



# News

## Directors Guild-Producer Training Plan



*graduation dinner*

## Class of 2005 Graduates!

**M**embers of the DGTP Class of 2005 were honored on the night of Nov. 11, 2007, as they celebrated graduation from the Program with a dinner and commencement ceremony at Delmonico's Lobster House in Encino, Calif.

The party honored the 12 men and women who began their journey Aug. 12, 2005.

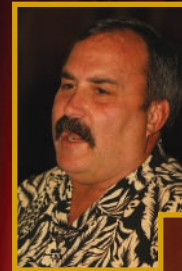
Following a delicious buffet, commencement festivities began with a welcome from Administrator Janet Dyer, who promptly turned the microphone over to Ed Milkovich, the current Program Chair. Ed congratulated the graduates, imploring them always to strive for excellence.

"No-one will promote you if you are mediocre," he said. "You are our legacy, so be on the cutting edge of this business...and remain at the top of your game."

Next, on behalf of the Directors Guild of America (DGA), Don Gold welcomed graduates into the organization, reminding them that the DGA exists to help them, and that the group offers continuing education and seminars.

Finally, Caitlin Bogert, of Entertainment Partners, took the floor to give graduates their congratulatory copy of Movie Magic, a software scheduling package. These gifts are made possible every year through the Bob Jeffords Memorial Fund, which celebrates Bob Jeffords, a great supporter of the DGTP over the years.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's graduation ceremony, especially sponsor Entertainment Partners.



Ed Milkovich



Don Gold



Caitlin Bogert

### Class of 2005

Rachel Caproni  
 Sonja Christoph\*  
 Audrey Clark  
 Chris Corrado  
 Allan Fortes  
 Emily Greenberg  
 Matthew Janssen  
 Helena Lamb  
 Rebecca Lombardi  
 Joshua Madera  
 Fred Mercado  
 Stacy Stuart

\*Not pictured

## Listening + Teamwork= *Jim Sharp*

After nearly 30 years in the television industry, Jim Sharp certainly knows what it takes to lead. As Executive Vice President of Production since 1998 he has overseen the day-to-day operations at Twentieth Century Fox Television. Before that, he served in various industry job capacities such as production assistant, extra, teamster, production supervisor, DGA unit production manager and line producer.



Jim Sharp

Jim began his career working for Stephen J. Cannell on hits like "The A-Team," "The Greatest American Hero" and "Hardcastle and McCormick."

"When it comes to important people in my life it's my wife, children and my parents," Jim said. In his professional career it's Stephen Cannell. "He shaped me into what and who I am today, and showed me first hand what it means to lead with conviction."

Today, Jim describes his leadership style as both hands on and detail-oriented. Considering that he oversees more than 20 network shows on any given day, this is quite a feat. Jim provides each of his individual production executives with succinct, written expectations before each season, and holds his people accountable. According to Jim, he has the best Production Executive team in the business.

Jim also believes that in a very competitive business/industry, working as a team provides the best opportunity to be successful. Who taught Jim about teamwork? His father-in-law Tom Shaw. Tom, a long time DGA 1st AD and UPM taught Jim this most important and valuable lesson: during filmmaking treat everyone with equal respect and importance.

"When you think about it my father-in-law is right," Jim explained. "Filmmaking takes DGA personnel, writers, actors, cameramen, grips, caterers, etc., it isn't about one person—you assemble the best people in each area and together as a team, you'll have success."

In addition Jim feels that listening is the key to everything. "Engaging in conversations with individuals and gaining their trust is critical because if you don't have it, they're not going to be that trustworthy of you down the road."

Jim was appointed to the DGPTP Board of Trustees in January 2006 by Nick Counter, President of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers.

## *Denny Clairmont*: The Man Behind The Seminar

For Denny Clairmont, owner of Clairmont Camera in North Hollywood, focusing on the technology behind film and television is critical.

Perhaps this explains why he can't say enough about the value of DGPTP's annual camera seminar "Lenses: What the Camera Sees." This seminar provides the trainees with an immersion in how to get the most from film and ICG-600 digital video cameras.

Denny's seminars provide trainees with a tutorial on what a lens is capable of seeing in a scene. Through a combination of lecture-based knowledge and first-hand trials, seminar attendees explore the differences between wide-angle, medium-focus and telephoto lenses.

"What's true for one lens or camera isn't true for all of them," said Denny, who has been teaching the seminar with DGA member Jack Cooperman since 1991. "Since ADs are the ones who'll help framing shots, it's important for them to know what can and cannot be accomplished by shooting with a particular piece of equipment."

Over the course of the three-hour workshop Denny shows students how to shoot the exteriors of a wide-angle lens, how to manipulate the medium-focus lens and how to minimize background with a telephoto. He also spends a good portion of the workshop on taking full advantage of depth-of-field, the distance in front of and beyond a subject that appears to be in focus.

If anybody knows about these techniques, it's Denny. The 72-year-old's personal history with the industry spans decades to a time when HD cameras were closer to fantasy than to reality. Denny and his brother, Terry, were born into the movie business, as their father, Leonard, emigrated from Stockholm to Hollywood in the early 1920s and worked as a DP until the late 1960s.

The senior Clairmont introduced his boys into the business when they were each six months old as extras and stand-ins. Denny's debut: a crying baby in the 1936 film, "The Gay Desperado." By the time each boy was 12, the two had worked on more than 100 motion pictures. Denny alone appeared in 56.

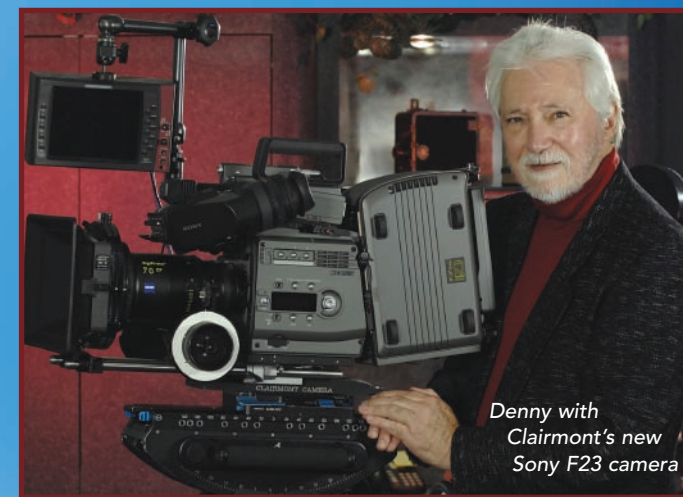
"To say we grew up in the industry would be an understatement," Denny said.

Later in life, as young men, the Clairmont boys followed in their father's footsteps and became cameramen at Birns & Sawyer in Hollywood. Terry left after a few months to become a camera assistant, and by 1972 he had become a DP specializing in TV commercials. Denny, however, stuck around doing lens repair until 1976, when the duo decided to join forces and go out on their own.

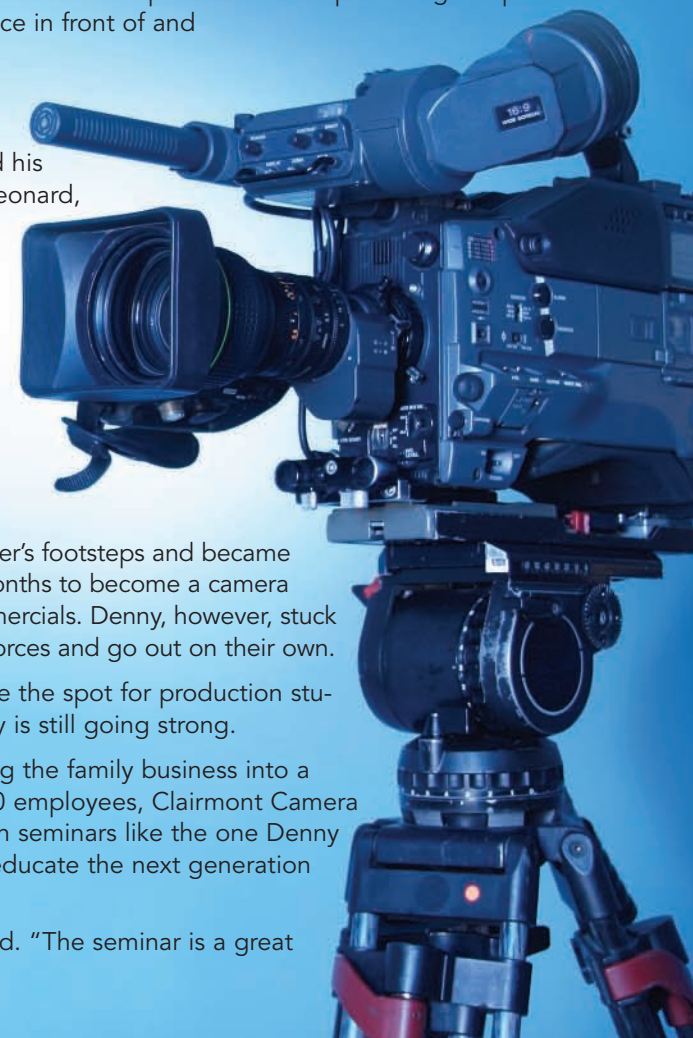
The resulting shop, Clairmont Camera in North Hollywood, became the spot for production studios to rent cameras. Today, more than 30 years later, the company is still going strong.

Though Terry died of cancer last year, Denny has carried on, turning the family business into a business juggernaut. With four offices, 350 cameras and nearly 100 employees, Clairmont Camera is second only to Panavision in terms of industry market share. With seminars like the one Denny gives for the DGPTP, Denny says the company proudly is helping educate the next generation of ADs in the finer points of cinematography.

"Over the years we've gotten quite a bit from this industry," he said. "The seminar is a great way to finally give something back."



Denny with Clairmont's new Sony F23 camera



## Closing The Deal

On TNT's hit drama "The Closer," Kyra Sedgwick's Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson is famous for the way she handles sensitive, high-profile murder cases. Behind the scenes, however, AD David McWhirter has become famous for the way he handles the rigors of production.

David, a member of the DGPTP Class of 1990, has worked on "The Closer" since the show's inception in 2005. Before that, he worked as first AD for another Shephard/Robin production, "Nip/Tuck." He credits Greer Shepard, Michael Robin and Ronnie Chong as three of his mentors in the industry, but says the DGPTP got him in the door.

"Before I got into the Program, I was trying to figure out how I was going to get in to the business," he said recently. "The Program was like being on a fast track to success."

Success certainly didn't happen overnight for David. He graduated in 1992 and for the eight years that followed he worked in a variety of roles for various television productions, including "Ally McBeal," "Boston Public" and "Murder, She Wrote." He also worked on the 1995 movie, "A Walk in the Clouds."

In the late 1990s, on a pilot called "Brutally Normal," David met Shephard and Robin. They never forgot him, and hired him to do "Nip/Tuck" in 2000. Working for Shephard/Robin, who always run fast-paced productions and keep budgets low, David says he's learned a lot about efficiency.

"It's all about anticipation," said David. "If you can stay ahead of the ball and find the right answers, people will hire you."

Today, in his spare time, David plays and writes music, studies magic, and works as a camp counselor. Most recently, just before the Writer's Guild strike, David sat in as first AD for an episode on "Women's Murder Club."



David on the set of "The Closer"



# Asked & Answered

**We recently asked our graduates to share with us their feelings about the Training Program. Here's what two of them had to say:**

"It's the hardest thing that I've ever loved doing. No one likes getting up at 4:30 a.m., or getting five hours of sleep on most nights, or seeing friendships suffer or having your exercise regimen go down the drain...but the tradeoff is two years of work alongside a diverse pool of talent that's hard to imagine."

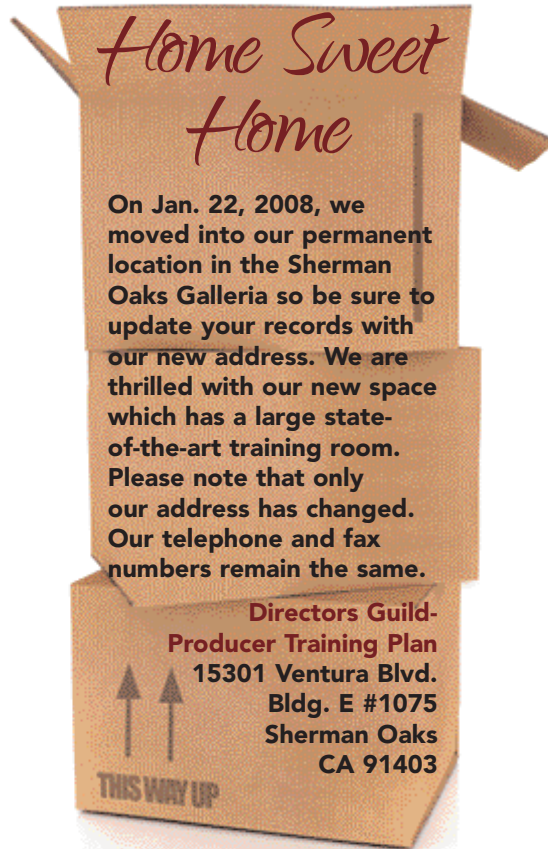
- Chris Corrado - Class of 2005

"The Training Program is the most grueling yet rewarding experience you'll ever have. You will work harder and longer than you ever have before, but the end result is that you become a stronger, more confident person and AD. The contacts you make and the variety of work you are able to experience is priceless. If you want to be an AD you couldn't ask for a better opportunity."

- Emily Greenberg - Class of 2005

## WANTED: Your Ideas

Please enjoy this latest edition of the *DGPTP News*. If you'd like to get involved in the next issue, we welcome your letters and story ideas. Simply send the information to the Training Plan at [mail@trainingplan.org](mailto:mail@trainingplan.org), and we'll take it from there.



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