

Next Club Meeting: Tuesday February 12th, 2008. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA



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President's Message

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January Meeting Highlights

Main Features:

AMPS 2007 Winning Movies

Tech Tips

2008 got off to a good start at the January meeting with a full evening of movies to watch. Although our own club movie "Dearly Departed" did not gain any awards from the AMPS festival, the evening gave us a chance to see what we were up against.

February Meeting
Back at the Quinlan Center
"How to Make a Digital Slide Show"
by Jim Visser.

AMPS MOVIES

The January meeting gave us an opportunity to see what other video-makers, both U.S. and foreign, submitted to the AMPS (American Motion Picture Society) Festival of 2007. Bob Meacham requested and received a set of DVDs containing a great number of movies and selected several for showing in a single club evening. In some cases, only a segment of long movies was possible. He chose nine that provided variety, and demonstrated techniques that may be useful to our own productions.

"The Pinnacle." A U.K. club entrant that received *Fist Place* in *General Category*.

This documentary recorded one man's passion for ballroom dancing and tells of how, as a young man, he was embarrassed by his clumsiness on the dance floor and, determined to improve, he took dancing lessons. Moving on to competing at dance contests, he eventually became proficient enough to become a dance instructor. His request to be a judge at England's prestigious Wintergarden national finals in Blackpool was initially rebuffed but persistence finally won out and he attained the pinnacle of the dancer's career.

"Wishing Well." Best Experimental. A movie by Rod Maxwell.



Rod plays all the characters in this

whimsical tale of a homely woman who seeks romance at a coin toss stand in a "pop-up book" town. This unusual movie cleverly uses special effects and a great deal of actor's make-up. The *Wishing Well* is a storefront where one can make a wish if one successfully tosses a coin into small labeled boxes. The target for our heroine is the one offering romance but is guarded by snapping turtles. Other characters include handsome young men to whom our star character is drawn. All but her last coin fail to fall into the box but the last one is caught by a turtle which chokes and spits it back. The coin strikes and knocks down a homely man. He opens his eyes which meet our heroine's. They lock and her wish comes true.

Continued page 2



"Amateur Expert." Certificate of Merit. Comedy.

A backyard archeologist discovers relics of an ancient and lost civilization in his backyard. However, the relics have a suspiciously modern look about them. The first, he claims is an egg by which these people reproduced themselves, although it looks remarkably like a ping pong ball. Next he unearths what he says is a skull of one of these creatures but it has a great similarity to an old garden hose spray head. This is followed by what he claims is a skeleton but rather looks like discarded cable wires and bracket and finally a piece of the creatures headdress which one would swear was a broken shard of a tea saucer. Still, one never knows.

"Life's Little Gaps." (Segment). Second Place General Category.

Three young men live together. Two of them are brothers; the younger is mentally handicapped. The third young man is the younger brother's mischievous friend but at the end of the movie it is discovered that he is a fantasy. The older brother, aware of his brother's "friend" is called away to work but before doing so instructs his brother to behave himself while he is away and to phone 911 if anything untoward happens. As soon as he leaves the other two begin mischief making but are interrupted when a thief breaks into the house... This movie also received a Best Photography award.

"Breendonk." (Segment) A Belgian entry. Joint Best Foreign Entry. Best Documentary.

Utilizing a mix of original WWII footage and reenactments of the period, this documentary features an old man today, looking back at the events that happened when he was imprisoned in Breendonk Fortress after the German's overran Belgium. This grim prison became an SS reception center for "undesirables". The narrator, along with his father were accused, without any evidence, of being members of the Belgian resistance. The movie tours the fortress today

and the narrator tells of the terror, brutality and hopelessness of those who were interred there. Actors portrayed both SS soldiers and the accused Belgians.

"When Talk Works." (Segment) Third Place General Category.

At the "National Conflict Resolution Center" a woman hotelier takes her grievance against a hired plumber to a mediator. She claims that the hotel lost a great deal of customers fees when plumbing went awry in the sauna room and that the plumber failed to respond to the emergency. The mediator explains the rules of mediation and how useful it is to find agreement between the two parties. The woman's case is based on the plumbers "24 Hours Emergency Policy" and therefore should have immediately repaired the plumbing, not several days later which he did. The plumber does not deny his policy but claims that the woman never stated it was an emergency and therefore is not responsible. Emotions get heated which the mediator endeavors to control.

"A Test of Strength." (Segment) First Place Student Category.

This movie relates the reasons for the U.S. Government enacting the "Resident Aliens Internment Order" of 1942 and the experiences of those Japanese-Americans who fell foul of the law. Through interviews with surviving internees and illustrated with family photos and newspaper articles from the period, we better understand their plight. Having been ordinary law abiding citizens living and working together with non-japanese americans, they now faced hostility from their neighbors. Given only a month to report to the assembly points before being shipped to the camps, and instructed to bring with them only what they could carry, these people were forced to sell their goods, homes and businesses at ridiculously knocked-down prices. The movie follows them to the camps and relates the world they were forced to live in.

"Thomas." U.K. entry. Certificate of Merit.

An older couple who enjoy their Sunday drives in the countryside would be happier if they didn't get lost quite so often. But that no longer need be if they equip their car with a GPS set - which they do. Initial testing by calling for relative and friend's addresses look good. A feature of the instrument allows choice of voice for the route narration. The woman is impressed by the voice of "Thomas", a deep, warm, manly voice and opts for that one. Out on the road, "Thomas" proves dependable and steers them accurately through their next Sunday drive. Returning to their home, the woman takes a nap and dreams of a romantic episode with "Thomas". The next time she is in the car she finds a red rose attached to the GPS set and wonders how it got there.

"Numbers". U.K. entry. Certificate of Merit.

Riding the commuter train, a Sudoku enthusiast finds a book of Sudoku puzzles left on the train by a mysterious stranger. He is puzzled by the warning on the cover that the puzzles must be completed. Nevertheless he pockets the book and returns home and prepares for an evening of challenge. In his study he arms himself with freshly sharpened pencils and sets to work. The puzzles turn out to be extremely difficult and the hours slip by until his groggy mind fantasizes numbers floating around the room. Eventually, completely exhausted he falls asleep without completing the book. The next morning, on going to breakfast, he is horrified to find that his wife and son have turned into giant numerals.

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. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Where do I go from here?

Have you asked yourself that question lately? Wondering where and why you are doing the things you do? I ask it of myself often, but not as a life question. I ask it as a video editor working on a project that I have in progress. I often think about skills and knowledge that would make me a better editor, videographer and producer. I think about different ways to present the materials in my work and how to improve them. I have a tendency to look for something that is not overused, not outrageous but still away from the norm. So, when I ask these questions where do I look for the answers?

The funny thing is I look to you, the members. Or, people just like you

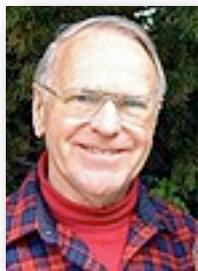
that are interested in doing what I am doing. I find that no matter what their own skill levels may be there is something for me to learn from everyone I meet interested in video. Sometimes it comes directly, like a tip, suggestion or criticism. And sometimes it comes indirectly, like a comment in a discussion that rolls around in my head until it ignites a spark of an idea, an idea that drives me to look at something in a different light or to become curious and re-search it to find out how or why.

I find that associating with people that have a common interest can be stimulating. And the more people, the more stimulant. Why I mention this is because as members of a club that is focused on video, I think we all benefit from the stimulant of interacting with the other members, and therefore the more members, the more stimulant, the more each of us learns and improves. So, using that as a base, I would ask each of you to encourage others that you may know, others that you may meet and others that express an interest in digital video, to join us and increase our own enjoyment and stimulant in the world of making videos. A club is a great place to interact, learn and acquire knowledge.

As your President it is my job to provide you with a great environment to learn and do, all the while helping to insure the continuation of the club. I mentioned last month (I assume each of you devotedly reads my articles) that I would be more aggressive in getting you involved and helping you to learn. Well, this part of that is I ask each of you, as we go through the year, to find at least one new person and bring them into the club as a new member, a new stimulant. One of the best ways I know to help each of you learn is to associate you with more people of like interest and maybe greater knowledge. We learn better by interacting than from reading text books. Books may hold the answer but peer relationships hold the key to desire. To learn and increase our own knowledge we need to feed that desire to become better at what we want to do. We need to associate ourselves with more folks with the same desires.

I want each of you to become a recruiter for Viewfinders and bring one new member to our club. Help answer the question, "Where do we go from here?"

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Here we go again" another year of the Viewfinders - into our eleventh year. A club that started out of a DeAnza class on "The A.B.Cs of Camcorders" in early 1997 to this mature organization that has won local, national and international movie com-

petitions for the last two years in a row.

**Congratulations, Viewfinders
And thanks to those brave souls
who started it all.**

This year's programs for our meetings are pretty well established and our new 2008 club movie has been chosen and many of the production assignments have been made. We should all be proud of our organization, which is the premier group of the five clubs in the NCCAMC. Our only shortcoming is in our demographics. How can we entice a few (more) young people to join our club to insure its longevity?

Besides the main program chosen for each month we will show club mem-

ber movies and Tech Tips (by Frank Swanson) taken from "Digital Juice" programs. Please bring your video productions and make a few comments about them before their showing.

A group of fifteen of our members made the trek to San Francisco on January 19 where the Sacramento and San Francisco clubs hosted an interclub competition and luncheon. The meal was very good and the twenty-five attendees enjoyed entries from three of the five clubs that attended.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Pfost

NCCAMC Inter-Club Meeting and Competition

The original plan had been for the Sacramento club (SAMM) to host the meeting in the Fall of 2007 but due to a lack of response from members it was postponed until January this year and moved to more convenient San Francisco.

Bob and Sue White of SAMM arranged with Dick Brain, NCCAMC treasurer, to hold the meeting at Dick's residence, the San Francisco Tower on Saturday afternoon, January 19th.



Viewfinders were well represented with about a dozen members, including Frank Swanson and Bernie Wood who volunteered to chauffeur us in their minivans. More than 25 people from the four Northern California clubs attended.

An NCCAMC officers' meeting, previous to the entertainments, discussed the possible disbandment of the NCCAMC on grounds that it may no longer serve a meaningful role but the idea was not accepted. It was agreed to move the Councils funds to a non-fee charging account. Treasurer Dick Brain will undertake this. It was also agreed that the "Filming For Fun" event will be hosted by Peninsula Video Makers Club this year.

After official business was concluded, the attendees enjoyed a first class lunch and then settled down to watch three competing movies from Sacramento, San Jose and Cupertino. The two judges for the contest, Fred Whitridge and Adah Bakalinsky, were introduced. The movies were:

"The Legend of Stingy Jack" from Sacramento.

In Irish folk tales, Stingy Jack was a quick witted lazy character with a passion for turnips, often stealing them from his neighbors fields. One day he has a visitor, a minion of the Devil who has come to take him to Hell. Slyly, Jack convinces the demon that a drink at the pub before descending wouldn't hurt but neither

he nor the demon has money. Jack tricks the demon into turning himself into a sixpence, then quickly pops the coin in his purse which also contains a cross, preventing the demon from escaping. Jack offers to free the demon but at the price of gaining eternal life. The demon has no choice but to agree. However, Jack didn't live forever and one day finds himself at the Gates of Heaven where he is spurned for living a sinful life and sent down to Hell. But Hell doesn't want him either and the demon tells him to go, giving him a burning coal to light the way. Jack complains that the coal is too hot to handle so the demon tells him to carry it in his carved out turnip. And that is why, each year in October, we see Jack wandering the Earth with a hot coal burning in a turnip, except in America where the pumpkin provided a better coal holder.

"Motor Car Mania" from San Jose. Produced by Ken Clouse and Bernie Wood

and narrated by Bernie Wood. A home movie of an automobile journey by two young couples from San Francisco to Vancouver around 1930, and ending with a busy freeway today. In 1929, San Jose car dealer George Winton made 16 mm films of car travel and used them to promote automobile touring. Ken Clouse picked this one up, purchased at an estate sale, and he and Bernie Wood digitized and edited the original footage. The movie records a journey north from San Francisco to British Columbia and back. This was a time when hotels and roadside diners were few and the roads were narrow and primitive. The fun of the film is in seeing how the West Coast has changed. Today's towns and cities were very small in 1929 and the miles between them had little or no development. Roughly following today's route 101, they traveled north through Redwood forests and over mountain passes into Oregon. Thence up to big city Portland, and over the Columbia river, through Washington to Puget Sound and the Canadian border. A ferry ride took them across to Vancouver Island and lunch at the Victoria Hotel. After an excursion to Grouse Mountain Resort, the families turned around for the long journey home. This is a fascinating movie and of great interest to those of us who are curious about an earlier California and Pacific Northwest, long before the post-second world war's huge influx of people and development.

The third movie was "Dearly Departed" from Viewfinders which has been screened at the club and covered by this newsletter frequently.

In order of merit, first place went to San Jose, second place to Sacramento and third place to Cupertino.

Well done San Jose.

All-in-all an enjoyable afternoon and good chance to meet other video enthusiasts from our sister clubs. ■





Getting to Know Video File Formats

Uncompressed video takes up a lot of space, about 17MB per second. Video is one of either **lossy** or **lossless**.

Lossy loses some of the data in the original file, making it much smaller, but the loss should be imperceptible. (For example, DVDs are compressed using the MPEG-2 format making files 15 to 30 times smaller but are still considered high quality.) **Lossless** retains all the information.

The different video formats are:

MPEG-1: At 1.5Mbit/sec it is a low quality compression for moving pictures and audio. This was based on CD-ROM video applications and is a popular standard for video on the Internet transmitted as an .mpg file. It is not very complicated to create and will yield okay results.

MPEG-2: Designed for 1.5 to 15Mbit/sec and used for digital TV satellite top boxes and DVDs. It is based on MPEG-1 but designed for the compression and transmission of digital

broadcast television. The most significant improvement over MPEG-1 is its ability to efficiently compress interlaced video.

MPEG-3: There is no MPEG-3

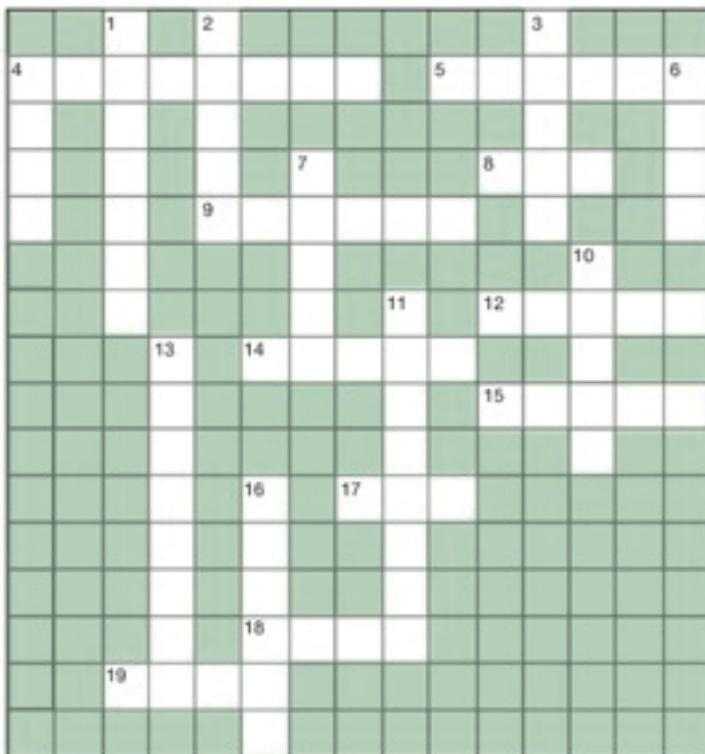
MPEG-4: The standard of multimedia and Web compression. Individual objects within a scene are tracked separately and compressed together to create an MPEG-4 file. The end result is a very good and efficient compression that is very scalable, from low bit rates to very high ones. This format is the one most used today by camera and camcorder manufacturers. It offers excellent video and audio quality. It is also the format used for streaming and downloadable web content.

JPEG: A compression format that stands for Joint photographic Experts Group. JPEG is not so suitable as raw files for full-color or grayscale image editing, as it exploits the fact that the human eye will not notice small color changes in an image.

MJPEG (Motion JPEG): is a video codec where each video field is separately compressed into a JPEG image. It's best suited for broadcast resolution interlaced video, such as NTSC or PAL. MJPEG is ill suited for progressive scan computer monitors. It is also used for short files such as the short movies that can be made by a digital camera.

.AVI: stands for Audio Video Interleaved. This type of file is a sound and motion picture file that conforms to the standards set by Microsoft Windows Resource Interchange File Format (RIFF) and has the extension .avi. This is a common file format for Windows based PCs. The video quality is good at smaller resolutions; the major drawback is that the files tend to be large. The most commonly used video codecs that use .avi are MJPEG and DivX. To play an .avi, you could use Windows Media Player, RealPlayer, or the DivX player.

Gordon Peterson



Viewfinders Crossword Puzzle

By Frank Swanson

How well do you know your fellow club members' names? Work on this puzzle and find out.

ACROSS

- 4. John
- 5. Jack
- 8. Frank
- 9. Aoyagi
- 12. Fred
- 14. Holl
- 15. Mooty
- 17. Webster
- 18. Smith
- 19. Jon

DOWN

- 1. Bob
- 2. Swanson
- 3. Lucas
- 4. Brownlie
- 6. Johnson
- 7. Grodt
- 10. William
- 11. Gordon
- 13. Misoff
- 16. Jim

Answers on page 6

How would you like to share your videos online?

There are a number of places a person can use to share their videos with friends, family and other video enthusiasts. Some are simple and some are more complex. Some have limits and others do not. Some require creating accounts and others, ...well you know.

Now, I have mentioned a couple of times that I will be asking you as members to get involved in your club, here is another. I am looking for 2-3 members that are willing to get together to do the research of "On Line Video Sharing Sites" and write up a handout for the rest of the members that would like to take advantage of this online capability. I would expect it to take a few hours of work and research from a few members to find out what is involved in getting access to uploading to these sites, what they



require in formats, file size and file space allowed. And, after researching the sites create a handout for our members to take home in their hot little hands and go through the detailed steps to be able to upload and share their videos.



If you will do the research, Brian has volunteered to put it in a classy format for the hand-out sheet itself. So, are you willing to learn how to do this on your own, and then write it up to help the other members in your club? If so contact me through the usual venues. 408-996-0750 or HYPERLINK R9Meach@aol.com.

Contribute to the club and learn some new, neat stuff on your own.

Bob Meacham



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 Pfof (fpfof@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.

TREASURER'S REPORT: JANUARY 2008

Bank Account Beginning 12/1/07	\$ 753.62
Income Total:	\$ 275.00
Dues (10)	\$ 275
DVD Sales (27)	\$ 135
Expenses Total:	\$ 0.00
Bank Account Ending 1/31/08	\$1,026.62



Frank Swanson, Treasurer

Answer to this month's Puzzle



TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

Since we're at the beginning of a new year, I thought it was time to give you some tips about how to shoot everything you need the first time - think about how the footage will be edited before and as you shoot it. The secret is to shoot with the eye of an editor.

1. Set The Scene: Establishing shots help put your scenes in context. They

help you tell a more coherent story, identifying the environment for all of the succeeding shots. Frequently more than one establishing shot is useful to set the stage,

each one visually honing in on the where the majority of the scene is to be shot. Otherwise you'll confuse the viewer right off the bat and that will distract them from your story. For example, if you're going to shoot a wedding, set the stage by beginning your video by showing the outside of the facility and the surrounding grounds; next the entry area where guests arrive; some B-roll of that area like flowers, invitations, attendees; then cut to the featured event. These establishing shots gives your editor important elements to tell a better story and prepare your viewer for what's coming up next.

2. Cover Your Cuts: This means to shoot cutaways to cover awkward edits. What are awkward edits? Well, it's situations where you've got to condense down an hour of video, or you have footage from a number of different angles and perspectives to put together, or you've shot a series of entirely different scenes at a party and want to make one cohesive movie. Just stringing all this material together can produce ugly edit



points. So while you're there shooting the basic material,



gather a collection of cutaways like close-ups of people listening to a speaker, a close-up of someone taking notes and so forth. Let your imagination run wild and get as much B-roll as you can find, even if it occurs before or after the main material is shot. And, cutaways also add interest and variety to your movies.

3. Shoot Alternate Angles: Change your camera's position and lens settings to give your editor some options. Editors need more choices of footage which gives them more to work with in telling the story in an interesting and unique way. If an event has some repetitiveness to it (like shooting a baseball game of your child), don't just drop your tripod down in one spot or leave your camera at one height. Try shooting from different angles and



heights. Shoot wide, medium and tight angles from several different perspectives. Move around. Your goal as a shooter is to provide the editor with a wide variety of shots to choose from.

4. Shoot Multiple Takes: Once you think you have the shot, shoot it one more time if you have the opportunity. This gives your editor the option of choosing just the right shot that helps with the continuity, pace and flow the scene. You never know when a safety shot might save the day. This concept also applies to those cutaways we talked about earlier. Besides

no movement at all, try using a slow moving tilt up and down, pan left and right, and a slow zoom in and out. Variety is the spice of movie making.

5. Make A Plan: "Plan your shoot and shoot your plan" is the tip here. Shooting without one can be a hit and miss endeavor. Because you're shooting lots of footage to give your editor lots of options means that some of your shots won't be used in the production. By planning ahead you only need to shoot extra shots of some things. Try to make a plan before you get to the shoot, even if the shoot is a simple event like a birthday party. Golfers, like experienced shooters, visualize their shots before they step up and take their swings. Make a list of the shots that you need to shoot - what are the "must haves", the "like to haves" and the "nice to haves". If someone else beside yourself is going to do the editing, talk with that person before the shoot so you can find out what they're expecting from you. A story board plan is even better to help define the shots you'll want to get. Then, use the checklist at the event to ensure you've got everything the editor will need. This is especially important if you shoot out of sequence like the cutaways and establishing shots. Finally don't just stick to your list, keep your eyes open for interesting options that you didn't anticipate - these can be some of the best B-roll you'll ever capture.

One last tip: tape is cheap. It's better to shoot more footage than you need than not enough. When you watch television the next time, pay close attention how the editor used establishing shots, cutaways, alternate angles and other B-roll to make an interesting movie. This tech tip can be seen live on your computer by going to www.digitaljuice.com. "Take 5: Shooting to Edit". There are a whole bunch of other great instructional videos from Digital Juice you to watch while you're on their website. I'll pick another one for screening at our next meeting, so be sure to come and see my choice.

CREDITS

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Viewfinder Newsletter is published during the third week of each month for Viewfinders Digital Video Club of Cupertino members.

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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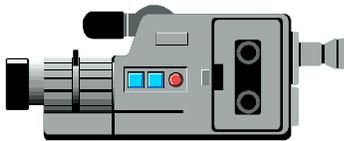
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
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<p>JAN 8th, Tues. (Cupertino City Hall) Meeting: AMPS 2007 Contest winning videos screened Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>FEB 12th, Tuesday Meeting: "How to Make a Digital Slide Show" by Jim Visser. Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MARCH 11th, Tuesday Meeting: Mercury News Film Critic presentation (To be confirmed) Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>APRIL 8th, Tuesday Meeting: "Road" Theme Challenge screening Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MAY 7th, Wednesday Meeting: "HD Cameras: All You Need To Know" Guest presentation Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>JUNE 4th, Wednesday Meeting: Panel Discussion "Adding Effects" with John Dietrich, Mary Johnson and Brian Lucas Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>JULY (Date TBD) Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>AUG (Date TBD) Meeting: To be determined Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>SEPT (Date TBD) Meeting: "Shooting Underwater Video" - Guest speaker Mike Boom Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCT (Date TBD) Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screening Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOV (Date TBD) Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DECEMBER No meeting this month</p>