

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com.

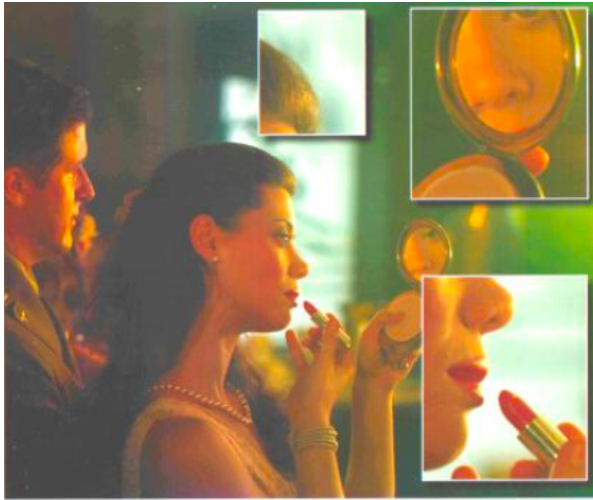
RON NAKAMOTO



“One of the more interesting moments in my career was the time I was on-set at The Arboretum observing how Hollywood made movies. (*Editor’s note: The Arboretum and Botanical Gardens of Los Angeles County was a popular location for Hollywood movies such as “Jurassic Park” and “Tarzan”. The Queen Anne Cottage was in the opening credits of the TV Show “Fantasy Island”.*) It was late, around ten p.m. as we walked through the parking area with row upon row of trailers for props, wardrobe, lighting, etc. on to the set of “Little Nicky”, the Adam Sandler movie released in 2000. Theo Van De Sante, the Director of Photography, was our sponsor as we observed the camera and lighting set-ups for shoots of portions of the film. (*Editor’s note:*

Theo did “Blade”, “Miracle Mile”, “Volcano” and many other films.) It was cold and the extras dressed as little devils were freezing on the mountain prop. Dinner break was called around midnight so we walked to the dining area under a large circus size tent that seated over 150. It was a bit surreal as you picked up warmed plates, silverware and proceeded to select from a full buffet including chefs carving prime rib... AT MIDNIGHT, UNDER A TENT, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOTANICAL GARDENS! No wonder films cost over \$100 million to make. (*Editor’s note: In case you were wondering, the film was released in 2000 and was considered a bomb grossing less than \$60 million. And yes, I did get to meet Adam Sandler and Rob Schneider.*) “

“I was there because we had developed a beta version of a full motion, all digital movie camera; with the resolution and dynamic range that was superior to film. The technology we used was readily available from the work we did in the intelligence reconnaissance area. Our belief and business proposition was that digitizing the front end of the filmmaking process would finally create an all-digital production process to make movies; better, never seen before picture quality, much shorter post production turnaround at reduced cost, allowing for more movie productions per year.”



*Actress prepping for a test shoot with the prototype Blue Herring movie camera.
Note fine hair resolution in insert.*

Born in Fukuoka, Japan in a U.S. Military Hospital, Ron was less than a year old when his family moved back to Hawaii, his family's home. There he grew up as a typical native wearing shorts and slippers and speaking 'Pigeon English' (Editor's note: Pigeon English is a unique blend of local English, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, etc. words, slurred together in rapid fire to represent the colloquial language in Hawaii.) His father, a life-long military man was soon reassigned to Thailand in the early 1960's as a military advisor to the Royal Thai Army. Ron quickly learned to speak and read Thai. Elvis was "The King" but even then on the other side of the world, he started to hear the music of the Beatles. Ron recalls being chauffeured to a Catholic English speaking school in a Mercedes, as did all of the kids at that time. The Catholic nuns quickly beat the 'Pidgin English' out of him and he was well on his way to a British English vocabulary. *(Editor's note: All students taught under the British system were required to take 12 subjects a quarter. The students were ranked and the rankings were posted for all to view at the end of each quarter. The nuns had free reign to 'rap knuckles' as they saw fit. It was the best of times.)* His father was again reassigned, this time to the Presidio of San Francisco and later back to Hawaii. With a family of eight, Ron's older brother decided to find a pad with a friend to complete high school. Of course, at 15, Ron thought to tag along as younger brothers often do. All three worked at a place called "Yummers" on Union St. in San Francisco and finished high school at the same school that O.J. Simpson attended a few years earlier.

Ron's intense educational experience in Thailand propelled him to graduate early and allowed him to compete and win a full military scholarship to California Polytechnic College. After graduating he entered the U.S. Army, which he found very rewarding and exciting over his seven years of service. He was always good at working win-win deals and after completing his officers training, co-opted an assignment to Hawaii. There he worked representing the Armed Services as Executive Agent for the Hawaiian Telephone contract. The military had installed most of the inside/outside telephone cable and switching equipment on the island during WW II. Unfortunately, after the war the government could not be viewed as competing with the local telephone service provider, so all equipment was turned over to the telephone company in exchange for preferred rates. This assignment ended abruptly as an urgent need arose at Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii. This major medical center was operating with aged and

failing communications infrastructure installed in the 1940-1950's. (*Editor's note: General Renzi, the senior Signal Corps general had checked into the hospital and immediately saw the condition of the communication systems and sent a "back channel" (general officer message) ordering action. Ron was assigned the next day.*)

"On my first day on the job, an ambulance arrived with a patient that just suffered a cardiac arrest. The cardiac paging system was activated but failed and the cardiac team was not able to convene in time. The patient died. I immediately reported this to my commanding officer and although the conversation was over the phone, I could clearly see his face - a West Point graduate pushing to become general; pale as he saw his career go out the window. A board inquiry absolved the loss of communications as a determining cause for the patient's death. Subsequently, I received extraordinary support from both the Hospital and Agency commands to 'fix' things immediately. I was at the leading edge of many advances in medical communications and had carte blanche to make things happen. "

"After that adventure, I was rewarded with early entry to "Advanced Officers" school and later to the "Senior Officers Telecommunications" Graduate School. The only downside to this great opportunity was as the junior officer, I was assigned extra duties such as "Morale and Recreation Officer" e.g. activity and party coordinator. Biloxi, Mississippi where the school resided was actually a very nice area with great seafood. The downside was the locals thought Hawaii was a foreign nation. "Oh, what language do they speak there?" After completion of school, I was selected to work for the Army Space Program Office and was assigned to the elite Secretary of the Air Force, Special Programs at Los Angeles, CA. The next four years was a blur of round the clock work to design, build and field intelligence capabilities for the U.S. military. We had Presidential priority to acquire any item we needed. The U.S.S.R. was our principal enemy with China and the Middle East emerging as regional threats. Unfortunately, the one-of-a-kind assignments had to end and I chose to leave the military for a career in Aerospace. I crisscrossed the country from Los Angeles to Westboro, MA, Palo Alto, CA, Annapolis, MD and finally to Mountain View, CA. The high point of my career with Lockheed Martin Corporation was leading the Intelligence Group (\$1.5 billion, 3,600 employee organization), travelling the world helping the nation better protect itself. I moved back to California in 2006 to lead a small technology company in the logistics area and later completed my career as a corporate officer advising companies with R&D initiatives."

Ron met his wife Elaine at work after he lost his first wife to a sudden stroke. He was heartbroken to have lost his mate but God was kind to him and introduced Elaine to him over coffee. They have been married for thirteen years. He has two children and five grandkids. His son is a UCSD graduate working for Kaiser Permanente as the Business manager for Networking. His daughter is a USD law graduate working as the International Contracts manager for General Atomics, the premier Unmanned Aerial Vehicle contractor. Ron currently enjoys playing golf, bowling and swimming. He spends

some time every morning viewing the stock market and adjusting his investments for the day. He has taken several Stock and Options classes in San Francisco and Chicago. His biggest regret was missing his opportunity to win an Oscar but he has credit as Producer for a short film "As Time Goes By". One of his biggest smiles came from a call from the Air Force Secretary awarding a highly competitive \$5 billion dollar contract to Lockheed Martin Corp. His team had spent over three years competing for this second-generation Military Internet contract.

His comment to his fellow SIR members is to get engaged in something you care about, as life is more enjoyable when you are involved versus watching from the sidelines.

And so we wrap up this profile with a "Hana Hou!" a phrase from Hawaii that translates to "One more time!" were life could be lived again.