

## Fujinon Lenses "Searching for Noah's Flood"

Given the all but impossible task of searching for the site of Noah's flood, noted Director of Photography Foster Wiley, Wiley Dowd Productions, took along Fujinon HA20x7.8BERM and HA10x5.2BERM high-definition lenses on a Panasonic AJ-HDC20A HD camcorder. "Searching for Noah's Flood" is the tentative title of a National Geographic special to air this summer on PBS that chronicles the search for parallels between the well-known biblical flood and evidence of a catastrophic flood in the Black Sea in Turkey in 5600 B.C. Explorer/oceanographer Bob Ballard, discoverer of the Titanic, leads the exploration looking for signs of ancient civilization and sea vessels.

According to Wiley, the weight and image quality of these HD lenses were perfect for the long, on-board production: "The weight of HD cameras and lenses can be a killer when you're working handheld for long periods, especially within the tight quarters of a ship. But these lenses were very light and allowed us great freedom of movement. I wanted to shoot this at a very high quality but in a cinema verite style. Another consideration when filming on a ship, is that you are often fighting the motion of the vessel and have to move the camera to keep the horizon level." The video crew was on-call 24 hours a day; with a schedule of that nature and as the sole camera operator, Wiley said it was crucial that the lenses and camera

were light enough for hours of portability.

"Searching for Noah's Flood" was originally to be shot on super-16mm film, but when budgets were tightened the decision was made to shoot in high-definition video. Said Wiley, who proposed the change, "HD video, while it isn't film, does have it's own very special look."

## Matsushita Establishes Panasonic Hollywood Lab

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., announced the establishment of the Panasonic Hollywood Laboratory in Universal City, CA. The new lab, a division of Panasonic Technologies, Inc., will focus its research and development efforts on high-quality digital video compression and new content distribution formats and applications that utilize broadband digital network technologies. "To help consumers enjoy the full benefit of rapidly expanding broadband applications, we need to collaborate even more closely with Hollywood movie studios and other content providers to develop new digital content distribution services," said Yoshiaki Kushiki, Matsushita Multimedia and Software Technologies.

Headed by Masayuki Kozuka, the facility will include an internal Digital Image Quality Lab to engage in an ongoing exchange with video industry professionals for evaluating high-definition image quality for digital cinema, digital television, and next-generation DVD, as well as highly compressed imaging for next-generation mobile devices.

## Snell & Wilcox Opens New Office

As a major part of its recent realignment and expansion of its Americas operation, Snell & Wilcox Inc. announced the opening of a new office in midtown Manhattan that more than doubles the size of its previous New York City location. The new office, headed by Tom Lang, general manager and vice-president, East Coast sales, and Steve Sloane, Northeast regional sales manager, will serve primarily post and broadcast markets throughout the eastern U.S. and Canada. The office also includes technical support and business development staff for the local market.

"The opening of our new office in this critical location serves as the nucleus for our broadened Americas operation," said Lang. "...By increasing our sales and support staff in New York City where it is vital to have a strong presence, we have taken a large step toward accomplishing that goal."

## Thomson Multimedia Acquires Philips Professional Broadcast

Thomson Multimedia's acquisition of the professional broadcast activities of Philips has been completed. The five businesses of the Philips Professional Broadcast group include cameras, film imaging, signal processing, media networking and control (routing and switchers), and the broadcast systems group. The new entity will be called Thomson Multimedia Broadcast Solutions. Together with Nextream, a joint venture between

Thomson and Alcatel dedicated to the highly growing interactive video market, it will address end-to-end needs of the businesses that operate in the digital media chain.

The integration of Philips and Thomson broadcast activities provides a unique worldwide sales and system network present in more than 20 countries. Said Marc Valentin, vice-president of Thomson broadcast and network solutions, "Thomson Multimedia Broadcast Solutions fits perfectly with our digital media solutions (DMS) strategy to address the immediate and future needs of the video content providers and the broadcast industry."

## Obituary

Gregory Narkunas, a valued member of the New England Section, passed away on April 21, 2001, at age 37. He was vice-president of the Boston Camera Rental Co., responsible for marketing, sales, and repair.

Narkunas received a B.A. degree from Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA. During that time, he directed the suspense drama "911," which is still being used for instruction at the college. He served the U.S. Army for four years. In addition to SMPTE, he was a member of I.A.T.S.E. Local 600.

Narkunas is survived by his wife, father, and four siblings.