Next Club Meeting:
Wednesday, January 12th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center,
10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA

November 2010 Meeting

Highlight

Annual Presentations for best Members Videos

Well, well, well, how time seems to fly by. 2010 was a good year for Club meetings with several guest speakers, our own members giving presentations on subjects including scripting, editing and equipment, and plenty of videos screened by members.

Wednesday January 12th 2011 Meeting

Video Making Made Easy!

Invited by Fred Pfost to speak to us about video making with small cameras, Jonathan Parnell of Keeble and Shuchat will feature the Canon SD 4500 and demonstrate it's video capabilities.

The highlight of the year, as in past years, was the screening and judging of best members movies in October and the awards given for them in November. At the November meeting the winners received the Club's Gold DVD awards and Honorable Mention certificates. We also welcomed a new Board of Directors for the following year and ended the evening with another of **Frank Swanson**'s popular *"Tech Tips"* presentation. (See page 6). With membership numbers hovering at a near all time high we know that we belong to a thriving and enthusiastic organization.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A slate of candidates for offices was offered to the membership which comprised of two officers continuing from the previous year and two new returning candidates from previous

Top photo- Gold DVD winners: *Jim Ciarico, Bernie Wood, Virginia Misoff and Milt Kostner.*

Bottom photo - Honorary Mentions and Category Winners: *Jack Gorham, Irv Webster, Bernie Wood, Jim Ciarico, Virginia Misoff, John Dietrich, Milt Kostner and Craig VonWaaden.*

services. Unanimously approved, the new Board for 2011 is as follows:

President: **Gordon Peterson**
Vice President: **Bill Mannion**
Secretary: **Fred Pfost**
Treasurer: **Frank Swanson**

Brian Lucas will continue to be your Newsletter editor and publisher.

Under the new but very experienced Board of Directors the Viewfinders Club will continue to be one of the most dynamic video clubs in North America. Our thanks go to those that have previously, and will in the future, devote their talents and energies to this aim.
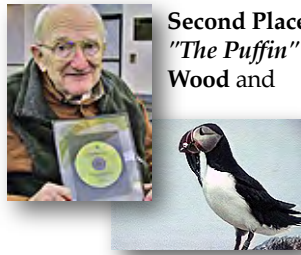
2010 ANNUAL CLUB VIDEO CONTEST

Following the election of Officers, **Jack Gorham**, our outgoing President who deserves much praise for his leadership over the last year, screened the winning movies. Gold DVDs went to the winners:
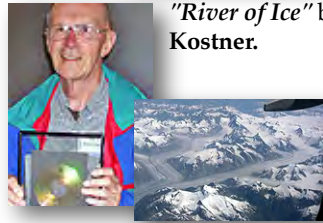
First Place: *"What you can see in Tanzania"* by **Virginia Misoff.** Edited by **Gordon Peterson.**

Second Places (a tie)**:** *"The Puffin"* by **Bernie Wood** and

"River of Ice" by **Milt Kostner.**

Third Place: *"Branding"* by **Jim Ciarico.**

Honorable Mention certificates went to:
"Snickers Bowl" by **John Dietrich**.

"Catch It" by **Irv Webster.**
Daisy Duck" by **Glenn Mooty.**
"All Stars Band - Heartbreaker" by **Craig VonWaaden.**
"Catherine's Palace" by **Jack Gorham.**

Category awards were given for:

Best Content: **Virginia Misoff**
Best Editing: **Bernie Wood**
Best Photography: **Virginia Misoff.**
Best Audio: **Bernie Wood.**

For descriptions and photo stills of the movies please see the November 2010 issue of the Newsletter. Congratulations go to the winners and all those who entered and thanks go to **Janet Holl** for providing the magnificent cake and refreshments, with assistance from Frank Swanson. ■

As video editing software and digital cameras include some filtering features it raises the question of whether or not optical filters are needed. In fact there are several basic optical filters that cannot, or with difficulty, be replicated in postproduction. This article is concerned only with those.

Digital compared to Film Cameras

Filters act by conditioning the light that enters the lens for both digital and film cameras but not necessarily the same way. For example, digital cameras are prone to blowing out highlights to a greater degree than film cameras so filters are useful in reducing contrast. Film is far more sensitive to ultra violet (UV) than digital cameras which hardly record it at all. However some digital cameras suffer from purple fringing artifacts which a UV filter can lessen to a degree.

Basic Optical Filter Types

Filters in this category should cause the camcorder to record a scene as close to that which the human eye sees. They are not intended to do the

Optical Filters for the Videographer

work of "creative" filters, and there are many of them, that deliberately alter color, focus or add special effects. A set of basic filters are used to capture a natural look and include UV, polarizing and neutral density filters.

UV, Haze or Skylight Filter?

Photographers have long used one of these filters permanently attached to the camera if, for no other reason, to protect a valuable lens from dirt, dust, weather, scratches or fingerprints. As these three filters appear to do more or less the same thing, confusion arises on which one to choose. Let's take a look at them.

UV filters are designed to cut haze caused by ultra violet rays found at very high altitudes or over large bodies of water. As digital cameras are almost entirely insensitive to UV this

filter is unlikely to make a difference. However, as inexpensive as these clear filters are, they do make good lens protectors.

Haze Filters. Similar to UV filters, 'though more expensive, these filters are lightly tinted, usually yellow. They do block more UV than the simple UV filter but also reduce blue. Heavily tinted Haze filters can cause an unwanted yellow cast which would have to be removed in the video editor.

Skylight Filters. Another variant of the UV filter but with no better UV suppression. They are tinted with a warm color such as salmon or pink and add a slight warming effect that can be pleasing. They are also useful for removing blueness in shaded areas, a result of indirect blue sunlight. Skylight filters are most effective on digital cameras as warming filters.

Polarizing Filters

These popular filters have the advantage when shooting outdoors of reducing glare caused by polarized light which enters the lens directly. This

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ask not what your Viewfinders Club will do for you, but what will you do for your Viewfinders Club!

To paraphrase Kennedy's words. We hope you will regularly attend Viewfinders events and help support the club by taking on a duty or participating more within the club.

Our joint meeting of the 2010 and 2011 Board members to plan next year's programs certainly impressed me with their concern and commitment to better club services for the members. Among the topics discussed was the idea of a meeting "Producer". This year we will have a producer for each meeting program. He or she will arrange for, and may present, the selected topic. Members are invited to offer suggestions for additional programs and we appreciate offers to produce such programs.

The club relies strongly on the results of members' surveys indicating areas of interests. We had 15 replies to our November survey from the 21 persons who attended the meeting. The topics selected for 2011 meeting programs are listed on the club calendar on the last page of the newsletter.

The following describes the sequence of events of a typical club meeting night for the coming year. It may be adjusted as needed:

1. 50 minutes presentation start ing promptly at 7:30pm (unless there are delays in setting up). Please be on time.
2. 10 minutes Club business, new member introductions, announcements and information.

3. 10 minutes Refreshment break.
4. 30-40 minutes Member-time to include video screening, video topics or demonstrations of video equipment etc.
5. 0-10 minute *Tech Tips* if time permits.

Members are encouraged to contact me **408-266-0250.** Email: **gorapeterson@earthlink.net** in advance of the meeting to indicate they have something they wish to show, discuss or demonstrate during member-time. Please provide a description of the video or topic and the estimated time needed to present it. Videos are limited to 10 minutes and may be presented for comments or no comments. Please indicate your preference. Priority will be given for the member-time as follows: 1st priority to those who notify me before the meeting (preferred), 2nd priority at the meeting (before the meeting starts), and 3rd priority to someone who gives notice after the meeting starts. I would like a written notice indicating the topic, estimated time to present, request for comments or not, and member's printed name so I can schedule the member presentation.

We very much appreciate the work **Frank Swanson** has put into the Club website. Check it out at **www.viewfindersclub.org.** Frank and the Board are looking for someone take over as webmaster so if you are willing, or know someone who would be willing, please let me know.

Brian Lucas has agreed to continue as the editor our outstanding Newsletter for the coming year. We certainly would like to have more member topics of interest or articles included in the Newsletter. Contact Brian at **408-735-0367** or send him an Email at **lucasbouret@sbcglobal.net.** He'll appreciate any submissions.

Several of our members, along with City of Cupertino employees, are working on better balanced audio and more accurate color for video projection screenings during Club meetings. We should see improvements in 2011.

The club would like to have additional special interest groups operat-

ing within the Club similar to the Production Group that has been producing the Club video each year. Other possibilities are groups comparing different computer platforms or editing software; videographers with special interests in nature, documentary, family history, public service, public access TV, travel, special events, educational; or working on some videomaking aspect like better sound, better exposure, better framing, interesting camera angles and other techniques; or just getting together and sharing ideas.

I would also like someone to coordinate the refreshments for the year. We have have volunteers for January-April but we need someone to recruit and organize arrangements for the rest of the year. Please contact me ASAP if you are willing.

To encourage visitors becoming new members, our new VP **Bill Mannion** will introduce a new program having club members be mentors. We plan to connect new members with someone who is using similar equipment and/ or similar video interests. Please contact Bill at **billmannion@sbcglobal.net** so he knows that you are willing to introduce someone new or act as a mentor.

Much seems to be happening in the visual-imaging world today. I recently heard on NPR about a NYU art professor who has had a "3rd eye" camera implanted in the back of his head. He plans to record a shot a minute for a whole year. Check out the story at **www.npr.org/templates/story/story.p hp?storyId=131539647**. He also has a website: **www.3rdi.me** where you can view what is taken by the camcorder. And yes, he did say it was painful to have the camera installed in the back of his head!

Gordon Peterson

V.P.'s MESSAGE

Perspectives

Situated in Cali Square at the corner of Stevens Creek and De Anza Boulevard is a sculpture entitled *"Perspectives"*.

The sculpture is three dimensional. You can walk around it and view it from many angles. Each angle presents a different view not only of the sculpture itself but what you see looking through it.

As the new Vice President of the Club I would like to use this column to look at the many aspects of the Viewfinders Club and write about the perspectives visible to me.

My first perspective is an awareness that the membership has grown significantly from the early days when we met in the "card room" of the old Cupertino Senior Center. It was a small, crowded, and somewhat forlorn meeting room but in the mid 90's it was offered to us free of charge from 7 to 9 p.m. once a month. And we were glad to have it!

Our early membership was limited to the size of the card room and one of our early goals as a new club, after realizing that the club was a viable, was to find a new location that could accommodate an increase in membership.

Quinlan Community Center filled the bill but it came at a cost. We needed to grow the membership to fill the large meeting room but we also needed the increase in membership to pay for the rent of the room. In time both needs were met, first by new members joining the Viewfinders and second by acquiring members from video clubs that had expired.

Two questions arise from this perspective. First, how can the Viewfinders continue to attract new members? Second, how can we avoid the same fate as those video clubs that have closed their doors?

In answer to the first question, we should all be on the lookout for new members. The easiest way to make potential members aware of our Club and its activities is to refer them to our website **viewfindersclub.org** and especially to the Club Newsletter pages on the website.

The Newsletters provide all the information a prospective member needs to know about our Club and its activities. Followup with potential new members and invite them to attend our monthly meetings. We have the room to grow our membership in the space at Quinlan.

The answer to the second question is understanding the reasons for other video clubs closing their doors. I suspect they failed because the membership dwindled as a result of a "groundswell of apathy". What does it take to overcome apathy in any organization? I believe apathy is overcome by involvement as recently demonstrated by the Tea Party movement in America. That was a "groundswell of participation".

I urge all of our members to participate in all of our Club's activities in 2011 including monthly attendance, making and showing videos, entering contests, and most of all a willingness to participate as an elected Officer of the Club in 2012.

Think about all of the above. And let me know what you are thinking by sending me an e-mail at **billmannion@sbcglobal.net.**

Bill Mannion

Improving Your Video Editing

By Milt Kostner

If you hope to improve your video editing skills, you might want to check out a book I read recently: *The Invisible Cut (How Editors Make Magic)* by Bobbie O'Steen, available at Amazon for $19.11 plus S/H, or perhaps your local library.

O'Steen provides an effective demonstration of the methodology and thinking of how several Hollywood editors of various movie genre managed to editor their good and sometimes bad film clips into award winning feature films. She does this by first discussing the how's and why's of good film editing and then reviews examples of these principles through the use of selected film scenes from nine great movies. Well maybe eight if them were great, IMHO.

These movie types include dialogue driven *(Twelve Angry Men)*; comedy *(The Graduate)*; suspense *(Rear Window)*; mystery *(Chinatown)*; action *(Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid)* and *(The French Connection)*; sex *(Body Heat)*; musical *(Hard Days Night)*; and montage (the bicycle montage in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*) and *(The Big Chill)*.

The author does this by first presenting the script of a movie scene broken down into movie shots used in that scene, together with frame icons. Next she presents the actual out-take and in-take frames at most of the important cuts while again describing the scene action. She follows this with a deconstruction (in some cases with comments from the editor) as of why these editing cuts held the film together. For an example, see **bobbieosteen.com/the-invisible-cut/.**

In one case, *Body Heat*, the editor notes that the filming had been a shambles and the director had to bring part of the porch back to the studio for retakes. The author points out that in spite of the best efforts of the editor, mismatches occur, but due to sharp editing, nobody really notices. Frankly, the sensuality of this scene really had me very interested, even though I've never seen this movie. But you can bet I'll be looking for it in the near future.

An interesting factoid from the book is that Alfred Hitchcock, who is known for editing on camera, used all the film he shot in Rear Window except for 9 minutes worth. Since you asked, I loved all of these movies except *Hard Days Night* with the Beatles (and of course, the unseen *Body Heat*). ■

Filters... continued from page 2

Filter examples from left to right: No filter, UV filter, Haze filter, Skylight filter, Graduated filter

filter also enriches the color and detail which glare will repress. Some practice is needed in finding the best rotation position of the filter for optimum results and some sort of shade over the camera's display is desirable to see the wanted effect. They are commonly used to enhance skies and clouds but also have positive benefits when shooting water or foliage. There are two types of polarizing filters: Linear and Circular.

Linear polarizers are less expensive and will work well in most digital cameras but may be incompatible with high-end cameras that employ split-beam metering for auto focus. For these cameras the circular version is the one to use.

Neutral Density Filters (ND)

Reducing the amount of light entering the camera has the advantage of enabling a slower shutter speed to exaggerate blur if wanted, such as moving water. It will also improve subject to background separation. Digital cameras with their small physically sized CCDs and apertures no smaller than f/8 have excessive depths of field in strong sunlight. ND filters, which do not affect color, will reduce the light entering the camera and consequently allow the subject to remain sharp while blurring the background.

Graduated Neutral Density Filters (GND)

Similar to ND filters but graduating from dark gray to clear over the diameter of the filter. Beloved of outdoor nature photographers, these filters are used to balance bright skies that reduce color and detail in dark foregrounds.

Square GNDs are more versatile than round GNDs but require some sort of holder similar to that offered by the Cokin System. Square filters can be rotated and slid across the

lens to better position the gray to clear transition for the scene.

Pros and Cons of Using Optical Filters as Lens Protectors

Pros: • A UV filter is a lot less expensive to replace than your camera's lens
• UV filters are clear so may be left affixed to the lens without exposure compensation concerns
• Higher priced quality multicoated filters suppress lens flare

Cons: • Any additional glass will, to some extent, degrade the optical performance of the lens
• Camera auto focus can be confused by the addition of a filter

• Risk of "vignetting" in wide angle shots whereby the corners of the frame are darkened by the filter mount. Especially noticeable when stacking filters or using cheaper and thicker plastic mounted filters
• Uncoated filters can cause unwelcome reflections called "flare" in certain situations. (A lens hood can protect against this problem, or simply remove the filter if in doubt.)

Whether or not to use optical filters is, of course, a matter of personal choice but in general they do serve useful benefits that are difficult to duplicate in post-production. They deserve consideration. ∎

Brian Lucas

JOIN/RENEW YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP FOR 2011
The Club membership at the end of 2010 was a near record of 42 members (it was 43 back in 2002). The membership dues for 2011 like last year are $30 for individuals, $35 for families and $5 for full-time students. Bring your check or cash to our January 12th meeting. Make your checks payable to the "Viewfinders Club".

Frank Swanson

TECH ✓ TIPS

THE MONTAGE
By Frank Swanson

*This month's article is about the "Montage" which was featured in the short video that was screened at our last Club meeting in November. If you were there to see this video produced by **Digital Juice** some years ago, you probably came away wondering how you could use this editing technique in your videography work. Well, I hope after reading this article you'll come away with some ideas that you can put into immediate use the next time you make a movie from your photos and video clips.*

First, what is the definition of a "montage"? It's a technique in film editing in which a series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information. Now that's a pretty simple definition, but it has a rich and robust potential to it. Today's video-editing programs are meant to compile many forms of media -- photos, video clips, text, illustrations and audio -- making an engaging, compelling special occasion montage easy. There are a few points to keep in mind to make the entire process more efficient and for creating an engaging video that tells a story while keeping your viewers interested.

Tip 1: Built a Storyboard. A photo montage that bounces back and forth through the years with seemingly no sense of continuity may feel fun for you but can be jarring for your viewers. Consider the story you want to tell with your montage. Are you telling about someone's life from birth to the present? Do you want to tell about your vacation trip to Yosemite last summer? Try to determine what shots should be screened at the beginning (usually a set of short establishing clips will do the trick), the middle and finally the end (e.g. a head shot of person or a sunset shot of Yosemite Falls). Separate your

footage into each of these three parts of the story. Deciding on a plan gives your project framework and will help as you search for photographs, video clips and music. A combination of photos and video clips in your montage can also add a new dimension that breaks-up the repetition of otherwise all photos or all video clips.

Tip 2: Timing is Everything. You'll want to include all of your recorded footage in your montage, but you can't. There's a fine line between a perfectly orchestrated slide show and an assault on a captive audience. Generally, an amenable length for a video montage is about five to ten minutes, depending on the pace of the show and particularly the music. Six minutes of slow ballads, and your guests may begin to doze. Having a time frame will give you a guideline for your photo or video clip search. A rule of thumb is about three or four seconds per photo, or five to ten seconds per video clip. That's about 60 photos in a four-minute slide show, or about 60 clips in a ten-minute video montage. Remember, this is not a feature film, so be ruthless and use your best best photos and/or footage.

Tip 3: Organize Your Memories. For some, this can be the most time-consuming aspect -- exploring old photo albums, rifling through digital storage, scanning framed pictures, or choosing which clips of your vacation video footage to use. Once you choose the elements, keep them organized and accessible. You might put all of the photo media in a dedicated folder on your computer or save them all to a data CD.

Tip 4: Choose Meaningful Music. Take any video clip or array of pictures and imagine how the emotional response might change with various pieces of music -- whether rock, clas-

sical, inspirational, or the score from a suspense film. Your sound track will change the overall feel of the presentation. Place markers along the sound track so you can change the photo or clip precisely on the beat – do this by hitting the asterisk key while listening to the music on your timeline. For a 10-minute video montage, choose up to three pieces of music. But remember to ease the sound between pieces and end your video when the last piece finishes – no abrupt ending here.

Tip 5: Ambient Sound. Place your music and video in the timeline of your video editing software. Experiment with different order, length and clips in each section starting with the beginning. When you are happy with a section, move on to the next. Be sure to pay attention to any audio from your video clips that needs to be heard, such as voices, running water in the river, city traffic, etc. And, be sure to fade in/out these sounds so they're not abrupt and jarring for your audience. You may want to lower the volume of your music for these sounds as well so they're heard well.

Tip 6: Finish Your Montage. Once the content is selected, watch the rough cut from beginning to end without stopping. Note adjustments that need to be made. Note transitions, audio adjustments and titles that are needed. Replace or fix any troublesome clips and make adjustments to music and surrounding clips. Edit out clips with poor focus, lighting or sound in favor of better quality ones unless the content is essential to your story. Add titles, transitions and audio adjustments after all footage has been chosen. Use special effects sparingly. Using too many will water down the effect and make your montage appear gimmicky and amateurish. If your audience is noticing your transitions -- screen wipes, swirls, flips and spins -- rather than your photos or video clips, you are missing your mark. Find effects and transitions that complement your show, that make sense with the music and the theme, and that improve the impact of your story rather than overpowering it. For example, a spinning transition or simple cut accompanying a bopping rock song adds power; for a more reflective picture or scene, ease in or use a soft dissolve.

Tip 7: Watch the Finished Product. Watch the finished montage with a critical eye. It may be good to get a second opinion at this point. Choose someone fair that will be honest, but won't necessarily rain on your parade. Render and test the video on the equipment you will be exhibiting it on before your audience arrives to avoid unpleasant surprises. Make any needed adjustments and render the final montage. ∎

PICTURE PUZZLE by Frank Swanson

In the following photograph taken during the Club's field trip to NBC's Channel 3 television station tin August, there are ten (10) differences between the original photo above and the modified one below. Can you find them all?

Picture Puzzle answer can be found on page 8

CLUB MEETINGS
REFRESHMENTS VOLUNTEERS

We're looking for volunteers willing to provide refreshments at club meetings. Please let one of the Board members know which month you will be available.

In 2011 we plan to have two people sign up for each month which will ease individuals cost.

The club thanks those who will or have provided refreshments in the past.

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: Gordon Peterson
gorapeterson@earthlink.net

Vice President: Bill Mannion
billmannion@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer: Frank Swanson
frank_video29@swansonhome.com

Secretary: Fred Pfost
fpfost@aol.com

WEBSITE
www.viewfindersclub.org

Picture Puzzle Answers from Page 7

1. Green screen has turned blue (B4-B7)
2. Lady's purse has disappeared (D6)
3. Light diffuser has doubled in size (B1)
4. Another checker pattern has appeared on floor (E4)
5. Neck brace on man has disappeared (C2)
6. Man's shirt is missing two green stripes (C5)
7. Yellow power cord on floor has turned red (D1)
8. Another light pole has appeared (B3)
9. Lady has lost her feet (D4)
10. Middle light reflector has disappeared (A4)

CLUB MEETING EVENTS
2011

January 12th, Wednesday

Videomaking Made Easy with the Canon SD 4500 by Jonathan Parnell of Keeble and Shuchat

Tech-Tips if time

February 17th , Thursday

Award Winning Amateur Movies: screening of movies from SCCA, AMPS and AIFVF contests in 2010

Tech-Tips if time

March 9th, Wednesday

Using Still Images Creatively in Videos: how and why the video editor should employ The Ken Burns Effect by Brian Lucas

Tech-Tips if time

April 13th, Wednesday

Making Animation Videos

Tech-Tips if time

May 11th, Wednesday

Member Video Screenings: recently produced movies by club members are shown to help Club members improve the quality of their productions

Tech-Tips if time

June 8th, Wednesday

Independent Movie Maker Presentation

Tech-Tips if time

July (TBD)

Making Low Light Videos: basic rules and procedures for improving your low light video shooting and editing

Tech-Tips if time

August (TBD)

Making Family History Videos: what, why, how and when to get started in documenting your family history

Tech-Tips if time

September (TBA)

Tech-Tips if time

October (TBD)

Annual Member Video Contest: screening of best movies produced by Club members this year

Tech-Tips if time

November (TBD)

Golden DVD Awards Night: screening of the top three movies for the year; also election of Club officers for 2012

DECEMBER

No meeting this month