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# PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR



1998 SCCA  
ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING  
& EASTERN  
REGIONAL MEETING  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 24th  
& SUNDAY OCTOBER 25th

Details on page 6

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# CIAFF FESTIVAL

CAMPBELL RIVER, BC  
November 26th, 27th, & 28th  
1998

*for details contact:*  
**BEN ANDREWS 705-737-2729**

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Cover Photo  
by Joseph Bochsler

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From the Editor:  
*Please note that February 15th 1999  
is the deadline for those submitting  
articles to be printed in the next  
issue of PANORAMA  
(Winter issue).*

*Linda Smith*

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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.*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**"OH CANADA" Good-bye.**

*Just wanted to get that out of the way  
in case I forgot to say it at the end of this  
message.*

In this issue I wanted to cover various topics, the concepts, of which you will have to read all the way through in order to find out. Each of these thoughts came about as a result of my trip this summer across this fair land of ours... "CANADA".

I drove across Canada (13,864 Km) on a working holiday. The first working part involved twenty interviews with former and current Canadian Football League players for five videos I was contracted to provide for the Canadian Football Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. This involved stops in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary. The second working part was to record a seminar presentation in Calgary for an insurance client in Toronto, from which will be produced a training video for claims adjusters.

The balance of the excursion was designed to take me to the Utah desert to film Land-Yachts near Black Rock, from which was to hopefully come, part of a television series. A couple of phone calls from Calgary to my American contacts resulted in my learning that the temperature was 107 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade, with no wind in the state. Having been told that if I showed up I would be the only person out on the dried up lakebed, every one else being in their homes or offices enjoying the refreshing air-conditioning, I decided to pass on the idea and head for the wonderful cool west coast of Canada. The Canadian dollar's attempt to see how low it could limbo dance under the American dollar also had

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# CLUB NEWS

by Wallace Robertson  
ASCCA

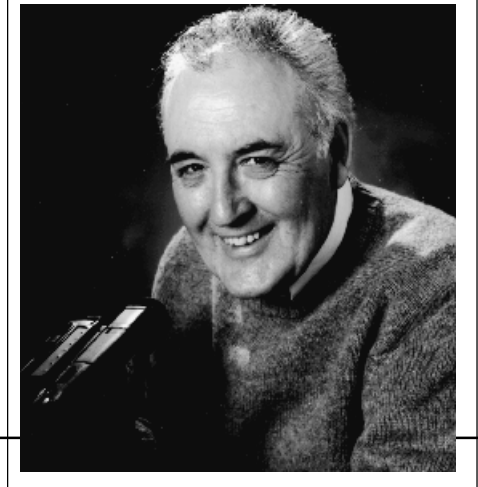


Photo by Ross

**Y**ou probably remember the old joke about the uncle who asked his nephew what his favourite subject was in school and the kid replied, "Recess!". Well, the truth be known, one of my favourite times of the day, while I was working, was coffee breaks. Although it was supposed to be a time for us to allow our minds to rest, on many occasions the coffee break was the one time when we were able to make contact with people that were difficult to catch in their office or by phone. That was the time we were able to solve problems and discuss important issues that were difficult to schedule during the normal work day. So, the coffee break was certainly not a waste of time. Coffee breaks are essential, providing us with that human contact which we all require in order to function capably, not only at work, but also in society. The coffee break is important for this human contact, the sharing of ideas, the relating of experiences and the developing of friendships. And even though those working days are behind many of us, we now find that the coffee breaks are just as important as they ever were. I notice on my morning walks around the neighbourhood and meanderings through the mall that the coffee break has not disappeared. We still find men and women grouped around tables at their favourite Tim Horton's or some other cafe discussing the topic of the day. Even the ever popular "Royal Canadian Air Farce" devotes a segment of their show to the coffee klatch. But the coffee break is not only reserved for the office or mall we even find it at our own meetings. Some of the most important information about film making is not produced by group discussion or seminars but from information breaks when we have that one on-one discussion with other club members. So, beware, the best programme of the evening, may be taking place during the break! What can I say,

coffee time is a great time! But, saying that, I have left one important quantity out of the equation and that is the person in each of our groups who sets up for our coffee breaks. The unsung heroes of our clubs. Those people who quietly and efficiently go about their business, missing much of our evening by perking the coffee and setting out the dainties for our enjoyment. Reading through the many newsletters I find that one of the hardest positions to fill in our groups is that of Coffee or Refreshment Convener. So please, let me be the first to raise my cup (of coffee) in a toast to these wonderful people for their dedication and hard work. Thanks to all of you !!

Out on the west coast the Victoria Video Club is well into the season. Their most recent meeting was to feature Stanley Fox a film and TV veteran who has not only produced, but has also had 30 years experience as a cameraman, editor and teacher. He is presently President of the West Coast Media Society. Besides giving a talk on film making, he was also prepared to critique members' films at the meeting and to provide constructive criticism on how to best improve them.

In keeping with our recognition of coffee co-ordinators, our first salute goes out to Phyllis and Neil Goodhand who are in charge of refreshments for the Victoria group.

Meanwhile, in Vancouver, we note that Art Lade is responsible for coffee and goodies. Once again, the tip of our collective hats to Art for his good work. While going through the recent copy of Vancouver's Reel Talk we notice that the inimitable Don Svob took a swing through the west and brought along his "tinkle" trunk full of gismos and gadgets to amaze and delight his west coast hosts. I'm sure they enjoyed it as much as I did when I attended the convention in Kitchener last year. In the same issue the group announced the winners of

their Annual Video Competition. The three judges: Ron Tucker, Frank Campbell and Mike Lee were put to the task and came up with three winners. First Place (\$50) was won by Ron Chappell with his film "Recycle", Second Place (\$30) "Five Little Pumpkins", by Barry Moffatt, and going home with his pockets \$20 heavier was Dave Wilkes for his video, "Fun at the Fair".

The Winnipeg Moviemakers experimented with summer meetings this year. This comprised a couple of meetings devoted to compiling some material for a CANUSA tape and an excellent evening which highlighted a great demonstration and discussion by the much travelled, Jon Soyka, President of the SCCA who happened to be in town, videographing Hall of Fame footage for the Canadian Football League. Members were extremely impressed, not only with Jon's presentation of personal video material but also with his complete and comprehensive knowledge of his subject. Thelma Ross and Jeanette Robertson got so engrossed in the presentation they almost forgot to make coffee. Oh! by the way ladies, on behalf of all the members of the club, thank you for your wonderful efforts.

I would like to pass out kudos also to the refreshment co ordinator with the London Videography Club but I see, from their latest newsletter, that they are presently looking for a new coffee convener. They are also looking for a number of people to fill some of the other positions in the club. Meanwhile, life does go on. Jim Town presented, "The East London Story" at the September meeting to club members and a special Task Force from the Mayor's

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# A VIEW FROM THE TOWER

by Stan Whitsitt

*(Ivory or Babel, you decide)*

**A**h, July!....The grass needs cutting, the flower beds need watering, the editor pleading for a few words of wisdom, (written, of course) for the next edition ....and here is the poor writer, afflicted with spring fever, or summer doldrums. (loosely diagnosed as the iron in one's blood having turned to lead in the derriere)

Summer is the ideal time to sit cross legged and contemplate one's navel, pondering the why's and wherefores as we engage in this fascinating pastime of making motion pictures. Contemplation is a more satisfying and less strenuous occupation than such mundane activities as yard work or writing articles. Sitting here, in the lotus position, my ancient knees protesting, I can only hope it produces something more substantial than a handful of belly button lint.

Many years ago I read an article by Ralph Hattersley that struck a responsive chord with me. It was entitled "WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE PROS". It was directed at still photographers, but from my faded notes and some tweaking to make them appropriate, I will pass his findings on to movie makers.

Based on conversations with a number of professional photographers, Mr. Hattersley opined: "Professionals and amateurs have many things in common, first of which is their interest in photography. As do amateurs, professionals want people to like their work, the only difference being, their living depends on it. They also want to like themselves as humans, for the things they do. They, like amateurs, wish to understand the world in which they function, and communicate their understanding to others."

Mr. Hattersley then summed up their collective philosophy, which I took the liberty of paraphrasing as follows:

LOOK FOR THE GOOD SIDE OF THINGS....

The successful pro knows it is much better to find reasons for liking the world than reasons for hating it. Though misery loves

company, it's very miserable company it keeps. On the good side of things are beauty, health, imagination, spirit, curiosity, orderliness, change, and many more. Your films reflect your outlook.

ALWAYS STACK THE CARDS IN YOUR FAVOR....

The successful movie maker figures out things in advance, so he knows how to solve his problems before they have a chance to overwhelm him. He leaves nothing to chance. Like a good lawyer, his success depends on careful preparation.

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME TRYING TO BE A GENIUS....

Instead of spending months to build up to one grandiloquent blast, the Pro tries to do the best job he can, day in and day out, on every project as it comes. He understands that real genius is a **slowly building** thing, not a **fiery roar**. Perhaps genius is a storing up of experience, and intelligent use of it. It will prove to be more productive to develop the talents that one has, than to run around screaming at the world, or taking "fancy pills" to see if they will transform one into a second Spielberg.

DON'T BE STUFFY ABOUT ASKING FOR HELP....

The smart filmmaker knows that no matter how great his knowledge, it is not enough to cover all possibilities.

HAVE A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR YOUR OWN WORK....

If you don't respect your own work, no one will. The basis for respecting one's work when it is less than perfect, is one's accepting his membership in the human race, a less than perfect company.

TRY TO SINK EACH SHOT, BUT SHOOT FOR THE PERCENTAGE....

The film maker should work very hard to make each effort perfect, even though he knows this is impossible. There will be failures, but the more he tries, the greater the odds in his favor.

GET TO KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT LIKE A BROTHER — OR BETTER....

Know the results you want and settle on the equipment that will give it to you. You can't get away with hopping from one piece of equipment to another. Owning every piece of equipment in the world is the Amateur's dream, not the Pro's.

SEE FILM MAKING IN RELATION TO REAL LIFE....

The person who devotes attention to everyday life cannot possibly run out of ideas, because of the diversity of the commonplace.

SEEK ORIGINALITY IN A SANE WAY....

Everyone knows that if a movie isn't in the least original it doesn't get much attention. If however, it is too original, people see it as meaningless or insane. The key is to blend the old and new in exciting ways.

DO YOUR BEST TO UNDERSTAND NEW TALENT....

The smart person knows that our culture changes day by day and year by year. The upcoming artists reflect the changing culture. It is difficult to break ourselves loose from our pre-conceived ideas of what is right and good, and what is not. It is easy for a person to get stuck in a cultural backwash and let new ideas pass him by, thus becoming irrelevant.

FINALLY, BE A STUDENT OF MAN....

The person who doesn't know himself, doesn't know anybody. Conversely, if he doesn't know other people, he doesn't know himself. To communicate with people, or entertain, persuade, educate, or care for them, one must know who and what they are. The successful film maker will improve his ability through studying himself and others. In discussing the diverse ideas of many people, we must think about their views even if we don't necessarily agree with them. The importance of being exposed to a variety of ideas is obvious. It is thus we broaden our intellectual base, and in doing so, improve our insight and ability to communicate through our films.

Voila! There you have Ralph's findings in the proverbial nutshell. To some individuals in our little coterie, such rhetoric seems verbose and overblown, bordering on psycho-babble. To the folks who's motto is "shoot 'em on Sunday", "cut 'em on Monday", and "show 'em on Tuesday", the foregoing is overkill for the maker of home movies.

On the other hand, our efforts, no matter how primitive, will never suffer by approaching our work from a higher intellectual level.■

some influence on my decision to stay "at home".

As the result of talking to the Robertsons in Winnipeg on a Panorama matter and telling them of my impending trip, I was invited to stay with them. It was a wonderful experience and I once again must thank Wallace and Jeanette for their kind hospitality. Wallace and I went for an early morning walk several times and he introduced me to "Confusion Corner" (reference the summer issue of Panorama), the anti-graffiti patrol that Wallace takes part in, Fotovideo's western branch just prior to its close and we both got involved in getting a thief arrested, but more on that one later.

In our talks around the kitchen table, and the various restaurants we went to, I learned a great deal about the Winnipeg video club. Included in that was the information that Ken Davey, one of the two instigators of the club back in 1935, was alive and living in Winnipeg. Wallace arranged for me to meet and talk with Ken, which I did over lunch at his golf club. It was the most wonderful three-and-a-half hours that I have had in a long time.

Ken Davy not only was one of the two men who started the Winnipeg film club, but he was also the first man in Western Canada to film a Grey Cup Football game, first man to film a night CFL football game, the first man to film an indoor curling brier (for television broadcast), and probably the first cameraman to get Prime Minister Lester Pearson to repeat an interview because the camera was not recording the first time. I was very fortunate to get a chance to interview and record Ken on my return trip through Winnipeg.

Leaving the mid-west and heading for the far west, I followed Jeanette's instructions and took the Yellowhead Highway to Edmonton. I had been looking for a "hook" or theme on which to base a personal video. I knew that I needed something to show at an autumn Hamilton Video/Film Makers meeting but six days after leaving Hamilton, I still had nothing in mind.

It happened about twenty minutes west of Portage-la-Prairie, Manitoba. I had seen some interesting rural views, funny signs and a rock with a face painted on it that turned out to be a tourist site. I passed a sign perched in the corner of a field that caught my attention, but was going too fast to read it all properly. I stopped, backed up, read the sign and formed the intent of my production in 30 seconds flat. The rest of the trip now had a very definite purpose and the following three weeks were wonderful.

The theme I settled on was "Scenes From a Road". I recorded almost four complete T-120 S-VHS tapes over the next twenty plus days, and as an added bonus, got to see various parts of Canada that a lot of tourists don't get to as well as having a great time. I traveled highways, backroads, dirt trails, logging roads and tracks through the woods that ended in a clearing amongst the trees.

I have usually not had a lot of use for people who constantly moan that they can't think of a subject to shoot. Now I will have less use for them. It is of course not necessary to travel several thousand kilometres to get a nice view, as we all live in varying parts of a great country, but all of the subjects I shot could be found in varying size and degree within a few kilometres of any video club in Canada. What such a trip does do to the creative spirit of course, is open ones eyes to what is possible and what is out there.

It took two days to get to Edmonton from Winnipeg and my view of life on the prairies was constantly challenged. The light is in continuous flux and since light is basically the main ingredient in a good photo (or video composition) I found myself keeping as much an eye on my rear view mirror as the road in front. I drive a minivan and had outfitted it for sleeping. The result was being able to position myself in rest areas and farmers fields to get a good shot of late night thunderstorms and early morning sunrises. My only complaint throughout the trip was the lack of Tim Horton outlets in the west.

I passed through Saskatoon at about 6:00am which is a great time to miss the traffic jams. I left the Yellowhead highway and made my way through Biggar, Saskatchewan (motto - New York is big, but this is Biggar) and on up to the Battlefords. I was now well into my project but soon realised that if I was to get the paying jobs done, I could not afford to stop every 100 meters to get the camera out. Hence I missed recording the sign that said "Mosquito School" which would have teamed up perfectly with the sign I saw a few days later for "College of the Caribou". Between two Tim Hortons (Lloydminster and Edmonton) I recorded a deer crossing the road, gun shot signs, churches, wobbly bridge over a deep gorge, funny town signs, large wooden and iron statues of animals, a very large "loonie", a super big Ukrainian Easter egg and numerous other bits and pieces. By the time I reached Edmonton I figured that there was enough material for at least ten theme videos. The down side of the trip so far was the constant heat and the total lack of good air conditioning in my car (I have a 4/100 cool air system, 4 windows

open and 100 Kilometres per hour).

After finishing my first bit of business in Edmonton I was preparing to move on to Calgary, By highway, that is about a two and a half hour drive. I took a detour and arrived in Calgary almost three days later. I figured on heading west toward Jasper then down through the Rockies: however at Edson the sunset was beautiful and I figured, why not take a looping 140 Km. detour on a logging road before rejoining the highway at Hinton. It was worth it. I saw two moose, albeit in light that was too dark to record with and at least 100 trillion stars. The following morning I recorded rivers, mist and mountains before arriving at the gates to Jasper National Park. I could not have asked for a better entrance, with the crests of the mountains just peaking between the early morning mist.

For the rest of that day I stopped and started the car a million times, getting out and recording mountains, lakes, rivers, ice & snow, waterfalls, and the occasional animal. What a beautiful country we live in.

Calgary turned out to be hot and expensive, but well worth it in the end. While waiting for an appointment I had later that day, I drove the country roads north of the city. Sadly I missed the million dollar shot of the trip. Cruising along I had spotted a hawk sitting on a fence post beside the road. I was able to slow down, stop, back up and get out of the car without the hawk moving. As it watched me with eagle eyes (bad humour) I got out the tripod and camera and set it in position. I turned it on. Directly in front of me was a perfect scene - a hawk sitting on a post beside a grain field, with a prairie dog sitting up on its hind legs, 20 ft behind the bird. While the hungry hawk watched me, its dinner was just a few feet away watching it. I turned on the camera and started to turn the focus ring. Suddenly, out of thin air, a minuscule black winged creature in kamikaze mode dive bombed the entranced hawk. As the hawk squawked then flew away and the prairie dog dove into its tunnel of safety, my camera clicked into record mode and I got a great shot of a solitary fence stuck in front of a undulating field of grain, with not a creature in sight.

The rest of the trip had many highs and lows. The top of the highs was a whale watching excursion off Tofino on Vancouver Island, the sunrise over the prairies from the top of windmill hill in southern Alberta, the multitude of lighting changes as I traveled on my way. The lows included being seconds behind a serious two car accident on a lonely stretch of

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# 1998 SCCA Eastern Regional Meeting

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***This is the last chance to inform you through the pages of PANORAMA about the latest developments with regard to the 1998 SCCA Eastern Regional Meeting. We have some late breaking news, though not all that we want.***

Saturday, October 24

Earlier we advised you that the day's events would begin at 10:00 am. This remains unchanged, but we've added a morning coffee break at 9:30. That will enable many coming from cities an hour's drive or more from Hamilton to attend the meeting punctually (and avoid the cost of a room Friday night). Those living closer (or coming so far that they must take a room) can socialize over coffee while waiting for the later arrivals.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the morning now, after the Opening and first speaker(s), just before lunch. All members of the SCCA are expected to attend the AGM, and nonmembers are invited to attend as observers without a vote, but for those who choose not to sit-in we've arranged a tour of the Hamilton Spectator plant. Immediately after the meeting and tour there'll be a break for lunch, not necessarily precisely at noon, but when the meeting and the tour finish. There are several fast food outlets and a few family restaurants within a couple of blocks. (For those who are able, we recommend walking because of the one-way street system.) The first group includes Macdonalds, Taco Bell, Harvey's, Dairy Queen, KFC. Pizza Pizza, Subway, and three (yes, 3 - those one-way streets again) Tim Horton Donuts (after all, this is the birth place of the chain!). The latter group includes Belamy's, Your Place, and Shehna (East Indian Cuisine).

After a leisurely lunch the meeting will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. with a program of Speakers, Films, and Videos. One of those Speakers, as previously announced, will be Don

Svob of Wellandport, a down-home guy who has just returned from a whirlwind speaking tour of some of our western SCCA clubs, where we understand he has broadened the scope of his reputation (now extending as far east as Quinte) for simple, affordable, practical solutions to many of our problems as moviemakers. This may be your last chance to see him without charge, as he seems to be destined for the International Lecture Circuit!

Jim Unsworth of Hamilton will show us excerpts of a video "Birds of Prey - Their Care and Training" he produced at, for, and with African Lion Safari, recount some of the challenges, failures, and triumphs associated with the production, and describe a current program to get POV shots of the hawks in flight, using a small "spy camera" and transmitter.

Walter Strickland of Montreal (actually Dorval), who still works in Super8, will explain how he produces those superb travelogues, and illustrate his talk with some of his work. Walter's efforts have earned him eleven awards in the SCCA, and eighteen in the CIAFF, and while he works exclusively in film, most of the lessons he has learned over the past two decades can be directly applied to video to greatly improve the holiday, travel, and documentary videos which most of us make.

Several other fascinating Speakers have been invited to participate. Most have eventually declined because of scheduling conflicts (and indicated that they might be able to attend next year!) Others have not yet been able to confirm in time for the PANORAMA deadline, and we are resisting the temptation to announce unconfirmed names. As this is written, there are still six weeks to nail down a few more stimulating, competent speakers, and as lead time shortens, the ability of the candidates to foresee their future increases, so we have no doubt that we'll be able to provide an interesting program.

Unfortunately, surprise speakers can't help us attract people to the Meeting, so for those who have access to the internet, we'll post late breaking news on our web site <http://members.tripod.com/~SCCA>. (Click on "Regional Meetings" in the body of the text on the SCCA Home Page - it isn't there yet, but it will be soon!) We can only ask that those with internet access pass the information found on that page on to others who might be interested.

We plan to break at 5:00 o'clock for supper. To accommodate those who would like to drive to a more expensive restaurant, the evening program will begin at 7:30 p.m., (coffee at 7:00) and unfold as previously announced: Presentation of SCCA Honours, Presentation of SCCA Annual Contest Awards, Screening of the Winning Entries. We plan to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. to allow time for those who really must make a long drive home that night to get home at a decent hour. But he hope to see them again in the morning.

Sunday, October 25

While we've had some of the same problems (vacations, business trips, voice mail, and uncertain scheduling) setting up the bus tour to Toronto, the last arrangements have just been confirmed as this was being written.

We will board the bus in the parking lot of the Hamilton Spectator. (By then everyone will know exactly where it is and there's lots of free parking.) Leaving at 9:00 a.m., we should arrive at our first stop by 10:00. The Photographic Historical Society of Canada has been holding Photographica Fairs every year since 1976. Their Spring Fair was the first in Canada, and their Spring and Fall Fairs are the largest in the country. They can have up to 200 tables, though recent Fairs have averaged about 140 tables. Each one-day Fair is attended by about 1,400 people, many of whom pay \$7.00 admission (\$2.00 Off coupons are widely distributed - your admission is included in the fee for the bus tour).

Sellers are mainly collectors and

members of the society, with some dealers present (some coming from Quebec, the U.S., etc.), selling used equipment, surplus equipment, and some new equipment. Just about everything photographic is offered from old stereo-opticons to used video equipment, but most of it is of only passing interest to video makers looking for the latest technology. There are, however, some 8, Super8 and 16 mm. cameras, and many tripods, light stands, and other equipment useful to both the still and movie photographer. With the Movie Machine Society's Annual Meeting in Toronto on the same weekend, and with the same man organizing both that convention and the Fall Fair, we can expect that considerable movie equipment will come out of the woodwork that day!

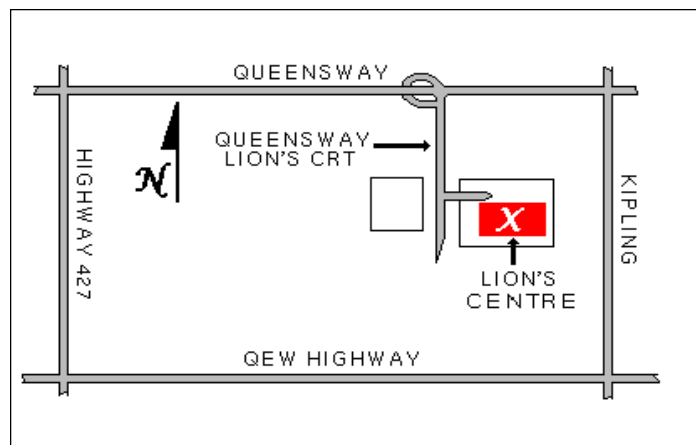
We'll have to leave promptly at 11:00 a.m. to reach our next destination, the Music Building at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds, for a Tour of Immersion Studios, conducted by Stacey Spiegel and Dr. Rodney Hoinkes. (See Article elsewhere in this issue.)

Our next call will be the Canadian Broadcasting Centre, headquarters for the English Networks of the CBC, Canada's national public broadcaster. A step into the future and a peek into the past, it's one of the most modern broadcasting facilities in North America and the realization of a longtime dream - the consolidation of 26 different Toronto locations into one 1.72 million square foot building. It's the home of English radio and television networks, local English radio and television programming, Newsworld and Newsworld International headquarters, and Network Control which links Canada's public broadcaster from coast to coast. Our main interest, of course, is the production facilities and the various facilities that support production, like the costume, set design, properties, makeup, and similar departments. Half of our group will tour the CBC while the other half enjoys lunch, and then the groups will switch. Tours are just not conducted on weekends, but we've been

able to persuade a tour guide to work on Sunday and management to permit it (because you're special and I'm persistent). The \$3.00 tour fee is included in the cost of the bus tour: your lunch is not!

One of the highlights of the 1985 GALA\*XIES Convention in Hamilton was the appearance of Foley Artist Terry Burke, who, among other things, won two Genie Awards in 1980 for his film "Track Star" demonstrating the work of a Foley Artist. His costar in that film, Andy Malcolm, wowed us at FAST FWD '93, also in Hamilton. Now we're going to visit the studio where both of these sound men "perform". Our host at the Foley Theatre of Deluxe Studios (formerly Film House Sound Studio) will be Japanese born Goro Koyama, who came to Canada for film study in 1991. After graduating from Confederation College Film Production in Thunder Bay in '94, Goro started training with Andy Malcolm. Goro's list of credits is too long to reproduce here, but they include *Fishtail Soup* for the National Film Board, *The Santa Clause* and *Mystery Alaska* for Walt Disney, *Star Gate* and *Cutthroat Island* for MGM, *Bride of Chucky* for Universal, *Johnny Mnemonic* for Alliance, and six IMAX films, including *Across the Sea of Time*. And I almost missed his 1997 Genie Award for Best Sound Editing for his work in *The Sweet Hereafter* for Alliance.

Our last stop will be Gajdecki Visual Effects, who boasts of the country's top effects supervisors, model builders and digital artists, and delivering the industry's most diversified and professional range of visual effects. With a studio in Toronto and another in Vancouver, and experience working on location in the U.S., Europe, Asia and the Arctic, GVFX is able to take on all manner of visual effects. Their credits include *Stargate SG-1* and *Poltergeist: The Legacy*, a Gemini Award nomination for *Gridlock* and three for *The Outer Limits*, an Emmy Award nomina-



tion for *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*, and Gemini Awards for *TekWar* and *The Arrow*. The Toronto studio is the only Canadian effects facility with an in-house model shop, and the list of techniques and equipment, from prop construction, green screen, motion control cameras, hero miniatures, pyrotechnics, digital animation, compositing, and on, and on, and on, is too diverse to even list completely here. Some will remember our host, Rick Gajdecki, from *Wideangle '97* in Kitchener. Realizing how much this man could show us in his home environment was the inspiration for the whole idea of a tour to Toronto's production studios.

Oh, yeah. They're the guys who blew up Mike Bullard's head!

By 4:00 o'clock we should be headed home, with a slight detour to return to our first stop. It was suggested in the last PANORAMA that people who live in Toronto won't need to come to Hamilton to join the bus tour: they can meet us at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Queensway Lions Club Community Centre, southwest of Kipling Avenue and the Queensway in the west end of Toronto. (See map.)

We have since realized that those people coming from other sites far enough east of Toronto to require spending Friday and Saturday night in Hamilton, (such as Ottawa and the Quinte region) should join us at the Spectator parking lot on Sunday morning, and follow the bus in their own cars to the Queensway Lions Club, and join the tour there. (We won't be able to find them among the 1,400 people, but ours will probably be the only bus!)

By dropping the Torontonians at the Queensway Lions Club we'll save them an hour's drive to Hamilton in the morning and two hours getting home. Those spending Saturday night in Hamilton and going home Sunday

Continued on Page 9

# IMMERSION STUDIOS

*Interactive Entertainment, Finally!*

**A** visionary international artist and a computer genius have come together to create an innovative technology they hope will change the face of the entertainment industry. Under the name of Immersion Studios Inc., Stacey Spiegel and Dr. Rodney Hoinkes are bringing to market a sophisticated entertainment product that heralds a new era in virtual reality experiences.

Mr. Spiegel, company president and CEO, is a world-renown artist who has been actively exhibiting multimedia works around the world for over 15 years. He has been artist-in-residence at numerous international centres as well as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Prior to founding Immersion Studios, he served as adjunct professor of landscape architecture at the University of Toronto and a visiting adjunct assistant professor at Harvard University.

Dr. Hoinkes, vice-president of technology and internationally recognized for creating computer software for design applications, is a graduate of Harvard University's doctoral design program. In his former capacity as head of design applications at the University of Toronto's Centre for Landscape Research, he developed numerous software systems for interactive design. He continues to hold teaching posts in landscape architecture at both the University of Toronto and Harvard University.

The Board of Directors includes Robert Kerr, formerly CEO and co-founder of Imax Corporation, and Bert Amato, formerly CTO and co-founder of Delrina Corporation.

Incorporated in March 1997, the company was founded on the strength of five highly successful European installations designed and implemented by Spiegel and Hoinkes over the last three years. The company's head office is housed in the recently refurbished Music Building at Toronto's Exhibition Place, also home to Immersion Studios' first permanent theatre.

Imagine soaring over the vast white expanses of the Canadian Arctic, swooping through the splendour of the Rockies and slipping past the skyscrapers of Toronto, skating along the Rideau Canal in Ottawa, or wandering through the picturesque streets of Old Montreal. Imagine all of it is yours to explore and discover. Immersion Studios' premier production, a 15-minute immersive event called My

Canada, debuted on opening day of the 1997 Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.

On stepping into the soaring interior of the Music Building, CNE visitors found themselves enveloped by a giant panoramic screen (comprised of three separate and angled screens each 17 X 24 feet for a total width of 72 feet, spanning 140 degrees) and surrounded by ambient sounds and music. While 100 viewers watch the journey on the main screen, audience members, working in groups of four, could tap into the Canadian experience of their choice using touch-sensitive computer terminals. Each group is able to view expanded versions of the content on the big screen by opening up 30-second to two-minute sound and video vignettes on the 15-inch computer screen in front of them. In all, there are about 700 video clips for the audience to choose from during the show.

All this is possible thanks to innovative software that marries video clips, satellite images, photography, text and animation, with sound, live links to the World Wide Web and artistically-rendered models and textures to create productions in real-time.

"Our software allows the participant to engineer an infinite variety of content combinations and permutations with the result that no two shows or experiences are ever the same," explains Spiegel. "You can pilot your way into the depths of a region or subject area and you can go on countless adventures, but no matter how many times you participate in a My Canada production, you can never experience the whole thing because the production is as limitless as your imagination."

Powered (until very recently) by a Silicon Graphics Onyx2 Infinite Reality workstation, coupled to High Definition Ampro Light Valve Projectors, the Immersion Studios production unites panoramic images, dynamic spatialized sound, and the individual navigation stations that place the user at the helm of a vast database of Canadiana.

The company's hardware and software products are ideally suited to operators of institutions and Location-Based Entertainment (LBE) attractions who are looking for innovative productions that surpass existing multimedia events and installations. This will be much easier now that Dr. Hoinkes has written new software which will run a presentation from two

PC computers, instead of requiring the Silicon Graphics Onyx2 Infinite Reality workstation!

"Immersion Studios' approach is different from other LBE offerings and produces benefits to everyone associated with the experience," says Stacey Spiegel. "Individual participants become repeat customers of a given venue or attraction because they can customize the experience with each visit. If we can create really compelling shows, we think people will come back many times over just to dig into the content," said Spiegel. "You won't get the whole show on the first, second, third and fourth trip."

And, because content can be easily combined and recombined, Immersion Studios' novel approach also makes it possible to produce new shows faster and less expensively than most cinematic or animation processes used today. As for the shows themselves, they can be specially themed and developed to cater to corporations, educational institutions, touring events (e.g. rock concerts), theme parks or the mainstream public." An interactive production typically spans 15 to 45 minutes.

Immersion Studios events can be mounted in existing software theatre environments or cinemas, exhibition halls, museums, auditoriums or planetariums that have been "repurposed" to accommodate the interactive technology, serving audiences as small as 10 or as large as 150, depending on the venue and component configuration selected. The theatres can also provide a dramatic setting for corporate demonstrations, special events and international teleconferencing.

Their ambitious plan is to open 45 immersion reality theatres in Europe and North America over the next few years, and to charge an admission of around \$8 for adults, with lower prices for children.

In addition to the immersion reality theatres, the company has developed five other products for individual kiosk environments.

The Video Jukebox is an interactive system ideal for themed restaurants, music stores, bars, sports venues, cinemas, museums and other locations. The system can use a variety of media, from videos and sound clips, to computer animations and web connections. The viewers choose what they want to see, guaranteeing they'll get the experience they want, smoothly blended with selected clips of advertising and promotional shots. Since the content



on the system is stored digitally, it can be rapidly changed, replaced or updated, allowing great flexibility of presentation.

The Virtual Hall of Fame provides an interactive ride through the history of a sport or team including players, facilities, statistics, recent replays, trivia games and more. Audiences have a chance to explore and play with an almost endless variety of virtual spaces, digital videos, slides, and web connections.

The Virtual Traveller has been designed to meet the demand for personal exploration consoles used to tour distant places or the local environment, and is a valuable asset for visitor centers varying from tourist destinations, to airports, trade centers, shopping centers, and location-based theme parks.

The Virtual Museum has already been implemented as a super-kiosk model. Each user has a large-screen in addition to the private touch-screen console. This product provides an original means of education, where huge databases of (custom) information are woven with imagery, movie clips, and real-time 3D-rendered digital environments. An installation contains private workstations, or super-kiosks, which can exist in a permanent environment or, just as easily, in a travelling tradeshow.

The Immersion Library is a customizable infotainment tool. By navigating through this virtual world, the audience can explore new information through alternate 3d spaces, digital videos, slides, and web connections.

But without finished productions, that's all just pie-in-the-sky! Immersion Studios has already produced several productions and is hard at work on others.

Debuting at the CNE this past summer, Monsters of the Deep is an interactive mission-based narrative designed for children ages 6 through 12. By interacting with each other and their touch-screen consoles, the audience guides their virtual submarine on an undersea adventure.

Crossings is an interactive 3-dimensional environment, showing how to investigate and navigate the vast information ocean of cyberspace.

Safe Haven is a virtual environment through which visitors can travel and access a special database where 135 stories are stored. The shared travel space of Safe Haven is an interactive ship's log that tells stories of a multicultural city.

The Space Adventure is quite possibly the most flexible production concept to date. An adventure experienced through a futuristic craft, this production has obvious potential for multiple applications. Exploring the cosmos may be the first to come to mind, but with their modular digital database, the material can be easily modified into, as one example, a trip through the human body. The potential uses for this production

span from breathtaking entertainment, to exciting and revolutionary education, or even simulation such as being in a NASA preparation center.

Immersion Studios is preparing to meet the demand for new modes of entertainment in the gaming world, with Telluria, a role paying game which would exist as a virtual world in which players can design characters and work interactively with many others. Their unprecedented methods of real-time rendering, combined with this gaming environment, yield an entirely new realm of entertainment. ■

### **1998 SCCA**

#### **Regional Meeting continued from page 7**

evening will also be spared the one-hour bus trip and a one-hour car trip returning to Toronto, so they can start home from Kipling Avenue shortly after 4:00 p.m. instead of 6:00 p.m.

To encourage the largest attendance possible on Saturday there will be no Registration and no Registration Fee. (There will also be no hats, binders, portfolios, name tags, note books, pens, floppy discs, etc. This will be a no frills Regional Meeting.) Therefore, while we're dying to know how many will be there, there is no pre-registration required.

HOWEVER, the bus tour will require payment of a \$20 (\$13.50 U.S.) Bus Tour Registration Fee. That will cover the charter of the bus and the entrance fees to the Photographica Fair and the CBC tour, but no food. We need a minimum of 25 people to make the tour feasible at that price, 32 if the 36 passenger bus is not available at that time. Therefore, we are requiring advance registrations, with prepayment, for the bus tour. If we don't have 25 (or 32) prepaid registrations by October 16, we'll have to cancel the tour and return the prepayments. On October 16 we'll confirm with the bus company, choosing the most appropriate sized bus available. Once we've passed that point-of-no-return, we'll accept additional bus reservations up to the capacity of the contracted bus, and up to the moment of departure Sunday morning, on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED basis.

If you want to see it happen, reserve your seat immediately. Send a cheque for \$20 (check for \$13.50 U.S.) to the Treasurer, Carolyn Briggs.

For those who accept my suggest of hooking up with the Movie Making Machine Meeting Bus Tour to Kinmount (see last issue of PANORAMA), Larry Boccioletti (416-243-1439) also requires

advance notice no later than October 16 of the names of those attending, but he (trusting soul) is willing to collect the \$25 payment as you board his bus! I hope I see many of you there! ■

**Fred Briggs**

#### **Club News continued from page 3**

Office. At the October meeting Bill Henderson will discuss "Lighting for Video". The club recently announced the winners of the annual contest. Winner in the Advanced Class was Kim Brown with his Film "Puzzle", Intermediate Class winner was "The Wild Life", by Phil McLeod and the winner in the Novice Class was Jane Veraart with "The Flower".

"Brant Camcorder News" announces in the September edition that the subject for the monthly competition would be "Open", meaning a ten minute film on any subject. The November competition will have "Stormy Weather" as its topic and January will feature videos on "Old Folks Reminisce". Certainly a complete range of possibilities for the creative film maker.

The Start Middle End Video Club of St. Catharines, Fonthill also mentions the results of last month's Assigned Subject Contest. Under the topic "Nature", the winners were: First Place, Sam Marchioni, Second Place, Herb Kenneford and Third Place, Tom Ingham. The next meeting will have Russ Hall presenting a seminar on camcorder lenses.

Hamilton Video/Filmmakers had a most interesting meeting recently when two young men Christopher Harrison and Jamie Vallely of Waterhouse Entertainment came to pitch a feature length movie they are producing in the Hamilton area. The name of the movie is "Sight" and will be shot on Super 16 film. Sounds like a very ambitious project. To fill out the evening a number of films and videos were shown, including Jack Carey's video, "Two Sisters", Lois Walton's, "Success in Golf", Dan Copeland's "Not Your Average Hair Show", Peter Janssen's "Happy Birthday Party for Rachel" and Joan and Joe Bochsler's, "Switzerland - Climbing the Santis Mountain". It was also mentioned that the coffee break was, "Again provided through the sustained efforts

*Club News continued on page 13*

# SCCA VIDEO LIBRARY LISTING

The Films Listed are the Property of The SCCA and may be borrowed by contacting the Librarian at the following address:

**Miss Stella Magic,**  
1395 Wilson Avenue, Apt. 200  
Downsville, Ontario,  
M3M1H9  
Phone: 416-248-9389

## 1. HAPPY BIRTHDAY BOBBY DIETZ

By Rick Hays  
Awarded a Special Commendation  
8:14 min. 1991

## 2. FUGU

By Jonathan Lewin  
Awarded a Special Commendation  
3:15 min. 1992

## 3. MASKED MAN ON ASSIGNMENT

By Mes Productions  
6:20 min. 1993

## 4. MASKED MAN: UNMASKED

By Mes Productions  
5:16 min. 1994

## 5. A PRETTY STRONG WORD

By Trumvirate Magical Prod.  
1st in Special Student Awards  
3rd for Best Editing Entry  
22 min. 1994

## 6. THE ROAD TO HELL

By Ian Birkett  
Awarded a Two Star Commendation  
7:15 min. 1994

## 7. SCREEN KISS

By Group Home Productions  
Awarded a Three Stars Commendation  
38 min. 1994

## 8. THREE MOVIES: By Concordia Fine Arts

**TOM T. HILL** 6:10min. 1994  
**WEST & EAST** 10 min. 1994  
**WHERE'S ELVIS** 2:02 min. 1994  
Awarded One Star Commendation for both: "WEST 81 EAST" AND "WHERE'S ELVIS"

## 9. VER'TE-BRAK

By Michael T. Fitzgerald  
Awarded a Two Star Commendation  
10 min. 1994

## 10. MOUTH

By Vincenzo Natali  
Awarded a One Star Commendation  
14 min. 1994

## 11. THE ALTRUIST

By Lee Roth Productions  
Awarded a Three Star Commendation

21:47 1994

## 12. IN LOVE & WAR

By Will Geiger  
Awarded a One Star Commendation  
18 min. 1994

## 13. ONE IN THE OVEN

By Gary Pemberton  
10:09 1994

## 14. B.C. FOREST MUSEUM

By A.E. Higham  
1:40 1994

## 15. THE DRIP

By Sid Laverents  
Special Commendation Award for Wry Comedy  
17 min. 1994

## 16. ANYONE/AIDS

By Dianne Lynn Quellette  
2 min. 1994

## 17. UAGUZI

By Christopher Erin Walsh  
1st Prize for Best Student Animation  
3rd Prize for Best Student Entry  
6:56 min. 1994

## 18. TROUBLE AT NINE MILE

By R.Bruteig (some nudity)  
Awarded a One Star Commendation  
15 min. 1994

## 19. URBAN INHERITANCE

By The Churches of Montreal  
Concordia University  
Awarded Two Stars Commendation  
14 min. 1995

## 20. OF MOUSE AND MONEY

By Ray Paylis  
8:32 min. 1995

## 21. ONCE ON A BLUE MOON

By A Think In Link Production  
Awarded Two Star Commendation  
4 min. 1995

## 22. LABOUR DAY

By Brian Averill  
Special Commendation Award  
23 min. 1995

## 23. THE BELL RINGER

By Brenda Sherwood  
Awarded Special Commendation  
19:58 min. 1995

## 24. ANGELS ON I-90

By the Vancouver Film School  
Awarded Three Stars  
8:40 min. 1995

## 25. MY BLACK JACKET

By Erin Falconer (some foul language)  
33rd prize for Amateur  
Experimental Award  
7:45 min. 1995

## 26. THE Strange Legend of

## ST. DESMO and THE DRAGON

By D.Pittsinger  
Awarded 2nd Place for Best Animation Entry  
10:26 min. 1995

## 27. Two movies from Copenhagen)

### PLANET JENSEN

By Thomas Eikrem  
6:40 min. 1995

### 28. STORM

By Thomas Eikrem  
2:45 min. 1995

## 29. THE INQUESTOR

By Rebecca Wood  
Awarded One Star  
6:22 min. 1995

## 30. THE SEARCH FOR GOLD MOUNTAIN

By Hurbert Toh  
Awarded 2nd Prize for Editing  
16 min. 1995

## 31. TRINITY

By The Florida State University  
2nd Prize for Student Scenario Award (in 1996, This was Awarded a Three Star Commendation)  
20 min. 1995

## 32. PRAYER

By the Florida Center for Electronic Communication  
Awarded Three Star Commendation  
20 min. 1995

## 33. HYBRID VIGOUR

By Stephen Arthur  
2 min. 1995

## 34. COWBOY JOE

By Christophe Jonatowski  
Awarded Two Star Commendation  
22 min. 1995

## 35. THE WISH

By Miguel Grinberg & Alicio Cmvicich  
Special Commendation Award  
4 min. 1995

## 36. THE STORY OF MY LIFE

By Kaveh Nabatian  
Awarded Two Star Commendation  
7:21 min. 1995

## 37. FAITH IN A BOX

By Jenifer Hinkey  
Awarded Two Star Commendation  
8:35 min. 1995

## 38. MUSIC LESSON

BY Vancouver Film School  
Awarded Two Star Commendation  
8:27 1995

## 39. ROOM 403

By Nadine Watt  
Awarded Three Star Commendation  
30 min. 1995

## 40. THE BOX

By Kaveh Nabatian  
Awarded One Star Commendation  
8:30 min. 1995

## 41. ECHOES OF THE NIGHT

By Kaveh Nabatian  
Awarded One Star Commendation  
3 min. 1995

## 42. PLACENTA STEW

By Vancouver Film School  
3rd Prize for The Canadian Awards  
9 min. 1995

## 43. RADIOMAN

Florida State University  
3 Star Commendation  
24 min. 1995

## 44. BIASFEAR

By Justin Michel  
Three Star Commendation

14:20 min. 1996	25 min. 1996	4:45 min. 1997
<b>45. RECYCLING WITH WORMS</b>	<b>62. REEL CRISIS</b>	<b>77. GASKILL'S GUESTS'</b>
By Envirokids	By Hamilton Video/Film Makers	By Paul Miley
12 min. 1996	Winner of Class "D: (Club competition)	20 min. 1997
<b>46. LUGWAMEN</b>	<i>The Garlick Trophy for the Best Visual Effects and the Best Visual Effects as well as The Telecine Transfer Trophy for Best Student Scenario (2nd Place)</i>	<b>78. PIP &amp; JOEY</b>
By Kevin Loncar & Brian Faiola	<i>Best Youth Entry ages 16 - 19</i>	By Ohio University School Of Telecommunication
<i>Three Star Commendation</i>	13 min. 1996	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
9:58 min. 1996	<b>63. RISOU REVERIE &amp; DAME</b>	22 min. 1997
<b>47. NO ORDINARY JACK</b>	<b>DARCY PLAYS</b>	<b>79. WILLIAM SHATNER LENT ME HIS HAIRPIECE (AN UNTRUE STORY)</b>
By David Catalano	By Tiger Mountain Films	By Ken Hegan
<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	<i>One Star commendation</i>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
10 min. 1996	10 min. 1996	13 min. 1997
<b>48. COOLBREEZE &amp; BUZZ</b>	<b>64. HEADLOCK</b>	<b>80. AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN</b>
By Florida State University	By Armanda Brotchie	By Carihi Broadcasting
<i>Three Star Commendation</i>	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
24 min. 1996	14:40 Min. 1996	4:45 min. 1997
<b>49. BROTHER</b>	<b>65. STRIKE OUT</b>	<b>81. LASTING IMPRESSIONS</b>
By The Florida State University School of Motion Pictures and Recording Arts	By Hamilton Video Club	By Roscomm Productions
<i>One Star Commendation</i>	<i>(A Take off on Star Trek) Winner of the Class "E" (Compulsory Subject), The Kitt's Trophy, Most Humourous Entry.</i>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
20:10 min. 1996	10:54 min. 1997	13:38 min. 1997
<b>50. THE STAGES OF JESSICA</b>	<b>66. CHRISTMAS ANGELS</b>	<b>82. FROM THE ASHES</b>
By Vancouver Film School	Backstreet Studios	By King Arthur Productions
<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	4:30 min. 1997	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
10 min. 1996	<b>67. SEASON'S EATINGS</b>	13:25 min. 1997
<b>51. THE GATEKEEPER</b>	Ephriam Horowitz	<b>83. WELL, GRANTED</b>
By John Parent	<i>One Star Commendation</i>	By Negative Space Media
<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	11:30 min. 1997	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
1:34 min. 1996	<b>68. DAJNGO</b>	22:44 min. 1997
<b>52. THE DECK</b>	By Chris. Kennedy	<b>84. SWELL</b>
By Cheryl Hess (Zoning Dispute)	<i>One Star Commendation</i>	By Swell Cinema Productions
5:25 min. 1996	5 min. 1997	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>
<b>53. EMPTY PAGES</b>	<b>69. THE BREAKS</b>	23 min. 1997
By Todd McCammon	By NTSC	<b>85. THE FACES OF CANADA</b>
<i>One Star Commendation</i>	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	By Jason James
9:21 min. 1996	19:30 min. 1997	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
<b>54. THE POND</b>	<b>70. LAUNCH TIME</b>	9:21 min. 1997
By Philip McLeod	DigiPan Applied Computer Graphic Arts	<b>86. JAP</b>
<i>Won 3rd Prize in Amateur Nature Entry</i>	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	By Columbia College-Hollywood Production
23 min. 1996	11:30 min. 1997	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>
<b>55. SILENT CONFESSION</b>	<b>71. WATER CLOSET</b>	30 min. 1997
By Brazen Baric	By Emma Russel	<b>87. STOLEN INNOCENCE</b>
28 min. 1996	<i>One Star Commendation</i>	By Diversified Productions
<b>56. ZZZAPPED 11</b>	<b>72. SYNCHRONIC STRUCTURES</b>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
By What Inc.	By Corneliu Dimitriu	28 min. 1997
<i>One Star Commendation</i>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>	<b>88. SESSION ONE</b>
27:15 min. 1996	10 min. 1997	By Ohio University School Of Telecommunications
<b>57. FORGOTTEN HAT</b>	<b>73. STOLEN INNOCENCE</b>	<i>One Star Commendation</i>
By Adam White	By Diversified Productions	14:50 min. 1997
<i>Three Star Commendation</i>	28 min. 1997	<b>89. GREEN</b>
16.05 min. 1996	<b>74. DELUSIONS</b>	By DigiPen Applied Computer Graphics School
<b>58. THE PIT</b>	By Erin Falconer	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>
By Florida State University	10 min. 1997	2 min. 1997
<i>One Star Commendation</i>	<b>75. PARTNERS</b>	<b>90. SHELTER</b>
10 min. 1996	By Mark McCarken & Mark Wheeler	By Dave Kost
<b>59. CARMA</b>	<i>Two Star Commendation</i>	<i>Special commendation</i>
By Trevor Meyer	29 min. 1997	29 min. 1997
6:55 1996	<b>76. POLYESTER JUSTICE</b>	<b>91. TRAPPED</b>
<b>60. THE PAPER SCULPTOR</b>	By Carihi Productions	By J. Devlin
By the Florida Center for Electronic Communication	<i>2nd Best Youth Entry 16-19 Yrs.</i>	<i>Two Star Commendation.</i>
<i>Two Star Commendation</i>		10:40 min. 1997
23 min. 1996		
<b>61. EMPTY</b>		
By Jason Suedath		
<i>Two Star Commendation</i>		

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# CIAFF

Film & Video Festival

November  
26th, 27th,  
& 28th

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**F**estival Director Ben Andrews reports that the 1998 Canadian International Annual Film/Video Festival attracted 265 entries, 43 of which were youth entries, and ten countries were represented. The judging process, which in recent years has been held over two weekends, had to be extended considerably due to the large number of entries and the addition of a feature film category.

Ben also reports that this year the Barrie Film Festival will include some selections from among the entries in the CIAFF. That festival will be held on October 15, 16, 17 and 18 at the McLaren Centre for the Arts in Barrie, Ontario. Films, 16 mm and 35 mm, will be shown at the Imperial Theatre, and videos will be shown in the William Morris Building.

On Thursday evening, October 15, a 16 mm. film *The Killing Man* will be screened, and on Friday evening a 35 mm. film *Splooosh* will be shown. Friday videos will include *The Buddy System*, *Kiss My Brain*, *Accident!*, *There But For The Grace Of God*, and *Punto Arroz*. the film program will include *Poetry and Apocalypse*, *Punctuated Equilibrium*, *Psychic Tequila Tarot*, *Nocturne*, and *Split*.

At a Saturday Matinee they will show the 35 mm film *Teen Canteen*, and another 35 mm film, *An Incident Near Falais* will be shown Saturday evening. On Sunday evening four 16 mm films from the CIAFF will be screened: *Does That Make Me A Bad Person*, *The Final Days of the Ministry of Tea*, *A Short Wait Between Trains*, and *Close*, plus another 35 mm production, *Road Movie*.

*For more information contact:*  
**John Gilbride,**  
109 Cordington St., Barrie, ON  
L4M 1R8, (705) 722-7544  
johngilb@barint.on.ca

Please note that the films and videos listed above are subject to change and have been chosen from the CIAFF entries by the organizers of the Barrie Film Festival and do not necessarily represent the choices of the CIAFF judges.

Campbell River, British Columbia, will again, be the venue, for the third year, for the three-day presentation of seminars, awards, videos, and the gala, to be held this year on **November 26, 27, and 28th.**

We are sorry that we are unable at this time to provide more details about the Campbell River program. ■

*For more information please contact:*  
**Kevin Harrison,**  
641 Tern Place,  
Campbell River, BC  
V9W 6C6  
(250) 287-8198.

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## Report from the Toronto Film and Video Club

by Trevelyan Beard

**T**he Toronto Film and Video Club still continues to meet twice a month. In fact there are a few of us who would like it more often. During the 1997/8 season we had a good variety of meetings, 17 in all. Half of them were called "Videos By You" meaning shorts brought in by members. The rest were a mixture of speakers, plus evenings dedicated to certain venerable members, the AGM and the Banquet. In October Walter Strickland took over the evening showing some of his best movies and in May, it was the turn of Harold Luft to do his stuff. These 'oldtimers' held us spellbound with films in 16 mm. The quality and content were superb and we enjoyed their efforts enormously.

There is so much interest by members wanting to show their own videos that we are so far limiting showings to movies 5 minutes in length, certainly not longer than 11 minutes. Then there is our Special Interest Group 'Computer Assisted Video' which meets once a month as well and there again we seem to have no shortage of things to show and talk about.

We have put forward a tentative list of subjects to help members latch onto a

theme. They are *Where Am I ?; Reflections; Parking; It's a Joke; Eating; Doors and Windows; Shadows and Clouds and lastly Weeds*. It's possible that none of these will flourish but 'c'est la vie'.

Recently a few of us holed up at Kodak (who loaned us the space) watching a total of 250 videos sent in to the CIAFF competition run by Ben Andrews. Covering all categories including documentaries, animation, experimental, nature and music, we slogged from early morning to very late at night with burning eyes. I would be lying if I said that they were all good movies but there were many gems. What I got out of the marathon session however was enormous experience impossible to acquire anywhere else. From Vancouver came Linda Smith, just for this job of judging, bully for her! I particularly thrilled to see the animation attempts, knowing how much hard work is involved. There's a temptation to murmur 'computer' as a way of minimizing some of the credit. Even though it's a marvellous tool for minimizing a lot of the work, the filmmaker puts in enormous effort to produce an animation.

The next year in our Club will see more computers in use, better cameras being bought, a move by some to digital camcorders and perhaps some role-playing in group movies. I always say to myself that during the summer there will be time to turn out maybe four or five shorts but then comes the fall, and it's a rush to complete one, just one.

The next season we will pack in 16 meetings of the Club and 9 meetings of the CAV. Add to that, 6 meetings to judge more CIAFF stuff. What a wonderful life! Have fun.■

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## Get it in Writing



by Stan Whitsitt

*Reprinted from the AMPS Newsletter*

**A**n old piece of legalese tells us to "get it in writing." This bit of advice also applies to our movie making.

It's a pity, but the amateur filmer doesn't start putting anything on paper until the film is shot and edited.

The ideal motion picture would tell the story with no sound, but alas, we do

not live in an ideal world, and audiences have been conditioned to expect sound. Thus, most filmmakers would be better served by scripting their films for shooting and narration before starting a movie.

Alfred Hitchcock compares a film maker shooting off the cuff, making things up as he goes along, to a composer attempting to compose a symphony before an expectant orchestra.

A shooting script will illustrate your idea and provide a road map of where you want your story to go. In short it will:

1. Save film in shooting,
2. Save money by less wasted film,
3. Guarantee a better film. Critical shots and scenes will less likely to be forgotten.

We usually don't start thinking about our narration until we have the film all edited, but after thoroughly researching our subject before shooting, a rough draft of a narration will help. Pick the key points you want your picture to put across and rough out a narration that covers them. This will help you know what key scenes to look for to get your story or point across on the screen.

How many times have we had something we wanted to say, but no footage to illustrate it. Too many people ignore this and their narration is saying one thing while the audience is watching totally unrelated images. This is very disconcerting to the viewer.

Assuming your film is edited and you are ready to take off from your original rough draft and do the final narration, the following steps will insure a happy ending for your film project.

1. Do a final check on your research. In every audience there is at least one person who looks for flaws in the presentation, and gets his jollies from pointing them out to everybody else.
2. Project the edited film and take notes on the parts that narration.
3. Time each sequence and measure its length.
4. Do a final draft of the narration, keeping in mind the time frame in which each sequence will fill.
5. Read the narration aloud while screening film. Note where adjustments in length or style must be made.
6. Record the completed narration to run along with the film.

Admittedly, the foregoing methods do add more work to the chore of making a movie, but most filmers will find they more than pay off in the quality of the finished product.

If you plan to show your work to other than your immediate family, you owe your audience the best product you can produce.

WRITE ON!

**Stan Whitsitt**

*Presidents Report continued from Page 5*

highway in the mountains of B.C., not being able to meet with various members of some clubs and finding out later that a meeting took place in Victoria when I was there, but I did not know about it. As for that thief in Winnipeg, I am going to let Wallace Robertson tell that story.

Over the next few months I will edit the various pieces of this production together, and maybe get it put on a CANUSA tape, but for now I have a much greater awareness of what a great country we live in and how anyone who says "I can't find anything to videotape" should have their camera taken away from them and given to someone who has the ability to see what is right in front of them.

Oh, and that "GOODBYE" I put at the beginning of this piece! I will follow it with a "THANK YOU" to all of you who have listened to my ramblings in this publication. It has been an interesting four years since I joined the SCCA and became president, unfortunately not accomplishing many of the things I had hoped for but being instrumental in others that did come to fruition.

This is my last column as I am retiring from the position of President of the SCCA to ensure that I can accomplish several other projects that I have planned for the next year. I have just sold a few minutes of my Ice-Yacht shooting to a California production company that is producing a television series for Sony International entertainment and I am trying to put my own television series together for next fall.

Now it is time for new blood, but that does not mean that the rest of you can sit back and relax. We still need your input, support (emotional, physical and fiscal) and ideas for the future. If you want to be further involved in this venture then please let Adam Houston (our Scottish style secretary with the nice legs) know and he can put your name forward to the executive.

If you did not like what I said in the past and now want to let me know, please send your comments to Jon Soyka, Shangri La Castle, Post Box # 1, Himalayas, Asia and I will pick it up the next time I pass through. Until then, think positive and keep shooting.

**Jon Soyka**

Present (but soon Past) President

*Club News continued from page 9*

of Jim Lloyd." Congratulations Jim on great work. I'm sure the whole Hamilton group is grateful for your dedication.

The Ottawa Video Group was also well represented with the showing of "Monster Mash". This film won three 1987 SCCA awards for the late Chris Needham, a prolific and dedicated young film maker from the Ottawa area and a person who is sorely missed by all who knew him.

The Toronto Film & Video Club is in the process of formulating their fall programme calendar. Upcoming October meetings will feature "A Night of Ben Andrews" C.I.A.F.F. Best Shorts", videos by members and clips of some Walter Strickland movies. The group is also reminding members about the "5 Minute Contest" which is due on November 19th. In sorting through "Shots & Angles" I have come across the names of Bert Butler and Rutger (Roger) Fick who are reported to be responsible for Thursday refreshments. I can only assume that these gentlemen are the coffee coordinators. If such is the case, I offer the biggest thank you for your efforts.

Robert and Julia Heckler of the Buffalo Movie-Video Makers are probably two of the most respected members of their club for their work in providing those half-time refreshments. In "Camerama", the group's monthly newsletter, we learn that the next meeting will have a demonstration of the Sonic Desktop Smartsound by Harold Cosgrove, a group video project entitled, "Scamarama" and a 100th birthday tribute to life member Henrietta Schlager. Indeed, a most deserved tribute to a lovely lady.

SAVAC the publication of our American cousins announces that Ed Hoot, who has been their Eastern Club News Editor for a number of years, will be resigning his post shortly. He and his wife are moving from Detroit to their new home in Indian River, which is thirty miles south of the Straits of Mackinac. Some very beautiful country in the north of Michigan. We send our best wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Hoot and hope that they will enjoy their new life. Also, in the newsletter the Ten Best of the West and Society of Amateur Videomakers and Cinematographers

*Club News continued on page 14*

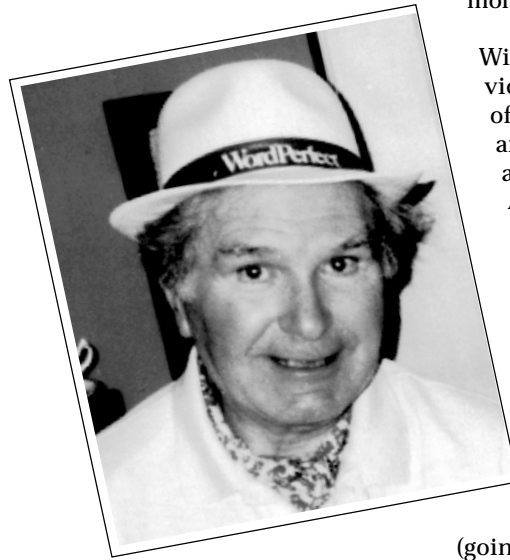
*Club News continued from page 13*

Joint Convention will be coming up on October 16-18 in Long Beach, California. Lots of good stuff on the agenda, ranging from Contests; to outstanding speakers; to the Awards Banquet; everything including great fun and fellowship.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, we find that they also are gearing up for the new season. The IAC National AGM Weekend with the theme, "The Bournemouth Experience", is beginning to take shape and as announced will take place at the East Cliff Court Hotel in Bournemouth between October 1st and 4th. Hot on its heels will be the Golden Knight International Amateur Film and Video Festival which is slated for Malta on October 29th to October 31st.

One of the most pleasant surprises in the July/August issue of IAC Magazine was in the Club Circuit article by Terence Patrick. Over the years I have often wondered what had happened to Norman Wisdom. I have often told my sons about Mr. Wisdom and explained that he was undoubtedly the last of that great breed of comedians who performed slapstick comedy. In fact, for the past number of years I have tried to locate a copy of what was probably his last film performance, that of the comic sidekick to Jason Robards in "The Night They Raided Minski's". So, it was with great warmth that I read in the magazine that, yes indeed, he was still alive and still prepared to entertain impromptu audiences. I really must find a copy of that video!!!

Well, it appears that I have come to the end of another club roundup and as Jasper Friendly Bear and Gracie Heavyhand say when they come to the end of "The Dead Dog Cafe Comedy Hour"... Stay Calm...Be Brave... Wait for the Signs. ■



## TREVELYAN BEARD REVIEWS...

### Adobe After Effects

If it's an 'attention getting' title you need or credits that will long be remembered, then turn to **After Effects**. Professionals use it yet it is within the reach of amateurs to use it as well. You start off with a short video clip or a still or a character generation clip, manipulate it in After Effects and compile it as an AVI file. This you then insert into your video (via Premiere) and end up with an eye-catching few seconds of footage you'll never forget.

Every video you make will be improved by using Adobe After Effects. AE (After Effects) is like pepper and salt and mustard! AE can make a flat video look good, it can make a well made video look even better. AE is not an editor — it's to be used with an editor. Its purpose is gingering up video and there's nothing quite like it. This revolutionary program allows you to take still images and make them dance. It lets you layer video on top of video

and create lightning, snow, rain, fireworks, explosions and much more.

With a few clips of pre-planned video, you will have the makings of a production that could match anything seen on TV. Its remarkable ability to produce 3D and Animation from existing video clips and stills has made it the favourite of professionals and prosumers everywhere.

AE works in layers. A layer might be a video, an audio clip or a still. Each layer will superimpose over the other. And each layer has several attributes such as transparency, scale

(going smaller or bigger), rotation, colour, blur, different types of motion, masks and others. Everything works on a timeline of course like in Premier, although the two programs are not at all alike. An example in one of the lessons (yes, I'm dedicated to learn this program through and through), shows a ballet dancer pirouetting across the stage. The word **BALLET** floats on to the screen and then fades off. Then each letter of the word appears one at a time, to immediately turn circles, bounce around and then jump clean out of the screen. Each letter has its own layer in the timeline, thus having its own attributes and can be made to move differently from the others.

An unusual effect is the simulation of handwriting, letters being formed just as if being written in script by hand. This has possibilities in other directions too. A video clip can be made to fade over its length or it can blur as if in a dream.

After Effects is particularly remarkable in generating imaginative titles — it can do almost anything with still scenes or letters.

Making commercials is a natural with AE. When you need some means of producing scenes that are "Larger than life", then reach for AE.

The manual for AE is more than adequate for learning the subject but there are two excellent books available that make learning AE both fun and efficient. One is Adobe's "Classroom in a Book for After Effects", it's essential. There is a CD and ten lessons, well explained. At \$59 it's indispensable.

Another excellent book is "Real World After Effects" by London and Reinfeld put out by Peachpit Press. Again, this has a CD-ROM included for a price of \$62. The CD contains 19 lessons and – hear this – it also contains demo versions of After Effects, Premier, Photoshop and Painter

These demos are fully workable, they only have the drawback that you cannot save or print from them. AE is such a thorough and complex program that it pays off to work through more than one book. You benefit by the different points of view being used to illustrate the topics.

Once you get involved with AE you'll be like me, driving along the streets but at the same time day-dreaming of all the possible ways you can use AE in your next movie.

Street price of Adobe After Effects - \$700 US

## Can You Walk a Little Faster, MGM ...

Yes MGM, we amateurs are now treading on your tail. With the sudden arrival of Digital Video and the increasing amount of hardware for it, we can now perform almost as well as the professionals. It doesn't take a small fortune anymore to own the camera, the deck, the computer or the software. It still takes more money than for analog but the resulting quality and the ease of editing are very noticeable. If you are more than just keen on this hobby of making videos and you are able to spend the amount needed, now is a good time to go out and buy.

But there is a problem and that is how to sort out from all the hoopla just what to buy. This article is intended to help you with this problem in a very direct manner. I have for the past two years gone through the mill. I have tried the good and the not-so-good and can make a few suggestions to help you avoid the same mill. Although new stuff is coming out all the time, you would not be out-of-date if you bought top quality equipment and you would remain in good shape for a number of years to come. The message is buy now and enjoy it – no need to wait.

To enjoy the wonderful world of digital, you'll need a digital camcorder, a

computer with top-notch hard drive, a digital deck (VCR), a capture card and appropriate software.

The computer is actually a collection of very special items inside the case, computers vary even more than cars. Depending on what you intend to do with the computer dictates what items you need to have on the inside. My first piece of advice would be to seek out a company to put together a machine to your own specs. Videography demands high speeds, high capacity and lots of memory and an off-the-shelf computer is not likely to have all of these.

My machine is an IBM clone, that is – it's a PC. It has an Asus TXP4 motherboard with an AMD K6 PCU of 233 MH. Memory is 128 MB and the graphics card is an ATI All In Wonder Pro. (ATI make among the best graphics cards anywhere). The sound card is a Sound Blaster AWE 64. The CD ROM drive is 24 speed. There is an 8 GB internal hard drive with an Adaptec AHA 2940 ultra wide SCSI controller.

Outside the computer, I have a Medéa VideoRaid hard drive of 20 GB. This is the best thing that I ever bought. It's a real pride and joy, is fast, quiet and completely trouble free. Being external it can be larger than normal thus allowing far better bearings and better platters. It can also be daisy chained for even larger capacity.

There are other items on my machine but they are not essential. I'm still running Windows 95 with no burning need to trade up to 98. The monitor is 17" with 0.25 dot pitch. Of course, everything these days is out of date in 12 months and my motherboard and CPU could be traded up (the gain is hardly worth it) but everything else should be good for years to come.

That's the computer. For the past twelve months I have been suffering heart-burn trying out capture cards and software and it's only now that things are settling down. In the next issue, I'll fill you in on the experience. ■

*Phone numbers:*  
ATI 905 882-2600;  
Medéa 818 597-7645.

## Directing Single Camera Drama *Author Mike Crisp*

Experienced videographers will get a lot out of this book. - it's full of good professional advice and for we amateurs good reading. Of course if you are a beginner and wishing to learn the craft from a master, you couldn't do better.

Mike Crisp worked as Production Manager and later Director on many classic BBC TV series. For ten years he was a senior producer with the BBC's TV Training Department - and it shows! The 'list of contents' reads...

1. Location filming
2. The Director's role
3. Sound
4. Cinematography: what the director needs to know about it
5. Storyboards
6. Filming dance
7. Directing techniques
8. Ten Sample Scripts.

He writes about continuity of lighting, sound and performance, these being of equal importance. He stresses that screen drama is all about creating a false reality and screen actors must appreciate the fact. He stresses the importance of holding the audience's attention.

His discussion of 'close-ups' goes on for several pages - how it affects the audience. Then into lenses and angles for close-ups, romantic close-ups, unflattering close-ups and more. He discusses a basic technique of the three-shot, an over-the-shoulder two shot favouring the actor, a close-up of him and a matching reverse close-up of the actress. And of course there's much more of similar practical detail to suit each chapter's material.

The Ten Sample Scripts are short scripts which need only half a day's rehearsal. They are arranged in order of dramatic and creative difficulty. They can be photocopied and used for non broadcast training drama exercises. Here's a great chance to enlarge the scope of your club's activities. A great chance to test the abilities of budding directors and camera crew. At a pinch the talent could go through the acting with script in hand, it's up to you. There's nothing to stop you combining with a dramatics group and shooting one of these in an evening. ■

*A Focal Press book, price 34.95 US.*

**by Trevelyan Beard**

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# IN RETROSPECT

by Lou Lanser

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Louis Lanser founded the Vancouver Amateur Movie Club (as it was known at the time) forty six years ago in 1952.

*Editor*

**M**any of you may remember the years that we started with a simple movie camera. First came standard 8mm. Then super 8 and some members had 16mm, but these were too expensive for most. We spliced the 50 ft. rolls together and entered Club Competitions. At the time they said that 98% of the people making home movies never spliced their rolls together. I think the same rule applies to video today, where most people never edit any of their footage.

Considering the limitations in editing equipment many excellent films were entered in the Club events. I will never forget the day a member brought his new camera to the Club meeting, it was a turret camera with three lenses...standard, wide angle and telephoto. Many of the members were excited to see this new model, but I'm afraid it did not improve their film productions. Remember how well these cameras were made, they seemed to run forever and never went in for repairs.

In those years no one had a TV. Today we can view the whole world in our living room, documentaries, nature films, old and new movies, and just about every topic to suit everybody's interest. This may be a reason that entries in Club competitions have declined.

Thinking back I wonder how many unedited films are still laying in cupboards and attics and have never been brought out since they were made. The old Kodak "brownie" standard 8 movie camera churned out miles of family records... picnics, kids birthdays and travel films. Many of us have transferred some of these films to video-tape but will they be presentable years from now?

Today Camcorder prices continue to fall and the cost of repairs continue to rise. Many members have found it makes sense to throw the old model away and buy the newest model with more bells and whistles. A lot of older filmmakers are having a hard time getting used to having their camcorders and editing equipment becoming obsolete in a few months. Most stores will not even look at

any equipment you have to trade-in. They just laugh and say "Where did you get that oldie, in a museum?"

I don't know how many speakers we have had at our Club meetings trying to sell the latest in Video equipment when a very large percentage of the members can't afford all the newest and latest. Most are not interested in spending a lot of money on this new technology. A questionnaire in a Video magazine recently asked, "What is your budget for video equipment next year?" "What are you planning to buy?"

As the late Uncle Ivan Watson wrote in his excellent filmmaking book... "If you have a camera with a good lens and a tripod EVERYONE is capable of making a good film." This also applies to using a camcorder. But what do we see at meetings? A lot of boring footage, poor titles, "wall to wall" music from beginning to end, and NO commentary. Then there are productions that have wizz bang transitions and wipes on every segment that makes your head spin. I think the audience wants to know interesting facts on what they are seeing. For example a member recently showed a video (it was transferred from super 8 to video) on the Grand Canyon. It was beautifully shot, and edited but all we heard the "Grand Canyon Suite" playing in the background for the whole production. I kept wishing for information on the Canyon's history and formation, how deep, how wide, how many tourists visit there, and what his personal comments and experiences were while climbing all the way to the bottom and back up again in the heat of the day. Attractions similar to this have many free booklets and brochures loaded with vital information that could have been used in this film.

I have kept in contact with the film and video club in my hometown (it started in 1952/53) in the Netherlands. They seem to be faced with the same problems we have. Poor productions, if any at all. However there still is a small group within the club who are very active making videos about historic events of the town, parades, restoration of old buildings and windmills in their area.

I feel that many people have an interesting story to tell about their life experiences that many members would enjoy watching. For example, their childhood memories, travels, interesting characters they have met. I feel they should write it all down and show it to their friends for suggestions on ways to improve it. Then write a shooting script. Find locations, props, old photos, and actors if needed, depending on the script. Keep it simple and think about the

outline over and over until you have the whole film in your head. This is what Alfred Hitchcock did. But we are amateurs and all we can do is do our best and do it our way.

## Weddings

I read with interest the article in Panorama by Tiny Bifano and his experiences in shooting weddings. I have also shot a few Weddings for friends but I did it for free. Most of these young people were friends of our children, and in each case it was suggested that we give them a copy of the ceremony on tape as a Wedding present.

The first wedding I shot on standard 8 was for a friend. (Remember old standard 8...shoot 25 feet open the camera turn the film roll over then shoot the remaining 25 feet) He said that he would pay for the film and any other costs. The Wedding Ceremony went fine and then I was asked to shoot more film at the reception that followed. The hall was dark and I needed a lot of light. I got many dirty looks from people shining all my bright lights at them. (Remember that the ASA rating for Kodachrome was 25 and a conversion filter was needed to get the correct colour temperature.) I finally edited the footage down to 200 feet and months later I invited them to a screening of the production. They thought the film was fine, but never inquired as to how much I had spent on film and I was never paid for all my trouble.

Another friend who had done many favours for me asked if I might shoot a Wedding of a good customer of his. I was obliged to take on the job to return a favour. This was a very big Jewish Wedding with 300 guests in attendance. When I showed them the film the Mother of the Bride was very angry, and said that I had shot the guests and NONE of the family. How was I to know, no one told me who were the family and who were the guests. On another occasion my camera broke down and all the footage was ruined, leaving the bride and groom devastated.

Then video camcorders arrived and I still hadn't learned my lesson. Most of my good friends' children were getting married. I made seven Wedding videos and of those seven couples five are now divorced. Two out of seven still married, not a bad average for these times.

Most of the tapes will never be played and by the time their children have grown up the tapes will be unwatchable. Let's hope with the advancements in digital video that all these images can be archived onto CDs and maybe they will be presentable in 100 year's time. ■