

*Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, November 4th, 2009.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room,
Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd.,
Cupertino, CA*



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A Tough Contest to Judge

October Meeting Highlights

Best Member's Movies Contest

In August we had a club member's movie night. At that meeting we were delighted with the high quality of the movies screened. Clearly we have members who take their movie making seriously enough to spend considerable time to shoot, edit and add relevant audio to

create very well crafted videos. The big question for the October meeting was - could the members repeat, or even better, those movies already shown. The answer was a big YES!

Of the ten movies entered in the Annual Club Movie Contest only two were repeats, and the overall quality was even better. The high standard and good mix of subjects made this year's entries most difficult to choose winners and voting required a good deal of careful consideration of an entry's editing, camerawork, audio and subject matter before committing a score. So, congratulations to all those that entered the contest. The movies, in alphabetical order, were:

hospital attention. The ship's captain called in a coast guard helicopter from which a paramedic rappelled down to the ship's deck. Night fell while the helicopter circled over the ship. After an examination both paramedic and patient were hoisted up in the darkness for a fast trip to a mainland hospital. Mary made good use of a number of graphic effects to add drama to her movie.

"Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Weigh-Off"
by **Janet Holl.**



Each year since 1974 Half Moon Bay, which calls itself the World's Pumpkin Capital, has hosted a challenge to other claimants to the title to bring their monster pumpkins to California and prove it. Prizes are given in several categories including greatest weight and most beautiful. This year the heaviest pumpkin came from Des Moines, Iowa at a staggering 1,658 pounds, not so far short of the world record of 1,725 pounds. The trick, apparently to growing one of these monsters is first to start from

November Meeting

Annual Members Videos Contest Gold DVD Awards

Come to the meeting for a social to end out the year and congratulate the winners of this year's best members movies.



"Drama on the High Seas" by **Mary Johnson**

Mary and husband Wally caught a

high-seas rescue on camera during a sea cruise off the coast of Alaska this year. The drama began when a passenger became very ill and needed

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a seed from a previous champion and then apply much water and fertilizer and a lot of tender loving care. If you're successful your pumpkin will grow at a rate of 30 pounds per day. That should be an awesome sight on the front lawn on Halloween night.



"Hiller Aviation Museum"
by Lynelle Raymond.

This museum in San Carlos showcases

many of the aircraft that moved forward aviation history. Wood, canvas and wire cables held together the earliest craft which were propelled by clumsy and not always dependable engines. Progress replaced canvas with sheet metal and more dependable engines, and owning small aircraft became the rage of the wealthy. Tableaus of cars and manikins in period dress give a sense of era to the exhibits while modern small aircraft taxi and take off from the runway outside the building. Several full cockpit instrument panels are on show while the army's interest in aircraft is best demonstrated by helicopters which could be used for medical evacuations among other tasks. And for those visitors who want to try their skill, a flight simulator is present.



"MacNeal's House Finch Nest"
by Gordon Peterson.

Gordon discovered a pair of

house finches had built a nest under a neighbors eaves. He rigged up his camera and recorded the progress of the three chicks as they grew from downy newborns to fully feathered youngsters. The red headed and breasted male did most of the work foraging for food but both parents regurgitated the chicks meals into the youngsters gaping mouths. The movie ended with the young finches, encouraged by their parents, exercis-

ing their wings before taking the plunge and flying from the nest. The movie was shot over 24 days.



"Oregon 2009"
by Milt Kostner.

Unexpected snowfalls made Milt and his wife's trip to Oregon to record waterfalls more arduous than they expected. Still, they managed to video 10 of them where the roads were open. As well as the waterfalls, Milt captured some nice footage of a snowy Crater Lake and surrounding mountains with his new High-Def camcorder and expects to shoot excellent footage with it the more he works with it.

"The Panda Phant"
by Bart Witterkind.



Not to be outdone by the birth of a panda bear at a Bangkok zoo a Thailand elephant corral created its own exotic creature; a Panda Phant.

Dressed in white furry suits, a baby elephant and its mother made a big hit with visitors, especially children, who fed the elephants with corn cobs, a particular treat. Bart lives with his wife in Thailand and has often sent us movies of the life and culture of that beautiful country. We hope to get more.

"Renaissance"
by Brian Lucas.



A day at the Renaissance Fair at Casa de Frutta in the hills west of Gilroy records a simulation of life in a typical small town in medieval Europe. This short movie features vendors, peasants, lords, ladies and entertainers. Itinerant musicians include fiddlers, harpsichordists and

flutists. A village drunk shoots the cameraman while tired visitors have their limbs manipulated. Raucous villagers kiss, hug and drink while country folk hawk their produce. Whether village life of the period was as much fun as the movie suggests it was is arguable but visitors to this 21 century reconstruction were certainly having a good time.

"Roaring Camp"
by Rocky Raymond.



A ride on the Roaring Camp and

Big Trees railroad has been a popular feature at Felton, California. This had once been a logging train bringing lumber down from the Santa Cruz mountains for delivery to the saw mills in the lowlands. Riding on the locomotive "Dixiana", Rocky shot some spectacular video of both the countryside and the train, including some great detail shots of the moving parts of the engine and wheels as it climbed up through Redwoods and Douglas Fir forests to the mountain's summit. This movie demonstrates how imaginative camera angles and excellent editing makes it a standout.

"Stand or Fall by the Fixx"
by Craig VonVaaden.



With the assistance of three other cameramen, including his cousin,

Craig shot and edited a concert given by a 1980's rock band "The Fixx" in Santa Cruz this summer. Having permission to record the song by directly connecting to the band's sound system ensured Craig getting a quality audio recording. The hard work and many hours came in cutting between and synching the four camera angles to the audio. Craig wrote an article describing how the movie was made which appeared in the October issue of this newsletter. In almost every way the movie can compete with professional music videos.

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Not Wealthy?; Not Dedicated?; Not Mac? Adobe's Premier Elements

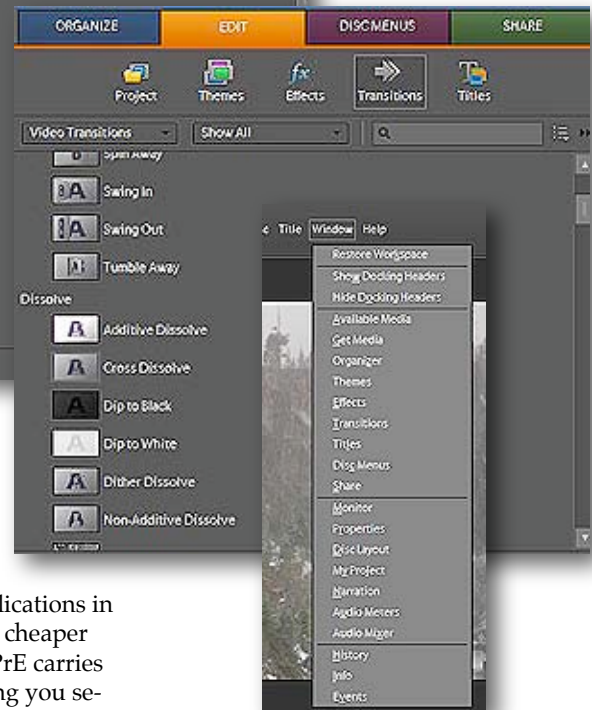
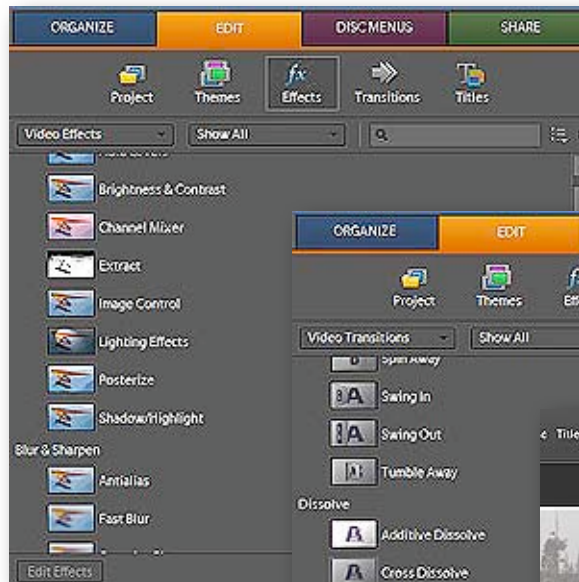
By Milt Kostner

You've bought a video camera some time ago and taken family and vacation pictures. Up to now you've been satisfied to show the video direct from the camera or used the Lite versions of editing software which were included with the camera. As you compare your output to TV or DVD output, a little voice inside you wants more. You price out advanced software like Adobe's Premiere Pro. Gulp! That much money?

If you've got a decent PC (sorry MAC users), every so often you can take advantage of a terrific package that one computer oriented store offers. A hint is that it starts with a big 'F'. If you watch the ads, on occasion you will find a packaged duet of Adobe's Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements priced just under \$100 (normally about \$150 or \$100 individually).

Both programs are reduced capability applications compared to their senior siblings. But not reduced by much! But let's talk about Premiere Elements here. (Hereafter PrE)

If you seen Premiere Pro, the above PrE work area layout should look quite familiar. PrE will capture video from many digital formats, DV, HDV or from files among others. You can set in/out points for your clips and rough edit using either a story board or timelines. PrE is limited to 99 timeline tracks. Work Area panel layout can be tailored to fit your process and saved. You may then use any of the Effects provided to adjust exposure and audio level and candy up your clips for interest. Then apply transitions galore.. Add sound tracks and narration, finishing up with assisted or self generated titles before burning



to a mobile device, DVD or for HDV to BlueRay (burner required).

Adobe has been dumbing up both Elements applications in order to compete with the cheaper offerings which abound. PrE carries this to an extreme by letting you select clips from your capture in any order to prepare an automatic movie output based on your selected music and candy effects templates. While none of this turns me on, it is easy to whip past this opening offering to get to the heart of the first class editor. ■

From top to bottom: Elements Work Area, Elements Effects Panel, Elements Transitions Panel, Elements Work Area Adjustments Panel.

For the Love of It

A Celebration of Amateur Moviemaking by Bernie Wood

In the Fall of 1998, Melinda Stone, then a film maker, independent curator, and PhD candidate at the University of California San Diego, conceived a need to celebrate the unique characteristics of amateur movies and their producers. She and her friend Kathy Geritz, a curator at the Pacific Film Archive (PFA) in Berkeley, set up a program of amateur movies that was presented in the PFA Theater. They called the event "For the Love of It" based on the motivation of the movie makers who spent great effort with no expectation of material profit. They were amateurs — a word derived from the Latin verb "amare" to love — and they made movies for the love of it.

In the following years, a number of similar "For the Love of It" programs were developed and presented in Berkeley, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The most recent was held at the PFA on a Sunday afternoon in May, 2006. A number of members of the Viewfinders attended that event, and afterward they gathered with Melinda



and other attendees at a nearby cafe for a meal before the long drive home. Serious discussions occurred on a wide range of topics related to movies, movie making, and movie clubs, and new friendships were formed. Among the Viewfinders present, the seeds were planted to form a group of club members who would develop

ideas, write scripts, and then produce movies. During the following months over brainstorming sessions held in a local pizza parlor they developed a script and formed a production group comprised of Viewfinder members. The product of their first effort was "Maybe Today," a movie gem that subsequently won many honors in local and national festivals. The group has since produced several fine movies, acquired new members, and shared its leadership roles.

Meanwhile, Melinda and Kathy are engaged in developing the program and confirming the arrangements for the next "For the Love of It." They expect to confirm a date in February 2010 at the PFA Theater. Make a mental commitment right now to attend. More information will be available before year's end, and will appear in our January Newsletter. ■

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"Wedding Highlights Introduction" by Frank Swanson.

Wedding videos are Frank's speciality and he's good at them, proven by the fact that he gets so many commissions to make them. This outdoor wedding took place at the scenic Maison du Lac in Los Gatos and Frank made good use of the lake, trees and flower beds as backgrounds to the ceremony. The movie records the arrival of friends and family and the bride and groom with group shots of the principals. Several clever montage and cross dissolve editing ploys added magic to the joyfulness of the occasion.



At the November meeting we will find out who the winners are and Gold DVD Awards will be handed out. It will be a social evening too, so don't fail to attend this last club meeting of 2009. ■

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

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2009

Bank Account Beginning 10/01/09	\$1022.66
Income Total:	\$577.00
Membership Dues 2009 (2)	\$12
Membership Dues 2010 (1)	\$30
DVD Sales DD/TLF (2)	\$10
DVD Sales TI (8)	\$80
AMMA Gift	\$445
Expenses Total:	\$496.86
VPG Group	\$136.86
City of Cupertino	\$360
Bank Account Ending 10/31/09	\$1102.80



JOIN THE VIEWFINDERS CLUB FOR 2010 NOW!

Bring your check or cash to our November 4th meeting to renew your Club membership early for 2010. The annual dues are \$30 for individuals, \$35 for families, and \$5 for full-time students. Make your checks payable to the "Viewfinders Club".

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



My year as president of Viewfinders Digital Video Club - 2009

Where did this year go? Each year of our lives becomes a smaller percentage of our whole life and thus each year seems to be shorter and go by faster than previous ones. (Philosophy 1-A)

Each year in October we have a Members Movie Competition and the attending members judge the submitted movies. The rankings are established and award plaques and certificates are given out at the November meeting. The top three winners are presented with **Gold DVD Awards** (first conceived and made by Bob Meacham in 2007). Other entries are awarded with Honorable Mention Certificates. The top winners last year were a tie for first place by two movies by Herb Wolff – “Right Turn” and “Shopping Carts”. Second place went to Jack Gorham for “Santa Maria Urban Ministry” and third place went to Bernie Wood for “Wheels of Wonder”. This year’s winners will be announced at the meeting on November 4th.

The club movie made this year by the “Video Production Group” was “The Interrogation” which has been entered into three video competitions so far. The group stopped production last summer in the middle of another movie (“Assumptions”) and has started on another one this year, temporarily called “The Blind Man”. This group is always looking for new members so consider joining with them to contribute your talents and to learn new skills.

Subjects covered by member speakers in February were Theory of Light and



A User's Guide to Post-Production Scripting

By Bernie Wood

Step 1: Collect raw video. Did you recently: go on a vacation trip? Videotape grandchildren? Get together with old friends? Collect some spectacular scenic shots? Video images from any of these can be strung together and be the raw material for a Post-Production Script that will produce an *interesting, compelling, indeed, even prize-winning movie*. You choose.

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas for a story, and write them as a *Treatment*. (Do it interactively with Step 3.) A Treatment is a paragraph or two that describes the story idea. Write whatever comes to mind without embellishment. *Set it aside for a while* then come back to it. Does it look good, feel right? If not, put it aside again and *let it stew* before making changes until it *sounds and feels right*.

Step 3: Review video for shots that support the Treatment. Does your raw video fully support your story? Perhaps you need additional shots. A close-up of a travel brochure, or of an object (like a suitcase), will add the right image to fit your story. Or maybe a video shot taken from your archives will do. If you can't provide all the video images you need, modify your Treatment.

Video Lighting, understanding the properties of light and what lighting equipment one needs while making a movie. In March the subject of White Balance and the subject of High Definition versus Standard Definition video were introduced.

In June we had a member panel on DVD Authoring. In July we were entertained by The Nimitz Grade School student movies. August brought more member videos and in September Milt Kostner and Herb

Step 4: Expand your Treatment into a **Script**, or a **Storyboard**. Use a two-column *Script Format*. In the left hand column, list the **shots** in an order that tells your story or makes your point. In the right-hand column, describe the **sound** that goes with each video shot or scene (e.g., “native sound,” “music,” “voice over.” etc.). If you plan to use a voice over narration, now is the time to write a first draft, right on the script.

Step 5: Assemble the video shots to follow the Script. This is the **Rough Cut**. At this stage, don't be concerned with the length of each shot or scene.

Step 6: Conform the narration to the video (or *vice versa*) *Read aloud* your narration segments for each scene, and time each of them. *Listen while you read*. Do the words clearly state what you want to be heard? Be concise, but don't trade comprehension for brevity. Put yourself in the place of the movie viewer. After a few days, read it again while you watch the video rough cut. Make appropriate changes in the narration and/or the video scenes. These are the elements of your **Final Cut**.

Step 7: Record sound onto your final cut. Read and record the narration as you play the final cut. Do it with confidence, imagining that you are speaking in front of a live audience. Then add your selected music tracks at appropriate levels.

Step 8: Show your movie with pride. Screen the movie for your friends who will surely praise it. Enter it in contests; you might be a winner.

Wolff demonstrated Adobe Premiere. Of course, each month Frank Swanson presents “Tech Tips” which covers all aspects of video making. With our October Member Video Competition and November awards night and year-end social we have completed another year (the twelfth year) of the Viewfinders –now known as the Viewfinders Digital Video Club.

TECH TIPS

MAKING BETTER iMOVIES

by Jeff Carlson
Managing Editor of TidBITS

If you wanted to edit video in the recent past, you needed a room full of specialized equipment and a fair amount of training and experience just to get started. Now, most what you need is probably sitting in your Applications folder. Apple's iMovie enables anyone with a recent Macintosh to import video footage and edit it into a professional-looking movie. Here are some Tech Tips for Apple's iMovie application:

1. Visual QuickStart Guide. If you're just starting to get your feet wet with digital video, these pointers will help you during shooting and when editing in iMovie.

<http://db.tidbits.com/getbits.acgi?tbart=06709>

www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0201787881/tidbiselectro00A/

2. A Stable Working Relationship.

Most people equate home video footage with the jittery movement of home movies and police pursuit shows. Except in rare circumstances, that look isn't a matter of style: the diminutive size and weight of most camcorders make it difficult to maintain stability while filming. Mounting the camera on a tripod is your best bet for keeping the camera stationary,



but a tripod is often a pain to carry and set up. Instead, maintain stability when shooting by tucking your elbows into your sides and hold the camera with both hands. Although

most cameras offer digital image stabilization, which does a good job of compensating for small variations in camera movement, don't rely on it to reduce larger tremors.

3. Zoom Zoom. One of the first things potential camcorder buyers do is test the product's zoom capabilities. And why not? Unlike Hollywood movie directors, who can place a camera wherever it suits them, you may be trying to get a shot of a grizzly bear from hundreds of meters away (and, in the spirit of recommendations, I strongly encourage you to stay hundreds of meters away from grizzlies in the wild). Punching up the telephoto zoom can be the difference between fur, blur, or getting munched, for those that ignore these tips.



As you're zooming, try to keep the motion steady and measured. The zoom control on most camcorders is pressure sensitive; so pressing hard makes the lens zoom quicker than a lighter touch. Try not to zoom in or out (or heaven forbid, both in succession) as fast as possible, unless you're trying to nauseate your audience. If you have the opportunity, practice zooming in on your subject before you begin filming. Also, turn off your camcorder's digital zoom feature. Unlike optical zoom, which describes the amount the lens mechanism can zoom (usually 10 times the normal setting), digital zoom is a technique where the camera's processor interpolates the image and enlarges the pixels to approximate a higher zoom level. In essence, the camera guesses what the higher zoomed-in image will look like, and it shows: digitally zoomed footage is highly pixelated, and it's often hard to tell what was originally being shot. Although a 200x digital zoom sounds nifty, it's more marketing gimmick than filmmaker's tool. Turn it off now while you're thinking about it, so you don't

scold yourself later when reviewing unexpectedly blurry footage.

4. Do You Hear What You Hear? As you're recording, use headphones plugged into to your camera to ensure that the audio you're capturing



is the sound you expect. Any pair of headphones will do, as long as what you hear is what the camera's microphone hears. You won't want to begin editing your footage and realize that traffic noise drowned out the rest of your footage's audio.

5. Cover Your Assets. When you get to the editing stage, you'll want to assemble a tight movie, with no scenes that can make your audience lose interest. However, when you're out shooting, record plenty of extra coverage. Linger at the end of scenes, and don't stop recording when the action ends. Take a few minutes to shoot the scenery, the reactions of people around you, or objects that catch your eye but may have nothing to do with the subject of your video. You want to go into the editing stage with more than enough footage to work with, because in most cases you won't be able to go back and reshoot something. That extra coverage can be essential when you need to add a few seconds of footage to maintain your movie's timing and rhythm.

6. Dumpster Diving in iMovie. With the shooting complete, it's time to import your footage and begin cutting together your movie. As you begin to chop, crop, and rearrange your clips, it can become difficult to



know which sections were once whole in case you want to go back and try a different combination of clips. Fortunately, iMovie offers a few methods to retrieve footage. First, you'll find yourself using iMovie's ten levels of undo often, though remember that the counter resets when you close your iMovie project. If you can't undo changes, you may still be able to restore an original clip. As you make edits, iMovie records only the changes that have been applied to the original clip you imported from the camcorder – it doesn't actually split the clip's media file on your hard disk. For example, suppose you imported a 10-minute original clip from your camera and split it into a number of smaller clips. Now suppose you deleted one of those smaller clips, not realizing until too late that you needed it. Unlike the Finder's Trash, you can't open iMovie's bin and pull out a discarded clip. Rather than reimport from the camera, select another one of the smaller clips and choose Restore Clip Media from the Advanced menu - iMovie reads the entire 10 minutes of data from the media file on the hard disk and turns that small clip into the full clip, which you can edit down to the necessary footage again. Be warned that if you use the Empty Trash command at any point, the clip is gone for good - iMovie edits the media file on your hard disk and removes the portions you threw away.

7. Transitions. Leave enough padding in your clips to accommodate transitions. A transition such as Cross Dissolve overlaps portions of the two



clips it's bridging in order to display both simultaneously. If the action begins immediately in the second clip, it will be partially obscured by the dissolving portion of the first clip. Leaving a few seconds of neutral

footage gives you the transition effect you're looking for without disrupting the content of the scene. If you end up with too much padding, you can always trim it out later. Speaking of transitions, don't go crazy adding every type of transition you can find (and there are plenty - in addition to Apple's, check out GeeThree's Slick Transitions and Effects

<http://geethree.com/>). In most situations, you'll probably use Cross Dissolve, Fade In, Fade Out, and Overlap. Although others can be appropriate in context, using too many different flashy transitions in one project tends to distract from the movie itself. It's the same principle as using too many fonts in a word processing document: with more than a few on the page, it no longer matters what the words say.

8. Sizing Up Titles. From an ease-of-use standpoint, the slider that deter-



mines a title's font size is wonderfully simple: slide left to reduce the size, slide right to increase the size. However, this approach can be maddeningly frustrating if you want precision. It doesn't make it any easier that the longer your title, the smaller the text will appear, even at the largest font size. Also, iMovie's rough title preview can be deceptive about text sizes and where longer phrases are wrapped to the next line. So, apply your titles to a few dummy clips that you can export back to tape and preview on a television to see exactly how the title will appear.

9. Using Music Tracks. iMovie features what must have once seemed like an ingenious method of adding music to your movie: you can record song tracks from an audio CD directly into the program. You must start playing the song and record it as it plays, much the way you import



video from your camcorder's videotape. However, with MP3 music files and iTunes, this technique has become archaic. Instead, use iTunes to extract music as MP3 files, and then use iMovie's Import command to add the song to your movie. If you want the highest quality audio (which takes up significantly more disk space), use iTunes to extract the song in AIFF format; that's how iMovie's built-in audio recorder stores music, but iTunes provides a far superior interface to getting it done.

10. The iMovie Effect. Once you start editing in iMovie, you'll never watch movies or television the same again. You'll see scenes in terms of shots, angles, lighting, audio effects, and visual narrative. My wife, after using iMovie only a few times, proved this to me when we watched the online trailer for the movie "The Man Who Wasn't There" www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUoRUdjn_Qg. It's a great



work of editing, but I didn't realize how good until Kim casually pointed out that each shot ended in a cross-dissolve transition, except when the main characters were on screen, which used jump cuts to show another shot of the actor before dissolving. If that doesn't demonstrate how iMovie's ease of use and editing power can get into your brain, I don't know what can. ■

Illustrations by Frank Swanson

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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. Guest admission is free.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2009

<p>JAN 14th, Wednesday Meeting: AMPS 2008 Contest winning videos screened</p>	<p>FEB 11th, Wednesday Meeting: Presentation on the Theory of Light and Video Lighting: Fred Pfof and John Dietrich Tech-Tips: "Cutting Room Floor"</p>
<p>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"</p>	<p>APRIL 8th, Wednesday Meeting: "Theme Challenge- Coast"" screening night. Hi-Def Cameras Overview by Milt Kostner</p>
<p>MAY 13th, Wednesday Meeting: Club Members Movie Night Physics of Sound and Sound Editing by Fred Pfof and Bob Meacham</p>	<p>JUNE 10th, Wednesday Meeting: Panel discussion "DVD Authoring" with Mary Johnson, John Dietrich and Frank Swanson Tech-Tips: "Shoot to Edit"</p>
<p>JULY 8th, Wednesday Meeting: Nimitz Grade School Videos Tech-Tips: "Focus"</p>	<p>AUGUST 12th, Wednesday Meeting: Club Members Movies Night</p>
<p>SEPTEMBER 9th, Wednesday Meeting: "Features of Adobe Premiere" by Milt Kostner and Herb Wolff Tech-Tips: "Image Stabilization"</p>	<p>OCTOBER 14th, Wednesday Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screening</p>
<p>NOVEMBER 4th, Wednesday Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DECEMBER No meeting this month</p>