

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



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September Meeting Highlights

Main Features:

Shooting Underwater Video

By Mike Boom

Tech Tips

"Introduction to HD"

Workshop by Frank Swanson

September Meeting

Club Members Annual Video Contest

See "President's Message" for contest rules

Beneath the Waves with HD Video

A presentation by Mike Boom

Mike could well be called a "renaissance man" in that as well as being a highly skillful and artistic movie maker he also writes for both national and international high tech companies. He has also written "how-to" computer books and his musical talents have gained him employment as a classical oboist in several major Southern California chamber and symphony orchestras. You can learn more about Mike's work by visiting his web site: www.laughingeel.com.

As our guest and speaker at the September club meeting, Mike screened several of his underwater videos, all

shot in High Definition. The color and clarity of his videos is awesome. He has travelled the globe to shoot his movies and include Monterey California, Fiji Indonesia and Belize Central America. All of his work undergoes hours of effort at his editing desk enhancing, color correcting, and color balancing. His dedication has paid off in winning many international awards. A list of them can be found on his web site.

Among the movies he screened for us, with a verbal explanation of how he planned and executed each one, were the following.

"Fiji: A Swim Through the Garden"

This expedition was aboard a dive boat chartered by a group of experienced divers. Part of his agreement was to provide each of them a movie of their experience. Exploring Fiji's reefs, his camera captured the brilliant colors of coral gardens and the amazing flora and fauna that make their home among them.

"Komodo Beneath the Waves"

Komodo National Park in Indonesia is probably best known for the huge

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Komono dragons that roam the park. But it also has rich coastal waters that attract divers. This site was chosen for one of Howard and Michelle Hall's 3D Imax movies who were shooting there when Mike was shooting his own movie. Learning from these two experts was an education that Mike values and has made use of in his own work. The seas here teem with underwater life making it one of the paramount dive sites on the planet.

"Green Water, White Mirth"

This movie was shot closer to home, in Monterey Bay which can be rather murky. Mike was lucky enough to have good weather and clear water for this video. His camera captured many of our local coast's underwater creatures, but not without difficulty. It seems that much as Mike was curious about our underwater neighbors, they were just as curious about him. He pointed out how difficult it can be to keep one's shots steady when a group of young seals, nudging and jostling him, figure that they have a new playmate to join in their games.

"An Ocean in Motion"

Shot off the coast of Belize, this is Mike's first movie where he fashioned a means to adjust white balance under water. This innovation greatly improved his takes, especially for wide angle shots. Consequently the movie features panoramic underwater scenes with clouds of colorful fish filling the screen in demonstrations of precise maneuver as they dart, change course, and sweep over the corals.

"A Snails Pace"

Shot beneath a Monterey California wharf. This area is silty and the fish rather small but it is rich in other sea life including snails and invertebrates. Because these creatures are small and the water murky, Mike needs to get close in and uses a macro lens on his camera, and lights to illuminate and bring out the color of

his subjects as they slowly amble around the wharf's pilings.

Not being in a position to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on the kind of equipment that professional underwater movie company's use, Mike had to find methods to simulate their results on a limited budget. He uses an off the shelf prosumer HD camera. The camera housing is a basic model (many housings can cost twice the price of the camera). Close ups and wide angle shots are made with quality screw-on diopters, which do not require alternate housings. Camera stability is solved by lashing a piece of wood to the underside of the camera housing and screwing a cheap tripod to the wood. It's not elegant but it works. His night shots are lit with USVH lights (Undersea Video Housings - a brand) which provide an even spread and color spectrum.

Although Mike's movies suggest he always enjoys fine weather on his dives, it isn't so. It can be rough out there. On one cold trip off the Channel Islands in Southern California the waves were so choppy and steep they smashed part of the boat's bow and engulfed the deck before pouring below.

Mike's movies can be described as gorgeous and fascinating but also educational. Conservation is a major issue. He has seen first hand how global warming is taking its toll on underwater life as the oceans warm up. This is clearly observable by seeing once colorful corals become pallid and bleached due to rising sea water temperatures.

If you missed the September meeting, or wish to view Mike's movies again, go to his web site:

www.laughingeel.com where his movies may be seen and where you can read descriptions of each of his videos, and much else about himself and his work. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



October always brings the Annual Member's Video Contest. It is one opportunity to show and share your work, get direct feedback on its quality from others like yourself and get your work recognized as some of the best in the club. Feedback and acknowledgment are always important to any artist that creates. It helps to keep us on track to improve and refine our skills.

I hope that each of you will have a short video piece that you have created to enter into this contest. This is your club and this is a good opportunity to showcase your efforts. The rules are simple. You need to be a

current member in good standing (paid dues), your video can be on VHS, S-VHS, miniDV tape or DVD and total run time cannot exceed 15 minutes in length (combined time per member for more than one entry). Bring your video in to the meeting on Tuesday, October 7th. Awards and recognition on these videos will be given at our November meeting.

The City and the Quinlan Center are in the process of upgrading their A/V system in the Cupertino Room and so if it is complete we will be able to show your videos on a new large screen using an up-converting DVD player to bring it into HD. It will be a great improvement over the system we have been using. I do however want to thank Fred and JoAnn Pfost for the use of their projector over these many past years, and acknowledge their efforts and contributions to the club.

One other issue of note is the selection and election of the Board of Directors for 2009. At the August meet-

ing I opened the floor for any nominations for Board positions, those being President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. If you would like to put your name in for a position, or would like to nominate another member, please do so before the October meeting. We need people willing to put in the time and effort to make the club run smoothly. You all have been recipients of these efforts in the past and the jobs need to be rotated between members to keep them fresh and moving forward. So, if you want to step up...

On a personal note, the Fall usually has me traveling around the West a lot and keeps me very busy. This year I hope to use my new camera to capture some great Fall footage and give me something to share with you all next year.

See you at the October meeting and bring a video!

Bob Mach

VIEWFINDERS PICTURE PUZZLE By Frank Swanson

Irv's Garage from Club Movie "Two Left Feet." Somebody's been messing around in Irv's garage and has made ten changes. Can you spot them all? Answers on page 6.





Judging the "Ten Best of the West"

By Bob Meacham



Each year since 1956 a contest has been held that is only open to movie makers west of the Mississippi River. In it each year the entries are viewed, judged and the best are selected as the "Ten Best of the West". The responsibility of collecting and judging these entries falls to a different club or group each year. This year our club volunteered to take on this job.

As President I accepted the responsibility for the club and gathered together 4 other experienced members. **Mary Johnson, Gordon Peterson, Frank Swanson, John Dietrich** and I met in April to discuss the rules, update the entry forms and to organize the actual logistics for the judging. From that meeting we came away with a solid plan to host the contest. Frank acted as the Chairperson and collected the entries as they came in. In mid September we sat together and viewed all entries and through hours of viewing and discussion selected the best of the lot, setting up the 2008 Ten Best of the West.

The awards for this contest will be handed out at the Annual Convention being held on October 10th and 11th in Buena Park. Frank Swanson will represent Viewfinders and present the awards in our name at the Awards Dinner on Saturday night.

Each of us that was involved in the contest and judging has a better respect for what it takes to host such an contest, and what it takes for a video to be competitive in a contest like this. It was a great experience. ■

The following article is credited to George Cushman written years ago.

A Brief History of the "Ten Best of the West" Contest

The "Ten Best of the West" is an annual motion picture festival for non-professional motion picture makers. Its beginning really had its roots in the Town Meetings, little two day conventions of the Photographic Society of America. Since their programs were primarily for still photos, Photographer George Cushman, a PSA member from Long Beach California, suggested Town Meetings for motion picture photographers only. Two such meetings were held in the Los Angeles area in 1954 and 1955. Cushman felt these meetings lacked the excitement of a competition. The ACL Ten Best, the father of all Ten Best motion picture competitions, had been headquartered in New York City for the past 24 years before moving to Philadelphia under the sponsorship of PSA in 1954.

Why not, Cushman wondered, have a Ten Best in the west, limited to motion picture makers residing in the western part of the country?

Because the San Francisco area was also active in holding similar get-togethers, Cushman decided to approach those people with his idea. On March 17, 1956, he wrote a letter to Tullio Pellegrini, President of the Northern California Council of Amateur Movie Clubs, suggesting an annual competition which he called "The Ten Best of the West Coast".

President Pellegrini answered immediately with tremendous enthusiasm

for the idea. He said Edward Kentera would be assigned to follow through on it. A day or so later an equally enthusiastic letter was received from Ed Kentera. He suggested however that the word "coast" be eliminated, it was not needed. Thus encouraged Cushman then wrote to Ed Garwood President of the Southern California Association of Amateur Movie clubs, and suggested the idea to him. Early in April President Garwood responded saying, "I presented the idea of the Ten Best of the West to our members and it was favorably received. A motion to that effect was made and carried without opposition."

Cushman then wrote similar letters to Salt Lake City, Utah, Seattle Washington and Denver, Colorado asking motion picture groups in those areas for their reaction. Letters were promptly received from O.L. Tapp in Salt Lake City, R.W. Patterson in Seattle and Markley Pepper in Denver all expressing enthusiasm for the idea.

Patterson in Seattle asked if they could host the Ten Best in 1957 in conjunction with the film festival they were planning.

But 1956 had to come first, and it did. Both Ed Kentera and Ed Garwood were helpful in establishing the rules. Entry blanks were printed, publicity was circulated and the first Ten Best of the West was held in the West Hollywood Park Auditorium on San Vicente Avenue in Los Angeles on Saturday evening November 10, 1956. That first year there were no talks, lectures or demonstrations just the screening of the winning films and

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What You should Know about MiniDV Tape



By Mark Calice
Ardenwood Sound & DVD
Posted on MacFilmmakers Listserve

miniDV tape is so thin and so easily damaged, that you should never use a camcorder to repeatedly play a recorded tape. The reason is that the head drum in camcorders is smaller (for space reasons) than those found in playback decks like a DSR-11. To get the video recorded correctly, the tape needs to be wound further around

the circumference of the head drum and more tightly than a playback deck's head drum thus causing much faster tape wear.

Digital is good for error correcting small dropouts but once a threshold is crossed on the number of missing bits, the tape is bugged (do we miss analog?) That's why professionals always use decks for transferring/digitizing (never camcorders) and

then never play the tape again unless absolutely necessary.

It's always good to store the tape in a played (not fast forwarded) condition. This keeps the edges of the tape pack smooth and minimizes potential degradation from long term storage. When the tape needs to be played again, the rewind operation helps to minimize tape restriction and shed any loose oxide particles off the tape. (For this reason, I know that everyone reading this always fast forwards then rewinds their new tapes before they start shooting right? ;-)

Although this probably doesn't apply to you, there's also the time element involved with the shelf life of tape probably only reliably lasting 10 years or so... Archive time! ■

Ten Best of the West cont. from page 4

screening of the winning films and the awarding of the certificates. Four areas; Seattle, Northern California. Southern California and Salt Lake City were the original sponsors and each was eligible to host a Ten Best of the West annual competition Those areas have taken turns ever since.

In 1973, two clubs in the San Diego area asked to participate. They were welcomed as a 5th sponsoring group and they hosted their first Ten Best of the West Festival that year. Attempts were made to induce additional areas; Denver, Dallas, Omaha and a few others to participate but to

date nothing further has come from this effort.

There is no President or any other elected or appointed officer. Each area selects someone from their region to represent them at the annual meeting which is held each year during the Festival. Each representative votes for his area on matters relating to the Ten Best of the West, such as contest rules changes entry fees, with of the next Festival and so on. There is, however an Executive Secretary who maintains records, keeps each area advised of any changes that have been made, forwards notices of upcoming events, and in general keeps the ball rolling. He has no

vote.(ed-No Executive Secretary has been appointed for several years.) The Chairman of each Festival serves as the Chairman of the Ten Best of the West for that year, and when his Festival is over, the Chairman for the following year takes charge and serves for the ensuing 12 months until his Festival ends.

There is no treasury, never has been. Each host organization plans and carries out the details of its own Festivals, its registration fees, plans the screening and the program, and keeps any profit that may accrue. By the same token, the host absorbs any loss.

Many observers have said the absence of a treasury has been one of the dominant factors in the continuing success and smooth running of the Festival for these many years. (No doubt true!)

In the beginning all entries were on photographic film, but as video has become a popular medium for making motion pictures entries on video tape are now acceptable in the competition.

The Festival is usually held in October or November. It has proven to be a popular event and has been held every year since its inception in 1956. ■

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR SEPT. 2008

Bank Account Beginning 9/1/08	\$ 894.54
Income Total:	\$ 100.00
Maybe Today DVD (1) \$5	
VHS Tapes (10) \$10	
TBW Entries (10) \$85	
Expenses Total:	\$ 157.02
Presenter's Expenses \$41.50	
Contest Mailings \$8.90	
TBW Judging/Awards/DVDs \$106.62	
Bank Account Ending 9/30/08	\$ 837.52



Frank Swanson, Treasurer

Video Equipment Review

Adobe Premiere Elements 4

By Milt Kostner

Maybe you've just bought your first video camera. Or, you've owned a video camera, whether digital or analog, and you have a collection of tapes you've shot. But your audiences rapidly get bored when you want to display them. The reason probably is that these tapes are too long, contain uninteresting shots, need some tweaking, or the shots have uneven sound or exposure. You really need to edit them to achieve movies that are both interesting and enjoyable. Adobe is recognized for the video editing programs like Premiere Pro and also offers Consumers an Elements version for you to consider.

Or, maybe you use an earlier version Adobe Premiere and are considering an update. But Adobe Premiere Pro CS3 lists at \$799 (street \$739) and an earlier version upgrade lists at \$299. The version 4 of Premiere Elements is priced by Amazon at only \$79. (Version 7 of

Premier Elements comes out October 15 at a pre-order cost of \$140 or an upgrade of \$120. From what Adobe advises as changes this upgrade appears not to be worth it.)

Yes, but maybe Premiere Pro (hereafter APP) may make better movies than its poor cousin Premiere Elements (hereafter APE)? Of course! But given the same good shots and decent plot, in my opinion (given as an APE user), only the fussiest of experts could tell any



difference between projects from a good editor using either software. This editor, using APP, would save some time and could make finer tweaks and timing. But would the average person notice the differences? APP should make some difference in correcting shot errors.

APE, like its sibling Photoshop Elements, contains better than 90% of the capability of its more expensive cousin. It is capable of capturing video from camera, Internet, data storage or even DVD's. It edits video and audio clips on multiple timelines, adds key-framed transitions and effects, adds titles and puts out movies as DVD's, tape, to Internet as Flash or Quicktime, or to mobile hardware (Ipods and the like).

What's missing? Based on several APP books I've read, major APP features that are missing in APE include: multiple sequences allow editing segments of your project with separately tabbed multiple timelines; simultaneous editing clips from up to four cameras; multiple sub-clips from a single captured clip (rather than duplicating and re-cutting the clip); graphic video analysis panels for color and luminosity correction; additional tools and buttons throughout the application to save time and effort; additional transitions and effects.

The Professional justifies the additional APP cost savings in time and a drive for the highest perfection. While the latter is a noble goal even for us mere mortals, is your time worth the price difference? ■

VIEWFINDERS CLUB REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

With the club's thanks to those who provided refreshments for 2008 meetings to date.

January 9th, Wed.	Fred Pfost	July 8th, Tues.	Irv Webster
February 12th, Tues.	Bob Meacham	August 12th, Tues.	Gordon Peterson
March 11th, Tues.	Brian Lucas	September 9th, Tues.	Janet Holl
April 8th, Tues.	Jack Gorham		
May 7th, Wed.	John Dietrich	October 7th, Tues.	Mary Johnson
June 4th, Wed.	Dick Brownlie	November 5th, Wed.	Stan Smith

Picture Puzzle Answer

- B3 - Flag has grown an extra red and white stripe
- E7 - Color of container changed from yellow to blue
- D5 - Voltmeter has doubled in size
- C1 - Water heater has been moved to the right
- F7 - Work bench has no right leg
- E4 - Irv's left hand/arm is missing
- C6 - A second saw has been added
- E8 - Tool box is now missing
- B7 - Fluorescent light has no power cord
- E5 - Workbench's left drawer has no handle

TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

At our September general meeting we screened Digital Juice's Tech Know episode titled "Introduction to HD" which explains what High Definition [HD] is in technical terms, why you should know more about it as a videographer, and your future possibilities with HD.

1. High Definition is Here: As video makers we need to get ready to transition from

Standard Definition [SD] to HD.



This should be a smooth one for us producers for two reasons: 1) the majority of household television sets are still SD because people with large screen SD sets are happy that they can still play all of their SD DVD movies, and 2) the transition to digital TV allows our productions made with current SD equipment and software to still work on HD sets, though not in HD quality. Some of our editing applications already do support HD (e.g. Apple's Final Cut Pro and Adobe's Premiere Pro), so all we need now is an HD camcorder to join the HD movement.

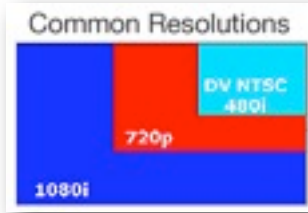
2. High Definition Fundamentals:

There are three main digital television standards in the United States at the



present time: one SD and two HD. The SD standard is known as 480i and the two HD standards are known as 720p and 1080i. The 480i standard has a resolution of 720x480, 720p has a resolution of 1280x720, and 1080i has a resolution of 1920x1080 (pixels per line x lines per frame).

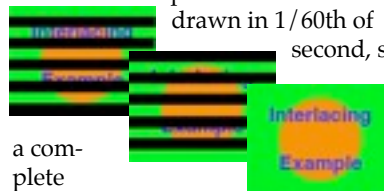
In 1941, U.S. analog television was defined by the NTSC (National Television System Committee) as having 525 lines of vertical resolution. Translated digitally we get about 480 visible lines



on the television screen, thus the name "480i". Old televisions

never did show the top and bottom of the picture because the tubes were not truly rectangular but rounded, the enclosure masked-off those edges, especially at the top and bottom.

What does the "i" mean that appears after the numerical resolution number? It stands for "interlace". Our old televisions draw every other line on the screen in two alternating fields: the first field drawn consists of lines 1, 3, 5, ... 523 and 525, and the second field drawn consists of lines 2, 4, 6 ... , 522 and 524 and filling in the missing lines of the first field. This "interlacing" technique makes for a flicker-free picture. Each field is drawn in 1/60th of second, so



a complete picture is drawn 30 times a second. However, very fast motion can reveal interlacing's biggest problem when we look at freeze frames (i.e. captured single frames). The frame looks blurry (i.e. has a shimmy look to it) making it useless to us. But, in general, interlacing technology was a brilliant innovation.

The 720p video format, designed at AT&T Bell Laboratories in the early 1980's, has a frame size of 1280x720 where the "p" stands for "progressive" scanning. All horizontal lines are drawn in consecutive order from top to bottom in a single field. This is why some people think "progressive" is a superior format to "interlace".

The 1080i video format is the latest HD format and presents a picture as two 540-line fields per second which

the human eye combines to build a single picture. The frame size of this 1080i format is 1920x1080, the "i" again refers to interlacing of the two fields.



There are a whole bunch of other ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee) video format standards but these three (480i, 720p, and 1080i) are the broadcast standards that television settled on. In the USA, 720p is used by networks requiring the smoother image desirable for fast-action sports telecasts, whereas 1080i is used by others due to the crisper picture for less active programming.

3. Your Future with HD: A number of pro/consumer HD camcorders are out there at a price amateur videographers can afford so getting one with HD capability is highly recommended. Even if you edit your HD footage in the SD format, the resulting SD video picture quality looks great. Hollywood has proven this with their movies on SD DVD's for a long time now. Also, it is very likely that your current editing application is already HD capable, so when prosumer Blue-ray DVD burners come on the market you'll be ready to wow your family and friends with some terrific high-quality video images that match the pros.



This Tech Tip can be seen at



and searching "1080i" to reach this 6-minute Tech Know video "Introduction to HD". I'll select another tech tip for screening at our next meeting, so be sure to come and learn something new. ■

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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. 10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino, California. Watch the calendar for programs updates. Admission is free.

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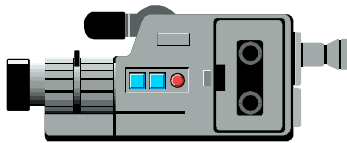
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
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<p>JAN 9th, Wed. (Cupertino City Hall) Meeting: AMPS 2007 Contest winning videos screened Tech-Tips: "Shoot to Edit" Frank Swanson</p>	<p>FEB 12th, Tuesday Meeting: "How to Make a Digital Slide Show" by Jim Visser. Tech-Tips: "Sound Advice" Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MARCH 11th, Tuesday Meeting: Andy Panizza of Pinnacle Systems demonstrates "Studio Ultimate" Tech-Tips: "Animating Text" Frank Swanson</p>	<p>APRIL 8th, Tuesday Meeting: "Road" Theme Challenge screening Tech-Tips: "Through the Window" Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MAY 7th, Wednesday Meeting: Club Members Movie Night Tech-Tips: "Selling It with Sound" Frank Swanson</p>	<p>JUNE 4th, Wednesday Meeting: Panel Discussion "Adding Effects" with Bob Meacham, John Dietrich, Frank Swanson (for Mary Johnson) and Brian Lucas Tech-Tips: "King Cut" Frank Swanson</p>
<p>JULY 8th, Tuesday Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos Tech-Tips: "Faulty Fonting" Frank Swanson</p>	<p>AUG 12th, Tuesday Meeting: "White Balance" by Fred Pfof and Members Videos Screening Tech-Tips: "Who're You Talking To?" Frank Swanson</p>
<p>SEPT 9th, Tuesday Meeting: "Shooting Underwater Video" - Guest speaker Mike Boom Tech-Tips: "Introduction to HD" Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCT 7th, Tuesday Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screening Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOV 5th, Wednesday Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DECEMBER No meeting this month</p>