Fred Baron

“If producers don’t take the lead, no one’s going to do it.”

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We don’t often do “special issues” of Produced by. Producers (and producing careers) come in so many different varieties that our profession is typically better served by trying to capture its incredible diversity than to focus on a specific aspect of the craft.

But every now and then, an issue comes along that is so essential and so important, that it merits special treatment. The evidence of climate change and its potential impact on our industry and our world is just such an issue. Consequently, the challenge of “green production” is one that every producer in our Guild must begin to understand and undertake. Our aim, as always, is to give you the tools to meet this challenge. And the first and most essential tool in this fight is accurate information.

I’m immensely proud of our PGA Green Initiative. This magazine is only one aspect of that effort. The center of the initiative is our website: PGAgreen.org — a truly state-of-the-art resource providing best practices and guidelines, green vendor lists, a calendar of green production–related events, and much more. PGAgreen.org will become an absolutely indispensable site for every producer. I’d encourage you to go to your computer and bookmark it right now. Don’t worry, this magazine will still be here when you’re finished. (“Old media” is nice that way.)

I’d like to offer my thanks not only to the many PGA Green volunteers who have helped to get this site off the ground (more on them in a minute), but also to the major studios, nearly all of whom have contributed to this effort. Like the PGA, the studios have recognized that climate change is a communal problem, one that requires a communal solution. It’s difficult to get the studios to agree on anything, but thanks to the incredible work of our team, and particularly our cover subject Fred Baron, we have built a consensus within the industry: that this is a task for all of us to face together, and that the Producers Guild — because of its non-partisan stance — is a logical choice to take the lead.

Fred and his fellow Green Initiative leaders Kathleen Courtney, Lydia Dean Pilcher, Mari-Jo Winkler, Amanda Scarano Carter and Katie Carpenter have devoted a truly precious amount of time and energy to this effort. They and their fellow Green Committee members have been at the forefront of this work for years, and it has been their commitment to ensuring that the major players in this industry pool their resources and rise to this challenge under a unified banner that has paid tremendous dividends — for our Guild, and ultimately, our planet.

That, after all, is what producers do: create the team, forge the consensus, communicate the message, and lead the change. The work of our Green Initiative is a logical extension of the leadership its members demonstrate every day on the set, in the studio, and around the production office.

It’s no longer enough for us simply to produce film, television and new media; it’s time to produce a better world.
Produced by
Spring 2010

The producing profession lost one of its giants on February 1 when David Brown passed away at the age of 93. A recipient of numerous honors, including the Motion Picture Academy’s Irving Thalberg Award and the PGA’s David O. Selznick Achievement Award in Motion Pictures, Brown’s credits include such classics as *Jaws*, *The Sting*, *The Verdict*, *Cocoon*, *The Player*, and *A Few Good Men*.

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**Remembering**

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**I talked to him every day for almost 40 years. I used to call no matter where I was. I’d get up from the dinner table in London saying: What time is it in Singapore? I have to make a call. Every day. We’d skip maybe one or two days in a month. Sometimes, he was on a cruise with Helen. Sometimes, I was on location or vice-versa. But we talked every day. Some people didn’t understand that. They said: What do you talk about? If you talk to somebody every day for 40 years, do you ever run out of things to say? We never did. We never talked about the weather because the weather was something that people who don’t have anything to say talk about. And we never talked about the good old days because we saw too many colleagues retire and reminisce about how it used to be much more fun in the good old days. We felt that that conversation, right then and there, was the good old days. We were living the good old days.**

–Richard Zanuck

**For the past 10 or so years, I’ve had the privilege and great good fun of having lunch with David two or three times a week. He’d call out from his office, “Kit, where should we go?” We’d eat and have a drink (don’t tell Helen) and talk about the projects we were developing. But mostly, we’d gossip about who was on Page Six and what movies were opening, and most especially, what the stock market was doing that day. He’d talk to me about life, and it was not only an education, it was a blast. When lunch was over and he’d pay the check, we’d sit there a bit and finally he’d say, “Should we go?” and we’d head back to the office to tackle the West Coast afternoon calls. Last Friday, I sat with David while he was having what would be his last dialysis treatment. He was sleepy but he opened his eyes and looked at me and said, “Should we go?” Even at 93, it was too soon to go.**

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As this magazine has previously had occasion to note, the line between producer and executive is a permeable one. Previous Case Study subjects such as David Picker, Larry Gordon, Gary Lucchesi and Hawk Koch have all logged time on both sides of the producer/exec divide, and spoken eloquently to the ways that those roles inform each other.

This issue’s Case Study takes that conversation a step further; Fred Baron is the quintessential example of that rare hyphenate, the producer-executive. Since 1990, Baron has worked for 20th Century Fox, where he currently holds the position of Executive Vice President of Feature Production. Not only is his work in that position guided by his extensive background in production — having risen through the production ranks working under such figures as Jerry Bruckheimer, Joel Silver, Bill Badalato and the aforementioned David Picker — Baron remains the uncommon executive whose contract allows him to act as a full producer on feature films. He exercised that option most notably from 1999 to 2001, when he took a full leave of absence from his duties at Fox to follow filmmaker Baz Luhrmann to Australia to produce the landmark, postmodern musical Moulin Rouge. The decision was a good one; not only did Baron return to his position at Fox with renewed vigor and a fresh perspective, the film scored its producers Oscar and Golden Globe nominations for Best Picture, and outright won the Producers Guild’s top motion picture honor, the Darryl F. Zanuck Award.

More recently, Baron’s stature within the Producers Guild has grown thanks to his leadership of the PGA Green Initiative, long serving as one of its West Coast Chairs. With the growing (and necessary) emphasis on the challenges of “green production,” his work, and that of his colleagues, has taken on even greater importance. And indeed, Baron has proved to be the right man in the right job, leveraging his position as an executive to create studio support for the Green Initiative and its centerpiece website, PGAgreen.org. The publication of this first-ever Green Issue of Produced by gives us the welcome opportunity to showcase the remarkable contributions of this unique figure within our Guild.

This is the 46th in Produced by’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. Editor Chris Green joined Fred Baron at his office on the Fox lot to discuss such varied topics as Baz Luhrmann’s uncanny abilities as a visionary salesman, the essential work of the PGA Green Initiative, and the challenges of getting John Belushi to the set every morning.
Talk a little about how you found your way into the industry. After all, everybody has a very different path.

I grew up in Manhattan and the suburbs around Manhattan. My parents loved the movies. Even after we moved out to the suburbs, if a movie opened in the city, we would go see it. In those days, a movie would open in Manhattan and there would be a 30-mile gap from the city that it couldn’t play in. I remember going to see The Red Shoes...opened. My parents drove all the way to Connecticut because it was easier to go to see it there. I remember sitting at the base of my parents’ bed and watching Citizen Kane. I remember the first movie I went to, which was Gigi. And of course, I didn’t know that she was a courthouse.

Right. Funny enough, Moulin Rouge has a lot of similar elements — courthouse, French guys singing...[laughs] I remember them taking me to see Alfie, and my father saying to my mother, “I’m taking him out of here!” Because there was abortion in it. But we went to the movies. When I was in high school, my best friend and I created a film society. A man moved down the block from us, who started as a manager at Paramount; by the time I went off to college, he was president of Paramount. He would bring movies home on the weekends, 16mm prints, and he’d let us have them on Saturday nights.

Wow. So we would screen movies in our basement. I remember, for my high school film society, I got The 400 Blows. I knew nothing about it...except that Truffaut had made it, and I was just amazed at what Truffaut pulled off. And Duck Soup, sitting with my little brother watching it over and over and quoting every Groucho Marx line... I just developed a love for the movies.

Did that translate into something like film school? No, I went off to a liberal arts college and fell into English lit, but I took the two movie classes I could take, and ran the film series so following my relatives to 7th Avenue. I had a friend who was going to USC Film School, who was living in a one-bedroom place out in Malibu and I just got in my car and drove west. I didn’t pick the right relatives for the film business. [laughs] There was no studio head or producer before me. They were just parents, with no industry connections. After a few months in L.A., I finally got a job as a gift wrapper at Bullocks. I didn’t like it, so I got a job at the courthouse. I was working my way up. [laughs] And then I was lucky enough to get on a waiting list to work in the mailroom at Universal. Now, that wasn’t like an agency mailroom, where you are trained to be an agent; it was just delivering mail, and you hoped that one day someone would say, “That looks like a great kid, we want him at our company.” And I met this woman, Lauren Shuler, who was a young producer who had gotten a job to run the West Coast Division of Martin Poll Productions. So I left the mailroom to be a runner for Lauren (who’s on the PGA Board with me now), and I thought she was terrific. She worked really hard, and she saw me as someone who could move up in the company. I would photocopy and deliver scripts all over town and I would read scripts for them and then became a story editor. The first movie the company developed, I wanted to be on the set; that was Nighthawks, with Sylvester Stallone. So I went to New York and slept on my mother’s couch. And the PA’s with me were Celia Costas and John Kilk. Joe Reidy — who later became Martin Scorcese’s producer and first AD — was the 2nd AD. Joe Harwick, now President of Fox Production, was the second accountant, Jane Evans from Focus was the production secretary... So I met all these young people and got myself into production. I picked up another PA job in New York, then came back to Los Angeles to work in development at a new production company. The company failed. I got a PA job in Chicago and flew myself there to work on Nighthawks. That’s where I met my wife. I just connected with production people, like Bill Badalato...one of the great producers; he really knows how to put a movie together. So I became a part of his team. And we worked on a bunch of things; we worked on Continental Divide, Cat People, and Top Gun. I would do everything — locations, unit manager. 2nd unit AD, I would solve problems, I would pick actors up at the airport, fill refrigerators for the above-the-line crew... I even once drove a fired director to the airport, where his parting words were, “Beware of sleeping snakes. They sleep with their eyes open.” One of the things I did on Continental Divide was serve as John Belushi’s wrangler.

Really? What was the toughest part of Belushi wrangling? Waking him up! Because he was nocturnal and stayed up late. He loved his friends and loved to party. He and Aykroyd had a private bar in Chicago that was near Second City. We would shoot all day on Continental Divide and be at the bar all night. He would be behind the bar, serving drinks and telling jokes, doing routines for me... and we’d stay up all night and I would never go back to my hotel. Once, I was lucky enough to get back to at the Holiday Inn and I thought, “Oh my God, I made it.” And I ordered a wake-up call and said, “I need to be up at 5:30.” And they said, “You do realize it’s 5:15?” And I said, “Yeah, I just don’t want to fall asleep in the shower!” I loved working on set, loved the crew and loved the stories. I remember holding back pedestrian traffic once in Chicago, and this guy comes up to me and says, “I wanna see John Belushi; I’m Abbie Hoffman.” And I’m standing there next to a cop, who goes, “I wanna shake your hand! I came this close to hitting you during the riots!” But this is what you see on set. And I went back with Bill and we did a movie for DEG with Dino DeLaurentiss called Weeds, which was almost a great film.

With Nick Nolte, right? That’s right, Nick Nolte. We shot at Joliet Maximum Security Prison, which didn’t affect us until the last day of the film, when there was an escape; a guy escaped in one of our vans. And it was quite a day. The next day, I got everyone out of town as fast as possible. I felt terrible. And a camera crew came up as I was literally loading stuff out the window at the Holiday Inn in Joliet. And the guy comes up to me at the window and asks, “Can I interview you?” and I said, “No, I have nothing to say, and please shut off the camera. We followed the rules, nothing happened.” And then my mother called me that night, she had seen me on World News Tonight. Her first question was, “Why didn’t you cut your hair, or trim your beard?”

So how did you make the transition from production to the executive track? I was trying to push my own projects for a while when Tom Jacobson, who was a social friend of mine, became Executive VP of Fox when Joe Roth was Chairman. We had kids the same age and he knew I wanted to stay in town for a while. Tom introduced me to Jon Landau, and I was hired at Fox. And then I fell into the studio system and that’s kind of the transition. When I renegotiated my contract in the late ‘90s, I negotiated a right to produce as well. I got a couple of calls from producers on the lot asking if I would produce their films. And Baz Luhrmann heard about it. He didn’t have a producer
for Moulin Rouge, and he wanted a partner to make the film. So I went off and we workshoped the film in Sydney. We were in this room with these wonderful actors, Ewan and Nicole, who were reading and singing for us. And I ended up producing the film with Baz and Martin Brown. That was 14 months in Sydney.

What stage was the project in when you came on? Was there a script?

There was a loose script. We wanted to test it out. Baz wanted to reinvent the musical, taking iconic songs from the '80s and '90s, and having our actors break into song and seeing how it worked performance-wise. And there were songs that worked and songs that didn’t work. Then it was going around and meeting the songwriters. Baz would meet with rock stars like Elton John and Bono, and show a little sizzle reel. He worked it like you would do in an advertising agency; “this is the look of our film.” He was an amazing salesman. For Romeo and Juliet, for around $10,000, we shot a screen test with Leonardo DiCaprio and Natalie Portman [Editor’s note: Claire Danes was subsequently cast in the role] in Sydney. That screen test, the sizzle that Baz did with his art team to say, “we can do a hip Shakespeare in modern clothes, in a modern situation,” is what got a green light at the studio. So with Moulin Rouge, we did the same thing together. We had this workshop and we had Ewan sing and Nicole sing; it was the closest in my career I’ve come to doing theater. At the end of the workshop we had a dinner — we drank a lot of absinthe — and we had Nicole and Ewan commit to doing the movie. Let’s go make the deal. And then it became a series of workshops; acting, dance, singing ... all this other stuff you would do in theater, leading up to the movie. That was an experience. It was wonderful. It wasn’t as simple as eight weeks of prep, go scout a couple of locations, get some wardrobe...

If we’re going to be as efficient as we could be with paper, wood, water, energy, and cars ... let’s all do it as one.

Well, no one would mistake Moulin Rouge for a simple-looking movie.

It’s a very thick, dense movie. Every time I look at it, there are new things I see. That was about in the middle of my career at Fox. Had I not done that, I don’t think I would have made it this long. I would have burnt myself out. The idea of going out there with the director, the actors, the crew and the writers ... it just brought me back into why I got into the business. Working at a studio, it isn’t that easy. A producer will come to a studio and say, “We need this extra action beat, but it’s going to cost us an extra million dollars.” And the studio’s response will be, “You’ve already got a hundred million dollars, you figure it out.” And I’m in the middle. I don’t believe anyone actually knows how to make a movie. People come into my office and say, “I know how to make that movie. I can do it.” I don’t believe them. All you can do is, from your experience, keep moving ahead and try not to make the same mistake twice.

That would be helpful for our readers. What kind of mistakes have you made that you would hope to help people avoid?

Often, it’s simple stuff like “I see the way you’re scheduling this, but it doesn’t make sense. If you do it this way, you’re protected on the back side. I wouldn’t go to that location first, I’d go to that one second. This actor — I wouldn’t shoot this scene after this holiday because I know he’s going to be off skiing and he’s not going to have his head in the game. Let’s start with something simple. Let’s build a set instead of using a location...” There are things that might look more expensive but in the end will save you money, because they’ll get you the performances that you need. It’s endless. There are countries that work, and countries that don’t work. If you’re going to go to Mexico, go for a specific reason. You don’t just go to save money. I asked a producer who worked in Mexico, using it to double for Brazil. I asked, “If you had one more dollar, what would you have done differently?” He said, “I wouldn’t have gone to Mexico.” You have to be specific. You don’t just go some-
where to chase a dollar. You go there because it’s right for the film. You chase tax rebates, but to go there for the rebate and then have to create another world, that doesn’t make sense. On Knight and Day, we went to Boston, Massachusetts, which has a great rebate; it saved us millions of dollars that we needed to help get the film greenlit, but we played Massachusetts for Massachusetts. We used the city, we used the people, we used the streets, the highways. When I worked for Cannon Films in the ’80s, they had a deal where every day, they would send their exposed film to New York to be processed. They would shoot in Los Angeles and send the film by airplane to New York. Why not use a lab in Los Angeles? “Well, we got a better deal in New York.” But it wasn’t a better deal when the film got lost. It made no sense. That saved them some money, but it cost the film.

You’re in this business with producers and directors — headstrong personalities. How do you work to bring them around to your point of view? Especially insofar as you’re representing the studio? You really have to put yourself in their shoes. You don’t want to always say, “No.” That doesn’t work. You need to say, “I get what you’re doing and what you’re trying to do and I think we can get there.” You want to point them in the right direction but you want to encourage them to think creatively without taking anything away from them. Not that I’ve always followed my own advice. I remember one time, we all thought we were going to be fired, because Speed 2 and Titanic cost so much money. The head of my department had just been fired, and his replacement brought in a producer, who had a project with us. He said, “We have to start in eight weeks because the actors are coming off a TV show, and we have to do it in only 45 days because they have to go back to the TV show.” And I said, “So we have eight weeks of prep, and you want to shoot in Texas, New York, London and an ice field in Alaska ... and in L.A. And you also want to build an alien spaceship, to scale, in Alaska.” And I looked at the new guy, who I thought was about to fire me, and said, “With all due respect, we need to get a real producer in here. Because what this guy is saying is impossible.” The next day, the director, who’s a big shot, came in to make peace. And in the end, we figured out a way to get everything they wanted. But without having to go to Texas, because we knew we could get that in Los Angeles. And we didn’t have to shoot in an ice field in Alaska, because we know there’s a crew in Vancouver and we can go up to Whistler and shoot there. And we knew that instead of going to London, that we could shoot most of the interiors here and then go there and use a double to create a really cool shot. We pulled off everything and guess what? There wasn’t anything that the director and producer wanted that they didn’t get. We just did it in a way that was smart. I’m usually more diplomatic than that. That was just a situation where it was like, “I’m getting fired, so you’re an idiot.” [laughs] I never thought I’d last long enough to be one of the old guys in the business; I always thought I was one of the kids. But now I know when to go to Prague, to Budapest, to Bucharest, and when to go to Prague, to Budapest, to Bucharest, and when to go to Prague, to Budapest, to Bucharest, and when to go to Prague, to Budapest, to Bucharest, and when to go to Prague, to Budapest, to Bucharest.
Bulgaria. Each place offers a different thing. I know what to do in France and what not to do in France. I know what to do in Spain, who to call and who not to call. I know that if I'm going to shoot in Thailand or Hong Kong, this is the one guy to call. I know that you don't know from experience, these are the people who can achieve what you want there. And that's what I'm offering up to directors and to other producers. If I was just a producer, I would have only one project at a time. I've had periods where I'm overseeing four or five movies in production at one time ... and I only deal with the problems. It's essentially crisis management. Every day. It's kind of like A Serious Man, where at the end of the day, you go, "God, I understand this is a test. What have I done wrong for you to test me so much? Isn't there someone else you can test?" But in the end, you go see the movie, you're proud of it. Whether it makes money or not, you feel like you've accomplished something. It's important to remember that a smooth production does not guarantee a good film.

Well, within the context of the Producers Guild, one of the things you've accomplished has been getting PGA Green off the ground....

Originally, there was a group we founded called the Green Production Alliance, which was made up of representatives of the major studios, min-major, and some networks. There were maybe 40 or 50 people. And we said, "It's a shame that the people who are going to take care of everything and you just have to let it go. If you're going to shoot in Thailand or Hong Kong, this is the one guy to call. I know what to do in Spain, who to call and who not to call. I know that I'm going to shoot in Thailand or Hong Kong, this is the one guy to call. I know that you don't know from experience, these are the people who can achieve what you want there. And that's what I'm offering up to directors and to other producers. If I was just a producer, I would have only one project at a time. I've had periods where I'm overseeing four or five movies in production at one time ... and I only deal with the problems. It's essentially crisis management. Every day. It's kind of like A Serious Man, where at the end of the day, you go, "God, I understand this is a test. What have I done wrong for you to test me so much? Isn't there someone else you can test?" But in the end, you go see the movie, you're proud of it. Whether it makes money or not, you feel like you've accomplished something. It's important to remember that a smooth production does not guarantee a good film....

All you can do is, from our experience, keep moving ahead and try not to make the same mistake twice.
The next time someone suggests that the Producers Guild Awards are a less-than-accurate predictor of the Academy Awards, you tell them: You should have been at the Palladium.

As Mark Harris observed in New York magazine (in an excellent article on the contemporary Hollywood circus that is awards season), "As the usual suspects gather for the next night’s Producers Guild Awards at the Hollywood Palladium, gossip is that … Avatar is a shoo-in. Nobody doubts this. And then — nothing more gratifying can happen during Oscar season — everybody turns out to be wrong."

In the big picture, as it turns out, the Guild wasn’t wrong, predicting the Academy’s pick for the third consecutive year, and in an increased field of 10 nominees, no less. But no one who was there in that room, for that electric moment when Oscar-winner-to-be Jeff Bridges announced The Hurt Locker as the winner of the Darryl F. Zanuck Award, can doubt that it represented a watershed in the film’s triumphant awards season run.

Producer and director Kathryn Bigelow’s acceptance speech was only the climax to a terrifically entertaining evening, delivered by Awards Chairs David Friendly and Laurence Mark in a tight two-hour package that was replete with memorable moments. Neil Patrick Harris offered a thoughtful meditation on the producing genius — and kissing style — of Vanguard Award recipient Joss Whedon. Tom Hanks and Tim Allen tried their hardest to one-up each other in a freewheeling tribute to David O. Selznick Achievement Award honoree John Lasseter. Pixar occasioned two of the evening’s most powerful moments, as well, in Sarah McLachlan’s aching performance of “When She Loved Me” from Toy Story 2, and the heartfelt acceptance speech of Up producer Jonas Rivera, in which he reflected on the film as a tribute to his grandparents.

In a change from routine, attendees enjoyed the awards show prior to the Wolfgang Puck–catered dinner — a much-appreciated denouement to the high drama of the evening — giving everyone plenty of time to mingle, congratulate the night’s winners, or simply take in the contemporary art deco splendor of the storied Hollywood venue. Not every awards show gets to end with a potentially historic upset, but this one did … and it’s a good bet that the 1,200 guests in attendance will remember that moment for a long time.
6. Presenter Jane Lynch.
7. Producers Guild Awards Chair Laurence Mark with Milestone Award honorees Amy Pascal and Michael Lynton.
8. Producers Guild Awards Chair David Friendly.
9. Vanguard Award presenter Neil Patrick Harris.
11. Director-producer Lori McCreary with producing partner Morgan Freeman.
13. Stanley Kramer Award honoree Lee Daniels with presenter Mo’Nique and Precious actress Quinshay Powell.
14. Ron Howard receives grooming tips from PGA Board member Brian Grazer.
15. Avatar producers Jon Landau and James Cameron.
17. Vanguard Award honoree Joss Whedon.
18. Presenter Lisa Kudrow.
20. Will Smith presents the Milestone Award to Sony’s Amy Pascal and Michael Lynton.
21. Inglourious Basterds producer Lawrence Bender with fellow PGA member Harvey Weinstein.
22. Greg Kinnear opens the show.
23. Inglourious Basterds Quentin Tarantino and Christoph Waltz.
There’s a lot of talk going on about being green, whether it’s easy (contrary to what Kermit says, it can be easy), cost-effective, or even necessary.

The PGA Green Committee isn’t about inefficient, endless discussion, it’s about action. There is no debate, really — it’s imperative to be proactive, both as individuals and as an industry, in reducing our negative effect on the environment.

Marshall Herskovitz, the PGA’s President, and one of the most vocal and concerned producers, says this: “It’s time we all accept it — sustainable energy practices are no longer a choice,” insisting, “the future of our industry and planet depends upon all citizens and companies taking responsibility for their contribution to carbon in the atmosphere.”

How can we do that?

PGA Green is here to help you answer that precise question. Created and overseen by some of the PGA’s most impressive, passionate and influential members (on the West Coast: Chairs Fred Baron and Kathleen Courtney and Co-chair Amanda Scarano Carter; on the East Coast: Chairs Fred Baron and Kathleen Courtney and Co-Chair Katie Carter), the committee is dedicated to providing the entertainment industry with the resources to be environmentally sustainable in all areas of production.

Mari Jo Winkler says, “We have seen tremendous change and progress in the growing movement to promote sustainability within our membership and the industry at large. Our goal is to work together on both coasts to continue to lead by example and carry on the quest to ‘green’ the industry.”

Education is pivotal to PGA Green’s mission. Our website, PGAgreen.org, has a plethora of materials, from our “EZ Green” tips for production and post, to the Best Practices guides from major studios, to vendor lists, factoids, and “Stories From the Trenches,” where you can read about the eco-experiences of your colleagues. We are constantly updating the site with new content.

But we’re not just a website! Our reach extends much farther — we want to assist all sides of production, no matter the project or the budget. Kathleen Courtney explains, “While the major studios currently have the infrastructure to support greening their productions, we want to be sure that independents and new media also have easy access to necessary and helpful information.”

To tackle that issue, the PGA Green National Committee has developed the Green Outreach program (GO). Volunteers are contacting independent productions at the beginning of prep to supply green tips and direct them to the helpful information on PGAgreen.org. Once the project is finished, we follow up with a call to see what eco-efforts were made, what worked and what didn’t. Production team members are encouraged to share and post their stories and knowledge on the website to inspire others in our industry. We also request a list of their eco-friendly vendors in order to increase the international, interactive Green Vendor database (also on the website). “This is a great way to increase our knowledge exponentially, both in quantity and quality,” says Courtney.

In addition to the GO calls, another priority for the PGA Green National Committee is to attack the entertainment industry’s monster footprint: recycling box for unwanted screeners, dailies or DVDs. We are contacting independent productions at the beginning of prep to supply green tips and direct them to the helpful information on PGAgreen.org. Once the project is finished, we follow up with a call to see what eco-efforts were made, what worked and what didn’t. Production team members are encouraged to share and post their stories and knowledge on the website to inspire others in our industry. We also request a list of their eco-friendly vendors in order to increase the international, interactive Green Vendor database (also on the website). “This is a great way to increase our knowledge exponentially, both in quantity and quality,” says Courtney.

Associate Commissioner of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Film Theater & Broadcasting, Juliane Cho introduces GOING GREEN IN FILM PRODUCTION, Feb. 8, 2010, and welcomes the site producers Carol Cuddy look on.
recommend that you scratch up the back of the screeners, and we’ll take care of the rest.

• **Green Seminars:** Planned throughout the year on both coasts. East and West past and future seminars include Recycling on the Set, information about biodiesel, the basics of Green Production 201, and more.

• **Green Screening Series:** We’re seeking film and TV projects with environmental themes to screen for the PGA membership.

• **Green Events Calendar** on PGAgreen.org: Our aim is to post all eco-themed events to our online calendar. It doesn’t matter which region you call home — send any event!

• **Eco-articles** will appear in every upcoming issue of *Produced by* and *The Networker*, highlighting new technologies, spotlighting vendors, sharing tips and trends, and showcasing producers and projects utilizing environmentally-sustainable procedures.

• **Earth Day/Week/Month Activities:** Plans are underway for an April 2010 PGA East panel discussion, “Going Green in Film Production: Taking a Look at Bigger, Bolder Steps in Greening Your Set.” Check in with the PGAgreen.org calendar for more info.

Committee volunteers are also going outside of the industry to help with community projects, like Habitat for Humanity. Last November, 40 PGA members gave up their Saturday, trading their producer hats for construction helmets and safety goggles. They assisted in the construction of two housing complexes in Los Angeles as part of Habitat for Humanity’s “Green Build,” which sets out to assemble affordable housing using environmentally-friendly materials and practices. (Who knew that blown-in insulation could be made from recycled denim?)

While some producers wielded hammers, additional volunteers brandished cameras and production skills to create a short documentary about the event, which was sponsored by Banner Capital and Reel Chef Catering, and supported by several generous vendors. The production was, of course, eco’d up! A solar-powered production truck and recycling bins were on set, recording and post were digital, coffee was sipped from mugs rather than paper cups, and many participants carpooled. Executive producer of the doc, Dale Roy Robinson, proclaims, “It definitely takes both more thought and effort to make a production green,” adding, “as self-respecting producers, I don’t think we can use either as a valid excuse not to do it.”

Neither can we use the “bottom line” as an excuse anymore. “Everyone in the entertainment industry — like with every other industry — worries about the bottom line,” adds Herskovitz. “It takes courage and foresight to understand that an investment now in our energy future will not only help save the planet, but within a short time, will help the bottom line of any company.”

The answers and solutions are out there. PGA Green is here to help — and we need YOU! Please contact us at pgagreen@gmail.com to join us, get involved and to send ideas for events, seminars or screenings! But even with your help, the committee can only do so much. As our Guild President says, “This is the moment we need large media companies that dominate the entertainment landscape to commit themselves to a sustainable future.” And it all starts with … you!

“It’s time we all accept it — sustainable energy practices are no longer a choice, but a necessity.”

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“...it’s time we all accept it — sustainable energy practices are no longer a choice, but a necessity.”

To learn more about how you can get involved with PGA Green, please e-mail pgagreen@gmail.com
When all is said and done, it always boils down to one thing. The one common denominator in all production — whether it is a studio tentpole movie, a low-budget independent film, new media or your favorite episodic TV show — TRASH. Whatever you’re shooting, whatever your location, trash will be with you through development, pre-production, production and post.

Major studios and more than a few production companies and producers have created Sustainability Departments with the goal to reduce the carbon footprint of a production. However, trash was always part of the equation and deemed to be an unavoidable nuisance, one to be hauled away and discarded to some unknown location. Unavoidable? Absolutely, but there are measures we can take now to break the chain of the “cradle to grave” approach to our trash — where sets are built, destroyed and dumped. Although set materials are often the largest component of any given production’s waste, there is also (to name a few) office supplies, props, paints, and paper, paper, paper.

Zero waste or near-zero waste is a philosophy that strives to eliminate waste altogether. It’s not simply a principle of “no trash,” but a belief that materials can be recycled or repurposed back into resources to be used again and again by diverting waste from landfills and focusing on the four tenets of zero waste:

Lisa Day, Fox Filmed Entertainment’s Associate Director, Energy Initiative, states, “The first goal is obviously to reduce the amount of waste being generated, either through eliminating materials or by switching to more efficient means of doing things.”

Waste management or zero waste management now becomes resource management where recycling is maximized and waste is minimized. Start by looking at the end result and proceed in reverse. Waste diversion and disposal should be considered at the beginning of prep — when designs are being implemented, furniture purchased, sets dressed and materials purchased.
Displaying a savings in carting expenses and environmental benefit, but now there is trash being eliminated (an obvious personal reusable water bottles to the sustainability efforts. When a company to examine ways to offset the financial be costly — but do we have to see “red” line.

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ductions or local non-profits to pick
take extra time, both during construc-
tions. For further information, please refer to the “Vendors” section of PGA Green.org.

During the budgeting process, Day cautions producers to “recognize that diverting materials from a film will take extra time, both during construc-
tion and, more importantly, during wrap. Add several days to allow for disassembly and, for either other pro-
ductions or local non-profits to pick up materials being reused or donated.”

Reducing the waste stream on productions with the least amount of disruption and financial cost is a great challenge for producers who are often asked to follow mandated sustainable practices while also managing the bot-
tom line.

Maintaining green momentum can be costly — but do we have to see “red” to go green? Producers are encouraged to examine ways to offset the financial impact by looking at other cost-saving sustainability efforts. When a company bans plastic water bottles and provides personal reusable water bottles to the entire crew (off and on set), not only is trash being eliminated (an obvious environmental benefit), but now there is a savings in carting expenses and the expense of purchasing cases of plastic water bottles. A show with an average shooting crew of 150, plus the myriad of off-set departments necessary to produce a film could purchase more than 120 cases of water bottles per week. Quick math tells us that adds up to 4,880 bottles of water at a cost of more than $1,000 per week!

In 2008, during the production of Twentieth Century Fox’s Wolverine: X-Men Origins (shot on location in New Zealand), four departments deemed to have the most significant waste were monitored and opportunities were identified for waste management. The departments tracked were the production office, art, special effects and construction.

From December 2007 through March 2008, approxi-
mately 670 tonnes of waste was produced across these four departments. From this, an estimated 615 tonnes was diverted from the landfill through reuse and recycling, resulting in an outstanding 92% diversion rate. In addition to reducing waste, another added benefit to waste management on Wolverine was a significant savings to the production, as the cost for recy-
cling was considerably cheaper than disposing of waste to landfill.

Zero waste management continues through materials and production to catering and craft service. A critical step in reducing the volume of garbage needlessly sent to landfills for disposal is compost posting. Composting turns organic waste into valuable resources. On the feature film Fair Game, executive producer Mari Jo Winkler (Chair, PGA Green National Committee) had the caterers and craft service compost all compostable foodware products and food waste; it was ultimately turned into organic fertilizer.

Conserve energy and unplug appliances, lamps, comput-
er, chargers, anything plugged in and not in use. All purchases should be done selectively. Purchase for zero waste — look for minimal packag-
ing, local, organic and non-toxic products.

Fox’s Day starts with construc-
tion, suggesting, “Ask the construc-
tion coordinators to think about how they can construct sets either to re-use materials from other produ-
tions, or to reduce the amount of materials being used. Also, ask them to consider more environ-
mentally-friendly materials — e.g., reclaimed or salvaged wood, fiberboard made from recycled materials, wood alternatives such as bamboo or sorghum, “manu-
factured” woods such as parallam beams, and locally sourced woods instead of tropical hardwoods like lasan. When building sets, use screws instead of nails and adhesives so that sets can be more easily dismantled.”

Change the rules, minimize environmental impact, exchange information for new and existing resources that can be used on a day-to-day basis.

The road to zero waste:

REDUCE, REUSE, REPURPOSE AND RECYCLE.

Dana Kaszynkoff is the Vice Chair of PGA East, the Co-chair of the Community Action Committee, and a mem-
ber of PGA Green Committee East.
You've completed your most recent project. It was a big success. You came in under budget. You got great box office. Critical acclaim. Or maybe your show got the highest ratings ever. Good for you.

But after you wrapped ... and the last prints or tapes were shipped and out the door ... what did you leave behind? Was it piles of DVDs or tape dubs that will now have to be destroyed? Was it chemical and film waste from developing screener prints?

Well, there are other ways to get the job done that help both the environment and your bottom line.

Why care about going green on your production? Why does it matter? We work in an industry on the cutting edge, and being green is now a trend. It is where we are headed in the United States and around the world, as sustainability and other environmental issues become topics of political debate and public action.

The technology now exists to enable you to create a complete digital workflow, from picture capture through post-production. Digital post has been developing for years. And as technology continues to advance on the production side, more and more TV shows, documentaries, and even feature films are being shot on digital camera platforms.

They decided to look at what it would take to become a green company first, and deal with effects on the bottom line second.

Jeff has been using digital files for post since 2003, when he first saw the benefits of converting from Telecine to conforming HD (high-definition) files at the beginning of the post process for the movie *21 Grams*. This eliminated the need for processing and printing copies of the film for daily screenings, and he’s never looked back. Advances in HD technology have made the quality of the image strong enough to stand up to the scrutiny of every edit and screening. Not having to go through the chemical processes and printing every time a cut has to be screened is a great benefit for the environment. An HD projector shows the HD file instead, without the need to record, use, and eventually dispose of even a single piece of tape stock.

In the past, the costs of conforming a preview cut could be as high as $25,000–$30,000 for each of five to six cuts per movie. Now there are some costs for color grading, but the conform is gone, and there is less of a need to rely on third-party film lab companies.

Dailies are distributed for screening digitally as well. Focus works with a company called PIX to digitize their cuts, which are then posted and distributed securely to all necessary parties. Jeff says this has saved him an entire budget line item, and tens of thousands of dollars per project in having to lay off DVDs. Not included in these savings is the cost of shipping those cuts to various parts of the world. With the current digital system, executives, producers, costume and art departments, as well as publicity and marketing, can all screen dailies. Jeff believes another benefit of this approach is the stronger finished product that emerges from a more collaborative process.

The PIX system also allows for the desktop edit display...
to appear on multiple computer screens at once — in the same building, across the country, or around the world — “live” across multiple time zones. Real-time collaboration in the edit has helped to make the post-production process faster, more efficient, and more collaborative.

Jeff reminds us of the practical reasons for working digitally — that we are still in a business that is ruled by its bottom line. “If doing things in a green way was not efficient, it wouldn’t be in our workflow,” he says.

A company dealing with the issue of green production in television is Everwild Media in New York. Josh Cook is their producer/editor, as well as one of the heads of the company.

Everwild is known for producing content about environmental and wilderness topics. Josh and his partners John Hemmaway and PGA Green Committee East Co-chair Katie Carpenter, first met while working on projects dealing with wildlife and conservation issues. The desire to focus on projects about the environment brought the team together, and they decided to form their own company.

They also found they shared a desire to work at a place where they could practice what they preached. Josh had a background in the entertainment field and discovered that he wanted to do something he felt more passionate about. Josh and his partners felt driven to create a company where they could “walk their talk.” They decided to look at what it would take to become a green company first, and deal with effects on the bottom line second.

When it comes to shooting and production, Josh will work in whatever format is most efficient for the project. He appreciates the environmental advantages of shooting digitally on technology such as the RED ONE or shooting onto P2 cards instead of tape. This way, at the end of production, he will be left with just two external hard drives — one to store the footage, and a second as a backup — versus finishing a project shot on tape and having hundreds of tapes to store.

Everwild sends out screener cuts digitally by posting them securely to their site, eliminating the need for DVDs to be burned and shipped for viewing. This allows music and graphics teams to work on a cut without having to spend money to lay-off copies and have them shipped out. As Josh says, “We create a higher carbon footprint when we mail a check to a graphic designer than we do sending work to them.”

When a project is shot on tape, it will be ingested at the start of post; there will be no reason to see a tape again until the online edit and tape play out at the end.

Some of the projects that Everwild has worked on include Burning Ice for Sundance Channel. For this project, they had to share source footage with a production company in London. In the past, this would have meant having someone carrying boxes of tapes on a plane to be delivered to London. Shooting digitally allowed Everwild to clone the footage onto drives, and then ship a mere two drives overseas. Those drives could be shipped unsupervised, as they were no longer the unique, highest resolution copies of the footage.

Some television companies are going green when it comes to delivery of the final product. An enormous amount of paperwork is involved in delivering a TV program for air — tape logs, rights and clearances information, and program descriptions. Companies such as Discovery Communications have eliminated a lot of paperwork by having all of this information submitted online, through their “Producer’s Portal.” In the past, Everwild would have shipped boxes full of binders to deliver this data, and now it is just a matter of entering information into Discovery’s producers website.

Fortunately for the planet, the technology is now here that allows us to work in a way that is better for the environment. Josh quotes Al Gore, who likes to point out that now there are places “where practicality and commerce cross paths with what is most sustainable,” and reminds us that there is really “no reason not to embrace the benefits of digital technology.”

Mark Pederson is the Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder of OFFHOLLYWOOD, a full-service production company that specializes in working with the RED cameras, from picture capture through post. Recent projects include the upcoming film release, Fair Game.

OFFHOLLYWOOD has always been on the forefront of technology — they owned the very first RED cameras ever released for commercial use in the entire world. For Mark, state-of-the-art shooting entails working with the RED’s new Mysterium-X sensor, just released at the end of January, which provides greater dynamic range and sensitivity to low light.

So what lies ahead for the future of green production? Mark’s enthusiasm spills over as he talks about it. The makers of RED will launch their next generation camera, Epic, this spring. Mark describes it as the first digital camera to have “greater visual capacity than you can capture with 35 millimeter film.” As with the RED, OFFHOLLYWOOD will be the first company to own it. Mark points to the fact that more and more features, such as the recent District 9 and The Book of Eli are being shot on RED, and sees a future where the “fast-er, easier, more cost-effective” digital world will surpass the use of film.

For companies like Everwild, the future means looking down the road to advances in bandwidth and FTP sites that would allow for an entire program to be shipped digitally, without ever touching a piece of videotape.

Jeff Roth adds that as far as the issues of production go, green-thinking is here to stay. “The consciousness is out there, more so than it used to be. And if it fits into being efficient, all the better for everyone.”

So having a smaller carbon footprint will actually cost you less. Al Gore would approve.
Many producers have specific systems in place for greening their sets here in the United States. It’s like second nature to some. But what happens when your shoot goes overseas? Some countries have much more stringent ecological regulations than we do; others have none at all. To learn more, we asked several PGA members and associates to share their experiences and what they’ve learned about sustainability while producing internationally.

You’re Not in Kansas Anymore

But what about practicing environmental stewardship while filming in developing countries and extreme locations? Producer Lydia Dean Pilcher (Chair of PGA Green East) relates that in rural India, where she filmed The Darjeeling Limited, “the issues of malnutrition, disease, child labor, and clean drinking water were so dire that there was a moral imperative to prioritize these issues. In a world where billions of people live in poverty, and millions die of curable diseases, the economics of improving the environment need to be part of the conversation.”

Also, attesting to the challenge of drinking water is Stephen Marinaccio, who recently served as line producer/UPM on The Stoning of Soraya M., which shot for four months in the Middle East. “We shot in the middle of nowhere. No major cities around, high desert; water was definitely an issue. The only water source for this tiny village was a wellspring that they brought down from the mountain from about a mile and a half away through aqueducts. Real aqueducts! People will fill buckets or pans with water — right where the donkeys were just drinking! To the crew, and us “Westernized” people, that wasn’t going to work for craft service. We made a deal with a water company to bring our water in. Unfortunately, five-gallon water bottles don’t exist there and we had to go with little mini-water bottles. For a recycler like myself, that was not so great. And we had to develop some sort of trash pickup because in that country they don’t really have highway cleanup programs or recycling programs. It’s hard enough just to get the local populace to throw things in the trash. It’s kind of like the Old West: ‘The desert is huge, so what does my one piece of paper mean?’ The town usually has no trash pickup because in that country they don’t really have trash pickup. So trash was an incredible issue, compounded on top of that, on any given day, we had another 50 or so extras, who usually came with their own trash. Compounded on top of that, on any given day, we had another 50 or so extras, who usually came with their own trash.

Greener Pastures

Jane Evans, Executive Vice President of Physical Production for Focus Features, found that sustainability awareness is already embedded in the culture of many European countries. She notes, “We recently shot features in Italy, Scotland and Hungary, and have a film prepping in Germany. What stands out is how different it is when you are in a country where sustainability is a part of the cultural makeup. Of course, we ask them to recycle, print double-sided, impose ‘no idling’ policies and conserve electricity, but they go far beyond that.”

In Hungary, the crew actually used bikes to commute to and from the production office for the Roman epic adventure The Eagle of the Ninth. On the Italy set of suspense thriller The American, waste was kept to a minimum, as craft service was very basic and all the leftovers were brought back to the production office at the end of the shoot day for the office crew. High costs in Italy generally keep everyone conservative in their use of resources. In addition, furniture, clothing, and other supplies were donated to earthquake-devastated areas in Abruzzo.

On a recent trip to Berlin for the upcoming action thriller Hanna, Evans was impressed with the environmental standards and waste infrastructure already in place. She observes, “It was interesting to see that after recent snowfalls, there was still a lot of ice and snow on the streets because the Germans don’t use melting salt or other melting solutions, so as not to contaminate their water supply. They clearly accept the inconveniences in their efforts to protect their environment.”

Jane was also enthused that every street corner had recycling bins and every street had a solar cell to power its parking meters. “Berlin and Italy have more to teach us,” she marvels.

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Natural Conservation
Supplies and equipment are always a concern when shooting in remote locations where everything will need to be thought of ahead of time and shipped in. But simplicity isn’t necessarily a bad thing.

While shooting the international unit of _Fair Game_ in Cairo, Jordan and Kuala Lumpur, producer Mari Jo Winkler (Chair of PGA Green Committee East) found location challenges often resulted in simpler but more creative solutions.

“The limitations in these countries really forced a simplicity, conservation, and inventiveness that served the film in a positive way. My biggest observation in these places was that we just used less. They don’t over-produce. They don’t over-bring. They would present two options for props, not 10. We have a tendency in the United States to bring more than we need because we always want to give our directors choices, and always want to be able to make changes on-the-fly, and I think there are some great things that come out of the creative process that way. However, we just did not have the resources. You had to order what you thought you were going to need, and most of the time it had to come in from somewhere else. It’s not like you could go to the equipment house and order up that bottle myself, just to show people that we were very serious about not littering.”

Low-Maintenance Crews
Foreign production shoots may have fewer amenities, but they also have less excess. Which is a good thing for your budget, as well as the environment.

Winkler notes, “I found that the local cast and crew was not as demanding as the U.S. casts and crews. Our U.S. talent had their own cars and drivers, but everyone else shared rides in minivans and took buses. There were no alternative fuels available, but then again, we didn’t have tons of vehicles. They’re not wasteful in their transportation methods. Nobody expected to be in a trailer. Nobody even expected to have craft service the way we have craft service in the United States. A bottle of water and, if they were lucky, a bag of potato chips or a candy bar was the extent of what the crew was expecting. We did feed the crew lunch, but nothing was over-ordered.”

Lost in Translation
Not all countries have the same feelings toward economic stewardship that we Americans do or understand our green terminology, which can lead to unforeseen conflicts.

Martinaccio and others on *The Stoning of Soraya M.* crew put their own practices into place, such as not printing “sides” (script pages specific to the day’s schedule). However, there were times that his efforts conflicted with the local practices. “We were in the Middle East, even further in the middle of nowhere, and I was on the edge of a cliff about 30 or 40 feet up, and I see this water bottle flung over the cliff. And we were probably about 14 seconds away from taking the shot, and I suddenly stopped everything and yelled out, ‘Who threw the bottle over the cliff?’ I was really disappointed that someone on the crew had littered. But as I came to find out, it was the police chief, who was visiting. Later, I went down and picked up that bottle myself, just to show people that we were very serious about not littering.”

The Importance of Dialogue
Sometimes the only impact your production may be able to have is the conversation you can start, and which will hopefully continue after you leave.

Winkler recalls, “In Jordan, there was a moment where I turned to the local production manager a few days before we were about to shoot and asked if there was any chance of recycling or thinking about sustainability issues on this film. And he just looked at me and said, ‘We either shoot or we recycle, but we can’t do both.’ Which means that it was just not on their radar at the time. It’s hard to tell whether they might have been more receptive if I had been able to give them more lead time and started the dialogue earlier. Which proves in all cases, even in our own country, how important it is to start a dialogue about sustainability goals early. I feel like I at least left there having had a dialogue with the production team and planting a seed for the future as they further their burgeoning film industry.”

Is Modernization Always a Good Thing, Anyway?
Before we start patting ourselves on the back for our enlightenment, it’s worth asking ourselves whether our methods are the only viable way to approach sustainability and consider what other countries might have to teach us.

When Mari Jo sat down with the local Egyptian line producer to talk about recycling, she was met with laughter. They said to not worry about the recycling because the Zabaleen would take care of it. She had no idea what this meant. It
Oregon delivers cash to you within weeks of filing
No sales tax in Oregon
No requirement to set up an Oregon Business

Oregon has what you need to make your next project better and less expensive!

Ask the Experts
To wrap things up, we sat down with environmental consultant Matt Cooper of CTP Media Partners, Inc., to ask what producers can do to carry over their green initiatives while filming overseas.

“One of the things that is really important in developing an environmental program is that it needs to be flexible, practical and give people tools. Each country and landscape has different issues. It’s important to identify what the environmental policies of that local studio are, and then work out a game plan for where you are filming. Learn what technologies they have in place to reduce waste and paper use. Establish recycling programs. Get the crew on board, the department heads on board, the producer and line producer on board. Hire a consulting company to establish programs you can implement, then set policies to implement them correctly. But most importantly, people must have the goal of wanting those things. Once filming starts, the focus becomes the schedule and budget and all the logistics of making a movie. So think of things earlier.” And Cooper has some good news concerning budget too: “We find that if you do it in a smart way, there can be cost benefits.”

Kim Van Hoven is a member of PGA Green Committee West.

“Dollar for dollar, Oregon is the best value in the entertainment industry.”

Dean Devlin
Executive Producer, LEVERAGE

 wasn’t until she got back home and saw Mai Iskander’s documentary Garbage Dreams, about Egypt’s “Garbage People,” that she realized how devastating the attempt to modernize Cairo’s recycling program has been on their community. “I was floored and relieved. At first, I thought it was just this local production person trying to appease me saying, ‘Don’t worry, don’t worry,’ and kind of laughing at me and going, ‘That’s nice that you want to recycle, but that’s not what we do here.’ I found out that they actually have a whole community which has sustained itself by collecting garbage. That was a big eye-opener for me. These are generations of families who have actually been collecting the garbage in Cairo and recycling it, reselling it, and re-using it. And that’s how they sustain themselves. They would sort the bottles, paper, etc., and then re-sell it to companies that use the recycled waste. There’s a big debate in Cairo because the Zabaleen have lost their one-and-only industry to modernized recycling programs. This particular facility said, ‘No, we’re not going to collect your recyclables, but don’t worry,’ because they were still allowing the Zabaleen to come and get it. None of them wanted to see the Zabaleen lose their livelihood. About 80% of the garbage was recycled under the Zabaleen but now it’s a lot less with the corporate recycler, because they’re not trained as well as the Zabaleen. And the corporation also uses trucks to take it out of the city. So it really raises the question, is modernization for some of these countries really the answer?”
It’s no secret that the film industry requires an enormous amount of energy. Perhaps most extravagant is the amount that’s needed to keep the sets beautifully lit, the base camp functioning properly and the avalanche of power required to move people and resources around. The good news is that help is on the way in the form of new technologies and fuel, resulting in significantly greener productions. Some of the biggest game-changers are solar panels, biofuels and a revolution in LED (Light Emitting Diode) lighting that’s film-friendly and requires only a fraction of the energy.

Although the occasional panel is cropping up on film sets here and there, Warner Bros. Valentine’s Day took a commitment to solar to a new level. An impressive solar energy system was sourced and incorporated under the watchful eye of Executive Producer Diana Pokorny along with Jon Romano, Sustainable Production Manager for Warner Bros. Pictures, and Shelley Billik, VP of Environmental Initiatives. A first-of-its-kind “hybrid” base-camp power system furnished by Pure Power Distribution and affixed to mobile trailers and the roofs of some of the Star Waggons trailers combined solar-powered and biodiesel generators, and the savings were substantial. According to Romano, “The production saw a 35% decrease in the amount of fuel required to power the set, a savings of 30–36 gallons per day.” Multiply that over the course of the 54-day shoot and you can immediately see an economic and environmental savings. What’s more, these impressive-looking panels appeared as a sort of mascot during the shoot, helping to reinforce the need for environmental action throughout the production. Pokorny loved being a central part of this initiative, which she says, “really got the rest of the production excited and motivated.” Warner Bros. and Shelley Billik have been instrumental in instituting sustainability efforts that include recycling, composting and alternative fuels, such as a permanent array of solar panels

Fueling the Future of Film

Alternative Power and Technologies

by Chris Perera
provided a 1250KW (14,000 amps) generator populated neighborhoods. Cat Entertainment Staten Island over bridges and through densely fuel that would have had to be trucked in from the stage. This fuel replaced the fossil Metro Energy, is a third-generation New York local one step further, the fuel provider, the team selected a B20 biodiesel processed production. With the support and cooperation fuel options that could be implemented achieve this goal. Production manager Denise Pinkley, with the help of Green Media Solutions, looked into viable alternative fuel options that could be implemented during filming without interfering with production. With the support and cooperation of the transportation and lighting crews, the team selected a B20 biodiesel processed from locally (interstate) grown soy. To take local one step further, the fuel provider, Metro Energy, is a third-generation New York City-based supplier, located less than a mile from the stage. This fuel replaced the fossil fuel that would have had to be trucked in from Staten Island over bridges and through densely populated neighborhoods. Cat Entertainment provided a 1250KW (14,000 amps) generator that was biodiesel compatible. Over the course of the five-week filming schedule in Brooklyn, each generator ran an estimated 10-16 hours a day, burning 20-75 gallons per hour. A total of 3,690 gallons were purchased for the stage generators during the final five weeks of production at an average cost of $2.20 per gallon, a 27-cents savings over standard diesel fuel and a total savings of almost $1,000 over the course of the final phase of the production. This shift to biodiesel and the good planning on behalf of the H’s Complicated production resulted in significant reductions in costs to deliver the fuel as well as saving carbon emissions to the environment while the stages were in use. To take a page from Valentine’s Day, the production managed to secure the use of a solar powered production trailer for use on location while filming on the West Coast. They also brought in level III and IV generators which are the most efficient currently available. Shot at the River Road Entertainment and Participant Media’s Fair Game, directed by Doug Liman, is another example of a recent independent film making great use of alternative fuel technology by using B5 biodiesel to run their base-camp generator along with their set-dressing trucks and rigging trucks. The film, which was shot mostly on location in New York City, was executive producer and Chair of PGA East Matt Jo Winkler’s second experience using biofuels. “Based on the success of my previous experience using biofuels in terms of reductions in carbon emissions and costs, there is no turning back for me. I will always seek alternative energy sources, and if solar were available here, I would use it!” Winkler and her transportation captain chose a reclaimed biofuel from Tri-State Biodiesel, a company that collects cooking oil from 2,000 different restaurants in and around New York City to create a biofuel blend. In addition to this, they made sure that they set up a method of "tying in" to each location’s power source wherever possible, something they accomplished for eight of the 31 scheduled filming days. Winkler states, "Our electric department was conscious from the beginning of our desire to reduce energy use and they worked really hard to conserve, use more energy-efficient equipment, and burn as little fuel as possible wherever we went." For all other trucks and the main unit generator, a significantly cleaner ultra-low sulfur diesel was used. The use of ultra-low sulfur diesel has recently been mandated by the city of New York through legislation and most diesel sold now on the East Coast is ultra-low sulfur. Fair Game also harnessed good common sense by instituting a non-idling policy for drivers, which not only reduces carbon dioxide output, but also makes the air around the set significantly cleaner to breathe. While solar power and biofuel technology are important steps in the right direction, the most power-hungry feature on any set, from a small independent project to a big-budget feature film, is the massive amount of lights needed to make the shots look beautiful. Thankfully, LED technology is coming to the rescue and is being used everywhere; from on-the-fly electronic news gathering (ENG) to the biggest live events in the world, including the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies and the impressive Super Bowl XLIV Halftime Show. Paramount’s Morning Glory, directed by Roger Michell, is an example of a recent film that successfully harnesses the use of LED lights. The electric department did so with the added challenge of having to light a set within a set, incorporating tungsten and florescent lighting. Despite these added lighting requirements, it was still able to achieve a savings of more than 50% in energy costs. That’s because LED technology, according to Paul Kobelja of PRG (the company responsible for lighting big events including the Olympics and the Super Bowl Halftime Show), “consumes 70% less energy than traditional lighting while giving off 80% less heat.” In addition to the direct energy savings, the sets populated with LEDs also require significantly less air conditioning, another added bonus. Kobelja is especially pleased that “The technical arguments for not using LEDs are getting smaller and smaller as there are products on the market that provide photographically accurate light,” something that LEDs were not known for until recently. Add that to the fact that they are generally compact, stackable and easy to set up and quick to strike (you don’t have to wait an hour for them to cool down), you’ve got even more arguments to go with the technology. While there are a number of great products on the market, one example of the photographically accurate LED light is Kelvin Tile by Gekko technologies. The stackable Nila light is perfect for a variety of set needs, including “freewheeling” mobile shots where an actor may actually be driving the car. A bunch of these lights can be attached to the hood of a car and plugged into its cigarette lighter, with no messy generator needed! In fact, DP Roberto Schaefer claims that the results worked perfectly for all the driving shots on the James Bond film, Quantum of Solace. And apparently, the sets are more comfortable, as well. Jim Sanfilippo of Nila maintains that “It’s good for the actors … normally you stand in front of a light beam and feel the heat coming off of it, and with our system you don’t get that.” Kobelja also contends that LEDs are especially suited for underwater filming where lights need to be brighter and batteries compact. Energy is the one thing a film production will always need, so reducing carbon emissions through alternative fuels and fuel-saving technologies will make a big difference in lowering costs and helping the environment at the same time, a win-win situation.

Chris Perera is a member of the PGA Green Committee East.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTENT: The Movie

With the abundance of “green” content available, one of the challenges for documentary filmmakers is to successfully convey the importance of protecting the environment in an entertaining way. To that end, I spoke to producers and directors of The Cove, Oceans, Dirt! The Movie and Fuel. Whether or not you agree or disagree with the content isn’t as important as getting a conversation started. Here is a glimpse into how these films were produced, distributed and kept “green” throughout the process.

“This is an Act of Love, an act for the ocean. This is an environmental film that is going to hopefully help people change the way they see the ocean.”

—Fisher Stevens

The journey to The Cove started with a conversation between friends, producer Paula DuPré Pesmen and director Louie Psihoyos. DuPré Pesmen had moved back to Boulder to raise a family after taking a sabbatical from a successful career in the film business and had founded her own non-profit “There With Care” (www.therewithcare.org). Psihoyos, one of the top photographers in the world, wanted to start a non-profit and make a film about the infractions against the ocean. His passion for the environment led to him and executive producer Jim Clark founding the non-profit Oceanic Preservation Society (OPS) (www.opsociety.org) and eventually to The Cove.

It was Ric O’Barry that introduced Psihoyos to the town of Taiji and its secret dolphin slaughter. To expose that secret, most of the work out in the field transpired under the cover of darkness in the middle of the night. There would be many obstacles to overcome in the making of this film, but the most crucial challenges proved to be avoiding being arrested or killed and keeping the footage secure.

Fisher Stevens was asked to join the project by Clark, after viewing some of the footage, he saw the possibilities and jumped right in. Stevens envisioned the film as a theatrical release — “a thriller, not a nature film” — where the audience could sit in the cinema and be on the edge of their seats. Stevens and DuPré Pesmen are well aware of the challenges implicit in combining entertainment and information, and no doubt, the thriller aspects of The Cove helped to get the film seen. Stevens found getting distribution was “a bit of a nightmare” until Norman and Lynn Lear offered to have a screening at their home and invited Jeff Skoll of Participant Media and Michael Burns of Lionsgate. “Once Michael Burns and Jeff Skoll got onboard,” notes Stevens, “it made the deal much easier to make with Roadside Attractions.”

As much as possible, the team tried to be green. Psihoyos even turned the studio as green as he could as soon as he could, in order to start offsetting the carbon debt. “We installed 117 solar panels (a 23-kilowatt system) on our headquarters and I bought fully electric cars for local transportation, a Zenn NEV (Neighborhood Electric Vehicle) and a Toyota RAV EV, which goes 80 mph and about 120 miles on a single charge — and all powered from the sun.” They also bought organic food at local farmers’ markets and did not use plastic water bottles.

Stevens and DuPré Pesmen hope that after people see the film, “they’ll look at the ocean differently, actually really look and open their eyes. Change their diet. Not go to Sea World. Send money to Ric O’Barry’s organization and OPS. Keep the ocean clean and dolphins free. Look at animals a little differently.”

The question we can all ask ourselves is, “What did you do?” The Cove has since received many awards and was the 2009 winner of the PGA Producer of the Year Award for Documentary Theatrical Motion Picture, as well as the winner of the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature.

“Cinema is an artistic spectacle, a source of emotion, but it can also function as a weapon to serve and defend the most noble causes, not the least of which is nature.”

—Jacques Perrin

The ocean covers more than 70% of the earth’s surface.

Oceans, a film by veteran actor, director and producer, Jacques Perrin (Winged Migration), co-wrote and co-directed the film with Jacques Chausard, opened in Paris on January 27, 2010. It took three years of planning and four years of filming, spread over 70 expeditions to 54 shooting locations. PGA member Antoine de Cazotte was the U.S. production supervisor on the film. He covered shoots from the Bering Strait to Venezuela, to shoots in the Gulf of Mexico, Florida, Bahamas and Delaware. When we sat down to talk about the film, he had just returned from attending the premiere in Paris.

“The film Oceans is a challenge for the public to see the world from the fishes’ POVs. We tried to be as close as possible to feel their emotions.” According to de Cazotte, Oceans is the most expressive documentary ever made. Even with funding in place, there were many challenges the team would encounter over the course of production. First and foremost, the mandate was to capture on film the mammals and marine life in their natural habitat. The route to get there was just as challenging.

Documentary Theatrical Motion Picture, as well as the win-
ner of the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature.
natural state without disturbing their environment. Respect for the ocean and its inhabitants was the primary concern. The crew monitored its noise levels, used sailboats when appropriate, and even created special equipment for underwater filming: tanks that allowed the filmmakers to breathe without expelling telltale and potentially alarming bubbles into the ocean, permitting camera crews to remain submerged for much longer periods of time and to fade into their aquatic surroundings.

The team followed the rules of the Marine Mammal Act and worked closely with marine biologists at the top of their field. Obtaining the trust and respect of the marine biologists proved to be a central ingredient of the project’s success. De Cazotte convinced the biologists of the importance of reaching out to the world through the film. “Working side by side gave us the same goal: to preserve the ocean and educate the public,” confirms de Cazotte. “They had the knowledge; we had the tools of communication.”

One of the biggest challenges for de Cazotte’s team was cameraman David Reichert’s effort to get a complete shot of a 130-foot blue whale from head to tail. “It took 27 weeks to get an instance, the spinner dolphins in Costa Rica at sunset,” he recalls, “and a mother leopard seal introducing her pup to the ocean for the first time in Antarctica.”

It was a life-changing experience for the producer. “We have taken so much and given so little,” he states. “The only thing man does to the ocean is pollute it with trash which goes into the rivers and eventually, ends up in the ocean. The ocean is begging for mercy.”

Oceans opens in the United States on April 22, 2010. DisneyNature will contribute 20 cents per ticket to the Nature Conservancy’s Adopt a Reef Program in the Bahamas for everyone who sees Oceans during the film’s opening week (April 22-28) with a minimum of $100,000 pledged to this program. For more information, go to www.disney.go.com/oceans.

“Dirt feeds us and gives us shelter. Dirt holds and cleans our water. Dirt heals us and makes us beautiful. Dirt regulates the earth’s climate.” –Gene Rosow

It might seem like dirt is everywhere, with plenty to go around forever, but it’s actually disappearing fast. How do you get the message out that humans are destroying dirt? How do you make it entertaining?

Gene Rosow directed and produced Dirt! The Movie with Bill Benenson. The pair took on this challenge after being inspired by William Bryant Logan’s book, Dirt: The Ewctastic Skin of the Earth. The film was six years in the making and featured more than 20 locations — from Riders Island in NYC, where a select group of prisoners were given the chance to learn about dirt, to Kenya for an interview with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai. They met with quite an eclectic group. Through trial and error, they came up with an idea: Why not give dirt a point of view, a voice? They’d accomplish this by the clever use of animation and a little humor. Another challenge was to not leave the audience with a sense of hopelessness but rather to inspire them. Benenson said, “We try to give people hope and empower them to see the possibilities and their potential to change things.”

PGA member Lisa Yesko was the post producer on the film. “Shooting and posting in digital formats is one inherent way of making a smaller carbon footprint than 16mm or 35mm film with the accompanying chemical processing and waste,” she notes. Other ways they “greened” the production included the constant awareness of reusing/repurposing, recycling, carpooling and bicycling to the editing room and facilities whenever possible. From the brown “plain wrap” DVD sleeves made out of recycled paper to eco-friendly business cards, this team was green!

Dirt! The Movie has been invited to screen at many venues, from the Sundance Film Festival to the European Commission’s headquarter’s in Brussels. In September of 2009, Rosow showed the film in Osnabruck, Germany, as part of a Commission-sponsored soil awareness event. The film has also been shown in European Parliament. As for Community Screenings, there will be 60 ITVS/PBS Community Cinema Free Screenings around the country. Rosow, apart from film-making, holds a Ph.D. in history from UC Berkeley, where he also taught and spent a year of post-graduate work at USC in ecology, biochemistry, cellular physiology and parasitology.

His conclusion: “Dirt is very much alive.”

Dirt! The Movie will broadcast at 10 p.m. on April 20, 2010, on Independent Lens as part of PBS’s 40th AnniversaryEarth Day programs (check local listings). For more information, go to their website (www.dirtthemovie.org).

“Fuel shows us the way out of the mess we’re in by explaining how to replace every drop of oil we now use, while creating green jobs and keeping our money here at home. The film tries not to dwell on the negative, but instead shows us the easy solutions already within our reach.”

–Rebecca Harrell Tickell

It started out as a two-month road trip and turned into an 11-year journey! In 1997, Josh Tickell set out across America in a diesel Winnebago fueled by used vegetable oil from fast-food restaurants. Behind the wheel of the “Veggie Van,” Josh spread the word about alternative fuel made from vegetable oil called “biodiesel” (www.veggievans.org). With video camera in hand, he documented every moment of the experience. Along the way, the “Veggie Van” caught the attention of NBC’s Today Show. Rebecca Harrell Tickell happened to watch the segment; a decade later, she would meet Tickell and become a producer on Fuel. (Today, the two are married.)

Every effort was made by Tickell and Harrell Tickell to keep the production of Fuel green. They used The Sandbox, a solar-powered post and production facility in Venice, Calif., owned by Todd Sali, one of the film’s co-producers. Many members of the production team became part of a fuel cooperative on the west side of Los Angeles, buying biodiesel in bulk as a group. Whenever possible, they utilized biodiesel...
generators, recycled, sent out press kits electronically, used recycled paper and rode their bikes. When possible, they flew on Richard Branson’s Virgin Airlines, as “he is the only person that runs an airline that has an environmental commitment.” To promote the film, Tickell and Harrell Tickell drove across the country to Washington, D.C., in the “Algaeus,” a converted Prius, which they call the world’s first algae-powered plug-in electric hybrid. Their cell phones are charged by solar panels on their backpacks. For the production of the film, they received a well-deserved EMA Award.

Harrell Tickell noted that more than 1,000 people donated, volunteered and participated in making the movie. “It’s just been a huge labor of love by a community of people who are really passionate about green,” she testifies. When it came to getting the word out about the film, they were not deterred by comments that a movie about fuel would not be interesting. Determined and committed, Tickell and Harrell Tickell took the film around to distributors showing it “every single night; sometimes showing the film two or three times a day.”

For Harrell Tickell, the greatest moments have been any time they show the movie to a group of high school students. “Categorically, the response is overwhelming,” she reports. “They’re open-minded, excited, interested, engaged, and have questions about what they can do.”

“The goal: that the vision of sustainability gets out there in entertaining and fun way, causing a social shift. The philosophy of the movie, our organization and all of our work is to show that you don’t have to stop living or stop doing all the great things you love to do. There are really smart solutions to these problems and sometimes they’re the most overlooked and simple things.” –Josh Tickell

For more information about Fuel (www.thefuelfilm.com) and to find out more about what Tickell and Harrell Tickell are doing, go to their websites: www.joshtickell.com and www.rebeccatickell.com.

Karyn Benkendorfer is a member of the PGA Green Committee West.

8. Professor Miguel Altieri in Dirt!
9. Edible Schoolyard founder Alice Waters in Dirt!
10. Sustainable South Bronx founder Majora Carter in Dirt!

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I recently had the opportunity to sit down with newly-admitted PGA member Mr. Woodrow W. Clark II (who prefers the name Woody). An author, lecturer, and longtime advocate for the environment, he offers expert advice concerning renewable energy and sustainable communities. In 2007, he received the Nobel Peace Prize, along with his colleagues of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC). Woody holds a Ph.D. from the University of California (UC) Berkeley and three separate master’s degrees. During the 1980s, Woody was a successful documentary filmmaker in San Francisco; subsequently, he held a teaching and management position with the Business School at Cal State University, Hayward (now East Bay), and co-founded The Center for New Venture Alliance which led to a position with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. It was here that he became involved with the UN and the IPCC and its groundbreaking work surrounding global warming. Woody then served as the California energy crisis that began in 2000-01, and which continues today.

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with newly-admitted PGA member Mr. Woodrow W. Clark II (who prefers the name Woody). An author, lecturer, and longtime advocate for the environment, he offers expert advice concerning renewable energy and sustainable communities. In 2007, he received the Nobel Peace Prize, along with his colleagues of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC). Woody holds a Ph.D. from the University of California (UC) Berkeley and three separate master’s degrees. During the 1980s, Woody was a successful documentary filmmaker in San Francisco; subsequently, he held a teaching and management position with the Business School at Cal State University, Hayward (now East Bay), and co-founded The Center for New Venture Alliance which led to a position with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. It was here that he became involved with the UN and the IPCC and its groundbreaking work surrounding global warming. Woody then served as the California energy crisis that began in 2000-01, and which continues today.

Community College District with its goal of creating energy-independent and carbon-neutral campuses. Woody has also worked with Paramount Studios and a number of prominent organizations in Asia and Europe. As he so aptly puts it, “I’ve been involved with making the sequel to An Inconvenient Truth; I’m actually on the ground doing something to help reduce our carbon footprint, if you will, in climate and global warming.”

Can you give our PGA members some background about some of the work you’ve been doing recently, along with some suggested solutions for studios and the film industry to become more environmentally sustainable?“Let me start off with a caveat: I just became a member of the PGA in September, 2009; it’s very recent. Nonetheless, there are incredible activities and leadership from many, if not most, of the studios and producers. What I find to be so compelling, however, is how little of this is being communicated to other businesses and the wider community. The lessons learned and technologies and methods used could set the standard to what some of us are now calling ‘The Third Industrial Revolution,’ which is renewable energy-based, rather than driven by fossil fuels.

The experience of working with colleges, which are campuses, is parallel to working with studios. College campuses can have 40 to 80 buildings. Similarly, a major studio has its cluster of buildings, usually in one area, with some kind of an effort to secure and protect who comes in and out. People may not live there … but they need work areas, large spaces and food, as well as areas for transportation and parking vehicles.

“So, if you take those clusters of buildings, he continues, “what you have there is a unique opportunity. What has generally happened in the area of sustainable buildings — ‘green buildings,’ if you will — is that each individual building is made into what are called LEED (Leadership Energy Environmental Design)–certified buildings, which go all the way from the lowest level to the highest level of ‘Platinum.’ But going building-by-building does not create or serve a sustainable community, be it a campus or a studio or office buildings, shopping mall, walking streets… I can go on and on! So how do you take those clusters of buildings and look at them in a way that can be sustainable? The trick is to watch and understand the infrastructures within those buildings and between them, and how they can be integrated and flexible all at the same time.”

Woody has been approached by some of the studios to provide advice for implementing similar measures on studio lots. His initial focus is on the installation of solar panels, including sourcing financial incentives and suppliers of the technology. He also feels that the studios need to get away from individual air-conditioning units and sometimes decades-old wiring systems, all of which can lead to ineffective energy usage. He instead proposes centralized heating and cooling plants with solar systems that service clusters of buildings, much like systems currently being implemented on college campuses.

In 2004, Woody founded Clark Strategic Partners, a consulting company that assists organizations to develop sustainability and renewable energy strategies. Most recently, he advised the L.A. Department of Water and Power about how energy was actually involved with developing a third industrial revolution for well over a decade and by now, at the end of 2009/2010, two decades of that revolution was based upon renewable energy … along with efficiency and conservation that have ‘smart grids.’ Not just smart grids for central plants, but smart grids in terms of your home — how you get energy in your home, or on a studio lot, whatever — so you’re able to get real-time information to monitor water and waste and other resources. And then, finally, the need for energy storage for all the wind and solar power which the new technologies make possible.

These concepts appear in Woody’s first book, Agile Energy Systems (2004), where he suggests tools people have to get away from vast centralized energy utility grids and instead have power generated locally from renewable energy sources. “The third industrial revolution may have blossomed in Europe, but really started two decades ago in Japan. It is also in South Korea and has now spread to China. So, it’s all over the place now… We, in this country, are late and we need to get on top of this revolution immediately. The U.S.A. must regain its world leadership in innovation and entrepreneurship.”

What is the Third Industrial Revolution?“The person who coined that term is Jeremy Rifkin, an environmental economist from Washington, D.C.…” The term first appeared in his book, The European Dream, in 2006. That book specifically talked about how Europe was actually involved with developing a third industrial revolution for well over a decade and by now, at the end of 2009/2010, two decades of that revolution was based upon renewable energy … along with efficiency and conservation that have ‘smart grids.’ Not just smart grids for central plants, but smart grids in terms of your home — how you get energy in your home, or on a studio lot, whatever — so you’re able to get real-time information to monitor water and waste and other resources. And then, finally, the need for energy storage for all the wind and solar power which the new technologies make possible.”

Well, to start with, global warming is a catastrophe. It’s not a ‘could be,’ it’s an ‘is.’ It’s here. Baby boomers in my generation must first admit — and I’m not talking about Psychology 101 or Therapy 101 — that we screwed up. There are a lot of things we can do about it, and there are a lot of things that are being done. One thing to do is get new technologies being used.

Some of the solutions he suggests to reduce our daily energy use are walking, biking, and using public transport. Work at home. Conservation and basic, daily energy efficiency are also critically important. He suggests exploring what renewable energy sources we can utilize in our own lives, and is a proponent of hydrogen fuel cell technology, which he’s confident will replace the natural gas and diesel generators and vehicles currently used in production. Asked, “Are there hydrogen fuel cell systems available for on-location production and shooting?” He smiles and quickly quips, “The answer is yes. Can I tell you who is doing it? No, I can’t, due to confidentiality, but they are happening and I know of some of the companies and people involved.”

I don’t think the PGA recognizes the full extent of its influence, at this point. Reflecting on why he joined the PGA, he says, “I want to be there when the two companies that I started as an entrepreneur have come full circle. One was a mass-media educational company in San Francisco, and the other is about implementing strategies of sustainability in communities throughout the world. And I see the link between those two things and now is the time to do it!”

Is there any general environmental advice or anything else you’d like to communicate to the PGA audience at this point? “What I’m saying to you and the PGA is: You, as a group, have an awful lot of political and corporate power. I don’t think the PGA recognizes the full extent of its...
influence, at this point. The entertainment industry needs the PGA. The people making money on Wall Street and corporate head- quarters all over the world need the Producers Guild. They also need the Writers Guild, the Directors Guild, and others. The reason that they need you is because you’re the ones that are actually in charge of the cash flow. So, if you begin to say that you want a different definition of ‘green’ — instead of dollars or yen, concern for the environment at a production level, on location, in the studio, on the lot — then you’re going to have a big impact. And that’s what I’m trying to do. I want to help reinforce the importance of ‘green’ production at all levels.

“If I was to get a message across to everybody in the PGA, it would be that the entertainment industry must have some kind of ‘green’ policy in place, because the studio’s chief executive officer, the president, or even the executive producers of the film are not likely to be there on location. Producers have to have something to refer to and it has to be in writing … passed by the Board or some equivalent body, along with strategies and an implementation plan… And you really can’t have a plan until the organization has a policy that says, ‘Hey, we need to do something about climate change, and here is what it is,’ or whatever that happens to be… You start off with that policy, then you can have a plan; and then you implement the plan with resources, measurements, people, volunteers, et cetera.

“A lot of us are very concerned about recycling, about misuse of paper, water, a whole bunch of things, but we also have to be able to help structure plans in our personal lives, at work, where we worship, and especially in our own homes and families. It starts at home, but what we’ve got to do is to ensure that everyone is onboard to ‘clean up the environment’ and ‘reduce the carbon footprint.’ Let’s get on with it while being sustainable with the environment.”

–Matt Cooper

Matt Cooper is Executive Vice President of CTP Media Partners, Inc. (CTP), a Southern California-based company servicing the legal and environmental requirements of the entertainment industry. CTP also administers the PGA Green website (www.PGAgreen.org). To find out more about the services CTP offers, please go to http://PGAgreen.org/ctp/ or email Matt at ctp.matt@gmail.com.

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- Admission to special PGA pre-release screenings and Q&A events
- Free attendance at PGA seminars
- Listing of contact and credit information in PGA Member Directory and online roster
- Arbitration of credit disputes
- Wide variety of discounts on events, merchandise, travel
- Complimentary subscriptions to Produced by and the PGA’s internal newsletter, The Networker
It’s Alive!

This March, the new PGA website went live, and patient PGA members were rewarded with a site that will allow them to handle a wide variety of Guild-related functions — such as paying dues and RSVPing for events — online, while providing a remarkable set of tools to allow producers to find jobs, connect with one another, and get the most out of their PGA memberships.

Many of the biggest advances have been made in the PGA’s employment tools. Specifically, members now have the option of posting resumes online; that information will go into a searchable database utilized by employers throughout the industry. But an online resume that isn’t filled out doesn’t do anyone any good. So if you’re one of the more than 4,000 PGA members reading this magazine, go to the brand-new www.producersguild.org, log in, and fill in your online resume — you’ll find it in the “Member Central” section of the site. (Scroll down to find the icon marked “Resume/CV Tools.”) The Producers Guild represents the greatest collection of producing talent in the world … so let’s make sure that the world knows it!

Likewise, if you’re one of the hundreds of employers or companies on Produced by’s subscriber list, you’d be smart to avail yourself of that aforementioned collection of producing talent. Simply go to the new “For Employers” page and start staffing your team.

Habitat for Humanity Store Open for (Production) Business

Fresh on the heels of the PGA’s “Green Build” for Habitat for Humanity that took place last November and the documentary about the event executive produced by PGA member Dale Roy Robinson (see page 28), Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles continues to reach out to the producing community with its Home Improvement Store.

The store encompasses 20,000 square feet of warehouse space in Gardena, California, featuring items suitable for set builds and dressing, available at extremely discounted rates, with profits going toward the organization’s mission of eliminating substandard housing and providing decent, affordable housing for those in need. They can also pick up many items from you at wrap, including sets you’ve struck, at no cost to you … it’s not only a write-off, it’s good for the planet as well.

Contact the Habitat for Humanity Home Improvement Store at (310) 323-4663 or find them online at www.shophabitat.org.

Thinking Green (and PGA Discounts!) at NFFTY

Environmentally-conscious filmmaking is something that is already part of the next generation’s DNA, in large measure thanks to such initiatives as NFFTY Earth, part of the National Film Festival for Talented Youth.

PGA member Nicholas de Wolff sits on the festival’s Advisory Board, along with fellow PGA members Tim Gibbons and Sabrina Wind. de Wolff has been involved with the festival since its inception in 2007, when founder Jesse Harris asked de Wolff’s company to sponsor the festival.

“I flew up to Seattle to attend the 2008 festival,” explains de Wolff “expecting very little. Instead, I was blown away by the quality and purity of the films featured, and the passion of the filmmakers and audience. There is something wholly unique, and quite inspirational, about this festival and the work shown here.”

The festival (“NFFTY” for short) has grown exponentially in the four years since its founding: originally a one-day screening event with a few hundred attendees, the festival has more than quadrupled attendance annually. Last year’s festival screened more than 100 films, with attendance well over 4,000. This year’s festival has had to add a day to the schedule, due to demand, and nearly 200 films will be screened.

In terms of green initiatives, NFFTY has been at the forefront of best practices among film festivals. Last year’s event was entirely carbon-neutral, the result of work that reduced its "footprint" by 425 metric tonnes. A central theme of the festival is its NFFTY Earth initiative, which focuses on films motivating awareness and positive change. This year, featured films include documentary shorts about alternative transportation, “local food” initiatives, human trafficking, endocrine disruptors, urbanization, and the greening of our youth culture; biographies of environmentalist Li Xing Bai, and a 17-year-old girl who created a micro-financing program to empower women worldwide. This year’s filmmakers come from 33 states and 16 countries, selected to participate in what has become the largest and most influential festival for young filmmakers.

NFFTY 2010 takes place in Seattle from April 29 to May 2, and PGA members have been offered an exclusive discount code for 30%–60% off the VIP Festival Pass (depending on how soon you purchase).

To purchase passes, go to http://nfft2010vip.eventbrite .com/?discount=PGA_1607

To learn more about NFFTY, go to www.nfft.org

Produced By Conference 2010

Program sessions are now open for registration. Register for the conference today and secure your seats for the event’s hot-ticket sessions!

Registration only $295 with PGA member discount.

Register today at www.producedbyconference.com
New Members

The Producers Guild is proud to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since October, 2009.

PRODUCERS COUNCIL

MALEK AKKAD
SCOTT AVERSANO
SARA (SAMM) BARNES
GREG BERLANDI
STEVEN BICKEL
ALAN BLOMQVIST
RICHARD BURGIO
JASON BURNS
TODD BURNS
BRIAN CAVALLARO
JEFFREY CLIFFORD
CHRISTIAN COLSON
ROBIN COME
CARL CRAIG
RITA DOUMAR
TREVOR ENGELSON
GIANNINA FAICO
KYMBERLEY FRANKLIN
JOANNA GALLAGHER
EMILY GERSON SAINES
JULIE GOLDMAN
PAUL GOLDMAN
JESSICA GOYER
TAYLOR HACKFORD
HAL HAENEL
MICHAEL HAUSER
THOMAS HAYSLIP
JOHN HERMANSEN
ERIK HUMMELSBAECH-WEINSTEIN
JUSTIN HOCHEBERG
JAMES HOLT
SILVIO HORTA
J.J. JACKSON
GREG JOHNSON
SHEENA JOYCE
LINDA KLEIN
TERRI KLEIN
DAVID LEAF
CHRIS LEE
KELLY LINN
GARY MAGNESS
MICHAEL MANDE
MARCE MARQUET
LEE MAYES
KARYN MCCARTHY
CHRISTIAN MCMINN
SCOTT MEDINICK
JULIE MERSYN
MISSY MAYER
AMY MURRAY-ROVON
MICHAEL S. ROSENBURG
PHILIPPE ROUSSELET
ALAN SACKS
FRED SAVAGE
ZACH SCHIFF-ABRAMS
RILEY SCOTT
SCOTT SHATSKY
MARTIN SHORE
SARAH SIEGEL-MAGNESS
MOLLY M. SMITH
J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI
EVE WATTERSON
JAMES YOUNG

NEW MEDIA COUNCIL

JASON ALEX
TONY BUCKER
KEVIN BERREY
REDA CHARAFI-FINENG
ERIN DOYLE
MARK HARWOOD
TIMOTHY JOHNSON
MATTHEW JORDAN
SCOTT KRAMARICH
CHARLIE LONG
JOAN MACFARLANE
JEFF MUNCY
HARRI PAAKONEN
JOSHD RALPH
DOMINIK RAUSCH
LURAH RITCHIE
TONY RIVERA
MARK SHACKLEY
SUSAN BETH SMITH
TAL VIGDERSON

AP COUNCIL

Associate Producer/Production Manager/Production Supervisor

LESLEY BECKER
LEIGH BROADBENT
WENDY COX
JOHN FEYNGEN
KEVIN GORDON
KATIE GRIFFIN
NICOLE GRINDLE
ARMEN KEVORKIAN
KELSEY KLINE
LAUREL LADENICH
DAN PASCHEN
MARY BETH SPROWS
HAYDEE STUART
JAMIE WILLIAMS
BRYAN YACONELLI

Production Coordinator

MELANIE KIRK
ANNEE KNOBD
PAULA LEUNG

Segment/Field/Story Producer

SANDRA ALVAREZ
DEREK HELWIG
WHITNEY LYON
DANIEL MIKIELS
MELODY MURRAY

Visual Effects

VANESSA JOYCE
MELANIE MILLER
CARI THOMAS
Since this is the Green issue of "Produced By" I've decided to recycle one of my comics from 1993. It may be 17 years old but the message still applies today.

I MET RHODA!

By Wendy Miller © 1993

Ask me who my major role models were and I'll tell you Bat Girl, That Girl, Laura Petrie, Sally Rogers, Pinky Tuscadero, Lorelai DeFazio and Christy Clev. But most of all, I wanted to be RHODA MORGENSTERN!!!

Oddly enough, she was everything I turned out to be. Single, overweight, funny, independent and always looking for work. The only difference between us is she wore bright colors and got her own show.

"My name is Rhoda Morgenstern."

Well, recently I had the opportunity to meet and work with Valerie Harper. Valerie Harper spoke of Rhoda. She's funny, smart, from New York and very likable. The only differences are Valerie's thinner than Rhoda, not Jewish and happily married.

"The first thing I remember liking that liked me back was food."

"I had a bad puberty. It lasted 17 years."

Valerie Harper is a lot like Rhoda. I wondered what would happen if I actually had the opportunity to hang out with my tweeve role models.

"Hello, it's your new wacky neighbor, Wendy."

"Hi! I'm your new wacky neighbor, Wendy." Would I really want to go to auditions with That Girl, go bowling with Laverne or share dating horror stories over a pizza with Rhoda?

Who are your role models?

"What day wanna do tonight?"

"We're gonna go home now."

Why are your role models your role models?

It's okay to have tweeve characters as your role models but when you get older and are constantly faced with more complex situations you need more realistic role models. Women who fight for their rights, stick true to their beliefs and challenge the establishment. Women who are smart, talented, creative and make a real difference in this world. Women like Mario Thomas, Penny Marshall and Valerie Harper.