

Setsurround

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Paul Setser and I encountered each other for the first time at the Wisconsin State University-Whitewater where we both were residents on different floors of Wells Hall in the 1970-'71 school year.

He was among the offbeat people at that conventional campus and usually alone. We'd pass each other on the way to and from class or Esker Dining Hall. I always said hello, but we never talked. Just felt a kinship.

Later I transferred to Madison, received my communications degree, and moved to Milwaukee. In the fall of 1977, I was hired by Wisconsin Telephone Company and became a writer-producer at its new Executive Communications Center in Bishops Woods.

One of our suppliers was Sorgel-Lee, a production company on Highland near the river. The hot presentation medium at the time was multi-image, essentially nine or more slide projectors synched and operated by an early computer.

Sorgel-Lee did excellent presentations with superb photography and programming and absolutely killer soundtracks. Music was especially important to invigorate the stills.

When I visited the firm's offices for the first time, I was introduced to Paul, Sorgel-Lee's audio guy. I immediately recognized him as the freaky kid who lived in Wells.

He didn't remember me.

One of Paul's colleagues nicknamed him "Setsurround" after the thundering sound effect *Sensurround* that gave rumble to *Earthquake*, a 1974 movie written by George Fox, produced and directed by Mark Robson, starring Charlton Heston, Ava Gardner, George Kennedy, Lorne Greene, and others.

We worked together on various projects and became friends at the long-gone Starship when we ran into each other at a 1982 appearance by The Ventures—I still have the concert shirt and found the flyer below online.

Falling video technology prices caused the decline of multi-image, and I took a job with Allen-Bradley as a video scriptwriter. Sorgel and Lee began laying off people. Paul became a freelance audio producer, composing, hiring musicians, recording at studios around town, and creating soundtracks. But well-compensated assignments were rare.

The last hurrah for multi-image in Milwaukee was the *Spirit of Milwaukee* show produced for the then-new Grand Avenue Mall which opened in 1982. The project was managed by Greg Coenen, a City of Milwaukee employee, and it was quite a production. Many area creatives worked on it—Paul did the sound—and I heard endless tales of turmoil. Some complained about the result, but I thought it was pretty good, particularly the track.



Coenen relocated to the East Coast, and years later when he needed audio production help contacted Setsurround.

The transition to video impacted Paul and other audio people more than most of us because a great track wasn't as important when everything moved.



In 1984, I went out on my own as a freelance scriptwriter then as an independent writer-producer-director. Paul did great sound for my St. Mary's Heart Hospital and Midwest Express videos.

He also helped compose and played keyboards on pieces for a video promoting Family Hospital's sexual assault treatment center and his sister Judy's wedding—we wrote the songs together on my deck in Wauwatosa.

Around then, Paul took up the guitar and accordion and soon was playing both well. The first time I saw him perform was at another long-gone tavern named L.A. Freeway on North. He was excellent, singing and strumming covers mainly but some originals, too.

We got together now and then and played our acoustics and sang songs. He met son Troy and daughter Ann not long after their arrivals and they always enjoyed his visits.

Another friend, Gary Kuber (who went on to have a career with the Internal Revenue Service in Tomahawk, Wisconsin), an imaginative, tell-it-like-it-is writer-guitarist, wrote a song titled, "Better Tomorrows." I'd helped Gary record an earlier tune named "Stained-Glass Anarchy" with a four-track TEAC deck on loan from Allen-Bradley. By the time he created "Better Tomorrows," I was on my own with no access to equipment. Mentioned it to Paul and he said he'd help.

We rendezvoused in my basement office on Mayfair Road across from Currie Golf Course; Paul brought his keyboard and a tape recorder. We did the tune in one evening. Gary played lead guitar and sang, I picked the bassline, Paul added synthesizer and mixed the result.

Links to mp3s of all three songs are on my website tswrites.com below the link to this article.

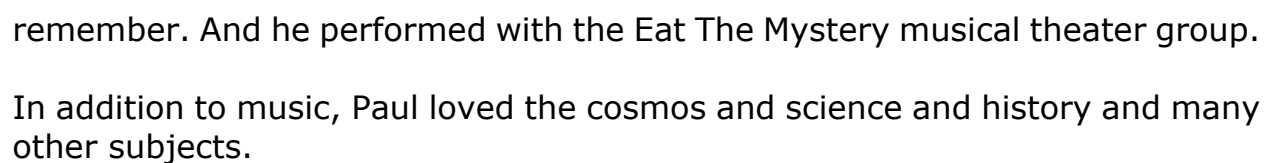
I hired Setsurround every chance I got and always recommended him as a way to make productions *a lot better*. He had the knack! And was a perfectionist who never settled for less than the best in himself and others...though some resisted. I went back strictly to writing when I realized my control ended at the client's whim and a decent production could be compromised quickly even though I'd put more hours in by far than could be billed.

The advent of the internet made things tougher for production companies and lancers of all kinds.

Things became even more challenging for Paul whose relationship with money during *most* of the time I knew him was similar to President Tavern Talk's with truth—it was a *distant* acquaintance.

It surprised me when he mentioned he was performing janitorial work at Shank Hall. "Need the cash," he said. And later he began running Quarters and working at Circle A. These gigs didn't pay what he commanded as a lancer, but he *squeaked* by and enjoyed the social whirl.

I heard many stories of people he met and performed with, and he was enthusiastic about all of them. He loved people and they loved him. Those tavern roles put him at the center of the scene, and he met dozens and scores of partiers and jammed with musicians regularly.



He was along when my brother took us to a friend's house under dark skies north of West Bend where we viewed Haley's Comet through my 6-inch Newtonian reflector as it hurtled toward the Sun in late 1985. Still far away, it looked like a bright-white match—short stem, globular head—suspended among the stars. Diminutive but distinctive in the eyepiece.

A few years later my wife Pam was intent on moving to Brookfield and someone told us we should buy on high ground. Knowing Paul grew up here I asked him to show us around the city concentrating on higher elevation areas. He was always happy to help and did a great job.

We purchased our Brookfield home on a hill in 1990; Paul visited many times for jamming and looking at objects through my telescope.

During Comet Hale-Bopp's appearance in 1997, he traveled with me to a low-light-pollution site northwest of Brookfield for an unforgettable view through binoculars.

Paul told me his Whitewater degree was in marketing and that seemed to define absurd. A stark illustration of the inability of education to alter a reflexive perhaps autonomic antipathy toward a subject.

Though not a marketer, he was a rare bird: An artist with a brain that could master technology. It was his practical side that probably propelled him toward marketing but his flights-of-fancy character made that airplane crash on takeoff.

Speaking of practical, a number of times I suggested he apply at Potawatomi because the casino has various audiovisual needs and a license to print money. Figured he'd fit right in with the round-the-clock hours. But he never did.

In the early 2000s, I began inviting Paul to the family cabin on Bass Lake in Florence County. The objectives were sliding a dock and deck-like raft stored on shore for the winter back into the water which was a taxing, two-man job but didn't take long. We'd head north late Friday morning, get the work done by the end of the day, and then have dinner at places with names like Black Bear Inn, Dina Mia's, The Green Shack, and Den and Ren's.

I paid for everything and think Paul viewed these trips as the vacations he rarely had.

Saturdays we'd take the rowboat out to the raft, tie it off, and spend the afternoon aboard lawn chairs drinking beer and playing guitar in the May Sun. Crystal clear air, blue water, north woods quiet, natural acoustics, chords ringing, voices reverberating.

We both knew quite a few country, folk, and rock songs and we'd take turns suggesting tunes and had a lot of carefree fun. Great memories!

Saturday evening it would be out for dinner again and pumping dollars into juke boxes at local taverns.

On clear nights we'd go back to the cabin, sit on the dock, and star gaze the ink-black skies over Bass Lake with the Milky Way stretched south to north.

In 2008, he saw an ad seeking an Associate Broadcast Specialist for WUWM's *Lake Effect* program and asked me to help with his resume. I also sent a letter of reference but nothing came of it. Too bad because he would have been superb in that role.

May 19, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known Paul Setser since we worked together on multi-image programs while I was a presentation manager at the Wisconsin Telephone Company in the 1980s. Since then, he has performed soundtrack work for me regularly on projects as diverse as a video for St. Mary's Hospital and a CD-ROM for MATC.

He sent a copy of the Producer, "Lake Effect" (Associate Broadcast Specialist) Job Availability Announcement, and I am certain his performance in this role would be outstanding. He is a consummate media professional who excels at every listed task. In addition, he is easy to work with, reliable, creative, and takes great pride in his work.

Please call or send an e-mail if you have questions or want more information about my knowledge of Paul's abilities.

Sincerely,

Ted Schaar

PAUL SETSER

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PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

Producer, "Lake Effect" (Associate Broadcast Specialist).

PROFILE

Communications professional who specializes in researching, creating, and engineering audio for business and entertainment purposes. Outstanding computer, interviewing, producing, directing, editing, composing, and management skills. Often takes projects from concept to completion

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1983 to Present: Setser Creative, Milwaukee. Freelance Audio Producer-Engineer. Duties include producing audio for a variety of live, video, radio, and Internet presentations. Services include talent and music selection; narration direction; on- and off-microphone interviewing; sound effect recording; on-location recording; original music composition; and multitrack soundtrack mastering. Work is performed at a client's facility or in a Mac-based, home office-studio. Also produce, record, mix, and master compact disc albums for bands such as Duo Americas, Embedded Reporter, and Floor Model.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Researched and produced the soundtrack for a multimedia presentation called "The Spirit Of New London" for the New London, Connecticut, Department of City Development's annual award's banquet.

Researched and produced the soundtrack and assisted in the design of the Milwaukee Department of City Development's "The Spirit of Milwaukee" multimedia presentation that was screened at the Grand Avenue. Also composed original music for the production.

Served as a consultant to Northwestern Mutual Life to help the company design and upgrade its corporate audio studio.

Composed music for a cyber card on nontraditional occupations for the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Audio producer-engineer for a play called "Faces in The Raft," written by David LaChance. Also composed and recorded original music for the project.

Produced the CD, "The Miles Left Over" for poet Eliot Brooks and composed

several music pieces for the album.

Composed music for a video on open-heart surgery called "Caring For The Muscle Of Life" for St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee.

Composed music for a video called "The Best Care In The Air" for Midwest Express Airlines.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

2003 to 2007: Subcontracted audio services for Circle-A Cafe music club, Milwaukee. Duties include researching, booking, and promoting music acts and operating sound equipment during performances.

1997 to 2003: Subcontracted management and audio services for Quarters music club, Milwaukee. Duties included booking and promoting performances; operating sound equipment for entertainment acts; and hiring and managing personnel.

1986: Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Audio Production Instructor. Taught students how to create audio productions and operate audio equipment. Topics included the history of the industry's technology and the theory of digital audio recording.

1977 to 1983: Creative director/audio producer, Sorgel-Lee, Inc., Milwaukee. Duties included producing soundtracks for video and slide show presentations, TV and radio and other audio media for a variety of corporate accounts.

1974 to 1975: Syndicated "Scintillations", a weekly 30-minute radio program to WQFM in Milwaukee and WIBA in Madison. The show was produced at WQFM.

1973 to 1974: Served as Music Director for the college radio station, WSUW. Duties included interviewing various touring performance artists, such as Chick Corea, Billy Joel and the J. Geils Band.

1972: Produced "Hawk Talk", a weekly sports journalism show that interviewed top student athletes on the college radio station WSUW, in Whitewater, WI.

EDUCATION

1983: University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Masters, Communication and Mass Communications.

1975: University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, BA, Marketing.

REFERENCES AND SAMPLES

Available upon request|



In 2009, when I was working on a story about Cathedral Pines, a grove of towering old-growth trees in Oconto County, Wisconsin, Paul and I stopped on our return from the cabin, and I recorded some images.



With him working in the tavern business, we got together less because he was usually hitting the sack about the time I was getting up. (I still rise at 4:44 a.m.)

Sometimes at the end of his day and beginning of mine he'd e-mail chords and lyrics to songs he worked on in the wee hours and his writing was as lively as his music.

He always spoke about his family warmly and gave an eloquent eulogy for his dad at a church on Calhoun Road a few miles from our house.

When our son was married on the roof of the Park East Hotel, I hired Setsurround to do the sound for a song I wrote. Troy's mother-in-law Mary Jo sang—I accompanied her on the guitar.

verse: A - D - E - D - A -E //

bridge: A7 out of verse refrain / E - A - B - E.

SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET Paul Setser © 2014

VERSE 1: LATELY I'VE BEEN FEELIN' OUT OF TOUCH
ABOUT AS NEEDED AS A WOODEN CRUTCH
BUT I'VE GOTTA LOTTA FRIENDS TO MEET
WON'TCHA' SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

VERSE 2: POUND THE PAVEMENT FOR THE DAILY GRIND
MAKES ME WONDER IF I'VE LOST MY MIND
WHY NOT STAY & MAKE THE NIGHT COMPLETE
OH BABY, SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET
BABY, SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

VERSE 3: I'VE BEEN JUMPIN' THROUGH A BLAZE OF HOOPS
TIL MY COURAGE SIMPLY FLEW THE COOP
WITHOUT YOU HERE IT WON'T BE THAT SWEET
WON'TCHA' SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

VERSE 4: OH, THERE'S GOTTA BE A BETTER WAY
TO GO ON LIVIN' RIGHT FROM DAY TO DAY
BUT I'M DYIN' JUST TO HEAR YOU SAY
YOU'RE GONNA SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET
YES, SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

BRIDGE: IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE MONEY'S BROKE
OR IF THE WHOLE WORLD'S GOIN' UP IN SMOKE
WE'RE FLYIN' HIGH BUT HOLD ON TIGHT
AND WE'LL COME DOWN TO EARTH
JUST RIGHT....OHH....

VERSE 5: WHY DON'T YOU DRAG OUT THE KITCHEN BROOM
& SWEEP AWAY ALL THE DOOM & GLOOM
SO GET ME OUTTA THIS LONELY SEAT
& BABY SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET
BABY SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET
BABY SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET

My family threw a surprise birthday party for Pam in 2013, and again I hired Setsurround to supply music for the event. He also did the audio for three songs my daughter Ann, Mary Jo, and I performed.

When he became a housekeeper at the County Clare Irish Inn, he had a steady income for the first time in many years. Of course the job didn't use his creative skills which were many, deep, and wide.

Eventually he signed up for Medicare and Social Security and things improved some for him.

A year or so ago I was able to convince him to go bicycling and we had a good time. He was happy to get some fresh air and enjoyed the way pedaling slows the world down.

But he fell a couple of times when coming to a stop or moving up driveways. He didn't get hurt and I thought it was due to his not having been on a bike for some years.

Recently he told me he thought those spills were early signs...

A year went by without my hearing from Paul and I was busy, too. Finally he posted something on my Facebook page about health problems he was experiencing. He said that he was having trouble talking and walking. Huh?!

I called him immediately and his voice was different, but he was sharp as ever. The more we talked the more normal he sounded. I invited him to lunch and picked him up at the Riverwest two-story he was living in with a friend who plays the tuba. We drove to the lakefront and parked near a picnic table. His gait was unsteady.

He said his condition wasn't caused by a stroke but the symptoms resembled the consequences of one. His doctor called it something, but I don't quite remember the term. We went for a walk along the lake, but he wasn't able to go far. Just too difficult for him though we rested along the way. He said his brain didn't seem to be in touch with his feet.

Ironically, for the first time, Paul told me he had "plenty of money" due to CARES Act payouts and unemployment checks. I was happy for him.

We got together twice more stopping at Panera Bread on the way to the lakefront to purchase soup-to-go.

I was planning another outing when my daughter, who has East Side connections, called and said she heard Paul had died. Seemed impossible but turned out to be all too terribly true.

My mom, Marie Bertha Emily (Westfahl) Schaar (1906—1995) always said when someone died, her or his "troubles are over."

Way more is over in Setsurround's case. An exceptional talent, intellect, and all-around good guy is gone.

Part of me thinks he checked out to avoid hearing or reading one more obnoxious comment uttered by prez tavern talk.

Now I play "Knocking On Heaven's Door," "All Things Must Pass," "Dirty Old Town," and "Desolation Row" in his honor.

If, in the monumentally unlikely event there is a heaven, you can be sure Paul got a splendid welcome at the pearly gates.

Back to elements, Paul.

Hope to meet you again someday, somehow.

* * *