: David Picker,
Samuel Goldwyn, Jr.
Director: John Erman
Cast: Bette Midler, John Goodman,
Steven Collins
*"Updated version of the 1935
classic Stella Dallas. For
Touchstone Pictures."*

Dov Hoenig

Hanna

Producer: Michael Mann
Director: Michael Mann
Cast: Scott Plank, Alex McArthur,
Ely Pouget, Laura Harrington
*"Editing Hanna (temporary title), a
two-hour pilot for Ajar Productions
at ZZY in Glendale. For N.B.C."*

Barry D. Nye

Amazon: The Flooded Forest

Producer: Barbara Jampel
*"A National Geographic special,
about pink dolphins, electric eels,
piranhas, and other strange
creatures that live on the forest
floor for six months a year."*

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Summer finds ACE members busier than ever, though, happily, not all the activity is work-related. **Buzz Brandt** and his long-time "significant other," **Adrienne Milder**, finally took a well-deserved, long overdue European vacation. "We've been together 14 years," says Buzz, "but have only taken a couple of quick week-end trips to Hawaii. Conflicting schedules make leisure time together a rare commodity. Adrienne is in the videotape telemarketing business. When she's available I'm not, and vice-versa."

Their two-week trip to London and Paris was worth the wait. "We were able to walk everywhere, which is a great way to get around because you see things you never would taking a cab." The exorbitant prices in Paris came as an initial

Scene and Heard

shock, however. "Having to pay \$14 for coffee and croissant was a bit much," he concedes.

George and Claire Grenville had the time of their lives traveling throughout the Southwest recently, visiting Indian country. Memorable stops included Monument Valley, Santa Fe (where they visited retired editor **Tom Stanford**), and Sedona (home of retired sound editor **Frank Warner**). In Canyon de Chelly, they stayed in a marvelous inn run by Navajos and wandered among Indian ruins dating back a thousand years. They were particularly impressed with Mesa Verde in southwest Colorado, where they

saw archeological remnants of The Ancient Ones, a tribe that mysteriously disappeared one day. "Most of us never come in contact with evidence of ancient civilizations. It's a profound experience, especially when it's practically in your own backyard," says George.

Leo and Ginnie Chaloukian just returned from La Costa, where they indulged in their favorite pastime—golf. Not only is she the v.p. of their company, Ryder Sound Services, Ginnie also partners with her hubby regularly for a mean round of golf. "Tennis too," says Leo. "We were avid players but I had to drop off because the body couldn't take it. I took up golf, Ginnie joined me, and we love it." Like most busy career couples, the Chaloukians haven't enjoyed a real vacation in years. "We make up for it by getting away on weekends as much as possible."

Peripatetic **Sidney and Beverly Katz** are heading for the Rogue River in Oregon, where they plan to do some great salmon fishing. There's also plenty of opportunity for other favorite pastimes, such as reading and horseback riding. When the Katzes are in town, you'll frequently find them on the golf course, in the pool, or cruising down the bike path

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Buzz and Adrienne

that extends from Playa del Rey to Pacific Palisades. Sidney just learned he'll be cutting a new CBS series starting in August. "What a great feeling to know I've got time off to relax and enjoy Oregon, but that I've also got a job lined up. It doesn't happen often. Usually, I come home and stare at the answering machine, and wonder if I'll ever work again."

Bill Conrad and his 15-year-old son **Alexander** are packing their bags for Spain and Portugal. "Between my work and his school, we don't get to spend much time together," says Bill, a single father who hopes to squeeze in some "quality time" this summer. After a month of traveling and studying architecture (a strong interest of Alexander's), Bill will drop his son off in Switzerland where he'll attend summer school and, hopefully, learn to speak French.

Other ACE's are staying closer to home this summer. New York member **Craig McKay** has just finished remodeling the guest room and bath in his country home in Barrytown, about 100 miles outside of New York City. The place sounds terrific, a three-bedroom brownstone built in 1870 right on the Hudson River. "We specifically chose a getaway that was close to home so we could enjoy it on weekends," says Craig. Despite his best intentions, he's found little time to spend in Barrytown what with overlapping feature projects for Orion and **Susan Seidelman**.

There's a summer wedding in store for father of the bride **John Horner** and, to hear him tell it, the planning has been all-consuming. "It takes a small army and a bank loan to get these things accomplished," he says with a groan. Daughter **Kerri's** church wedding will be followed by a big reception at the Knollwood

Country Club. "That's what's going to hurt." Proud papa tells us Kerri has just received her teaching credentials and will begin teaching elementary school in the fall.

Another beaming dad is **Paul Hirsch**, who says his 12-year-old daughter **Gina** is growing up before his eyes. She just graduated Wildwood School in Santa Monica and will begin at Westlake in the fall. Paul's nine-year-old son, **Eric**, meanwhile, continues at the Mirman School. His wife, **Jane**, is an elementary school teacher, not to mention a computer whiz, who will spend her summer instructing other teachers how to use software. As for himself, Paul quips, "I just keep working to pay the mortgage."

Ed Englund is still reeling from the news that he's a grandfather. "It's a shock," he says, "because I'm not that

old. I simply started young. I came out here from New York and had my daughter when I was 17." Once the reality of being "gramps" sinks in, he plans to visit his new offspring, **Louisa Marie**, in Tucson.

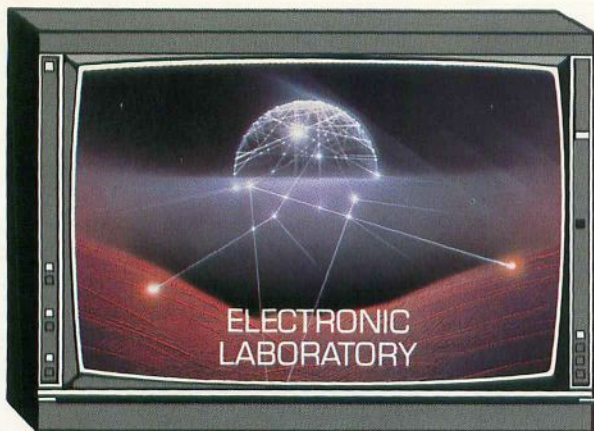
Aside from traveling to Europe every other year, former three-term ACE prexy **Axel Hubert** finds no need to leave his Malibu abode, especially since it's equipped with a cutting room bigger than those found in many studios. He just edited (music as well as film) a low-budget, independent film and plans on cutting the next pix for director **Mel Weiser** as well.

Two years into his retirement, **Jack Gleason** says he "loves it, but misses the business too. It's a double-edge sword." Jack spends his days doing yard work and building models of cars, airplanes, and trains, which he'll save for his grandchildren. "I spent my entire life working on film, and I never had much time to develop a hobby. So I'm at an interesting stage right now."

Finally, congratulations to **Fred Nolting**, on his recent promotion to senior vice-president, post-production for the MGM/UA Film Group. Keep up the good work, Fred. That goes for all the rest of you as well. Lather on that sun screen and have a great summer. □
by Denise Abbott



California Governor George Deukmejian, Leo and Ginnie Chaloukian



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