New England’s recent growth in film production continues its steady expansion. The region appears to be priming itself to be even more user-friendly to the industry. The commodity of tax incentives has now forced a competitive environment, providing legislators to react at what is happening in the town. The question now is what will be the new threshold that qualifies filmmakers and producers for the tax credits. This is one battle that may not one New England state against another and does have ramifications still to be felt.

While the political winds blow, those who have worked in the business and laid the foundation for what has been a renaissance in regional production, continue to set new standards, raising the bar on what is expected from all who play in this field.

One individual who has helped set these standards of what we have come to expect in the production sector is Curt Worden of the Providence, RI-based Tango Pix.

While he may not admit to it himself, Curt is one of the region’s leaders in the entertainment industry. It is no small wonder then that his facility has been selected to undertake the post-production for the popular Showtime series The Brotherhood. According to his official company biography, Curt has been in the business since the Age of Aquarius.

Curt Worden spent many of those formative years honing his craft as a director of photography as a broadcast Director of Photography (DP), he was part of the first wave of journalists sent to critical situations of armed conflict in the Panama invasion, the civil war in Liberia and Desert Storm. Curt was in command of his craft and skill at capturing historical events, as well as the human condition, with uncommon sensitivity and creativity. This unique gift of his, through the lens of a camera earned him a distinguished reputation in the industry and two national Emmy Awards.

Curt’s talents exceed his skills behind the eye- piece of the camera. Today, he is sought after as both a producer and executive producer for his ability to create, conceptualize and execute many types of projects. Some of his credits include: Ed Bradley Assignment: Town Under Siege, a CBS documentary, Tax And Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace, a two-hour documentary for PBS, Reversing Of The Whole, a dramatic, two-hour special produced with NBC, business and sales book In The Heart of the Sea by Nathaniel Philbrick; a Show Of Force, a New York Times television documentary that aired on PBS, and Tango Pix has directed and executive produced programming for the Travels and the Healthy Heart, a part, half-hour series for the Lifetime Network.

When we spoke recently, Curt was in the middle of production on a new work on famed Beat Generation artist, Jack Kerouac.

GTM: Tell us a bit about yourself? What is your background? How did you get started in the business?

CURT WORDEN: I was influenced early on by my father who purchased an 8mm camera and projector for our home. He used the camera for documenting family events before we had a television. New England’s film industry was booming! It was part of my education and I was hooked.

GTM: You worked as a broadcast Director of Photography when secondary because how did that happen? Were you a stringer or did you work for one company for a very long time?

CW: My first real job shooting for broadcast was in the Providence local news market. I was a staff cameraman at SBS-6 and from 1973 to 1980. I was shooting 16mm film days events in the area. It was a good experience and it enabled me to learn the equipment. I eventually acquired a 16mm camera and with my viewfinder. After that I was hired by ABC’s Nightline which moved to NYC. I was exposed to national stories and began my world traveling documenting major issues and events.

GTM: What was it like covering stories like the Panama Invasion and Desert Storm?

CW: I found myself working in hostile environments frequently. The Panama invasion and Desert Storm were large military deployments. I was part of the media pack that was dispatched to cover those conflicts. The safety issues and concerns were always present but most of the time our movements were planned and supported by experienced journalists and network staff. In other conflicts it was more unpredictable and dangerous, like the Liberian Civil War, Somalia Invasion, Shining Path in Peru and covering civil stories in Columbia. These are the conflicts where emotions run high and you tend to travel alone or in small production teams. Working in many parts of the world on many projects has made an impact on me. I’ve gained a perspective in my life that makes me appreciate my good fortune and reminds me to make the most out of every minute because life is so fragile.

GTM: You’ve won two national Emmy Awards. What were they for and how did you feel when you won them?

CW: I’ve never been motivated by awards. My reward has always been the satisfaction of sharing experiences with an audience - telling stories on film. It is nice to have your work acknowledged and appreciated, but it is never a factor for me. I’m actually doing the work. The first Emmy award was for one of programs I did with Ted Koppel during the Clinton administration. We were given amazing access to the President, traveled on Air Force One overseas to Bosnia, Paris, Kuwait and Moscow during the NATO summit tour. We produce a series of five shows that really gave insight to America’s international relationships at that time. It was a first time access to President Clinton and other Heads of State that enabled the program to be so good. The second Emmy was won for a series of reports called the “100 Day War” which was shot during the first Gulf War. I worked with correspondent Forrest Sawyer, and a great sound recordist, Adam Mosston. We were able to go back to Kuwait before the allies ground war started and the city and meet up with the Kuwaiti resistance to tell the story while the Iraqis were still occupying the neighborhoods of the city. Shortly before the Iraqis retreated and the allies rolled in to liberate Kuwait. I had been in the Middle East for three months at that point and I knew it was time for me to go home. The Emmy applications were submitted by the Network I worked for and I was thrilled to receive the award.

GTM: Tell us about some of the more notable projects that you’ve undertaken that are more proud to have worked on?

CW: I often get asked “What was your favorite project?” It is very hard to answer because of the diversity of subjects and the personal reward can be felt in many ways. For example, it is exciting and personally stimulating to travel to places in the world such as, Indonesia, that are culturally different and highly stimulating for the potential of being there, meeting the people, experiencing the food and seeing life from a different perspective is highly emotional and has had a profound influence on my life. But it is equally rewarding and personally stimulating to produce and tell the story of being there, meeting the people, experiencing the food and seeing life from a different perspective is highly emotional and has had a profound influence on my life. But it is equally rewarding and personally stimulating to produce and tell the story of being there, meeting the people, experiencing the food and seeing life from a different perspective is highly emotional and has had a profound influence on my life.

GTM: You have been noted for your ability to “create, conceptualize and execute many types of production project.” How have you honed your craft for doing this?

CW: My work is fundamentally understanding the audience, their needs and how best to engage them. The commonality of tax incentives has now forced a competitive environment, providing legislators to react at what is happening in the town. The question now is what will be the new threshold that qualifies filmmakers and producers for the tax credits. This is one battle that may not one New England state against another and does have ramifications still to be felt.

GTM: What are some of the projects your company has undertaken? How would you assess its success?

CW: The production team at Tango Pix has highly hallowed sets. We have great tools and know how to use them. These assets are applied to a wide variety of projects. We produce stories for corporate sales and marketing divisions and for audiences who go to the movie theater for an entertainment experience. Large corporate clients such as ABC, NBC, and the Smithsonian use our technology to create interesting content. We have great tools and know how to use them. These assets are applied to a wide variety of projects. We produce stories for corporate sales and marketing divisions and for audiences who go to the movie theater for an entertainment experience. Large corporate clients such as ABC, NBC, and the Smithsonian use our technology to create interesting content.

GTM: What were they for and how did you feel when you were accepted into the ACE society?

CW: The Showtime Brotherhood relationship has continued tremendously. First they are all great people with a high degree of creativity. They embraced the opportunity to do their post production work right here on their production location. They turned to us when they found that we could accommodate their needs. Tango Pix has twelve professionals and we’ve helped them to a real world experience in a highly competitive industry. Their academic work an internship gives them significant edge as they work towards a career. I do not advise individuals to go to the company with the film and video industry. They need to make that decision and my opinion could be wrong. My best advice to anyone is to find your passion, identify your strongest skills and seek all the experience you can. Don’t look back.

To learn more about Tango Pix, go to the company website: www.tangopix.com.

George T. Marshall is The Producing Director of the Rhode Island-based Flickers Arts Collaborative, the creators of the annual Rhode Island International Film Festival for which he also serves as Executive Director. He is also a Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Roger Williams University. He is also a director, writer, producer of commercials and industrials for numerous corporate clients and numerous business clients in the region. Currently he is writing a chapter on teaching digital film making for a new book tentatively titled “Multimedia: Pedagogy in the Age of Hypermobility.” He can be reached at marshall@cogeco.com.