

# PORTA-BRACE

**N O T E S**

FOR PRODUCTION CREWS IN THE FIELD

■ SUMMER 2003

## Happy Sails to You



Paul pictured in the sailboat that he built and enjoyed many times on North Bennington's Lake Paran (top). Relaxing on his 28-foot sailboat, the Narrenschiff, on Vermont's Lake Champlain (right).



You name it, and he can do it: from fixing a sleeve turner to building a boat to designing Porta Brace's NAB booth, Paul Miottko is a Jack-of-all-trades. After being with Porta Brace for 18 years, Mr. Fix It, as he is affectionately known (you might remember seeing him in the "Old-timers" feature of the fall 2002 Porta Brace Notes), is retiring in May. Although we'll miss him, we are delighted to say that he will be moving on to bigger waters and brighter horizons down in coastal North Carolina, where he plans to continue sailing.

### Protecting Your Camera in Unusual Situations

From dusty barns to sand storms, there's no question that cameramen need to protect their valuable equipment in the most harsh environments and unusual situations. You might think that cases only protect the exterior of a camera. However, as Eric Burks, News Operations Manager of Tampa Bay's Channel 10 News says, the case also gives the camera "security against bumping or vibration," which keeps the cards and chips in place. In one extraordinary situation, Porta Brace's Ken Barry recalled that a

Tennessee station called up and wondered what the warranty was on the Shoulder Case. Ken said at least a year. It turned out the product was only two months old, so Ken told him to send it back. "When I opened the box, the case looked perfectly brand new until I flipped it over. It looked like it went through the cheese grater," said Ken. The customer laughed when Ken called back. He and his reporter had just finished a story when they got called to a crime scene. They rushed back to their car, threw in their equipment,

Paul came to Porta Brace rather circuitously. While earning a ceramic design degree from Alfred University, he came to our town on a fellowship at the famous Bennington Potters. After graduating, he took a job in coastal Massachusetts working for a high tech ceramics company that made crucibles and ceramic fireplaces. He missed Vermont, though, and soon returned to Bennington Potters, where he ran the production operation for eight years and then designed a pottery line for Berkshire Stoneware, before finding his way to Porta Brace.

In 1984 Porta Brace needed help upgrading machines and fine-tuning its assembly products. Paul answered the call. He put pottery to the side and threw himself into his new job. "It's always been challenging because there are always new things to work on," he said (See Paul's "inventions" on page 3). "I really get into anything I work on, especially the involved projects like building webcutters or a turner (a machine that turns sleeves right side out)." Paul says he's been lucky to work with such

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## PORTA-BRACE NOTES



Paul at work in his home potting studio.

learned to sail mainly on Lake Champlain and then progressed to the 28-foot boat he now has, which he plans to bring to New Bourne, N.C. where he'll sail in the nearby bay.

When he's not sailing, Paul will be in the pottery studio that he plans to set up. Although he's had a small pottery studio in the basement of his house here, he's not had time to establish a professional operation. He hopes to become more active in potting by not only continuing to make his favorite type pottery—functional pottery—but also venturing into sculpting.

"You've really got to think about what you're going to do when you retire," said Paul. "It is a big change." Luckily, Paul will keep busy with his vocations and with all the gardening and tinkering that we know he'll do around the house.

When his wife, Kathy, has time off from her job as a nurse, they'll travel to the land of Paul's ancestors and relatives—Stockholm, Sweden. They'll also travel to Boulder, Colorado to see their son Erik, who does soundwork and sets up shows at a theater. And, fortunately for all of us, we'll not only be reminded of Paul because of the presence of Paul's son Ben, who works in our Assembly Department, but we'll also see Paul's familiar face when he comes for a visit!



Paul's functional pottery.

nice people. He's enjoyed the variety of his jobs, from mechanics where he gets to put ideas into form to more aesthetically interesting projects such as designing cases and displays.

Sew-er Debbie Green says that she'll miss Paul's wonderful sense of humor. "He's always got a good joke to make us laugh," she said.

While Paul said that he will miss the daily camaraderie, the challenge of his projects, and the sense of fulfillment he gets out of contributing to valuable work, he is looking forward to having time to devote to his passions.

"I came to sailing kind of late," said Paul, who started out with a little 13-foot day sailor about 18 years ago. "Sailing is kind of magical because you don't hear anything. You are moving around and you need to be aware of your surroundings in order to make the boat move in the wind."

It took Paul a while to know where the wind was coming from. He

## Pat Jarvis

Pat Jarvis has been at Porta Brace for almost a decade. Her co-workers will be the first to tell you that she is an exceptional sewer, who can take on difficult projects and readily make sense of them. "She is very helpful," added sewer Colleen Carlow. "If you need a hand finishing an order, she'll always assist you."

Pat moved from Massachusetts to Pownal, Vermont 11 years ago, with her longtime companion Bruce and their 16-year-old son, Jonathon. "We moved up here because there was more to do and it was easier living," said Bruce.

In Vermont, Pat first worked for her brother, who owns Bennington Dry Cleaners, and she then decided to put her sewing talents to use at Porta Brace.

When Pat's not working, she spends time with her son, who attends the local Mount Anthony High School and excels in computers. She loves the outdoors and especially deep sea fishing in Maine, snowmobiling in Wilmington, and camping. Pat enjoys seeing wildlife and sometimes accompanies Bruce and Jonathon when they are scouting for deer. She is most infatuated with wolves. In the summer, Pat's favorite pastime is to go fleamarketing.

As the second to the youngest in a family of five, it is no wonder that Pat developed a great sense of humor. "She is a real joker," said her colleague Mary Field. "She's always making us laugh."



Pat at work



Pat's quite the fisherwoman!



Pat off exploring on her ATV.



Note: Waiting line

## Paul's Inventions



Inside-Outsider Turner



Pellet Loader



Cross Cutter



Plastic Bender



Web Burner

### Protecting your Camera continued from page 1

and were off. They'd driven about 1000 feet when they noticed a strange noise. One asked the other: Did you put the camera in the car? Neither had. It turned out that it had gotten caught under the car and was dragged. When they took the camera out of the Shoulder Case, it worked perfectly fine; only the viewfinder was slightly scratched.

More recently, we spoke to John Premack, WCVB TV Chief Photographer, who said, "We look for the case to protect the camera against the bangs and dings of everyday use and to keep it from accumulating dust and grime and grit. Just look at your windshield after two days. Would you

want your camera's to look like that?"

Protecting cameras against the rain is also essential. Leon Gonzalez, Chief Photographer for WFOR TV in Florida, has been in his share of hurricanes and tropical storms. When it gets really bad he uses the larger, more heavy-duty Porta Brace Rain Slicker that completely covers the camera. Gonzalez further protects his camera from humidity by blowdrying it after use. "We keep hairdryers handy in the live trucks."

No matter what season your entering or where in the world your heading, take the advice of Andy DeSantis, Chief Photographer WGRZ TV Buffalo, NY: "When we buy our cameras new, we put the Porta-Brace Shoulder Cases on, and we don't take them off unless the camera needs a complete overhaul. It's part of the camera, and it is the protective part."



### NEW items introduced at NAB



Quick Slick

A new addition to the Porta Brace line is the **Quick Slick**. This trim and slick item is ideal to cover cameras in a jiffy in case of rain. It has several features that are unique for rain slickers. An expandable back for various size batteries and radio mikes, a zippered neoprene viewfinder cover, and a revolutionary new lens gasket that fits internal focus lenses tightly.

Our new line of **Quick Cases** for lighting equipment and tripods is a sensible addition to our line, offering a concept of wide-mouth, with full-length opening and closing. They are our answer to the recent need for lightweight, economical cases.

We have introduced quite a few **new** audio cases made specifically for mixers from **Professional Sound, Shure, Sony, Sound Devices, and SQN Electronics.**

Check our web site:  
[www.portabrace.com](http://www.portabrace.com)



Debbie Stork who has been with K&H Products for more than 17 years retired in February. She was a mainstay of the company, providing us with top-notch management skills and plenty of good-natured fun.

## It's Sugaring Time!

Every year around this time, Vermonters join together for sugar-on-snow parties (plenty of hot maple syrup poured over packed snow or crushed ice). In the olden days, hot biscuits were dipped into warm syrup and some even ate sour pickles along with maple syrup-made sweets.

Tapping sap from the maple tree and boiling it into syrup (known as "sugaring") is a time-honored winter activity (Feb-April). Our state has an ideal climate for growing sugar maple trees and it has just enough night freezing and day thawing to make for good sap flow. This exceptionally cold winter is expected to create a banner syrup year.

Syrup making know-how has been handed down from generation to generation since the times of the native people who used the syrup to sweeten corn dishes. For the colonists, it was a fine alternative to sugar, which was then scarce and expensive.

### Interesting Facts

- It takes 40 years to grow a maple tree large enough to tap.
- Vermont is the largest producer of maple syrup in the U.S.
- Within the year 2000, those producers made an estimated 460,000 gallons of maple syrup.
- It takes about 35 gallons of sap for one gallon of syrup.



# Your Logo's Lookin' Good

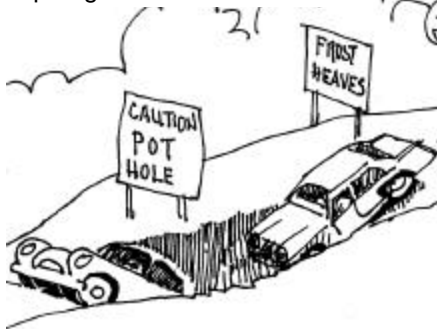


Sometimes we are able to emblazon logos of TV stations on certain cases.. We have also been known to do some modifications to certain cases to meet special needs.

Give us a call 802-442-8171



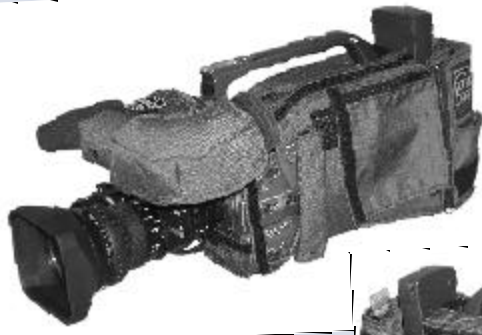
Spring time in Vermont



## We Enjoy Hearing from You

**Please share your comments, stories, and photographs. Tell us how you carry your equipment. We'll pass on your ideas and tips to our readers. You can e-mail us at [info@portabrace.com](mailto:info@portabrace.com)**

The Porta Brace Shoulder Case Tradition Continues



**The Shoulder Case: One of our most inovative and useful products, but still the best**

"The Porta Brace shoulder cases we've used on several of our cameras for nearly 20 years are the best product available for the protection of our cameras. Last Christmas we had close to 8 feet of snow in Buffalo in a week. Not one camera went down due to dampness, cold, or wetness. We attribute a lot of that to the case. ."

— Andy DeSantis, Chief Photographer WGRZ TV Buffalo, NY

"One of the things we appreciate most about the shoulder case is the built in rain top. It is always there and you can't leave it behind. It's pretty easy to put on—you can do it in a few minutes."

—John Premack, WCVB TV, Chief Photographer

"We swear by it. It's an investment, but it's well worth it. As you can tell when you take a dirty, nasty, beat-up Porta-Brace off a camera and the camera is unscathed, clean, and protected...obviously there's a reason for that."

—Eric Burks, News Operations Manager, Tampa Bay's 10 News



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