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What Price Post?

*By Rich Rubasch
Tilt Media, Inc.*



What does the 27-ton

Proteus Fire Master have to do with digital content creation? If you think nothing, hear me out before you turn the page.

The Proteus Fire Master is a "turn-key" wildfire fighting beast outfitted with a 3000 gallon water tank, a telescoping water cannon, an eight foot dozer blade, a boom mounted grapple claw

and 18-inch bar saw. If you're a firefighter who's concerned about comfort, features also include air conditioning, CD player, three escape hatches, GPS, and an interior fire-suppression system. It'll cost you \$350,000. Or you could rent this monster for a mere \$350 per hour.

Have you made the connection yet? Consider the relationship between cost-of-equipment and hourly rental rate.



Inferno Machine: Proteus Fire Master

Step back one decade...a fully outfitted online bay with multi-machine editing, two channels of ADO, color correction, character generator and Grass Valley 300 switcher would cost you around \$350,000 and bill for \$350 per hour. Hmmm, same as the Fire Master. At that time the industry

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Our sympathies and prayers go out to all the victims and families of the events of September 11



MCA-I Madison

Media Communications Association International-Madison

is an international non-profit organization for digital media storytellers. Our newsletter, the Storyboard, is now being published in full color. Therefore you are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity and submit all advertising in color. This is a rather unique opportunity to get full-color ad printing with virtually no increase in our ad rates. Call Lori O’Konek (836-4556) if you would like ad rates or info. If you are not yet a member but are interested in learning more about becoming one, please contact Kym McNaughton (664-3881 x2704) or Pam Geary (849-1900). If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, contact Lori O’Konek (836-4556).

And if you have ideas or suggestions for the MCA-I 2001-2002 season, contact Kip Schwanke (829-2728).

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In Search of...

*By Kip Schwanke
Madison Media
Institute*



I wish I could tell you that this was anything but a solicitation, but it's not. The Madison Chapter of the Media Communications Association, International (MCA-I) is currently looking for someone to fill the shoes of the position of President-Elect.

As it turns out, the position was left empty when Pam Geary of VIP Multimedia Services withdrew as a candidate for the President position as part of making a career change and I, running for the President-Elect position, decided to step up to take her place. The move left the President-Elect spot open, which unfortunately managed to coincide with our summer break.

Now that we're back in full swing, I wanted to take this opportunity to bring this to your attention and ask anyone interested to please step forward. This is a tremendous opportunity and a vital position within the association that is well worth

considering. On an additionally good note, Pam Geary has recently returned to the organization and is now serving on the membership committee. Welcome back Pam.

So, what are the benefits of serving on the board and as the President-Elect? Well, first consider all the popular reasons: helping the industry and promoting the field within the community, building a network of friends and professional acquaintances, furthering the educational and professional interests of the membership and providing resources and benefits within itself and through third party associations.

Second, I have always found that having an active role in things makes all the difference in the world. There's something about actually taking responsibility that is far more worthwhile than worrying about whether you can manage the time or rise to the challenge. Serving the association representing your industry is not only rewarding, but also an important investment that demonstrates our commitment and longevity. Through it, we carry forward our

successes and provide continuity that can only strengthen and promote the success of every member. Now that I've done it, taken the leap and raised my hand, it's been incredible.

So, how about you? MCA-I Madison Chapter is "In Search of." If you would like to learn more about the President-Elect position, please drop us a line. ●

By the way...



Perhaps you've wondered if MCA-I Madison has its own website. Well, we do, and you'll find it at www.itvamadison.org. Or you can browse the national site at www.mca-i.org. That's the good news.

The bad news is our local Madison chapter no longer has a webmaster, and if you took a peek, you'd see we're ready for an upgrade.

So, how about it? Anyone out there want to get involved and put together their next "showpiece" site? We're taking applications, so contact Lori O'Konek at 836-4556 or email her at lorio@chorus.net

What Price Post?

continued from page 1

It appears similar formulas work across professions as with the Fire Master. But are things changing? Sort of. The Fire Master, with its minimum ten-year life expectancy, is similar to post equipment ten years ago that might last you ten years. Today we hope to get three years out of a new system before buying another. And the cost of paying talented individuals to run these systems hasn't decreased.

Zoom ahead to 2001. Media100 announces they will sell their Cleaner compression software and low end editing products like EditDV to Autodesk, the makers of Discreet products such as smoke* and flame*. In almost the same breath, they announce a soon-to-be-released product code named Pegasus.

Pegasus is a secret R&D project Media100 has kept under wraps since 1998. It took

Media100 users by complete surprise. They're still reeling from the announcement. As some watchdogs have observed, there were an awful lot of R&D dollars going somewhere at the Marlboro, MS headquarters in the past few years, and Pegasus was the secret project gobbling up the dollars. In fact, Media100, now selling at around \$1 a share, is banking on Pegasus to turn the company, if not the whole industry, around.

The system is like no other. It has the ability to run as many as seven realtime uncompressed streams of video simultaneously. For those of you less technical out there, it would be like having seven engines in your car. No other manufacturer has accomplished this to date, and everyone has been asking for it.



The cost? A mere \$50,000 for the complete system. To compare, a fully equipped AVID Media Composer system with two streams could cost you more than \$150,000. A Discreet smoke* could go as high as \$300,000. So,

although \$50,000 seems reasonable for


Media100's new technology, Media100 users have previously been able to buy a top-of-the-line system for around

\$20,000. For them,

Media100 announces Pegasus \$50,000 is "high end" and out of reach. So, is it?

Let's revisit our room-rate formula. For the \$150,000 AVID, we would calculate a rate of \$150 per hour. In our market that rate seems to be the norm, maybe a little higher. If we faithfully apply the formula to a \$20,000

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Media 100 system, we would charge \$20 per hour for the room! Taken a step further, for \$6000, you could buy an Apple G4, load it up with RAM, hard drives and Final Cut Pro, and if we used the formula, you would be charging \$6 per hour for your edit suite!

What gives? Nothing really, because it isn't just the equipment a post production company is buying. It is the talent of their editors, their expertise in telling the story, wrangling these emerging new technologies, and delivering the goods with the highest quality. With shrinking depreciation periods, the equipment must cost less!

In fact, we are in many ways, spoiled. AVID has ported a significant chunk of their outstanding MediaComposer code to the AVID ExpressDV for only \$1700. Apple released FinalCut Pro for \$1000 and industry experts called it the next best thing to an AVID. Even at \$50,000, Media100's Pegasus is a steal considering you could probably bill it out at \$200 per hour or more. That's four times the traditional formula rate. And with all those streams, creatives will be able to crank out multi-layered projects in much less time. It's a win-win.

Will you get ten years of video post out of the Pegasus? You might. But more importantly, as prices continue to drop for complete post production systems, the talent that sits beside them is the most valuable asset in any post house. No matter what you bill per hour, a system as capable as Pegasus is well worth \$50,000 to the pros who sit down to use it. And I'm sure the Proteus Fire Master is worth what it costs as well. ●

Media100 has been so secretive about the Pegasus project, you won't find much info on the web. You can try, however, by logging onto the Media100 site at www.media100.com, or read the details of the Autodesk purchase at www.discreet.com.

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Off to a Great Start

By Tom Kermgard
Pro Video



Token Creek Mobile Television September 18 Recap

The first MCA-I Madison monthly meeting was held on Tuesday, September 18. And what a great meeting! Attendance was terrific – 32 members, guests and students were on hand to hear from John Salzwedel of Token Creek Mobil Television.

In a nutshell, John has what can be referred to as a television station in a truck. This truck is used for live television productions. He has done work on a national level for ESPN, Fox Sports Net, The Golf Channel and locally for companies such as CUNA Mutual and Famous Footwear. During the meeting John allowed us to have a hands-on tour of his truck, which was quite impressive and entertaining.

Many thanks also go out to Bruce Bennett of CUNA for hosting the event. Bruce and the fine folks at CUNA were kind enough to open their doors to us for this meeting. We were all impressed that CUNA, on the eve of an address from their company president to

employees across the country, would let us use their International Building for this meeting. So our thanks to them for their hospitality (and for the great food!)

Custom Music Workshop Coming October 16

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 16 at Concept Productions – 7878 Big Sky Drive. The topic will be a Custom Music Workshop hosted by Dan Geocaris of Concept and Michael Massey. For those of you who don't know Michael, he is a very talented

local musician who has produced a wide assortment of custom music for such clients as Verlo Mattress Factory Stores, New Balance Shoes Stores, Berean Bookstores, and Group Health Cooperative.

If you've ever thought of using custom music in a production, you won't want to miss this program. It promises to be informative, interactive and fun! You'll be leaving this meeting with your toes tapping and fingers snapping!

Madison Media Institute Coming November 20

Our November meeting will be on Tuesday, November 20. This meeting will be held at the new Madison Media Institute building, 2702 Agriculture Drive. The program will be entitled: Us vs. Them – Find Out How to Win (The Education Dynamic). We'll also get an opportunity to take a tour of the new MMI building.

We're looking forward to seeing all of you on October 16! And be sure to bring a friend! Let's keep up the great attendance.



STORYBOARD



What's Ahead in 2002

By Steve Tingley
American Family
Insurance Co.



I was asked to write this article to give you an idea of what I will do as the Media Communications Association International President in 2002. For the past couple of months my response to that question has been that I will continue with the goals and initiatives that your Board of Directors has already begun. But rather than say what I plan to do, I will tell you what I think is important as I near the role as MCA-I President:

▶▶ We need to find opportunities that enhance the benefits to members. Some great ideas have been presented and we need to act on them. They include the regional and state seminars or learning opportunities, vendor discounts and on-line learning opportunities. I am sure that other opportunities will present themselves and we need to be able to embrace those that are of value to members.

▶▶ We need to continue establishing partnerships with other organizations. They benefit our members and provide MCA-I with a tremendous amount of visibility and great opportunities to recruit new members and commercial partners. As we develop relationships with web2001 or DV Expo or anyone else, our opportunities will grow. These groups are looking for our member's expertise in return for

discounts, floor space and other conference benefits. These partnerships are in lieu of our traditional ITVA/MCA-I conference. One of the things we found is that the annual conference lost the association money year after year. It was a great value to many of us who looked forward to the opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. Unfortunately, the attendance dwindled each year to a point where the association simply could not afford to have it. For that reason, we began to look for conference opportunities in partnership with other organizations. President, Todd O'Neill led the way to arrange partnerships with Techexpo, Web2001 and DVExpo. The individual conferences provide discounted rates to members and in some cases, facilities for members to gather for special MCA-I events.

▶▶ We need to overhaul our website, providing easier access for members to access other members and space to connect our commercial members/partners with members for discounts and learning opportunities. It must be easy for new members to join and existing members to rejoin. The site needs to be fresh with pertinent information for various segments of our membership. And, of personal importance to me, the association calendar must be current with national, trade and chapter events. There are a number of opportunities for the website and we need to move forward with it.

▶▶ We need to continue developing relations and partnering with industry vendors.

The relationships can provide benefits to members in the way of discounts and learning opportunities and to the vendors in having a targeted audience for their products or services.

▶▶ There are probably a number of items that I haven't listed that are important to you. There are many initiatives the board has listed as important that I haven't covered. These are simply the items of importance to me at this writing. One thing I have found this year is that our priorities change depending on the resources available. The most important factors are the availability of volunteers and funding. That's where you come in. None of these or other goals can be met without the help of members and in some cases, commercial sponsors. We are working at 2001 initiatives with great effort from your board and a handful of dedicated volunteers. I am proud to say that a few members in the Wisconsin Chapters have been very active in supporting and assisting in our efforts. I applaud their efforts and would appreciate continued support in 2002.

▶▶ MCA-I has faced and overcome a number of challenges during the past couple of years. It is great to be part of an organization that has members who are dedicated to see the association continue and contribute to the growth. I will make every effort to clearly identify what needs to be done in 2002 and then seek the help of members and partnerships to make the identified goals a reality. ●

ASK THE EXPERTS



Q *What is meant by "General Use" DVD's and "Authoring" DVD's?*

A Since Pioneer released the A03 DVD-R drive (for General Use) many people have asked this question. First, both General and Authoring types of DVD's are designed to work in most newer players, with the "authoring" type having the edge on compatibility. And for good reason. The Pioneer S101 and S201 DVD-R burners (for Authoring) support the smaller 3.95 GB disks which seem to be compatible in more players, especially older set top and computer players. The A03 drive, also known as Apple's "Super-drive" only supports the 4.7GB size. Furthermore, the A03 drive only burns General Media disks, which lack one important feature. They cannot record the Disc Description Protocol (DDP) header that replicators need. Although this was thought to be a significant problem with the General Use format, several replicators have announced they will begin accepting General Use disks for mass production. Any disk created for General Use should be tested carefully on any and all players it might be used on.

Q *Why do they call it an "optical" mouse?*

A An optical mouse is actually equipped with a light, a lens, and a \$3 camera chip. Although similar to a video camera's CCD chips, optical mice use cheaper and faster CMOS chips to do the "looking." Basically this little powerhouse of a still camera takes pictures of a small area of the surface under the mouse at a rate of 1,500 times a second.

As it reads these images it determines where the mouse is headed and sends that info to the computer. The movement of the images directly correlates to the position of your cursor on the screen. Someday we may even see the "flying mouse" which would allow users to navigate interactive TV shows by waving the mouse in the air. Because of the simplicity of the mechanism (no moving parts), and the low cost of CMOS chips, the optical input device will find its way into many electronic gadgets.

Q *What is a CCD chip in a camera and how does it work?*

A CCD stands for charge coupled device. These small chips consists of millions of photosensitive pixels that become charged when light hits them, then sends the charges to a "processing center" for translation into digital imagery. Since the CCD actually contains several chips on one

wafer they are not generally efficient and consume more battery

power than other chip designs, like the CMOS chips in the optical mouse.

But the CCD's advantage is that the sensors are kept separate from the processors, so they can capture more pixels per square inch with less "noise" caused by close wiring (as in CMOS chips).

The advantage of CMOS chips is that they can capture images as fast as 10,000 frames per second. But due to

their bulky size, and larger pixels, they can't obtain the high resolution of CCD's. Which is why they make their way into low-resolution applications like the optical mouse. But some savvy engineers are working on a high-speed CMOS camera that might work great in security camera applications. Running at over 100 frames per second, these cameras can capture subtle motion in great "time-detail" something limited in standard video's 30 frames per second.

Expect to see CMOS chips in low-end consumer cameras, and CCD's in high-end gear.



Apple's Optical Mouse



*Email your questions to:
Ask the Expert
storyboard@chorus.net*

MCA-I Membership Application

Membership Categories

Individual – Belongs to the individual who is entitled to full association membership.
Nontransferable.

Organizational – Belongs to the organization, corporation or agency wishing to assign three (3) employees from the same business as members. Additional employees may join at a reduced rate.

Student – Belongs to an individual who is enrolled as a full time student (12 semester hours undergraduate or six hours graduate level) and is nontransferable. To qualify, verification of student status must accompany the application (a letter from a class advisor on school letterhead is acceptable).

Lifetime Membership – A nontransferable membership belonging to the individual who pays to receive all the regular membership benefits plus special benefits – and *never pay dues again!* Lifetime 100 membership is limited to 100 members at any time. For further information on these unique membership options, contact MCA-I.

Commercial Membership – Belongs to the corporation or company that supplies equipment and/or services to the visual communications industry, allowing them the major benefit of using the MCA-I mailing list. Other special benefits also apply. Please contact Glenna at info@mca-i.org for more details.

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