



BILL SOPER

by Jordan Nunziato

When deciding what to do with one's future, many opt for a post-secondary education in something they are passionate about. There are not many who can say they have meshed two passions together to form one ultimate career. Some use their knowledge for a specific purpose. When Bill Soper, C.E.T. started his electronics career, he never expected it to go in the direction it did. Now Technical Support Manager at TOA Canada Corporation, Soper took his electronics background and applied his knowledge in the direction of the Canadian music industry. "It has been a genesis of my background being in the music business and the arts. I went to school for electronics, but eventually, an opportunity came up to work with bands."

Soper grew up in Toronto and attended W.A. Porter High School, Ryerson Polytechnical College, and Seneca College. Loving music and being into electronics, he found himself melding the two together, but by more unconventional means. "My electronics background segwayed into this business. I learned as I went from there through the school of hard knocks."

Through that method, Soper found himself landing a job with Entertainment Technologies based in Toronto. From there, he went to Southam A/V Group, AVW Telav, and finally, TOA. "I was Project Manager throughout all of those – I was responsible for design criteria. I made sure the projects got in on time and to budget. I was also responsible for onsite supervision."

Before entering the commercial audio industry, Soper did a lot of different electronic jobs. "I was in the geo-physics business, and worked on the development of equipment for doing aeromagnetic surveys from airplanes." He travelled around the world gathering geophysical data with the equipment he helped develop.

After leaving that position, he acquired a job with a big name electronics company. "I was at Philips Electronics in the R&D department for its video display." He finally landed a job more suited to him as he made his way up the industry totem pole: "I was in the music business for quite a number of years as an FOH sound guy."

Soper has a wife, Nancy (who works with CBC Radio, Writers & Company), and two daughters – Robin, 18, and Laura, 21. Laura is at Ryerson University for Fashion Communications. Robin is attending the University of Toronto for Music. He also has a small poodle. When not focused on work, Soper enjoys playing electronic drums in his hobby band. He also enjoys cross-country skiing and over the last year has started to run. "My triathlete coach Kyla, who also works at TOA, has helped me dig deep to do this. I've knocked off several 5km races and expect to do some duathlons in the summer. Two half marathons are booked for March and May...cross your fingers!"

Soper enjoys travelling, but it has been for professional reasons more than personal. "I've been all over Canada for the aeromagnetic geo-physics side of things and my present position at TOA. I've been to Japan with TOA and down into the States. I haven't really travelled much for personal pleasure. It's just been for business."



Soper is actually celebrating 10 years with TOA in 2010. He wishes to end his stint with the company on a good note prior to retirement: "I want to continue on and deliver the quality support that I think TOA is able to provide to our dealers." Soper wants to deliver back to the A/V community what it has given him throughout his entire life. "At the end of my career, I want to give back to the A/V community, possibly getting into teaching." He wants to inspire young people to get into wanting to work in the Canadian music and A/V industry. "I also want to teach the people that are as passionate about this industry as I am. I want to teach at the community college level or possibly open a private company that would take the young kids in a communications course or an electronics course and give them the exposure and opportunity to get into this industry."

These are dreams that Soper will see come true as he finishes his career out at TOA. He has seen a lot in this industry, and has contributed even more to it. Soper has loved his job, and hopes that others will enjoy their time in the industry like he has. "It's a lot of fun. If there's one thing I can think of that is a highlight of this business, it's the energy level that I see, and the youth and friendship. We seem to have a very tight-knit community."

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