

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, February 11th, 2009.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room,
Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd.,
Cupertino, CA



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January Meeting Highlights

Screening of the best movies from the AMMA and AMPS 2008 Festivals

Frank Swanson presented a selection of award winning entrants from the AMMA contest and Fred Pfof did the same for the AMPS contest.

AMMA movies are usually shorter with a number of "One Minute Movie" entries so Frank was able to show most of them in their entirety. AMPS movies are mostly longer so Fred screened abbreviated versions of his choices with an emphasis on editing and creative techniques.

February Meeting

Presentation on the theory of light and video lighting

By Fred Pfof and John Dietrich

AMMA Movies

Presented by Frank Swanson

"Scare the Crows" (U.K.) During a Scarecrow



Festival on the Isle of Guernsey, a young boy is teased by his friend who claims that the scarecrows walk about when no one is looking. Nervously he bicycles home, passing grotesque looking scarecrows. Meanwhile his father is called to work, leaving his mother and a handyman to head for the bedroom together. The mother, alarmed on hearing her son return, tells the handyman to leave by the window dressed in her frock and hat as he has left his own clothes downstairs. The boy sees the handyman dashing for the shrubbery and mistakes him for a scarecrow. Father comes home but dismisses the boys tale about seeing a walking scarecrow and the boy is left wondering as crows in the nearby trees cackle and croak.

"Anthropology" Urban amateur anthropologist Paul Hansen considers the history of



shopping carts. He has discovered that they originally came from outer space by way of Mars, and settled in submerged Atlantis, ancient Egypt and other primitive lands, leaving evidence of themselves in cryptographs, cave drawings and papyrus scrolls. Their children begin their early years as shopping baskets before reaching full shopping cart adulthood. Over the years they have flourished and today have become a true friend to man; loyal and helpful.

"Triangle" (One minute Movie.) A young couple's car suffers a flat tire on a narrow winding mountain road in winter. Instructing the woman to erect a collapsible red caution triangle on the road behind them, the man busies himself removing the flat tire and mounting the spare. The woman finds the triangle construction perplexing. A sudden screech of tires causes the man to look up to see that the woman has found her own way to bring the traffic to a stop.



"Antiques Fraud Show" (One minute Movie.) Paul Hansen spoofs the popular PBS TV show. As an art expert, he removes a button from a fan's blouse and declares it worthless

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and says she must be joking. Smugly he asks us if that isn't something we would like to say to hopeful art owners. The enraged button owner pulls a gun on him. She isn't joking.

"By the Book" (One minute Movie.)

A lazy husband waits for his wife to make the morning coffee. She suggests that he could make it himself but he chides her for not doing her job. Oh no, says the wife, making coffee is a man's job, it says so in the Bible. The bemused husband asks her to prove it, whereupon she brings him a Bible and opens it to the Book of Hebrews. He asks where it says that making coffee is a man's job. Right there says the wife. "HE BREWS."



"Survival of the Penguins"

Antarctic penguins face a savage foe in the Tiger seals that cruise their feeding grounds. Venturing off the rocks and into the sea is a life and death race to avoid the jaws of the ravenous seals. The movie shows the violent end to the slow and unwary, while gulls hover and dive to snatch bloody penguin scraps left by the seals.



"Hunter" (One minute Movie.)

A sophisticated couple attend an expensive restaurant to enjoy an intimate meal. The waiter, with great aplomb serves the wine and then brings them the soup.



The man is disgusted to find a fly in his and calls the waiter who apologizes profusely, then swats the fly with a swatter sending soup all over the table. He then walks jauntily

away to the kitchen and chalks up another fly kill on his score board.

"Kayaking on the Oxbow Bend"

Two kayakers photograph river and riparian life on the Snake River in Wyoming National Park. Anglers fish from the banks and small fishing boats while bald eagles and white pelicans soar above. Various ducks nest in the reeds of small river islands while moose bathe to rid themselves of pesky flies, and others feast on whitefish. The dramatic Wyoming mountain range rear up as a magnificent backdrop to this Western idyl.



AMPS Movies

Presented by Fred Pfost

"Mark TV: A Visit to St. Petersburg"

(Best Comedy.) This tongue in cheek travelog takes emcee Mark to Russia, rather than The Florida city he was hoping for. Utilizing some stylish cuts and effects, he takes us on a tour of the architecture, statuary and lifestyles of a people still surrounded by the remnants of the communist era. Officialdom can still be suffocating but Western influence is becoming rapidly dominant in the dress, food and lifestyles of the citizens.



"Continue" (Best Sci/Fi - Horror.)

In a world where human regeneration is possible, Senator David Leonard is due for his third re-creation but has been told that twice is enough. The gift is available to few as the planet has not the living space to allow all to enjoy it. It has been given secretly to a few chosen government officials. Incensed at being rejected, Leonard makes the secret public, bringing



universal wrath down on the officials. Ironically, he receives a letter granting him a third regeneration as living space has been found on another planet but it is rescinded because of his public statement.

"Crimson" (First Place Student.)

This movie, without any dialog, makes heavy use of symbolism and color tinting to tell the story of a young woman's murderous emotions when she believes that another young woman has replaced her in her boyfriend's affections. The color red, or crimson, dominates scenes depicting revenge on the other woman. A red scarf, blood erupting from a shower head, a bloodied rival and the girl's own red hair underscore her malicious thoughts. A murder is seen but did it happen or was it just a figment of her warped mind?



"Paschendahle" (First Place General-Documentary-Editing.)

(Belgium.) By far the most professionally executed movie, this Belgian entrant examines WW1 and the people that it affected. In 1917 two brothers, Franz and Victor left their village and joined the Belgian army to fight the Germans, only to lose their lives at the Battle of Paschendahle, the bloodiest battle of the war where three quarters of a million men lost their lives. Their namesakes and grandchildren, Franz and Victor, two middle aged men today, set out to visit the site of that war's battlegrounds and military cemeteries. On their travels in Flanders Fields they observe the burial ceremony of a recently discovered body of a British WW1 soldier, the graves of their post-humorously decorated grandparents and a WWI museum in the City of Ypres. Modern scenes are interwoven with seldom seen yet superb war footage from the Great War. ■



VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Viewfinders Club Web Site

Have you seen our web page? Our club has a new website and every member should check it out. We have a "Welcome" page that describes the club's aims, our meeting location and address and meeting dates.

Click on the heading "Events" and you can see pictures of guest speakers, a listing of future meetings and presentations and a brief description of the meeting topics. If you click on "About Us" you will be able to read about the club's history, see photos of our officers and view some pictures taken at our meetings and informal gatherings. A click on "Productions" and you will learn about past completed movie productions and the current movie underway.

There is still work to be done, but we have a wonderful beginning that we can be proud of. After you have had a chance to review it, please let me know what you think. Any suggestions for improvement will be gladly received. E-mail me at: jack_g93@yahoo.com ■

Jack Gorham

WANTED!

Refreshment Volunteers for Club Meetings

Please help fill the volunteer roster for 2009 by letting one of the club officers know which month you prefer either by email or at a meeting.

Viewfinders PICTURE PUZZLE

Dance Scene Taping from the Club Movie "Two Left Feet"

This scene with Herb Wolff holding the microphone boom has had a makeover with ten changes. Can you spot them all? Answers given below.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7



E7 - Microphone boom pick-up has gotten longer
 A2 - A second speaker appears on ceiling
 C5 - Chair is missing
 B2 - A picture appears on the wall
 D1 - Tripod grew an extra leg
 B1 - Ceiling light grew in size
 C2 - Waist of green skirt is higher

PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWERS
 C7 - Dancer's pink shirt changes to green
 D4 - Herb has second pencil on shirt
 C1 - Right half of mirror is missing

Video Equipment Review

Velbon Videomate 607 FH Tripod

By Brian Lucas

A year or so ago my wife's dance teacher asked me to video a dance contest for him. I agreed, and arrived at the venue with my camcorder and tripod. The competition began and I quickly found that following the fast moving dancers with close and medium shots wasn't going to work well with my traditional camera tripod unless I was willing to put up with jerky shots. I determined to buy a fluid head (FH) tripod.

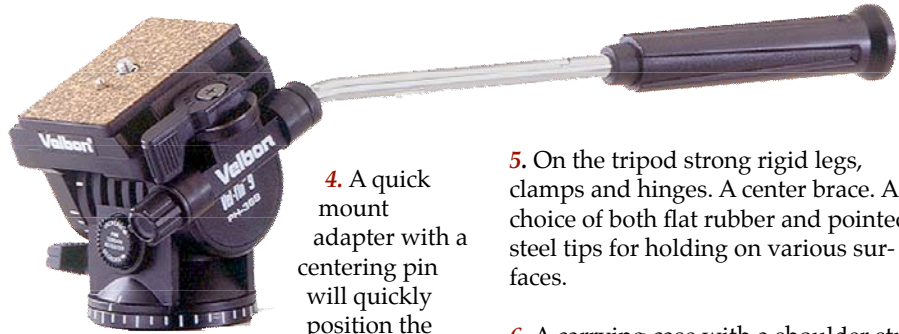
My memories of this kind of mount date back to my film camera days. They were beautifully machined but heavy and extremely expensive. Had things changed since then? Yes indeed. Lighter camcorders and improved technology has allowed manufacturers to offer reasonably priced FH tripods to the videographer.

Things to look for in a FH tripod

1. Smooth pan and tilting motion. After all, this is why you buy one. Damping controls should be adjustable for both horizontal and vertical movement. At whatever tension adjustment the motion must be smooth and consistent.

2. Weight. The heavier the camera the more rigid, usually meaning heavier, the tripod should be. Old film cameras were very heavy which required heavy tripods. A heavy camera on a light tripod shifts the center of gravity toward the camera making the rig top-heavy and therefore less stable. (A trick when using a light tripod is to tie a heavy weight to the tripod's center support, lowering the center of gravity.)

3. Fluid heads are described as "2-Axis" and designed to move vertically and horizontally. A bubble meter is a must to set the tripod level or your pans and tilts will go everywhere but where you want them to.



4. A quick mount adapter with a centering pin will quickly position the camera accurately on the tripod. I leave the adapter on the camera when traveling with the tripod.

Specifications:

- Maximum Height: 64.3"*
- Minimum Height: 25"*
- Folded Length: 26.5"*
- Load Capacity: Full-Size Camcorder*
- Leg Stages/Sections: 3*
- Leg Lock Type: Flip-Lock*
- Center Column Sections: 1*
- Center Column Type: Geared With Friction Control*
- Center Brace*
- Spiked Feet*
- Head Type: 2-Way Pan, With Auto Lock Quick Release, Also Features 4-Way Handle Positioning*
- Head Mount Thread Size: 1/4"*
- Weight: 4.5 Lbs.*
- Built-In Bubble Level (Velbon Fluid head available without the tripod)*



5. On the tripod strong rigid legs, clamps and hinges. A center brace. A choice of both flat rubber and pointed steel tips for holding on various surfaces.

6. A carrying case with a shoulder strap for conveying.

What's Available?

Good to excellent FH tripods can be had for up to \$300 but you don't have to spend that much. I spent less than \$100. However, you do need to go to a store and try them out. **Do not purchase one online with having first tested it.** There's a lot of junk out there. I went to several stores and tested a number of them and quickly found that some of them performed worst than my still camera tripods. The poor ones are flimsily made, of lightweight and inferior materials and construction, and have awful damping qualities. You won't find a decent FH tripod in Walmart.

I was impressed with and bought the Velbon Videomate 607. I liked its construction, controls and motion. Yes, plastic plays its part in the head but it appears to be pretty solid. I've owned Velbon tripods over the years and have always found them dependable so was drawn to the brand. It is a little heavier at 4.5 lbs than some of the competitors but more sturdy. The head controls are firm and precise and the motion is smooth. The tripod is quite rigid for being lightweight and sets up about as quickly as most tripods, with three section aluminum tubular legs and two tightening clamps per leg. A bubble meter is included. It is quite tall at a little over five feet for shooting over crowds.

For dolly shots, Velbon also offers a "Dolly Pod" platform on wheels for mounting the tripod for about \$50.

Recommended? At about \$80, definitely.

See Amazon.com for owners reviews ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Well, here we are into the new year and we have lots of activities and ideas to work on. One of the many is the work being expended in the preparation to actual shooting of this year's club movie "Assumptions" - written and directed by one of our newer members, Dale Porter. This is a very ambitious program with several locations (8) and many actors (13 principles and many adults and children in groups) -- so much to do before the shipping date to the first contest on August 17. We will keep you posted during the coming months on the progress of the production.

Please volunteer to join the VVP group (Viewfinders Video Productions) if you want to be involved in these productions. We will be producing one each year and the organization of the next year's production usually starts in September.

At right is the production crew for "Assumptions".

This February's meeting subject will cover "Light". Fred Pfof will discuss the physical aspects of light (which constitutes such a small fraction of the electromagnetic spectrum) and John Dietrich will discuss the practical aspects of "using light" in the production of movies.

"Assumptions" Crew List

Production Manager:
Milt Kostner

Director:
Dale Porter

Assistant Director:
Brian Lucas

Director of Photography:
Franz Helbig

Writer:
Dale Porter

Video Editor:
Jack Gorham

Sound Tech/Designer:
Bob Meacham

Lighting Designer:
Herb Wolff

Equipment Manager:
John Dietrich

Production Designer:
Irv Webster

Videographer, Camera 1:
Fred Pfof



Theme Challenge

"Coast"

Once again we are throwing out a challenge for members to make a short movie around a given theme. "Coast" is the chosen topic which should provide a number of interesting subjects. On our nearby coast we have seaside resorts, fishing piers, rock pools, cliffs and waves, a lighthouse at Pigeon Point and several state parks. All can be very photogenic.

Movies should be short, no more than three minutes, and can also take advantage of the "5x5" idea that Bob Meacham introduced last year. In this case, a movie comprises of no more than five scenes at five seconds each for a total of 25 seconds.

So dust off the camcorder and plan a trip over the hills - it's a good opportunity to get the year started with a firm video idea for 2009. Submitted movies will be shown at the the April meeting.

Good Luck!

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JAN. 2009

Bank Account Beginning 1/01/09	\$ 737.11
Income Total:	\$ 345.00
Dues for 2009	\$335.00
TLF DVD's (2)	\$ 10.00
Expenses Total:	\$ 0.00
Bank Account Ending 1/31/09	\$1082.11



RENEW YOUR VIEWFINDERS MEMBERSHIP NOW!

Bring your check or cash to our February meeting to renew your Club membership for this 2009 year. The annual dues are \$30 for individuals, \$35 for families, and \$5 for full-time students. Make checks payable to "Viewfinders Club".

Frank Swanson, Treasurer

TECH TIPS

By your Editor

A full program didn't allow for Frank Swanson's usual workshop in January, so here is a short article that offers some tips for your next vacation or day out.

A Portrait of a Place



1. Preparation. If this is a vacation trip you may not be back again so plan ahead. Researching your destination before you go can be a lot of fun and will uncover places and events of which you may have been unaware. You may also discover that permissions or limitations are involved in videoing some of your planned targets so a plan B might be required.

Try to imagine how you will shoot your scenes - and then how you will link them. Arrival at an airport or railway station to the check-in at your hotel for example, and note it down on your shot list. It is too easy to shoot unrelated clips that lack continuity when editing them.

Prepare a shot list, even if it is simply a list of subjects



and possible camera angles.



2. Shoot all you can. Tape is cheap and even with a shot list you are almost certain to discover interesting things you hadn't anticipated. In the editing stage you might want to turn your story upside down, inside out, or anyway other than you originally envisioned. You'll need plenty of additional footage to do this successfully.

3. Shoot overview material. Your audience will need to know where you are taking them. Are we in the mountains or at the coast? Is the weather balmy or inclement? Can we expect humor or is this a serious

documentary. Overview sequences require material to establish context and mood.

4. Consider your fellow travelers: You and your party may be anxious to record the trip but they are happy taking snapshots which take little time. They want to move on while you are still struggling with tripod, camera



angles,, waiting for that Guardsman to move, etc. In other words, you are holding up the party and it won't be long before the dreaded "Put that camcorder away!" is heard.

Work out a mutually convenient "Meet: time and place" plan before the day's tour begins.

5. The audio component. Often overlooked when shooting video is the need to capture quality sound. After all, you want your movie to

create a feeling of "being there" to your audience and we all have ears. Much of what we see requires sound to fully create a sense of place and dimension. The scenes in our subject here, London, need London sounds. The whoosh of a London Underground train as it enters the station, or the snorts and jingling of the mounted Coldstream guards for example. Different locations have their own, sometimes unique, sounds. You need to capture a great deal of this while you can. It may be very difficult or impossible to replicate it once you are home.

A portable audio recorder is a

very useful tool for this but you can do it with your camcorder. Think of it as an audio recorder, you've got plenty of tape. Maybe you're taking a lunch break or a rest on a park bench. Local sounds are all around you; let your camera run. You never know when a particular sound capture will make a scene really come to life. And let the camera run for a



while; don't rely only on the sound you capture while shooting. You will need lengthy sound captures to bridge, introduce or connect scenes in you final edits.

One last thing; **Don't forget to take your battery charger if you're traveling!** Many chargers are unique to a particular brand or model camcorder. Don't leave home without it. ■

Photos courtesy of Freefoto.com

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

MEMBERSHIP DUES

- \$30 for individuals
- \$35 for families
- \$5 for full-time students

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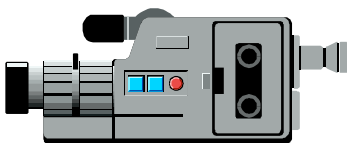
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2009

<p>JAN 14th, Wednesday Meeting: AMPS 2008 Contest winning videos Screened Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>FEB 11th, Wednesday Meeting: Presentation on the theory of light and video lighting: Fred Pfof and John Dietrich Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MARCH 11th, Wednesday Meeting: What you need to know about White Balance and High Definition Video. Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>APRIL 8th, Wednesday Meeting: "Theme Challenge" Screening Night Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>MAY 13th, Wednesday Meeting: Club Members Movie Night Physics of Sound and Sound Editing by Fred Pfof and Bob Meacham Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>JUNE 10th, Wednesday Meeting: Panel Discussion "DVD Authoring" Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>JULY Date TBD Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>AUGUST Date TBD Meeting: "Theme Challenge" Screening Night Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>SEPTEMBER Date TBD Meeting: Guest speaker TBD Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCTOBER Date TBD Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest Screening Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOVEMBER Date TBD Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DECEMBER No meeting this month</p>