Josh Schwartz
Stephanie Savage

“We want to be somebody's favorite show.”

In this issue:
Honoring the Digital 25
Cleveland O’Neal does it all
Hiring from within the PGA
Turning again to my accuser, my face now sharply litters with the refuse of her insults and accusations, I pause to recount the fondness and deep affection she once had for me. The First Entertainment Credit Union ATM surveillance camera guiltlessly captures our caustic exchange against the all too ironic backdrop.

First Entertainment Credit Union already serves over 60,000 industry pros, but we want everyone in the biz to join. That’s why we’ve cooked up this storywriting contest. We’ve got $2,500 and 3 iPads to award to the best original stories, fact or fiction, that somehow involve or include the credit union. To enter the contest, simply join the credit union, write a killer short story, and then go to www.firstentertainmentwriteoff.com to upload it for consideration. While you are there, you can check out your competition, read up on our judges, drool over the prizes, collaborate with the other aspiring writers and more – it’s a full-blown social network set up just for this contest. Learn more about the industry’s leading financial institution at www.firstent.org.

Your Jobs, Your Service
A message from the PGA Presidents.

Case Study:
Josh Schwartz & Stephanie Savage
Their Empire may be Fake, but it’s growing.

The Digital 25
Honoring the great visionaries, innovators and producers of 2010.

Every Day Is Independence Day
The entrepreneur spirit of Cleveland O’Neal.

“Never Stop Playing Games — Ever”
Starr Long produces the next level(s) of interactive entertainment.

 Stranger Than Fiction
Marc Smerling and Andrew Jareck: reel in Catfish.

Different Voices
The work of the PGA Diversity Committee.

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Rachel Klein
Over the years I have used just about every piece of equipment Clairmont Camera has ever owned: time-lapse film cameras to super high-speed digital cameras and now the Alexa. I love Clairmont’s custom gear and incredible service; it keeps me coming back! In visual effect shooting we always are inventing on the fly. With difficult setups like hanging off a 70-story building, complex driving rigs or doing “in camera” visual effects having equipment and service you can depend on is essential. I would recommend Clairmont Camera to anyone in the industry.

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I’ve now served as the Executive Director of the Producers Guild for more than 10 years — about a career and a half in Hollywood terms. Over that span, I’ve had the good fortune to participate in many successful projects: the rejuvenation of the Producers Guild Awards, the launch of the Produced By Conference, and the creation of our Producing Workshop, to name a few. But there is no single achievement of this Guild of which I’m prouder than the development of our credit and awards arbitration system.

Creating a system that was comprehensive, fair and — above all — effective was no mean feat. Producing a film or television program is a difficult undertaking; it is only slightly less difficult to determine which of the individuals named as producers actually did the majority of the work. We knew that the system would have to provide the safety of anonymity for team members who might share an unflattering perspective on an industry power player; at the same time, without sufficient transparency, our determinations would never have been accepted by the rest of the industry.

The result is a finely-balanced machine, one that invites each credited producer to detail the nature of her or his contributions to the project, but verifies those statements with accounts from the director, writer(s), studio executive(s) and department heads. The rules by which our process works are available for anyone to read; they’re posted on our website as part of our Producers Code of Credits. Our list of arbitrators is likewise available upon request. While we can never divulge the identities of individual arbitrators involved in a given hearing, the pool of veteran producers from which we draw our arbitrators includes the top names in the profession. Producers who submit their eligibility forms to our panels know that they are being evaluated by their true peers — fellow producers with extensive experience in the genre or format under consideration.

This year, we’ve continued to streamline the process. Our eligibility form for theatrical motion pictures has been shortened to two pages, with a new, easy-to-read layout. All of our forms are available for download on www.producersguild.org, and our arbitration staff, including Executive Arbitration Officer Fred Kuperberg and Arbitration Administrator David Schachter, stands ready to help guide you through the process.

But we’re gratified to be at the point where the changes we’re making are principally cosmetic ones. The system works. It’s trusted by the Motion Picture Academy, the Television Academy, the Golden Globes and the BAFTAs as the most accurate tool for determining who did the majority of the producing work on a given project. It is the cornerstone of the service the PGA provides to this industry, and its foundation is rock solid.

If you’re a PGA member with extensive experience in your chosen genre or format, we hope that you will volunteer to serve as an arbitrator. If so, please contact Jo-Ann at the PGA offices. The time commitment is minimal, but the service you’ll provide is the most honorable and appreciated you’ll ever bestow upon your Guild.

The Cornerstone

West Virginia Film Office
We took on the challenge of the PGA Presidency because we believe in the goals of our Guild and the dignity of the producing profession.

Your Producers Guild membership should represent a genuine opportunity for you to advance in this profession. That’s why we will be undertaking the most aggressive jobs campaign in the history of this Guild — personally reaching out to our colleagues at studios and production companies to make sure they are hiring from the PGA. And if you are a member who is also an employer, then you have one obligation above all: Hire from within the Guild.

These opportunities will not simply fall into our laps — we have to use all of the tools at our disposal. For some of us, that will be the networks of contacts we have built up over the years. For others, it will require a commitment to utilize the PGA website and help to make that the premier employment resource for producers. If you haven’t gone online and added your resume to the www.producersguild.org database, do it today. Do it now. We can’t start knocking on the doors until our online talent pool is at least 1,500 strong. If you do your part, we promise to do ours.

If our Guild is successful in its mission, that success will translate into greater opportunities for you. But in order for the PGA to be successful, it requires a personal investment of your time and energy. This is a member-driven Guild. This organization only functions because a core group of members consistently donates its time and expertise to the Guild’s initiatives and activities.

We would like to take this space to thank those members who form our regular corps of volunteers — you know who you are. You are the lifeblood of the PGA, and a personal inspiration to us in our own service to the Guild. Furthermore, we would like to challenge the rest of the membership to match their example, and find the time to serve the PGA. Speak with Kyle Katz in the PGA office, and find out ways that you can help to organize and staff a PGA event, coordinate a seminar, serve on a committee, or help to vet the applications of aspiring members.

We guarantee: The more you give to the PGA, the more it will give back to you. At the absolute minimum: Put your resume on the PGA website. It will take all of 10 minutes and is the very least you can do to serve your Guild.

Thanks,

Hawk Koch

Mark Gordon
It used to be easier to write stories about Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage. The humble scribe could run down their collective curriculum vita, note their ages, stick the word “wunderkind” somewhere in the headline or the lede, and pretty much call it a day.

Things are different today. It’s no longer enough to look at their series and hail them as the work of a pair of great young producers. It’s time to take the backhandedness out of that compliment, and call their shows what they are — the work of a pair of great producers, period.

But just to re-cap, for those joining us late: Josh Schwartz created and ran the seminal teen drama series *The O.C.* at 26, making him the youngest creator and showrunner for a one-hour drama in network television history and making youth idols of stars Benjamin McKenzie, Mischa Barton, Adam Brody and Rachel Bilson. Supervising that initial effort was Stephanie Savage, working as a fledgling producer at Wonderland Sound and Vision. As *The O.C.* matured, Savage left the executive ranks, joining the show’s writing staff and scripting one of the series’ most memorable episodes, “The Best Chrismukkah Ever.”

Since that time, Schwartz and Savage have continued to develop as producers and writers, collaborating on the CW’s signature series *Gossip Girl*. Schwartz also marks time as the co-creator and showrunner of NBC’s one-of-a-kind comedy/action/espionage cocktail, *Chuck*, a series whose passionate fanbase has kept on the air in spite of corporate scheduling jitters.

The team works well. When Schwartz is required on *Chuck*, Savage takes the reins on *Gossip Girl*. As *Chuck’s* co-creator Chris Fedak matured into the showrunner role, Schwartz and Savage reteamed to bring their joint sensibility into new arenas. To that end, the pair recently made their partnership official, this year forming Fake Empire, which looks to encompass not only TV projects, but work in motion pictures, music, video games and publishing. Among the major upcoming projects for Fake Empire are features *Fun Size!* and *Au Revoir, Crazy European Chick* (both for Paramount, where the duo has a first-look producing deal) and additional projects that reflect the principals’ interest in speaking to youth audiences about contemporary culture.

This is the 48th in *Produced by*’s ongoing series of Case Studies of successful producers and their work. *Produced by* editor Chris Green joined Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage at their offices on the Warner Bros. lot for a freewheeling chat about the lightning-fast rise of *The O.C.*, convincing the network to shoot *Gossip Girl* in New York, and the timeless appeal of extreme-sports crime-fighting.
So, to begin at something like the beginning, how did your partnership get started?

Josh: It was the fall of 2002. We had yet to invade Iraq. I was a young writer, and Stephanie was a high-powered executive, McG’s partner at Wonderland Sound and Vision. I had written a couple of pilots that had gotten shot, but hadn’t gotten on the air. Everyone said I needed an 800-lb gorilla to get something on the air. They said go meet at Wonderland. So I went in and met with Stephanie. And at the time, she brought up doing a show set in Orange County, but set in the world of extreme sports cops.

Stephanie: [laughs] To add a little context, it was the year of xXx and Jackass, so extreme sports were very big. It was the network’s idea. They suggested that if there could be a franchise, that would be even better.

Josh: So I told her I had gone to USC, which has…

A great extreme sports program.

Josh: Yes! [laughs] And not only that, it’s where all the Orange County kids go to college. So I had gone there as a Jewish kid from Rhode Island, and I said, “Well, I could write about Orange County, but for the extreme sports cops, you may need to find somebody else…” And we started talking. And she effectively said, “Alright kid, go off and do that.”

Stephanie: “And come back when that’s a little more cooked…”

Josh: So she sent me off. And The O.C. came out of that experience and that dynamic. Very early on, I could tell that Stephanie was more than your average executive, that she really had, you know, “writer energy.” We did a lot of brainstorming together and we had a very easy relationship. So I encouraged her to write an episode and got her approved at the studio. I then got to be her boss. She did a great job. She wrote the first “Chrismukkah” episode, a fan favorite. And eventually, she was willing to take the scary plunge of leaving the sure-fire executive producer job, to move to be a full-time writer/producer. And we did that; she was EP on The O.C. for two years. As the show was ending, I was already down the road on Chuck with Chris Fedak, who I also went to college with, and I got sent the Gossip Girl books by Alloy. I called Steph and said, “I think you’re gonna like this. And if you do, I think we should do it.” She read them and had a great take on it right away. So as Gossip Girl was taking off, we started talking about finding more things to do together, because it was a very natural dynamic.

And now you’ve formed a company to make the partnership official…

Stephanie: It’s exciting! It’s only been real since June, but things are happening very quickly.

Josh: We’ve got the TV side of things set up at WBTV — which has always been our home for television — and hired Len Goldstein to oversee that arm of the company. He was Peter Roth’s for many years. You couldn’t ask for someone more experienced and savvy — he knew everyone on the creative side as well as at every network and agency, and there’s not a situation that he hasn’t seen before. Then with features, we are at Paramount. Years ago, I sat down with Adam Goodman and he talked about how no one was servicing our O.C. audience on the feature side and men...
Josh gives you the credit for suggesting a show about Orange County, never mind the extreme sports cops. What led you to think that was an idea that would work?

Stephanie: Well, McG's from Orange County and so we spent a lot of time talking about it. And at that time it was an interesting, untapped world where on the one hand you had gated communities and Reagan politics and a very conservative ladies-who-lunch, golf-club environment. But you also had this incredible music scene, with Gwen Stefani and No Doubt and Sublime, and the surf-and-skate culture, and how did those two environments interact with each other and create something original and very specific?

Josh: I saw the same thing, going to college with all these kids. They all were very pretty and you saw their parents who had visited at Parents' Weekend or Homecoming and they had just as likely gone to USC as well. And sometimes, you couldn't tell the difference between the moms and the daughters, and everybody had this sort of perfect sheen. But I had seen what happened when the sun went down; it was very different from the lives that they were living publicly with their families. A lot of it reminded me of Providence, of where I grew up, except that everyone was much better looking.

My recollection of The O.C. is that it took off kind of immediately.

Stephanie: Yeah, it was crazy from the beginning. Josh
Stephanie’s really empowering in New York. And on the floor of the stock exchange, when she was a corporate finance guy, working on the trading floor growing. Suddenly, I was hearing stories from my brother Josh:

Josh: Three times a week. Every week, the show just kept growing. Suddenly, I was hearing stories from my brother who was a corporate finance guy, working on the trading floor in New York. And on the floor of the stock exchange, when someone made a successful trade, they would yell at each other “Welcome to the OC, bitch!” For whatever reason, that line was catching on. And then we came back from baseball and it just started to grow. They put us behind Idol for the spring and it really kind of took off. It was a wild ride.

That kind of pace would be harrowing even for an experienced producer, but this was your first series and Stephanie’s second.

Josh: Well, that’s where our showrunner Bob De Laurentiis really deserves all the credit. There was no story you could pitch Bob, no show you could mention that he hadn’t done a version of, or done that show. He’s a very sweet man. We met with a lot of people who would take one look at me and be like, “Hmmm … a 26-year-old rookie. Look at her; she’s going to be off doing her Wonderland thing. I’ll get in there, I’ll get this kid fired and I’ll take over the show!” [laughs]

Stephanie: You would sit with them for 45 minutes, and it would be really obvious who was getting smothered with the pillow…

Josh: And who was getting the knife in the back. And then we met with Bob and he just said, “You know, I get what you do. This is what I do. How can I help?” He’s a great guy, and there’s a reason he’s been as successful for as long as he has. I think he’s actually carved out a niche for himself right now, working with people like us.

Stephanie: I can only speak for back when we were doing the pilot, how I would, for lack of a better word, train Josh and make sure he was aware of his role and how much power he really had in this situation. I’d tell him, “They are blocking the scene. You go over there and you stand and you listen to what they’re saying, and if there’s something in your head that you don’t think they’re gonna have, because they’re not getting that coverage — speak up and say something. Because it’s your show. You’re the one that’s responsible.” And by the end of the pilot, everything was really running through Josh and there was that clear sense of the vision for the show.

Josh: Stephanie’s really empowering that way. Because again, she could have taken that role of “I’m the producer. You’re lucky to be here.” But she was very empowering about it, and I think that’s why she has such good relations with writers, in general. Her position was always, “I’m here to create a platform for you to succeed and be yourself.” It was very much like we were in the trenches and together.

Stephanie: And then when it was time, Josh encouraged and supported me to write an episode. Episode 13, Josh said, “Well, that’s Stephanie’s episode. I want her to write it, I’m guaranteeing it.” So, there was that sense of “I believe in you, you believe in me. I’ll use my power to help you and then you’ll help me.”

In terms of the show’s popularity, its impact on the culture, it seems like it did just about everything you could want a series to do, except last a dozen years.

Josh: It’s a crazy thing which we wrestle with a lot. When we look back at it now, I’m very proud of the legacy of the show, but at the time, we felt like, “Oh man, we’re going to be one of those shows that started really hot and cooled off really fast.” And now, it’s kind of become our trademark. It means that you’re doing something that’s exciting and of the moment, and because of that, it’s harder to sustain, but that’s okay. We’d rather do those kinds of things than make something that might run for a dozen years, but nobody really knows or cares if it’s on. I feel like The O.C. was the last show to not benefit from TiVo, iTunes and online distribution, and Gossip Girl was the first show to really benefit from it. The Wall Street Journal even wrote an article about it at the time; it is literally the blueprint for how people talk about Gossip Girl now. And, for me, partially, a lot of the drive of doing Gossip Girl was almost a way to help rewinterize the last season of The O.C.

That’s a great transition. What have you taken from The O.C. that you’ve brought to Gossip Girl and Chuck? What have you kept and what do you think of differently?

Josh: Well, we said from the beginning, “Look, if we have the same experience, if we’re in season four of Gossip Girl and getting canceled despite this amazing run, even if we didn’t go for a hundred years, we’ll look at that as a success. If we’re able to match the success of The O.C., that’s a win.” We learned a lot of practical things … how to work with the cast and how actors change over seasons. Putting an actor in a television series is, by itself, a little bit of a challenge, because actors by their very nature are free-spirited; they want to explore different roles, they want to have different experiences, so you’re almost working against their instincts by putting them on a show, which is a kind of cage. As a producer, a showrunner, you have to know how to manage that, how to write for that.

Stephanie: How to be a better zookeeper?

Josh: [laughs] How to be a better zookeeper. How to write for those actors so they continue to feel challenged. Networks and studios are going to come in with thoughts about the show, saying, “It’s season three and we have another two years and you have to do X, Y, Z to change the show.” And you have to resist the urge to do that, because you could get too far from the show that people like.

Stephanie: We also learned that a high school show, it has a shelf life. So for Gossip Girl, we kept them in high school for two years instead of three. From the outset, we tried to make high school less of the franchise and make New York City more of the franchise.

Josh: I think the biggest lesson that we took was about making sure that we really knew where the show was going and could go, so we didn’t blow through so much story in the first season. The first season of The O.C., it was like, “Let’s just go for it.” I think part of what made that show really exciting for people in the first season was how much crazy shit we were doing every week.

Stephanie: And the season one finale feels like a series finale.

Josh: With Gossip Girl, we talked a lot about how we could pace this thing out and not feel like we have to “go to 11” every week, and allow for some room for the characters to breathe. This is sort of a practical thing and maybe an obvious thing, but many of these shows get a lot of mileage out of having the core characters dating and breaking up with each other, and constantly reshuffling their deck. We never
did that with The O.C. We kept bringing in outside characters and found out that the further we got from our core, the less the audience was interested. With Gossip Girl, we started with a bigger ensemble as opposed to bringing in more external characters, so we can keep the interest of the show with the primary characters.

Stephanie: And on The O.C., we always wish we could have gone on location to Newport Beach more. So with Gossip Girl, when everyone said, “Great! Here’s the backlot in Burbank; it’s where we shot Gilmore Girls,” we said, “We have to shoot the show in New York. We just have to.”

What was that negotiation like?

Stephanie: It was intense. At the beginning, the answer was simply, “No way.” I mean, The CW had never even produced a show in a city, never mind in New York. Everything was Utah or Vancouver or North Carolina. Josh: I like that you don’t consider Vancouver a city.

Stephanie: Okay, an American city. So the idea that we were gonna shoot the show in New York… People did not want to hear that. They suggested, maybe shooting there two days for the pilot, and we just said, “No.” Like with all things, it starts by setting your goals, identifying the obstacles to those goals and systematically taking down the obstacles. The first one was obviously budget. So we did some investigating and sure enough, New York had a tax credit, which made a huge difference. The Canadian dollar was doing very well, and there was a potential actor’s strike in Canada, so that took Vancouver and Toronto off the table. Once the studio finally got their heads around the idea that the numbers were pretty much the same for New York versus trying to make Los Angeles look like New York, then we could actually have a conversation about how we’re gonna do it. We found a great line producer in New York, Amy Kaufman, who had a background in independent film. She had great taste and a great sensibility for how to make the show feel more sophisticated; she knew New York inside and out. Once we committed to doing the pilot there, we just cut corners in other places to make sure that we will be able to keep the city in the picture as far as shooting.

I want to come back to the question of casting, and particularly, putting together a young cast. This is something you’ve done several times.

Josh: We spent a lot of time on it. Stephanie comes in very prepared, who’s going to do good solid work from week to week and get critical praise, though it might take them a little longer to break through. It’s not just one thing; you have multiple engines driving you.

Josh: For some shows, you want people who they see your actor on the street, to call them by their character’s name, and know them that way. And other shows, you want them to know who the actor is, before they know the character’s name.

Interesting. Just to take Stephanie’s advice and step back: You make your mind blank and try and find somebody that you feel could be a movie star in their own right. With Ben [McKenzie], he kind of reminded us of a young Edward Norton, and that’s kinda cool. With [Adam] Brody, he’s got this young Tom Hanks quality to him. He was also not a conventional teen drama actor, he was funny and a little bit nerdy, but obviously good-looking enough that he became a breakout heartthrob on the show. Mischa [Barton] had this model energy, a European kind of energy versus the button cuteness.

Stephanie: Josh had written the one line description of Marissa: “She was so heartbreakingly beautiful and a little bit of an escapologist.” And Mischa came in and we knew, “Well, there she is.”

Josh: And with the Gossip Girl cast, we applied the same thinking. Blake [Lively] was somebody whom we knew a little bit about, Stephanie more than I. It was funny when the show first got announced, the fans and the message boards were full of, “Blake Lively should play Serena van der Woodsen.” She had done The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants at the time, so I showed that to Steph and we spoke to her agents. Blake is very savvy and very smart, and she was somebody we felt could be a movie star. She feels exciting. Leighton … same thing.

Stephanie: There’s that combination that Blair Waldorf has, on the one hand being able to be a very malicious, but also be incredibly vulnerable and able to have her feelings hurt and be fiercely loyal to her friend and fall deeply in love, and we thought Leighton had all that. Also, not everybody has to do the same thing or fulfill the same function. You have to keep that big-picture perspective the whole time. You have one person who’s going to get the magazine covers first. You have one person who’s going to do good solid work from week to week and get critical praise, though it might take them a little longer to break through. It’s not just one thing; you have multiple engines driving you.

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Josh: If you are excited about it, then people will pick up on it. We always say we want to be somebody’s favorite show. And with both Gossip Girl and Chuck, we have experienced that. We are not the number-one or the number-two show. Both shows have been challenged and Chuck in particular has been very lucky, but that’s because the fans are so passionate about those shows. Gossip Girl… our ratings are not great, but then you go to iTunes and it’s the number-one show there, beating out much, much bigger shows. Or when Chuck is about to be canceled, and fans rise up with a “Save Chuck” campaign. And that passion for both shows really, I think, carries the day. We’re passionate and we love it, and hopefully, that’s what people are feeling as well.
new media

The Producers Guild of America Presents
THE DIGITAL 25

Over the past decade, the PGA has demonstrated a commitment to new media that is unique among the major entertainment guilds. In that spirit, the Guild is proud to present its 2010 “Digital 25: Visionaries, Innovators and Producers,” an honor which recognizes individuals and teams that have made the most significant contributions to the advancement of digital entertainment and storytelling over the past year.

As you survey the recipients and their work below, you’ll be struck by the incredible variety of honorees, hailing from all aspects of the digital entertainment space. Make no mistake, this isn’t simply a who’s who of online innovators (though the Web is surely well-represented here), but a survey of individuals and teams often working at the cross section of new and traditional media, breathing new vitality into time-honored storytelling models, and bringing arresting and innovative work to a massive young audience that is ravenous for content.

These recipients were honored at an exclusive cocktail and dinner reception on Monday, October 18, as part of the Variety Entertainment and Technology Summit at the Digital Hollywood Conference at the Loews Santa Monica. Of course, we’re proud to recognize them in the pages of Produced by as well.

Steve Ballmer, Todd Holmdahl, Alex Kipman, Don Mattrick, Kudo Tsunoda
Kinect for Xbox 360

This team is the driving force behind Kinect for Xbox 360 — a controller-free gaming and entertainment experience by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 video game platform. Based around an add-on peripheral for the Xbox 360 console, it enables users to control and interact with the Xbox 360 through a natural user interface using gestures, spoken commands, or presented objects and images. Thanks to Kinect, you might never touch an Xbox controller again.

Rishi Chandra, Vincent Dureau
Google TV

The goal of Google TV aims to turn television and Web into a seamless experience, giving you access to online content and videos from the comfort of your living room. Google puts it this way: the traditional way to watch a TV show is to wait for it to air on a network, meaning you can’t change the channels and must watch shows you might not want to. Google TV makes it possible to match that of the show you want to watch. The Internet breaks that barrier, allowing you to watch shows whenever you feel like through outlets like Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube. You can watch online content out of the confined space of your computer’s monitor and instead play it on your television set — together with standard TV content.

James Cameron, Jon Landau
Avatar

James Cameron’s magnum opus Avatar had been gestating since 1990. In December 2006, Cameron explained the delay: he had to wait until the advanced technology necessary to create his project had been developed. In no time, Avatar had rewritten cinema history. The film smashed the record for box-office revenues, beating Cameron’s previous film Titanic. Avatar also became the first movie ever to earn more than $2 billion worldwide. It was nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, and won three, for Best Cinematography, Best Visual Effects and Best Art Direction.

Avichai Cohen
LiveU

By aggregating several cellular air cards, LiveU is offering a dramatic reduction in costs and complexities related to professional-grade live broadcast. In Avi Cohen’s world, any entity can broadcast live, from a high school graduating a transmission ceremony to a local newspaper covering community events — consider it a satellite truck in a backpack. Since its introduction to the market, LiveU has already been used by hundreds of producers and companies, ranging from micro-publishers all the way to many of the largest global media companies in more than 30 countries. Just as the development of digital HD cameras lowered the barrier for entry for making cinema-quality films, LiveU rewrites the rules for live broadcast, putting that power in the hands (and on the backs) of individual storytellers. Thanks to LiveU, the way we produce and view news, sports and entertainment is going to change.

John Ham, Brad Hunstable
Ustream

Ustream is amassing audiences online for live broadcasts with the kind of power that could make even TV networks nervous. But at this stage in the site’s growth, Ustream is actually proving to be of benefit to its would-be competition. As the leading live online broadcast network, Ustream enables anyone with an Internet connection and a camera to engage their audience in a meaningful, immediate way. Unlike previous webcasting technology, Ustream uses a one-to-many model, which means that either use with no limits. Ustream’s platform has been used to broadcast everything from high school sporting events to Hollywood movie premieres, and people are finding new and innovative uses for it every day.

Reed Hastings
Netflix

Since it was launched in 1998, Netflix has built its reputation on the business model of flat-rate unlimited rentals without due dates, including Best Picture and Best Director, and won three, for Best Cinematography, Best Visual Effects and Best Art Direction.

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John Ham, Brad Hunstable
Ustream

Ustream is amassing audiences online for live broadcasts with the kind of power that could make even TV networks nervous. But at this stage in the site’s growth, Ustream is actually proving to be of benefit to its would-be competition. As the leading live online broadcast network, Ustream enables anyone with an Internet connection and a camera to engage their audience in a meaningful, immediate way. Unlike previous webcasting technology, Ustream uses a one-to-many model, which means that either use with no limits. Ustream’s platform has been used to broadcast everything from high school sporting events to Hollywood movie premieres, and people are finding new and innovative uses for it every day.

Reed Hastings
Netflix

Since it was launched in 1998, Netflix has built its reputation on the business model of flat-rate unlimited rentals without due dates,
late fees, shipping or handling fees, or per-title rental fees. In February 2010, the American Customer Satisfaction Index named Netflix the number-one ecommerce company for customer satisfaction. Fast Company named Netflix the winner of its annual Customers First Award. Netflix has revolutionized the way people rent movies — by bringing the movies directly to them. With consumers demanding more value and control, it’s no wonder that Netflix has become the preferred online provider of the home-entertainment experience.

Max Haot
Livestream
Max Haot is the founder of Livestream, where producers can use the browser-based Studio application to create live, scheduled and on-demand Internet television to broadcast anywhere on the Web through a single-player widget. Unique features include the ability to mix multiple live cameras, imported video clips and overlay graphics. Producers can broadcast live from a mobile phone; use a customizable flash player with integrated chat; and develop a branded channel page on the website that incorporates interactive chat. The ability to broadcast live from anywhere using only a mobile phone has opened the doors to storytellers all over the world, allowing them to share their content with little to no overhead.

Dan Konopka, Damian Kulash, Tim Nordwind, Andy Ross
OK Go
With their groundbreaking videos for *A Million Ways, Here It Goes Again* and *This Too Shall Pass*, OK Go continuously demonstrates unparalleled Web-savviness, artistic vision and genius approach to the viral video. Using the Internet both as a creative inspiration and tool of distribution, OK Go continues to pioneer a genius approach to the viral video. Using the Internet both as a platform for audio and visual media such as books, periodicals, movies, and games, as well as Web content. The iPad has revolutionized the idea of the home entertainment-delivery systems used in the home. The simplicity of navigating with your fingers rather than a keyboard or a mouse has already changed what we expect from our computers.

Kelly DiGregorio, Salar Kamangar, Chris Maxey, Kevin Yen
YouTube Partner Grants
YouTube launched a $5 million fund to support producers in the innovation of new formats, production methods, and marketing strategies for online video. The goal of YouTube Partner Grants is to act as a catalyst by infusing additional funds into the production budgets of a small group of YouTube partners at the forefront of innovation. YouTube identifies eligible partners, who are invited to submit a grant proposal. Proposals are evaluated by YouTube based on criteria, which include projected performance, distribution plan, marketing plan, cost requirements, and appeal to advertisers. If approved, funds are transferred to the partner so they can start on their project.

Mark Pincus
Zynga
Mark Pincus is the visionary behind Zynga, having founded the company in 2001 to enable users to build social connections through games. Every day, millions of people interact with their friends and express their unique personalities through their games which have their players do everything from harvesting plants (*Farmville*) to running a crime empire (*Mafia Wars*). If you have signed on to Facebook in the past two years, you have seen Zynga at work.

Eddy Cue, Jonathan Ive, Steve Jobs
iPad
The iPad is a tablet computer, designed by Apple, particularly marketed as a platform for audio and visual media such as books, periodicals, movies, and games, as well as Web content. It has revolutionized the idea of the home computer, opening the door to Apple TV as a potential primary entertainment-delivery system used in the home. The simplicity of navigating with your fingers rather than a keyboard or a mouse has already changed what we expect from our computers.

Kevin Macdonald, Ridley Scott
Life in a Day
Life in a Day is a cinematic experiment that attempts to document a single day in the life of the world. On July 24, 2010, 40,000 videos capturing different aspects in the lives of people from 197 different countries were uploaded to YouTube. The Life in a Day channel on YouTube offers an interactive gallery with different viewing modes of some of the footage received as part of the editing process. The film will premiere at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival as the first large-scale, crowd-sourced movie in history. You may want to spend the next few months planning how to get into that post-screening party.

Idan Cohen, Zach Klein, Avner Ronen
Boxee
The idea for Boxee first began to germinate in 2004, the result of its founders’ toying with Xbox Media Center, the open-source software for the original Xbox, which allowed users to play digital media on their television sets. Over the past six years, the team has taken that idea much further, turning Boxee into a cross-platform, home-theater program that brings the incredible variety of online digital and social media experiences into the family living room. Boxee’s versatility allows users to enjoy movies, TV shows, music and photos, as well as streaming content from websites like Netflix, Hulu, NBC, Comedy Central, Pandora, Last.fm, and Flickr. Moreover, Boxee’s social media functions allow you to share your experiences with others, all within a visually-driven interface that makes media come to life.

Robert Bowman
MLB Advanced Media
Robert Bowman’s leadership at MLB Advanced Media with Major League Baseball has turned the national pastime into a global one, live-streaming every single one of its games and making them available to subscribers worldwide via its MLB.tv service. Moreover, MLB.com’s Gameday and At Bat features take fans inside the game through a variety of dynamic interfaces, incorporating statistics, photos, reportage, in-game subtitles and even fan Twitter feeds to create an immersive experience unique to online sports coverage. With the 2010 postseason in full swing, Bowman’s remarkable digital re-conception of the ballpark experience is bringing the work of MLB Advanced Media to more fans than ever.

Brett Leonard
FragFilms for the POPFICTIONLIFE
A dazzlingly innovative approach to new media storytelling, Brett Leonard’s FragFilms for the POPFICTIONLIFE demonstrates its creator’s contention that new distribution platforms require new creative genres and forms that reflect both the strengths of its delivery system...
and the media orientation of its audience. To that end, POPFICTIONLIFE is an online narrative concept featuring a music-driven story told in 15-minute "frags" that connect together to form a full-length feature film. Not simply a television-style series transplanted to the Web, POPFICTIONLIFE provides the long-form narrative richness of cinema and emotional impact of great music as refracted through the dynamic and multifaceted prism of digital media. An ambitious project that would have been inconceivable without contemporary advances in technology, POPFICTIONLIFE has staked out a place on the farthest frontier of storytelling in the digital age.

Josh Abramson, Barry Diller, Dae Mellencamp, Ricky Van Veen
IAC/Connected Ventures and Vimeo

One of the premier video sharing sites on the Web, Vimeo has hosted a thriving online community since 2004, and today features more than 3 million members and more than 16,000 new videos uploaded daily. Vimeo's video sharing functions power the Web content of College Humor, Busted Tees, and others among its fellow brands under the banner of Barry Diller's IAC/Connected Ventures. The name is an apt one; in pairing some of the Web's most popular and innovative content with a delivery system perfectly suited and attuned to the needs of its young audience, many of whom are budding filmmakers, IAC's network of sites ranks as the eighth largest in the world.

Jay Fulcher, Sean Knapp, Bismarck Lepe
Ooyala

The advent of streaming video has proven to be one of the true watershed moments in the brief history of the Web (and arguably, in the somewhat longer history of telecommunications itself). Right now, Ooyala is at the forefront of that still-evolving revolution. Providing a flexible platform that allows organizations to host, manage and monetize their video assets, Ooyala currently services the video needs of more than 300 global media companies and 5,000 online properties across 100 companies. As producers look to online distribution not only to reach a both wider and — paradoxically — more targeted audiences, but also maintain their autonomy in the face of increasing corporate control over traditional media channels, Ooyala is likely to occupy an increasingly important place in the plans of this industry's creative entrepreneurs.

Richard Rosenblatt
Demand Media
Demand Media a leader in social media solutions, creating their content based solely on what their customers need. Using search engine query data to identify topics of high interest, Demand has developed leading sites like eHow, LIVESTRONG.COM, Cracked.com, Trails.com, and GolfLink. Their web of freelancers around the nation generates text or video content that are useful to the online community, much of it in the how-to field, making Demand Media one of the world's largest video suppliers. Given the scale of its video library on YouTube, Demand Media channels currently generate more than 2 million streams per day, with viewers who are actively engaged in pursuing knowledge about their passions from hybrid cars to healthy food choices to how to grow eggplant. The company also operates the world's largest domain name registrar group, eNom; the platform for domain registration services helps both new and experienced users get the most from their websites.

Peter Anton, Rick Engdahl, Evan Greene, Paul Madeira
Grammy.com, Grammy Live, Grammy 365

The Recording Academy, which annually showcases the coveted Grammy Awards, has reinvented the understanding of the Awards presentation by embracing digital media. For the 52nd Grammy Awards, Grammy.com, a vast site that emphasizes the significance of social media and digital interaction between the artists and the public, launched Grammy Live, a 72-hour live broadcast that highlights all aspects of the Grammy experience, including a pre-show telecast, a look

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To learn more, call the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office at 404.962.4052 or visit www.georgia.org/entertainment

Oh, and did we mention 30%
inside Clive Davis’ famous party, the Person of the Year event with Neil Young and extensive behind-the-scenes coverage on award day itself. Further, current and prospective members of the Recording Academy are able to build personal and business relationships, and gain access to members-only benefits and events through Grammy 365, a simple and convenient tool for accessing Academy information.

Erin McPherson, James Pitaro
The Upshot
The Upshot is at the leading edge of a new generation of news blogs, featuring a team that works to deliver the latest news as soon as the stories break. With commentary that’s often as candid as it is incisive, The Upshot’s six reporters and two editors represent an approach to reporting that brings old-school rigorous journalistic standards to bear on the fast-paced, blink-and-you-miss-it field of online journalism. The lean, no-frills outfit prides itself on its responsiveness to its readers, often relying on search queries to provide leads for potential stories. Their bottom-up approach gives them a unique perspective on the events of the day, often providing unconventional angles on popular stories, or filling in gaps left by mainstream media outlets.

Andrew Adamson, Teresa Cheng, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Gina Shay, Aron Warner
DreamWorks: Shrek Forever After
One of the premier animation studios working in motion pictures, DreamWorks Animation made its most recent installment in the popular Shrek franchise, Shrek Forever After, the studio’s first release in 3D, and hasn’t looked back. The studio’s producers were so excited by the new possibilities of stereoscopic storytelling, they swiftly made a stirring commitment: all of the company’s animation releases henceforward would be in 3D. Not coincidentally, Shrek Forever After has become DreamWorks Animation’s biggest international release to date. The final film in the franchise reunited the voice cast of Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz and Antonio Banderas, as well bringing on new cast members Jon Hamm, Walt Dohrn and Jane Lynch. But the biggest novelty was still seeing everyone’s favorite ogre in all of his 3D glory.

Advisory Panel
The 2010 Digital 25: Visionaries, Innovators and Producers recipients were voted upon by members of the Producers Guild and nominated by an advisory panel comprised of some of the most respected and incisive minds in digital entertainment. For their esteemed service, we are proud to thank our 2010 Advisory Panel:

Jason Calacanis CEO, Mahalo
Chris DeWolfe Founder, MySpace
David Eun President, AOL Media & Studios
Paul Greenberg President, Time Inc. Digital Lifestyle Group
Brian Hall GM, Microsoft Windows Live Worldwide
Ethan Beard Director, Facebook Developer Network
Albie Hecht CEO, World Wide Biggies/Founder, Spike TV
Ira Rubenstein EVP of Global Digital Media, Marvel
Doug Scott President, Ogilvy Entertainment
Neil Vogel CEO, the Webby Awards/CEO, Internet Week
Will Wright Creator, The Sims/CEO, Stupid Fun Club

27 Fall 2010 Produced by
Cleveland O’Neal has a message to independent producers who are struggling to make sense of the turbulent entertainment marketplace: embrace your inner entrepreneur.

O’Neal, who built his Connection III Entertainment Corp. into a veritable mini-network by strategic planning and good old-fashioned hard work, is reaping the rewards of his labors. His weekly syndicated series, Made in Hollywood, featuring celebrity interviews and behind-the-screen segments on how movies and television shows are made, is now in its sixth season. His FCC-friendly version, Made in Hollywood: Teen Edition, has just been picked up for a fifth season, and Connection III recently renewed a marketing partnership with MovieTickets.com.

It’s been a long road, with some bumps along the way, and now that O’Neal has achieved some success, he’s hoping to design a series of seminars for up-and-coming producers to help them deal with the ever-challenging and ever-changing marketplace environment.

“The old model, the work-for-hire model, isn’t the only option,” explains O’Neal. “It took me a long time to realize it, and one of my hopes is that we can teach some of these talented people who are starting out that there are so many more ways to generate revenue from material you produce if you own it. Aaron Spelling, Bernie Brillstein, Carsey-Werner — these are people who owned their own masters. These are the people to emulate.”

Photos by Michael Q. Martin

Cleveland O’Neal tapes a Connection III Entertainment Corp. Presentation reel “Intro” at his Wilshire Boulevard offices.
O’Neal began with a talent management company, specializing in kid and teen talent. His goal — like many managers then and now — was to create content that would feature his talent.

“No, I’ve always been a right brain/left brain guy,” he continues, “so I could visualize the title and the poster, the general idea and how to market it. So I came up with the idea and rough story.” From there, O’Neal found the best comedy writers he could and developed the script until he was happy with it.

Script in hand, O’Neal needed a director. Without money or connections to hire an A List director, he thought like an entrepreneur and went to AFI, scouting for up-and-coming talent. He found someone who no one had ever heard of, but whose reel and passion blew him away. He happened to be Doug Ellin, who went on to create Entourage. “I guess you could say I’m a pretty good judge of talent,” says O’Neal with a smile.

“We all put our hearts into making that movie. It was called Phat Beach, and it was the first hip hop beach movie. To this day, I’m proud of that movie and how we made it, but what I’m not proud of is what we got out of it financially.”

By the time the theatrical distribution deal for the independent movie was all said and done, O’Neal had little more than “Monkey Points” to show for it. “I call them Monkey Points, net points. No real points at all.”

THE MOVE TO TV

From day one, O’Neal had cultivated relationships with banks and was very surprised when he put his first deal together and none of them would loan him money for completion. Finally, a banker took him aside and pointed out that he was asking them to loan him money to build a product that would, at the end of the day, be owned by someone else — the studio or Cable eventually killed off this unique niche of programming, but he was there at just the right moment before it went away.

“What made after-school specials special is that they were perceived as pro bono,” O’Neal explains. “For a modest network license fee, after all was said and done, I owned the master to my special and once I’d fulfilled the original network run, I could do whatever I wanted with my master.”

O’Neal produced the first African-American after-school special What About Your Friends? for CBS. And as he’d anticipated, O’Neal owned those masters; after the two runs specified in his initial contract, he was free to do whatever he wanted with them — including license them again.

“So what did I do? I turned around and licensed it to HBO. And after that deal was up? I licensed it again. And since then, we produced a two-hour remake.”

A traditional independent producer, stuck in the work-for-hire mindset, might only see that they were doing pro-social TV and getting paid modest license fees, and probably wouldn't even take the job. O’Neal, viewing the entirety through an entrepreneurial lens, realized that he was creating product — product that he could sell over and over again, creating as many revenue streams as he could find. This seizing of whatever opportunities are available is a common theme in O’Neal’s journey.

“What’s important in my mind is that you first have to understand that as an independent producer, you are an entrepreneur. Second is that as an entrepreneur, you’ve got to be contrarian. Everyone at the time was making their independent movies and getting paid in Monkey Points. I made after-school specials and ended up owning my own material.”

THE SYNDICATION DEPARTMENT

With a couple of projects under his belt, O’Neal discovered a hole in the syndication market that he could exploit. One of his contacts let him know that his company should have an in-house syndication department.

“I didn’t have any money to hire staff, so that department was me,” O’Neal laughs. “At that time, almost every department was me. Have you ever seen a comedy skit where there’s a bunch of phones sitting in front of someone and someone calls in and asks to be transferred to the Accounting Department and the guy puts them on hold, picks up one of the other phones and says in a different voice, ‘Hello, this is Accounting. That was me!’”

The Syndication Department needed to sell some product, so O’Neal packed up his car and drove by himself up and down the entire eastern and western seaboard, the midwest and south, selling his two-hour movies to locally-owned affiliates.

Ever the entrepreneur, O’Neal put his house up as collateral.

The whole experience led him back to TV syndication. He happened to stumble upon the tail end of the after-school special business. Cable eventually killed off this unique niche of programming, but he was there at just the right moment before it went away.

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Filming in the U.S. Virgin Islands is one unbelievable shot after another. You’ll find a diversity of locations from rural farmland, lush rain forest and rolling hills to quaint European towns, cosmopolitan settings and colorful Caribbean architecture. Not to mention picturesque beaches. You’ll also find an experienced film community with English-speaking crews and the convenience of U.S. currency. For more opportunities in St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas, call 340.775.1444.
This was back before the wave of consolidation hit the industry, so every little town or region had a locally-owned affiliate station or two. So I would call in, set appointments, meet with the owner or program director, and sell them a show here and a show there. Once those relationships were established, and people responded favorably to my movies, they were comfortable continuing to buy more from me.

For the two hours or so of programming that O’Neal sold them, Connection III operated the same as any of the other, much larger networks. He held world premieres of TV movies in prime time. He did sequels to the most popular ones and in doing so, built up a library of properties that he owned.

“Nowadays, if you were to try and do it, you’d be told that Corporate in New York or Los Angeles handles all of the deals, and when you’d try to get in touch with Corporate, you wouldn’t even be able to get anyone on the phone. So I don’t know if anyone could do what I did if you tried to today, but I did it back then and slowly built up a customer base.”

O’Neal gathered his display book, headed inside and informed the receptionist that he had an appointment with the owner. O’Neal is adamant that as an entrepreneur, you have to buy programming from me would work.

“Finally, after a long time, this real young guy, a junior executive, came out and apologized to me. He said the owner couldn’t meet with me, but he’d be happy to. It must have been this guy’s first day on the job because I had to explain to him how the entire transaction of them buying programming from me would work.

“But you know what? They bought some programming, and they kept buying it.”

Flash-forward from that awkward encounter to an international conference where O’Neal’s Connection III shared the marquee with Fox, NBC and the other big boys. Or Connection III on the front cover of NATPE Daily. “I built it from the ground up,” he smiles. “I’m very proud of that.”

MADE IN HOLLYWOOD
Connection III’s Made in Hollywood and Made in Hollywood: Teen Edition both offer a weekly mix of celebrity promotional interviews and behind-the-scenes looks at how the creative arts are made.

O’Neal says that there wasn’t one particular moment when he knew that his hard work had paid off, there was simply a gradual process of getting better at it. “I mean, just committing to coming up with two hours of content every week is a big challenge and so it’s been more a gradual process. Again, we made a lot of mistakes… I don’t want to say mistakes so much as doing things inefficiently, but you learn by doing. I would hope that we could show people how to do things efficiently from the beginning.”

O’Neal himself marvels that his Made in Hollywood series franchise is available in 90.7 million U.S. homes with a gross average audience of 5.2 million U.S. TV viewers. “And now, MovieTickets.com is one of our sponsors. It’s all good.”

The success of both of these shows speaks to the popularity of the brand and the appeal of what goes on in entertainment, not just with the celebrity interviews, but also the behind-the-scenes segments of how these shows get made. The fact that they’ve both recently been picked up by Zee Network in India joining current foreign licensees including Fox International Channels in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, not to mention more than 20 other territories, illustrates that there’s a worldwide appetite for this type of programming.

PASSING ON HIS EXPERIENCE
Now that O’Neal has achieved some success, he is looking to set up a series of educational seminars for up-and-coming producers. The seminars would seek to educate PGA members and other aspiring producers in some of the areas that O’Neal had to learn through sometimes frustrating trial-and-error.

“We have a lot of very talented, hard-working people who need to change their mindset from that work-for-hire model to one of entrepreneurship,” he concludes. There’s so many little things that I’ve learned over the years — little things like making sure the checks always come to you first, things like that that may make a lot of sense to someone who’s been doing this for a while, but that someone inexperienced may have to learn the hard way. It would just be great if we could set up a program to educate them.”

Although rarely on-camera, Cleveland O’Neal often serves as an announcer for his weekly series, seen here in the Voiceover Booth at Connection III’s Wilshire Boulevard offices.
The gaming industry is a force to be reckoned with and it shows little signs of slowing. The annual retail revenue estimate for 2010 could come in around $20 billion*. And that's after a tough year in 2009. So who is making all these games? Producers, of course. Game producers. And unlike their brethren in film and television, game producers are at the forefront of interacting with their audience. Literally. Enter Starr Long.

Starr currently produces for the Walt Disney Company Online Studio division but is known for such titles as *Ultima Online* (the longest-running massively multiplayer game in history) and *Tabula Rasa* (one of the shorter-lived online games ever). If anyone is well-trained in the game business, it's Long, who sat down to share a balanced perspective on the business, having been involved both with successful and not-so-successful products. He also has had the luxury of sitting on both sides of the game production model, publisher and developer, respectively. This vantage has given Long an ability to draw expertise from both sides.

"The publisher generally provides the funds to the developer to actually make the games," Long explains. "Big publishers like Activision or Electronic Arts also have their own internal development teams, but also still outsource a lot to independent developers."

"I am an entertainer," he declares. "My job is to give people entertainment. I lead teams of people who make the content that entertains audiences while also trying to be on time and on budget."
Like all game producers, Long has made his living making entertainment that actually changes once it gets in the hands of the audience. Unlike film and television, games are interactive by design, which makes fueling the fire of this growing industry a challenging task.

“The difference is in the medium,” he elaborates. “TV and film are fixed — traditional narratives with plot structure — beginnings, middles and ends. They are not changed by their audiences. A game producer has to understand that fundamental aspect about this medium. The audience changes the experience every time they consume it. So in many ways, your role as a game producer is to create a structure for the audience wherein they consume the content. In some cases, there may be narrative structure in it, and in others cases, there may not be narrative structure.

“Technology also plays a part,” he continues. “A game producer has to have not only an understanding of current technology, but what’s ahead. Especially if you are working on an innovative product, you have to be able to see what will be in the marketplace three years from now. For instance, game controllers may radically change within that time.

You have to see into that future, because it will affect what and how you make a game. That’s not as much of an issue with TV or film.”

Breaking in

When asked how one gets into producing games, Long gets serious about playing games but also focuses on traditional storytelling as a critical influence.

“You have to be obsessively passionate about playing games and wanting to understand them and make them better — critically analyzing the games as you are playing. You have to be very, very, organized. You have to have the ability to understand technology quickly, even if you are not a technologist. You have to understand the fundamentals of entertainment — the traditions of storytelling, or world creation, and have an aptitude for constant research.”

Nor does the work stop with game play. “Avid consumption of other forms of entertainment can be leveraged,” Long adds. “Those experiences can make better games. I love music. I love sci-fi novels and movies; when I am consuming those I might think, ‘Oh, that’s a great scenario for a level in a game.’”

As one might expect, Long’s source materials are an eclectic bunch. “The works of Joseph Campbell, like The Power of Myth and The Hero With a Thousand Faces, are incredibly valuable for building up archetypal characters and story arcs. We used those works and [Kahlil Gibran’s] The Prophet as the inspiration for the main character in the Ultima series, who was called the Avatar. I also find great inspiration in novels like Fallen Dragon by Peter F. Hamilton. In that book, there’s an incredible fire fight sequence on a primitive world with a very high oxygen content, which means the very air can explode. That inspired us in Tabula Rasa to design a level where the air was flammable.”

Quality is really all that matters. If you are successful, no one ultimately remembers if you were late or how much you cost.

Long also knows what it takes to get new ideas off the ground. Experience has taught him that there are many places that allow an idea to germinate and grow — it all depends on where you are and the nature of your clout. For Long, the approach is a simple one.

“You have to be a great pitch man,” he asserts. “It’s not good enough simply to have a great idea — you have to be able to affect people with your passion for that idea. In the traditional console model, you have the two roles, publisher and developer. Typically, the publisher provides the funds to the developer to make the games. If you are on your own or with a small development group and you have clout and a reputation, only then can you go to EA or Activision with a proposal. Otherwise, they approach developers with an offer for something they want done.

“If you are inside a big publisher, it’s the internal development teams led by a producer and or a director that pitch to execs. Otherwise, an exec may assign a project to an internal team.”

Long also has insight for independent producers looking for backing or a way to make and break their game. “For independent game ideas,” he observes, “it’s about the platform — it’s very dependent on that. If it’s a mobile app — you can make and publish that yourself. Facebook is the same. Smaller platforms can use minor investments and get post-deals after you are known, or you can make some deal after it’s done. But if the scale is massive, you need funding and backers — tens of millions of dollars. For that you have to 1) get investors like equity partners angel funding and then you can go your own way, or 2) Go with a major publisher. This is critical for any big console game — you HAVE to go with a publishing partner.”

Lessons

When asked about his regrets, Starr is refreshing frank about some of the biggest mistakes a producer can make in developing video games.

“Shipping product too early, not giving the product the proper amount of time to be ready for an audience, coupled with overselling the product to the audience … that’s the perfect storm,” he summarizes, “it’s a lot easier to promise what you are going to deliver, but then under-deliver. It happens a lot in the video game industry because the development process takes so long and it’s so expensive. And we are driven by holiday vestments. When that comes around, the pressure that is on to finish and ship is huge.”

Ultima vs. Tabula

When we asked about his comparative experiences produc- ing Ultima Online and Tabula Rasa, Long offered his typical candor. “It is a great question as to why Ultima Online was so successful — or at least possessed of great longevity whereas Tabula Rasa was incredibly unsuccessful and very short-lived. Both of them were created by many of the same people, like myself and Richard Garriott, and both received a very large amount of media attention. Fundamentally, they were both massively multiplayer games, allowing thousands of people to play together in a virtual world. Interestingly, both of them also launched too early with a lot of bugs and balance problems. In fact, Ultima Online got the ‘Coaster of the Year’ award from PC Gamer for how buggy it was.”

But the differences became clearer over time. “Ultima Online was based on a very well-established single-player franchise in the industry,” Long continues, “one that had at
least 12 versions prior to the release of *Ultima Online*... This meant that the game already had a very large international fan base. *Ultima Online* was also one of the very first of its kind so it had the luxury of being forgiven for many of its flaws because it was so new and innovative. *Ultima Online* was also built to be what we call a ‘sandbox,’ where the players were given the tools to shape their own experiences versus us, as the designers, guiding them. For instance, there were no quests in the game. As part of the sandbox, we gave the players the ability to create items in the game and own homes, ships, and businesses where they could sell their goods. This virtual economy aspect is one of the real linchpins of *Ultima Online* and in fact, resulted in the first major sale of virtual goods on Ebay when a castle — very rare player house, due to the size of the lot required — sold for thousands of dollars.

In the end, I believe that this level of simulation of reality is what has kept *Ultima* alive all these years.

“In contrast, almost every large online game since *Ultima Online* has focused on a much more sequenced and structured experience for the user. They have also been much more focused on combat. That kind of game has been orders of magnitude more successful than *Ultima Online*. *Ultima Online* at its peak had almost 300,000 subscribers whereas *World of Warcraft* has almost 20 million subscribers. So clearly, there is a larger market for combat focused games with a clear structure, such as quests provide.

“Tabula Rasa” attempted to innovate this combat experience with a more dynamic landscape where the enemy AI [artificial intelligence] would actually seize and control sections of the game and the players would have to wrest control back. We promised that this would result in an amazingly different experience every time the player logged in. In reality, the experience was only somewhat different, but that unique feature was overshadowed by the number of bugs in the game, the low performance on many players’ computers, and insufficient content to keep the higher-level players engaged. Many of those problems would have been forgiven except that we launched into a much more mature market than *Ultima Online* launched into, so we were competing with much more polished and evolved experiences like *World of Warcraft*. If we had waited an extra year, we might have been able to make *Tabula Rasa* competitive, but we were already late and the pressure was on to try to recoup our investment.

“I learned from *Tabula Rasa* that quality is really all that matters. If you are successful, no one ultimately remembers if you were late or how much you cost. This means that it’s always worth it to try and spend the extra time and money to get higher-quality results. If you don’t think you can get the product to a high-enough quality, it’s probably a better choice just not to ship it.

“In the future,” he reflects, “I think that I would walk away and have my name removed from the credits before that happens again. It is such a damaging moment between you and your audience. Your fundamental relationship is with the audience, and if you let them down, they don’t forget. That will stay on your resume forever with the audience. You can’t escape that.”

**THE “NEVERS”**

To mix it up, we asked Long something unusual: “What should a game producer never do?” He paused and thought for a few moments, before breaking into a smile.

“Never stop playing games — ever.”

He continues, “You should never become attached to any idea, especially your own. Change is the only constant, especially in games. Because what you create changes when people consume it. You may make something you think is really good and everyone making it may agree, but when the audience plays it, it all changes, and you have to let go if they don’t like it.

“You should never stop listening to your team. The people in the trenches making stuff — you have to be receptive to their feedback.”

And finally, advice that Long himself so evidently lives by: “Never be afraid to admit your mistakes.”

If you are working on an innovative product, you have to be able to see what will be in the marketplace three years from now. For instance, game controllers may radically change within that time.
If producers Marc Smerling and Andrew Jarecki are excited about discussing their new film *Catfish*, they’re also a bit protective. When the element of surprise is key to a picture’s success, giving too much away can spell disaster. Jarecki notes, “People, particularly journalists, have been very respectful. Fundamentally, people and — I think — critics love movies.”

*Catfish* follows director Ariel Schulman’s brother Yaniv, a photographer living in New York City, as he becomes increasingly involved in online correspondence and even old-fashioned snail-mail package exchanges with a Michigan family.

Having produced *Capturing the Friedmans* and now *Catfish*, Smerling and Jarecki’s passion for documentary filmmaking is evident. Jarecki notes, “There are films that treat their subjects with dignity, and I think that was really essential in *Catfish.*” He adds, “We haven’t really produced a film before *Catfish* that we weren’t also writing or also directing. This project came to us at an interesting place in its evolution, where we knew that we could make a contribution and take the film to another level.”

Smerling and Jarecki were busy working on the narrative film *All Good Things* in Los Angeles when Jarecki’s wife Nancy brought them a project through some mutual friends. Jarecki explains, “The project was introduced as three young guys working on a documentary, which turns into something completely different. They were fans of *Capturing the Friedmans*, and they knew how that movie started out as one thing ended up as another thing. They felt like it would be really useful to have some outside perspective and maybe some godfathering in the process.” Jarecki and Smerling were intrigued and wanted to see what these boys, directors Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, and the film’s star, Yaniv Schulman, had come up with.

They watched the footage, which was in a rough assembly edit. Upon viewing it, Jarecki recalled, “It was really arresting. It’s really striking.” Jarecki points out what really attracted them was, “this incredible love story that was happening and then all of a sudden, an incredible twist. Yaniv is so charismatic and you go on this journey with him, then you make this hard right turn.” It was important to both producers and directors in making this film that their subjects not become trivialized, or that they seem to ridicule or make light of the subject. Jarecki notes, “It wouldn’t matter if it became the biggest commercial success in the world, that simply would not be something we would want to have our names on.”

It was at Sundance that *Catfish* really took off. Smerling comments, “It was sort of similar to our experience with *Capturing the Friedmans*. Everyone liked it, but no one knew what to do with it. There’s always a certain hesitation with a film that’s a documentary.” The pair say they had positioned the film in a rather modest way because they wanted people to discover it for themselves. It worked. Not only were they totally sold out at Sundance, but there were suddenly long lines around the block; it had become a sort of viral entity in the festival environment. Smerling says, “It was around that time we knew the studios were starting to take an interest, partly as a result of the success of films such as *Paranormal Activity*, which was clearly not a documentary, but had that feeling of found footage. And there was certainly that aspect to *Catfish.*” Jarecki notes that Paramount expressed an interest in the movie, after which director Brett Ratner (*Rush Hour, X-Men: The Last Stand*) saw it in Los Angeles. “What a lot of people don’t know about Brett,” adds Jarecki, “is that he’s a huge fan not just of film, but particularly of documentary film.” Given Ratner’s association with action films, the pair were a little surprised at his initial interest in *Catfish*. Jarecki notes, “It was a surprise to us, but as we have gotten to know him, it’s become clear that he’s just a film lover.”

Marc Smerling and Andrew Jarecki Reel in *Catfish*

(*Photo courtesy of Andrew Jarecki*)

**STRANGER THAN FICTION**

by Jenn Lloyd

*Catfish* follows director Ariel Schulman’s brother Yaniv, a photographer living in New York City, as he becomes increasingly involved in online correspondence and even old-fashioned snail-mail package exchanges with a Michigan family.

Having produced *Capturing the Friedmans* and now *Catfish*, Smerling and Jarecki’s passion for documentary filmmaking is evident. Jarecki notes, “There are films that treat their subjects with dignity, and I think that was really essential in *Catfish.*” He adds, “We haven’t really produced a film before *Catfish* that we weren’t also writing or also directing. This project came to us at an interesting place in its evolution, where we knew that we could make a contribution and take the film to another level.”

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Marc Smerling and Andrew Jarecki Reel in *Catfish*
A lot of people in Hollywood were seeing the film around this time, with the producers well aware that the “Sundance effect” can be kind of a bubble. Jarecki goes on to recall, “So we screened it at CAA and got a similarly strong reaction.” It was after that screening that Ratner called them out of the blue to say that he loved the movie and thought he knew of a good home for it, a place where it could be released through Universal and its highly-regarded marketing department.

“It kind of started from that,” Jarecki continues. “After that moment, there seemed to be a raging enthusiasm for it.” Quickly, Paramount became interested and wanted to screen it for a live audience. Soon, every studio seemed to call at once saying they, too, had to see it. The big breakthrough came with a call from Relativity Media, who said they didn’t care about screening it for an audience. The message: “We know how good it is, and we want to be a partner.”

There has been much discussion regarding the status of Catfish as a true documentary or a work that blurs the lines between documentary and narrative. Jarecki and Smerling allow that the story of the film represents a journey for the audience and possesses a strong narrative momentum. Jarecki notes, “Because the audience is asked to go through all these twists and turns, that may leave them feeling the film is scripted in some way. Because how else can these things happen in such a neat way?” Jarecki notes that the film changes on an almost subconscious level when the directors and star arrive in Ishpeming, Michigan, and they meet Angela, one of the family members with whom Yaniv had been corresponding. “For a large chunk of the movie,” explains Jarecki, “it’s shot with very small home cameras. The boys didn’t really know what they had. They shot four or five hours of Yaniv and everything was sort of rough and low-tech.” Smerling adds, “They knew there was a story there. So once in Michigan, they upgraded to HD cameras. The narrative being such an adventure, and then this sort of upgrade of the look makes it feel a little like it’s fake. But it isn’t fake.” Jarecki notes that having seen the footage at a very early stage and then watching much more of the footage that didn’t make it into the film, “it frankly never occurred to us that people were going to think it was fake. Even for a moment.”

Smerling and Jarecki have known each other since they were 8 years old. After Smerling attended USC graduate school, he began working in documentary filmmaking with Tom Brokaw. He then started his own production company. At the time, Jarecki had been in another business. They decided to reengage to make Capturing the Friedmans in 2003. Jarecki points out that Marc and he have been in each other’s lives for various reasons for many years. “I think the
advantage of that, when you’re making films together, is that the film business is famous for being a place where mistrust is often the emotion that carries the day. And I think if you can work with someone that you have really fundamental building blocks of trust in a relationship — and I’ve known Marc longer than any friend I have — it’s really impossible for people to get between you. It’s all about keeping everybody in the boat and keeping everyone moving in the same direction. I think Marc and I have complementary skill sets."

The pair notes that since coming together, one of their key goals has been to get advice from the people they respect. Jarecki recalls producing a short film back in 1988 and not realizing he needed insurance for such a venture. Jarecki says, “We went to General Camera that morning and they asked for our insurance. We didn’t even know what that was. And I remember we called Mike Housman who said, ‘Oh, just put it on my insurance certificate.’ So certainly in my life that kind of thing has happened many times when we were in a bind.” On Capturing the Friedmans, Jarecki credits Albert Maysles as a huge help, particularly in grappling with some of the ethical issues of the film and making certain that they were treating the film’s subjects in the correct way. Jarecki goes on to note, “Albert was a really great resource to be able to go show stuff to and talk to. He gave us a lot of confidence that we were doing things fairly.” As far as their new film venture, the pair notes that Yaniv Schulman is now starting to get all kinds of new attention, and is in the exciting process of deciding who he needs to be and who he can be.

In the end, Jarecki believes these people are a part of his and his colleague’s lives. “You spend so much time with them. You get to know them during this very intense period of their lives. You feel that through all the bumps and the ups and the downs that they’ve been handled well.”

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"It frankly never occurred to us that people were going to think it was fake. Even for a moment."
I joined the Producers Guild of America in 2004. As I considered which committee to get involved with, my father-in-law, Stanley Rubin, a past PGA President, suggested I look up his friend George Sunga. George was and still is the Chair of the Diversity Committee. As a Brazilian-born (read Latina) producer, I thought I had found my place.

In 2004, the Committee’s main endeavor was the Celebration Diversity — an annual commemoration of the people that made a difference by producing shows which truthfully reflected our diverse world. The event was a modest-sized companion to the Producers Guild Awards, and although we didn’t have the same funds, we had the same heart. And it was that heart that soon led a core group from within the Diversity Committee to realize we needed to do more than award producers for their work and efforts. We needed to take matters into our own hands. We needed a producers’ workshop.

George Sunga, Charles Howard, Steve Grossman, Yvonne Russo and myself spent many late afternoons at the Guild and at different coffee shops around town creating a format for the workshop: an ambitious A through Z of producing for producers with show ideas in the areas of feature films, TV dramas, TV comedies, Web series and reality television. Our idea was to launch a program that would support and inspire producers of diverse backgrounds, as well as producers committed to diverse ideas. We wanted to educate and kick down doors. After a couple of months in development, we were ready to propose the idea to PGA Executive Director Vance Van Petten, who quickly embraced it with enthusiasm and support.

We picked a day for the start of the workshop, put together a “call to action” and an application form and sent both to dozens of organizations in the L.A. area. Within weeks, we had hundreds of applications from aspiring and working producers looking to take the next step with their projects. We also got amazing feedback and support from within our Guild from such producers as Marshall Herskovitz, Bruce Cohen, Mark Gordon, Ali LeRoi, and Damon Lindelof, who were willing to mentor our participants on their first time out of the gate. Their presence turned our workshop into the hottest ticket in town, and I’m happy to report that not only has this group of producers come back for the six years we have been presenting the workshop, but other PGA producers have come aboard to participate in our efforts.

I’m also proud to say through the Diversity Workshop, many participants have found employment on such shows as Grey’s Anatomy and The Unit. Another accomplishment of the workshop has been a support system that starts during the first session of the program and continues well beyond its three-month duration. Committee members, mentors, and participants form a bond and share a wealth of information almost on a daily basis.

We have also welcomed new Committee members, including Rebecca Graham Forde, Karyn Benkendorfer, Megan Mascena, Christina Lee Storm and Vincent Williams, who brought us into the 21st century through a very dynamic website (www.pgadiversity.org) and a Facebook page.

Our program continues to evolve, as we learn with each new group of participants how better to communicate the skills and tools needed for a successful producing career.

In addition to the Diversity Workshop, in 2009, a breakfast club was formed by the diversity directors of SAG, AFTRA, WGA west, DGA, Film Independent, Women in Film, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and the PGA, out of a general feeling of a need in the entertainment community to discuss how together we could join forces to advance diversity.
Our initial effort, *Out of Silence: Readings From the Afghan Women’s Writing Project*, marked the first time the Hollywood unions and guilds had ever agreed to promote an event together. The show was produced by Steak House, Julie Vizza and myself. The material for the reading was selected from dozens of blogs, poems and essays from the Afghan Women’s Writing Project (www.awwproject.org); a writing mentorship program for women in Afghanistan taught by American female writers via the Web. The program was started by novelist Masha Hamilton who was awed and inspired by the resolute courage of the women she met in Afghanistan. Once she came back to the United States, Masha felt the need to create a way for the Afghan women to communicate with the world without interference of male family members or the media.

On the day of the event, more than two hours prior to “showtime,” a long line had already formed around the block. The 300 seats of the theater were quickly taken by guests who had come to listen to such actors as Nancy Travis, Conchata Ferrell, Marcia Wallace, Jodi Long, Summer Bishil, Nichelle Nichols, Bahar Soomekh, Nadia Bjorlin, and Teal Sherer read the funny, moving, and wrenching words of the Afghan women.

The night was successful in numerous ways. We honored women, we brought attention to the plight of Afghan women and we, the Diversity Committee of the Producers Guild of America, performed an important role in bringing together Hollywood’s unions and guilds to a common goal; a true collaboration of entertainment professionals.

The Diversity Committee followed the Afghan night with networking events between the Writers Guild and the Producers Guild as well as panel discussions at the Brazilian Film Festival — an effort between the PGA and Women in Film.

In July of 2010, Screech Washington (PGA’s Vice President of Television), George Sunga and I were invited to attend an event, “Light! Camera! Access!”, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and attended by Secretary Solis. As representatives of the PGA, we were invited to participate in an open discussion on disability and the media. The proposed question: How can the government assist Hollywood in creating more jobs for people with disabilities? With all the wars, the advances in science and people living longer, the number of individuals living with some type of disability has skyrocketed.
The event took place at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, where we heard from a number of performers belonging to I AM PWD — a global campaign of SAG, AFTRA and Actors’ Equity seeking equal employment opportunities — and from aspiring producers, writers and directors. Again representing the PGA, I sat on a panel with my colleagues Ray Bradford (AFTRA), Rebecca Yee (SAG), and Kim Myers (WGA west) to answer questions and propose solutions. The focus of our discussion was how the unions and guilds can be more proactive in the employment of people with disabilities. At the end of the day and the summit, we all had come to an understanding and a plan on how to promote the employment of PWD (People With Disabilities) in the entertainment and media business. Our first step: putting together a one-day workshop at the various guilds and unions for PWD. Second step: bringing back the Media Access Award to help promote our agenda.

Over the years, many producers have been honored with a Producers Guild Media Access Award, including our President Emeritus Marshall Herskovitz. But in 2006, due to budget cuts, the Media Access Awards ceased to exist. On October 8, at the Peninsula Hotel, the PGA Diversity Committee together with SAG, AFTRA, CSA, WGA west, the Reeve Foundation, and Friends of Californians With Disabilities, brought back the Media Access Awards. I was especially thrilled about this year’s event because I produced it, and because we have decided to name the Producers Guild of America Media Access Award after our very own George Sunga. As of 2010, this award will be known as the Producers Guild of America George Sunga Award, and our first award recipient is PGA member and Producers Council delegate Mike Tollin.

Besides being a very successful producer (Smallville, Norbit, Coach Carter, Radio, among other TV series, documentaries, and feature films), Mike Tollin is one of the good guys. He is not only a successful producer but also a socially responsible individual who is deeply involved with social and educational programs.

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Wrapping up the year will be a “meet and greet” between members of DGA, WGA west, a group of producers from Latin America and Spain, and members of the Producers Guild. Many plans are in the works for the Diversity Committee in the upcoming year, but none of it would be possible if not for the support of all the individuals that make up PGA; wonderful people, wonderful committee and wonderful Guild.

Deborah Calla is the Chair of the PGA’s Producing Workshop.
Introducing the Green Production Guide

The Producers Guild of America and our thousands of members are continuously expanding our commitment to the environment. The issues of climate change and environmental protection grow ever more pressing. By now, you’ve probably read some of the startling statistics:

- The average American uses one 100-foot-tall Douglas fir tree worth of paper and wood products each year — and the whole country uses 85 million tons of paper in a year.
- Recycling a ton of paper saves 17 mature trees. 79 gallons of oil, 7,000 gallons of water, and 41,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity.
- Americans waste 27% of their food — throwing out 365 pounds a year for every man, woman, and child... Even 5% of the 96 billion pounds of edible food tossed out annually in this country could feed 4 million people a day for a year.
- According to a study prepared by the Integrated Waste Management Board, Hollywood has produced more air pollution than the hotel, apparel, and aerospace industries combined.

While most of these statistics aren’t specific to entertainment, you can look at these numbers and realize how much more, as an industry, we waste. But there is hope, and the entertainment sector, like many others, has ramped up at these numbers and realize how much more, as an industry, we waste. But there is hope, and the entertainment sector, like many others, has ramped up its focus on identifying solutions to help us operate more sustainably.

The PGAGreen Committee responded to this growing cultural shift by developing www.PGAgreen.org, a comprehensive website dedicated to greening productions. Kathleen Courtney, Chair of the PGA Green Committee (west), says, “One of the tools on the site, Fredstik, a green” version of craigslist, has taken off! In fact, the Disney production I’m on now just picked up flats and paint advertised on Fredstik — free of charge!"

And now, the PGA has taken another exciting step by creating the Green Production Guide, a site that Courtney calls “our crowning achievement.”

What is the Green Production Guide?
Over the summer, the Producers Guild of America, in partnership with Disney, Fox, NBC Universal, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Warner Bros., launched the interactive website http://www.greenproductionguide.com.

“The studio sustainability reps approached PGAgreen to discuss the idea of creating a vendor website, with a carbon calculator, for the industry in the fall of 2009,” says Mari Jo Winkler, Chair of the PGA Green Committee (east). “It was something that our national [Green] committee had talked about doing in conjunction with the PGAgreen.org site. It was pretty evident at that meeting that we were the organization to work with since the environmental goals of PGA Green were in alignment with those of the studios.”

A Vast Global Database of Vendors
The Green Production Guide is a user-friendly website where members of the film industry can access a vast global database of vendors that offer sustainable or environmentally responsible services and products. Currently, more than 2,000 vendor listings are available, referred by producers and production representatives who had positive experiences with products and services on past productions. On an ongoing basis, both producers and individual companies will be able to submit, for consideration, profiles of vendors that use and offer sustainable goods and services. Users can search by product category, department, location or key word.

Take a look at those statistics above — how many sodas can get thrown away on your set? How much of the catering and craft services gets tossed? Wouldn’t it be great to quickly find a caterer who provides composting bins, or a lumber supplier who uses FSC wood, or a vendor who supplies recycling bins and pickup? Look it up on the vendor guide! Biodiesel in Vancouver? No problem. FSC–certified wood in Albuquerque? It’s in there. Green options for the makeup department? Take a look.

It’s easy and ever-evolving. Says Courtney, “We look forward to expanding its international library of vendors with the help of our fellow Guild members and filmmakers all around the globe.” The more comprehensive the list is, the better our chances of greening the production.

A Carbon Calculator Designed for Film and Television Production!
The new site also offers a Carbon Calculator which can be downloaded to help producers determine their production’s carbon footprint. The Carbon Calculator measures the carbon emissions generated by your production, based on information you enter on emissions sources such as utility electricity and heating, fuel, flight and hotel use. Download a copy of the Carbon Calculator using the link on the site and you will be able to immediately see the effect of green production practices on your carbon footprint.

A PGA Green Unified Best Practices
In our business, let’s face it — all roads lead to the producer. Producers are like coaches in the middle of locker rooms with game plans, orchestrating what we spend, who we hire, what we build, where we shoot, how we get there, and the millions of other moving parts that comprise our productions. An increasing number of productions are using green-production practices. Many producers are now hiring a Green Steward/PA or utilizing consultants to coordinate the greening of their productions. Studios and production companies are increasingly more receptive to this idea as environmental initiatives have become a corporate priority.

On the Green Production Guide site there are links to various best practice guides. A PGA Green Unified Best Practices Guide appears as well, which will ultimately provide a universal template for achievable goals informed by producer experiences. The best way to launch a green production is to review these best practices and make a list of goals at the beginning of pre-production. The producing team and production managers can mandate that a producing team, cast and crew follow through on the execution of these goals.

How Can We Use the Green Production Guide?
PAG East launched the first training panel in September at the New York Kodak Screening Room, “Calculating Your Carbon Footprint: How to Measure, Reduce and Offset.” Producers and members of the producing team, production accountants, and studio representatives were in attendance.

The PGA Green Committee is now planning a year’s worth of panels, screenings, seminars and appearances at film festivals, to educate our industry on how to set goals, and use the Calculator to measure the carbon footprint of a production to reduce and hopefully offset it.

One of the most dynamic aspects of the site is that it is a constantly expanding tool developed by the industry for the industry. The Green Production Guide website will be expanded and enhanced during this second phase, based on feedback gathered during training and outreach. PGA Green encourages all members to check it out and join the ranks of producers who are making a difference! —Allison Hall
Your PGA Health Benefits

PGA members have a variety of healthcare options available to them. While none of them represents a “perfect plan,” many members will be able to improve their coverage or the cost of their coverage through their PGA membership. Members may take advantage of two options: Employer-paid coverage and self-pay coverage.

Qualifying for Employer-Paid Coverage Through the Motion Picture Industry Plan

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the program, you must...
- Be credited as an executive producer, producer, associate producer or post-production supervisor;
- Work for a company that is an AMPTP signatory, or signatory to Motion Picture Industry Health Plan;
- Work on a theatrical motion picture or prime time network television program; some primetime cable and syndicated series also qualify, as do productions for which an AMPTP member agrees to make contributions; and
- Work on a production that utilizes a West Coast IA crew.

How many hours do I have to work to qualify for coverage?

To qualify for the Industry Health Plan, a producer must be credited with 600 hours (automatically computed at 56.5 hours per week) within a six-month qualifying period. To maintain coverage, he or she must be credited with at least 400 hours for each subsequent six-month period. If a member becomes ineligible, his or her eligibility for benefits will be reviewed every month until he or she accumulates enough contribution hours within a six-month span to re-qualify for benefits.

I've determined that I qualify; how do I get my coverage to start?

Contributions are not automatic; they must be directly requested by the producer. Producers request contributions by signing and submitting a participation form within 60 days of starting eligible employment. If the producer does not submit a signed participation form, he or she will be deemed to have waived his or her right to contributions with respect to the job. Participation forms should be provided by the employer upon request. If you have difficulty obtaining a form, contact PGA Executive Director Vance Van Petten at (310) 358-9020 x104.

My company isn’t an AMPTP signatory. Am I out of luck?

Not necessarily. If you are employed by a company that is a signatory to both the IATSE Basic Agreement and the Motion Picture Industry Health & Welfare and Pension Plans, you can request that they make voluntary contributions, even if they are not members of the AMPTP. This request has been granted many times, but can be difficult to secure. A good way to know if your production has signed on to the IATSE Basic Agreement is to check if the camera, grips, or sound providers are union.

If I qualify, is my employer required to approve my coverage?

Unfortunately, no. However, the cost to the employer is reasonable enough that many employers will approve the coverage.

Additionally, standard practice has dictated (though again, not required) that once a production begins making contributions to the Health Plan for one producer, it will make those same contributions for any eligible producer on the show, provided coverage is requested in a timely fashion.

Questions? Contact:

Employer-paid Plan
Kyle Katz  (310) 358-9020 x101

Self-pay Plans
Scott Brandt  (888) 700-7725

Self-Pay Plans: Atlantis and Producers Health

In a perfect world, every PGA member would qualify for employer-paid coverage. For those who do not qualify, the PGA offers two self-pay options which, because of our group status, are likely to offer better rates than what members can find on the open market.

The Atlantis Health Plan is available only to New York-based members of the PGA East. The Producers Health Plans are available nationally, including in New York. If you’re currently without health insurance, we encourage you to call immediately to see if you qualify for a plan that suits you. Even if you currently have coverage (particularly other self-pay coverage), it would be worth your while to investigate the options you may have through the PGA self-pay plans.

PGA HEALTH BENEFITS: STEP BY STEP

START

Do you have health insurance? yes no Is it employer-paid? yes no Congratulations. You’re one of the lucky ones.

Are you typically credited as Producer/Executive Producer, Associate Producer or Post-Production Supervisor? yes no

Do you work for an AMPTP signatory? yes no

Do you work on a theatrical motion picture, prime time network program, or prime time dramatic first-run syndicated program? yes no

Does your production utilize a West Coast IA crew? yes no

How have you been credited with 560 hours of such work over the past six months, assuming a 56-hour workweek? yes no

Request that your employer make contributions into the Motion Picture Industry Plan on your behalf.

Did your employer make the contributions? yes no Congratulations, you’ve got employer-paid health coverage. You must work 400 hours over the next six months (assuming a 56-hour workweek) to maintain your coverage.

Call Scott Brandt at (888) 700-7725. Request a quote for Producers Health Insurance or Atlantis Health Plan (New York-based).

You should sign up for the PGA plan. The more members sign up, the lower the average costs, and the better the benefits.

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The Producers’ Mark

Just as this issue was going to press, The New York Times published a story about the Producers’ Mark, a PGA credit initiative that has gained the support of more than 140 of the most respected motion picture producers working in the industry today. If adopted, the initiative would add the designation p.g.a. following the “Produced By” screen credits of producers certified through the Guild’s arbitration process.

What Have You Been Missing?

We know how much time you spend sitting by your mailbox, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the next action-packed issue of Produced by. But did you know that there’s a way to get a wide variety of information and insights on producing without having to rely on the U.S. Postal Service?

We’re talking, of course, about www.producersguild.org. Yes, we’re well aware that for much of its history, the PGA website has been like the Sphinx of Giza: ancient-looking, unchanging, and missing some pretty important pieces.

But this spring, the website re-launched with lots of new functionalities, including social networking, online dues payment and a host of new job features. (Speaking of which — if you’re a PGA member, have you updated your online resume yet? If you haven’t, do it today, for real.) By the time this is published, members will probably be using the site to RSVP for Guild events.

And over the last two months, the website has featured a steady stream of new content, including news items, PGA events, important member information, items from past and present, and exclusive Web-only content. If you haven’t been checking over the few weeks, you’ve missed:

- Essential information on receiving your PGA screeners
- A special feature on producing animation and games for mobile devices
- An extensive four-part series on producing sizzle reels
- Fun photos from the PGA’s outing to Dodger Stadium
- A re-printed Produced by feature on creating behind-the-scenes footage

As this issue goes to press, the site is featuring the first-ever video message from PGA Presidents Hawk Koch and Mark Gordon. We’re pretty certain it won’t be the last.

This is just the beginning. Our goal is to make www.producersguild.org a must-read site every morning for producers — before the trades, before Deadline Hollywood Daily. For now, start checking in online with the PGA every few days. After all, we wouldn’t want you to miss something big.

Producers Guild Awards Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 11, 2010</td>
<td>TELEVISION SERIES AND NON-FICTION TELEVISION NOMINATION POLLS OPEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 29, 2010</td>
<td>THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE AND ANIMATED THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NOTICE OF CREDITS AND ELIGIBILITY FORM DEADLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 8, 2010</td>
<td>TELEVISION SERIES AND SPECIALS NOMINATION POLLS CLOSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 3, 2010</td>
<td>LONG-FORM TELEVISION NOTICE OF CREDITS AND ELIGIBILITY FORM DEADLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 6, 2010</td>
<td>THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE, ANIMATED THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AND LONG-FORM TELEVISION NOMINATION POLLS OPEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 3, 2011</td>
<td>THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE, ANIMATED THEATRICAL MOTION PICTURE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AND LONG-FORM TELEVISION NOMINATION POLLS CLOSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4, 2011</td>
<td>PRODUCERS GUILD AWARDS NOMINEES ARE ANNOUNCED FOR ALL OTHER CATEGORIES; FINAL POLLS OPEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 21, 2011</td>
<td>FINAL POLLS CLOSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22, 2011</td>
<td>2011 PRODUCERS GUILD AWARDS</td>
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</tbody>
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New Members
The Producers Guild is proud to welcome the following new members, who have joined the Guild since July, 2010.

**AP COUNCIL**
- Associate Producer/Production Manager/Production Supervisor
  - TRAVIS GATES
  - REBECCA IKLER
  - JENNIFER OLLMAN
  - BRETT STOLNICK
- Segment/Field/Story Producer
  - JEANNE-MARIE BREMER
  - TREVOR ROGAS
  - PAULETTE TERRY
  - PATRICIA TONE
- Post-Production
  - MARIA ALVES
  - GREGORY CARTER
  - DANIELLE DI STEFANO
  - JOHN DUARTE
  - JENNIFER DUMONT
  - JOHN TRICOLI

**NEW MEDIA COUNCIL**
- TYLER LEE
- TARA TREMAINE
- JEFF VORIS

**PRODUCERS COUNCIL**
- LETTY ARONSON
- TIMOTHY BRUNO
- STUART COOPER
- ANDREW DEANE
- SHANNON FARR
- MARK FINKELPEARL
- BETSY HART ROSSOFF
- TRACY HELLERUD
- LYNN HUGHES
- BASIL IWANYK
- ROBERT KRAVIS
- LEON LOGOTHETIS
- TODD LONDON
- DYLAN MASSIN
- ZACHARY MATZ
- PAUL MILLER
- NOAH MOROWITZ
- DOUGLAS ROSS
- ROBERT SALERNO
- STEPHANIE SAVAGE
- HAL SCHWARTZ
- SCOTT STEPHENS
- ANDREW SUGERMAN
- KATHRYN TAKIS
- PATRICIA WILSON
- JANET ZUCKER
- JERRY ZUCKER
DOMINIK RAUSCH

I was very excited when Salvy Maleki from the PGA Mentoring Committee informed me that Bill Fay was going to be my mentor. My goal was to talk to Bill about production needs on movies of the size and scope that Legendary Pictures produces. I hoped that Bill’s perspective would help me to transition from new media and branded entertainment into the more traditional film world, as I want to combine the best aspects of both traditional and new media to create the “perfect media.”

Obviously, Bill Fay is a very busy producer, and yet, he took an hour and a half out of his busy schedule to invite me to his office and answer all the questions I had.

One of the questions I prepared was how budgeting and financing has changed since the age of the “Golden ’90s” and films like Independence Day compared to today’s big-budget films like Clash of the Titans, produced in the wake of the economic meltdown.

When we talked a little more about the movies that he had produced, we started to discuss other things like making creative decisions in relation to financial restraints and what he looks for in a script to consider for production under Legendary Pictures’ label. It was very interesting to exchange ideas and to discuss what makes a good script and what kind of story most audiences are attracted to. We had very similar ideas and agreed that one of the highest priorities is always to keep in mind how the audience will perceive the story and characters.

Overall, it was inspiring to listen to and talk with Bill, as he is doing exactly what I want to do when I reach a status like his in this industry. And getting all the information about working with a studio from an inside perspective was invaluable!

Best of all: We are still in touch and we are planning to get together one more time to talk in a little bit more detail about budgets and financing.

I want to thank the Mentoring Committee and the PGA so much for making this possible! The timing couldn’t be more perfect as I am about to finish producing my last branded entertainment project and am now focusing on transitioning into the film and studio world. It definitely exceeded my expectations!
Hiring someone these days can be like finding a person you’d like to go into battle with ... will they have your back? Will they come through when you need them the most? And most importantly, can you depend on them and have fun with this person along the way?

In my eight years as a member of the PGA, I have always stood firmly behind the idea of hiring fellow members. As a Board member and Co-chair of the Produced By Conference, I felt it was a principle I had to demonstrate. Recently, when I was hiring my staff for season four of UFC Primetime, I knew I was going to follow my mantra again. Within the volunteer ranks of committee chairs, council representatives and volunteers, I found that I had seen first-hand a ton of people’s work ethics… I had found a producing talent pool like never before.

I hired Kimberly Austin, Melissa Friedman and even former PGA intern Ryan Willis. These three had volunteered for me at the Producers Challenge, a part of the Produced By Conference, and had worked like it was a high-paying job! I saw dedication, class, skills and responsibility first-hand ... and we had a BLAST! I knew I wanted to bring these PGA members into any show I could staff.

Another example is John Peterman, who approached me at the PGA East Tribeca Party two years ago, and simply said, “When I grow up, I want to be YOU!” We struck up a conversation and through my initial impression and subsequent conversations, I knew I wanted this guy on my show one day. That day soon came, and I took JP on the road with me to New Orleans for Steven Seagal: Lawman. A brilliant slice of networking had put John on my radar, and I never forgot him. Each time I crossed his path, interacting with him became a positive experience, so when the coordinator left the show, I went to bat to bring on Peterman.

My essential advice for members looking for work is to volunteer and network. But don’t do either like you’re looking for a job or interviewing, but as if you’d simply like me to get to know you. I want people on my producing team that are energetic, excited about what they can do and looking to be a team player. So get out there, dedicate a few hours to the Guild, with people you know can provide work, and commit yourself to the task at hand ... You will shine and be in the mind of people the next time they HIRE FROM WITHIN!

Rachel Klein (left) and Melissa Friedman (Photo: Adam Shaw)

RACHEL KLEIN

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PGA MEMBERS:

ARE YOU PART OF THE 1,500?

The Producers Guild is getting set to launch its biggest jobs campaign ever. PGA leadership will be reaching out directly to employers—including heads of production at every major studio and independent—promoting the PGA as the source of the best producing talent available anywhere.

But we can’t promote the PGA without a robust sampling of members available for staffing searches via the PGA website. We want to embark on this campaign with no fewer than 1,500 members with resumes listed on the PGA website. With a membership of nearly, 4,500, this is a realistic goal.

That means: YOU MUST GET YOUR ONLINE RESUME UP ON THE SITE.

Here’s how...

- SIGN IN TO THE PGA WEBSITE. That’s www.producersguild.org.
- CLICK THE BIG ORANGE BANNER ON THE HOME PAGE. You can’t miss it.
- FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS. Open up your resume page and follow the six easy steps for filling it out.
- FEEL FREE TO CUT AND PASTE. The database will not search an attached Word doc or pdf. Don’t hesitate to cut and paste relevant sections from your resume into the parts labeled Objective, Experience and Education and Skills—those sections are searchable!
- PAY ATTENTION TO PRIVACY OPTIONS. These selections will determine whether your online resume is searchable by employers.
- ATTACH YOUR “PAPER” RESUME. You can attach a Word doc or pdf if you like. While the system can’t “read” these documents during searches, an employer who looks at your online resume will be able to read your attachments.

Remember: We need at least 1,500 members to step up and put their resumes on the site. So don’t be shy about asking your colleagues if they’ve completed their online resumes—every single member has the potential to bring us closer to our goal of 1,500.

If you’re having trouble posting your online resume—don’t worry, we’re here to help. Contact Manager of Digital Operations Jeremy Lettiere at the PGA office—(310) 358-9020 x105.

THANKS, EVERYONE. LET’S ALL GET TO WORK.