

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, May 13th, 2009.  
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room,  
Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd.,  
Cupertino, CA



IN THIS ISSUE: MAY 2009

**Theme Challenge  
"Coast" Movies**  
Member's Movies  
address the theme.  
**Pages 1 and 2**

**High Definition Video  
Capture by Milt  
Kostner**  
Milt explains his  
experiences working  
with his new HD  
camera. **Page 2**

**What NAB is saying  
about the Future of  
Video Cameras**  
Bob Meacham at-  
tended this year's  
show and has some  
news. **Page 3**

**Naming Your Shots:  
A follow Up**  
Bob Meacham con-  
siders how the April  
article applies to us.  
**Page 4**

**Mixing Tape Brands  
Cause Problems?**  
Gordon Peterson  
writes of tape brand  
lubricants that may  
not be compatible.  
**Page 5**

**Tech Tips**  
Frank Swanson tells  
us that editing with  
the right transition  
can improve our  
movies. **Page 6**

## April Meeting Highlights

### Theme Challenge

Member's Videos

### About New Hi-Def Cameras

A Power Point Presentation by  
Milt Kostner

May Meeting

### Club Members Movie Night

Club members will show their  
movies

### Physics of Sound and Sound Editing

By Fred Pfof and Bob Meacham

## Theme Challenge "Coast"

Maybe the winter got to us and thoughts of going out to shoot a short movie wasn't so appealing but in any event, the number of entries for the challenge was disappointingly small. Only four videos were submitted and only one of those was shot specifically to address the theme. As the idea behind the challenge is to encourage members to get out with a camera, use a little imagination, and screen the result for other members consideration, the aim fell short. We hope members will do better next time. Thanks goes to the following video makers. The movies shown were:

"Hunchback Whales off the Coast of Maui" by Janet Holl.



Janet shot her movie while aboard a boat chartered to watch breaching

Humpback whales on their annual migration to and from Hawaii and Alaska. These 45 ton animals launch themselves out of the water by just two or three powerful sweeps of a very strong tail. It is believed that they do this to knock barnacles off their bodies or possibly just to show off in front of their competitors. The haunting "songs" of the whales were picked up and broadcast from a hydrophone trailed from the boat.

"Oregon Coast" by Ralph Nobles.

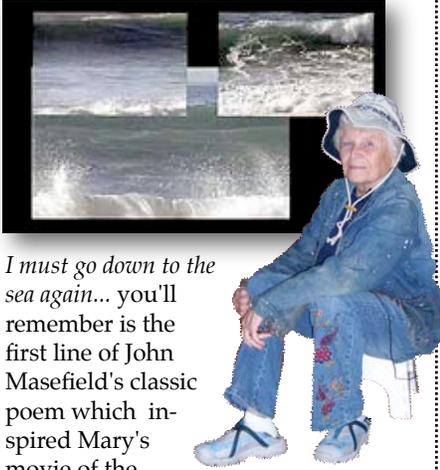


Some years ago, Ralph and family took a car ride up Oregon's splendid coast and recorded the trip. His movie, a shortened version of the original, featured that State's magnificent beaches, coastal rock formations and a fishing boat launch from a crane in Port Orford.

Continued page 2

Continued from page 1

"Sea Fever" by Mary Johnson.



I must go down to the sea again... you'll remember is the first line of John Masefield's classic poem which inspired Mary's movie of the same title. Working together a number of her ocean stills and video clips and then sewing them together with excellent graphic effects and transitions, she inspires us to be creative with our own work. This is a delightful short video and one could almost smell the sea air as one watched it.

"Coast" by Brian Lucas.

This video was shot in a couple of



hours at Princeton on the San Mateo coast. Portraying day tripping families making the most of a sunny Spring day on the beach and fishing pier. Wintered hauled out boats sat in yards while dogs romped in the water and children built sandcastles on the beach. Below the pier fishermen sold their fresh catch to visitors. ■

## Amateur High Definition Video Capture and Production

An Overview by Milt Kostner

### Standard vs High Definition Video Differences

HD Camera Sensor Pixel Count is three times larger than SD  
HD provides 720 or 1080 TV lines per inch against SD's 525 lpi

### What's available in Consumer HD cameras?

- Sony, Canon, JVC, Panasonic (Hybrid), and other brands
- Media used: Mini-DV tape, Hard Drive or Flashcard
- Formats used : HDV(MP2) or AVCHD(MP4)

### What are these different Formats?

- HDV (High Definition Video) is an MPEG-2 based compression
- AVCHD (Advanced Video Coding High Definition) uses MPG-4 Part 10 (H.264) based compression.

### My Experience Capturing with my Canon HV-30

Both Premiere Pro and Premiere Elements capture HDV using FireWire as a single .avi clip

HDShrink (a free beta application) captures individual clips using FireWire in .m2t format.

Both Premiere versions accept .m2t file input (.m2t = MPEG-2 Transport format)

### Editing on a PC

My system comprises of an Intel Quad CPU w/ 3GB RAM, 640GB internal hard drive, 700GB External hard drive and a 512MB video Card memory

SD video rendering is fast, near real time.

HD video rendering however frequently requires 2 -15 minutes of fixed screen non-operation.

Downgrading HD to DVD output is also slower than SD.

### Output Options (From computer or camera)

*Consumer Warning:* I have a never used Blu-Ray player in my computer, I don't own a Blu-Ray burner, I don't own a HDMI cable, I don't own a



HDTV set, and I don't own a separate Blu-Ray player even though I'm planning to buy a Blu-Ray burner to watch on TV sets owned by others!

- To SD television via a/v cable
- To HD television via HDMI cable
- To DVD disk. (HDTV or DVD needs compatible HDMI cable and HDTV with HDMI inputs)
- To Web with Flash application (For DVD or Flash, HD Video is downgraded to DVD or Flash quality prior to use)
- To Blu-Ray disk. Need HDTV, Blu-Ray Player and HDMI cable. Blu-Ray burners are now as low as \$210 for LG GGW-H20L 6XSL 25GB, 4XDL 50GB Blu-Ray 2X single layer blank \$18, Memorex 4X single layer blanks are 15 for \$79 = \$5.26 each

### Computer Cabling

- Camera to computer  
Fire Wire (I-link, IEEE1394), USB2 or A/V
- Computer to HDTV  
High-Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI A19pin/B29pin/C19pin portables), (RCA (Video + stereo sound) or Component (Y/Cb/Cr) ■



## What's New in Video Cameras According to NAB

By Bob Meacham



I thought I would share a few things I observed or discovered at this year's NAB in Las Vegas.

As we all assumed, every camera manufacturer is phasing out their SD (Standard Def) cameras except at the low end, and even those are going to HD. Most manufacturers are going away from tape (all except studio cameras) and to flash type cards for the recording medium. They are even moving away from hard drive cameras because the flash cards can be used as a storage medium as well as hot swappable (making them interchangeable) during shooting or on long shoots. Of course, the cards at high capacity are about \$17 each but will come down in price as they go up in capacity.

At an entry level, cameras that use hard drives or flash cards shoot in AVCHD formats. I saw a number of demonstrations of importing footage from cards and pre-editing, setting the "In" and "Out" points during the import into a project to keep the project file sizes manageable (remember HD files are about 1.5 times larger than SD files). The other big advantage from a camera stand point is the cards use less territory than hard drives or tape drives leaving more room for other features. It will help make HD cameras with more capabilities smaller and lighter. ■

### TREASURER'S REPORT FOR APRIL, 2009

Bank Account Beginning 04/01/09	\$1265.11
Income Total:	\$30.00
Dues for 2009 (1)	\$30.00
Expenses Total:	\$0.00
Bank Account Ending 04/30/09	\$1295.11



### RENEW YOUR VIEWFINDERS MEMBERSHIP NOW!

Bring your check or cash to our May 13th meeting to join the Viewfinders for this 2009 year. The annual dues are \$30 for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$5 for full-time students. Make your checks payable to "Viewfinders Club".

#### These are some of the benefits of being a member:

1. Free attendance at all general and special meetings of the Club
2. Networking opportunities with other Club members
3. Receive the Viewfinders monthly Club newsletter all year long
4. Receive the quarterly Viewfinders Club Roster that lists the experience, skills and equipment used by each member
5. Screen YOUR videos at the general meetings
6. Participate in Viewfinders Special Interest Groups:
  - Video Productions Group (makes one new movie each year),
  - PC Editing (Adobe Premiere Pro)
  - MAC Editing (iMovie, Final Cut Pro)
7. Free attendance at Club videography workshops and classes
8. Enter the Club's Annual Video Contest held at the October general meeting
9. Check-out videos from the Club Video Library (instructional, contests movies, informational (\$10 refundable deposit each)
10. Submit articles for inclusion in the Club monthly newsletter
11. Receive special event notifications via E-mail and Snail-mail
12. Receive 30% discount on all O'Reilly Media videography and photography books
13. Run for an elected position on the Club's Officer Board
14. Automatic invitation for special Club field trips
15. Invitation to participate in local, state, national and international video contests and conventions

Frank Swanson, Treasurer

# Naming Your Shots: The Usable Stuff

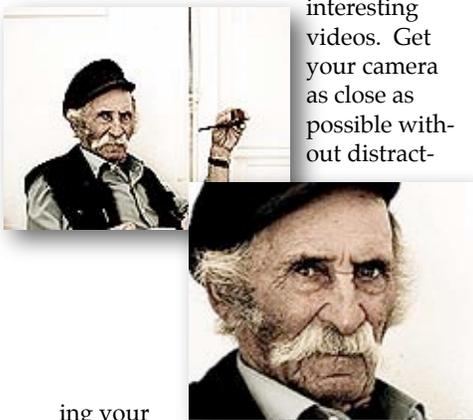
By Bob Meacham

In last month's newsletter our Editor, Brian Lucas, printed an article titled "Naming Your Shots". When I read it I was left thinking that the average club member would say, "Nice article but, since I don't work in the movies, what would I do with this information?" Well, here is what I would do with it.

First, the graphic on Framing Areas shows you the various compositions that you should use as a videographer, everything from Full Shots to Extreme Close Ups. But, again, how does one use them in our personal videos?

A very well know photographer once said, "If your photos lack emotion, move your camera closer!" The same works when it comes to shooting

interesting videos. Get your camera as close as possible without distract-



ing your subjects.

This gives them room to be natural and you don't have to be in full (and shaky) telephoto mode to get interesting shots. I would choose the framing type that is close enough to capture the emotion yet still wide enough to capture most, or some, of the action. Seeing the character (his wrinkles and the twinkle in his eyes) in Uncle Harry's face in an Extreme Close Up is much more interesting than seeing his face from a distance in a Medium Full Shot. Choose the framing to suit the action. You have to be watching what is happening "around" your viewfinder. Try to



anticipate the action of your subjects. If you are focused on just what is in your viewfinder then you may miss seeing someone approaching your subject. If you want to see Uncle Harry hugging his long lost brother, chose a slightly wider shot to get them both in. Then, to see their emotions while talking to each other, chose a Close Shot that may not even have all of their heads in the frame.

The article mentions other types of shots not covered in the Framing Area graphic. The use of a Master or Establishing shot tells the viewer where the following action takes place. A shot of the sign at the entrance to Yosemite National Park lets the viewer know the scenes following that shot were taken in the Park. Seeing a sign for the Parker Family Reunion tells them the shots are of that event. So, I encourage you to look for and use Establishing shots in your videos.



It also mentions framing for "One Shots", "Two Shots" and "Three Shots". This means a shot of person by themselves or with one or two others. When framing these shots keep in mind the

"Rule of Thirds" (divide the frame into thirds horizontally and vertically) and keep your subjects on those lines or at the intersections of those lines. When shooting people or animals, I recommend keeping their eyes on the one-third line no matter how close or wide the shot is. By doing that you can go in extremely close, enough to cut off the forehead, or back enough to show the subjects to the waist and the two shots will edit together very well.

Point of View shots, Over the Shoulder shots and motion (Pan, Zoom, Dolly, Crane and Tilt) should be used sparingly and only to augment the other shot types.

If you practice these various shot types, and learn what each one entails in how you can shoot it with your camera and equipment, you will find your edited videos have become much better. Application of these techniques will make for a more interesting video.

That is what I would do with this information. ■



Photos courtesy of FreeDigitalPhotos.net

# Mixing Different Brands of Tape

By Gordon Peterson

In DV cassettes' early days, Sony and Panasonic used different tape lubricants, and if you used mostly one brand and then switched to the other, incompatibilities between the lubricants, which get deposited on heads and tape guides, could cause VTRs to jam up or clog the heads, sometimes permanently. Beginning in 1997 the lubricants were supposedly made compatible but I'm still hearing horror stories about these problems.

This is not a DV/DVCAM vs. DVCPRO problem. While many of the people reporting the jams are inserting the occasional DV tape into a DVCPRO transport, many others are seeing the problem in DV and DVCAM equipment, (high-end DVCAM gear aside) which can't play back DVCPRO to begin with. It also happens when other brands of tape, not just Sony and Panasonic, are intermingled.

Anecdotal evidence would seem to indicate that the problem occurs when one brand of tape is used exclusively for a long time, and then another brand is used: instant mess! If one switches back and forth between the different tape brands frequently, say, switching between Sony and Panasonic every three or four tapes, the problems don't seem to appear.

Frequent switching apparently prevents a critical mass of one lubricant building up in the transport. Switching tapes may clean off accumulations of gunk before they get heavy enough to cause problems. Whether

this is a solution, or if frequent switching only leads to a longer-term buildup of cross-contamination pollution on the tapes is unknown.

I run about 50% Panasonic DV tapes in my gear, with the remainder being a mix of Sony DV or DVCAM, JVC, and the occasional Fuji. I've never had a problem. It's rare that I run more than four hours on one brand of tape before using another brand, so that may be a good starting place as to what a safe interchange frequency may be.



Thus there appears to be two general approaches to this problem:

1. Pick one brand of tape, and "stick" with it (sorry about the pun!). You simply won't see the problem. If *any* foreign brand of tape comes into your facility, *do not* put it into your VTR; make a FireWire dub of it onto your chosen tape brand on your machine, using the client's camcorder or VTR as the source deck.

2. Interchange tape brands frequently so the gunk from one never builds up a critical mass inside the transport to jam up another brand tape when that is inserted. Always clean the heads when changing brands too.

Problems with tape interchange of this sort seem to be reduced by using a tape cleaner between tapes from different manufacturers. Especially in this instance, do not rewind and re-use the cleaning tapes; you'll just be mixing old gunk with new if you do so. Clean the heads *before* inserting the new brand tape. Don't wait until you've seen blockies or dropouts: using the cleaning tape at this point may only polish the gunks firmly into the heads.

Your results may vary: and if you've had any positive or negative experiences of this sort, I'd like to hear your story... ■

## CLUB MEETINGS REFRESHMENTS VOLUNTEERS

*The club thanks those who will or have provided refreshments*

Jan. 14th, Wed. Fred Pfof

Feb. 11th, Wed. Janet Holl

March 11th, Wed. Bernie Wood

April 8th, Wed. Brian Lucas

May 13th, Wed. Stan Smith

June 10th, Wed. Bill Mannion

July Gordon Peterson

August Glenn Mooty

September Jim Visser

October

November

## Frank Swanson's SUDOKU Puzzle

The goal of Sudoku is to fill in every empty box with one of nine letters. Each letter can appear only once in each horizontal row, as well as only once in every vertical column and only once in each of the nine 3X3 squares. This month's puzzle contains the nine letters A, C, D, E, N, O, R, S and Y. As a clue, the nine letters form a word that refers to the cameraman who is not the primary shooter of a movie. The answer to this month's medium difficulty puzzle appears on page 7 of this newsletter. Have fun!

				R	Y	S
	S			Y	N	C
D	Y			E		A
		Y		D		
	E			O		
	R			O		
S		O		A	Y	
R	D	A		C		
N	O	R				

## Answers to April's JUMBLE PUZZLE:

Jumbles: AWARDS MOVIE MOTION ACTION

Answer: Fred Pfof loves to perform the job of "CAMERAMAN"

# TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

What are the two most popular transitions used in the movie industry? They're the CUT and the DISSOLVE. This Tech Tip discusses each of these transitions. Whereas the cut is the king of transitions, the dissolve has its unique usages but do we know why and when it is used? For movie goers, it may not be important but for editors, it's crucial.

We usually edit to change the duration of screen time or, on occasion, lengthening it. We may condense a one-hour baseball game to ten minutes, beginning with the team coming out of the dugout and concluding with the last out. In effect the editor takes out all of the non-essential 'middle parts' in order to keep the story moving along. The real meat of the movie consists then, of significant action sequences like pitches, hits and fielding. The majority of these action sequences will most likely be 'straight cuts', but there could be one or more dissolves. Let's learn when to use the CUT or the DISSOLVE and why.

**1. Time Stands Still:** An editor uses a cut to give the audience a new perspective. A cut shows the same subjects and action as the previous shot, but from a different viewpoint, not try to communicate a change in time. An example might be a medium shot of a geologist talking about the rocks

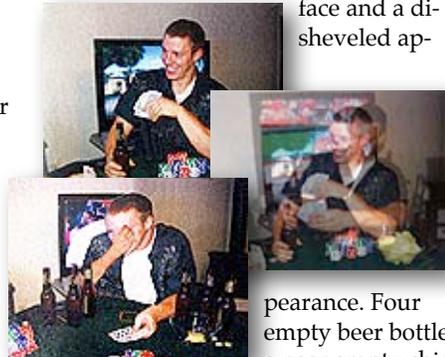


he's found lying around the area. When he raises his hand with a rock

specimen and begins to tell us about it, the editor decides to 'cut on action,' just as the hand motion stops. The editor cuts to a close-up of the hand holding the rock without interrupting the flow of the action. The audience is not conscious

of the transition, it generally goes unnoticed.

**2. Time Shifting:** In a movie about an excited poker player the scene begins with a towering stacks of poker chips, a full beer bottle and an overflowing bowl of potato chips at hand. The editor then uses a three-second cross dissolve to a shot of the same man framed as before, but now he is slouching in his seat, a look of disappointment on his face and a disheveled ap-



pearance. Four empty beer bottles, a near empty chip bowl, and a dwindled pile off poker chips sit before him. We know that a fair amount of time has passed, and this man has lost most of his money. Editors often use the dissolve, a gradual merging of the end of one shot with the beginning of the next, to show a passing of time. Though this transition is more obvious than the cut, we are so used to seeing it that we accept it and move right along with the story.

**3. Time Fades:** What do you think when you read "fade to black?" A "commercial break" or "end of movie, roll the credits.?" It is actually a powerful transition denoting a change in time or location or mood. Some directors will hold the fade to black so long that the audience thinks the movie has ended, but it's usually just a transition to an epilog or last chapter to the movie. Unlike a dissolve, a fade to black indicates a shift that is important and meaningful to the movie.

Using the poker game example above, we've established by his appearance and props that the card player has been at the table a long time. But now, he's playing his final hand, and he beams as he lays down his cards: a Royal Flush. We then fade

to black for a 2-to-even 5-second pause, then fade up to a shot of him driving off in a brand-new souped-up sports car. Unlike the dissolve, this transition shows a conclusion to the tense card game and a change of mood to jubilation. The fade to black shifts our gambler to a better time and place.



**4. Talking Heads:**

Narrative storytelling doesn't hold all the chips in the dissolve game. In fact, it can be a lifesaver to the documentary editor. Let's say you've shot a long talking-head interview but failed to acquire B roll. Let's also say you've failed to alter the viewpoint, thus having an entire hour-long interview of the same framing. This is definitely not a good situation to be in.

The interview occasionally

lapsed into long fits of coughing, which

you as editor need to remove. What comes to save the day? The dissolve. A straight cut would produce a jump cut, which could cause the subject to 'jump' within the screen. But a quick cross dissolve between near-identical shots will soothe the visual 'jump', being acceptable to the audience. Typical durations are 3-to-4 frames. News program or PBS documentaries with talking heads utilize cross dissolves frequently.

Though the cut dominates the editing profession, the dissolve is a transitional player popular in both narrative and documentary movies. When the chips are down and you feel all is lost, try playing your dissolve card and see how you fare. ■



**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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**Sudoku Solution**

E	O	N	C	A	R	Y	D	S
A	R	S	D	O	Y	N	E	C
D	C	Y	N	S	E	R	O	A
O	S	A	Y	R	N	D	C	E
C	N	E	S	D	A	O	Y	R
Y	D	R	E	C	O	S	A	N
S	E	C	O	N	D	A	R	Y
R	Y	D	A	E	S	C	N	O
N	A	O	R	Y	C	E	S	D

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2009

**JAN 14th, Wednesday**

Meeting: AMPS 2008 Contest winning videos screened

**FEB 11th, Wednesday**

Meeting: Presentation on the Theory of Light and Video Lighting: Fred Pfof and John Dietrich  
Tech-Tips: "Cutting Room Floor"

**MARCH 11th, Wednesday**

Meeting: What you need to know about White Balance and High Definition Video by Fred Pfof, Franz Helbig and Milt Kostner  
Tech-Tips: "I've Been Framed"

**APRIL 8th, Wednesday**

Meeting: "Theme Challenge- Coast" screening night  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**MAY 13th, Wednesday**

Meeting: Club Members Movie Night  
Physics of Sound and Sound Editing by Fred Pfof and Bob Meacham  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**JUNE 10th, Wednesday**

Meeting: Panel discussion "DVD Authoring"  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**JULY Date TBD**

Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**AUGUST Date TBD**

Meeting: "Theme Challenge" Screening Night  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**SEPTEMBER Date TBD**

Meeting: Guest speaker TBD  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**OCTOBER Date TBD**

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

**NOVEMBER Date TBD**

Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social  
Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

**DECEMBER**

No meeting this month

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