

PCN Tours

A Companion to the Popular Television Series
Brian Lockman

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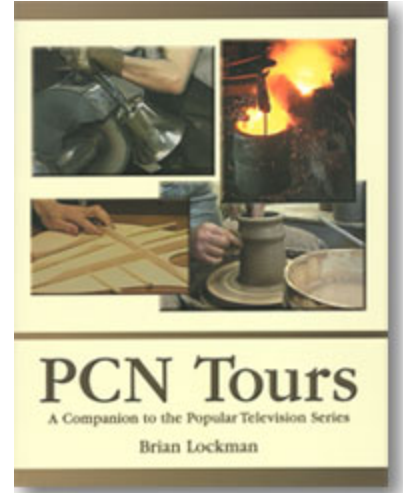
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From the Foreword

by Larry Kaspar, Senior Producer, *PCN Tours*

It started in 1995 with a simple question. What would be the result if the Pennsylvania Cable Network visited a factory with a hand-held video camera and a wireless microphone and asked company officials to give us a tour of the place from raw materials to the packaged product? No complicated, tedious setup of lights, no makeup, no one running around with an instrument to measure light levels, and no television production crew of ten or more people. Just one person shooting video from the shoulder, using a small camera with a wide lens. Producer, director, sound engineer, cajoler, and commiserator, all in one. The camera would show what was being described, while recording the voice of the tour guide at the same time. We would keep the camera in motion and the tape rolling whenever possible. That would achieve two things: a "you-are-there" feeling for the viewer and a drastic reduction in editing time. The latter was necessary in order to fit the demands of a weekly one-hour television program into all the other requirements of operating a 24-hour-a-day public affairs television network.

A few years and a couple of hundred programs later, *PCN Tours* is without a doubt the most recognized offering on our network. What can explain the popularity of this humble program? Maybe there is a sense of adventure or suspense about what we are going to see after we round the next corner. Maybe viewers like the video vérité technique. Perhaps our down-to-earth tour guides are the attraction. What is the thread that runs through all our

tour programs that seems to make them a consistently rewarding viewing experience? I think it has less to do with tangible things and more to do with human nature. People enjoy seeing *stuff* put together. Everybody likes the idea of building or creating. Maybe viewers get a vicarious kick out of seeing something recognizable evolve from raw materials, as though they had a hand in it.