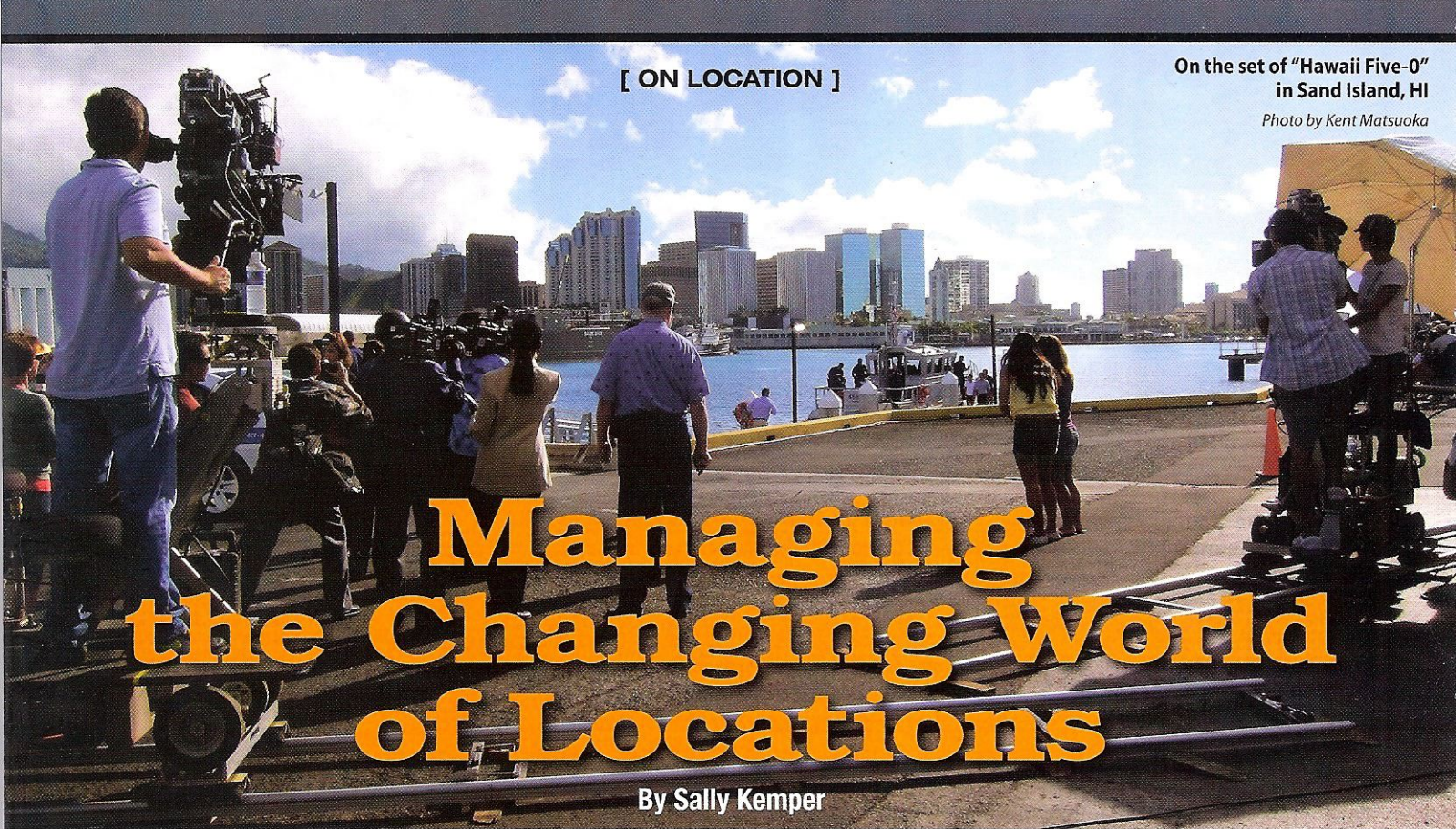




Managing the Changing World of Locations

By Sally Kemper

Now celebrating its 25th year as a trade magazine, *P3 Update's* foundation was built on covering film locations. And over the past decade, its editorial staff has worked with production experts who willingly shared their career experiences and keys to success to provide the industry with the most up-to-date news on global preproduction, production and postproduction. So after a quarter of a century's existence, *P3* returns to where it all began to bring you tips and updates on the fundamental role that location professionals play in today's production process.

As a location manager, it's important to get to know local authorities, government officers and neighborhood residents to ensure the smoothest shoot possible and to prepare for the ease of future projects. Interpersonal relationship skills can make a location manager's job much easier and more fulfilling while making sure the entire production and future location managers benefit.

"I've done several fun things for the neighborhoods that we shoot in," says Location Manager Nancy Haecker, who is currently working on the Fox TV show "House M.D." "I brought an ice cream truck into a neighborhood where we were shooting and let all the families from that neighborhood order from the truck." Haecker's

efforts won her the prize of satisfaction for bringing together a neighborhood. "I was shooting on a closed street where there happened to live the troop leader for Girl Scouts, and it was cookie campaign time, so I purchased boxes of cookies for each home on the block," she recalls. "The cookies were a big hit, but more importantly, I had the troop leader and her girls who were new to the neighborhood deliver the cookies, and that really brought them together with their new neighbors."

On another occasion, Haecker walked into a house where she heard a heated conversation between a mother and a hysterical daughter regarding a lack of funds for her high school prom. It wasn't long before Haecker and her co-workers came up with a solution. "I collected money from my location department," explains Haecker. "Kyle Oliver, Doug Dresser and I paid for the prom dress, the corsages, the prom photo and dinner. About a month later, I received the prom photo, and this girl could not have been happier."

J.J. Levine is currently working as a key assistant location manager on the CBS show "Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior." She offers several helpful tips that have attributed to her success as a location manager on many TV shows, films and commercials. "When you scout, photograph the location in a way to show that

it fits the action and not just the scene description," she says. "And 'feel' rather than always 'think.' It's a subtle difference, but when searching for a house that belongs to a certain character, I ask myself, 'does this feel like this character?' versus just thinking my way through it — especially in situations where the schedule is fast, like on TV shows and commercials."

Levine recommends that you get as much clarification on the tech scout as you can. "It's best to ask questions when everyone is there, so you have a clear picture and help for a solution," she adds. "A picture is worth a thousand words, so before you go out and scout, try to sit down with the decision-makers to make sure you agree on the expectations. Not everyone has the same vocabulary or vision, so it can be easy to miss the mark."

Prepare for the unexpected and know what you will do next. "Think about what could go wrong and have a backup plan," says Levine. And she is not an advocate of stretching the truth or omitting pertinent information, because it can come back to bite you and can affect the next location manager. "Don't try to lessen the impact by minimizing what you tell the neighborhood about the production," she warns. "When you're trying to get signatures, it's tempting to minimize the impact because you need the neighborhood's approval." Take lots of pic-