

Viewfinders

*Next Club Meeting: Wednesday April 4th, 2007, 7:30 - 9:30 pm
Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA*

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March Meeting Highlight

The main feature of the March meeting was a presentation by John Dietrich on how "Green Screen" technique is both affordable and do-able for the amateur video maker.

Bill Mannion screened his movie "Hawaiian Dance in Silicon Valley."

Frank Swanson continued his "Tips and Tricks" regular club meeting feature.

The "How To Green Screen or Bust" Presentation

By John Dietrich

Remember green and fun go together. At least that is one point I tried to get across during my presentation. The only two necessary components you really need to do a "green-screen" effect is a video camera and editing

software that allows you to "key out" a uniform color.

The green screen can be any uniform color that your talent is not wearing. In fact, blue screens are also used. You can purchase a chroma green muslin backdrop for \$600-\$1200 or you can place your talent 10 feet in front of a white garage wall and achieve good results.

The art of green screen production is a simple one. You want to key out, or cut out, an area around your talent and



make that area transparent so you can see a video layer on the track below your talent. If your talent is a square—no reference here to their lack of trendy fashion statements; you

would not be challenged to key out the area around them. But fortunately our talent is more interesting than a simple block, which adds complexity to their shape. Add motion and you have a job for many modern-day editing programs.

The alpha channel is the component of the video that allows you to perform the key. This is also the same technique that allows you to overlay titles over your video, so no problem. The alpha channel controls the amount of transparency. You all have used a dissolve at one time or another—that transition uses the alpha channel to change how transparent the top video layer is to allow more and more of the lower video layer to show through over time. So when we perform a green-screen key, we want some areas of our video frame to be on and others to be off.

So what makes a good background? Uniformity in color, uniformity in illumination, usually highly saturated, and any color the talent is not wearing. I showed three colors that your talent will likely not be wearing, but then again, you never know. The best policy is to coordinate with your talent before the shoot. You can also have your talent wear a patch of this

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color strategically placed to produce some interesting effects.

Start simple and have fun. Feel free to call me if you want to experiment with this interesting technique.

Here are some resources that can help get you to a more detailed understanding of keying or to buy materials that you need.

How-To Links

How to build background for under \$50

www.kenrickparish.com/jgeerling/articles/photography/diy-greenscreen.html

Digital Juice TV Production Notes: "Green Screens and Ham"

www.digitaljuice.com/djtv/segment_detail.asp?sid=78&searchid=12315

Digital Juice TV Tech Know: "The Technology of Chromakey"

www.digitaljuice.com/djtv/segment_detail.asp?sid=95&searchid=12315

Material Links

Synthetic Aperture Test Gear (Mac/Win)

www.synthetic-ap.com

Video Scope (Mac)

www.evological.com/www.evological.com

"Hawaiian Dance Comes to Silicon Valley"

Bill Mannion screened his movie which he shot at a High School in San Jose. He had discovered a shop called the "Hawaiian Store" in Cupertino and found that not only does it sell merchandise but it also provides lessons



in South Pacific dancing to local people of all ages, from children to adults. Once each year, the shop stages a showcase where the students take part in a demonstration of this South Seas art form.

WANTED Videographers to film dance showcase

Two volunteer videographers are needed to film "April in Rio," a dance showcase to be presented April 21 at Stepping Out Productions in Sunnyvale. As well as admission to a terrific night of dancing, there is free buffet and refreshments. If interested, please contact Gailynne Bouret at 408-735-0367 eves.

April Meeting Main Feature

Water on the Brain

This month we will screen the first of our new quarterly video challenge based on a given theme. The goal is to produce a short movie of a maximum running time, including titles, of ten minutes. Anything between a minute and the maximum length is acceptable, so if you think you have a winner, go for the maximum.

The theme for this quarter is "Water" and members were encouraged to take a broad interpretation of the word. As well as good photography, editing, and audio, coming up with creative ideas is part of the challenge. Just as long as the theme is recognizable as the basis of the movie, pretty much anything goes.

Several of us discussed the method of judging and determining winners. One idea was to have a panel of three members that the club felt were suited to make a quality decision. However,

to be fair, that would exclude those people from entering a movie in the competition. Therefore, at least for this month, I prefer to follow the method that we used in previous contests where all attendees at the meeting, whether they have entered or not, judge and select in order their favorites. Score cards will be available and list ranking categories such as camera work, editing, titles, audio and soundtrack.

Last month a show of hands by those working on a submission, indicated that we are going to have a good number of entries, so we look forward to a full and entertaining evening.

Also on the agenda, Frank Swanson will bring us Part Three of his popular "Tech Tips" series and if we have time, President Bob Meacham will give a short talk on "How to Make Better DVD Menus."

SECOND QUARTER CHALLENGE

Deadline for the next competition will be

the July club meeting and I've have been working on the next theme. Given that the month of July is when we celebrate Independence Day, a patriotic motif seems in order so the next theme will be "American Liberty". Initially this seems to be a challenging subject as, after all, we don't live on the East Coast which abounds in monuments and historic sites from the Revolutionary War. But then it occurred to me that the fight for liberty did not end in 1776. For the last 200 plus years we have been defending and extending liberty constantly. Within our own lifetime we, or some of our living relatives, witnessed World War II, and the struggle to preserve it. Relics of that conflict are still with us. Survivors can be interviewed; (I once interviewed in Atherton a group of women who "Knitted for Victory" during that war and they were a fun bunch). Boy Scouts and children still recite the Pledge of Allegiance; America has always been, and still is engrossed in extending liberty to our minorities as well as trying to export it abroad. A little research will uncover a variety of ideas. Try "Google" with associated words.

So, once again, Good Luck.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Have you ever noticed that you can hear the same joke or story told by different people and enjoy the one told by the better story teller over the one by other person who just "retells" the story or joke?

Anyone that attempts to tell jokes soon finds out that there is an art in story telling. To make your story as interesting to your audience as you can make it, you have to pay attention to who your audience is and how they will "hear" the story. Well, as video-

graphers, and especially editors, we all play the role as story tellers.

If you think of your videos as stories, be they a grandchild's birthday party, a trip to a volcano in Hawaii, a wild-life documentary or an intentional scripted movie, you will approach the shooting and editing processes from a different perspective. That of your audience. As you shoot and edit, if you think about what your audience will see then you are on your way to the telling a good story with your video. We as editors sometimes lose perspective on how and what our audience wants to see.

I think a comment attributed to Mark Twain relates directly to our video story telling. He once said, "The mark of a good speech is a good opening, a good closing and keeping those two parts close together." We shoot an event and capture a lot of tape to use for the editing process. We have a tendency to want to include as much of that tape footage as possible. But the fact of the matter is your audience is interested in the story and will quickly understand what is happening on screen. They are then ready to

move on and not see more and more of the same thing or person. We need to follow the rules as stated by Mark Twain and provide our audience with an interesting opening so they know what the video is about and it captures their interest. Then give them the "Reader's Digest" of the main part of the event. And close with a good summary and finality to the event.

In short, we are story tellers. Every time you shoot and edit you are telling a story of something that can be captured on video. We each need to improve and sharpen our skills; composing, shooting and editing, to become better story tellers. And, it would not hurt to practice your actual story writing and telling skills as well. Like the two people at the beginning of this article, it's up to you whether you will become a good video story teller, or just someone stumbling through, simply retelling the event.

Let's all become better story tellers.

ABOUT OUR NEW MEMBERS

Viewfinder's has two new members so far this year; **Karen Louie** and **William Loden**. The club welcomes them both and members are encouraged to make them feel at home with our group. To break the ice, here's a little information about them that they submitted on their new membership forms:

Karen owns a Panasonic PV-GS39 miniDV camera and works on a PC computer. Her editing application is Adobe Premiere Elements V.2. She describes herself as a beginner and is interested in video making as a hobby. Her video interest covers all aspects, including: editing, lighting, camera operations and audio, all of which she hopes to be able to develop through her membership with Viewfinders. Karen offers her time to volunteer for tasks for which the club need help.

William (Bill) is looking toward reaching a semi-professional level in video and is currently at the intermediate stage. He owns two cameras, a Sony DSR-250 and a Sony DSR PD 100a. He edits on a PC using Reality hardware Leitch Velocity 8.2. Bill's video subjects include music performances, travel and art and his main interests are acquisition and post-production operations and developing creative ideas. He hopes to improve his skills and find new ideas through membership with the club.

Welcome to the club Karen and Bill and take advantage of the expertise and knowledge our club members have to offer.

**LAST CHANCE!
AMMA 2007
CONVENTION
CRUISE
DEADLINE: APRIL 9TH.**

The cruise embarks from New York and sails for eight days visiting U.S. and Canadian cities on the Atlantic coast before returning to the Big Apple.

For information about the cruise or about sharing a berth, email Bill Mannion at billmannion@sbcglobal.net

For full information about the cruise, contact AMMA Convention chairman Harold Cosgrove by mail:
PO Box 474, Lewiston, NY 14092
or telephone:(800) 668-9041



A column intended to include video techniques, news of interest, or random bits of relevant information. Members are encouraged to submit items.

“FILMING FOR FUN” CONTEST

If you’re planning to compete in this annual event, remember that the deadline for video entries is April 7th. If you want to attend the luncheon, you need to return the completed lunch order form.

You will already have received a pdf form for video entry. If you haven’t received a luncheon reservation form, please contact JoAnn Pfo: (650) 967-4579.

VIDEO IMPORTING

When importing from your camcorder to your computer, be sure to have enough disk space to handle it. It takes a whopping 1 gigabyte approximately of memory for each 5 minutes of video you import. Also, make sure that screen-saver and sleep options are turned off to ensure that they don’t interfere with the import.

TRAVELING ABROAD

- Be sure your battery charger works in other countries
- Prepare a shot list; you might not want to go back for re-shoots
- Research ahead so you know what to shoot
- Pack a spare battery and lots of video tape
- Be aware of permissions and fees for shooting monuments and historic landmarks
- Take model/location release forms if you are unsure of the legal aspect of your shots

BECOME AN EDITOR FOR PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAMS



The Cupertino Senior TV Productions group has been producing 30-minute programs for cable casting on nine Public Access Channels from Palo Alto to Gilroy for over 24 years. To date they have produced over 850 programs covering a wide variety of subjects.

This group is sponsored by the City of Cupertino and they work out of two locations, the first is the Cupertino Senior Center on Stevens Creek Boulevard and Mary Avenue and the Public Access Studio KMVT in Mountain View.

There are 18 members, some of whom produce programs as well as crew the studio taping, and do the program editing either on their home computers or on a PC located in the Cupertino Senior Center.

Access to the groups editing equipment in the Center can be made available to any member of the Viewfinders who wanted to learn how to edit under the following conditions:

- 1. Becoming a member of the Cupertino Senior Center**
 - a. Must be 50 +
 - b. Pay a membership fee of \$24 for the year (prorated for 2007)
- 2. Becoming a member of The Cupertino Senior TV Productions group** with no obligation to either produce programs or crew in the KMVT studio.

What’s in it for you?

First, an opportunity to do hands on editing on a PC with training provided by experienced members of the group (at no cost).

Second, the pleasure of seeing your work cable cast on Public Access Channels with your name in the credit role.

You will be working with the Producer of each program to make the final cut a reality.

If you are currently editing on your own computer at home, the Producer would be happy to deliver the mini-DV tape and look over your shoulder as the program takes shape on the timeline.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to do valuable community service while enhancing your editing skills, call Bill Mannion at 408-252-2667 or e-mail him at: billmannion@sbcglobal.net

You can also learn more about the Cupertino Senior TV Productions group at our website: www.thebetterpart.com where you can see a list of our most recent award winning programs, a list of the several hundred program topics we have produced, and a statement as to our purpose.

Bill Mannion

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR MARCH 2007

Bank Account Beginning 2/28/07	\$942.15
Income Total	\$ 40.00
Dues (3)	\$40.00
Expenses Total	\$ 4.50
DVD Production (3)	\$4.50
Bank Account Ending 3/31/07	\$977.65



Frank Swanson, Treasurer for 2007

TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

At the end of each monthly general meeting of the Viewfinders Club, I've been presenting a short video clip from **Digital Juice** that provides you good information and practical tips for expanding your knowledge of camcorders, shooting techniques, audio recording, editing tricks and tips, or post-production tools.

In March we screened Digital Juice's "Creative Camerawork" video clip which showed how to get creative and shoot from a new perspective. This challenged us to do some creative thinking and camera positioning. It's all about giving your audience a new and interesting look from your camera's lens. Here are five tips for being creative with your camera:

1. Look Up, Look Down, Look All Around: change the feel of your shot by changing the height of your camera. Don't shoot everything from eye



or shoulder level. You need to see the world from a different perspective to set your work apart. Get down on your knees to

produce a dramatic perspective that your audience wouldn't ordinarily see. Or, head to higher ground like up on a ladder, from a 2nd floor window, or on top of a roof - but be careful! The principle is to add new dimensions to your productions that give your audience unique perspectives.

2. Tilt It: add interest by occasionally tilting your camera. These sideways shots are called "canted" or "Dutch Angles". Used in combination with a low camera position you can make your shots look real cool. Don't tip your camera more than 45 degrees or less than 2 degrees. Make the angle look like it was intended. Hand-held

shots can produce shaky footage so use a tripod with a mount that rocks left/right, or if your tripod has the tilt capability, just mount your camera sideways so you can tilt your camera side-to-side instead of up-and-down.



3. Distort the

Distance: your lens lets you compress or expand distances. Use the power of your camera's zoom lens to effect it. Different background looks can be achieved with different camera positions and lens settings: 1) a close position (i.e. 3 feet) with a wide angle lens setting produces a shot with the subject and the background in focus; 2) a



nearby position (i.e. 8 to 10 feet away) and reframed

with your zoom lens to make the subject the same size, produces your subject in focus with the background a little out of focus; and 3) a distant position (i.e. 25 or more feet away) and reframed further with your zoom lens to make the subject the same size, produces your subject still in focus, but now the background view is significantly narrowed and somewhat out of focus. Wide angle and telephoto lens settings can compress or expand the apparent distance between objects and impacts the field of view of your shots.

4. Create the Illusion of Depth: compose shots that help to add the illusion of depth to the flat screen. Avoid shooting your subjects against a flat wall. Reposition your camera so that a flat wall goes off into the distance. Look for diagonal or receding lines to add the illusion of depth. Another method is to use foreground framing (focusing) at the beginning of a shot and then adjust the focus onto the subject with your manual focus ring

to achieve a more compelling composition. Look out for frames that you can shoot through like a rock formation, between branches of a tree, or even two people talking to each other. Give your shots that cinematic flair by developing an eye for angles, finding shoot-through shapes, and objects you can frame in the foreground.



5. Set Selective Focus: set sharpness and softness selectively in your shots. Artsy shots often have some elements in sharp focus where others fall soft. Depth of field is the range of area in your shot that is in sharp focus. A wide depth of field has objects in focus over longer distance. A narrow depth of field shrinks the sharp focus range. Get to know your camera's controls, particularly the aperture and focal settings. In bright situations



it's easy to keep things in focus because

the aperture is (automatically) closed-down which broadens the sharpness range - small iris, large depth of field. In a dark room, opening up the lens (manually) to a wider aperture to get more light through the lens results in a shallower depth of field and it's more difficult to focus - large iris, small depth of field. To shrink the depth of field outside on a bright day, use a neutral density filter; this will allow you to open the iris to expose the scene properly but now you have a shallower depth of field; and furthermore, now you can move that band of focus closer to or farther away from the lens to create a dynamic focus effect called a Rack Focus. This will direct the attention of your viewers from one object to another and add a whole new dimension to your productions.

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SLIDESHOWS

The main feature of our April meeting was to be a talk by Jim Visser on Slide shows techniques. Unfortunately, Jim had to postpone his talk to a later date. Meanwhile, I have been musing on the subject. There are a whole host of subjects that the slideshow format can address particularly well and the subject material is usually close at hand.

Going beyond the family photo album and vacation trips, the medium opens up lots of possibilities. Using photographs or printed matter that can be imported into your computer provides the basic images. A couple of months ago I entered the club video contest with a movie called "A Stroll Through Venice" that featured 18th century works of the Venetian painters Canaletto and Francesco Guardi, with a music soundtrack by Vivaldi. The movie was, in fact, a slide show and contained no video footage at all, but members found it greatly entertaining. Motion in the images created a movie effect.

Most of us have hobbies other than video making that can make excellent slide shows. One of mine, over the years, has been philately. Now, before you start yawning and falling asleep at the idea of sitting through someone's boring stamp collection, think of the possibilities. Postage stamps tell stories.

My collection covers British Empire issues through the reign of George VI, a period when Great Britain still had a vast empire across the globe. The stamps record the people and cultures of that era and offer a myriad of stories of personalities and actions. Fleshed out with supporting graphics and a good story, here's the way to make an entertaining and (dreadful word) educational show for your friends and family. Just be sure that you have a good story to tell.

I have a Mac computer and use iMovie and iPhoto and PC owners have equivalent applications, often bundled with the original purchase. Using the so-called "Ken Burns Effect," that is, bringing motion to still images, you produce a result that can almost fool the viewer into believing your production is a video, bringing another dimension to the traditional still-image slideshow.



So, what other hobbies do you have? Consider how you can entertain others in a pastime to which they may not have given much thought. Even, like my philately hobby, may have thought uninteresting. The trick is to make it visually exciting. To bring something to it that the viewer was previously unaware of. Now, if someone could do that with a slideshow on, let's say, opera, or one's pipe cleaner collection, that would really make me sit up.

Brian Lucas

Viewfinders SUDOKU Puzzle

By Frank Swanson

The goal of Sudoku is to fill in every empty box with one of nine letters. Each letter can appear only once in each horizontal row, as well as once in every vertical column and once in each of the nine 3X3 grids. This month's puzzle contains the letters ACEHKMOR and Y. To help you get started, let's say you wanted to put an E in the 3rd column from the left. You couldn't put it in grids 4 or 7 because there is already a "E" in those 3X3 grids - so it must go into the first grid. Since there is a "E" in the third row across (and a "C" in the first square), the "E" has to go into the second square right below the "C". As another clue, the word "CHROMAKEY" appears somewhere in the puzzle. The answer to this month's puzzle will appear in the May newsletter. Have fun!



March Quiz - Movie Studio Answers: Columbia, DreamWorks, MGM, TriStar, RKO, International, Paramount, Disney

CREDITS

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Please send announcements and articles for submission to the publisher during the two weeks previous to the following monthly issue. Send address and email corrections to the publisher.

MONTHLY CLUB MEETINGS

Held in the Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center. 10188 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino, California. Watch the calendar for programs updates. Admission is free.

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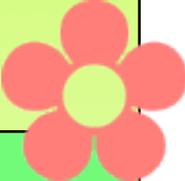
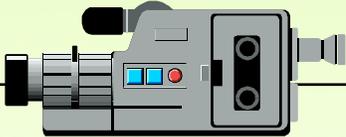
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WEBSITE

www.viewfindersclub.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2007

<p>JAN Jan 3 Meeting: "10 Best of the West" and NCCAMA movies screenings. Jan 5th San Jose Meeting: "Gorillas..."</p>	<p>FEB Feb 7 Meeting: Fred Pfof on "The History of Video Tape" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p> 
<p>MARCH March 14 Meeting: John Dietrich on "Matting and Chromakey Techniques" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>APRIL April 4 Meeting: Members Quarterly Short Video Competition screening. Theme: "Water" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MAY May 2 Meeting: Club Members Video Screening Night. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>JUNE Inter-club Exchange Night (still to be confirmed) Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>JULY MV Student Video Festival Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p> 	<p>AUG Panel Discussion of "Audio in Video: Microphones, Capturing, Editing and Voice-overs" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>SEPT Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCT Club Annual Video Contest. Screenings. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOV Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DEC</p> 