Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, June 10th, 2009.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room,
Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd.,
Cupertino, CA

viewfinders

May Meeting
Highlights

Physics of Sound
A presentation by Fred Pfost

Sound Editing
A presentation by Bob Meacham

June Meeting
DVD Authoring
A panel discussion conducted by Mary Johnson, Frank Swanson and John Dietrich

The topic of the evening was all about sound. What sound is about and how we can manipulate it in our movie making to enhance the final edited movie.

Fred Pfost began by describing pitch and frequency ranges and Bob Meacham continued the evening by explaining the value of utilizing audio software programs to shape the audio component of our videos.

Start with a piano keyboard...
Physics of Sound by Fred Pfost

Pitch represents the perceived frequency of sound.

Frequency is measured in cycles per second (Hz)

A piano is designed to produce a fundamental frequency range from approximately 25.5 Hz to 4186 Hz. This is a much greater range than the human voice or most musical instruments (see diagram page 3) and therefore pressing an individual key produces a frequency/pitch comparison to most other sounds we hear.

Frequency can be determined by physical measurement but it may differ from pitch (what we hear) because of harmonic or other overtones in the sound. The human ear may have difficulties in distinguishing frequency differences caused by en-vironmental circumstances. Pitch is the approximate highness or lowness of sound tone heard by the ear.

The voice, which is produced by vibrations of the vocal cords which then resonate through the throat, mouth and nasal cavities is only capable of a limited range of sound, although a trained vocalist will strive to extend it. Most musical instruments can produce a significantly larger frequency range but are generally smaller than that of the piano.

To achieve the greater range, the piano was designed with about 230 strings to cover its 88 keys. All keys do not have the same number of

...then the computer

Audio Editing by Bob Meacham

What part does audio play in videos?

Since we are no longer making "Silent Movies", the audio of your productions plays an equal part to the visual in producing a good video. You can tell your story or show the event visually, but paying attention to the soundtrack will not only enhance your work but also control and influence your viewer's impressions of both the video and the subject on the screen. Try a simple test; watch any movie or program and pay close attention to the audio, both to the main track (vocals, dialogue, or voice over inflections) as well as supportive tracks of music and sound effects. Then try watching the same video with the sound turned off to understand the influence that audio has on the entire presentation. We are no longer just folks shooting video, we are videographers. And that includes paying as much attention to the audio as the video. Our audience has become more advanced, and so must we.

Why audio is important to video.
Surveys have shown people will sit through poor quality video longer than poor quality audio. With poor video you can shut your eyes to get away from it. But poor quality audio bombards one's ears without relief. As a videographer, even with simple videos, we need to learn to manage (shoot, capture and edit) audio as equally as we do our video.

Audio can help to set the mood, create a feeling, enhance a video with additional sounds, and compliment the images we see on screen. Audio editing is no more involved than video editing, it just requires a few simple tools. Some of which are probably built into your video editing software but some may require an audio dedicated application.

What can you do with audio editing?
There are many things you can do to affect the audio in your videos. Most,

if done properly, will add greatly to the entire movie. Here are a few of the basic things you can do with sound:

Add voice over. Using either yours or another person's voice after the fact you can compliment the video by describing the story to the viewer behind the onscreen action. Try to

Audio editing application screen shots.
Top to bottom: Graphic Equalizer, stereo audio track in waveform, The same audio in a spectral form

explain the movie by describing those parts of the story the video omits and avoid describing that which they see onscreen.
Some audio editing software allows you to "enhance" the quality of a person's voice with frequency shaping (through the use of Equalizers and Filters) and additions (a slight amount of Reverb or Echo) to make it even better.
*Add music tracks and modify them.* Background music can enhance the feel of a video so choose a style that fits, and the effect you wish to convey. But also pay close attention to the sound level in comparison to the captured track.
Add additional sound effects. You can "fill out" a video by adding sounds that were not captured in the initial shoot. Think of nature sounds like birds or dogs, and transitional sound effects where your video switches from one scene to the next, and also complimentary sound effects to enhance the onscreen action such as booms and explosions for 4th of July fireworks.
Copy sounds from one clip to another. Sometimes when you shoot a series of video shots the audio might change between locations. In a shot of a lake scene you may have some nice Loon calls but another shot of the foliage might not have much audio. By copying and pasting the Loon sounds into the second clip your audience still feels they are at the same location. It helps connect the two clips in time and place. The same can be done by copying a good audio track onto another kind of sound that you want the viewer to hear. It can also help in covering a clip that had poor audio that detracts from the scene.
Clean up poor quality audio. A whole lot is written about the use of audio editing in cleaning up bad audio. For example, if you need to use the audio from a clip of Uncle Ted singing but has unwanted background noise, there are things you can do to try to improve it.
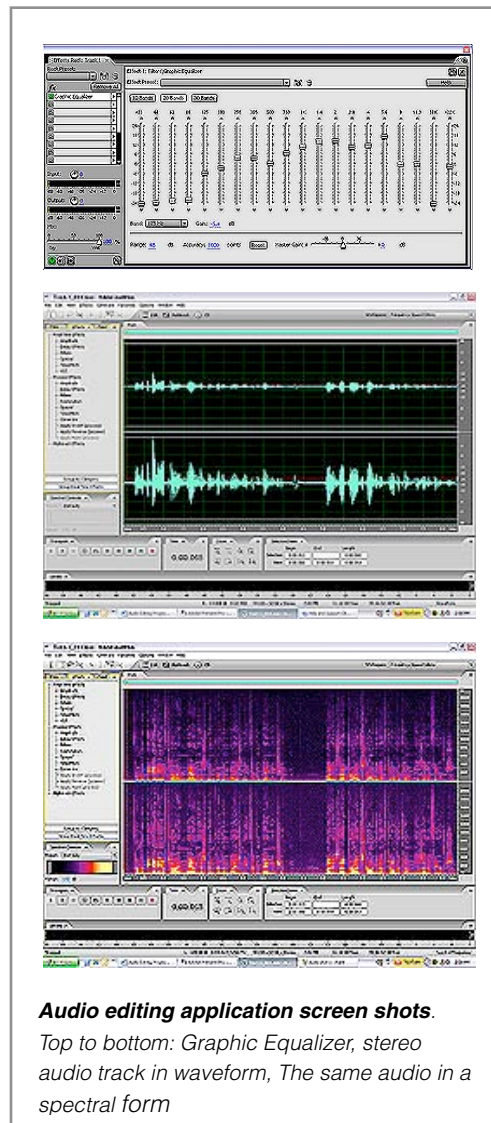
Audio Editing, continued

Cleaning up this kind of poor quality audio is probably the greatest challenge for a budding audio editor. In most cases it will require obtaining and learning a dedicated audio editing program. You will need to get deeper into the program capabilities and learn about the various tools that are available in the software. You will need to look at the audio as a waveform or in a spectrum format to find and remove the offending audio pieces. It is not a daunting task, it just takes some trial and effort on your part to find what works.

What audio tools are available?
As I mentioned before, a great deal of this is available in your video editing program because the creators realized the importance of audio in video. Look there first and begin by using these tools. If you find you need more than what is available, then look at dedicated audio editing tools. A few suggestions might be:

Audacity – a cross platform and free software that is simple to use but powerful.

Adobe Audition ($350) or *Soundbooth* ($200) – a PC based audio program that has huge capabilities. It has the ability to not only work with pre-recorded audio but can be used to capture and create new music pieces up to 999 tracks each..

Apple Final Cut Pro, Final Cut Express and iMovie – Apple has an audio program called *Garage Band* but it is more about music creation and less about editing video audio. Apple does build in a lot of audio editing tools into its higher level video programs.

There are plenty of other programs available to the video editor. To find one that compliments your video software, look first at the same video editing company for one that may be interactive with your video program.
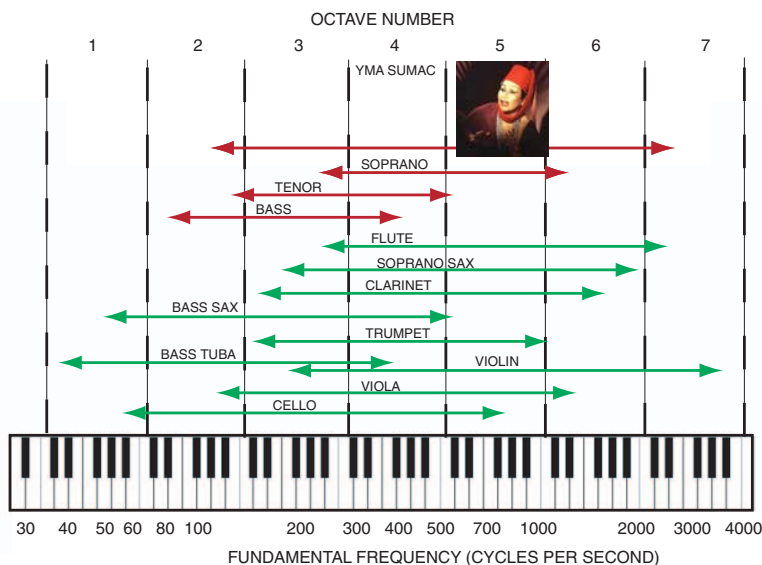
Web sites with more information.
After you have started learning to use your audio editing tool there are tons of helpful web sites and blogs available for most applications. Do search out and use ones that are at the same level of skill you are at. Some folks on the net get way too detailed and involved.

Web sites with stock sounds.
Also, if you are looking for sounds to add to your videos there are sites, both free and pay, that have a great array of sound effects you can download.

Audio is important to your video. Remember, when your audience starts watching your video they are looking for something to keep them interested. Poor quality audio is the fastest way to lose them. You can have the greatest piece of video but a poor sound track will ruin it. Get with the new world, audio is all around us so plan on editing your audio on the same par as your video. ■

Physics of Sound, continued

OCTAVE NUMBER
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YMA SUMAC
SOPRANO
TENOR
BASS
FLUTE
SOPRANO SAX
CLARINET
BASS SAX
TRUMPET
BASS TUBA
VIOLIN
VIOLA
CELLO

FUNDAMENTAL FREQUENCY (CYCLES PER SECOND)
30 40 50 60 80 100 200 300 400 500 700 1000 2000 3000 4000

strings. Generally the 10 lowest pitches have one string each, the next 18 pitches have two strings each and the remaining 60 pitches at the high end of the keyboard have three strings each. The reason for multiple strings to a piano key is to provide the ear a more pleasing sound than a single string can produce. ■

CLUB MEETINGS
REFRESHMENTS
VOLUNTEERS
The club thanks those who will or have provided refreshments

Jan. 14th, Wed.	*Fred Pfost*
Feb. 11th, Wed.	*Janet Holl*
March 11th, Wed.	*Bernie Wood*
April 8th, Wed.	*Brian Lucas*
May 13th, Wed.	

June 10th, Wed.	Bill Mannion
July 8th, Wed.	Gordon Peterson
Aug 12th, Wed.	Glenn Mooty
Sept 9th, Wed.	Jim Visser
Oct 14th, Wed.	Janet Holl
Nov 4th, Wed.	
December - No meeting	

EDITOR'S NOTES
Gordon Peterson would like you to know that much of the information in his May article **"Mixing Different Brands of Tape"** was gleaned from the following web site: www.adamwilt.com/Tidbits.html which has lots of useful video information.

President Fred Pfost would like you to know "There have only been three of the questionnaires returned on proposed program subjects for future meetings. Please let us know what you would like to hear about in the upcoming meetings."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our club's special interest group VVPG (Viewfinders Video Production Group) has been producing our annual club movies for entry into competitions (local, national and international) for four years (this will be our fourth year) and we have won winning positions and recognition with each entry. The group affords our club members a great opportunity to learn new skills or to improve on skills they already have. We try to rotate all the crew jobs each year so each member can develop additional abilities. On top of that, all of these activities are fun and develop a lot of camaraderie among participants.

I have owned five different camcorders over the years but never one as good as the one made available for this shoot. I have had the opportunity to be "first camera" for the taping of our latest movie using a great $4000 Prosumer Sony camcorder (owned by Franz Helbig), which offers almost all of the fea-

tures that the "Pros" have with their $50,000 cameras. It represents a real challenge and has been a tremendous learning experience for me.

We encourage each member to join the VVPG for next year's production, which requires a story concept, story writing, screen adaptation and all the other production jobs. Organization will start sometime in September. Let us hear from you.

**RENEW YOUR VIEWFINDERS
MEMBERSHIP NOW!**
Bring your check or cash to our June 10th meeting to join the Viewfinders for this 2009 year. The annual dues for the rest of this year are $22 for individuals, $26 for families, and $5 for full-time students. Make your checks payable to the "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

Frank Swanson was unable to attend the February meeting but he did supply us with another of Digital Juice's video tutorials whereby narrator Chuck Peters explained why many of our amateur videos don't get the enthusiastic audiences we would wish. Too often we ignore the old adage "Less is More" and bore the audience by including every wonderful shot (to us) instead of leaving them where they belong, on the "Cutting Room Floor". The following are some tips for reducing poor footage and editing to entertain the audience.

1. Is it a story? You shoot a minute of the dog in the back yard, a minute of your wife knitting a sweater and a minute of a bird in a tree. What's that? Each snippet might have made a good story on its own if expanded and developed but instead you have a mishmash of unrelated events that will only be of interest to you.

2. Ever heard of the rule of thirds? Placing your subject smack-dab in the center of the lens in shot after shot is boring. Placing the subject on an imaginary line one third of the way from top, bottom, or either side of the viewfinder will produce more interesting shots that are keepers.

3. Is this a police line up? Placing your subject facing the camera and centered in the viewfinder using flat lighting or a a camera mounted light is not flattering. Nor is shooting them against a strong back light rendering them as featureless silhouettes. Lighting is a very important consideration to be done before the camera rolls.

4. Shoot - don't chatter. Avoid the temptation to describe what you are shooting while shooting it. The video does a pretty good job of that anyway. A gushing cameraman makes watching the movie a chore and if a narration is beneficial it should be done in the editing stages where a carefully considered script can be written and the audio controlled.

5. There's more than one angle. Unless you want your movie to look like a supermarket surveillance video you need to move your camera. Too many

family gathering videos are recorded by setting the camera at wide angle, placing it on a tripod and letting it run. Maybe something interesting will happen and you'll have it on tape. It might, but it'll be disappointing with this technique.

6. Video or slide show? A minute of a flower or sleeping infant is a snap

Seen any good movies lately?

shot, not a video. Video should be dynamic and that means motion. If the subject is naturally stationary, such as a long sweeping coast line, a slow pan along the beach or cliffs gives the shot the motion that video needs.

7. Dump the dizzies. A camera being whipped around from subject to subject, or bobbing up and down in the hands of a walking cameraman will

have the audience feeling queasy in no time. Likewise, zoom happy movies: zoom in - zoom out - zoom in again - zoom out, and so-forth, will cause the same effect. Yes, you want to bring attention to the zoomed object but all you are doing is bringing attention to the camera's lens movement.

8. Look guys - my feet! You forgot to turn off the camera and recorded a several minute's bird's eye view of your shoes. Yes, we've all done it. It's no longer funny. Dump it along with all the other accidental takes and bloopers that are simply yawn inducers.

Professionals work on an expected 20: 1 ratio of final footage. That is, 95% of it ends up on the cutting room floor. We don't need be as drastic but should take a hard look at how and what we record. We need to be brutal enough to discard superbly shot scenes that have no relevance to the story we wish to tell. We need to screen our work, critique our work and revise our work. We need to be very critical and place ourselves in the shoes of a non-objective audience. Accept criticism from knowledgeable fellow hobbyists and never be satisfied with the final edit without repeating the mantra: SCREEN - CRITIQUE - REVISE. ∎

JUMBLE PUZZLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square to form four ordinary words familiar to videographers.

LANP

OVIDE

ROYST

WREC

This movie production group needs another _____.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above photo.

Print answer here: ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚   *(Answer page 7)*

TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

*Although we didn't have time at our May meeting for a Tech Tips video, I thought that I'd provide an abridged article published by **Digital Juice** in their November 2006 magazine titled **"10 Font Facts: A Designer's Guide to Text Treatments"** by Michael P. Hill.*

With so many options for stock images and backgrounds, it is easy to overlook the most important tool designers have for getting a message across: *text*. Understanding a few font characteristics will allow you to create professional text treatments with the best of them.

1. Finding Your Font: Selecting a font: **Serif or Sans Serif**? In typography, serifs are the little "hooks" or "feet" on the end of letters shown in the circles. Times Roman (above) is an example of a common serif font. Sans serif fonts, like Arial (below) lack the serifs ("sans" is Latin for "without").

Studies show that people can read and comprehend serif typefaces in large text blocks better. However, headline and display text can be set in either style. It's quite common to use a heavier, sans serif font for headlines and a serif font in body copy.

2. Avoid Too Much of a Good Thing: It's generally best to avoid using more than two or three fonts in a single project. If you're looking for more variety however, look for a font that has multiple weights or styles, such as condensed or extended. You can get a good mix using variations while still maintaining the same basic look.

3. Match the Font to the Message: Font's have their own "feel" or "personality." The style of a given font may make it better suited for certain uses. The script typeface and light, airy font makes a great logo for a day spa. However, the heavy, bold font (middle) doesn't seem appropriate for a relaxing spa. The blocky font is more at home for a body shop logo.

4. Readability First: Resist using the cool font you just discovered but has poor legibility. After all, your project won't do any good if the text is too hard to read.

5. Branch Out: Avoid overused fonts such as Times and Arial. There are plenty of great alternates that have a similar look, but provide a uniqueness to your project. For Times-like fonts, try Minion, Garamond or Century Schoolbook. Arial look-alikes include Helios and Franklin Gothic.

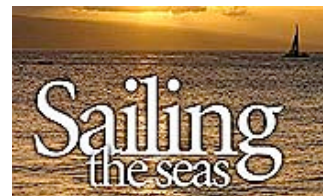**6. Text as a Design Element:** Once you've selected your fonts, you need to format your type to create eye catching design elements. Try turning a few key words into an eye-catching, stylized typographical component that becomes an artistic element of your project. This typographical design uses an interesting and elegant font, Trajan, to emphasize the word "Shine." It works very well with a subtle background. You can blow the text up fairly large and use fonts that have interesting serifs or flares.

7. Picture Perfect: Negative spaces in photos make great places to place text, especially when combined with a drop shadow or glow effect. It's usually best to avoid covering busy backgrounds, but areas such as grass, sky or water often make great places to place text.

8. Tuck Your Text: Try breaking the words into two or three lines and tuck the words into the spaces created naturally by some letters.

9. Add Some Glow: When placing text over photos, add a drop shadow or outer glow effect to the text to make it stand out. If the photo you are using is light, black shadows and glows usually work best. Over darker photos, you can use white or gray instead. You can also try varying type sizes or running some text in all capital letters. Maybe take a key word or phrase from your headline and make it bold, change the color or increase the size. Another tip that works well in multi-line layouts is to let a shadow or glow overlap other text elements. This gives the layout a unique sense of depth.

10. Hand Style It: Try adjusting the letter spacing of your text to crunch the characters closer together or spread them out for interesting artistic effects. You can also adjust the space between the lines (leading) to create different effects. Instead of using your layout or design program's built-in small caps feature, try adjusting the smaller capital letters yourself: pre-formatted small caps effect often don't have the optimal proportion between the large and small capitals.

Well, there you have it! Ten tips to enhance your text with creative and effective use of fonts and formatting. You can see other really good instructional videos by going to:

www.digitaljuice.com

I'll select a new tech tip for screening at our next meeting, so be sure to come and learn something new. ∎

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

OFFICERS
President: Fred Pfost
fpfost@aol.com

Vice President: Jack Gorham
jack_g93@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Frank Swanson
frank_video29@swansonhome.com

Secretary: Brian Lucas
lucasbouret@sbcglobal.net

WEBSITE
www.viewfindersclub.org

Jumble Puzzle Solution:

Jumbles:
PLAN VIDEO STORY CREW
Answer: This movie production group needs another SCRIPT"

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 Pfost 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 Pfost, Franz Helbig and Milt Kostner

Tech-Tips: "I've Been Framed"

APRIL 8th, Wednesday

Meeting: "Theme Challenge- Coast"" screening night.

Hi-Def Cameras Overview by Milt Kostner

MAY 13th, Wednesday

Meeting: Club Members Movie Night

Physics of Sound and Sound Editing by Fred Pfost and Bob Meacham

JUNE 10th, Wednesday

Meeting: Panel discussion "DVD Authoring" with Mary Johnson, John Dietrich and Frank Swanson

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

JULY 8th, Wednesday

Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

AUGUST 12th, Wednesday

Meeting: "Theme Challenge" Screening Night

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

SEPTEMBER 9th, Wednesday

Meeting: Guest speaker TBD

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

OCTOBER 14th, Wednesday

Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screening

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

NOVEMBER 4th, Wednesday

Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social

Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson

DECEMBER

No meeting this month

BLANK PAGE