



SHOP TALK

Rochester AudioVisual Association

January 2002

Happy New Year 2002

January Meeting

The White Cockade

A new docudrama will launch our 2002 programs **Tuesday, Jan. 8** (*Note change of date.*)

Local filmmakers Leif HerGesell, Jim Hughes, Thom Marini and their partners at Mule & Johnny Films have produced a unique video based on the Scottish Clan uprising of 1745-45. **The White Cockade** began as a documentation of battle reenactments and then grew to include scripted "remembrances" of the historic participants.

This will be the first in a series of docudramas about significant events of Scottish history.

Fred Armstrong has graciously opened his studio for this meeting. Seating will be limited, however, so it is important that you make a reservation. If we sell out, a second screening will be arranged.

Following the screening we will have dinner with the producers at the new restaurant, The Metropolitan in the Days Inn, East Ave. at Alexander where we had the successful December holiday dinner-meeting.

For both meeting and dinner reservation, please call **Walter Dixon, 671-7741** by **Monday, Jan. 7.**
Tuesday, Jan. 8 – 6:00 PM
Animatus Studio – 34
Winthrop St.
Side bar

Meeting Notes

1. Jim Harte has planned this meeting for the same month as Robert Burns birthday/
2. Since the First Tuesday is Jan 1, that luncheon has been combined with the regular monthly meeting.

Don't miss this exciting slice of Scottish history seen through local eyes.

Media Production Off in Rochester

Production of videos, films, web pages and other systems plus event staging in 2001 has been pegged at between \$49 million and \$50 million by Hope Reports. This represents a drop of 28% to 30% from 2000's output.

Hope Reports in 1996 did a thorough study of production in the Greater Rochester area having a population placed at 1,010,000. The survey showed media production by contract producers at \$52.6 M.

In-house production was \$13.4 M. Special events videos (weddings, birthday parties, bar mitzvahs etc.) was placed \$645,000.

By 2000 the production was estimated to have been \$70.7 M by producers, \$18.3 M in-house and special events, \$1 M.

The 2001 figures are based on an informal survey done last month.

Shop Talk.

<http://www.ggw.org/rava/>

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First Tuesday, November

Makeup Artist

“Christine Goff Knoblauch is a great lady,” was Stirlin Harris’s comment. He has used her when expert makeup is needed. One example: Gov. Pataki required makeup when Stirlin made a TV commercial for the governor in the last gubernatorial race.

Christine learned her trade from a master makeup artist in New York City 14 years ago and then returned to Rochester in 1989 to begin her career. Her business flourished so much that she put together a crew of local makeup artists.

When the economy began to soften and flounder a couple of years ago, television commercial production fell off. TV spots are one of the first activities cut back as advertisers turn to old commercials when not dated. Christine does much TV commercial work. She had to independently.

November Meeting

“75 Years of Memories”

A 15-minute video of Camp Stella Maris produced for its 75th anniversary by Dan Celso (AV8 Productions) and Tom Hanney (independent writer)

The film was so well received at the camp’s celebration that the two producers are hatching plans to make an hour-long documentary of the camp.

At the RAVA dinner meeting in the Spring House Dan and Tom, after screening the camp anniversary video, shared with other RAVA members their dream for the documentary.

At the luncheon Dick Powers asked Christine what could be done for someone losing hair. Answer. Color can be sprayed on the head. Fred Armstrong brought out laughs as he pulled his ponytail around so it looked like a wig!

Christine is married with two children, Jeff 12 and Gabriele 10.

Jim Harte related some the experiences he and Fred Armstrong had in producing their classic video story of Rochester’s subway.

Many factors are involved in planning a documentary.
~ What will be its audience?
~ Could the film be used to inspire boys and girls to get their parents to send them to camp?

~ Or should it be aimed only at parents?
~ Or the general public?
How many talking heads should be used?
~ Could a former camper be used as narrator who could be on-screen at times as he walked around reminiscing?

Funding is vital.
~ Could a foundation be interested?
~ Are there enough camp alumni who might be inspired to contribute?

Dan and Tom would appreciate any ideas from other RAVA members.

Continued from page 1

One small company, doing under a million, was up 25% in 2001. Another small company had gross off and profit down, but it was very busy at year end. Some of its jobs were postponed immediately after Sept. 11, but are now back on track.

Individual producers found business volatile, busy at times and quiet at other times. One, however, has been busy most of the year.

Events and staging have taken perhaps the biggest hit from the soft economy and the Sept. 11 tragedy.

Hope Reports has been tracking this industry for more than 40 years. Since 1996 Hope Reports has determined the 100 largest out of 19,000 industrial contract producers (using a broad definition) in the country. In effect, it is every one outside of the Hollywood feature business, television program production and TV commercial output.

The Top 100 in 1999 did \$1.5 billion. Rochester had two of those companies – Fusion Productions and In-Seitz.

In 2001 one of the largest production houses in the area,

Member News

Bill Dengler, who had cancer surgery, is a new man. At the December RAVA luncheon he was his old, smiling self. He reported that his surgery was successful and the cancer is in remission. He and Barbara had just returned from a week's European jaunt.

Tom Hope is still limping around. On May 11 he tore a ligament and cartilage in his right knee while mowing the lawn. He was on crutches for 3 months and now uses a cane until his knee is fully healed.

Walter Dixon and **Sheron** after vacationing for years at Kennebunkport, ME bought a condo which they fixing up for summer use

Marvin Mindell and **Phyllis** are spending more and more of their time in Boston where they have an apartment.

Their excuse. Caring for their first grandson while his parents work.

In-Seitz, closed abruptly in November. Another large company was off by a percentage in two figures

RIT Showcases Faculty Films

In RIT's Webb Auditorium film and animation students Dec. 18 had the opportunity to see how good their instructors were as filmmakers. It was fun.

One long subject and 18 short films all done by 10 of the faculty were screened in a two-hour program. RAVA member Howard Lester, chair of the school, showed four of his zany shorts made in 1970 when he was at UCLA.

The 26-min. film was one done by Marla Scheppe for the Eastman House Council. Most of the others were off-beat, avant garde subjects done by Prof. Skip Battaglia, Duane Palyka, Cat Ashworth, Jack Beck, Maria Berns, Johnny Robinson, Stephanie Maxwell, and Lorelei Pepi.

This was the second year of exhibiting faculty films. It is so successful that it will become an annual event. Feb. 23, 24, 25 & 26 productions by undergraduates will be screened.

The School of Film and Animation has a student waiting list for entrance. Howard said this year they could accept only 32% of the applicants, the best record of all schools in RIT.

December First Tuesday

Digital Cinema

At the Spring House luncheon the subject of "digital cinema" was thoroughly explored by Art Cosgrove, an Eastman Kodak engineer-scientist, and RAVA's Tom Hope.

It is not a question of "Is it coming?" ...But how soon?

Both men, at the November SMPTE national conference in New York City, heard a realistic talk from theater owners' perspective. National Association of Theater Owners president John Fithian does not see the world's movie theaters moving to digital cinema soon.

Example. The economic aspect is paramount. Today a new movie theater using traditional 35mm film projection would spend \$30,000 for the equipment. Digital would start at \$100,000 as a minimum.

The film projection system would last 20 to 50 years. Digital, maybe two years before obsolescence. Of course digital prices will go down. But obsolescence will not go away.

Other key factors include standardization of a digital system and potential piracy if

December Meeting

Hunting for Sunken Gold!

Rochester lawyer, Jim Philipponne, enthralled RAVA members and spouses at the new Metropolitan Restaurant in the Days Inn, East Avenue at Alexander. (Former Treadway Inn)

Two years ago Jim was the major financial backer of an expedition to recover gold worth \$20 million (today value) in a Japanese submarine that was sunk off the coast of Africa. The Mitsubishi-built sub was carrying the gold and other cargo to Germany in payment

and when a movie is sent to a theater via the Internet.

At the end of 2000 there were 31 theaters worldwide experimenting with digital, 20 in the United States.

One of the major costs of the present system is the making and shipping huge 35mm or 70mm film prints. Loss of this business will impact Kodak. Art pointed out that Kodak is not sitting back but is expecting to have a major role in the digital system and its equipment.

If you wish to have a copy of John Fithian's SMPTE talk, call Tom Hope, 442-1310.

for German-built war equipment and know-how.

Jim showed a National Geographic documentary filmed of the expedition that held nothing back. It depicted a major set-to between Jim and the expedition leader whom Jim described as more of a dreamer than a practical businessman.

The sub is at 17,000 ft., the deepest sunken ship in the world. A Russian ship with two mini subs carried the huge party. Result: they were not able to get inside the sub because the explosion that sank it made it impossible to go inside.

New plans are being formulated either to use new technology to see through the metal hull to locate the gold and then cut an opening to retrieve it or to raise the sub (Mitsubishi's desire).

If either plan is successful, Jim will realize many millions of dollars. Space does not permit the account of many exciting aspects Jim related.

Tune in as RAVA follows future developments of this unfolding, exciting events.

And not to be overlooked, everyone was pleased with the food at this new eatery at reasonable prices!

2001 In Review

RAVA is one of the oldest, if not THE oldest, functioning professional media AV organization in the country.

A varied program was available for members.

Watching on film the history of a football dynasty and witnessing via a video the hunt for sunken gold with more to come were the *alpha* and *omega* of RAVA's 2001 year.

In between were many intriguing subjects. -----

- o Brainstorming ideas for a future documentary.
- o Experiencing wet plate photography in an 1860's era studio.
- o Screening World War II film memories.
- o Reveling with Buster Keating slapstick humor.

Honoring the coming generation of film/video makers.

- o Seeing the joy of college students winning a RAVA scholarship
- o Viewing the winning works of college students --and an occasional high school student.

Highlight of the year certainly was the grand October celebration of RAVA's 45 years featuring a hometown noted Hollywood actor interacting with his audience with style. The event brought back eight past presidents, one from Florida and one from New Hampshire.

Noontime luncheons allowed members to chat with interesting people, to discuss cutting-edge topics or just to enjoy a quiet networking meal.

- o Hear the dreams and difficulties of a former television station executive for making a documentary.
- o Learn about the forthcoming High Falls Film Festival.

- o Hear from the owner of a leading media production company what is around the corner.
- o Get the inside story of Rochester's oldest film festival.
- o Hear first hand the fun of working as a makeup artist.
- o Look at the future of digital cinema for the world's movie theaters.

A 2001-2002 member **Directory** with picture pages covering the year's activities was published.

Membership. Six professionals joined RAVA during the year: two in education, two in media production and two from industry.

This mixture of disciplines is in keeping with the RAVA concept of having members from all walks of the profession spelled out during the watch of Art Cowdery, president in 1969.

Editorial

Looking Ahead

As RAVA moves through its 46th year, let's examine its role as a premier member organization.

The setting. RAVA started in 1956 so professionals involved in what then was called audiovisual could meet. It was strictly an informal luncheon group, a place for networking and catching up on what was happening locally as well as nationally in our industry. Two or three dinner meetings a year were special events.

Federal aid to education brought dozens of people new to AV into AV jobs in schools. RAVA was an ideal learning experience for them.

Espirit de corps was high. Members tackled some big projects – hosting a national convention and two important international conferences stand out. Working together on major events builds friendships.

Today luncheons have become a luxury. Those in teaching often have classes adjacent to or at noon. Industry has cracked down on long lunch hours for many. Those in production often are tied up at noon.

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Programs

Currently the principal meetings are in late afternoon or evening. Most meetings are planned so people can attend and then go on home or stay to dine with the speaker. Here the high cost of dinners is a factor.

Luncheons tend to have topics of more interest to production people and retirees, You can look at last year's programs listed in 2001 in *Review*, page 5.

How best to serve our education-related members is challenge. Chris Pruszynski at SUNY Geneseo remarked that he would love to attend some luncheons, but the distance and timing make it impossible. Ditto for Alice Gerace at Finger Lakes CC in Canandaigua. Right in the immediate area Dan Reardon has a tight noontime schedule usually.

As president I propose that RAVA's officers sit down with a good group of those in education to brainstorm how best to plan meetings of greatest interest to them.

Scholarships

The scholarship awards program is more than a quarter century old. It started by awarding a modest recognition to one worthy AV student in two, then three and eventually four colleges, each chosen by their respective faculties.

A few years ago when Marvin Mindell chaired the program, he noted that several years some students nominated by their college faculty were definitely of a lower quality than those of other schools. A change was in order.

A RAVA scholarship committee was formed to interview the nominees from each college to select only those that stood out. Two were chosen each year. There were three four-year colleges and one community college. To make the judging more equitable, two more community colleges were added. For several years one student from a four-year and one from a CC were selected.

Last year, all six of the nominees were good. The question. Should RAVA have a more flexible criteria? This will be carefully examined now to make an adjustment.

Officers

People join RAVA for various reasons - to keep up-to-date, to be with friends, to be listed in the Directory, to get the newsletter and/or for the prestige. Possibly half join for one of the latter reasons. This leaves a smaller active base from which to find those willing to take some leadership.

Each position requires specific talents or skills. Running a volunteer organization is different than a business or education job. The president, for one, needs seasoning by serving in other jobs first, especially that of at least program head.

RAVA has been strongest when members first serve on a committee to gain experience and learn how RAVA functions. Likewise, we find out who delivers and does a good job.