

Next Club Meeting:

** Wednesday, September 11th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center,
10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA*



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August Meeting

Shooting a movie in Nepal incurred problems not always anticipated by ex-Viewfinder Herb Wolff.

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Club Movie Screened in Germany

"Maybe Today" was accepted by the Regensburg International Film Festival.

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Viewfinders' Puzzle

Frank Swanson's Picture Puzzle plays games with last month's meeting.

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President's Message

Ron Rhodes waxes poetic - or at least video-etic - about what constitutes the 'Happy Time'.

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Worth a Look Online

Four more videos seen on the web that may add to your video skills and imagination.

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Tech Tips

A video profile of someone you know makes an interesting project which will be valued, says Frank Swanson.

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August 2013 Meeting
Highlights

Himalayan Adventure

So here's the deal. A colleague of yours shows you a movie script he's written, you like it, and then he asks you to spend a month with him in Nepal to shoot it, all expenses paid. Would you take him up on his offer? Of course you would. Like a shot - what better have you to do this summer? That's what happened to ex-Viewfinder Herb Wolff, 'though it turned out to be more of an adventure than he anticipated.

The Making of 'Teri Mountain'

A Presentation by Herb Wolff, with Frank Paul Perez



Above: Frank with his Red camera and Herb with his two Sennheiser microphones discuss filming in Nepal

September Meeting

Shoot the Train Workshop

Bring your camcorder to the meeting for hands-on training by some of our Club's experts.

A model train layout will be set up as the subject for us to learn how to position our cameras, effectively use the camera's controls for framing and depth of field, and much much more.

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

With assistance from fellow crew member and videographer Frank Paul Perez, Herb addressed the Club on the making of the new mystery movie 'Teri Mountain'. It's set in a past era and is about a Tibetan family, a sorcerer, a lost treasure, a murder and a missing body. A location in Nepal was chosen to represent Tibet.

Tsering Dhondup, Herb's fellow student at DeAnza college, a Tibetan, wrote the script, raised funds for the production cost, and appointed himself Director. Herb was engaged as

the Sound Mixer and Boom Operator, and Frank as Camera Operator. Other crew members were mostly recruited in Nepal. 31 days were scheduled for shooting, mostly in the countryside with one day in a Kathmandu studio for special effect green screen shots.

EQUIPMENT

The presentation began with a discussion of the principal equipment that Herb and Frank took with them.

Frank began. He took with him his Red One camera that shoots at 4k, 2k and 1k. These things cost around

Continued page 2

Teri Mountain, continued from page 1

\$22,000 dollars for the body alone, plus another \$3,000 for a variable lens. Takes are recorded to a proprietary 64 gig solid state memory drive, about the size of a cigarette package, that slots into a recess in the camera. Frank took three of these with him which were quite sufficient for a day's shoot. The plan was to download content to a computer each night for review but unforeseen events made this difficult. More about this later. Four batteries went on the trip, two of them 3 hour durations and two of them 30 minute durations. As it turned out they never had to be recharged while in Nepal.

Herb, as the sound guy, took two microphones, both Sennheisers. One of them, a shotgun type turned out to be the workhorse and used for most of the sound recordings in conjunction with a wireless control. The second mike, handled inexpertly by a locally employed crew member, recorded little of value. Herb also had a 4 channel audio mixer, a 3 channel audio mixer and a 4 channel digital recorder. Out in the field these very heavy recorders began to slowly rip apart at the seams the backpack in which they were fitted. With foresight Herb had packed needles and nylon thread which saved the day in that remote area. Herb says he will never go on a shoot again without these emergency items.

TRAVELING THROUGH NEPAL

Mount Everest can be seen from Kathmandu but their flight from San Francisco landed in fog so the great mountain was hidden. Disappointingly the same weather conditions prevailed a month later so they never

got to see the highest place on Earth. The next morning they set out for their destination, Kagbeni, to the northwest of the capital. The village lies some 60 miles away as the crow flies, but the trip took two, often bone jarring days. The first leg followed the Prithvi Highway to Pokara before



turning away to Jomsom, their overnight stop. The next morning a one hour drive brought them to Kagbeni. Many hours were spent uncomfortably driving over the rough dirt roads.

AT KAGBENI

Filming locations were on the mountain above the village which can be seen in the background in some of the shots. They include two caves, a monastery and a lake. To get to them each day required an arduous climb carrying heavy equipment, including the generator, which soon lost its charm. Compounding the physical effort were long days of shooting caused by "Nepalese Time". American crews understood the need to be punctual at "call" time, when the cast and crew report for work. Not being on time can play havoc with scheduling. Unfortunately the Nepalese understand no such discipline. Herb and Frank would report at 7:00 am, the rest of the crew arrived at about

9:00 am. This situation persisted regardless of exhortations through the 24 days of filming.

This caused long work days that pushed dinner times back to 10:00 p.m. After dinner the rushes needed to be downloaded from the memory drive to the computer and then reviewed. The Director however had other problems to deal with and never got to review the takes until eight or nine days into the shoot. Frank was so exhausted at the end of the long days, lugging heavy equipment up and down the mountain that checking the rushes after dinner until 3:00 am each day was impossible. So he arranged for the Assistant Director to at least download the takes at the end of the day. Herb voluntarily rose early each morning to review the takes before the start of another day's shoot.

RAIN AND MUD

Kagbeni sits in an arid desert-like valley of dust and rocks where most of the time rainfall is scarce. But on the morning of day 8 the skies opened up and the rain poured down. Sand, dirt and rocks on the mountainsides were washed down in a torrent that turned into a mudslide that threatened the villages below. Before shooting could begin the Assistant Cameraman (AC) suddenly said he had to go. The village across the valley, where his sister lived, was being destroyed by the mud. The crew learned later that one person had been killed and much livestock had been injured or drowned by the mudslide which had engulfed the village. There was no shooting on

Continued page 3



Left to right: • Director Tsering Dhondup • Herb Wolff and crew • Mudslide devastates a village • Up on the mountain

Teri Mountain, continued from page 2

day 9 as the crew volunteered to help the stricken village. Frank reluctantly took over the extra role of AC, who's job includes setting and tearing down the camera, focus pulling, checking batteries and so forth, for the rest of the shoot.

TERI MONASTERY, THE LAKE, AND TREASURE MOUNTAIN

Sitting high in the mountainside above the stricken village is Teri Monastery. Payment had been made to the resident monk for permission to film inside the holy place. Without electricity the interior was very dark indeed. However there was a bonus; religious paintings that had never been photographed before lined the walls. The movie would be the first to do so.

Above the monastery and another two hour trek was the lake that served as another location for the story.

Nearby "Treasure" mountain required another hike. This mountain served as the place where the missing treasure of the story was said to be hidden. Caves had been carved into the mountain by monks long ago. The scenes featuring the search for the treasure were filmed in these caves.

RETURN TO KATHMANDU

On completion of shooting in Kagbeni the crew returned to the capital and rented a studio for one day to work some green screen magic before returning to the USA. This would be assimilated with the location footage for the editing process in California.

THE MINDER

Nepal is presently governed by one of the two national communist par-

ties and shares borders with communist China and Tibet. Typical of such countries the government, while encouraging tourist dollars, can be suspicious of strangers. Consequently a government employed "minder" was detailed to accompany the film crew. However, the agent was a pleasant woman who happily accepted the film crew's generosity at restaurants and made no difficulties for them. After a couple of days she left them to their business and went home.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

After Herb's and Frank's presentation Viewfinders members were invited to ask questions. Most of them were related to the technical aspects of going into remote areas to film. Some of the answers were as follows.

During the shoot Herb had to step in to assist as lighting technician. The main problem was that in such a remote place the electrical supply is rudimentary and unreliable. Voltage fluctuates wildly causing the lights to waver in brightness which is no help for achieving good continuity. Sorting out various power adapters, cables and plugs resulted in a rats nest of wires and connectors.

As shooting was limited to less than 30 days, pick-ups or re-shoots weren't viable. To counter the problem of poor lighting continuity from day to day and location to location, Frank devised a scheme to mask inconsistencies. As the film was to be a period piece, Frank employed candles for interior shoots and washed the whole scene in a warm orange glow. A large silk (a cloth light diffusion sheet) to filter the harsh sunlight had no frame to control it so it flapped in the wind.

This could be heard in the audio capture so was useless. Exterior takes, some on rainy days, were treated to a greenish-blue tint. By stylizing the shots Frank hoped to minimize lighting inconsistencies.

The environment at Kagbeni was surprisingly noisy. Herb had to struggle with this as his audio recording equipment picked up livestock and agricultural related noises that echoed across the treeless valley. The inexperienced Nepalese crew seemed not to understand that even shotgun microphone can pick up noises from the sides and rear as they happily chatted while the camera rolled.

Herb learned the hard way how important a part water plays in civilized living. At Kagbeni where the crew lodged there were no showers or flushing toilets. Keeping clean and not becoming odorous was a struggle in the hot and dusty climate. At the end of a long, sweaty and fatiguing day there were no soothing hot baths or showers to look forward to.

The film is now in the editors hands and likely to remain there for about a year. The hope is that the finished movie will be accepted at Sundance as well as other major international film festivals around the globe. We look forward to seeing it.

Frank (www.redlilystudios.com) is now working on a comedy series with another group, and a film short written, directed and produced by Herb. We eagerly anticipate seeing those too. ■

(Note: See Web Site Updates, page 4, to download Herb's presentation slides.)



Left to right: • Struggling with heavy equipment • A monk enjoys the joke the joke • Crew and actors in one of the caves • Green screen studio work in Kathmandu

“Maybe Today” Gets More Recognition

In terms of the entertainment business, a project has “legs” when it can continue to produce. A club movie we made a few years back, “Maybe Today”, was entered into the “videoAktiv Regensburg Film Festival” in Regensburg, Germany last July and received some recognition. The festival presented all movies that were accepted into it with an award, “Diplom” in German and a nice medal commemorating the event’s last festival.

“Maybe Today” has been shown in two European film festivals, The “Big Gig” in Scotland and this one in Germany, as well as the AMPS, the AMMA, the Best Of The West festivals



and a local festival in Los Gatos, CineCats.

Come check out the medal and awards at the next meeting. Make a good movie and see it visit exotic places!

Bob Meacham

Viewfinders Web Site

viewfindersclub.org

Click the link above for latest updates

Home Page: Our new club “Promo”

Meetings Page: Download Herb Wolff’s “Nepal” presentation slides from the August Club meeting.

Video of the Month features the President’s Award for Nature Golden DVD Award for 2012, *The Uninvited Guest* produced by Sal Tufo.

Download the short video clip *Music Score Revealer* (48MB). (Revealers are short video clips used for bringing text on and off the screen).

Productions Page: Click on past club video production titles to view excerpts. “*Hollywood Film Directing*” - links to seminars on the topics of film directing and screen writing

Newsletter Page: Download all Viewfinders Newsletters since January 2007 with a list of selected articles.

Webmaster: **Frank Swanson**

PICTURE PUZZLE by Frank Swanson

At the Club’s August meeting Herb Wolff and Frank Paul Perez demonstrate the Red One 4K digital cinema camera that they used in Nepal to shoot their new feature film “*Teri Mountain*” that’s now in post-production down in Los Angeles. There are 10 differences between these two pictures. Can you spot them all? The answers are on page 8.



A
B
C
D
E
F



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Happy Time

Once upon a happy time
we had a place to watch a show.
We came and shared our video tales
and went home to let our new
thoughts grow.

To sit and think, cooking ideas,
We plan and plot and design.
Creating a world that needs to be real
As real as it is in our mind.

Searching for raw material
or gathering clips of our favorite deal.
We'll point our magic lenses
at the things we'd love to reveal.

We watch the images flicker
in front of our blurry eyes.

We count seconds, and feel the
rhythms
and construct a video enterprise.

To capture and to manipulate,
to mold and shape our narration,
we'll cut and paste, stretch and
weave,
stack and blend the presentation.

What is the point, how is it real?
How do we best persuade?
Order and sequence, cause and effect,
is how good stories are made.

Transition, transposition,
segue to and fro.
Transaction, juxtaposition,
you're the idea relationship maestro.

Sounding out the depth of music
voices and wording follow or lead
as the flow of visions paints a tableau
we take our ears along to succeed.

Must we label what we do?
Introductions must be telling.
Chopped into chapters and flagged
with markers,
better watch your spelling.

We build a menu for the courses,
and give credit where it's due.
Here's a title and a crawler
and a scrolling list for you.

As we finally surrender we must
eventually render
our creations to a composite whole.
Pick a format and select a medium
so we can reach our goal.

A night of reveals and yours is but
one.
Everyone else has been crafting too!
From the family that likes to share,
A golden reward for the selected few.

Those who succeed in bridging the
gap
between their mind and ours,
we honor their talent and skill,
and their effort of many hours.

Each year we add to our prowess
and we take away what fails.
We find enjoyment with the results
and share many more exciting tales.

The happy time is now.

Ron Rhodes

Worth a Look Online

Google Glass instead of a GoPro?



www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1uyQZNg2vE

Adolf's not too pleased about the Canon 7D



www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZp9WMy4ihg&list=TLHMNW5CK0CcA

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TREASURER'S REPORT FOR AUGUST 2013

Bank Account Beginning 8/1/13	\$1384.47
Income Subtotal:	\$10.00
DVDs (2):	\$10.00
Expenses Subtotal:	\$20.00
Refreshments:	\$20.00
Bank Account Ending 8/31/13	\$1374.47



HELP THE CLUB GROW

Spread the word about the Viewfinders Club to other local amateur videographers when you meet them along the way. Get some of the free Club business cards from the Club Treasurer at the next meeting. The membership dues for NEW members are prorated, so for the remainder of 2013 they are:
\$14 for individuals, \$17 for families and just \$5 for full-time students. Bring your check or cash to our next meeting on September 11th. Make your check payable to the "Cupertino Viewfinders". Remember that you must be a Club member to enter a video in the Annual Club Member Video Contest this October and perhaps win one of the three Golden DVD Awards for 2013.

Frank Swanson

TECH TIPS

TECHNICAL TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Part 35

By Frank Swanson

Video Profile: A Story Waiting to be Told

Have you ever contemplated making a video about yourself or a close relative? I think most of us have, but very few of us have actually carried through making one. Why do you think that is? Is it because you think the task seems too daunting, too big a challenge to tackle? Is it because you don't know even where to start? Well, I propose that you take a new and different perspective on making one of these videos that I'll call a "video profile: a story waiting to be told". Read-on and discover how to capture the personal insights of people in your life – perhaps even you - who have an interesting story to tell.

1. A Video Profile: Introducing an audience to a person is a video profile. Whether that person is a spouse, a grandchild, a close friend, or even yourself. A video profile treats the viewer to an inside look at the story of the person being profiled. Profiles like the ones seen on the evening national news (e.g. ABC's Person of the Week on Fridays), A&E's Biography series, or E!'s True Hollywood Story look back through time at the lives of actors, singers, athletes, politicians, rock stars and other famous people. Through a combination of personal interviews, old clips and photos, the viewer is given a backstage pass to the interesting and unique lives of people. Regardless of whom you profile, the goal is the same: to tell the story of a unique and influential person's life.

You don't need a rich or famous subject to make an intriguing and worthwhile video profile. Anyone with a story to tell will do. You might

profile a grandparent for an upcoming birthday celebration or family reunion. You might profile your boss for the annual company banquet, or your nephew's championship baseball team for the big awards dinner. Video profiles can be simple



and fun to make, or they can be profound and meaningful. They're a great way to honor important people in YOUR world.

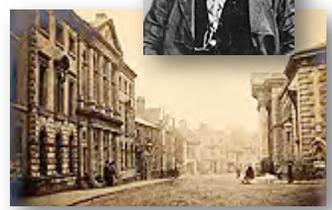
2. Storytelling: At the core of an interesting profile is a person with a story to tell. The trick is to get your subject to tell his/her story in an interesting way. Most people become animated when they have the opportunity to talk about themselves. That enthusiasm is contagious. It engages the audience and breathes life into the profile. The task then is to find those questions and allow your subject to answer with more than a "yes" or "no". Should you discover that it's not quite that easy, try keeping these tips in mind:

- *Stay out of the way.* The person you are interviewing is the story, and they know their life better than you do (unless the subject is you). Allow them to tell their story their own way, even if they ramble on or get off-track from what you expect.
- *Maintain a conversational tone.* Try not to grill your subject like an investigator. Have a conversation with them about their life – allow your subject to speak freely and at length in response. You can always shorten answers that are too long in postproduction.
- *Listen to the answers.* Don't get so caught up in asking questions that you forget to listen to the answers. If your subject senses a lack of genuine interest, they may stop talking.
- *Ask follow-up questions.* When you hear what your subject is saying, you can ask appropriate follow-up ques-

tions that can add detail to the story. The uniquely personal voice of your subject may be lost if you make them adhere to a strict list of pre-fabricated questions. After all, it's their story.

3. Production Elements: Video profiles lend themselves to many production styles. From simple talking-head interviews to copy stand work, from Super 8 film clips to videotaped reenactments (if you're really ambitious), creative opportunities abound. Here are a few elements that you might include to keep things interesting:

- *Old photos.* Even in the age of video, a picture is worth a thousand words. A few black and white photos can speak volumes. Pictures of your subject as a child set the scene for the story of their life. Old family albums are gold mines for material such as a photo of a great-grandparent who brought his family to America in the 1800's. Even old pictures of the city where your subject grew up can add interest. Place each photo on a copy stand and record it to tape to gather shots for B-roll.
- *Film clips.* At its simplest, transferring Super 8 film to video requires no more than your camcorder, a projector and a white wall. Film footage of your subject learning to ride a bike or blowing out birthday candles is good for adding interest to your profile.
- *News tidbits.* A newspaper headline or snippet of video from a news broadcast can provide the context for the life of your subject. We can all relate to certain historical moments. Identify your subject's place in history by attaching their life to moments we all remember.
- *Interviews.* Make a list of friends and family members of your subject. You may find it interesting to interview several people who know your subject well. On A&E's Biography



Continued page 7

Tech Tips cont. from page 6

phy series, they use interviews of spouses, children, produces and co-starts to round out a celebrity's story.



Many times, these other interviews provide the bulk of the content. An added benefit is that this takes some of the pressure off of your subject. Even if they don't interview well, those who know them can tell their story.

4. Start at the Beginning: Generally, the story of one's life begins at birth and proceeds in chronological order. When viewers see an individual's personal history, they gain insight into the way that person thinks. They have the ability to learn what makes that someone tick. This background grabs the attention of the audience



and provides interesting and little-known facts about the subject. Where



were they born? Were they an athlete? Were they in student gov-



ernment or some kind of club? What was their first job? What was their worst job? How did they meet their spouse? Questions like these allow the viewer to get to know the person being profiled. As we learn the individual's triumphs and low-points, we begin to understand what make the person who they are.

The best stories aren't only about the successes, but about the obstacles the person overcame, as well. What was the lowest point for them? How did they overcome hardship to get where they are today? The answers to these questions usually reap great rewards,



and can reveal something amazing about your subject that no amount of research ever could.

5. Good Closing: Lastly, you'll need a good closing. Barbara Walters closed her celebrity profiles by asking stars how they would describe themselves in a single word. You might ask your subject for a personal motto or philosophy of life. Or, you might ask them what the epitaph on their tombstone would say. Maybe it's what they say to themselves when times



get tough, or an image that comes to their mind when they face adversity. A question like this will produce a unique and powerful answer that can provide the perfect ending to your profile.

So why profile a person? Video profiles enrich our lives by offering personal insights that help explain the vast and complex world we live in. For many, a video profile provides



a way to gain insight into worlds they might otherwise never experience. Every person you meet has a story that is waiting to be told. Each life is like a ready-made video script waiting to be produced. If you haven't read what I had to say at a Club meeting back in 2011 about "Making Family History Videos", this is a good time to do just that. Go to the Meetings page of the Viewfinders Club website and click on the first link under Past Program Downloads to download this Adobe .pdf file. So, select an interesting person in your life and make a video profile. If you don't do it, probably nobody else will. ■

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Worth a Look, continued from page 5

For Motion Graphics Fans - weird



<http://vimeo.com/channels/pmg/64542506>

An iPad Clapperboard



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkuutgfe8Hs>

REFRESHMENT VOLUNTEERS

The Club will reimburse the providers up to \$20 to offset some or all of the cost of refreshments

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| January | Brian Lucas |
| February | Bob Meacham |
| March | Greg VonWaaden |
| April | Irv Webster |
| May | Nancy Wood & JoAnn Pfost |
| June | |
| July | Gordon Peterson & Virginia Misoff |
| August | Sal Tufo |
| September | Glenn Mooty |
| October | Janet Holl |
| November | Jack Gorham |

CREDITS

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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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WEBSITE

www.viewfindersclub.org

PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWER from Page 4

- D2: Wayne's name tag has disappeared
- A4: A second sconce has appeared on wall
- C7: Emblem on Sal's hat has moved to the right
- B3: Door's top locking panel has doubled in size
- E4: The tripod has grown an extra leg
- D5: Barbara's arm has disappeared
- C7: Sal's sideburn has grown longer
- D5: Glenn's camera strap has a bigger loop
- D4: Wall tile by floor has doubled in size
- D3: Herb's belt buckle has moved to his left side

CLUB MEETING EVENTS 2013

<p>January 16th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Award Winning Amateur Movies:</i> screenings from recent AMPAS and SCCA events</p>	<p>February 20th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>The 12 Essential Story Questions.</i> A discussion by Ron Rhodes</p> <p><i>Editing Methodology using Final Cut Pro X</i> by Wayne Fogle</p>
<p>March 13th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Comparison of Sony's SLT-A37K DSLT camera and Canon's HV-30 camcorder</i> by Milt Kostner</p>	<p>April 10th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>WeVideo Cloud-Based Video Editor.</i> An online platform for collaborative video production in the Cloud</p>
<p>May 8th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Nimitz Grade School Video Screenings</i> by Susan Woods' 3rd Grade Students.</p>	<p>June 10th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Comparing CyberLink & Adobe Premiere Editing Software.</i> A presentation by Milt Kostner.</p>
<p>July 10th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>3D Video for Everyone.</i> John Dietrich will discuss the Pro method and Ron Rhodes will examine the DIY angle.</p>	<p>August 14th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Feature Filmmaking in Nepal.</i> Our own Herb Wolff will describe his recent month-long shoot in Nepal.</p>
<p>September 11th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Shoot the Train Workshop:</i> Bring your camera to the meeting and shoot a model train set-up.</p>	<p>October 9th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Annual Member Video Contest:</i> Screening of the year's best Club members movies.</p>
<p>November 13th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Golden DVD Awards Night:</i> Award presentations to the Annual Member Video Contest winners.</p> <p><i>Election of officers for 2014</i></p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>No meeting this month</p>