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PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR

**1997
SCCA
CONVENTION
Kitchener,
Ontario
August 7th & 8th**



Executive Panel

1996-1997
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WHAT TO DO?

Writing is such a pain, when the brain refuses to get into gear and the eyes glaze over as the white computer screen stares blankly back at you. **What to do?**

How about insulting somebody... I seem to be pretty good at that. Or I could ask someone else to write for me... who would know? Steal an article from some magazine, that, odds are, nobody would know about. Forget it all and watch TV... but there's so many programs... which one shall I watch. What to do? I turned on the VCR's and monitors about half an hour ago, and got the computer ready for some editing. But, no ideas. **What to do?**

I have a presentation to make at the next club meeting. It's supposed to be about "The Common Sense of Television Graphics"... but I have two hours of video to edit down to thirty minutes, and why did I agree to do this anyway? How am I going to make a limited subject, vibrant and exciting? **What to do?**

Today started far too early... with a "what are we going to do?" meeting first, then walked miles (oops, sorry, make that kilometres), around McMaster University, with an insurance bloke and two safety officers... scouting locations for a risk management video that a Toronto based organization has asked me to do. This project has been on the go for over eighteen months now, but I can't seem to hurry them up. **What to do?**

Later I went down to the bay to see if any ice boats or snow surfers were out... so that I could add some more footage to a planned production for the club. The snow covering on the ice was deep, so I stood there... by myself. I want to have something done for the March club contest and maybe an entry for the CIAFF as well as the Guernsey Lily Festival... but there are no boats. **What to do?**

Continued on Page 15

Cover Photo:

Kingston City Hall.

Photo by Evans Photographic Inc.
Toronto

**Kingston, Ontario will
be the site of the 1997
SCCA Convention.
Thursday & Friday
August 7th & 8th
Don't miss Fred Briggs
report on page 15!**

EDITORIAL BOARD

Linda Smith

Wallace Robertson

LAYOUT, DESIGN & TYPESETTING

George McLachlan

PANORAMA

...is published in Vancouver, B.C.
Canada

The publication of the Society of Canadian Cine Amateurs an association of video and filmmakers devoted primarily to informing Canadian Movie/Video makers of the activities of the Society and developments in the realm of amateur motion picture making. It aims to provide information about the new equipment and methods, offers a forum for discussion of topics affecting the interests of amateur/video makers.

CLUB NEWS

by Wallace Robertson

For those “first time” readers of Panorama, may I extend a warm welcome.... After reading the bulletins and newsletters from across the country it is obvious that the clubs are well into their planned programmes and projects for the year. Enthusiasm is the name of the game, and as witnessed from the various publications, members are becoming not only more knowledgeable about, but also more prolific in, producing video and film.

Sheila Perkins of the Victoria Video and Film Club writes in their newsletter that the group recently moved to a new meeting place at the Fairfield Health Centre. John Jones, Contest Chairman, reminds members that the Annual Contest, will have a final deadline of January 28th. Their ‘Assigned Subject Contest’ with the topic, “Roads that lead to...” must be entered for competition by April 29th.

Linda Smith reports in Vancouver’s monthly publication “Reel Talk” that along with David Cooperstone’s successful monthly workshops, they also conduct highly productive general meetings. As an example of the eclectic flavour of these meetings one has only to examine the programme for December. The meeting started with a six minute video animation entitled, “Freedom” by Barry Moffat: followed by Dave MacDonald from Jack’s TV who discussed and fielded questions about batteries and other related VCR/camcorder subjects. The evening was topped off with a demonstration by Pat Sheridan and Greg Caravan who explained the capabilities and uses of the club’s new PV audio mixer. To quote, in part, from Linda’s article, “...we have a promising future.” Get well wishes to Bryan Belfont, who was recently hospitalized, but is rapidly recovering at

home under the constant loving care of his charming wife Marjorie.

A few days ago I was pleased to pick up the mail from Michael Faryna, the Secretary Treasurer of the Calgary Movie Makers. We don’t hear from Calgary too often but when we do we are always happy to know that they are still “hangin’-in- there” with the rest of us. Members like Mike, Fred Mollison, Bill Furgeson and Dick Mott are still pursuing the dream. Although, a small club, presently meeting in members’ homes, they are looking forward to 1998 when they will be celebrating the group’s 60th Anniversary.

Winnipeg Amateur Moviemakers is also a club with a small membership, but as noted in recent bulletins the enrollment is gradually getting larger. Their programmes primarily consist of instructional videos and lectures, CANUSA films and club videos. A “5 minute Unedited” competition recently drew three entries, “Prairie Gold and Steel” by Norm Frederickson, “Quiet Time” by Tom Nixon and the Robertson’s, “Winter Survival in Winnipeg”. Members are eagerly awaiting the February meeting and a sound seminar to be conducted by Willard Elliott, retired CBC technician and long time club member.

In London Videography Club’s, “It’s a Wrap”, Editor, Thom Speechley relates that at a recent general meeting Jim Town exhibited his award winning music video, “My Old Town”. Harry Ronson offered “Shooting the Shoot”, a video which was composed of “behind the scene” shots of their feature production, “Time Lapse”. The members were also treated to the first public showing of Kim Brown’s film, “Christmas at Eldon Housen”. Congratulations go out to Frank Birch of the

Brantford Video and Moviemakers for winning the Golden Eagle Award for photography. Frank’s “Exploring Southern Ontario” was a presentation which combined photographs and commentary. At Brantford’s last general meeting Don Bradley, using Stan McCall’s copy kit, conducted a discussion on “How to Convert 8MM movie film to a VCR cassette”. To finish off the evening Bob Wilkinson, Don Bradley, Don Hagey, Art Crain, Jack Wheelton and Dan Kennaley showed a number of informative and entertaining films and videos.

The Start Middle End video group of St. Catharines had Mark Snell and Richard Seguin from Hamilton’s Foto-Video shop out recently to conduct a seminar on both Sony and JVC Digital camcorders. They also viewed 19 videos produced by their own members. (What? No popcorn!) Winners in the “Animated Titles” contest were Jim McDonald, Gerald Andress and Herb Kenneford. In the “Christmas” contest, Gerald Andress, Russell Miller and Herb Kenneford took home the hardware. Also recognized for their accomplishments were Bob Wiley, Don Svob, Jim McDonald and Clair Wiley. Another interesting note: SME are toying with the idea of having members take a turn at conducting a seminar at upcoming meetings. Sounds promising!

It appears the Ottawa Film and Video Makers are well on their way in collecting video footage of winter activities in and around our capital city. The finished film will be called, “Ottawa-Winter Wonderland” and will be a production enlisting the many talents of their members.

We were delighted to read the fine testimonial in the “In Black and White” column of “The Caszette”, praising the

dedication and accomplishments of Vic Adams. But, just so it wouldn't go to Vic's head, the Programme Co-ordinator scheduled Vic and Stanley Klosevych to conduct a seminar on "Transfer of Photographs, Slides and Motion Picture to Video" at the next meeting.

Although I was pleased with what I read in the Ottawa "Casette", I was immediately shocked back into reality when I picked up the January issue of Hamilton's "Reel News" and discovered that Muriel Upton and Tony Scott hadn't attended the previous meeting. I can readily understand why Fred Briggs was so disappointed! Although the meeting wasn't quite the same without them, it did go on and as Fred reports it was jam-packed with information and entertainment. Jim Town projected video clips from the Grey Cup/Santa Claus Parade. Seventeen year old Ryan Turnbull introduced an in-camera animated video. Ken MacFarlane spoke on "the care of video tape". The Reflections Mini-contest received entries from Jim Town, Joe Bochsler and Fred Briggs. There was a showing of Mark Jaster's and Bob Crayford's, "1996 Grey Cup Fun in Hamilton". To top the evening off, Adam Houston presented "Farmers' Market": and Steven Balogh exhibited "In Search of the 161AA2 Tape". It appears everyone in the club participated (except Muriel and Tony).

Trev Beard reports in the Toronto Film & Video Club's "Shots and Angles", that they recently conducted a "Stanley Klosevych Night". The presentation, "Image Quality in Videography" drew 40 people and as Trev said "we got our money's worth and more". Stan showed some of his videos and talked about lighting, audio and camera technical details. The newsletter goes on to mention that Toronto held a special meeting with Ben Andrews who presented awards to Arnold Meyers, Trev Beard and Richard Vielrose for their winning participation in the SCCA and CIAFF competitions.

It is always pleasant to open the mail and find a copy of the SAVAC newsletter. Their attractive publication keeps us up to date on sister groups across the border. The current issue contains a couple of great articles on Harold and Mary Cosgrove, and Norm and Pat Otto. Bill Sedlacek mentions that our re-

cently "discovered" friend, Eph Horowitz (whom we met at the combined conference in Victoria in October) was hospitalized with emergency surgery. Best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Eph. Another prominent name popped up, that being Jim Meeker, the prolific videographer, whose home group, the Tri-City Cinema Club in Illinois, produce more CANUSA videos than most other groups combined!

You know, someday, I'm going to have to "shuffle off to Buffalo", if for no other reason than to see the giant 30 foot screen at the "Screening Room". It seems that in just about every issue of "Camerama" the Buffalo's group is attending a function at this popular eatery in Northtown Plaza's Century Mall. Their most recent event; the annual Christmas Dinner. In the January edition John Weiksner, wrote an interesting and amusing article entitled "Digital Delay". (Extra ammunition for Bryan Belfont in Vancouver.)

While I'm on the topic of "shuffling off"...have you had thoughts about a sojourn to the "Old Country". Each year there are a great number of film and video festivals, contests and movie fairs throughout the British Isles. I'm sure that the good folks at the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers (24C West Street, Epsom, Surrey, England KT17RJ) would be pleased to supply times and places for such events.

(Gerald Mee Past President of the IAC has sent some items of interest on page 8. Editor)

As a final "up beat" comment, we have been informed that Brian Black and Jerri Bezzo in Simcoe, Ontario and Harold Jonasson in Brandon, Manitoba are in the process of forming video groups in their respective areas. All the clubs around the circuit send their best wishes for your success. ■

LENS BEHIND THE CAMERA

by Leonard Cobb

Why do you have a video camera? Or perhaps, what is the real purpose of a video camera?

The two are not necessarily the same. Some have a video camera because it is sort of a status symbol. It enables them to show others how better off they are. Something like owning a Rolls instead of a Ford. Some like to play with new toys. They are like people who buy a certain car because it has special features which they appreciate and like to use. Perhaps they want a video camera so that they can take pictures. That is like having a motor car so that they can drive. But is that the real purpose of a motor car? I suggest that the real purpose of a motor car is to enable one to be someplace else. When many people didn't have a car & gasoline was 20 or 30 cents a GALLON perhaps people did like to "Go for a drive". But to day? At 60 cents a LITRE?

We all know that taking pictures is what a video camera does. But what about the pictures? If they are just pictures of stationary objects like vases of flowers. Use a still camera, it can do a much better job.

Rather than go on at length, I will return to my first few lines. I am suggesting that the real purpose of a video camera is to enable one to make one's audience feel as if they are someplace else. A successful video doesn't leave the audience sitting in the seat. It transports them into the action which they are seeing on the screen. It doesn't just show them the pyramids. It makes them feel as if they are at the pyramids. It doesn't let them just see the traffic, it makes them feel as if they are the traffic. This is real cinematography.

It doesn't need to involve dissolves, fades or other "tricks". Such things may remind the viewers that they are just watching a moving picture. This is my suggestion. Get back to basics. Get a good story. Tell it to the best of one's ability. Try to put the audience in the picture. The camera is just a tool. It is the type-writer in the hands of a mystery writer.

Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the skills of members and the way they use their equipment. Many of the videos shown are good but too many of them are just good technically. ■

Twenty-seventh Canadian International Annual Film/Video Festival 1996

A bonus you get when you go to Victoria via Vancouver is the wonderful trip on B.C.'s modern Ferry Service. The scenery is spectacular and on the passenger deck, you glide through it in virtual silence. We also found time to visit the "Deep Sea Exploration" exhibit in the Museum in Victoria; an ambient, audio, video experience; very educational with just a touch of "X Files" techniques in the presentation.

The Four Societies Convention went smoothly, with Margaret Chamberlain, Vice President SCCA Presiding. In the SAVAC Top Ten Competition both Jack Carey and Ben Andrews did well; Jack with "Serendipity" and Ben with "Hindu Bali" and "Hodgkins can be Beaten". As previously published, top SCCA winner was Eckhard Kries with "Dog Sledding".

The speakers set a high standard. Particularly entertaining was the presentation of Bryan Belfont who outlined with irony, wit and sheer good humour the many glitches, frustrations, and booby traps encountered with having a multiplicity of incompatible video systems; and so on to a "common" digital system where manufacturers are already diverging into a variety of features, each incompatible with the other. David Cooperstone and Gary Schumyla from Videonics and Panasonic each spoke candidly about the equipment they represent and outlined what we might expect in editing and digital equipment in the future. Harold Cosgrove, long time SAVAC member from Niagara Falls, Ontario spoke from experience on "Making Better Movies". Judy Somers, who had made "Victoria, more English than the English" dealt with how to make a low budget professional film, and Alan Burgess from

Auckland spoke eloquently of the work of amateur video clubs in his native New Zealand.

Both banquets, held on Friday and Saturday were well supported. Honours were given to recipients who could be there in person. Other honours will be presented at members club meetings. Ben Andrews was made an Honourary Fellow of the SCCA. All of the Societies managed to fit Annual General Meetings into the schedule. At the SCCA AGM the following Executive and Officers were elected: Jack Carey, Past President; Jon Soyka, President; Margaret Chamberlain, Vice President West; Fred Briggs, Vice President East; Adam Houston, Secretary; Carolyn Briggs, Treasurer. Officers: Ben Andrews, Competitions and Festival Director; Linda Smith, Editor, Panorama; Panorama Board, George McLachlan, Layout and Design; Jeanette Robertson and Wallace Robertson, Production and Mailing. Linda Smith Membership Chair; Fred Briggs, Publicity Officer and Librarian; Jan Bekooy, Honours Committee Chairman.

The drive to Campbell River was another pleasant experience. In the company of Ben Andrews we made a side trip to Chemainus where the town has dealt with the loss of industry by setting out to attract tourists. Murals depicting the history of the town have been painted on the sides of buildings with new paintings being added each year. Even the garbage bins have attractive murals on every side. It seems to work well. Ben may show you some video; mine is awful.

At Campbell River we were met by Kevin Harrison, Assistant Director of the CIAFF, and his students from Carihi Secondary School. The School has an exciting video programme. Each morning the students produce a fresh ten minute video news programme to be broadcast, on time, through the monitor networks in the school classrooms.

The Festival Showings took place in the Campbell River Museum. Various workshops were held in the museum and also at the local cable TV station. Topics included: lighting, animation, editing and planning a documentary. An innovative showing was set up at the Friends Blues and Jazz Cafe. Monitors were placed at the tables round the restaurant and the presentations controlled from a central VCR. This presentation of CIAFF videos was well received by the patrons. This could start a trend. Particularly enjoyable was the half hour

performance by Carihi School Jazz Combo before each evening showing. This is one of the top groups in the B.C. School System.

At the Awards Presentations on Saturday Evening, participants were welcomed by the Mayor of Campbell River and the Campbell River Film Commission. Ben Andrews and Kevin Harrison presided. Those taking part came from as far afield as New York, California, Toronto and Barrie as well as from British Columbia. Campbell River was well represented in the winning videos and a poignant moment was the presentation of Best Youth Entry Award to Rebecca Kaye and Lian Anson for their video "I will Remember You", a tribute to the strength of the human spirit when, faced with ISL (Lou Gehrig's Disease) A full list of winners can be obtained from CIAFF.

Both functions were successful, especially Campbell River where it was heart warming to see so many young people responsible for much of the running of the Festival. ■

A. Hagis

FILM FEST FANTASY

CIAFF Stats

In the Campbell River newspaper, the Mirror, October 9/96 it lists 34 films and videos presented at the Campbell River Museum, from Thursday, October 10th to Saturday, October 12th.

This marks the twenty-seventh Canadian International Annual Film/Video Festival since its inception.

There were 193 entries in the 1996 competition, which included 23 Best Award Categories, Special Commendation, as well as, One, Two, Three Star Commendations.

The entries were representative of the following countries, including, Canada, U.S.A. England, Scotland, United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Germany, New Zealand and Brazil.

The C.I.A.F.F. Committee was represented by the following:

- **Ben Andrews**, Director, C.I.A.F.F.
- **Jon Soyka**, President, SCCA
- **Kevin Harrison**, Asst. Director
- **Adam Houston**, Secretary

Linda Smith Editor

INSTANT VIDEO

by David McNeill

Today the whole world is in a hurry. It is impatient and wants everything instantly, right now! We are used to getting immediate response to all our whims and needs. We drive up to the bank teller's window so we don't have to park and get out of the car. We drive to the fast food window for the same reason. We used to drive to the movie. We want instant service at the market, department store, and shops. We use our credit card to make instant purchases, either in person or on the telephone and even the internet. We can get bank loans almost instantly. Some people even drive as if they were going to get to their destination instantly.

Years ago we were able to get instant photos on our new Polaroid cameras. Nowadays, almost all cameras, except the professional cameras, are completely automatic, giving us the opportunity to get instant exposures and instant focus without consulting tables or light meters to determine the best settings.

So it should be no surprise that video equipment is going in the same direction - instant video. Just point and shoot to get brilliant, beautiful results! What could be easier? Most of the new camcorders enable us to choose the best setup without any mental exertion. For sports action, choose short exposure time. Or choose zone focus to be sure the desired subject is in focus. Or choose backlighting mode to get proper exposure on a dark subject. Choose image stabilization to avoid having to use a tripod. Choose automatic white balance to get proper color rendition. If this were all that is required to shoot good video, we would all be experts. So what is the reason we don't always get the results we desire? The science of video can be duplicated by equipment, but the art of video can never replace man's creativity or initiative. That's why it will

"The science of video can be duplicated by equipment, but the art of video can never replace man's creativity or initiative".

always take lots of human effort, study, and experience to become an expert in any subject.

On to the subject of video editing, in the past few years, we have seen video editing equipment give us the capability to greatly improve and simplify the effort to create a quality video story from a lot of raw video. We can purchase editing VCR's that produce rock solid images during the pause mode, that have time code to define individual video frames to begin and end a scene. Some of them can be set up to automatically record a series of scenes. Nevertheless, we must choose the scenes, the starting and stopping points, and put a story together.

For a short production, it may even be easier to do all the editing manually rather than use an editor because the more bells and whistles the editor has, the greater the amount of practice and training is required to learn how to use the equipment. A typical editor may have 100 pages of information in the instruction manual, which may have to be referred to many times during self training. And don't expect to be able to read a manual and then set it aside without having to refer to it again. It

doesn't work. I can testify to that.

The point of this discussion is this: There is no magic formula to gain instant success in creating a video story without spending the time and effort involved to develop the required techniques and skills. Our classroom is the time we spend practising and learning from our mistakes. Be glad that we can see the results instantly and not have to wait for developing and/or printing that was required when movie film was the medium. There we have the definition of "instant video." It is not attained by the use of techniques or equipment but rather is inherent in the process of shooting video. We can see immediately what we have shot, but making it palatable for others to see depends on what we do with it.

Keep trying and don't give up. Video making is a great hobby! ■

BACK TO BASICS OR WHO NEEDS IT AND WHAT FOR?

by David Cooperstone

Digital 6mm video, DVD, non-linear, jpeg, mpeg, and peggy lee... What's all this stuff? Who needs it and what the heck is it all for. It is now time to put down our brochures, catalogues and even the new "toys" we have purchased and get back to basics. As I tell my students, I have seen people walk in with top of the line gear including cameras worth over \$3000.00and then this person walks in with a simple 8mm camcorder. Guess what the person with the simple 8mm camcorder has produced a far better video, than the person with the "High End" gear.

Why? Because the person with the simple camera knows what is important in producing a video...

"THE BASICS"

- A GOOD STORY
- TOLD IN A SIMPLE STRAIGHT FORWARD MANNER
- GOOD CAMERA TECHNIQUE WELL LIT WITH GOOD AUDIO

You may need a tripod, a light, and an external microphone... But all you need to understand is that good videos that entertain, inform and instruct our audiences are produced with well thought out, conceived concepts and ideas. It is work — equipment should not dictate the nature of the video or be considered a way to make a process easier.

Spend time developing your ideas, learning and practicing the basics of camera, lighting and techniques and less time wishing you could get that latest and greatest piece of video technology. ■

Capture your audience - then captivate them.

Reprinted from "Shots and Angles"
The Toronto Film & Video Club Newsletter

To Captivate an audience you first have to capture one... No matter how much money you pour into equipment purchases, and your latest production, captivating your audience is still a long way off. Take a look at the often lacking, but vital, presentation skills needed to capture and captivate your audience

Many fine movies are ruined for the sake of a little extra fine tuning: both in the final production stages, and during the actual presentation. Your audience deserves as much tender loving care as that given to your production.

The difference today is that your video productions are shown on the same device as the worlds finest professional work—the television in your family room. Your video production is directly challenged by, and judged against, the best that crosses the airwaves.

However, video has brought the amateur producer many benefits, as well as the above "challenges". For example: the ability to copy and share your movie with as many groups of viewers as you care to make video copies. All the more reason therefore to provide that extra "tender loving care"! Today, copies of my video productions are presented by unseen hands, and VCR's.

Here is my hit list of things which most of us fail to achieve: are you guilty too? They are in no specific order, they are all important!

Your video tape receives no special treatment. Just "shoved" into the jaws of the yawning VCR. Did you clearly

label your tape? Which audio tracks are to be played? Is this a S-VHS recording? A clear label is a bare necessity, for ease of viewing.

How was your TV or monitor set-up? The optimum television or monitor set-up is not always easily defined by eye. Video tapes viewed as ideal on any person's system may be very different from anothers. Provide the viewer or presenter with a reference picture, before the main video. The optimum image is a test chart or grey scale target.

A video user can create as much "blacked tape as needed: almost free! Put the lens cap on your camcorder, and press "Record" — ideally with no audio input. All of your video tapes should commence with a solid "black" section before "intro" titles or sequence. VCR mechanisms are often quite unstable at the beginning of the video tape. Ensure your recording has at least a 30 second "blacked" and mute section at the start, and also at the end. Label your tape with the exact time (into the tape from zero in seconds) for cue purposes.

If your video tape copies are audio recorded in "Hi Fi" VHS/S-VHS or Hi-8 PCM formats — then erase the linear/standard audio tracks, when making

You have the technology, and everyone has an interesting story to tell. Go for it and win!

copies, to prevent "phasing" effects during soundtrack replay by other VCR users. A clear label also helps! Tapes entered for competition are prone to be replayed incorrectly. Quite often, with so many tapes to view, the "Playback VCR" being used is left set to the "Mix track" audio input selection.

Broadcast television has almost no "dark Screen" time. Television audiences are not tolerant people! Once your opening sequence, or titles have hit the screen, avoid long "black" pauses without a good reason. Black screens punctuate your movie — use, if at all very carefully.

If you are the presenter, then you are the "cinema manager". Just because your video may be an impromptu show to friends or visitors — don't lose control! Televisions have good picture performance, in terms of 1947 radar enhanced technology, make sure that

the ambient room light is subdued, and that your key guest is not seeing a bright reflection of your best Crystal reflected in the TV screen. Yes, I have been invited to that experience quite often! (And the Crystal was the best image I saw.)

Check your sound levels, before your intended audience views your masterpiece. Easy, if you are the presenter! Many of us use video equipment with no manual control of the audio recording levels.

Each time a video tape is copied for example during editing, the AGC (Automatic Gain Control) adjusts and flattened out any intended changes in audio levels. This provides you with a reproduced sound level quite different from broadcast TV. If you are stuck with AGC, then check your sound levels, before presenting your masterpiece.

Look and learn from the Broadcast sector. Television producers know that to grab your attention (the average TV viewer samples only 23 seconds before channel switching) their programmes need to appear instantly special. Ask yourself "what does my video present in the first 30 seconds" — we are being generous here — to grab the viewers attention? Like it or not,

broadcast television sets a standard of high production values. You will be judged against these! TV commercials tell a story in less than 40 seconds — aim for the same ideal, but try 40 seconds per sequence — you have the technology, and everyone has an interesting story to tell. Go for it and win!

Create a viewing environment. Your movie is special. Make the viewing environment comfortable. Welcome your guests — or invite a viewing experience to a remote tape viewer with a decent tape package. Include production notes: other movie makers are interested in the equipment and more importantly, the techniques you have used, and the problems you may have encountered. Share them!

Don't settle for a passing glance; at your work — make it special — we are making movies with the technologies of our fathers' dreams. Capturing an audience involves two basic principles: packaging and presentation. Capture your audience — then captivate them.■

Gerald Mee writes from Britain



Gerald Mee FACI
Past President of the IAC and International Film Judge has sent a few items from England that may be of interest to SCCA members.
Linda Smith Editor

THE INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHY

The IAC, now known as the Film & Video Institute, was founded in 1932 by a band of enthusiastic amateur film makers. It is a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity "...to promote the advancement and improvement of general education in relation to all aspects of cinematography and associated audio and visual arts and the development of public appreciation of these arts."

The Institute is one of the oldest international amateur film and video organization in the world.

The library of award-winning amateur movies at IAC headquarters, in Epsom, is probably the largest and most comprehensive collection in existence.

The IAC is run by a Council of keen and active amateur film makers. Although it has a very small paid staff to conduct day to day business, much

of the Institute's work is done on a voluntary basis.

Among its activities are the annual Film & Video Festival and International Competition held at Easter-time and an Autumn Convention coupled with the Annual General Meeting.

Close contact with local activities is maintained through its organisation in Regions each of which has its own Regional Council with considerable autonomy. Regions too, hold their own film & video festivals.

A large library of mood music recordings is held by the Film Music Advisory Service (operated by Gerald Mee) which offers help, and assistance to members when compiling their sound tracks.

A special feature of great value is the IAC music copyright clearance service to all amateur film-makers and those making audio-visual presentations and, exclusive to IAC members, the right to copy commercial recordings.

The Institute has always been honoured in its patronage.

The list of past presidents and patrons is extensive. One of the current patrons is the Countess of Sutherland who is the niece of the Institute's first president, in the 1930's, his Grace, the late Duke of Sutherland

Until recent years, the International Festival was always held in London but in 1992, as an experiment, it was staged in Bradford, Yorkshire. This proved to be a popular move and it was decided to alternate the venues between the capital and the provinces. Festivals since then have attracted large numbers and the varying venues spread the load of organisation and give added interest to those attending.

1996, being the centenary of the cinema in Britain, gave much opportunity for the screening of vintage material and many public shows have been held up and down the country. The original 1885 Lumiere programme has been shown on numerous occasions together with some fine footage of film shot in Britain in the years from 1886. ■

TRANSFERRING FILM TO VIDEO

There are various "boxes" advertised to reflect a projected image via a front coated mirror (to avoid double reflections) on to a ground glass screen. Some of these may work well but most tend to produce a central "hot spot" and also give a very contrasty result.

The method that I prefer is the recording of an image projected on to a screen.

One of the problems of film transfers is an inherent difference between the recording capabilities of photographic film and magnetic tape. Modern film has an enormous contrast range which video tape does not and so if the original film image is very contrasty as for example a wedding subject where there are white dresses and black suits, it is quite difficult to record faithfully the subtle half-tones between these two extremes. Film can cope but video tape can't!

I have a series of artists' card mounts in varying shades of grey and I use these to experiment with when setting up my transfer. It is quite a good idea to overlap several grey cards and let the projected image fall on all of them so that one can judge the optimum "greyness" for this particular project. Using a monitor makes this quite simple.

I usually find that the more contrasty the subject matter, the darker grey the card needs to be. It is remarkable just how dark a grey card is sometimes acceptable.

If the film is fairly "flat" a nearly white screen is acceptable. The test is always to look for light coloured objects like flower petals and see if there is detail in the surface. Actually, when videoing (awful word!) light coloured flowers, I always endeavour to do this on what we used to call a "cloudy-bright" day. It is no good filming (yes, an easier term) in bright sunlight. All the detail will be burnt out. If of course your camcorder has the facility for manual exposure control this is fine. You can experiment by closing down the iris a little. This

often works wonders!

Another point worth considering, if you do any amount of film transfers, is to use some form of colour corrector. The video image often needs some little adjustment to make the colour acceptable. This applies particularly to wedding dresses!

Most transfers will be from 8mm film running at 16/18 fps. This is fine as most projectors have a three blade shutter so that at roughly this speed there should be no noticeable flicker on the TV screen. If the film is shot at 24 fps then with a three blade shutter you will have problems! At this speed the only non flicker option is to use two blades. Some people even go to the lengths of sawing one off, but that is a bit drastic unless you have a spare projector.

I am fortunate because when using 16mm my Siemens projector as well as having a control which permits variable speed, also has a shutter that can be altered from three to two blades when needed. Many 8mm projectors do have variable speed and this can be very useful in getting that flicker-free position.

Just one more point. When setting up, make sure that the projector and the camcorder are as near to each other as possible and at the same height. This will rule out "Keystone" errors and ensure that the image frame has nice right angles and verticals and is truly "square". It is always best to use a monitor to check the transfer and to "zoom" in just a little to ensure that the edge of the film frame does not show on the TV screen. Remember that not all TVs have the same coverage so make a small allowance but be careful not to cut off too much of the frame or any wide titles will suffer!

Aim to use a fairly small projected image size, say, 6 x 8 inches. This should give a sharper result than a larger picture. If you find it difficult to cover this size image with your camcorder, try using a 2 x close-up lens. This will allow you complete freedom of the zoom facility and make the framing of the picture area much easier. Incidentally, a close-up lens makes the filming of titles etc. from small cards so much easier than trying to work from the macro position of the focussing ring on the camera lens.

Do not forget, of course, to set the camcorder to "Monitor" (or for whatever your camera control is called). You are only using your camera to pass its signal to the VCR. It is the VCR that

will make the recording, NOT the camcorder.

So far we have only dealt with the picture. Unless the films are old they will probably have sound tracks and these too need to be transferred to the best of your ability.

It is no use, of course, trying to use a microphone by the projector speaker! Silly, isn't it, but people do try to do it this way!

If your projector has a "Line Out" socket, then there is no problem. If not, you can use the "Ext. Speaker" socket but this may need to be attenuated. In either case it is best to feed this projector output into an audio mixer and the output from the mixer into the VCR. In this way you will be able to hear the sound through the monitor TV speaker and regulate the volume (and quality). You can also add music this way.

Much of this is trial and error but experiments will enable you to set margins of acceptability.

I hope that the foregoing will be of use to you? The main things are:

1. Use the camera as a monitor and pass the signal to a VCR to record on its tape.
2. Monitor the signal on a TV to see what the results are as you copy.
3. Have a variable speed projector so that you can adjust the speed to get the best (NO FLICKER) speed. ■

PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF VIDEO

For countless years "letters to the editor" in the various cine magazines mentioned the poor presentation of films at public shows. Attempts were always being made to institute standard techniques in the lacing up of films by the use of "Academy" leaders or some uniform length of black leader following a coded "head".

The standard "Academy" leader which is used universally in the professional world of film presentation, with its countdown from 12 to 3 and then the standard black, has its counterpart, in various forms, in the video field.

It is sad to see so many video presentations having very ragged lead-ins to the opening shot. All sorts of odd effects appear on the screen, whether it be a cathode ray tube or a large projected image.

Unfortunately, it will probably take years to bring home this basic ideal. People will adopt all sorts of strange leaders with odd timings. The most favoured at the moment is the countdown clock. Whatever the system, the mechanics of it are not intended to be shown on the screen! The leader is purely for the projectionist's benefit, to enable him to find the correct spot on the tape before exposing the image to the audience.

Of course, with video, this is not quite so easy. With film the image can be seen and at the appropriate moment the lamp can be switched on so that the first image appearing on the screen is the first frame of the film.

The way round this is to use a switched monitor. I use a simple LCD, battery operated M329 Citizen. A friend in our club has built me a switching device that allows me to see the video image on the monitor and then at the appropriate moment I switch the image to the projector/TV screen and at the same time, I switch in the sound.

I find that by plugging in headphones to the VCR I can monitor the sound and so, if the sound starts before the picture, as it often does, I can fade it in (through a mixer) as soon as I hear it on the monitor 'phones.

When using my video projector I find it a big help to be able to control the quality of the picture by means other than the controls on the projector.

There are a number of video processors available. I use a Videotech VCC 3010 Colour Processor (or a HAMA 290S Genlock), allowing me to by-pass the video signal and process it on its way to the projector. I am able to adjust the colour (Red, Green, Blue), the contrast, and the brightness and, of course, I can fade the picture in and out.

This method of control, of course, allows me to work remotely and when using an LCD projector it obviates the use of its own controls which, in most cases, put up the annoying "bar" image on the screen (showing the amount of correction one is applying). By using the processor I can adjust the picture as the video progresses without the audience being aware of it! ■

Looking Down the Road

by Jeanette Robertson

In this era of increased apathy or indifference, pleasing the members and retaining their enthusiasm is more important than ever. The executive past, and present have constantly sought ways to improve the Society of Canadian Cine Amateurs in order to retain present members and attract new ones. We are confident the road ahead will lead to continued growth and success with the assistance of all members. In order to fully appreciate what our group represents the following questions should be considered.

a. What is the Society of Canadian Cine Amateurs, and,

b. What are the benefits of participating in the society? The Society of Canadian Cine Amateurs is: "a non profit, nationwide group of people whose common bond is their interest in film/movie or video) and their enjoyment in producing movies."

The benefits are:

1. The society is a base for the amateur movie/video maker to learn and improve their skills.
2. It extends a friendship network, not only within the home club, but in a cross Canada network of clubs. The Society has international networking with clubs and people in other countries.
4. Film festivals are held so that members can enjoy the labours of others and hopefully create enthusiasm to make/produce films.
5. Conventions provide a means of renewing old friendships and making new ones.
- 6 Membership involvement helps to strengthen the organization and fresh ideas provide rejuvenation.
7. Panorama magazine is an asset to our members and is proof of the spirit of filmmakers.

8. It provides tips and information how to solve problems and produce better films.

9. It provides periodic reviews on equipment, (given in layman's language).

10. It provides ideas for workshops. For the more adventurous, articles on how to construct "gizmos" and "gadgets" which will help make filming and editing easier. We realize that people have full schedules, however clubs and organizations do not run by themselves or with three or four members doing the work. In order to survive and grow they are dependent upon each member's regular contribution. We need new people, new ideas and a fresh outlook toward the future.

There is no substitute for your involvement, in your home club or the S.C.C.A. ■

HEADACHES

by John P. Weiksnar

Suddenly we are in a tantalizing position as amateur producers able to purchase digital camcorders - units whose electrical signal specifications are on a par with broadcast television instead of home video. The industry's promise of plugging the output of these devices into personal computers as opposed to regular VCR's reminds us that clear, non linear, film-like editing for the majority of us, is potentially only a few months down the road. All of this is great from a marketer's or even a consumer's point of view. After all, who wouldn't want superlative digital picture quality and the brand-new equipment built to deliver it? Well, uh, ask me after I meet the first member to have one of these digital camcorders serviced out of warranty. I got this idea after reading a trade journal article on servicing the broadcast-league big brothers of the consumer digital units. Imagine having to shell out \$3,900.00 for a video head re-

placement alone! True, the list price of a broadcast digital machine reaches \$570,000 (yes, four zeroes) versus \$4,000 for a consumer's, but the notion of any head replacement is always very spooky.

What's the solution? Knock on simulated woodgrain finish, my eventual digital tape unit will not fail, either out of warranty or before a succeeding technology makes it obsolete. It's funny I should mention this because said technology is not far behind - it is already out in broadcast form in the Avid/Ikegami "Camcutter" digital TAPELESS camcorder (it uses computer hard disks with a mean time between failure of over 100,000 hours). But even this technology will eventually fall to a solid-state memory camcorder. Then as far as head replacement costs go, we will all have chips on our shoulders. ■

Reprinted from CAMERAMA, the newsletter of the Buffalo Movie-Video Makers.

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**More reasons for you
be a member of the...**

SCCA

1. A subscription to the Society's Journal "PANORAMA"
2. Access to film and video competitions conducted by the Society.
3. News of foreign competitions that you might want to enter.
4. Contact with other members across Canada and in the U.S.A.
5. Access to the Society's library of Canadian and foreign amateur movies that have won awards.
6. Other video and film programs that the Society offers from time to time.
7. News of the Society's convention and any regional meetings, and the opportunity to participate.
8. Access to reliable technical and production information from Society's experienced members.
9. Opportunity to help shape the society's future programs and services for the greatest benefit of amateur film & video makers ■

MiniDV Technology for Today



by **Gary Shumyla**

*Western Regional Manager
Broadcast & Television Systems
Division*

It seems like every 10 years there is a revolutionary change in the consumer & industrial video market.

In 1975, the first home recording VCR (Betamax) was introduced. The 8mm camcorder came onto the scene in 1985. Last year (1995) the first affordable digital camcorder was introduced to the market, DV. Why a new digital format?

Back in 1993, discussions began on the design of a new consumer video format that would be able to handle the new HDTV systems thought to be very close to reality. All the major players in the video manufacturing industry were involved, including Matsushita (Panasonic), Sony, Hitachi, JVC, Mitsubishi, Sharp, Toshiba, Sanyo, Philips and Thompson. In 1994 the DV format was agreed upon. Since then, upwards of 55 electronic, tape and computer companies have endorsed the format.

The DV format would allow for both "Standard Definition" and "High Definition" television formats. It would have a standard compression

scheme, with a chip-set that would encapsulate the technology. Of course all cassettes would be interchangeable between manufactures since the mechanism and format would all be the same. The basic specifications of DV are as follows:

- Standard Cassette: 4 1/2Hours
- Camera Cassettes: 60 Minutes
- Video Recording Rate: 25 Mbps
- Tape Running Speed: 18.8 mm/s
- Resolution: 500 Lines

In order for the format to survive it is going to have to capture a large market share in a short period of time.

The present market share breakdown for consumer camcorders is

- S-VHS/VHS - 25.0%
- S-VHS-C/VHS-C - 35%
- Hi-8/8mm - 4

The consortium of companies mentioned above expect the market share to change in 1998 to:

- DV- 50%
- All Other Formats - 50%

At this point in time, there doesn't seem to be any interest in releasing rental movies on DV because of unrest in Hollywood regarding video piracy.

There are many questions regarding any new format when introduced, and DV is no exception. The most frequent question asked is "Why Digital"? To deal with this question it is best to review some of the differences between existing analogue technology and digital.

Remember, analogue video processes signals as an unlimited and varying group of values. Hence, reproduction is never perfect. Each copy is noticeably degraded from the original. However, in the digital realm, video is processed as a series of 1's & 0's, similar to a computer floppy disc. We know that when copying files from disc to disc, there is no degradation, so as long as the 1's and 0's can be read, the video copy is also perfectly copied.

Digital also brings other benefits such as improved resolution. Currently, the best resolution one can hope for from an S-VHS, or Hi-8 recorder is around 400 lines. The DV format has 500 lines, making it a sharper image. Even more importantly, the amount of signal on the tape when compared to noise is increased. This specification is known as a "Signal-to-Noise Ratio".

The comparisons are interesting:

- S-VHS/Hi-8 45-48dB
- MII/Betacam SP 51dB
- DV 54dB

As one can see, the signal to noise on DV is better than existing broadcast

formats.

One of the biggest problems with analogue formats is drop-outs. Because of being digital, DV does not have drop-outs, it has errors (basically meaning the same thing but reacting differently). Powerful error correction and concealment mean no noticeable drop-out type symptoms are seen.

The DV format uses component recording. This means that the luminance (B&W) information is recorded separately from the chroma (Color) information. Because these two signals are processed separately, they each retain the maximum resolution. This results in less visual noise in colors, no Y/C delay, no ringing, and better color reproduction. It is interesting to note that DV records 3 times the color information compared to S-VHS or Hi-8. One of the most important benefits of component recording is it's ability to increase quality in multi-generations. When this recording system is used in the digital realm, one can understand why making copies is no longer a problem.

It is interesting to compare the DV format with current consumer technologies. The following tables will feature some of these differences:

Drum Size

- S-VHS 62.0mm
- Hi-8 40.0mm
- DV 21.7mm

Track Width

- S-VHS 58 microns
- Hi-8 3.8 microns
- DV 10 microns

Drum Rotating Speed

- S-VHS 1,800 rpm
- Hi-8 1,800 rpm
- DV 9,000 rpm

Number of Heads

- S-VHS 2 per speed
- Hi-8 2 per speed DV 2

It is said that the only thing that is consistent is change. When it comes to video, this is a very true statement. As the demand for higher quality and lower costs continue, manufactures will develop technologies to meet these demands. What will we see next? It is a lot like looking for a car. We know that next year will bring improvements, but if we keep waiting for next year, we will be forever riding the bus. Choose what works the best for you with current technology, with an eye to future development. As far as what's coming, one can only wait and see. ■

NEW DIGITAL HIGH DEFINITION TV STANDARDS APPROVED

by Fred Briggs

...researched on the Internet.

On Christmas Eve, 1996, as a Yuletide plum to American consumers (and the television industry), the U.S. Federal Communication Commission (FCC), after nine years of study of Advanced Television (ATV), finally approved standards that will usher in the long awaited digital television (DTV) era. (Please see FCC News Release.)

By endorsing most but pointedly not all of the recommendations of the Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC), the FCC has approved a November 25 compromise reached by the Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service (ATACS) between the Digital HDTV Grand Alliance and Americans for Better Digital TV and the Broadcasting, Cable, Telephone, Computer, Entertainment, and Consumer Electronic industries, about the future of DTV in America, and, we expect, by extension, in Canada.

The Broadcasters, though worried about costs and channel assignments, are delighted with the green light. Domestic television manufacturers, with the wolf at the door (read Zenith), are ecstatic. And we, reportedly, should be happy at least and at last, because the new, flexible (some would say compliant) FCC standards, while defining the broadcast signals, leave the method of handling those signals in the receiver, and even the size and shape of the picture, to the manufacturers and to the market place.

Hollywood (The Motion Picture Association of America) claims a victory, but the American Society of Cinematographers and the Directors Guild of America must be disappointed that their preferred 2:1 (18:9) wide-screen format wasn't adopted, and even the 16:9 format is only a permitted option. (cf. 2.35:1 Cinemascope, 2.2:1 Panavision 1.75:1 Vista Vision)

The Computer industry snatched a victory from the jaws of defeat in a last-

ditch battle to make the new standard more computer friendly with square pixels and progressive (non-interlaced) scanning, but at the price of a signed agreement prohibiting it from taking positions which differ from the broadcasters' on broadcasting issues (like channel bandwidth allocations, digital spectrum auctions, etc.). (On January 10 Microsoft announced at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronic Show that it would begin publishing standards for their new architecture in February so electronics manufacturers and entertainment producers could develop products in time for Christmas, and that more than fifty companies, including NBC, Spelling Entertainment, Sony Electronics and Compaq Computer, planned to support the standards.)

The new transmission standard (which covers cable and direct-satellite as well as broadcasting) includes MPEG-2 Compression with "B frames", internet-style packet switching of data allowing the transmission of almost any combination of video, audio and data packets, and CD quality digital surround sound, using 5.1-channel Dolby AC-3 audio technology.

"Include me out" elements include mandated lines of vertical resolution, picture aspect ratio (screen shape) and scan format and mode (television's interlaced vs. The PC computer's non-interlaced). Manufacturers will choose the aspect ratio they feel will sell, and it will most likely be 16:9. Eighteen different scan formats are approved for use, but most likely the broadcasters will adopt the computer industry's more modern progressive scan. Receivers (HDTV television sets, PC-TV monitors, and outboard stand-alone DTV receivers) will have to be able to adapt to either interlaced or non-interlaced scanning at the number of scan lines required by the program being received.

The manufacturers are now free to design and build the DTV receivers that can receive the digital signals. Consumer purchases will dictate future development, so don't rush out and buy the first system offered! The first sets, in late 1998, are likely to be front and rear-screen projection units for home theatres which will benefit most dramatically from the increased resolution. The wide-screen 16:9 TV sets are expected to cost "early adopters" at least \$1,000 to \$1,500 (US) more than current television sets. The cost should fall rather quickly, as there is no inherent reason why digital receivers should cost much more than analogue. The boom in demand isn't

expected until 2003, when eighty percent of programming broadcast will be transmitted digitally.

Direct-view sets will probably come along a little later, but first, tube makers must come up with designs that fall within the FCC standards. Some manufacturers complain that there are no suitable aperture masks available. (The mask directs electronic beams from the back of television and computer monitor picture tubes to the phosphors that produce the colours.) But BMC, the only U.S. manufacturer of the masks, is ready now to produce them as soon as the set and picture tube engineers present their designs. BMC is spending \$85 million to expand production and the new lines should be easily converted for HDTV screens. After that investment, marginal production costs shouldn't be much higher than at present, but a 31 inch HDTV picture tube will still cost about three times the price of a 31 inch NTSC tube. The big three networks have already promised to begin digital broadcasting in 1998, and will be providing their affiliate broadcasters with digital signals, but the broadcasters are going to have to spend about \$6 billion to put those signals on the airwaves.

PBS is eager to lead the way, and some stations are already producing HDTV programming.

Capital Cities/ABC ordered DTV transmitter equipment for its ten owned stations (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, Durham NC, Fresno CA, Toledo OH, and Flint MI) from Harris Corporation's Broadcast Division last June. While none have yet been delivered, Harris earlier delivered DTV transmitters to several stations with experimental DTV licenses. Other broadcasters, including Cox, Tribune, and a few PBS stations, and at least one CBS affiliate (WCBS in New York) have also ordered transmitters from Harris.

NBC has announced that it will buy digital transmitters and engineering services from Comark Communications Inc. for eleven stations. Comark provided transmitters for the first high-definition TV simulcast at NBC's Washington affiliate and for the HDTV Grand Alliance's field test from 1992 to 1995. Comark is also negotiating with another, unnamed, network.

CBS later announced that WCBS-HD will start experimental broadcasts of HDTV from the Empire State Building this spring, and begin commercial broadcasting in 1998. The network will

use a 16:9 format with a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels, and will start with interlaced scan lines. (That is the problem with voluntary standards: there is too much freedom!)

The cost of the new transmitters is in the \$500,000 region, each, and the other equipment required is expected to raise the cost to a million dollars for each station.

But first the FCC must divide up the airwaves and issue DTV broadcasting licenses; a move that's predicted for this year. While the analogue-to-digital technological change is revolutionary, we must expect its adoption by the consumer to be gradual. At least during the transition period (ten, possibly fifteen years), while the 220 million American television sets are being slowly replaced, broadcasters will simulcast programs on two channels, one analogue and one digital, as allowed by the new technology and the new FCC standards. (Analogue transmission is expected to cease in 2013.) And by enabling broadcasters to squeeze more video and data into their existing channel space, DTV will permit them to provide new services to the consumer (free or for a fee) like specialty channels (News, Sports, etc.), stock market quotes, or data downloads to home computers. The new systems will move 19,000,000 bits of information per second into a television or computer. (The typical computer modem today moves only 28,800 bits per second.)

Originally, the reason for approving digital broadcasting was to let over-the-air broadcasters compete with cable systems which will soon be providing HDTV. Now some commercial broadcasters are thinking of using the new technology and the ATV transition channels to send as many as six Standard-quality television signals instead of HDTV. Whether the stations will be able to use the bandwidth to increase the number of standard channels without providing HDTV isn't clear from the FCC Press Release.

More important to video makers, though, HDTV screens will display as much as ten times the information as today's screens, producing a far clearer, richer picture and CD-quality audio on at least some broadcast television (as well as from satellites and digital video discs) and most importantly, the opportunity to see our own digital video productions on DTV sets! We can also expect that the new DTV market will stimulate the development of the digital video market, providing digital camcorders, VCR's, (or

digital video disc recorders) and associated equipment with greater variety and at lower costs than exist today. Lower, that is, than for today's digital video, but probably never as economical as some current consumer analogue equipment.

There are still many outstanding issues. Many in the U.S. Congress are questioning whether broadcasters should be allotted space on the public airwaves without paying billions of dollars for it like the operators of cellular telephone companies must. Public Television stations, whose budgets have been cut repeatedly, want to know how they will pay for the digital transmitters they will need to run beside the analogue transmitters for some years. Will Congress let PBS use some of the extra broadcast bandwidth to generate revenue? Or will they benefit from a trust fund endowed with revenue from leasing out or auctioning off part of the surplus spectrum? These are political decisions to be made by Americans, and are best left to them. (I don't qualify to comment on them.)

The Canadian Radio-Television/Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Canadian broadcasters don't appear to be as far along in their plans, but this will no doubt accelerate now that the FCC has set the U.S. standard. Advanced Broadcasting Systems of Canada and the CBC are members of ATSC, and the Advanced Television Evaluation Laboratory of the Canadian Communications Research Centre has conducted subject assessment tests of DTV. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters has a Task Force on Implementation of Digital Television which plans to facilitate the introduction of digital HDTV in Canada in 1998 and disband within about three years.

IMAX RULES! DEFINITIONS and ACRONYMS

ACATS:

The FCC Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service, a 25-member blue-ribbon panel comprised of senior executives from the broadcast, cable, telephone, consumer electronics, computer and entertainment industries

Americans for Better Digital TV:

The Americans for Better Digital TV coalition includes: the Directors Guild of America; the Computer Industry Coalition on Advanced Television Service; the Media Access Project; the International Photographers Guild, Local 600, AFL-CIO; the American Society of Cinematographers; Digital Theater Systems, LP; the

Todd-AO Corporation; Panavision International, LP; the American Home-owners Foundation; the Computing Technology Industry Association; the Business Software Alliance; a number of computer hardware and software companies including Compaq Computer Corporation, Apple Computer, Inc., Intel Corporation, and Microsoft Corporation, and many high profile individuals including Bill Gates, Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood, Arthur Hiller, Martin Scorsese, Robert Redford, Dustin Hoffman, and Robert Zemeckis.

ATSC:

The Advanced Television Systems Committee, composed of approximately sixty member corporations, associations and educational institutions throughout North and South America, is a private sector organization developing voluntary standards for the entire spectrum of advanced television systems, including high-definition television. The membership includes broadcasters, equipment manufacturers, cable operators, and computer, motion picture, and telephone companies.

ATV

FCC Definition: "Advanced Television refers to any television technology that provides improved audio and video quality or enhances the current NTSC television system." As first used, ATV meant an HDTV program compressed to fit the size of a current NTSC broadcast channel. Now, the definition is being broadened to include the concept of multiple video programs and other data simultaneously carried within one channel.

Broadcaster's Caucus:

This is a group made up of ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, PBS, NAB and MSTV with the goal to protect the broadcaster's interest as rule making is developed for ATV. It has been working to develop a way to assign channels for ATV that will treat existing broadcasters fairly and prevent interference to NTSC stations during the transition period to ATV.

Canadian Association of Broadcasters Task Force on Implementation of Digital Television:

Members include the Presidents/Vice-Presidents/CEO's of The Association of Tele-Education in Canada, CANCOM, Canadian Film and Television Production Association, CBC, CTV, Global Television, Rogers Cable Systems, Stentor Telecom, Télé-Métropole,

Videotron Inc., TVNC, and representatives of the Canadian Specialty and Pay Services, the Electronic Industry, the CRTC, and Canadian Heritage and Industry Canada Government Ministries.

CICATS:

The Computer Industry Coalition for Advanced Television Service, consisting of Apple, Compaq, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Novell, Microsoft, Silicon Graphics, Tandem Computers, and others.

Digital HDTV Grand Alliance:

The U.S. grouping, formed in May 1993, to produce 'the best of the best' initially proposed, (and competing) HDTV systems. The participants are: General Instrument Corporation, Lucent Technologies (originally AT&T), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Philips Consumer Electronics, David Sarnoff Research Center, Thomson Consumer Electronics and Zenith Electronics Corporation.

HDTV

FCC Definition: "High Definition Television offers approximately twice the vertical and horizontal resolution of NTSC, which is a picture quality approaching 35 mm film and has a sound quality approaching that of a compact disc."

International Telecommunication Union Definition:

"A system designed to allow viewing at about three times the picture height, such that the system is virtually, or nearly, transparent to the quality of portrayal that would have been perceived in the original scene or performance by a discerning viewer with normal visual acuity. Such factors include improved motion portrayal and improved perception of depth."

SDTV:

"Standard definition television (SDTV) is a digital television system in which picture quality is approximately equivalent to the current NTSC television system." The ATV standard will probably allow multiple SDTV programs. The quality will be better than NTSC in the respect that there will be fewer NTSC artifacts such as "chroma crawl" and noise. Depending on the number of SDTV programs and the degree of action in the picture, there may be visible motion artifacts that NTSC doesn't have.

Report No. DC-96-117ACTION IN DOCKET CASE December 26, 1996 FCC ADOPTS DTV STANDARD

The Federal Communications Commission today adopted a standard for digital television (DTV). The standard is a modification of the Advanced Television System Committee's (ATSC) DTV Standard first proposed for adoption earlier this year. The standard adopted today is consistent with a consensus agreement voluntarily developed by a broad cross-section of parties, including the broadcasting, equipment manufacturing and computer industries. The standard allows transmission of one or two High Definition Television programs; four, five or more Standard Definition Television programs at a visual quality better than the current analog signal; many CD-quality audio signals; and the delivery of large amounts of data. The standard does not include requirements with respect to scanning formats, aspect ratios and lines of resolution.

The Commission concluded that adopting the DTV Standard will serve the public interest and bring benefits to American consumers. This decision was based on a careful weighing and balancing of previously articulated goals and objectives outlined in this proceeding which, when taken together, justify the Commission's action today. These are: 1) to ensure that all affected parties have sufficient confidence and certainty in order to promote the smooth introduction of a free and universally available digital broadcast television service; 2) to increase the availability of new products and services to consumers through the introduction of digital broadcasting; 3) to ensure that our rules encourage technological innovation and competition; and 4) to minimize regulation and assure that any regulations we do adopt remain in effect no longer than necessary.

Today's Order is the first in a series which will complete the Commission's efforts to usher in the next era of broadcast services. Future actions will decide various policy issues created by the introduction of digital broadcast service and determine allotment and assignment of channels to eligible parties. ■



CHRIS NEEDHAM

After a lifelong Passion with a camera, any kind of camera, Chris Needham died on Monday, 7 October 1996. For many years he was a very active member of the Ottawa Film Club. He also won a lot of the hardware available in the SCCA competitions. Locally, he made some big waves with his movies about knights in outer space. He had his basement converted into a dungeon set where we shot "outer-space" movies with live actors.

He often amazed me how he always was able to attract a good number of people to work with him. Sometimes in the most impossible places. I remember a Saturday when a day in the bush, full of mosquitos, shooting an innocent young girl fleeing from a fierce looking warrior in outer space garb. Not for him a Garden and Home drama, so often seen in the local club.

About five or six years ago he attracted the attention of the local CJOH TV Station. They commissioned Chris to develop his "Just Jeffrey" as a Puppet play that required elaborate devices to be manipulated from beneath a large table-mounted castle set.

Just Jeffrey won Best Children Program in the 1993 local ACTRA awards. But the show was not picked up as a series as Chris had hoped. But for Chris dreams were important. His Jeffrey "is a little boy who wants to be a knight. Everybody I know wants to be something else. I am a Federal employee who wants to be a Producer."

We, who had worked with him, met again in the funeral parlour. The chap who used to portray an old man, wearing a kind of goatskin over his slender frame while sitting in front of a make-believe fire in Chris' basement and the very gifted make-up man, who painted signs for a living, but could make monsters out of an ordinary man. We talked about the old days and laughed a bit about the crazy ideas we tried to put on tape. We also knew it never would have happened without Chris. He was only forty years old. ■

Jan Bekooy

It can't be cabin fever because I have been out most days. I actually do like shooting in the cold and the snow. I know that people looked at me weird (they do that anyway) lugging the camera and tripod down to the end of the pier. Got some great shots of the ice flows and breakers, but no real need for them at the moment. Of course come July, somebody is going to call up and say, Jon... you're the weirdo around here, have you got any footage of winter storms with lots of ice and big waves breaking onto the beach. Now, do I sell it to them or just give it away.
What to do?

Well, since I can't think of anything to write about, I guess that I will go and put a blank tape in one machine and one of my many tapes of raw footage in the other machine. Maybe, as I watch some scenes pass by, I will get an idea for what to do. I guess it really is that simple. Open your eyes and look around. Say, to heck with all the options and just start doing something... anything. Usually I don't end up continuing what I started out with, but rather the creative juices get going and before you can say "Ralph's your cousin" other ideas start to come flooding in, the excitement level rises and if you go with it... you end up at the next club meeting saying "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is my latest production, I hope you like it."

Now, let me think... how about a story of this nerd who goes down to the water to film some sailing boats, but he finds the water is frozen and he begins to feel stupid standing on the dock with his camera and tripod until he realises that the others are laughing at him, not because he is a videographer, but because he is wearing shorts, sandals and a T-shirt, then we will have him..... **Just "DO IT"**.

(Hmmm, wonder if I could sell that to some company to use as an advertising line.)

Jon Soyka *President*

1997 SCCA CONVENTION Kitchener, Ontario August 7th & 8th by Fred Briggs

The 1997 SCCA Convention will be held in Kitchener, Ontario, on Thursday and Friday, August 7th and 8th, with optional tours planned for Wednesday and Saturday, August 6th and 9th.

Kitchener (pop. 140,000) and its fraternal twin, Waterloo (pop. 71,000), are contiguous cities lying on the west bank of the Grand River (a Canadian Heritage River), ringed by picturesque towns with a foot in the past. High-tech and academic Kitchener-Waterloo, though surrounded by charming countryside, is in the centre of an industrial belt whose economy is based on rubber, textiles, leather and furniture, and while lacking, as yet, an SCCA affiliated video club, it's certainly ready for one. In addition to its own urban population, a KW video club could initially draw on Guelph (pop. 88,000) and Cambridge (pop. 93,000), at least until those towns were able to establish clubs of their own! Guelph, a pleasant and gracious city built on several hills on the Speed River, is only twenty minutes to the east. To the south, Cambridge, an amalgamation of Galt, Preston, and Hespler, at the junction of the Grand and the Speed, is even closer. By holding a convention in Kitchener-Waterloo, we're hoping to plant the seeds of a new club there and attract new SCCA members.

For the majority of our present members, KW is ideally located for a convention, situated within an hour of Brantford, Hamilton, London, Simcoe, and Toronto (and Pearson International Airport). It's only a little farther from St. Catharines/Welland/Niagara and Buffalo, and less than 500 kilometres from Ottawa. In fact, this convention is within a one-day drive for 120 million people in Canada and the Northern United States! But Kitchener has more than logistics to recommend it: it rests in the middle of an area known as Festival Country, replete with photogenic towns and villages and a variety of colourful ethnic cultures which will excite movie makers.

Kitchener was founded as Sand Hills in 1799 by groups of Mennonites, a tightly knit Protestant sect who came to Ontario from the States where their pacifist beliefs had incurred the wrath of their neighbours during the Revolution. Soon after, German farmers began to arrive in the area, and the new settlers had Sand Hills renamed Berlin in 1826. During World War I it was thought prudent to change the name again, to prove their patriotism, and they chose Kitchener after the British field marshal. Today, around sixty percent of Kitchener's inhabitants are descendants of German immigrants, a heritage celebrated every year during Kitchener-Waterloo's Oktoberfest (second only to that of Munich), nine days of alcoholic rowdyism when even the most reserved men can be seen wandering the streets in lederhosen. Of course, we won't be there in October, as we don't

want to compete with an expected autumn SAVAC convention in San Diego (and when the KW hotels are packed anyway), but we are planning to inject the exuberant Oktoberfest "Gemuetlichkeit" spirit and camaraderie into the convention.

We also plan to show you equipment and techniques you'll never see at your club meetings, provide more useful information than at many conventions, and stress affordable solutions to your problems. There'll be a wide diversity of subjects covered, and variety in their presentation, including hands-on workshops. And outside of the in-hotel program, there'll be ample opportunity to practice your hobby with optional tours in the days before and after the core convention meetings and events.

There'll also be alternative spousal programs during the convention for those disinterested in the lectures, seminars, and workshops. We're looking at two spousal tours. The Thursday tour will be described below. Friday is less certain, but may include some of the Kitchener landmarks: Homer Watson House and Gallery, Joseph Schneider Haus, Seagram Museum, and Woodside National Historic Site, the boyhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, tenth Prime Minister of Canada.

On Wednesday, August 6th, we plan to visit Stratford (pop. 27,000), on the Avon River, less than thirty minutes to the west of Kitchener. Of course, we'll see the grandiose city hall and some of the enchanting shops and boutiques, but more importantly, the town is the home of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival (North America's largest repertory theatre), which started in 1953 and is now one of the most prestigious theatrical occasions in North America, attracting no fewer than half a million visitors from May to October. We'll include and explore the Costume Warehouse in our tour, and those who wish can attend a matinee performance. Although the core performances are still Shakespearean, the festival has broadened its appeal by including other drama and musicals. Twelve productions will be presented this season, divided between the Festival Theatre with its dynamic thrust stage, the restored Avon Theatre with its proscenium stage, and the exaggerated thrust stage of the Tom Patterson Theatre. While the plays for 1997 and the theatres in which they'll play have been announced, scheduling details haven't. We won't know which play will appear in each theatre at Wednesday, August 6th matinees, until February 22nd.

Shakespeare isn't everyone's cup of tea, so we're also planning a less expensive alternate optional tour for Wednesday to African Lion Safari, where 1,500 exotic birds and animals (132 different species) roam freely on large reserves (five to fifty acres) and people are "caged" in cars and buses. Attractions include the game reserves, a scenic railway, a cruise, daily animal and bird shows, and a family of rare white tigers. There are more

than 50 lions on three reserves, and the park has been successful in breeding more than 30 endangered species and 20 threatened species. This might be a better bet than Stratford for those who are really itching to use their camcorders!

The convention will be held right downtown in the Four Points Sheraton Hotel (formerly the Valhalla Inn) with a wide choice of restaurants within easy walking distance. (You'll have plenty of opportunity to discover them as the only meal included in the convention fee will be the Annual Banquet!) Kitchener's centre is marked by the Farmers' Market, open Wednesdays and Saturdays. (The hotel is connected by an overpass to the Market Square, Mall and Eaton's department store.) The Mennonite traders you'll see in the market are unmistakable. Unlike their Manitoba cousins, the men wear traditional black suits and broad-brimmed hats, and the women wear ankle-length black dresses and matching bonnets. Members of the traditional wing of the Mennonite movement, sometimes called Ammanites, own property communally and shun all modern machinery, traveling to the market and around the back lanes on spindly horse-drawn buggies. But except for Market Day, the Mennonites have drifted out of Kitchener itself, and are concentrated in St. Jacobs and Elmira, villages north of Waterloo.

St. Jacobs (pop. 1,500), a few minutes out of Waterloo, was originally called Jakobstettel, or "little town of many Jacobs", in 1875. The streets are lined with more than eighty shops of local artisans and retailers, including The Meetingplace (Mennonite interpretation centre), the Maple Syrup Museum, and the Quilt Shop, and black horse-drawn buggies are a regular sight along the streets and nearby roads. Two kilometres south of town (accessible from St. Jacobs by horse drawn trolley) is the huge indoor/outdoor Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday Farmers' Market, and a modern Factory Outlet Mall. The former abounds with Mennonites and their horses and buggies are all neatly lined up, providing ample footage for your video.

We're planning a leisurely spousal tour of St. Jacobs and the markets for Thursday, and a shorter video opportunity at both locales will be included in the Saturday excursion.

The main destination on Saturday is only thirty kilometres north of Kitchener. Fergus (pop. 6,800), originally called Little Falls, was founded by Adam Fergusson and James Webster in 1833. Scottish limestone architecture is prevalent in over 200 19th-century buildings in this picturesque little Grand River town. But we'll be visiting for the Fergus Scottish Festival and Bell's Highland Games, one of the largest Highland Games in North America. August 9th is the day for the International and North American Scottish Heavy Events Championships, North American Tug-of-War Championships, Highland Dance Competitions, Band Competitions, Avenue of the Clans, Canadian Gold Medal for Piping, Individual Pipes and Drums Competitions, Drum Major Competition, Scottish Marketplace, Scottish Foods, Crafts Vendors, Highland Cattle Display, and Scottish Celtic band in the Festival Beer Tent! You might

want to shoot a bit of tape here too!

Just five minute west of Fergus is a pretty little village of old stone houses and mills pushed up against the craggy banks of the Grand River on the twenty-metre deep Elora Gorge. Elora was founded in the 1830s by settlers who harnessed its waterfall to run their mills. Nearly all of their limestone cottages have survived, many as the little shoppes and restaurants that delight the ladies, but visitors also come here to walk along the Elora Gorge Conservation Area riverside, and gaze at the falls right in town. We're planning supper in Elora, and the daring can venture into the Gorge with their camcorders while the less adventurous can explore the charming village shops.

Along the route we'll stop at West Montrose

Kissing Bridge (built by the Baehr Brothers in 1881), the only surviving example of eight historic covered bridges built in Ontario. If we're lucky, you might get a shot of a Mennonite horsedrawn buggy entering or exiting the bridge. If not, just shoot the bridge. We're sure to find buggies somewhere along the route, and we'll stop for videography.

All you can do at this point is mark the dates on your calendar and arrange your vacation for the first week of August. More information about speakers, fees, hotel reservations, and the costs of the optional tours will be announced in the next issue.

We'll see you in Kitchener! ■

VIDEO WEB SITES ON THE INTERNET

The sites listed may be of interest to PANORAMA subscribers. All of these are "Hot Links" on the Video Instructions Web Page located at <<http://mindlink.bc.ca/belfont>>

Please e-mail me if you have any additional sites that are relevant. <belfont@mindlink.bc.ca>

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