Cine Gear—Pay us a Visit

The Cine Gear Expo runs Friday June 3rd through Saturday June 4th at Paramount Studios.

PERG will be on the A.C. Lighting booth #S120 in Stage 14. We’ll be demonstrating and registering people for Rental Guard (www.missingequipment.org). Stop by to pick up easels for your rental counter and stickers for your door to alert prospective thieves that you are part of the worldwide network fighting fraud and theft.

We’ll also be promoting our members with our slide show, “PERG Members Are All About . . .” which demonstrates the vital role PERG companies play in their local production communities. Members who wish to submit logo and photos to be included in the show should contact Harry Box ASAP at harry.box@esta.org!

The AICP/PERG patented Pre-Cinco de Mayo Party—“immeasurable value” to members of both organizations. Story on page 5.

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CONTENTS

Panavision Shares Helpful Shipping Guidelines | NAB Meeting Sets New High Mark 2
To Buy, or Not to Buy? 4
“Immeasurable Value” -- the AICP/PERG Pre-Cinco de Mayo Party 5
Ties to Law Enforcement – a Game Changer 7
Eye-Opening Theft Video | New Theft Tip Fund to Aid Police Investigations 10
PERG Membership Resources 11

Follow us on
Panavision Shares Helpful Shipping Guidelines

At the PERG NAB Membership Meeting on April 16th Mark Howorth, COO of Panavision, spoke passionately about the need for rental houses that ship lithium-ion batteries to understand the potentially dangerous (and costly) repercussions of doing so improperly. Panavision has developed a simple, two-page document that summarizes the new shipping rules about as concisely as it is possible to do given their complexity. The guidelines are available on the PERG website at http://www.esta.org/PERG/Initiatives/lithium-ion_batteries.html along with other helpful links.

NAB Meeting Sets New High Mark for PERG

PERG’s General Membership Meeting at NAB was filled with positive momentum. A record 185-plus people attended the meeting, with RSVPs coming in from 16 countries (PERG had to double the room size prior to this event). Following the customary hour of relaxation and networking with drinks and food, this year’s presentations featured a series of fast-paced, topical discussions. The evening’s host/ring-master was Paul Royalty (Litegear), chair of the PERG Council.

The Line Up:

Tony Carmean (Aerial Mob) and Derek Hammer (Camera Bee) discussed what rental houses should know about drone operations: equipment, legal restrictions and requirements, ramifications for insurance, and competition in the market from operators that do not have FAA approval and tend to bend safety rules.

Michael Givens (FAA) an aviation hazardous materials safety specialist gave attendees the lowdown on shipping lithium-ion batteries, including showing eye-opening videos of FAA tests where lithium batteries experience thermal runaway, resulting in spectacular (and terrifying) fire and explosions.

Bill Flynn (Product Engineer for Anton Bauer) discussed battery safety from the standpoint of the manufacturer, and how the safety protections work. Anton Bauer is
Mark Howorth (COO of Panavision) described the measures that Panavision has undertaken to ensure compliance with the new shipping regulations.

Detectives Martin Pastor and Anthony Diaz (NYPD Major Case Squad) were honored with an Award of Recognition. See these related articles in this issue: “Ties to Law Enforcement – a Game Changer”, “Eye-Opening Theft Video (a story with a happy ending”).

Lori Rubinstein (Behind the Scenes Foundation) concluded the meeting by sharing moving letters of thanks from recipients of Behind the Scenes charitable grants, which provide help to people working behind the scenes in our industry who become ill or injured.

PERG 2016 events are made possible with the support of our annual sponsors: Allianz, Arri Rental, Chubb, Panasonic, Panavision, Taylor & Taylor Associates, and Vitec Videocom. PERG’s General membership meeting at NAB was also sponsored by: Abel Cine, Bluebird Express, The Camera House, Chroma-Q by A.C. Lighting, NPF Insurance, and Orion Software.
To Buy, or Not to Buy? Thoughts on the Analysis of Capital Purchases for Rental Inventory – In Protocol NOW.

At the peak of his buying days at one of the large Burbank-based production/post rental houses, Joel Ordesky was in charge of annual purchases of over 12 million dollars. In the Spring Issue of Protocol, Ordesky ponders the question “To buy, or not to buy.” As Ordesky puts it, in the rental business if you want to sleep well at night, you need to know that what your company buys not only performs now, but also makes money in the long-run. Gut instinct and experience is not always enough when the success of your company depends on making good purchase decisions.

In this insightful article, Ordesky lays out the evaluation process for capital purchases for rental inventory. He looks at payback rates, number of lifetime paybacks, total cost of gear (including non-chargeable support items), factoring in redundancy, determining the initial-rate-card rate, erosion of revenue, utilization, and anticipating demand. It is a terrific article, tailor-made for PERG members, that will help anyone think more clearly about one of the most important decisions in sustaining and growing a rental business.

From the red carpet to the stage or the screen, Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty provides innovative entertainment insurance solutions and flexible risk services to meet the needs of the Entertainment industry worldwide.

Since the silent film era in the 1890s, Allianz has insured thousands of films for the industry’s top studios. With more than 100 years of entertainment insurance dedication, we insure a broad portfolio of risks including Hollywood blockbusters, independent films, music tours, festivals and other live events.

We are proud to be the recognized leader in film and entertainment insurance. Our centers of expertise in the US, Canada and the U.K. combined with a local presence in close to 200 Allianz locations around the world means we have the reach to work with productions and live events wherever they may go.

Our division comprises more than 60 specialist Entertainment underwriters, claims adjusters, auditors and safety experts averaging 25 years of experience in the industry. At Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty we insure a variety of events and productions for many of the hottest acts and top film producers — whether a live performance or with cameras rolling on location across the globe.

Apart from entertainment insurance solutions, Allianz provides unique risk solutions for property, casualty, aviation, energy, marine, financial lines and mid-corporate risks as well as international insurance programs. Taken together, our expertise, global reach and superior network make AGCS an industry leader in providing first-class insurance and risk management services to corporate clients and mid-sized businesses.
“Immeasurable Value”–the AICP/P ERG Pre-Cinco de Mayo Party

On the evening of April 28th the AICP and PERG once again co-hosted our patented “Pre-Cinco de Mayo” party at the historic Culver Hotel in Culver City (West Los Angeles). This members-only event, which grew even larger this year, has proved to be a huge hit and a great opportunity for members of our two organizations. But we’ll just let it speak for itself . . .

“It was really fun, and we had a good crowd. People really interact at this party, which is, to me, a very big hallmark of a successful event. People spread out in the venue so that each area felt festive, unique and lively. Can’t wait to see the photos!” - Jessie Nagel (Special Agent/Partner Hype)

“We were thrilled to sponsor as well as participate in the PERG/AICP Cinco de Mayo celebration. PERG/AICP’s top-notch events provide immeasurable value to the commercial production community as they create new opportunities to connect while solidifying familiar ones alike.” - Dennis McDonald (C.O.O. Keslow Camera)

“Thank you for hosting another great party last night. I love the great mix of production folks that PERG and the AICP brings together for this Cinco De Mayo event each year. When you get the PERG members, talking with Producers, Insurance Brokers, CFOs, Payroll experts and other AICP members, all in the same place, drinking margaritas and eating great food, you can’t help but have interesting, lively and insightful conversations! I always have fun, and I always seem to walk away with another great connection.” - Chris Lind (C.F.O. Smuggler)
“It was a fun time for people who work really hard together day in and day out to relax and stake out an area of the hotel where they could mingle with industry friends. I left around 10:00 and there was still a large crowd of people hanging out even after the party was officially over and it went to a cash bar. The AICP/PERP Cinco de Mayo event is like a reunion. It gives people who once spent time together a setting to rekindle those relationships that might otherwise slip away. Ole!” - Scott Taylor (Taylor & Taylor Associates)

PERG 2016 events are made possible with the support of our annual sponsors: Allianz, Arri Rental, Chubb, Panasonic, Panavision, Taylor & Taylor Associates, and Vitec Videocom. The AICP/PERP Pre-Cinco de Mayo party was sponsored by: The Camera House, Caps Payroll, Keslow Camera, NeeD Financial Services, Hype, PC&E, Quixote, and Warner Bros. Studio Services.

AN INSURANCE BROKER WHO UNDERSTANDS EQUIPMENT RENTAL

Taylor & Taylor is and has always been an insurance advocate for the professional equipment rental company servicing the entertainment industry. We are experienced in the types of claims routinely incurred, the specific insurance requirements when servicing live events and the settlement of claims when things go wrong. It is no small coincidence that many of our customers became customers after we helped them resolve a claim or obtain necessary coverage that they were not able to secure elsewhere.

We pride ourselves on setting the standard and helping people in any way we can.

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When you talk to rental companies who have experienced a theft, a common complaint has been that although the police come and take a report, they hold out little hope of recovering equipment or making arrests. That is changing quickly, thanks in large part to two people. Over the past nine months detectives Martin Pastor and Anthony Diaz of the New York Police Department’s Major Case Squad have recovered an estimated $700,000 worth of stolen cameras, lenses and production equipment.

PERG honored these two men with a special award of recognition at the NAB membership meeting. Paul Royalty (Litegear, LA) and David Wells (Moving Picture Rental, Miami) presented the awards.

Wells told the audience, “Back in August, at seven in the morning, I got a call from a guy who says he is an NYPD detective on the major case squad. He says, in this thick New York accent, ‘Hey Dave, I’m in Madrid, Spain recovering some master primes and you may have some information I need.’ I ask, how are you going to recover the lenses, you don’t have any jurisdiction there? He says, ‘I’m just going to knock on the perp’s door and ask for them.’

Ties to Law Enforcement – a Game Changer
Detective Martin Pastor calls back the next day. ‘Hey Dave! I got the lenses!’ At this point I am thinking this guy’s incredible—God’s gift to the rental industry.”

Pastor and Diaz have travelled to Spain, France, Argentina, California and Florida investigating crimes against our industry. They have worked to develop paid informants, which has enabled them to identify the people who are actually behind scores of thefts, and people who trade in stolen equipment. Pastor and Diaz have advised in cases when Rental Guard has identified stolen equipment that resurfaced for sale. On numerous occasions the detectives have placed repeated phone calls to persuade local police departments to get involved in cases. They have coordinated with police departments in Miami, Los Angeles, and Atlanta to recover equipment and track down suspects. Without their help, it is pretty clear no action would have been taken in these cases.

Pastor and Diaz credit PERG for creating Rental Guard (www.missingequipment.org). As the central, international database for stolen professional production equipment it provides law enforcement some real help. Rental Guard provides the data that enables the detectives to be more persuasive in discussions with the people they report to, and with other law enforcement agencies.

At the NAB meeting, Wells extolled the actions of these two charismatic detectives, telling some impressive stories in the process. Using information gained from arrests in New York, Pastor and Diaz were able to identify two perpetrators in Argentina who have been selling stolen equipment there for the past 25 years. By leveraging PERG’S relationship with the Secret Service, Pastor was put in contact with the head of security of the United States Embassy. Pastor and Diaz then flew to Argentina and were able to coordinate with the embassy to bring the perpetrator in for questioning. While no arrest could be made, anytime this person enters the United States the NYPD will be informed by the FBI and he now knows that.
The detectives travelled to Miami in January to participate in a luncheon put on by David Wells to network with four police agencies—City of Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Davey, and Hollywood Florida—all cities that have suffered rental house losses.

Detetive Pastor has helped PERG’s efforts to increase theft awareness among production companies and rental houses by participating in forums like the one held by Taylor & Taylor Associates last year at Able Cine Tech in association with the AICP/PERG Oktoberfest event.

Pastor and Diaz flew to Las Vegas to attend NAB (with the blessing of the NYPD, and partially funded by PERG) to make contacts with rental companies and equipment manufacturers and learn more about the equipment by which PERG members make their living. At the NAB meeting Wells concluded his remarks, saying “The message to brokers and thieves is that the NYPD is on the job. If you move stollen equipment, these guys will hunt you down across continents. You may be arrested, serve jail time, and/or lose a lot of money! The head is being cut off of the market makers because of these fine detectives.”

The award reads: Award of Recognition presented to detectives Martin Pastor and Anthony Diaz for their dedication to combating fraud and theft in the motion picture and television production industry. Presented by the Production Equipment Rental Group, April 2016.

Proud Sponsor of the Production Equipment Rental Group (PERG)

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Eye-Opening Theft Video  
(a story with a happy ending)

It was a revelation to the NAB meeting audience when detectives Pastor and Diaz screened video of a theft in action. The video is now available on the PERG website at www.esta.org/PERP/Initiatives/theft_video.html. The video, captured by security cameras on a New York City street, records two men following a rented truck full of equipment. When the PA parks the truck, the two men check the parking receipt on the vehicle to see how much time is on the parking meter. Then, in broad daylight, on a busy sidewalk with people going about their business and tourists snapping pictures, the two men break into the truck, unload its contents into their van, close up the truck, even raising the lift gate back into place before taking off. Detective Diaz narrated the video clip for the PERG audience. He and Pastor later were able to track down and arrest the thieves, one of whom was responsible for nearly 30 similar truck robberies in NYC. This was the case in which information gained from that arrest led the detectives to Argentina (See “Ties to Law Enforcement – a Game Changer” in this issue). (See “Please Help Stop Equipment Theft” flyer on the back page of this newsletter.)

New Tip Fund to Aid Police Investigators

PERG asked law enforcement how we can help them help us. One of the answers we got was to establish a tip fund for information that leads directly to the recovery of stolen equipment. Law enforcement can often gain valuable information by offering a small incentive. ESTA has developed a strategy for administering such a fund. At the PERG event at NAB, Paul Royalty led the charge, calling on attendees to pitch in to seed the tip fund. The audience responded enthusiastically and PERG raised $2400 within just a few minutes. Thank you to all who participated!

We urge PERG members who find themselves speaking to police about a theft, to let them know about the resources available from our industry’s trade association, particularly Rental Guard and the new Tip Fund. Contact Lori Rubinstein or Harry Box for more details.

Right Back at You!

Detectives Pastor and Diaz had a surprise of their own for three individuals who are central to PERG’s work to combat fraud and theft. The detectives presented certificates of appreciation from the police department of the City of New York to Scott Taylor (Taylor & Taylor Associates), Lori Rubinstein (ESTA) and David Wells (Moving Picture Rental). The certificates read (in part) “In grateful recognition and sincere appreciation of your untiring and selfless efforts put forth on behalf of the members of the Detectives Endowment Association”. It was gratifying to have our front line honored by the NYPD for the work they have accomplished, much of it away from the public eye. PERG is extremely proud of Taylor, Rubinstein and Wells and their efforts.
PERG Member Resources

RENTAL GUARD –
http://www.missingequipment.org

AICP/ESTA Sample Terms and Conditions –
http://www.esta.org/PERG/Initiatives/terms.html

ESTA Job Board – A fullfeatured employment resource.
http://jobboard.esta.org/
- Job postings
- Resume search
- Self service management of postings
- Notification of new candidates with the qualifications you are looking for.

Members receive one free job posting on the new job board. Additionally, members receive 25% off subsequent purchases using your member discount code. Contact membership@esta.org for information.

Media cards and storage devices are commonly returned with sensitive images still on the device. PERG brought together representatives from every side of the industry to discuss the issue and created the Recorded Content Disclaimer and the Media Handling Guidelines for Rental House Employees.

Membership Benefits – http://www.esta.org/join/membershipbenefits.html
Take full advantage of your PLASA membership.

PERG Website – http://www.esta.org/PERG/
Learn about upcoming and past PERG events and programs. Connect to other members.

Become a Member – http://www.esta.org/join/membershipbenefits.html
Please contact Harry Box (harry.box@esta.org) to learn more about joining ESTA as a PERG member. Join the growing international network focused on the challenges and opportunities faced by professional rental companies in the film, television and commercial production market.

Save Money with American Express
ESTA is delighted to welcome a program with American Express which will offer members the low rate of 2.8%. If you already accept American Express and want to lower your rate, or if you would like to begin accepting American Express, email Frances Thompson (frances.thompson@esta.org).

Help Your Colleagues in Need
Learn more about Behind the Scenes – a charity that provides grants to entertainment technology professionals who are seriously ill or injured. See the video, Behind the Scenes: In Their Own Words, an informative and moving testament to the success of this unique charity. If you know of someone in need please tell them about Behind the Scenes. Visit http://www.behindthescenescharity.org.
Would you leave $250,000 (of anything) in an unattended vehicle? Theft from vehicles and sets accounts for more than half of all equipment theft.

Theft is an Industry Epidemic
Incidents reported to Rental Guard in 2014-2015:
• Over $8 million dollars of stolen equipment (est. value)
• Incidents in 23 cities worldwide, and in 13 U.S. states
• 32 incidents in Los Angeles and New York alone
• Losses from a single incident exceeding $280,000

Theft hurts everyone. It disrupts production schedules, affects insurance rates and rental rates, and reduces availability of hard-to-replace equipment.

Our industry can no longer afford to be a soft target. You can help.

What You Should Know
• Do not leave equipment unattended in a vehicle. Minimal security measures, such as vehicle door locks, pad locks or lift gates, are entirely inadequate to deter a professional thief who is targeting high-value equipment.
• Criminals know the value of gear. They have walked into filming locations and taken cameras and lens cases right from the staging area. They will follow a vehicle from the rental house and wait for an opportunity to break into (or steal) it when it is unattended or parked overnight.
• Drivers should plan trips to avoid stops, such as for food or gas, when transporting high-value equipment.
• When shooting on location with public traffic (such as a restaurant on a busy city street), assign responsibility for watching over high-value gear and preventing intrusion by the public.
• Some short-term insurance policies exclude theft from an unattended vehicle. Be sure you’re covered.

Police Recommendations
• A truck should be considered a means of transport only, not security. Security must be provided at the location where the truck is parked.
• High-value equipment should be removed from the vehicle whenever appropriate security cannot be provided.
• As an alternative, high-value items could be locked inside a safe or welded cage within the vehicle.
• Parking security should be assessed and vetted (locked gates, guard on duty, video, lighting?).
• Using a “bonded lot” provides absolutely no protection against theft.
• Do not rely on the lift gate to provide security. The lift gate is almost always operable without the keys to the vehicle. (Some vehicles have a kill switch in the cab.) Another security weakness is trucks that have a cargo area that is accessible from the cab.
• Vehicles that are painted with a company name or logo may raise the risk of break-in, as it draws attention to vehicles likely to contain expensive equipment.

If you suspect that a piece of equipment you are working with is stolen, check the RENTAL GUARD website and contact ESTA. Reporting stolen equipment and searching the database is free. If equipment is stolen from your shoot, have the equipment owner report it to RENTAL GUARD. You’ll be doing them and the industry a favor.