January Club Meeting: City of Cupertino City Hall, 10300 Torre Avenue. Tuesday Jan 8th, 7:30 pm

#### November Meeting Agenda

A grand night to wrap up 2007 and prepare ourselves for 2008. **Page 1**  **President's Message** For Bob, learning new things is the paramount reason for the existence of the club. **Page 3** 

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Brian moves on and looks back at a year of accomplishments. Page 3

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A recap of Frank Swanson's November everpopular workshop. Page 7

# November Meeting Highlights

### Main Features: Club Members Video Awards Night Election of Officers "Dearly Departed" First Screening

Our final club meeting for 2007 provided plenty of entertainment and was well attended. A full and varied program closed out the old year and paved the way for 2008.



## ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

First on the agenda was the serious business of electing a new Board. The slate of candidates was announced and additional nominations were solicited from the attending members. In the event, the floor was satisfied with the four nominations and no other candidates were offered. A vote by show-of-hands was called and the new officers for 2008 were unanimously elected. The new Board, of familiar faces, comprises:

**President: Bob Meacham**, who will continue the fine stewardship that he demonstrated last year. **Vice President: Fred Pfost**, one of our most active members and last year's club secretary.

**Secretary: Brian Lucas**, who will move over from his last year's stint as Vice President.

Treasurer: Frank Swanson, another of our most active members, who will continue in the position that he handled so well in previous years.

So, thank-yous and congratulations go to the new Board. These are members who have long shown their commitment to the club and will continue to strive to maintain it as the



premier amateur video club in Northern California.

## CLUB MEMBERS VIDEO AWARDS PRESENTATION

Next on the program was the presentation of awards to winners of the annual best members' videos event. The award itself is a new one.



Designed by Bob

**Meacham**, it is a handsomely framed gold DVD with the winner's name and entry printed on it, and will continued to be awarded in succeeding years.

The winning movies, which had been screened with other competing mov-

ies at the October meeting were shown again. They were:



First Place: "Antarctica" by Virginia Missoff. A documentary

about a trip Virginia made to the bottom of the Earth.



Second Place: "Cirgon" by Frank Swanson.

An infocommercial Frank made for a friend and inventor

which featured an electronic photo display device.



Third Place shared between: "Animals of Africa" by Janet Holl. A safari tour shot in Tanzania about regional

> "Sanctuary of Truth" by **Bart** Wittekind. A

animals.

visit to a cultural sanctuary in Thailand. (Award received on Bart's behalf by Gordon

Peterson).

For greater descriptions of these movies, please read the November 2007 club newsletter.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all those who submitted movies. We look forward to 2008's selection.



#### "DEARLY DEPARTED"

The club's new movie "Dearly Departed" had it's first club screening in November. It had garnered an award from AMMA (Amateur Movie Makers Association), qualifying as one of the "Ten Best of the West". The award was presented just before the screening. On hand to see the movie were our two principal actors, Donna and Frank Jeler and supporting actors Mabel Seid, Frank Yap and Fred Pfost. Copies of the movie were handed out and time was spent autographing them by actors and crew. Many other members appeared in the movie and were, we hope, pleased to see themselves on the screen. (The 2008 club production, with a working title of

"The Dancer," is already in the works. More news of that as it progresses). If you don't have a copy of "Dearly Departed" and would like one, please contact Frank Swanson. He'll be pleased to supply you with a copy at \$5.00 a piece.

#### REFRESHMENT BREAK

Frank Yap, our refreshment volunteer for the night, provided us with a beautiful "Viewfinders Awards Night" cake. It looked splendid, at

least for a little while until we descended on it. The break gave us time to socialize, swap news, discuss video techniques and ponder on what a makes a first rate amateur video club.

#### **DOOR PRIZE WINNERS**

From Frank Swanson: Compliments of computer book publisher O'Reilly Media, the following Club members were awarded a videography reference book of their choice: Janet Holl - Digital Video Pocket Guide, John Dietrich - Adobe Photoshop Elements 6, William Loden - Adobe Photoshop *CS3*, and **Bernie Wood** - *Apple iMovie* '08 and iDVD. Congratulations to all of you for participating at our last meeting of the year.

Our contact at O'ReillyMedia, **Marsee Henon**, *User Group Coordinator*, provided these four digital video books as a way to spread the word to video professionals and hobby enthusiasts that O'Reilly has a wealth of resources available in this growing field of videography. Since the Viewfinders Club is registered with O'Reilly, all of our Club members are entitled to a 30% book discount, as well as discounts on O'Reilly conferences and tutorials. For access to O'Reilly's website and book store visit: **www.oreilly.com** 

#### **TECH TIPS**

The evening closed out with the ever popular **Frank Swanson**'s club

feature, "Tech Tips". A full recap of the workshop is printed on page 7 of this newsletter.

And so we say goodbye to 2007; a good year for the club. Our monthly programs were informative and fun. Many of our members became enthusiastically involved with club projects and our standing as an amateur video club has never been better. Per Adua ad Astra!

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year!

This whole thing with new years always reminds me of the parallelism of baseball season. It is a new beginning that offers hope and brings the possibility of a rebirth in our lives. With the coming of the new year, or

#### Welcome to the Viewfinders Club SUDOKU January 2008 Puzzle

#### By Frank Swanson

The goal of Sudoku is to fill in every empty box with one of nine letters which are E, I, L, N, O, R, S, T and Y. Each letter can appear only once in each horizontal and vertical column and only once in each of the nine 3X3 squares. To get started, let's say you wanted to put a "T" in the bottom row across. You couldn't put it in the bottom left or bottom right squares because there is already a "T" in those 3X3 squares. Since there is a "T" in the fourth column (upper left corner of the middle square), the "T" has to go in the second square just to the left of the "I". A clue; the word that means "the plot of a movie" appears in the puzzle. The answer to this month's puzzle appears on page 6. Have fun!

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	Е		Ν			1		
Y	S		Т	L				R
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R				1	Y		S	L
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		Т						Ν
		S			1	Y	R	

new season, comes the hope that we, or our favorite team, will have a better year than the last. It means another opportunity to do more, reach higher and achieve greater than before.

I admit that last year as your President gave me the chance to learn a lot about making videos and about the folks that like creating videos. I enjoyed filling that role for the club. But I mostly liked the learning and I hope you did as well. This year I fully expect to continue that process and learn more, better and greater as we go through the year.

I hope each of you will join me in this learning process and at the end of the

#### **EX-VP'S MESSAGE**

Now that we've entered into the new year and wonder what the club has on offer, I thought it useful to look back at 2007. How did it go? What did we accomplish? For my part, I accepted the position of Vice President in January with some trepidation. After all, I had been a member for less than nine months. Many members had joined the club years ago. What did I know about videography, let alone serving on the board of a video club?

A duty of the Vice President is to build membership, a difficult task as we've seen from the shrinking numbers in our fellow clubs. A mystery, considering the large number of camcorders sold each year to many who, one would think, could use some help mastering their complexities and fulfilling their promise. Our club finyear we can stand together and marvel at all of the things we were able to accomplish in 2008. My whole approach as your President this past year has been to reinforce that fact that this is a teaching club. And, since I am filling the same role this year, you can expect more of the same. The only difference is that I may be more aggressive in getting you involved in this learning process. Actually, you can plan on it.

With all that said, I hope you each enjoyed your Holidays. Let's make the new beginning a good one and have fun with the new year.

Bah Mach

ished last year with about the same number of members that we had twelve months before. No real increase but no losses either. We've not yet found the magic



solution to combat either public apathy or people's limited leisure time.

I'm inclined to believe that by continuing to strengthen the club with dynamic meetings, and projects that involve and excite outsiders, somehow curiosity will spark the public in general. It may be a long slog but I think we are already doing that.

Not a single meeting in 2007 was disappointing. Presentations made by club members and invited guests helped us understand the techniques

Continued page 6

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT: NOV-DEC 2007**

Bank Account Beginning 11/1/	07 \$626.15
Income Total:	\$ 655.00
Dues (19) \$ 5	520
DVD Sales (27) \$ 1	.35
Expenses Total:	\$ 497.53
Contest Awards \$82.53	
DVD Production (36) \$	90
Quinlan Room Rental \$	5300
AMMA Dues \$25	
Bank Account Ending 12/31/0	7 \$ 783.62
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Frank Swanson, Treasurer

# Audio for the rest of us

#### By Bob Meacham

As videographers we read, hear and study a lot about cameras, shooting, editing and making video. But one of the darker sides of our hobby is getting decent recorded audio, especially voiceovers. As many professionals and speakers will tell you, viewers will sit through poor quality video but have a low tolerance for poor quality audio. I will try and help you along a bit in this article.

We had a great panel discussion on capturing audio with cameras and on microphone types in mid 2007. What we decided however was to omit audio editing because it can be very complicated. Let's take that process and start with a few general steps.

To begin with, you would benefit from using a stand-alone audio editing software to capture and edit your voiceovers, or any clean up that you want to do on the captured (native) audio from your videos. If you don't have a separate audio program I would recommend that you either buy one that you like, or download a program called "Audacity" at http://audacity.sourceforge.net. It has both PC and Mac compatible versions. It is simple to use and is a freeware program with lots of support. If you are a Mac user and prefer an Apple program you might get "Garage Band", part of *iLife*, selling at \$79.

There are a many other audio editing programs out there, so find one you like and can afford. Almost all have the same basic abilities to capture inputted (mic'd) audio, simple audio manipulations like EQ, Filtering, adding Effects, mixing multiple tracks (lines of recording) and level adjustments with audio monitoring. Easily 80% of the features you may never need, you just need to find out which ones you do need. So, we will concentrate on voiceovers and what it takes to make yours better.

Let's set some basic points. First, we all understand that badly recorded audio, either on camera or via mic and recording software, is difficult to improve. Aside from background noises (which I will address later) the biggest problem is caused by overdriving the microphone input and recording at a high level that creates distortion in the captured audio track. You need to be sensitive to this while re-



cording to your camera. When you set up to record a voiceover you need to test your mic's input level and, using the level monitors in the software program, avoid the volume going into the red zone, or overdriving.

For every audio track you are recording or manipulating you will have the ability to set its overall level, plus one for the Master track (all tracks combined output). You can adjust each track level slider or knobs on the mixing display. So, in your editing program what is a good level to record voiceovers? Well, a book on PC Recording Studios suggests that when recording voice you set the average level during testing at about -3dBm to -6dBm (most editing software defaults to 0dBm so you need to reset the level with the slider). This will allow what is called "head room" on your audio track to make sure it does not overdrive. Later when you are putting the project together you can always raise this tracks volume level to match the other audio tracks

in the video. Once you have the level set you should try a few other things to modify and clean up the voice



"Audacity" Audio Editing Program for Windows

track. The two most common things we do to voice recordings are adjusting EQ and adding a slight amount of Reverb. EQ, or equalization, is a tool that affects the audio signal by "shaping" it by increasing or decreasing, either by narrow bands to wide

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bands, the frequencies of the voice. It does not change volume, but selectively removes or adds gain to whatever frequencies across the 100Hz to 20kHz audio range that we as humans can hear. Adding a slight amount of reverb (a scaled down echo effect) to a voice gives it a larger, fuller quality that most people find pleasing.

#### EQ (Equalization)

So, let's talk about EQ. In most programs you will find both Dynamic and Parametric EQ. Both do the same type of job and the main difference is how finite you want to use the tool. If you are doing general voice recordings you can use the Dynamic EQ



and get good results. If you are cleaning up a track by trying to remove a specific noise, hum or other noises (unwanted audio at different frequencies) at the same time, you should use the Parametric EQ because it can give you a finer selection process. So, in recording voice here are some good guidelines.

Increasing frequencies below 100Hz can "warm up" or add "boominess" to a voice.

Frequencies between 100 and 200Hz tend to muddy some voices.

Frequencies around 400Hz can make the voice sound "boxy".

Frequencies around 800Hz can add "depth" or "body".

Frequencies between 1kHz to 2kHz can add "punch" or "attack" to the voice.

Frequencies between 2kHz to 5kHz can increase the "presence".

Frequencies between 5kHz and 8kHz are where some "harshness" comes into voice.

Frequencies between 8kHz and 15kHz add "brightness" or "airiness" to the voice.

In general you are better off cutting or decreasing a frequency section rather than adding or boosting one. It is best to record the voice without any adjustments, then activate the EQ and reset some frequencies as mentioned above, and then playback (listen) to the voice after it has been modified. You may need to make a number of tries at this to find some settings that you like. You will find you can greatly change the voice by removing highs or lows, most of which you may not like. But when you find one that adds to the voice, save it. There is not a single voice (or sound for that matter) that you hear on the radio, in movies, on television that has not had some basic "shaping" done to it. Any voice recording will take some trial and error to find what is best.

#### Reverb

When adding the effect called Reverb remember a little goes a long way. In any editing program there are a lot of reverb options. We have all been in an empty hall, a tiled bathroom or a church that has a hollow sound. That is the basis of echo and reverb. It is affected by the size of the room (sound travels by time, the larger the room the longer the time for the bounce back or wider echo) and the hardness (attack) of the walls and floor. Think of reverb in terms of time (delay), size and shape (attack and decay). Most audio editing software programs have presets based on room size; small or large rooms, halls or Churches. For your voice recording start with a small room. If it has too much reverb for you adjust the settings for time length (usually in Milliseconds) and decay (how long it takes the signal to die out). Again, you will probably need to play with some of the settings to get just what you want.

I find it valuable to record the voice and save it as is, then copy it. I then make modifications to the copy until I get what I think I want. You can then play back both tracks and compare the difference between the two.

The majority of what we do with these audio programs, after voiceover editing, is fixing problems in our audio tracks. Think of this like you would video clips. If you had a piece of video that was less than what you wanted, but was critical to the whole piece, you would probably try to use some tricks to improve it. Think of doing the same thing with your poor audio tracks. Learn to use the audio program to help you with this process. If you have a single piece of unwanted audio in a clip, like a car door slam, an airplane overhead or some other stray noise, you may be able to simply cut out the spoiled section and replace it with a normal sounds section, to fill the empty space. If there are needed voice sounds in the section you may have to rely on isolating that section and applying to it filters that remove or reduce the frequencies of the offending noise leaving some or most of the voice intact.

A. A. C. A.	Noise Removal
Noise	Removal by Dominic Mazzoni
Step 1	
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E	Get Noise Profile
Step 2	
Select all of	the audio you want filtered,
choose how	vmuch noise you went filtered out ick Remove Noise
choose how	much noise you want filtered out,
choose how	much noise you want filtered out,
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If you have a background hum or consistent noise on a complete track you can apply what is called a "sampling inversion" to remove it. With that you "sample" the noise during a piece that has no voice in it and then "invert" it and apply it to the entire track. This method cancels out the offending background and is the same technology used to make sound canceling headsets for air travel. It gets rid of the constant noise generated by the plane in flight. Once you start using the tools in your audio program you'll find much more you can do with them.

The bottom line is that video editing programs are designed to do mostly that, edit video, and do a minimal job at audio editing. And, if you remember that nothing you hear in broadcast or playback medium (YouTube excepted) is raw, untouched voice or audio track, then why should you settle for anything less and have marginal audio on your videos? Part of being a good video editor is learning to be a good audio editor.

## NCCAMC Competition and Lunch is Back!

Sacramento Club will host belated InterClub Contest at San Francisco venue

#### From Bernie Wood

Sacramento Amateur Movie Makers had earlier announced that the 2007 InterClub Contest had been cancelled because of a lack of response to the luncheon invitation. Three of the five NCCAMC clubs had produced movies to enter in the contest, and all three were disappointed. Consequently, Bob and Sue White, of SAMM, polled the officers of all the clubs on a proposition to hold the contest in early 2008. The idea was met favorably, but many Bay Area members would be reluctant to travel to Sacramento for the event. The Whites asked for suggestions for a venue that would reduce the travel distance for all club members. San Francisco won most everybody's approval, so they called Dick Brain, Treasurer of NCCAMC and Westwood. Dick suggested using the facilities at his residence, San Francisco Towers, and found that they would be available

Ex VP's message, continued

of Chroma-key; audio recording and selecting microphones suitable for video; home studio narration ploys, and what makes useful equipment for field trips. Guests taught us the history of video taping, and how to record one's city's history. School children and H.S. students entertained us with their video work and club members with their latest productions. The quarterly "Theme Challenge" has inspired members to use their imaginations and submit some of the best short movies we've screened. Our on-going "Tech Tips" meeting segments revealed how the professionals handle their trade. Several meetings with our fellow clubs during the year allowed us to view their member's work, and on a trip to the Dolby Labs in San Francisco we learned of that company's advances in digital cinema. And not the least important is our club movie making team that pushes our knowledge and skills to the limit in producing the annual

for a luncheon event on Saturday, January 19. Sacramento agreed to run the screening and judging and promote the event with announcements and registration forms.

Sacramento and San Francisco have collaborated to make this into an accessible and superbly appointed luncheon event at a modest cost of \$22.00 per person. It's up to our members now to support it with their attendance. So reserve the date, and send in your reservation form as soon as possible.

Not all Viewfinders members have received a reservation form with full information about the luncheon event. An enclosure will be added to this newsletter mailing.

You may also contact **Bob and Sue** White (suebobw@comcast.net) directly, or Bernie Wood (bernancyd@sbcglobal.net) for de-

tails.

Reservations are required By January 15th latest!

We look forward to seeing you in San Francisco on January 19th!

club movie. A full third of our members participate in this endeavor, either as crew members or actors, which is remarkable.

The year ended with a modest face lift for the club: a new logo and a revised name to reflect the technology of our craft: Viewfinders Digital Video Club. All-in-all, not a bad year.

Next month, this article will be written by Fred Pfost, our new Vice President. Fred has long been a major contributor to the club's success and will undoubtedly continue to be so. I will be assuming his vacated board position of secretary which entails recording the meetings and activities of the club, a natural fit for one who publishes this newsletter. I will also, of course, continue to nag you all for submissions.

Well, it was a good year. With the help of our members we can do even better in 2008.

Regards,

Road

#### **Theme Challenge**

You can interpret "Road" as Street, Highway, Lane, etc. From interstate superhighway to your own home street, the choice is yours.

Movies submitted should not exceed 5 minutes or so and can be as short a one minute.

#### **POSTPONED TO MARCH** Due to full Jan/Feb programs

#### REFRESHMENTS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Its time to call for refreshment volunteers for our club meetings during the coming year.

January and February meetings have been taken care of, but we need to fill in the rest of 2008. Please send your request for a specific month to Fred Pfost (fpfost@aol.com) who will compile the list. Of course, he may ask you to serve a different meeting if more than one request is received for any given month.

Answer to this month's Sudoku Puzzle





#### By Frank Swanson

At our last meeting of 2007 I thought it was time to give some tips on titling, and how it is important to provide clear communication with your viewer. By adding text, you're making a lot of decisions about titles location, duration, orientation, animation, readability and relativity to the topic.

1. Title Location: Good graphics are like real estate in that you need to pick the right location. Remember that your computer screen may not reflect a TV screen. Most televisions display an overscan image meaning that the outer images will fall outside TV screen edges. Newer flat-panel TVs (LCD, DLP and plasma) don't have this problem, but you need to consider all your viewers. The part that will remain visible on all TVs is called the "safe area". The "safe action area" is about 80% of the image, and the "safe title area" is about 60%. Your



editing system will show these two areas and you should keep your titles within the smaller box. The second is-

sue is where your titles fit within that safe area. Common usage places title types in certain locations, identifying certain things, and drive the rules of screen position for your text. Usually,



the title or name of your movie goes in the center of the screen. Identification text such as a person's name gets hung off the lower-

third line so as not to obscure the video subject of the frame yet stay within the safe title area.

2. *Title Duration:* How long should your titles stay on the screen? For simple (one to three line titles), most editors use the "3 Second Rule" where

the title is fully visible for 3 seconds exclusive of fade in/out and motion. Text graphics of four or more lines should be left on the screen long enough to be read verbally three times. When it comes to identifying

> people in your movie, keep the

For\_example,

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ing to read them

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title simple and only the first time they appear.

3. *Title Orientation:* Sometimes it's best to not play it straight with title text. You can slide your title from the standard center location to the side, even with a slight angle or straight-up on it's side. Titles can remain static



position to another. This title technique can literally give you a new angle on the titles you create.

4. Title Animation: There are several ways to get your titles on and off the screen. Popping them on and off with cuts can appear abrupt and jarring. At the very least you should use a quick dissolve to fade your text in and out. Sometimes a little motion makes sense. A simple slide or push can do the trick, but other transition effects, like bouncing letters, crossstretch, cube-spin and cross-zoom may look cheesy, To add interest, include a slight grow and/or slide effect. Some editor applications let you ease your text in and out. For multi-word titles, use a series of individual one-word titles so you can control the motion (and size) of each word independently. The use of "Revealers" is appealing to bring your titles on and off the screen (see Digital Juice for details).



which move across the bottom of the screen are usually used for notifications and warnings, not for quotes or on-screen ID's. Lower-thirds typically slide in and out from the sides, and credits typically scroll from the bottom up, not the top down. Hollywood has pre-programmed your viewer's brains to these motions.

5. *Title Readability:* Judging carefully your choice of fonts, style, treatments, colors, sizes, positions and just about everything related to your text clearly communicate a message to your viewers. And check your



6. Title Relativity: This concept is about the "why" of your titles. They should deliver information that can't be communicated with the camera. In the case of identifying people, use the title to tell your viewer who's talking, why they're qualified, and where or when the shot takes place. Use text when you want to recap a long list of information or to recap the points of a presentation. Use text when you want to add emphasis to a quote or something that was said in the audio. And finally, avoid using gimmicky text effects in your editing application just because you can.



When you watch television the next

Bill Dehr

time, see if you can spot each of these six titling

considerations. This tech tip can be seen live on your computer by going to **www.digitaljuice.com**, There are a whole bunch of instructional videos from Digital Juice that I'll pick for another meeting, so be sure to come and see my choice.



#### CREDITS

Editor and Publisher: Brian Lucas lucasbouret@sbcglobal.net

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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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Vice President: Fred Pfost fpfost@aol.com

Treasurer: Frank Swanson frank\_video@swansonhome.com

Secretary: Brian Lucas lucasbouret@sbcglobal.net

WEBSITE www.viewfindersclub.org



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#### JAN 8th, Tues. (Cupertino City Hall)

Meeting: AMPS 2007 Contest winning videos screened

Meeting: Mercury News Film Critic

Meeting: "HD Cameras: All You Need

Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos

To Know" Guest presentation

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

Meeting: "Shooting Underwater

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

Video" - Guest speaker Mike Boom

Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards

**JULY (Date TBD)** 

SEPT 11 (TBD)

NOV 7 (TBD)

and Social

presentation (To be confirmed)

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

MAY 7th, Wednesday

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

MARCH 11th, Tuesday

#### FEB 12th, Tuesday

Meeting: "How to Make a Digital Slide Show" by Jim Visser.

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

#### APRIL 8th, Tuesday

Meeting: "Road" Theme Challenge screening

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

#### JUNE 4th, Wednesday

Meeting: Panel Discussion "Adding Effects" with John Dietrich, Mary Johnson and Brian Lucas

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

AUG 1 (TBD) Meeting: To be determined Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

#### OCT 3 (TBD)

Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screening Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

DECEMBER No meeting this month