

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



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2009 Best Members Gold DVD Awards

Viewfinders applaud the best members' videos.

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Getting the Most from Your TV

Bob Meacham says don't put up with inferior television performance.

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New Jumble Puzzle

See if you can solve this video-related puzzle from Frank Swanson.

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Presidents Message

Jack Gorham reports on what the board is planning for meeting events in the year ahead.

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V.P.'s Message

Milt Kostner sees the future of the club depending on recruiting new and younger movie makers.

Tech Tips

Frank Swanson kicks off the year with a new bunch of helpful tips and ideas.

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Goodbye 2009

November 2009 Meeting

Highlights

Presentations of Awards for Best Member's Movies

We come to that time each year when the club meets for the last time. November is an important month where we elect a new board of officers, award members who made the best movies, socialize with

other video makers and look forward to another season of club events. In addition, at the November meeting we saw our special interest group, Viewfinders Video Production Group's latest movie for the first time. It was a well attended and full evening.



Your club newsletter will continue to be edited and published by Brian Lucas.

The club thanks the board for taking the responsibility to

keep the club thriving. We also wish to thank those that continue to serve for the work and energy they have donated in the past.

January Meeting

**Fred Heiman:
Wildlife and Opera
San Jose in High Def.**

We're pleased to welcome back producer and pro-cameraman Fred who has new movies to show us, and a presentation on his move to working with high definition video.

Election of Officers

A slate of officers for 2010 was offered and unanimously elected. Some of those officers have served before 'though not necessarily in the same capacity. The new Board of Officers is as follows:

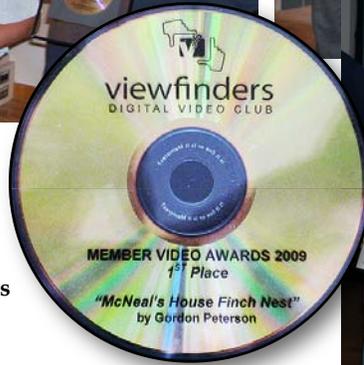
- President: **Jack Gorham**
- Vice President: **Milt Kostner**
- Secretary: **Fred Pfof**
- Treasurer: **Frank Swanson**

2009 Annual Club Video Contest

After the board elections, President Fred Pfof screened the winning contest movies and presented the winners with their awards, the handsome Gold DVDs designed and produced by Bob Meacham. The three winners were voted the best by attending club members at the October meeting where they were first shown. The winners were:

Continued page 2

Continued from page 1



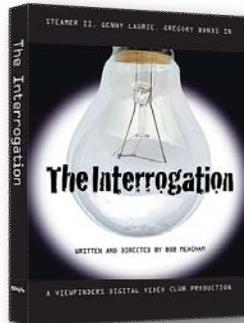
1st Place: **Gordon Peterson's** "McNeil House Finch"
 2nd Place: **Rocky Raymond's** "Roaring Camp"
 3rd Place: **Craig VonWaaden's** "Stand or Fall - The Fixx"

Honorary mention certificates were awarded to:

Janet Holl's "Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Weigh-Off"
Mary Johnson's "Drama on the High Seas"
Milt Kostner's "Oregon 2009"
Brian Lucas's "Renaissance"
Fred Pfost's "Seren's Dive"
Lynelle Raymond's "Hill-view Aviation Museum"
Bart Wittekind's "The Panda Phant"

Movie category winners were:

Best Camerawork: **Rocky Raymond**
 Best Sound: **Craig VonWaaden**
 Best Editing: **Frank Swanson**
 Best Content: **Gordon Peterson**



Descriptions and still from the movies were printed in the November 2009 issue of this newsletter.

Congratulations to the winners and to all those who entered.

"The Interrogation"

Following the awards presentations we saw the first club showing of VVPG's 2009 droll movie "The Interrogation". The story appears to be a police interrogation of a criminal suspect but all is not as it seems.

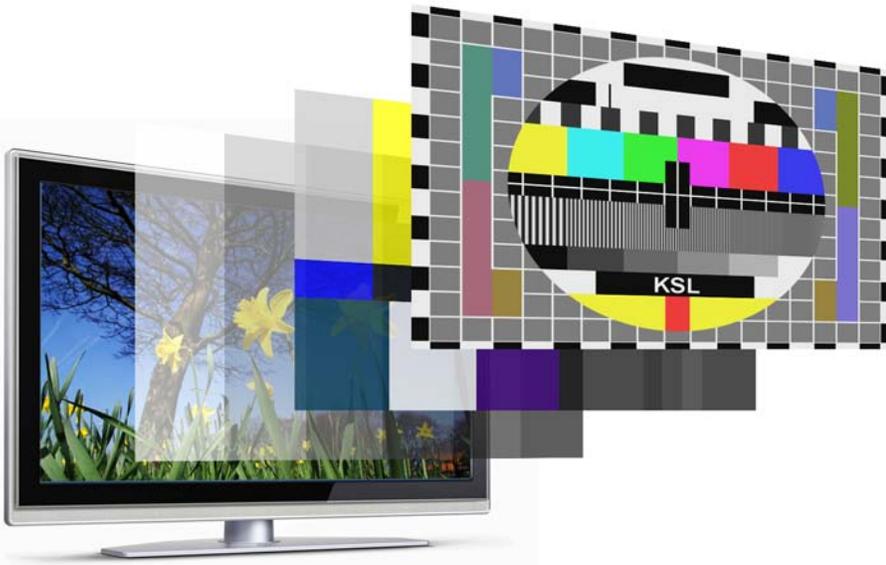
Directed and written by Bob Meacham, it will be on sale to Viewfinder's members early this year. This short movie with a surprise ending should appeal to coffee lovers.

Photos from left to right: 1. Delighted winners Gordon, Rocky and Craig. 2. Gordon stands in for Bart Wittekind among the honorable mentions. 3. Frank Swanson joins Gordon, Rocky and Craig as a category winner.

Social

Refreshments were supplied by Bob Meacham and included the handsomely decorated cake shown on page 1. Members, both new and long-timers got to mingle and discuss their video interests for the year ahead, and discuss techniques with the award winners. A very pleasant evening was had by all. ■





The Best Way to Set Up Your TV

By Bob Meacham

Since we are all involved in creating and viewing some form of video I think it is important that we address how to adjust your TV to get the best quality picture from it. After all, like speakers in an audio system, it is the last and maybe the most important part of the entire process. Why make

good videos but watch them on a less than properly set up television?

Your television probably came with a menu of adjustments like, brightness, hue, color, contrast, sharpness and a couple others. Most of us simply plug it in, click on the Menu button on the remote and do a quick series of adjustments using what ever is on the TV at the time. However, there is a simple and better way to get the best picture from whatever TV set you use to view your DVDs.

To properly set up your television, start by checking your professional DVD collection. I have found that some purchased DVDs, mostly animated features, have some powerful

tools in their "Bonus" or "Special" features. In the Christmas movie "Elf" (Disney) there is a set of Color Bars squirreled away in the Special Features section. It comes with simple instructions on how to use it to set up the colors but also brightness, hue and contrast of your TV or monitor by displaying the Color Bars on the entire screen. The animated movie "Monsters, Inc." (Pixar) not only has a series of Special Features on video tests and set up but also has audio tests to set up and maximize a Surround Sound system for THX (theater audio). This series is a bit more complicated but addresses screen distortion as well. In the Special Features for the new movie "UP" (Pixar) there resides yet another set of tools/panels that you can use to adjust brightness, contrast, sharpness, screen aspect and hue for the video and a speaker test for the audio.

All of these come with fairly easy to follow instructions that can be used by just about anyone. In just a few minutes you can be assured that you are getting the best picture quality you can from your television, be it digital flat panel HD or CRT based analog.

These are three quick ones that I found by looking at a few of the DVDs that I have. So, check your Special or Bonus Features on your DVDs and get that *perfect picture* to watch your own videos! ■

JUMBLE PUZZLE

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

LEIRRAT



DOEIV



HAWCT



MURCLUF



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



This scene in our Club's 2007 movie "Dearly Departed"

was _____.

Answers on page 7

CLUB MEETINGS REFRESHMENTS VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Each month a member of the club provides refreshments for the evening.

Fred and Joann Pfof will cater the January meeting. Please advise Brian Lucas on which month in 2010 you are willing to volunteer to bring refreshments.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year

Happy New Year to everyone! As I begin the new year as President, I realize that I need to spend more time concentrating on Club business. That is my New Year's Resolution. Fortunately for me, we have some great Board Members.

Last month, the Board met a couple times and spent several hours working out our programs for the coming year. I believe we have some excellent meetings ahead and hope that all the members will enjoy them. We have planned three outside speakers for the year; the first one will be at our January 13 meeting: Fred Heiman. No stranger to our members, Fred has given two other outstanding presentations in the past. This year his presentation will be in High Definition, a real break-through for us to view. I hope you will try to make this event; it should be a wonderful program.

Next month, we will get a chance to view the AMPS winners for last year. This is always a fun program to see how other groups are making films and how they compare to our Club. It's also a chance to see the what types of films are getting awards.

In future months, we plan on having not only a Grade School screening of films, but also films from a local Community College. These films will be fascinating to watch and might give us some ideas that we might incorporate into our films.

We also have plans to get our members more involved in movie making by asking each member to bring to a meeting a short video on a subject in which we provide the video clips for the member to use. A preliminary

New Products

My New
Sony HDR-FX7
Camera

By Fred Pfost

A couple of years ago I bought a new Panasonic 3-chip camcorder which shot very good video but lacked many optional manual controls and other frequently needed adjustments like video and audio gain, Iris control, shutter speed, Zebra stripes and so forth. Also, it did not record in High Definition, a feature I want to explore. So after extensively researching new cameras with all my desired features, I settled on two possibilities. One of them was a Sony that had all the features for about \$2500 but only took flash memory cards (SDHC). This could be a problem as other VVP Group members editing our movies might find these cards not compatible with their editing programs.

I finally settled on the **Sony HDR-FX7** which has almost all the features of the \$4000 Sony camera belonging to Franz Helbig that I had used occasionally. This one had a street price of around \$2300 but I found it on the internet for \$1800. Now I'm busy learning to operate it comfortably in time to shoot our new club movie.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions about this camera, or look it up on the web. ■

discussion will be made before we provide the clips so that you will understand what you need to make your video. In addition, we will have one "Theme Challenge" during the year. We hope most of you will participate in these educational events. Plans are also being made for two technical sessions: one on a storyboard and script software presentation by one of our members and one on Adobe Photoshop/Premier presentation by an Adobe employee.



SPECIFICATIONS

Image Sensor: 3 1/4-inch ClearVid CMOS
Pixels on CCD: 1120k
Video Effective Pixels: 1037k
Format: Mini DV and HDV
Lens: Carl Zeiss 20x Vario-Sonnar T 37.4-748mm, f/1.6-2.8
Viewfinder: color (252K pixels, 16:9)
LCD Display: 3.5-inch color (211K pixels, 16:9)
Focus: auto, manual
Anamorphic: 16:9 yes
Image Stabilization: optical
Exposure: auto, manual,
Min. Shutter Speed: auto: 1/60; manual: 1/4
Max. Shutter Speed: auto: 1/2000; manual: 1/10000
Iris: auto, manual
Electronic Gain: +18dB
Neutral Density Filter: yes (2)
Zebra Stripes: yes (70%, 100%)
White Balance: auto, manual, presets
Audio: 12-bit (default), 16-bit
Audio Gain: auto, manual
Microphone: Input 1/8-inch stereo mini
Headphone: Output 1/8-inch stereo mini
Inputs: FireWire, USB
Outputs: Composite, Component, HDMI
Edit Interface: FireWire, USB
Dimensions: (w x h x d) 5.8 x 6.2 x 12.8 (inches)
Weight (sans tape and battery): 3 lbs. 6 oz.
External Battery Charger Included: no
Battery Type: infoLithium
On-Camera Light: no
Accessory Shoe: yes

All in all, I think we have an exciting and varied program for 2010. Please come (and bring your friends), participate and enjoy. It is going to be great year.

Jack Gorham.

V.P.'S MESSAGE



My Two Cents

It's a New Year and I, your new penny V.P., have a chance to put my two cents in front of you each month. Well let's start out at a couple of obvious problems that Viewfinders has grown into. Then we have the rest of the year for you to disagree with me or to work on solving these problems. You know the old saying; "If you get lemons, make lemonade!"

The first problem we have is a static membership. We meet in a great hall that cost \$60 of your dues a month to rent. It has great facilities. But his hall could easily hold many times as many attendees as it does. In the past year and a half I've been a member of VDVC, membership has remained static. That's got to change.

Where are the younger folk who will not only replace us but who in the meantime will keep us younger minded and activated? (I'm 77 this year.) Is this an interesting hobby club or an old folk's monthly tea? (I note that at least one member tends to sleep through my past presentations, but maybe it is lack of being interesting on my part.)

What about the video presentations offered regularly by club members? Are they something you'll go home thinking about? Do they make you want to try out some of the ideas you saw there or to try next month to do even better? Since I offer only boring travel documentaries, I can hardly boast, but we need to have more dynamic, interesting videos to draw in the crowds of people under 60. Videos that may appeal to the younger crowd.

There seems to be a limited number of people who offer videos for show. What about the rest of you? You do

have video cameras, don't you? Dust them off! Viewfinders modus is mostly to show member or guest videos. Another multimedia club I belonged to stressed editing. Last year at our club a questionnaire was distributed asking what your interests were. Only a few responses were returned. Are you here to learn, to participate or to be entertained?

We need involvement of our local resources, namely the excellent video school at DeAnza. But some people say the movies they make are shocking. Shocking? What do you watch on

TV these days? These younger people are not living in the Victorian age. By now, you senses to modern life should have been dulled. You can't expect them to flock into Quinlan to watch one of my travelogues!

We plan to repeat the survey attempted last year and this time we'd like to hear about your desires and emotions. Will you stand up for Art? For learning skills? Let us hear from you.

Milt Kostner

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR NOV/DEC 2009

Bank Account Beginning 11/01/09	\$1102.80
Income Subtotal:	\$210.00
Membership Dues 2010 (6)	\$155
DVD Sales MT (1)	\$5
DVD Sales TI (5)	\$50
Expenses Subtotal:	\$234.79
Contest Entries	\$4
Awards & Cake	\$149.79
DVD Production	\$40
Bank Account Ending 12/31/09	\$1078.01



TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR 2009

Bank Account Beginning 01/01/09	\$737.11
Income Subtotal:	\$1477.00
Dues 2009:	\$642.00
Dues 2010:	\$215.00
AMMA Gift:	\$445.00
VPG DVD Sales Subtotal:	\$175.00
MT (2)	\$10
DD (3)	\$15
TLF (4)	\$20
TI (13)	\$130
Expenses Subtotal:	\$1136.10
Quinlan Room Rental:	\$660.00
Contest Awards & Cake	\$149.79
VPG Expenses Subtotal:	\$241.86
Entry Fees	\$53.00
DVD Production	\$52.00
Materials	\$76.86
Wrap Party	\$60.00
SCCA Membership	\$20.00
Nametags	\$64.45
Bank Account Ending 12/31/09	\$1078.01

JOIN THE VIEWFINDERS CLUB FOR 2010 NOW!

Bring your check or cash to our January 13th 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".

TECH TIPS

SHOOTING TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Videography Equipment

by Frank Swanson

This article is the first in a series that I will be writing on this topic which I have gathered from videography magazines and my personal experience as a videographer for the past twenty years. I'll be covering Equipment, Pre-shooting Tips, Camcorder Operation, Shooting Techniques, The Seven Deadly Camera Sins, the Art of Composition, the Art of Videomaking, and more.

The camera bag: what's in your bag? If you're headed on a three-day wilderness shoot on foot, you'll want something simple and lightweight to hold, perhaps, only your camcorder, a small lightweight tripod, and a few accessories. Most camcorder companies offer these kinds of bags. If you're going to shoot an event that you can reach by car door-to-door, you'll need something that can hold more items such as a microphone and lighting equipment, a large sturdy/heavy tripod, etc. In these situations look beyond the camcorder manufacturers to such sources as Tamrac, Petrol, Case Logic, Bogen, Targus, Vidpro, and others.



What is the environment in which you plan to shoot? Take a look at weatherproof bags such as LowePro and Cinebags. Some bags are customizable and easily carried as a backpack such as those from Kata and LowePro. If you need something more durable and can be checked with airline baggage or resist fire, dust and moisture, you'll want a sturdy aluminum case as those from Zero Halliburton, Pelican and PortaBrace.

Most bags and cases, but not all, come in scuff resistant black exteriors and have top access to the main compartment with a zipper or Velcro side pouches.

How much are you willing to spend? Although it's tempting to save money, cost shouldn't be the deciding factor. For amateur videographers with only a small DV camcorder and a few accessories (e.g. extra battery and tapes) to protect, then an inexpensive pouch may be just fine. But, if you've got a high-end camcorder, lots of accessories including lenses, filters, wireless microphone kit, and lights, you should focus on semi-hard to hard cases with reconfigurable interiors. You should also consider the longevity of your purchase to handle future purchases of, probably, more expensive and/or additional equipment. Some companies offer lifetime warranties, like Zero Halliburton and LowePro that might be less stressful on the wallet in the long run.

But you say you don't shoot weddings and other serious stuff, just a lot of family gatherings and family vacation stuff. Well, here's a list of the equipment you should acquire and use for these occasions:



Camcorder Gear: your camcorder; remote control; add-on lens converters (e.g. wide-angle, telephoto); lens filters (e.g. transparent, UV, skylight, neutral density ND6 or ND9, polarizer).

You may not own most of these camera accessories now, but over time they're something you should have in your camera bag.

Lighting and Sound: a micro-light that mounts on camera's accessory shoe; white reflector (e.g. car sunshade); headphones (aka "viewfinder for the ears"); shotgun camcorder microphone that mounts on camera's accessory shoe; hardwired microphone; wireless microphone kit. Extra lighting is especially important for those locations where the ambient lighting is insufficient or comes from a bad angle. A pair of headphones is always good to have for monitoring

the recorded audio while you shoot. Because camera microphones are notoriously bad, using an external microphone will get you good clean sound from the subject, especially for those "interview" situations.



Power Supplies: at least two batteries (with a third in the charger); the battery charger; cigarette lighter plug cord for charging batteries in the car (or a 12V to 120V inverter to run your AC battery charger); a foreign country voltage converter kit. Batteries that come with new camcorders lasts as short as 30 minutes so purchase the largest (i.e. longest runtime) battery you can afford. I would rather not come up short and miss those last few shot opportunities at the end of the day.



Tripods and Accessories: lightweight tripod if you're going to be doing a lot of walking (a small monopod will work in most situations); heavy fluid-head tripod for those situations where you need steady camera positioning (e.g. telephoto shots, strong winds, camcorder panning up/down & left/right). As a rule of thumb, it should cost about as much as



your camcorder, and should outlast the lifetime of three camcorders. Using a poor tripod is probably the most significant mistake of amateur videographers; lens-cleaning supplies.

Well, that's half the story on equipment. Next month I'll finish with tips on care and how to handle airport security when you haul your gear to those far away places. ■

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

OFFICERS

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WEBSITE

www.viewfindersclub.org

CLUB MEETING EVENTS 2010

<p>January 13th, Wednesday</p> <p>Fred Heiman movie maker: Presentation and Opera San Jose, & wildlife documentary videos screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>Feb 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>AMPS 2009 Contest winners movies screened by Frank Swanson</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>March 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>Celx pre-production software demonstrated by Milt Kostner</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>April 14th, Wednesday</p> <p>De Anza student's movies screened and discussion</p> <p>"Theme Challenge" announced for June screening</p>
<p>May 12th, Wednesday</p> <p>Adobe Representative Presentation: Photoshop and Premier elements</p> <p>August "Creative Editing" contest announced by Fred Pfof</p>	<p>June 9th, Wednesday</p> <p>"Theme Challenge" movies screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>July 14th, Wednesday</p> <p>Nimitz Grade School movies screened and presented by teacher Susan Woods</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>August 11th, Wednesday</p> <p>Members "Creative Editing" clips screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>September 8th, Wednesday</p> <p>Movie maker Amy Do screens her movie "Rabbit Fever"</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>October 13th, Wednesday</p> <p>Annual Member Video Contest videos screened and judged</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>November 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Awards presented to member video contest winners, board election and social</p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>No meeting this month</p>

Answers to JUMBLE PUZZLE:

Jumbles:
TRAILER VIDEO WATCH
FULCRUM

Answer: This scene in our Club's 2007 movie *Dearly Departed* was

A MATTER OF WILL

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