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PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR



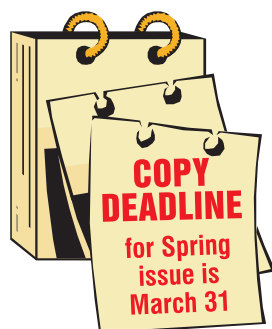
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

Fred Briggs, FSCCA

By the time you read this, the 2006 CIAFF GALA will have taken place in the Canadian Football Hall of Fame in Hamilton, Ontario, on Saturday, February 10th. We are very sorry that we weren't able to announce the date, time, and place long enough in advance to make it easier for SCCA Members living in Southern Ontario to attend in large numbers. After a long series of complications that constantly delayed the GALA, we finally were able to arrange it at very short notice.

Following the delays reported in the last issue of PANORAMA, we ran into a problem with the trophies. The company from whom we purchase the trophies found that they were unable to get them any longer from their usual supplier, and asked for a time extension to find another source. In the end, they reported that they were no longer being manufactured, and we began to search for a new trophy.

The beautiful crystal globes are no more, but we have found an attractive substitute in a glass Maple Leaf!

We made a gallant attempt to contact all our members in the vicinity, and the members of the Hamilton, Brantford, Toronto, London and Buffalo Clubs by email, and in some cases, by telephone, but I'm writing this too early (six days before the GALA) to be able to report on our success or failure.

The Executive has been working hard on a 2007 Convention and AGM, but our plans are still up in the air. In the last PANORAMA we asked that you keep the weekends of August 17 – 19

and 24 – 26 open. Now we have found that there is much more going on in Hamilton that would appeal to our members to attend and videotape on the previous weekend, August 10 – 12, and are considering moving the convention up to that weekend.

We have investigated close to 20 possible sites for the convention, and visited most of them, but haven't been able to settle on one yet, and now we are contemplating moving the site outside Hamilton. If we do, we may also change the date to a weekend in September. Stay Tuned! We should have it all settled by Spring!

In the Fall issue of PANORAMA, in the President's Message, I wrote about the new Music Library Page we had added to our web site (<http://s-c-c-a.ca>) to allow our members to audition the royalty free music they could borrow for use in their videos (much of it available even for commercial use, under 10,000 copies, of your video!) In September we had telephoned and emailed each of the music publishing companies whose products are in our library, to ask for their permission to use their logos, and invite them to check the page over for any errors we may have made in summarizing their terms for your use of their music. In October they were all telephoned again, and each asked that they be sent the email again.

Several more weeks went by, and it was decided to assume that a lack of protest was equivalent to acquiescence, and we went ahead and put the Music Library Page online, just in time to make the announcement in the Fall PANORAMA.

Finally, on January 18th, we received email that the CEO of Sound Ideas had finally had an opportunity to review our page, and was asking for several changes. More emails, more telephone conversations, and by the end of the month we were able to improve the quality of the Sound Ideas Logo, add a link to a sample Cue Sheet, and most importantly, greatly improve the accessibility to the music of one of the Sound Ideas Libraries.

The Lazer Trax Library consists of 14 CD's with about 140 different themes, and you can listen to 20 – 30 seconds of each and every one of them.

The gba Music Library consist of 2 CD's comprising over 50 different themes (depending on how you count

the variations) and you can listen to approximately 30 seconds (some more, some less) of each of them.

From Big Dog Music we have only purchased one of their CD's, with 16 Themes (or 23 with variations), and you can listen to up to 30 seconds (much less in some cases) of each of them.

Our biggest collection comes from Sound Ideas. The Turner Music Library has 15 CD's with 304 Themes, the Series 4000 Hollywood Sound Effects Collection has 5 CD's (2 of them music) with 2,200 Sound Effects, and the single Mzzz Muzic CD has 200 music clips, and all (it makes good sense with those last two collections) can only be auditioned with "compilation" tracks consisting of a lot of short samples of the music or SFX strung together, with a narrator describing the contents of that collection.

The MIX Signature Collection of 24 CD's with 323 Themes was the same on our Music Library Page, but thanks to Sound Ideas, we are now able to make available for your listening all 323 Themes in their *Full Length Version*, so you can find exactly what you need, and arrange to borrow the correct CD's from the SCCA Library! Check it out now!

We're very pleased to carry, in this issue, articles from the eastern and western extremities of our country: Michael Véronneau in Victoria has written an article about Film Competitions for Teenagers, and Hugh Damaline in Newfoundland reports on a Screening in Buchans of some of the 2003 CIAFF Winning videos.

Can we get an article from you for the Spring? How about the Summer issue?

Does any club want to arrange a public screening of the 2003 CIAFF DVD to help publicize the CIAFF? Maybe there is another video club, or a film or video school or a video co-operative in your neighbourhood. Maybe you could arrange a screening in a High School for the students, especially those in a Media course. You may charge admission, and we don't ask that you share any of the proceeds with the CIAFF! You might even hold it on your regular club meeting night, if you made an effort to invite guests. Just as long as the CIAFF gets publicity!

The DVD is waiting for you.

Stay Warm! ■

CLUB NEWS

By Thom Speechley

BRANT VIDEOMAKERS

"Brant Camcorder News"
editor Dan Kenmaley

The theme for the January meeting will be "good and bad."

Please bring a sample of your best video, 1 to 10 minutes in length.

Be prepared to talk for a few minutes on why you feel it is some of the best video that you have taken. Please bring a sample of a bad video that you have shot. **THIS SHOULD BE ONLY 2 MIN. IN LENGTH.** It is important that you are prepared to discuss what makes it bad and how you may have been able to take steps to correct the problem. We will also ask for suggestions from the floor on what can be done to improve video of this nature.

We hope to have a good discussion on "bad video". A few of the obvious come to mind, use a tripod, get closer, more light and the one that Frank often uses, keep it short.

We will also have Joe Szaloky talk about what technology can do for us to improve our video. I'm sure Joe will answer any questions that he can, like changing lens openings to get better light. Maybe he will be able to unlock some of the mysteries regarding HDTV as it applies to video cameras. He also has a new DVD recorder that he will talk about.

BUFFALO VIDEO-MOVIE MAKERS - "Camerama",

John Weiksnar, Editor

November's meeting was a hit, including the announcement of the 2006 Shorty Contest winners: FRED CALANDRELLI took First Place for "REVEREND JONES," a 16mm film cut for the small screen. EMIL J. NOVAK placed second for his video, "THE SUMMER I MISSED." The birds 'n' beesque "TURTLE LOVE" by JARED GAR-

LIPP earned him Honorable Mention. Congratulations to all who participated.

December's meeting was another success, with a strong turnout, plenty of fine program material, and discussion . . . plus the annual party with member-provided foods and the famous gift exchange.

Special thanks to all who contributed to the event's success and to the Golibersuch family for their legendary hospitality at the Screening Room.

A helpful tip from Fred Calandrelli about having a still photographer on site during shooting of video.

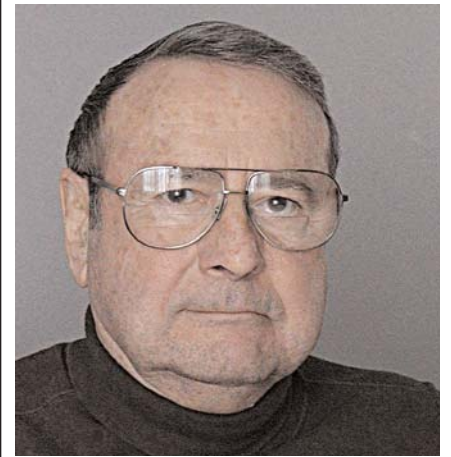
"We all have a friend or relative who loves to take pictures. Give them the title of 'production still photographer' and turn them loose. You'll find that anyone having the slightest amount of experience behind the lens will turn out a surprising number of exciting photos."

HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS

"Reel News", Editor, Dave Stewart

The Executive Committee has made a decision for the club's contest themes. We would like to ask the club members to vote from a list of ten (10) themes at the Thursday Club Meeting. The top five (5) selections will be the themes used for the 2007 Club Contests which will be held bi-monthly. I hope we get a great turn out for the meeting so that all club members have a say in what they want to video for the club's contests. The contest list is as follows:

1. Kids
2. Pets (animals)
3. One minute
4. Music Video
5. Holiday/Travel Documentary
6. Commercial
7. Sports
8. My Street/City



9. Seasons

10. Hobbies

The members will vote and the top 5 will be used as contest themes for the year.

At the December meeting, Fred Briggs presented a short segment from 4 videos about the birth and early years of film making entitled Landmarks of Early Film 1894-1896.

- Landmarks of Early Films
- The Lumière Brother's First Films
- Landmark of Early Films Volume 2: The Magic of Méliès
- The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon

Harold Cosgrove presented a "Videogrunt Tutorial" about the terms and technologies of digital video. These videos were downloaded from the following website: **www.videogrunt.com**. Videos Viewed at the December meeting

1. Hookipa Bay on a Windy Day, a windsurfing documentary by Sandy Whitehouse
2. Marina Monster. a movie trailer by Christine Whitlock for Echelon Studios, California
3. Cruising Galapagos, a travel documentary by Jack Simpson
4. Bitter Sweet, a music video by Dan Copeland
5. Worms, a poetry reading by Gary Christianson by Dan Copeland

LONDON VIDEOGRAPHY CLUB

"It's A Wrap", editor, Bob Thorn

Due to other, more pressing commitments, our editor has been unable to keep up the 'monthly' pace. The January 2007 issue is a summary of our November and December meetings. The highlight for November was a presenta-

tion by Bob Plumsteel of the music creation software, "Sonicfire Pro 4" by Smart Sound. This very sophisticated program uses a somewhat different approach from "Band in a Box" and other music software, allowing the user to select a musical "mood", while working with clips of various musical styles.

Our December "Christmas" meeting was partially hosted by Mary Gladwin and Liz Mayville, Oxford County Archivists, who very graciously provided snacks and beverages to express their gratitude for the Club's help in producing a documentary about Beachville. Part of that venture was shown at the meeting, as well as this year's "Bag Shoot" and several short features from previous years.

TORONTO FILM AND VIDEO CLUB

"Shots and Angles", Sam Spence, editor

The November issue begins with an amusing, but timely editorial by Sam about the rapid changes in technology since the beginning of the digital revolution. One of his points, with which I can identify, is the separation of the generations enforced by the rapid obsolescence of familiar technologies. He writes: "I was watching a comedy rerun not long ago. The family is seated at the dining table and the dad mentioned about using a typewriter. The 6 year old look at him confused and asked, 'what is a typewriter?' the same kid could ask 'What is a LP record?' The rest of Sam's piece uses the present state of cell phone cameras to underline his concern regarding where this will all end.

This issue also contains a useful article on "Titling" by Bill Simonsen. The article reminds us of several basic rules, such as:

"Let's get down to the basics!"

Three fonts faces should be the limit. The font faces, colour and name should reflect the content and the mood of the production.

The font size should be of a proportion not to be distracting, especially if the title is an overlay with moving background."

Other important points covered are observing the Title Safe Area in the frame and uses of titles other than as "main" titles.

Six pages of this issue are devoted to a complete presentation by Milo Kubik on the subject of classical "framing" rules for film and video, presented in

storyboard fashion.



Horizontal head positioning

The article also explains the "Rule of Thirds" and uses illustrations to demonstrate typical shot sizes from extreme close-up (ECU) to extreme long shot. (ELS) Josephine Black reports that club member and recent SCCA contest winner Marilyn Reid is conducting a course in video making at The Central Eglinton Community Centre.

THE VANCOUVER VIDEO PRODUCTION CLUB

"Reel Talk", Cathy Caravan, editor

The October 27 meeting included the presentation of the Annual Financial Report and the election of officers. Eleven members had submitted thirteen entries in the annual "1-Minute Competition". Winners were: 1- "Birds" by Tony Sparks, 2- 3 - (tie) "One Minute in Morocco" - Bryan Belfont and A Sue Young Interview by Romeo Bruni.

Dave Fuller presented a seven-minute DVD showing advanced audio techniques. The "Member's Night Presentation" by Becky Mortensen was a description of the making of a nine-minute commercial video of a construction project and a short video of a scenic ride on the "Rocky Mountaineer".

The club's "Workshop" group met on November 8th at the home of Lou Lanser to outline their agenda for the year. The group has identified two very useful software programs to enable members to keep in touch and exchange ideas regarding their current project. The script "management" program "Celtx" was described in last month's newsletter. The second program is called "QT Movie Notetaker" and is also a free download. The group's next meeting will look at "Skype", a free piece of software which permits phone calls over the Internet within a group of other people with "Skype" installed. This would also facilitate continuous communication between members of the "Workshop" group.

THE VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB

"The Bulletin", editor, Sheila Perkins

Planning for the club's annual banquet is well underway. Margaret and Sheila have been working on this, and they have made special efforts to address any shortcomings from last year's banquet. Please contact them if you have any specific concern or suggestion for the event.

Mila brought the "**Reel Youth Film Festival**" to club members' attention in 2006, after she attended an evening of movies produced by young movie-makers. The festival is a showcase of "...the richness and diversity of a new generation of films" She also brought back a DVD of movies that we will enjoy at one of our monthly meetings.

OUR JANUARY GUEST SPEAKER - is Anne-Marie DeSouza, an assistant producer at Cedarwood Video Editing and Production. Anne-Marie attended the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS) this summer in the "media intensive program" and will be telling us about this experience and presenting the movie that was completed by her team. She will also be telling about her work at Cedarwood, and some of their projects.

THE ANNUAL CONTEST DEADLINE is the January 30 meeting. In this contest, your entries may be on any subject and up to fifteen minutes in length.

A WORKSHOP FOR THE REVISION OF OUR CONTEST RULES will be held on February 19 at 1:00 - 4:00 at the home of Sheila Perkins

Here is Michael Véronneau's description of "Celtx", also referred to in the Vancouver newsletter. "I've been trying a free (\$0) script writing solution, called Celtx, that I would encourage you to check out. It runs on Windows XP, Macintosh OS X, and Linux computers and is yours for the price of a download (<http://www.celtx.com/>). As an example of what can be done, I took one of the e-mails, that contained a number of jokes involving a minister, and turned it into a short script. Academy award winning? I don't think so, but it would be a lot easier to get folks involved in the project with the script instead of the e-mail! If I can I'll include a printout of the script called "The Minister's Day". Celtx operates much like a word processor, so it is easy to start using. There are prompts that

help you select formatting features, such as to press tab to enter an "action" description, or hit "enter" to write dialogue. And there is room for expansion – when you get comfortable with the basic script features you can explore and have it track props used in various scenes, wardrobe items or cast members, and printout reports.

If you are both scriptwriter and director, then you can include camera direction and shot types in the script (a 'shooting' script) so when you go into production you have your shot list right there in the script."

Michael

WINNIPEG AMATEUR MOVIE AND VIDEO CLUB

"Bulletin", editors, Jeanette and Wallace Robertson

The October bulletin reports that the season's first meeting was devoted in part to important "business" issues. President Al Ross led a discussion in what is referred to as "Quest For The Club", a way of soliciting member participation in critical club functions, such as writing articles for local newspapers and looking at other promotional opportunities. Norm Fredrickson has accepted the responsibility of coordinating the monthly showing of member's films as well as finding out what kind of film making projects they are interested in. Two new films were shown, the first, "The Glass Blower" by Don Rodgers, shot on Salt Spring Island, shows in great detail the skills involved in the creation of blown glass objects. The second film, "Mantario Experience", is an interview by Al Ross of Don Rodgers, concerning many adventures Don has experienced in the Lake Mantario area.

The November meeting continued to explore future workshop plans and an explanation of the "adjudication sheets" which will be used at each meeting to evaluate films shown. A scoring system will permit the designation of "Filmmaker of the Year". Two films shown were the 2005 Santa Claus parade by Lorne Strick and "Highlights of Qingdao", a visit to that Chinese city by member John Charette.

At the December meeting, the group discussed a possible project called "Interplanetary Marshall", which generated considerable interest. During a workshop session, Bill Preston opened a discussion about comparisons of vari-

ous formats, DVD, hard drive, tape, and pros and cons of each. Three films were shown. "Winter Survival in Winnipeg", by Wallace and Jeanette Robertson and their sons, which demonstrates that considering the many world catastrophes, staying home in winter may not be that bad. "Walking With Poppy", a film by Don Rodgers, follows a puppy and it's owner on a daily walk. John Charette, who introduced his China trip at the November meeting, concluded the series with his video of his family visit, "Memories of Beijing", which includes a fascinating side trip to "The Great Wall".

AMATEUR MOVIE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

"AMMA Monitor" - Gina Gullace, editor

This news magazine has a new editor. Congratulations and best wishes. I should also note that elsewhere in this issue, Gina offers a very well written personal story about her pursuit of a movie story based on real life. Please read it.

The December issue deals extensively with the 2006 convention and competitions. Talk nicely to someone with a subscription so you can check out the winners, or, go directly to: www.ammaweb.org/index.html, click on "Newsletter" and download the December "Monitor". Our congratulations to the SCCA members who are listed among the winners and 'honorable mentions'.

Howard Lockwood's summary of the convention contains some additional wisdom worth quoting. Here are some examples:

"A number of people felt that some of the videos were way too long. A documentary that won second place was judged by a panel of people with academic or professional credentials. It was well-done, but more than one person observed that it "contained more information about the subject than I wanted to know." We must always remember The Three Basic Rules Of Editing: Cut, Cut, Cut."

"Music is not just a filler. It can add mood. An example was shown of horseback riders crossing a stream. One musical background made the scene tranquil, another added urgency. What does the monotonous thump of buy-out music add to a video? Avoid having music overwhelm the voiceover."

"Be careful to use good lighting. Chet

Davis of Macrosystems said he's heard of using 'available light' but some of the videos seemed to have been shot in 'available dark.' This works if you're trying to create a mood, but not if it's done out of carelessness."

Under the heading "**New And Notable On The Web**", two valuable sites, not previously reported in PANORAMA, are discussed. **my movienetwork.com** at first glance seems to be just another in the exploding universe of do-it-yourself video streaming. It does have a friendly interface and deserves a closer look. www.bytecaster.com/ is actually an online agency which commissions the production of video materials and tries to identify talent with potential for TV or video work. It is actually possible to earn money by submitting material to this site. Check the fine print to find out about "ownership" issues. And it does accept material from non-USA residents.

INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS (IAC)

"Film and Videomaker", editor, Garth Hope

The November/December issue contains final summaries of the 2006 BIAFF and Cotswold competitions. Notable, is high marks for a Canadian entry, "Nothing Girl", by Pierre Daudelin, which was honoured in both events.

Tom Hardwick reviews the Sony HC3 HD camcorder and offers some important comparisons with the 3 chip Sony FX1. In summary, the much less costly and amazingly smaller HC3 provides excellent results with its CMOS element while the FX1 offers superior 3 chip light sensitivity and more manual control of all functions. The HC3 is nevertheless, a great intro to the HD experience.

Two articles from Andy Markem, reporting from the USA, help de-mystify the current trends in HD TV's and playback equipment. Andy tells about the confusion among consumers, the lack of accurate information provided by "big box" retailer personnel, and the difficulty of understanding what is actually required to get true high definition digital TV. He offers a very useful reference to a help section at the "Consumer Electronics Association"

Continued on page 11

ANOTHER BIG BREAKTHROUGH!

by Fred Briggs

It seems like only a few months ago I reported some important additions to Band-in-a-Box that make it much easier for you to make copyright-free music for your own videos. Actually, it was in the Summer 2005 Issue of PANORAMA that I reported on some new facilities that seem to have been added just for us, or, at least, with us in mind.

I hadn't previously reported on the then new 2005 edition because it didn't seem to be necessary: after all, I've reported on Band-in-a-Box in the pages of PANORAMA several times, and even though there was always 50+ New Features in every new edition, most of those features were usually aimed squarely at their main target, musicians. However, the musical/software geniuses at PG Music had come up with a group of new features, many of them things I had been suggesting to them for a long time, and they were just too good to hold back for the 2006 edition! They came out as a "PlusPAK" for the 2005 Version, and I eagerly reported them to you.

We also scheduled John Conley, a BiaB-using musician from London, Ontario, as a speaker at the Port Stanley Convention, but John was suddenly taken very ill on the day of his appearance, and had to cancel. As disappointed as we were, John wrote an article for us that appeared in the Winter 2006 PANORAMA.

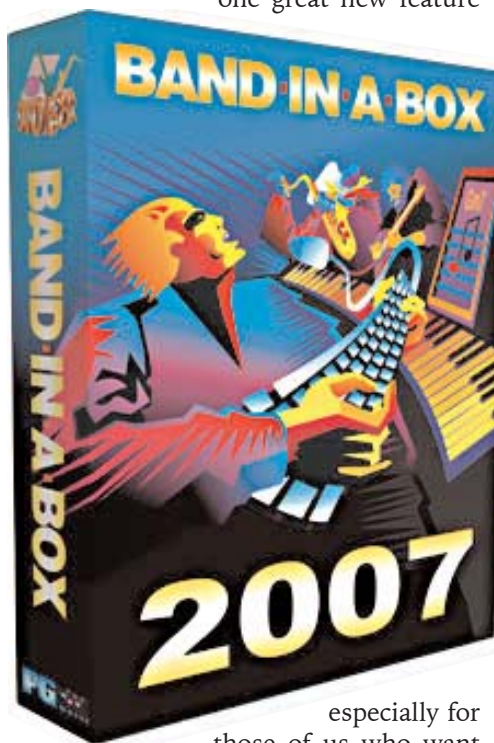
That seemed enough under the circumstances, and we turned our attention to other matters on the pages of PANORAMA, and the 2006 Edition of BiaB appeared unheralded here.

But now the 2007 version has been released, and it's a doozie!

I suggest that you first review the article that appeared on page 14 of the Summer 2005 PANORAMA (if you can't find your copy now, it's available on the SCCA web site (<http://s-c-c-a.ca>) for a report on those important developments, before I start to tell you about the current big news for us.

As usual, 50 new features, ya-da-ya-da-ya-da. This time there are new

Melodists Sets (now 1-8, 2 more than last reported), more new Styles Sets (now up to Styles Set 66, 14 more than when I last reported!), and lots of new features that you have to be a musician to appreciate, or even understand! And one great new feature



especially for those of us who want to make music for our videos!

The new Melodist #7 contains 5 Brazilian Melodists and 6 "Even 8th" Melodists. The Melodist #8 set has 6 Children's Melodists, 6 Joplin Melodists, and 9 Tin Pan Melodists. Together they contain 32 demo songs as some Melodists have more than one demo song.

The 14 new (since the 2005 Edition) Styles Sets include Latin 2 (20 styles), Mainstream Jazz (21 styles), Modern Jazz (21), Pop (20), Latin 3 (20), Requested 5 (22), Ballroom Dancing (20), All Gospel (20), New Age (20), Requested 6 (20), All Blues 2 (20), Extreme Tempo (21), Requested 7 (21), and Country 2006 (21 styles). The 63 Requested Styles added since our last report are extremely varied. Any one of the more than 1300 styles in total could be exactly what you, or you, or you, need for your own video,

depending on the subject, time, place, etc., of your video, but the 21 Sound Track Styles and the New Age styles, will be of universal interest because they provide mood music which is timeless. New Age (Set #61) contains the following styles: AWAKEN1, AWAKEN2, CALLING, CHAKRA1, CHAKRA2, CITADEL, CRYSTAL1, ETERNAL, GREEN, INSIGHT, LOTUS1, LOTUS2, MIND1, OCEANS, PEACE, PRAYER, QUEST, SPRING, VISIONS, and VISIONS2. And there's no limit to the number of different songs that can be composed with these styles, and the Sound Track styles!

The Free Bonus 12-PAK includes Classical MIDI Fakebook Volume 2, which contains 170 classical pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Handel, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, Wagner, and many others, and these all seem to be different from the 288 that are already in the CLAS-FAKE FOLDER already on my hard drive. And just for us, there is a new SoundTracks Fakebook Volume2, but as far as I can see, it simply holds one more demo song for each of the 21 Soundtrack Styles I reported on in the Summer 2005 Issue, bringing that total up from 60 to 81, but remember, these Fakebook pieces can be used in your productions "as is" or modified, without royalties or permissions required.

When buying BiaB you can upgrade your Free Bonus 12-PAK to the 25-PAK for another US\$25. This will add, among other things, a couple of new Soloists (#12 & #13, missing from the repertoire for several years), a Blues Pianist Volume 2, some more RealDrums Bonus Styles (see below), and, most important to me (and probably to you), 200 Folk Songs, which consists of 50 each of British, Scottish, Irish, and Children's Folk Songs, plus many new styles for these tunes.

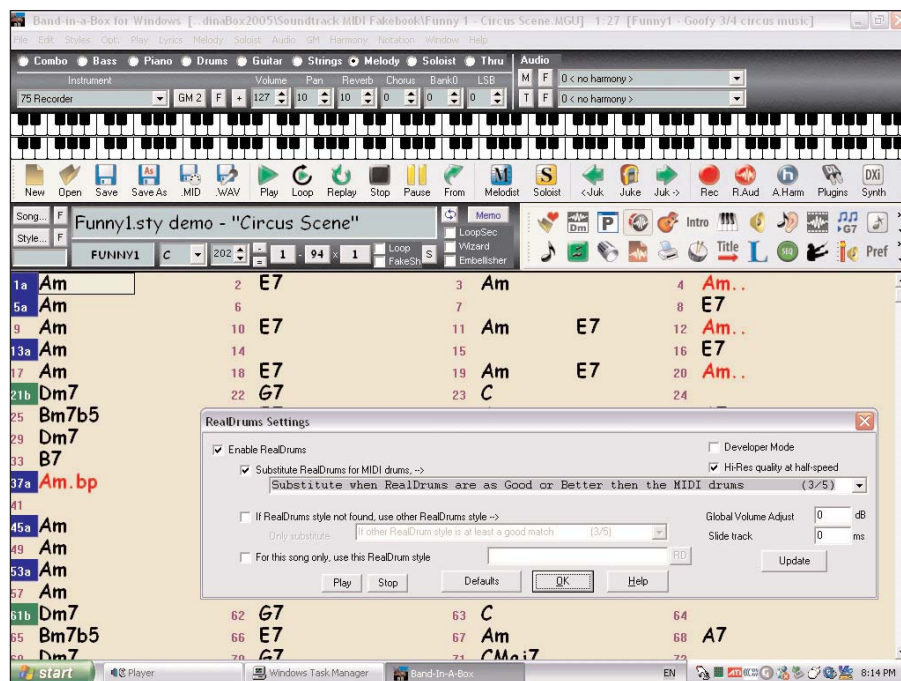
The item getting the most attention from the musicians writing in to the Band-in-a-Box Discussion Forums is the addition of RealDrums. RealDrums are just that: instead of

MIDI drums, these are real drum beats played in patterns (of from 1 to 8 bars, with variations, and not just drum samples). They are played by a live top studio drummer and recorded as WAV files in the studio, and can be called up by BiaB and played in sync with the music instead of the usual MIDI drums. There are 3 sets of these RealDrums altogether at this time, subdivided into 24 different music styles, and because real drummers play slightly differently at different tempos, there are several variations (at different tempos) of most of the styles. While the tempo of the music you are producing can vary greatly, and be in between the Real Drum tempos, BiaB will select the tempo style nearest to the tempo of your piece, and adjust the drum tempo accordingly.

There are also 118 new songs to demonstrate these new drum sounds, with original melodies and all the accompanying instrumentation, and like all the other demo songs (there are many thousands of them, at least one and often more for each style, each soloist, each melodist, all in separate folders, so don't ask me to count them!), you can change anything and everything – instruments, tempos, length, melody, chords, harmonies, etc.

All the new songs provided with this and future BiaB versions are designed with the RealDrums in mind, but they are backward compatible to a degree with all those older pieces. You make the decision as to when to substitute RealDrums for the original MIDI drums, as there are program-wide settings that you can make to "Enable RealDrums", and "Substitute RealDrums for MIDI Drums Always", "Frequently even when RealDrums are Not As Good as MIDI Drums", "When the RealDrums are As Good or Better", "When RealDrums are Better", or

"Only if RealDrums are Way Better than the MIDI Drums"! (This is typical of the flexibility of BiaB, which (flexibility) seems to improve with each version.)



RealDrums alone will add about 2.5 Gb in the BiaB Folder on your hard drive, and PG Music recommends using a DXi synth with RealDrums. It doesn't matter if you don't know what DXi is (def.: new Software Synth Plug-in Standard developed by Cakewalk based on Microsoft DirectX Standard), as they provide the VSC-DXi (Roland Virtual Sound Canvas) with the Free Bonus 12-PAK that accompanies the MegaPAK, which is the way I recommend you buy BiaB. They also sell the Coyote ForteDXi, a very realistic high-quality sample player with a sound quality far better than a standard MIDI synthesizer, for US\$40, and they provide a free 30-day trial of that synthesizer with the Free Bonus 12-PAK.

However, it seems that the Bonus 12 PAK and 25-PAK were special, limited time offers, and while I was writing this article, they seem to have withdrawn the offers. Never mind: by the time you read this, there will probably be other special offers! And one year's bonus offer tends to be included in the following year's regular package, at the same price. Most withdrawn items get offered for sale, usually at US\$29. See the web site for up-to-date information!

The VSC-DXi Software Synthesizer also enables you to convert any piece

of music from BiaB format to a MIDI file, WAV file, WMA file, or an MP3 file, making it very easy to import your music into your video editing program.

But how about going the other way?

As I mentioned earlier (PAMORAMA, Winter 2000), you can import any MIDI file into BiaB into the Melody or Soloist Line, enabling you to import MIDI files from the internet (there are thousands of them) and convert them into BiaB pieces so you can vary tempo, intro, ending, instrumentation, accompaniment, etc. Remember, however, that unless the composition is copyright free, and you have permission from the individual who sequenced or constructed the MIDI file, you can't use

that melody in your video, but you can use it to determine the chords of the accompaniment, and then create a new melody line to go with those chords, so that you get new music in the style of the piece that you like. That way, you can get new music that sounds like an undiscovered piece composed for and played by Chuck Berry, or the Beach Boys, or CCR, or Elvis, or ABBA, or the Rolling Stones, or even Count Basie or Errol Garner or Fats Waller or Scott Joplin or just about anybody else. But if you want your audience to think of the words, you better choose an old familiar song that's out of copyright, but that's another story, and I plan to write another article on finding and using copyright free music in the Spring PANORAMA.

Meanwhile, back to the mechanics of importing MIDI files. This is not intended to be an instruction manual so we won't go deeply into the various ways to import a MIDI file. However, if the MIDI file contains only one channel of information, it will be opened on the Melody Track, and you will have control of the instrument used to play it. But if there are more MIDI channels than just the one, BiaB will open 16

channels, *not* on the Melody Track. If the MIDI file used a piano to play the melody of the piece, piano is what you get, and all you can have. All MIDI channels would play together as in the original MIDI file. You can't reduce or kill any of them individually, and if you mute the entire Melody, you will hear no RealDrums and no BiaB accompaniment – just silence! You can change the tempo, but you can't change the instruments used to play what's on the 16 MIDI channels - except by editing the MIDI file!

By clicking on the SEQ button you can see what's on each MIDI track, and if there's only one track being used, you can set the Track type back to a single channel. In that mode you'll be able to change the instruments used to play the melody and the BiaB accompaniment. (When importing a MIDI file you may find that the Style is disabled for that song, but it's easy to enable it.)

One way to import a MIDI file is to click "Melody", then "Edit Melody Track", then "Import Melody from MIDI File", and then select your file. You'll be asked "Which Channel(s)". You'll usually want to import just the melody channel if the file has accompanying tracks. If you have loaded them all previously and then used the SEQ button to see what's on each channel, you'll know which channel you need, assuming you've already identified (by ear) the instrument used to play the melody. If you understand MIDI you can edit the MIDI events in the Notation Window just by clicking on #, or in the Piano Roll View (see below), but I wouldn't recommend it to the faint hearted.

BiaB includes a Sequencer mode that lets you view any or all 16 imported MIDI Tracks (in normal musical note notation instead of the more usual Piano Roll view that is more usual for sequencers), and play each, all or any combination of channels. This is the best way to determine on which channel the melody is. You can also combine selected tracks down into one track for use in BiaB and choose which channel you want to go into the Melody Track and which into the Soloist Track. Here you can even change the Patch (Instrument Assignment), and delete tracks you

don't want to use, but you aren't really able to edit the tracks at the individual note level as you can in the Piano Roll View where you can audition individual notes, change their pitch and duration, copy and paste, and insert or delete them. (It should also be noted at this point that each track of a BiaB arrangement is basically a MIDI channel, and each note can be similarly edited in the Piano Roll view.)

After you are down to the one track you want to keep on the Melody Track, you can restore the Single Track Mode and have all the usual controls.

Another method of loading a MIDI file into BiaB is to use "Import Chords from MIDI file (Ctl-Alt-I)". This menu lets you choose the MIDI file and gives you much of the information about the file, such as the number of bars and which parts BiaB thinks are on which channels, and allows you to assign one channel to the Melody Track, and one or more others to the Soloist Track, select the track from which to interpret the chords, and a lot more. Using this method allows you to change instruments and volumes on the Melody Track, Soloist Track, and each of the accompaniment tracks assigned according to the style you have chosen and the chords derived from the chosen channel of the MIDI file. In short, it's possible to play The Maple Leaf Forever with Tubular Bells and a Bagpipe sharing the Melody, in a Bossa Nova Style, starting from a MIDI file! (Don't ask me why you would want to do that.)

Again I feel the necessity of reminding you that I'm no musician, and my ignorance of the mechanics of music is overwhelming. However, I'm learning a little, bit by bit, by experimentation. I told you in an earlier article that the chords assigned were based on the melody and that you could mute the melody and still have a "ghost" of the melody played in the chords. Now I find that I had misunderstood, because that feature has just been added to the 2007 version! All you have to do is click on the "Reharmonist" button and the program creates a new chord progression for any bar, a number of bars, or the entire piece! A menu lets you choose a Genre (from among 24) and a new style if wanted (from those fitting the Genre chosen), the key, etc., and

even asks you whether to track the Melody or the Soloist.

Another, similar, improvement has been made to the Soloist. Now the solo generated by the Soloist can be directly influenced by the melody, and the "strength" of the influence, or the closeness to the melody, can be adjusted by the user. There are new controls so the solo will be influenced by the Density & Rhythm, or Pitch, or, especially useful for our needs (solo replacing a copyrighted melody) "Similar Notes Used". There is even a Custom setting, but I haven't figured that one out yet!

What if you want to use a particular song, but it isn't in BiaB and you can't find a MIDI version anywhere? I reported in the Winter 2000 PANORAMA that Version 9.0 then had an audio track to which you could add sampled sounds, sound effects, ambient sound, or even a vocal or recording of an instrument. BiaB can now import a WAV file, a WMA file, a WMV file, a CDA file, or even an MP3 audio file into the program! How cool is that! Where's the hook?

Here's the hook!

The audio file, let's say the MP3 file (because they're all over the internet, often illegally), is imported into the Audio track of BiaB. Instead of starting in the File Column at the top of the screen, you begin in the Audio Column, click on Import Audio File, choose the file, and whether the audio is to overwrite or merge with existing audio on that track, and the Time position (beat, tick) where the MP3 file is to go, and then click OK. If the file is Stereo, you get an option to import it as stereo or monaural. That's soooo easy, isn't it? The problem is this doesn't generate chords based on the Audio track, and since there is nothing on the Melody track, a very simple accompaniment will be generated, based only on the Style chosen, and it's a little difficult to get it in perfect sync with the audio track. Even worse, the Audio track is probably copyrighted! You can Mute it on the Menu under Audio, but if the Audio track isn't reflected in the accompaniment, and you can't use the Audio track for your video, what's the use of going through that exercise? I suppose this facility was added to allow an individual musician, let's say

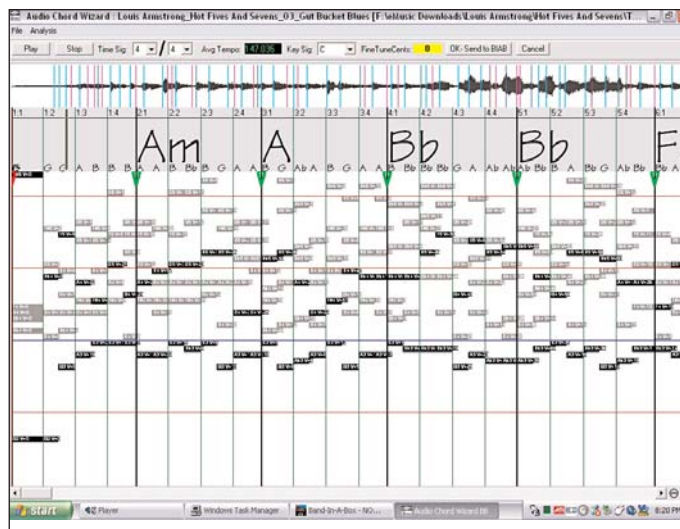
a guitarist, to play along with Elvis, or with whomever he wants to play along. He hears the music he wants to accompany, and can use the chords that can be generated as described below, and that's exactly what he wants, but not what *we* want!

However, you might be pleased with playing an accompaniment based on those chords, Read on!

The new 2007 Version has added a Reharmonist feature that generates new chords for the accompaniment, based on the melody, and an Audio Chord Wizard that generates chords based on a WAV, WMA, WMV, or MP3 file.

The Reharmonist only works with music on the Melody track, or the Soloist track, so it's of no use if your music is on the audio track. However, if you have imported a MIDI file into the Melody or Soloist track, this is extremely useful. While the improvements aren't revolutionary, you can choose a Genre, decide whether or not to allow the Style to be changed, and if so, pick the Style. You also have an opportunity to affect the mixture of chords from Major and Minor Keys, and the number of variations. You can also change the key if necessary, and Reharmonize the whole song, or part of it, specifying the starting bar for the change and the number of bars. Nothing especially exciting here, but read on!

The Audio Chord Wizard is very impressive and extremely useful with music on the Audio track. First you click on "Launch Audio Chord Wizard" under Audio, or simply click on the Audio Chord Wizard on the new toolbar. In either case, if you have already imported an audio file into the Audio track, you'll be asked if you wish to keep that file, or clear it and import a new audio file. If new, then you get an opportunity to select the file. Then the program goes to work, progressing through several necessary steps to accomplish the task. This is a joy to watch, and must have been a beast to program! When finished, BiaB presents a graph of the audio file (which looks quite similar to the graph you see on music editing programs as well as on video editing programs), the chords extracted for each bar that BiaB will use for the accompaniment, and



all the chords played by each instrument on the audio file, with their time placement and duration, that BiaB has determined to be present in the audio file. All this latter information is presented in piano-roll format, one of the several display formats of BiaB.

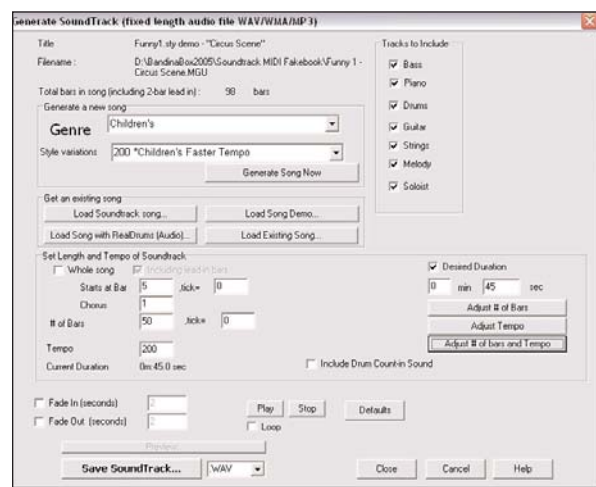
Next you have to manually set the position of the first downbeat. Pressing the space bar will play the audio track, and a second press will stop the playback, and as the file plays, a green marker moves along the graph. You stop the playback and drag the green line to the first downbeat on the music graph, set that as the beginning of the music (the program tells you how), and BiaB resets all the subsequent bar lines. Then you send the chords to the BiaB file, and the program will analyze all the chords for the entire song. When this is finished we are taken into the regular screen for the program, and all the chords for the accompaniment for the audio track appear.

Select a style, and the accompaniment will play right along with the audio file! If your original audio file was copyrighted, as it usually is, you can silence the audio track (see MUTE above), and play just the accompaniment, which is based on that audio file. You might feel that something is missing, so you can use the Melodist (in a compatible Melodist style) and deselect "Generate Chords" and deselect "Allow Style Change" and get an excellent piece, all original and

copyright free (in fact, you now own the copyright to that music) that sounds similar to, but not the same as, the recording with which you started. But, if you started with copyright free music (and an old out-of-copyright performance), or the royalty free music from the SCCA Music Library (see s-c-c-a.ca and click on Music Library on

the pop-up menu at the bottom of the page) or another source of royalty free music, you can even keep the original audio and have a fuller arrangement over which you have some control of volume, instruments, etc.

Now that we have disposed of the preliminaries, it's time for the main event! Having embarked on a new course of catering to those who want to create music for films and videos or as they themselves put it "Need to generate some original, royalty-free music for backgrounds, home videos, slide shows, voiceovers, jingles, themes, underscoring scenes or entr'acte, dance routines, ceremonies or any occasion that calls for musical accompaniment? The Soundtrack feature allows you to generate music in the style you choose for any length of time you specify." I couldn't say it better myself, so I didn't



even try!

There's no more counting beats and bars, and working out the number needed for the time you require. Just

click on the button for the SoundTrack Window, in which you can choose from the 24 main Genres, and then from the appropriate Style variations. Alternatively, you can choose to load an existing Song. There you can Choose Song Track Demo, and then pick from the 81 Soundtrack Demos, or Song Demo, and the Style Picker will pop-up. Just choose a Style and then click on Load Song Demo. Or you can choose one of the many Real Drum Demos, or Choose from all the BiaB songs on your hard drive!

You can also choose to use any or all of the Accompaniment Tracks, and choose to play a Whole Song or set the Tempo and Number of Bars, or instead, set a Desired Duration by entering the minutes and seconds needed and click a button to Adjust # of Bars and Tempo, and the program will set the tempo according to the chosen style and number of bars required at that tempo to satisfy your required length. You can manually change the number of bars and click Adjust Tempo, or manually set the tempo and click Adjust # of Bars, and the program makes the changes to meet your time needs.

The only problem remaining now is that the song isn't rearranged to last exactly the time required, including a lead in, and especially, an ending. Instead the music stops abruptly when the time is up, and that's less than satisfactory. You are able to set a time (in seconds) for fade in, and separately, for fade out, but I don't think I would ever use that, preferring to let the piece play a little longer than needed and then fade out (or dissolve the music into the next piece) in my video editing program where I have complete control and can change my mind repeatedly until I'm satisfied.

However, some mastery of BiaB, and editing the music, should allow you to edit the arrangement by cutting out bars so that the piece will have a proper ending that comes just at the exact time, or close enough for the girls we go with! (A few seconds of silence before the next piece starts never hurt, you know.) The ability to compose a song with any desired length, and with a proper beginning and ending, would be a desirable improvement to something that already has almost everything we need, and it is clear that PG

Music (or Peter Gannon) has already decided to provide a tool for video makers who aren't musicians. Judging by the past, it shouldn't be long before this last nut is cracked!

That is, if there's a market for it, and that means that they will be watching the sales for signs that we want this, and are prepared to pay for it. So far, I know of three SCCA members who have BiaB, though I don't think any of them have produced many videos, if any, using BiaB music! This program will probably always get better every year, but it now has just about everything we could want. After all these years and all those improvements, they have had to raise the price of the basic program to US\$99. You can download it free to try it out and see if you want to part with your money. I strongly recommend that you invest in the MegaPAK (which includes the basic program) with all those Styles, Soloists, Melodists, Song Books, Demo Songs, and other extras. Alas, that price too has been increased to US\$269. If you already have the program, or an older version of the MegaPAK, there are upgrade offerings (there is even an upgrade offer for old versions for your old Atari!), and if you just want to go with the basic program and a few extra discs, the individual discs usually sell for US\$29 each, so it doesn't have to be expensive. Visit the web site at <http://pgmusic.com> for pricing and to keep abreast of any special pricing that may have just come into effect.

There are oodles of instructional videos about the program that you can watch online (look under "Support"), and you get a lot of video tutorials with the MegaPAK, so it's time you started looking into this! Oh yes, we mustn't forget the Mac owners: there is a Mac Version 12 for Macs using OS X version 10.2 or higher, but I can't guarantee that the program can do everything on a Mac that it can do on a PC. Get the program and write an article on BiaB for the Mac!

In the Spring Issue of PANORAMA I intend to give you some new information about getting copyright free music, especially in MIDI format so you can import it into BiaB, and touch on some inexpensive MIDI Sequencers for examining and editing MIDI files. ■

Club News

Continued from page 6

website. Here is the link:

<http://www.myceknowhow.com/digitalTelevision.cfm>

This issue, Howard Gregory offers more helpful 'sound' advice.

COMPUTER SOUND CARDS
SEVERAL READERS HAVE APPROACHED ME WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS. They are trying to record, usually a voice-over, directly onto their computer soundcard, and are getting poor results. Plugging a mic directly into a soundcard is not a good idea for two reasons:

I don't know of any "consumer" mic that has sufficient output to drive a typical consumer soundcard fully. Soundcard mic inputs are simply not sensitive enough. I suppose they are designed on the assumption that someone is singing into the mic, karioke-style with the mic touching their lips. Under these conditions, a mic gives anything up to a hundred times the output that it does under typical voice-over conditions.

The inside of a computer is electrically hostile. There is a lot of interference from the digital circuits, making it a daft place to take a low-level analogue signal. Mic signals become accompanied by hiss and various clicks and buzzes. Even if the mic input was more sensitive, you would merely record more signal and more interference.

The simplest solution to both these problems is to make the signal bigger **before** sending it into the computer. Then it will be at the level that the soundcard designer was expecting, and it will be large enough to swamp the hiss, etc. There is a device which does this, called, not surprisingly, a mic pre-amplifier. There are many different ones available. Professional ones are excellent, but expensive. Ones from electronic hobby shops are a lot cheaper, but some are as hissy as the soundcards they are supposed to be improving. To fill the gap, I make a mic pre-amp designed specifically for this purpose. It has the lowest hiss level of any mic amplifier I've ever met (including those in professional recorders), yet is affordable. Many A-V workers are using them and report that they have cured their problems. Contact me if you are having trouble in this area.

Phone 01925 75 3303. ■

2007 SCCA Annual Competition

ENTRY RULES - CLASSES - AWARDS

1. Open to all Canadians. Open to non-Canadians who are members of the SCCA or of an SCCA-affiliated club.
2. Only amateur film/videos are eligible. A film/video is considered amateur when the producer has no financial or commercial object in making the film/video, and when it has not been the subject of any sale or rental agreement prior to entering the competition. Also there must be no direct professional help except for the use of professional services which do not affect the creative values of the film/video such as copying, striping, processing.
3. The use of unauthorized copyright material for public performance is prohibited by law. The clearance for use of all submitted materials is the sole responsibility of the maker of an entry, and shall not be the responsibility of the Executive and/or Officers of the S.C.C.A., the Contest Chairperson, or the Judges.
4. Films/videos may not exceed 30 minutes in length.
5. Non-members shall pay an entry fee of \$15.00 for each film/video entered. Individual members and clubs shall pay a fee of \$10.00 per film. An individual may submit up to three films if the individual is the creator of each. The entry fee for the script contest shall be \$8.00 for non-members and \$5.00 for members, per script.
6. Competition entry forms must reach the contest officer not later than June 15th. The entry fee, made payable to "Society of Canadian Cine Amateurs", must accompany the entry form.
7. Videos should be sent by registered or insured mail courier.
8. Entries, including Film, must be submitted on VHS Tape, miniDV Tape, or DVD.
9. It is a condition of entry that award winners will consent to have the film/video screened at the SCCA Annual Convention and other SCCA-sponsored screenings.
10. Script entries shall be typed single space on white bond. A two-inch (50 mm) margin shall be on the left side. It is a condition of entry that the SCCA may use the script for future contests.
11. The best possible care will be given by the Society to all entries. The SCCA and Contest Officer bear no responsibility for the loss or damage to films or scripts, either during judging or subsequent showing. The films and scripts are entered entirely at the entrant and/or owner's risk. DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL COPIES OF FILMS OR VIDEOS!

DIVISIONS OF THE COMPETITION:

Class "A" (Advanced) - The Betty Peterson Memorial Trophy is awarded for the best film/video submitted in the competition at the advanced level. Rules 1 - 11 apply - there are no further restrictions in the competition.

Class "B" (Intermediate) - The Toronto Film and Video Trophy - open to individuals or groups of individuals who have not won an award in a class higher than "Intermediate" in this or any other competition, and have won no more than two first place awards in an Intermediate class of a competition other than club contests. An award in a competition without class levels, such as the CIAFF, will be considered to be an award above the Intermediate level.

Class "C" (Novice) - The Eumig Trophy - open to individuals or groups of individuals who have not won first place in the Novice class of this competition or an award in a class higher than Novice in this or other competitions, other than club contests.

Class "D" - The Garlick Trophy - this competition represents the best SCCA Club film/video of the year. Each SCCA club may submit one film, preferably the winner of the club's annual contest or the best film/video shown at a club meeting during the year. An individual may not submit a film/video him/herself, but the film/video entered by the club may be an individual's film, a group film/video or a club film, provided it has been produced within the organization and completed within two years prior to the closing date of the competition. The film/video may be already entered in any of the other SCCA Competition classes.

Class "E" - The Intercity Trophy - open to individuals or groups. The theme or title selected for this competition is compulsory. Film/video length may not exceed 10 minutes. An entry in this class is not admissible in another SCCA class in the same year, with the exception of the Garlick Trophy, but will be eligible in another year. The themes are published each year in PANORAMA. For the year 2007, the theme is "Your Call Is Important To Us".

Class "F" - The SCCA Award - Presented for the best script and should be an original simple single story. The treatment shall not exceed 1200 words. It should describe the story, as it will unfold on the screen, by giving the producer and production crew a clear picture of the writer's mental concept of the action transpiring. Locations should contain sufficient description to enable the director to establish time of day, mood, atmosphere and pace. Outline the story in terms of its major scenes. Keep narration to a minimum. Complete verbatim dialogue is not necessary. The idea is more important than the verbiage. However, a sample of a scene or sequence of dialogue will be expected. A "shooting script" is not required. Simplicity should be its chief value.

OTHER AWARDS

"Most Humorous Film" - donated by the St. Catharines Photographic Club, Movie Division, known as the "ST. KITTS AWARD". The trophy will be awarded if, in the opinion of the judges, an entry in Class "A", "B", or "C" merits recognition for its amusing content.

"Best Visual Special Effects" - donated by Bob and Marion Dixon and to be known as the BOB DIXON TROPHY. It will be available to all classes, (except Class "F") if the judges find that an entry merits this special recognition.

"Best Cinematography" - THE OTTAWA MOVIE MAKERS TROPHY, donated by the Ottawa Movie Makers club, is available to all classes, (except Class "F"), and it will only be awarded by the judges if an entry merits it because of its technical and artistic qualities.

"Best Use of Sound" - THE FAIRVIEW AWARD is presented by Fairview Photo Lab Limited for the entry which, in the opinion of the judges, has the quality and choice of sound which contributes the most to the success of an entry in classes "A", "B", or "C". (Note that commercially or professionally recorded music is not eligible for judging for this award, even when cleared to comply with Rule 3.)

"Best Editing" - THE TELECINE TRANSFER TROPHY is awarded for editing in classes "A", "B", and "C" if, in the opinion of the judges, the editing makes a significant contribution to the interpretation of the theme.

"Best Teenage Production" - THE ALLAN WRIGHT MEMORIAL TROPHY is attainable by persons under twenty years of age. It will be awarded if, in the opinion of the judges, the entry demonstrates the film/video-making potential of the young entrant by its construction, originality, technical qualities, awareness and observance of recognized film-making rules. It should have a clear theme or message and hold the attention of the viewers.

"Best Scenario Video" - THE VANCOUVER VIDEO PRODUCTIONS CLUB TROPHY, donated by the Vancouver Video Production Club, is available to all classes, (except Class "F") and is awarded for the best Scenario film/video, which demonstrates, in the opinion of the judges, a superior scenario production, (a film/video with a pre-planned and pre-scripted story or plot).

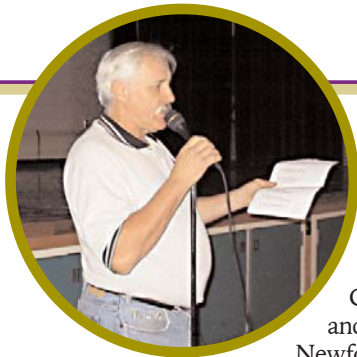
"Most Original Movie" - donated by the Calgary Movie Club, THE CALGARY MOVIE MAKERS TROPHY is for an entry that, in the opinion of the judges, has the most original treatment.

"Best Senior Production" - donated by John J. Carey FRPS and to be known as the GERALD ROBINSON MEMORIAL TROPHY, this award is for the best film/video, in the opinion of the judges, made by an individual or group of individuals sixty years of age or over.

Best Film/Video of the Contest - donated by Ben V.W. Andrews and to be known as the BEN ANDREWS TROPHY, this award is for the film/video that in the opinion of the judges is the most outstanding film/video in the contest. (Not applicable to the Script Contest.)

'My Rant From The Rock'

by Hugh Dimaline



Hugh Dimaline Introducing Program

Greetings, all you "Mainlanders", and a winter hello from Buchans, Newfoundland. Get out one of your old Canadian atlases and check out our location. You will find us in the middle of the island at the end of the Wilderness Highway.

Three things you need to know about us are:
... we are the innermost community in the centre of the Rock
...we are the Newfoundland community furthest away from salt water
...we are the highest elevated town in Newfoundland

Buchans is a community surrounded by over two million acres of incredible Newfoundland wilderness. When you travel the wilderness highway this time of year, you don't have to worry about heavy traffic because there isn't any, but you do have to be on the lookout for caribou that collect on the highway to lick the salt on the road. Yep, we still use salt down here and studded tires are both legal and recommended for winter travel. As for the caribou, there is a permanent winter herd of about one hundred animals that make the Buchans region their winter home.

Oh ya, did I mention that Buchans is home to the number one academically ranked school in Newfoundland!

Buchans was the site of the single richest ore discovery in the history of mining in North America...even to this day. The town's population peaked at nearly 3,000 residents in 1975 and today hosts a population of about 725 citizens. At one point in time Buchans had less than one-quarter of one percent of Newfoundland's population, and yet they generated nearly ten percent of the provincial tax revenues. The town officially began in 1926 but there was no road out of the interior to the Trans-Canada highway until about 1959, and no cars were allowed into the town until 1953, even though you could only drive around the town streets and take a five-mile ride to the beach. The only connection to the rest of Newfoundland was the company owned train, if they chose to let you ride on it, which was an impossibility some times. Men would be hired on, and in the early days of the town's history, they would sometimes work two years or longer before they would be given a pass to take the train out to visit their families.



Last year I decided I wanted to produce a short film based on a story idea that an old friend from Toronto, Brent Haldane by name, had sent to me for consideration. I took Brent's one page synopsis and expanded the idea to an eleven-minute production. With the help of fellow SCCA member, Tyrone Ball, we began to put our

project into motion. I did a mail-out asking for help from the citizens of Buchans and nearly 150 people became part of the film including business owners, the town council, two hockey



teams, and several citizens at large. We took over the local hockey stadium on March 31st, 2006, and filmed the finale to our little production. When completed, we had re-decorated the interior of our arena with the remnants of nearly 1000 smashed up Florida oranges. It was an awesome experience! The entire project was filmed over a five-week period and forced Tyrone and me to hone the organizational skills required to successfully put together a large cast production. Everyone in town got into the production of our project and this helped make the entire process move along smoothly.

Our efforts were rewarded with two awards at the 2006 SCCA film awards and everyone in town was thrilled that our little community received a dose of national recognition. The largest paper in central Newfoundland, The Advertiser in Grand Falls-Windsor, gave our success a front-page storyline in addition to a one-third page write-up inside the newspaper.



On November 15th, 2006, we showed the film to the citizens of Buchans for the first time. We charged adults one dollar to get in and all kids sixteen and under got in free. We raised two hundred dollars and some hampers of foodstuffs and all proceeds were turned over to the local Churches Christmas Fund. Buchans has a strong religious history and is home to five active churches. Our programme featured selected winning films from the 2003 CIAFF in addition to some of my own earlier film works. One of the local business owners provided food and beverages for everyone in attendance, and the entire evening was a truly great experience for all involved.



Tyrone Ball Projecting

props or whatever, people don't hesitate to step forward and assist us.

What can I say, Buchans is Number One, and that's my "Rant From The Rock" for this edition! ■

Next month we are starting our newest film and the help we are getting from the local businesses is unbelievable. There may be no film club per se down here, but the backing we get from the citizens of Buchans makes the entire film making process so much easier. If we need help with any phase of our production, be it specialty

SOME INTERNET UPDATES

By Thom Speechley

THINGS CHANGE

Most of the software we purchase has built in reminders to download patches, plug-ins and updates. Unfortunately most freeware and some shareware do not come with such a utility. The following are a few links to download some of the free software we have recommended in previous articles.

ZERO ASSUMPTIONS

<http://www.z-a-recovery.com/>

I have had two opportunities to use this application to salvage 'lost' pictures from friends' camera cards and used it also to salvage one of my own photos after spoiling the downloaded copy on my hard drive.

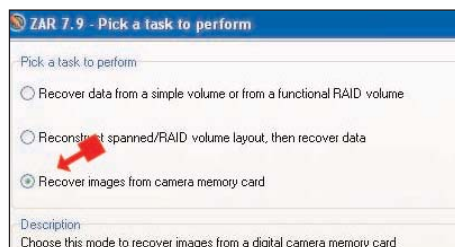
The original free version was a stand-alone program. The only version available for download today, is actually the commercial version with only the camera card feature activated. This means you can still recover files from a card but are obliged to wade through other de-activated functions to make the program operate. This is only a minor inconvenience but involves a few new steps. In fact, for the advanced computer user, you may elect to purchase the "key" to unlock the entire program. It is one of the better ones for its purpose. (\$99US)

Here is the new opening screen.

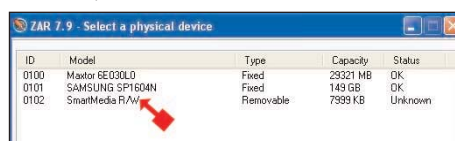


For card recovery only, simply click on "Proceed".

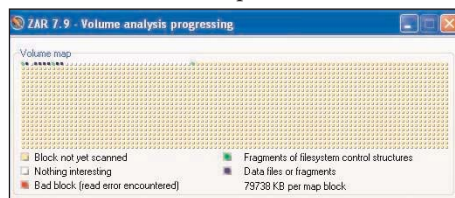
Select "Recover images from camera memory card" and click "Proceed".



On the next screen select the name of the "drive" which represents your memory card. Press "Proceed".

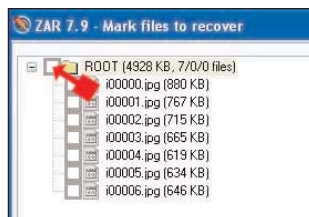


The next screen shows the progress of the recovery process. This can take a long time, depending on the capacity of the card (MB, GB?) and the resolution or file size for each picture.

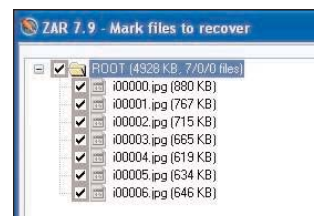


When the scan is finished, a screen displays all of the files recovered.

You will probably want to recover all the files listed so click in the box opposite the "Root" folder, click "Proceed".



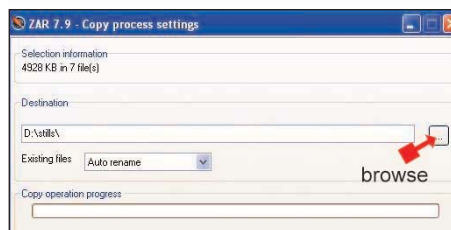
All files are now selected. Click "Proceed"



The next screen asks you to select a destination for the recovered pictures.



Use the "Browse" button to locate the folder (Directory) you have chosen and click "Proceed".



A progress bar will then show that the files are being transferred. Remember, you are only saving pictures which have not been overwritten if you had reused the card after losing the original pictures.

DIRECTORY LISTER 0.9.1.0

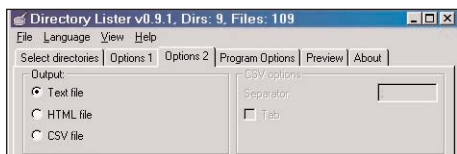
<http://www.krkssoft.com/>

This is a very small, fast utility which lists all the contents of a folder, including sub-folders, in the form of a text file. This allows you to annotate the text by adding names or descriptive titles to the files for easier searching at a later time. This works extremely well with collections of picture or music files. Most photo or music compilation programs have a utility to create a "Play List" or "Picture Album". Except for downloaded music, where lists are available on the Internet, these programs still require a lot of manual input. "Directory Lister" is simply quicker than opening a big program and following a set protocol for filling in details. In addition, the resulting text, CSV or HTML file can be opened and imported into many other programs.

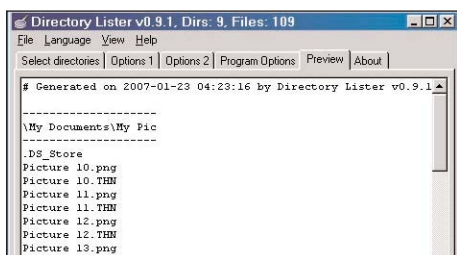
The new interface offers several new options for formatting the program, including seven directory properties and ten file properties to be included in the finished listing.



Formerly, the program generated only a plain text file. The new version will save the listing as text, HTML or CSV, if the information is to be inserted into a database or other tabular format.



This is the preview screen. You cannot add or change the content in this screen but it shows you what detail will appear in the final list. The amount of detail is adjusted under the option tabs.



My favourite use for this program, is creating a table of contents for a data disk of files I am about to finalize or close. Opening the file at a later date with a simple text editor, "Notepad", and reading the descriptions I have added, saves wading through all the files with names I no longer recognize.

MPEG Streamclip

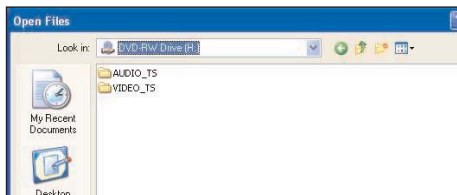
<http://www.squared5.com/>

Now for something entirely new. We occasionally have a need to extract a portion of a DVD. We prefer to remove the small portion in MPEG2 format but the disk content is broken up into 1.4GB files in VOB format. It's simple enough to change the file extension to .mpg and copy the whole file, but because of the 1.4GB file convention, the clip you want may be split between two different VOB files. Most of us give up, copy the DVD to DV tape, recapture and trim it on the timeline of our edit suite. MPEG Streamclip allows you to combine all the separate parts of the DVD and scroll to the in/out points you want and save the clip. No quality loss

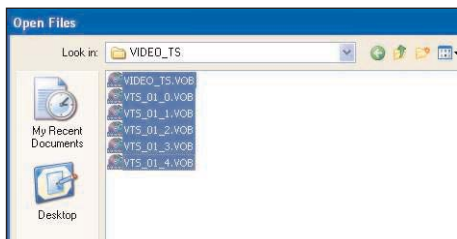
from transferring to tape and much less time involved. To perform this operation, open Streamclip and select "File", "Open files..."



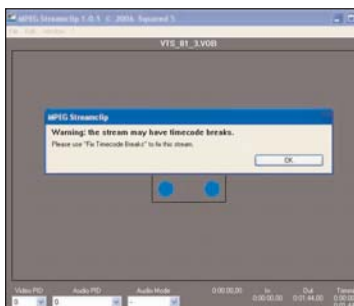
Open the drive which contains the DVD you will be copying. The contents of that drive will be shown as two folders, "AUDIO_TS" and "VIDEO_TS". Double click the VIDEO_TS folder.



Highlight all the VOB files to select them and click "Open".



This combines all into one VOB file. You will see a warning that the file may contain timecode breaks.



After the files are combined, click "Edit" and "Fix Timecode Breaks"



This step may take a minute or two, depending on the number of VOB files on the disk. When finished, you may now use the play/scroll controls at the bottom of the picture to locate the beginning of the section you wish to copy.



It may help to locate the in/out points if you first play the DVD and note the times in playback.

Use the "I" and "O" keys to mark the in/out points. Finally, click "File", "Save As", name the new file and select a location for it, and click "Save". The file will be saved with the VOB extension. If your application cannot use that format, change the extension to .mpg.

I find this utility handy for extracting a 20-30 second clip for use as a background for motion menus when authoring a DVD. You can also extract just the audio portion if you want intro music in your menus. Here is the list of additional functions available with this amazing free program. ■



Sound Effects

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE SCCA SFX LIBRARY

There are eleven more previously unannounced SFX CD's that we have purchased for the SFX Library. Mostly we have described Sets or Collections, but this time we have a Mixed Bag of Odds and Ends.

Some of them are many tracked compilations of unrelated spot effects, and some of them are themed groupings of longer, ambient sounds. First, we can quickly dispose of one of the latter.



Fire Sounds
("The Soft Enchanting Crackle of Fire Sounds") is 72 continuous minutes of a fire crackling in a fire-

place. It was sold to accompany the burning of a gas fire in your fireplace, to cover the sound of the gas fireplace blower motor and provide that cheery crackling sound we associate with a warm wood burning fireplace. I strongly doubt any of you will feature a fireplace in a 72-minute scene in any of your own videos (except as a joke) but you might want a few seconds from this, or even a little longer for an outdoor campfire. Add the sound of wolves howling in the distance, and you have a great background for a quiet campfire conversation, or a storyteller relating the preamble to your video about an Indian legend.

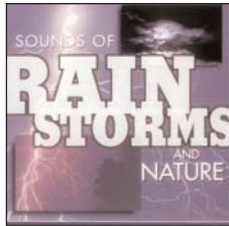
However, it definitely won't work for a furious house fire or the burning of a building, no matter how many spot effects of fire sirens and fire engine bells you add, because that roaring sound of a big fire is noticeable by its absence.



Another dud is **Ocean Whispers**, which turns out to be "a new age musical experience", five tracks (from 2:46 to

11:20, 38 minutes 13 seconds in total)

of soft flute music with a background track of surf. Because of the music (copyrighted, of course) all you might be able to use is a little surf sans flute as the "scenes" open and close. Never mind, we have a great one (below) that more than makes up for it.



Sounds of Rainstorms and Nature is a crossover. There are 19 tracks (among the 76) that are extended (from 1 to 2 or

more minutes, with the longest being 4:03) of ambience, and about 30 more between 30 seconds and 1 minute, that might be useful as ambience tracks. The remainder could mostly be considered spot effects, individual barnyard, zoo, and pet sounds.

One of the most difficult things to record yourself on your camcorder is the sound of the wind, and you often have to completely replace the sound-track of windy scenes because of the rumbling sound. There are lots of good wind tracks here, Wind & Rain (1:27), Wind & Thunder (1:06), Wind in the Trees (0:37), Outback Winds (2:10) but they all have something mixed in with the wind. More universally applicable is Snow Blizzard (0:50) because the snow itself doesn't make any noise! There are also several tracks of rain (6) in different conditions and of varying severity, and the same for waves and surf (6), and streams (7). The Fire Burning (1:01) and Crackling Fire (1:00) are comparable to the Fire Sounds CD, but with much more whoosh and more energetic crackling, suitable even for a forest fire, though I expect that if you caught shots of a forest fire, you also caught the sound!

The animals sounds provided might be very useful and would be included in answer to a request for sheep, or goats, or wild dogs, etc., and any of these might be the best in our collection for the purposes of your video.

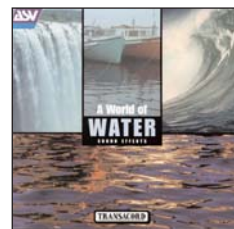
Another crossover CD is the oddball



56 Special Backgrounds for Telephone Calls and Sound Effects for Answering Machines. The first 28 are all

exactly 1:00 minute long and seem to be designed for the man who is working late and wants to convince his wife that he is in the pool hall or casino or at the races! The list is varied and extensive, including Airport, Fishing, Theatre Intermission, On The Beach, even On Board a Space Ship. Busy Office is also there, but I guess it's too difficult to use this CD from the phone booth in a bar!

The SFX for Answering Machines includes 4 tracks of 1 minute each – Heavy Breathing, Ticking Clock, Typing a Letter and Changing Channels on TV. The remaining 24 are short to very short and include Boing, Love Making Sounds, Toilet Flushing, That's All Folks Music, Laughing Trumpet, Drum Roll & Crash – just the stuff that juvenile comedians like to use for those annoying answering machine productions they like to record, and change every week. (If you ever get any of those when you call, make a note of where, because those guys are often very creative and might, someday, be just the person you need for help on one of your own, serious and important breakthrough videos!

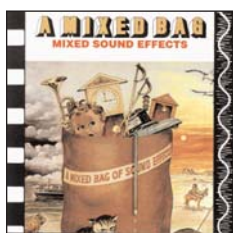


The last of the ambience record ings describe here, **A World of Water** Sound Effects, may be worth more than all the above to

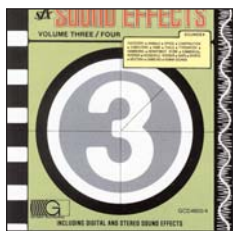
you, because it has 37 tracks spanning 72 minutes and 49 seconds of excellent sound tracks. The shortest track, Water dripping from the roof of a cave, is 0:43, and the longest, "Cloughton" waits to leave Woodside Pier, Birkenhead, is 9:12. But what makes

this collection so useful is the variations of just a few themes. There are waves rolling on a pebble beach, onto a sandy beach, breaking over rocks, breaking over a Jetty, breaking against the side of a ship, onto the lower deck of a ship, and across the decks of a ship ploughing through a stormy sea. There is Bow Wave, from the deck of a ship, the wash at the stern of a ship at sea, near the stern of a ship at sea in stormy weather, and there are more variations of streams, waterfalls, etc. but you should get the idea.

Only two of these tracks seem to be too specific for general use: Venice Church bells ring in the distance as two steam ships pass each other in the lagoon (1:53) and A gondolier shouts a warning, then a 'Vaparetto' water bus calls at a nearby landing stage (2:28), but both of these have elements within them that might be used separately. Similarly, part of On board the Paddle Steamer "Jeanie Deans" (2:00) could stand in for a steam locomotive!

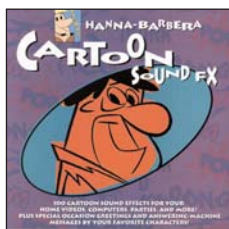


One of the remaining six, **A Mixed Bag**, describes itself accurately. There are 41 tracks on this CD, varying in length from 12 seconds to 2:32. There are a few of the regular run-of-the-mill SFX here like Mixed crowd, noisy, laughing (0:50), Busy bar, music, crowd, sings along (1:00), Farm animals (1:30), and Recess, school bell, children playing (1:07), but lots of more exotic sounds, like Spanish men on horseback, chasing Indians (0:12), Launching boat in storm – shouts of haul-a-way, cast off (:38), and Mine disaster – hammering, rock slide, fire (0:54). Some things for everybody, some things for almost nobody – a great wind sound, but mixed with grasshoppers and then locusts!



Gateway **Sound Effects Volume 3 and Volume 4** of a 10 Volume Basic Library of SFX, consists of 77 tracks, 17 of them over a minute long (though it's hard to imagine why any of us would ever need 1:12 of Hammering!) Again, lots of the

usual stuff: Walking down hall (0:20), Pinball Machine (0:53), Electric Drill (0:20), etc., but again, lots of very unusual stuff, like Olympia elec. Typewriter (turned on/put in paper/type/remove paper) (1:50), and Cannon NP50 copier (turned on/paper exposed/makes copies/copies removed) (1:04), both of which I think I would have if I had the video that went along with them. My favourite? Sword fight on horseback (Horses approach left and right, meet in the center, depart right and left, turn and repeat) (1:01). I wish I had a dollar for every time I've needed that!



Hanna-Barbera Cartoon Sound FX is different from any other SFX CD in the SCCA Collection, and so it fills a need for some members. There are 97 tracks of Kabooms, Kabongs, and Ba-Wongs, and several Character Voices of Fred Flintstone, Quick Draw McGraw, Snagglepuss and other Hanna-Barbera characters, but I would advise against using the voices. There is a great variety of comic sounds here that are almost demanded for cartoon animation, and could bring some smiles to any comedy that can benefit from this type of treatment. However, I'm not quite sure how you're going to describe the sounds you want, and how I'm going to recognize them, but where there's a will there's a way.

However, I should point out that unlike other SFX collections, this one is marked "Not For Commercial Use"



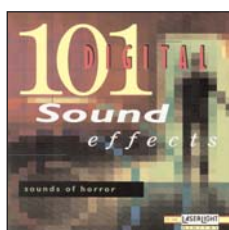
SFX Mania is a huge collection of 323 tracks that can be played only on a computer, i.e. they are wav files, and not cda files for a desktop CD player. The longest, the launch of Apollo 11, is 57 seconds, but the vast majority are much shorter indeed. In fact, there are 13 cuts less than 1 second each, with 3 of those being arrows shot from bows, and the others being very short tones of different frequencies. But don't let the large number or generally short effects persuade you that these sound effects

should be dismissed. They will definitely boost the variety of sound effects that the SCCA can make available to our members.

And finally, there are two that I will treat together: Sounds of Halloween and 101 Digital Sound Effects Sounds of Horror.



Sounds of Halloween includes every thing – "thunder claps, howling wind, rattling chains, frightening groans and moans, eerie organ playing, blood curling screams, pulsating heartbeats, squeaking doors and creaking floors." The problem is that it's all on one hour long track! This seems to be intended for playing on your verandah on Halloween, or outside a haunted house, rather than conveniently finding a sound you want. However, there are many good sounds included, and not all of them are accompanied by music, so if there is something you want in particular, we might be able to find it on this CD.



Sounds of Horror lists in its notes, as the title implies, 101 tracks, but the Red Book Standard for all CD's only provides for 99 tracks. However, only 98 tracks can be read from this computer either on a CD Player or on a computer! They have combined 4 tracks into one on track 98! There's always a way, if you really want to do something!

Anyway This collection provides all the SFX you might need for a Horror Film – stormy night, screams, groans, chains, a bull whip, creaking doors, an owl, a ball and chain, ghost sounds, a monster dragging his foot as he walks, even a chain saw massacre and Mother Bates' Rocking Chair! Only 15 of the tracks are a minute or longer, but happily, 4 of them are wind effects (and there are 2 more that are just under a minute) and these 6 are all different and all would fit any video you are making that needs the sound of the wind. ■

Can Young Movie-Makers Make a Splash?

By Michael Véronneau, Victoria Video Club

It's not unusual to see local middle- and high-schools with audio, video and editing equipment suitable for making movies. And with some guidance and encouragement from school staff those students are turning out movies for both school credit and for the sheer fun of making a movie. The dropping equipment costs and the rising interest in using video to tell a story, to communicate a message (e.g. public service announcement on the dangers of smoking), or to just have fun is resulting in an explosion in video production.



Visit the YouTube site and you find an amazing range of videos, grouped into categories such as Travel & Places, Music, Comedy, Pets & Animals, and so on. Most folks just seem happy to post their creations and let people view and comment on them. But it hasn't taken long for contests to appear on YouTube. So if you are competitive, then try something like the "Your 10 Favourite Things" contest, or the "\$45,000 Worldwide New Numa Contest" – yes, jump in with your entry and try to get a share of the \$45,000 in prizes.

But sites like YouTube are huge, and open to the world. So, for a youth looking to make a splash, dropping their video into that big pool is unlikely to make many waves. What if you are a Canadian youth and want to start off in a smaller pool? First check out what festivals run in your city or province.



For youth in British Columbia there are two Canadian festivals that should be considered: the "Reel Youth Film Festival" (www.reelyouth.ca)



and the "Behind The Lens Kids' Film Festival" (www.kidsfilms.org). Located in Vancouver and Sidney, B.C. respectively, these festivals are great places for young film makers to submit their movies.

Note that both of these festivals are open to all Canadians (and international submissions too, in some cases), but the advantage to finding a festival that is close to where you live is that you are more likely to be able to attend the event to see all the submissions, and to meet and talk with other movie makers. And typically the festivals include workshops (e.g. story development, lighting, makeup) that involve youth, and provide the forum for discussion on how to improve other movie-making skills.

There are two other considerations when "jumping" into any festival. One, festivals don't always accept every submission. There are rules and submission guidelines and if a submission fails to meet those (e.g. failure to get permission for a music soundtrack) then there is disappointment of that rejection to deal with. Two, it is a contest, and ultimately only the "winners" take home the prizes—although judges usually have some latitude to recognize achievements, and many festivals

offer an "audience choice" to give the audience some power over the awards.

Are there more festivals in Canada? You bet! I was surprised by the number that I was able to find. Here are just a sampling of what I found across Canada:



<http://www.eciad.ca/r2r/>
Vancouver, British Columbia



Freeze Frame: The international festival of films for kids of all ages
www.freezeframeonline.org
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Wee Reel for children in grade 8 and under
Reel Views for grades 9 to 12 (up to 19 years of age)



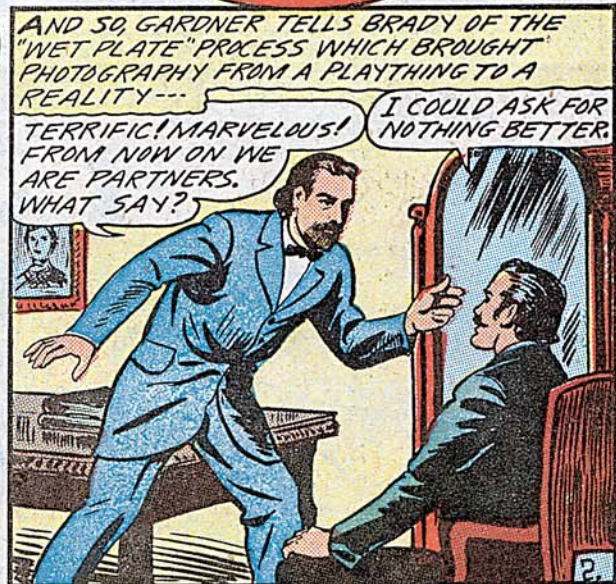
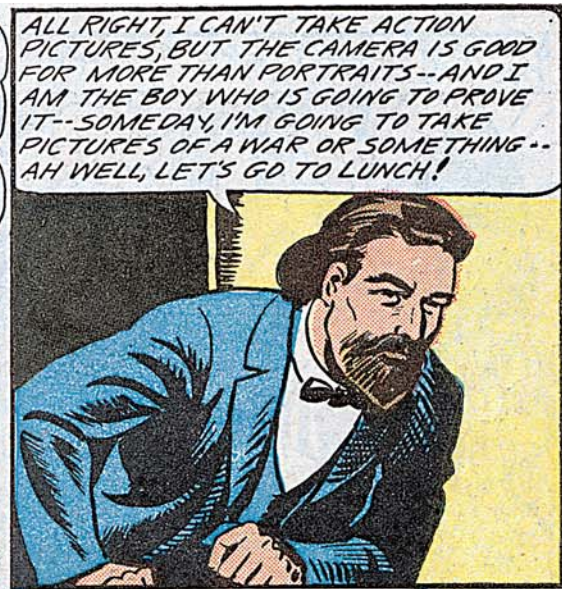
<http://www.kidsforkidsfestival.org>
Montreal, Quebec

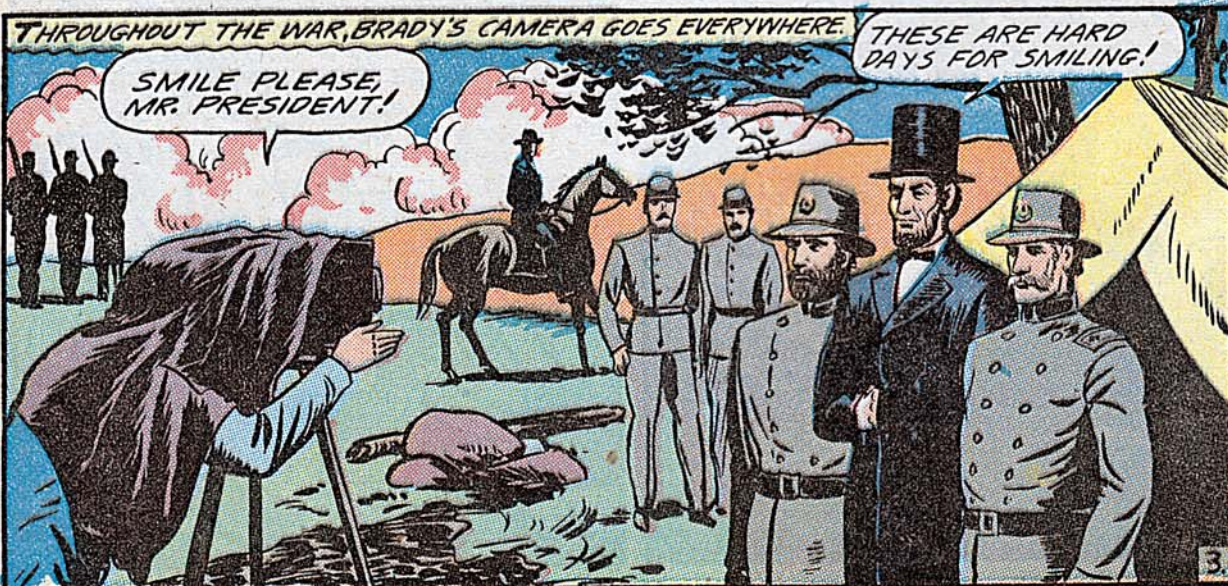
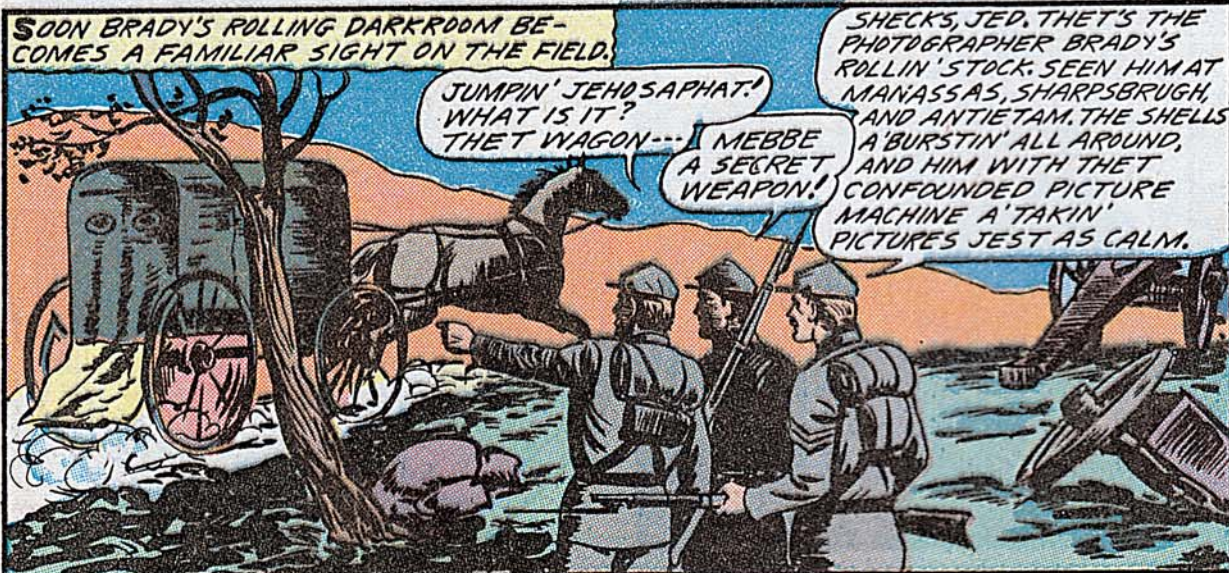
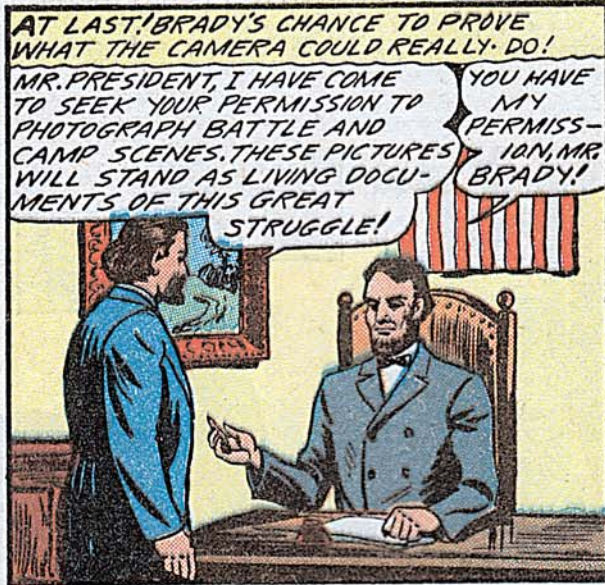
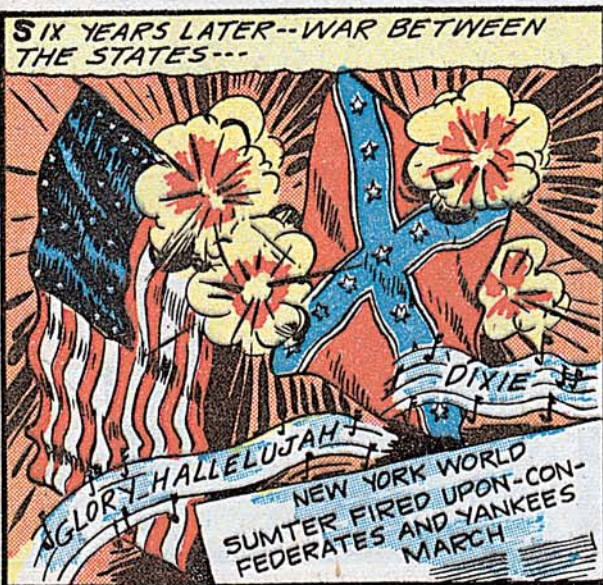
So why not consider attending some of these festivals—enjoy the movies as much as you can, and look for an opportunity to provide constructive criticism. ■

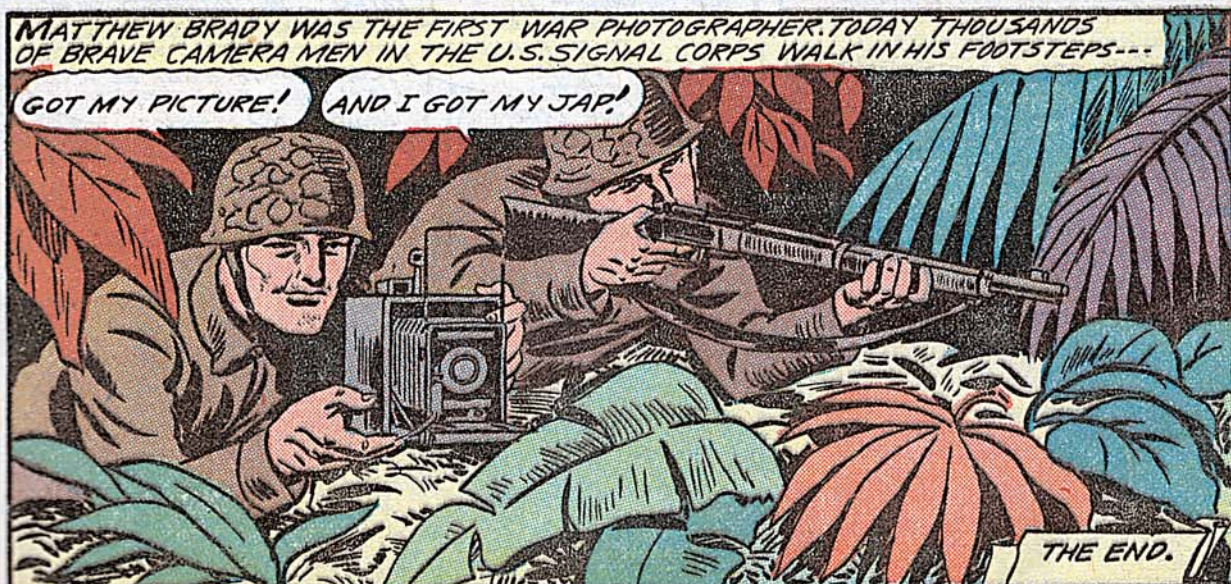
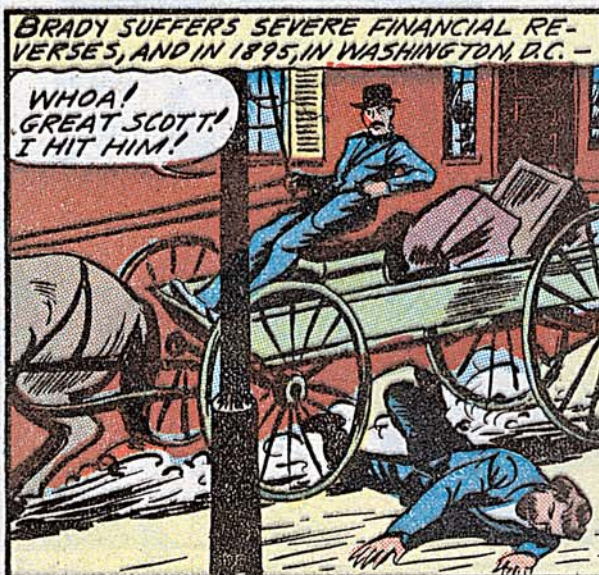
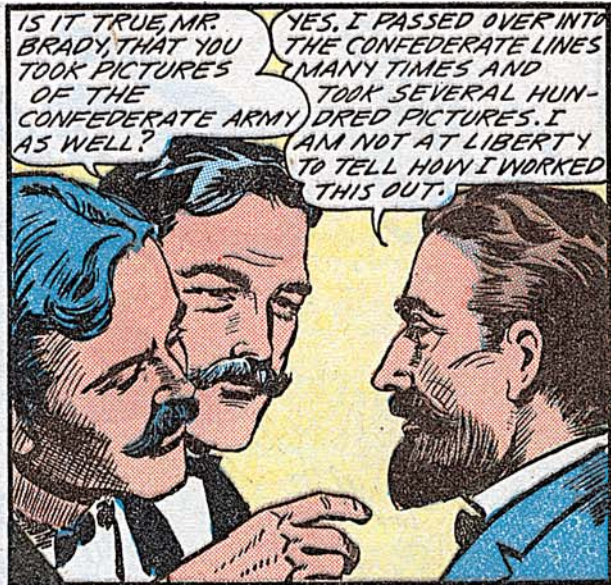
MATTHEW BRADY

Provided by Campbell McCubbin









THE END.

PIRACY

Canada is sporting a big black eye! Twentieth Century Fox has stated publicly that as much as 50% of the pirated films illegally released on DVD and available for download on the internet are captured originally in Canada!

They have complained that Canada's laws are insufficient to deal with the problem, and if the situation doesn't change soon they will have to delay the release of new movies in Quebec. If that isn't sufficient to stop the piracy, they will have to delay releasing to theatres in all of Canada!

The claim is that movies are being taped with camcorders in Montreal movie houses where both the English and French versions are screened, because it's more convenient there, and that the practice can't be stopped in Canada because Canada has no law prohibiting the use of camcorders in a theatre.

Apparently the "product" is moved out to the Philippines and China before the

films are even released there, and the pirates then distribute the illegal copies. It seems that Canada's law provides that anyone caught copying a movie in a theatre can face criminal prosecution, be jailed, or fined up to \$25,000. The copyright holder can also bring a civil suit. Under U.S. Law, however, one man caught with a camcorder in a theatre was fined \$250,000 and jailed for 8 years!

"Internal Policies" within the RCMP are also faulted by the U.S. movie industry, but a spokesman for the Mounties says that prosecution is difficult because under Canadian law possession of a camcorder isn't illegal, and it must be proved that the person used it, and intended to profit from using it.

The US Government has been asked to put Canada on the list of the world's worst countries for piracy along with Russia, China, Belize, Venezuela and Turkey.

This has raised several questions:

Question #1: How do they know that people are using camcorders in Canadian theatres?

Answer: Cineplex Odeon hires security

people who patrol their theatres across Canada wearing night goggles, and when they catch someone taping a movie, they throw them out.

Question #2: Where do they get the information to indict Montreal and to support the "50%" claim?

Answer: Every movie released to the theatres around the world carries a "watermark", which is invisible to the patrons, but is copied when the movie is videotaped, and appears on the pirated copies sold illegally around the world and on copies distributed over the internet. The film industry can detect this "watermark", and it identifies the copy and the theatre to which it was distributed!

Question #3: If delayed release to non-North American countries encourages the business of piracy in those countries, will delaying release in Canada not increase the market in Canada for pirated movies, and won't the pirates quickly find another source?

Answer: That isn't for me to answer! Ask Hollywood.

Fred Briggs

URGENT NEWS FLASH!!!

Warning! Potential failure of IEEE1394 camcorder port

A member of the London Videography Club recently discovered that he could not download video through the "Firewire" © IEEE1394 output of one of his camcorders. He switched to another camera but soon realized that it too, could not be recognized by his computer. Substituting a new cable did not solve the problem. A trip to a local repair depot revealed that the "chips" in both cameras, which are the gateway for the video signal, had been destroyed. (The popular term is "fried", but that doesn't provide any additional comfort) To restore the function would mean replacing an entire PC board at the cost of a new small DV camcorder! The repair person would not venture a guess as to the cause of the failure, but a quick check on the Internet revealed that this problem was happening with sufficient frequency to raise an alarm. Several instances have been reported and probable causes have been suggested. In one instance, examination of the cable involved disclosed that improper wiring was shunting current for camera control to the circuit for the 1394 chip.

In other cases it was assumed that the user had not inserted the cable plug with proper care and a wrong connection was made. The real problem has not yet been thoroughly defined since there

does not appear to be a common thread at this time. With the exception of the faulty cable, other indications are improper attention by the user, need for a standard protocol for use of the port and poor basic design of the plugs, jacks and camera port location.

One universal conclusion from all of these reports is that both computer and camcorder, or both camcorders, if transferring between cameras, should be turned off while attaching the cable.

There is a touch of irony here because attaching cables while powered up ("Hot Swapping") was one of the major selling points of IEEE1394 at the time of its release. In addition to the above precaution, exercise extra care when inserting the plugs. In one of the reports it was noted that this caution is only now being included in some owner manuals. (JVC, Panasonic)

We will be following this problem closely to determine if and when manufacturers will take the situation more seriously. If any reader has had a similar experience or suspects they might have, I would be happy to hear from them. Meanwhile, check out a few of these sites to get a better appreciation of what a potential problem this could be. ■

www.camcorderinfo.com/bbs/t104354.html
<http://dvinfo.net/conf/showthread.php?t=64873>
www.fwdepot.com/wcable.html
www.sonyhdvinfo.com/showthread.php?t=7501
<http://wiki.pearpc.net/index.php?title=Firewire>

Thom Speechley

The Last Word...

I've just been looking through whatever was on the computer to get some kind of clue for this month's Last Word. In Club News the first thing I noticed was the Brantford Club's theme of Good and Bad. What a great idea! I like the suggestion of balance between good and not so good. Also it gives a way to handle an unexpected suggestion from the floor.

Another good suggestion was the job for the person, who already has a camera in hand, as a Production Still Photographer. His job was to take pictures of the actual production of the opus. It gives that person a status, and keeps him/her beside rather than in the way of the action.

There is a focus on youth in "Can young movie makers make a splash?" by Michael Véronneau, Victoria Video Club. Be sure to check Thom Speechley's "A few links to download patches, plug-ins and up-dates ..."

I've had some fun talking and seeing friends overseas on Yahoo! Messenger. I was able to see and talk directly to them. It's not as good as a visit, but it helps me stay in touch!

That's all for now. I'll be back when it's Spring!

Joan Bochsler, Editor.

