

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



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September Meeting

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September 2013 Meeting
Highlights

Shoot the Train Workshop

Most guys, and some girls, played with model trains when they were young, and some of us never grew out of it. Two such people conducted a workshop at the September meeting. Not necessarily to encourage us to play with trains again, 'though the idea is appealing, but to explain a few techniques on how to

Videoing Model Trains

A demonstration conducted by John Dietrich, with the able assistance of Robin Gilstrom



Above: Robin at left and John at right look over Robin's model train diorama

videograph model trains, train layouts or miniatures of any kind, to make them as realistic as possible.

Club member John Dietrich brought along his fellow model train enthusiast Robin Gilstrom who was kind enough to bring from home and spend an hour erecting his model train set and diorama in the club meeting room. Both John and Robin are members of the Santa Clara Historic Railroad Museum in Santa Clara, California, where Robin is the Business Manager. It was generous of him to give his time and labor to make the meeting possible.

Among the topics John discussed were:

- *How does one frame moving models*
- *Camera placement and gear*
- *Lighting*
- *Scene composition*

STAY IN CLOSE

The camera needs to be fairly close to the target, whether a model train or part of the scenery, as one will not wish to record anything outside the diorama, such as room walls and ceilings. The camera needs to limit what we can see. This is particularly important if shooting wide angle. While birds-eye views can be effec-

Continued page 2

October Meeting

Annual Member Video Contest

This is the month when Club members compete with other members and screen their best videos.

The top three winners, nominated by the audience, will each receive a Golden DVD Award at the November meeting. Non-members are welcome to attend. This event is one of the most popular each year.

Videoing Model Trains, continued from page 1

tive, most shots should be down at action level. That is to say, as if viewed by an imaginary miniature human standing at train track level.

CAMERA PLACEMENT

Focusing can be a problem filming miniatures, especially if they are moving, as trains do. Unless one is shooting at wide angle it is likely that the train will move in and out of focus which is difficult to control without prior rehearsal.

A camera attached to a tripod to one side of the diorama gives a stable platform; one should avoid any risk of camera shake caused by hand-holding the camera. If the camera is set at a fixed angle and motionless one can allow the moving train to enter the frame on one side and leave on the other. A perfectly acceptable shot. If the tripod is stationary the camera can be rotated to follow the moving train in a panning motion allowing the train to stay in view as it approaches, crosses the camera view, and then moves away into the distance. A third alternative is to set the tripod on wheels which can follow the train as it runs down the track, keeping the train within the frame as a dolly shot. But keep in mind that too many pan and dolly shots can be disturbing so a fixed camera position should be used for the bulk of the shots.

Placing the camera on the diorama will allow the camera to record angles from within the track layout, and provide additional viewpoints. The drawback is that unless the camera has a rotating display it will be hard to compose and monitor the shot. A camera linked to a laptop computer

or separate display monitor would be the best choice. In all the above examples of camera placement, camera operation will best be served by using a remote control.

LIGHTING

Lighting miniatures may be the trickiest part of shooting them. Trying to achieve realism with a poorly lit train layout won't work. It will be obvious what it is, a poorly lit model. If it is at all possible, shooting the train set-up out of doors is the way to go, but this may not be practical. So what do we need to know when lighting an indoor diorama?

First off, we need to decide what time of the day (or night) we want to imitate, as well as the season and weather conditions. Only the lighting design can make this convincing. Early morning and evening shadows are long, so lights should be placed low. A summer sun can be high in the sky and produce harsh light. A winter sun is likely to be low, less intense and produce a hazy light.

The sun is our outdoors source of light and it is a single source. Unless it is an overcast day the sun causes sharp shadows, and the shadows point in one direction only so we need to avoid multiple shadows caused by several light sources. This would be a dead give-a-way. So we need to simulate sunlight. One answer would be to set a powerful spotlight some way away from the track at a height and angle that imitates the position of the sun. Fill lighting, to reduce harsh shadows, can be bounced off ceilings and walls. A reflector card or two can be supported and positioned to direct fill light more accurately. Another thing about shadows worth remembering -

trees and buildings do not throw shadows on the sky, so they should not do so on a painted diorama sky.

Be careful not to mix different types of lighting (tungsten, fluorescent, etc) as this can play havoc with color casts. Check the color through a monitor as one's eyes tend to adjust to colors. And most importantly set the camera's white balance manually before each shot, don't rely on the camera's automatic white balance to do it for you.

SHOT COMPOSITION

Backgrounds. It is easy, when one's eyes are concentrating on following a moving train to be unaware of running out of background. A great close action shot of the train moving past trees and buildings can be ruined if the sky or distant countryside becomes a wall or a doorway. With a low angle upward shot there is the danger that the diorama painted sky is not tall enough. In this case an extra tall board, painted in the sky color and positioned in the far background should be out of focus enough to merge with the diorama sky.

Shiny new model trains look like shiny new model trains when photographed. For realism, use a matting spray to dull them a little and find ways to "weather" them.

Watch out for obvious miniature model give-a-ways such as out of scale elements, studio lights reflecting in water or building windows, derailed rolling stock, fallen over miniature accessories, visible tree supports, gaps under buildings etc., etc. The camera gets in close, it sees a lot more than a human glance sees.

Continued page 3



Left to right: • John waits for the train to round the bend • He adjusts the camera's depth of field • Foreground and background out of focus as the train comes into view

Videoing Model Trains, continued from page 2

DEPTH OF FOCUS AND RACK FOCUSING

Here's where it gets tricky. Normally, shooting with a dSLR should accommodate shallow depths of field. (Where the foreground is in focus and the background is out of focus and visa versa.) But we are shooting miniatures where everything is fairly close together without much distance separation. DSLRs and prosumer video cameras should allow focus and aperture adjustments to handle this. However, for those of us with typical consumer camcorders with notoriously long depths of field, this may be difficult to achieve. Some success should be possible by shooting with a wide open aperture to lessen the depth of field, and a neutral grey filter to compensate for the lens gathering too much light, but it

might be minimal. Experimenting with frame speed might help. In the end though, one may have to forego "arty" focus shifting takes and concentrate on just making a well made and enthralling movie.

For those shooting with prosumer video cameras and dSLRs, the occasional rack focussing effect whereby the focus shifts from near to far or far to near when a train approaches makes an impressive shot, but like all effects strictly ration them.

POST PRODUCTION

Video editors today, even entry level ones, come with a list of effects, transitions and correction tools. If your movie seems pedestrian, without compelling interest, it may be saved by using some these features. Playing with color correction can establish a mood lacking in the original shots.

Slow and fast motion can introduce drama, as can fog effects and rain. Film aging, monochrome and sepia effects can give a period look, along with soft focus. Color problems? How about converting to black and white? Give your movie an old time nostalgic look. Play with them. When editing your shots consider keeping the scenes short. Maybe just a few seconds each. This technique emphasizes action.

Time constraints kept the September meeting workshop shorter than we would have liked but members who brought cameras had the chance to shoot Robin Gilstrom's train set-up and follow John Dietrich's examples. We learned that there is still much to learn about videographing models, but it is a fascinating field worth pursuing. ■



Left to right: • Wayne Fogle, John, and Fred Pfost consider another shot • Robin's diorama • Brian Lucas gets in tight as the train approaches

Club Officers Slate for 2014 Proposed

I am pleased to announce that we have a ticket for next year's Governing Board of Directors.

Frank Swanson is eager to remain our Treasurer and I couldn't be happier. Frank is usually managing the door at meetings and his is the first face people see when they stop by. His welcoming and friendly demeanor is a positive influence on our club.

Brian Lucas is running for club Secretary. As the newsletter editor for the past 7 years, he has a great knowledge of the club, our membership and of the club activities, and his addition to the board can only enhance our success.

Irv Webster is ready to take over the role of Vice President. One of the tasks of the VP is to work on promotional activities. Everyone can help to promote the club by mentioning our club to friends (and even relatives),

and by helping to choose which publications we need to advertise in. Irv is also hoping to help coordinate meeting presentations, and your ideas are also welcome here.

Finally, I have decided that I can continue as club president for one more year. It has been a busy yet satisfying year, and I hope to be able to provide the membership with more ideas to keep everyone thinking and doing and sharing their movies. I'm not an expert filmmaker, I just like movies and telling stories and I like to see the dedication and effort that you people put into your movie projects. I hope you'll elect this board to become your club leadership and that you'll be a part of the success that we look forward to next year.

Ron Rhodes

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Aesthetics

What do you think about when you go to make a movie?

Some are very interested in the Science of the Art. The combination of using technical and artistic experience and capturing the best image that is possible with the equipment on hand is what these types like to do. Apertures, focal lengths, and shutter speeds, ISO, composition, continuity, 3 point lighting, all of these aspects take time and effort to learn and to get comfortable using and there is a thrill of accomplishment when you succeed in putting all the parts together and get that perfect shot. The Science is about acquiring a body of knowledge and using what you learn to produce something technically new.

The Art of the Science is a way of focusing more on the aesthetics of film-making, perhaps at the expense of the technically precise. Some people are there for the scenery, they are the collectors and catalogers, they want to take a beautiful sunset and put it away for later. They want to capture family fun or adventure and bottle it forever.

One could make a simple comparison to the Left and Right brain description of people and personalities to explain the difference between the Science of the Art and the Art of the Science. We usually understand that it's not an either/or equation, a balanced mix is a healthy situation.

Arthur Shimamura is Professor of Psychology and faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley. His study of neuroscience has led him to research what is art and what do we mean by aesthetics. When we talk about the experience of beauty, we're talking aesthetics. Anything we make in order to generate emotion in

others can be included in this list. Things that are fun to look at or that just make you think can be referred to as aesthetic, and anything that you experience in your head can be studied with the science of psychology.

What's really interesting is that Professor Shimamura has written a book on a subject that he has termed Psychocinematics. This term describes the scientific study of the way movies are made and how they manage to affect us emotionally, how they affect our senses, and how they manipulate our conceptions of the world.

Film editors have figured out the best ways to trick our perceptions using scene cutting techniques. One example is that of the match-action technique, where a scene of a person is raising a glass to drink cuts to a matching closeup. Because the cut is mid action and we are in the middle of an expectation and of an upcoming conclusion, we may not notice that the editor has changed the viewpoint. A close up is more intimate, so we are emotionally drawn closer to the subject in the movie, and since we missed the cut, we do not realize that we have been maneuvered into this emotion. I look forward to reading

Professor Shimamura's book and I'll share more of these techniques with you.

Whether you are more Art or Science, I'm sure that you love making movies so that you can successfully share your ideas and experiences with the rest of the world, and I hope you have a movie to share with us this month when we hold our yearly contest. The contest is a way for us to be given that extra little shove to complete our projects. It also helps everyone else to see what we're up to. Remember, that you don't have to wait for the contest night to show your movie clips. Anytime you have something to show off, or have a sticky problem to work through, bring it in and we'll all benefit from it.



Ron Rhodes

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2013

Bank Account Beginning 9/1/13	\$1374.47
Income Subtotal:	\$5.00
DVDs (1):	\$5.00
Expenses Subtotal:	\$80.00
Refreshments:	\$20.00
Quinlan Room:	\$30.00
Honorarium:	\$30.00
Bank Account Ending 9/30/13	\$1299.47



HELP THE CLUB GROW

Help the Club grow by spreading the word about the Viewfinders Club to other local amateur videographers when you meet them. Get 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: \$6 for individuals, \$8 for families and just \$5 for full-time students. For those who were members in 2012, the dues are still \$30. Bring your check or cash to our next meeting on October 9th. Make your check payable to the "Cupertino Viewfinders". Remember that you must be a Club member to enter your video in the Annual Club Member Video Contest at our October meeting and perhaps win one of the three Golden DVD Awards for 2013.

Frank Swanson

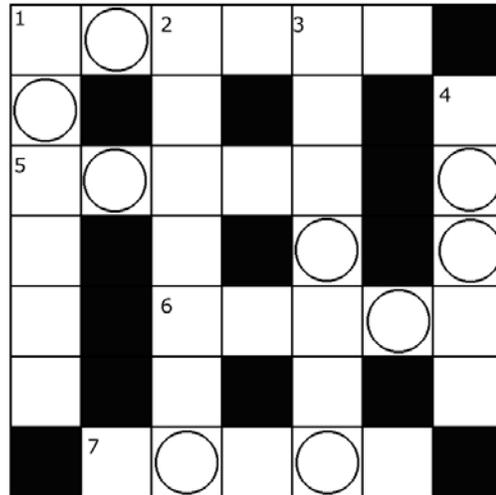
JUMBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE by Frank Swanson

Complete the crossword puzzle by unscrambling the answers. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the circled letters to solve the BONUS. Answers on page 8.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1. SCOOLR | 1. SCOURR |
| 5. ANORY | 2. REVAOLY |
| 6. SIEVW | 3. DRESEN R |
| 7. HERSF | 4. AREES |

BONUS

Clue: What will be given out at our November meeting.



REFRESHMENT	<i>January</i>	<i>Brian Lucas</i>
VOLUNTEERS	<i>February</i>	<i>Bob Meacham</i>
The Club will reimburse the providers up to \$20 to offset some or all of the cost of refreshments	<i>March</i>	<i>Greg VonWaaden</i>
	<i>April</i>	<i>Irv Webster</i>
	<i>May</i>	<i>Nancy Wood & JoAnn Pfof</i>
	<i>June</i>	
	<i>July</i>	<i>Gordon Peterson & Virginia Misoff</i>
	<i>August</i>	<i>Sal Tufo</i>
	<i>September</i>	<i>Glenn Mooty</i>
	October	Janet Holl
	<i>November</i>	<i>Jack Gorham</i>

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 Music Golden DVD Award for 2012, *Aloha Oe on the Ivories* (YouTube) entered by Frank Swanson.

Download the short video swipe *Movie Film Swipe* (43MB). (Swipes are short video clips used for transitioning between clips. A link to an 11-minute Digital Juice Training video by Digital Juice is provided.)

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**



(Notes from 2007 worth repeating)

FLASHES

One of the hottest new transitions between scenes or clips you see today is the "white flash". It is sometimes accompanied by a flash bulb type sound or impact type sound (foomp) as well. If your editing software does not have this as a selectable transition you can create it on your own. What you need is a white clip (shoot a piece of white paper), or create a white matte strip. Then, insert it between the two clips and apply an "Additive Dissolve" transition

from the end of the leading clip to the white clip and another from the white clip to the trailing clip. What will happen is the video clip will wash from standard colors to the white and then back again to the colors in the trailing clip. Play with the length of the white clip and the transition times to get it to look like a flash. This also works with any color. I have seen it used with gold, amber and reddish colors on some programs.

STAND UP FOR YOUR AUDIO

If you find your narration or voiceovers are lacking in depth of range and spark, stand up! One of the simplest ways to improve your

voiceovers is to do them while standing. When we sit it compresses our diaphragm, limiting our range and changes our voices. Standing allows for full use of our vocal range and inspires greater enthusiasm making the narration more interesting to the viewer. Have you ever noticed that professional people doing voiceovers for cartoons and movies are always standing? Even the "Big Voiced Guy" in that insurance commercial is standing. It allows them to animate their reading and adds life to the narration. You will hear the difference immediately. And, so will your viewers.

Bob Meacham

TECH TIPS

TECHNICAL TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Part 36

By Frank Swanson

Five Essentials for Directing Talent

So you think you want to try your hand at being a director for a movie? The Viewfinders Club has a special interest Production Group that makes short movies in a runtime range of a few minutes up to about 15 minutes. The movies include "Maybe Today", "Dearly Departed" and "Two Left Feet". These movies went on to receive awards at local, national and international festivals. (See the Club website's Production page for the specific awards). One of the common threads in making these movies is that each of them had a Director to run the show from beginning to end. If you're thinking of directing actors, you can be easily overwhelmed with thoughts and worries, easily overlooking the five essentials that you need to know for directing your talent. This article will help you avoid taking on that responsibility cold turkey, having no idea what to expect.



Before you begin directing all of the pre-production planning functions should be completed beforehand including script-locking, storyboarding and shot selection, location scouting and access, talent selection, prop and wardrobe identification and preparation, production schedule, set construction, script read-through with cast, and the list goes on and on. When the shooting begins, the pre-production ends.

1. The Pre-production Meeting: The term "director" can conjure-up images of someone with a megaphone, barking orders, looking harried and perhaps even sweating profusely while the shooting is going on. Well,

that's how Hollywood has made it out to be when we see behind-the-scenes shots promoting a new movie.

The first essential to successful directing is the pre-production meeting. This is where the director gets the opportunity to address many of the things that go beyond telling your actors where to sit, stand, or move; teaching them how you want them to emote (energetically, seriously, pensive); and instructing them to when you want them to say something, or nothing.

You need to plan ahead as much as possible to ensure that when the shoot begins, little time is lost caused



by ill-prepared talent. One must avoid the unanticipated consequences of actors showing up with pre-conceived notions of what they need to do that are opposite to what you expect. This is where meeting before the shoot is an essential component of the directing process.

Here are some things to convey to your acting talent (and crew for that matter) at the pre-production meeting:

1. What the movie's theme and point are.
2. What the mood progressions will be during scenes and from scene to scene.
3. What the location descriptions are for each scene.
4. What the dialog between characters is all about.
5. How each set will be lit and why.
6. What props will be handled by the talent for each scene.
7. What kind of clothes each character will be wearing from scene to scene and what they tell the viewer.



8. When the characters will move and how they should do that for each scene.

9. What the significant eyelines are in a scene and when do they change.



10. What the camera compositions will be for each scene (e.g. framing).



There's more, much more, to directing talent than calling the shots and giving orders on set. First and foremost is to advise the talent what to wear. The wrong apparel can make or break the production or cause delays and loss of valuable time while costume changes are made because you didn't advise them to avoid reds, busy patterns or multi-stripe designs. Tell them to stay with solid pastels, soft colors and grays and your directing debut will be off to a good start. Another thing to do at this meeting is to discuss the script, the shot sheet and the set. It's imperative that you and your talent are on the same page, knowing what's going to happen and what's expected of them in each scene. This will make a world of difference on how smooth and efficient the shooting process is.

2. What to Say: Each character must know what they are going to say for each shot in each scene. As the director, you must ensure that the script contains all the dialogue, word for word. Nothing will squash your talent's enthusiasm or your directorial reputation like winging it, going in with no idea of what needs to be said. If nothing more, at least have a few prompt cards handy to help your talent stay focused on what is to be said for each shot. The first few words of a sentence should be all that the talent needs to start speaking their lines. The cards can be held at a distance within the actors sight, but out of the camera's view. You as the director have to be familiar with what needs to be said when the camera starts rolling and you cue the talent, or be prepared for the estimated two-

Continued page 7

Tech Tips cont. from page 6

hour session to take all day. Often, during the rehearsal time, some dialogue may turn out to sound contrived, or difficult for the actor to express. This is the time to make changes in the



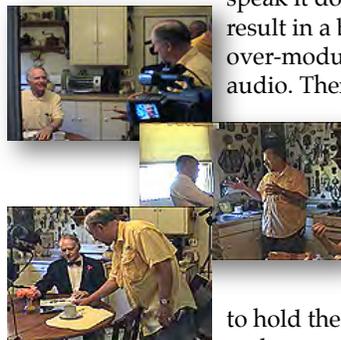
script so your talent feels comfortable with their lines. Good talent always wants to help the director with more realistic dialogue.

3. Plan Some Rehearsal Time: Directing can actually be fun, not only for the director, but also for the cast and crew. Having time to gear up for the shoot, taking a run at the lines or sound bites prior to shooting the sequence can go a long way toward improving the fun factor. Rehearsal time alone will generate miracles during the shoot and the director will get much of the credit for making them happen. Unfortunately, this preparation can often get lost if actors indulge in bursts of creative spontaneity during the shoot. Try your best to stay with the script and avoid allowing this bad habit. If you must change some dialogue, at least take the time to have your talent rehearse it well. Be realistic about scheduling your shoot even though you've done loads of rehearsing. A typical rule of thumb is that it takes approximately one 8-hour shooting day to cover 2-4 minutes of script.

4. Directing the Shoot: Directing includes letting the talent know about terms that you will use: waiting for the cue, clean-in, clean-out, maintaining eye contact with the camera (or off-camera if that is preferred) as well as making them aware of unconscious habits – twitching nose, restless fingers, swaying back and forth, etc. Tell your talent what you will do



to cue them for a take. Calmly point out the need to hold an expression for a few seconds following your cue to start (clean-in). Take a slow, easy breath so that when they begin to



speak it doesn't result in a burst of over-modulated audio. Then after the dialog has ended, tell your talent to hold their focus and expression for a few seconds while waiting for your signal that they can relax (clean-out). These are perhaps the most important things the director can point out and may need to be repeated frequently until they become a natural habit.

5. Stick to the Routine: This directing essential relates to the shoot itself. When you develop your own routine for announcing actions, such as the

camera is rolling, stick with it. Nothing is more confusing than starting out with a 10-count, then changing to a 5-count. Or using vocals or gestures indiscriminately, like putting your thumbs up into the air to end a take then changing to an energetic "cut!" that startles everyone who promptly fall out of character. Discuss these signals during the pre-production meeting and repeat them during the shoot. Advise the talent (and crew) that you always say the same thing when starting the camera recording, or repeat the explanation that you'll do a verbal 5-count, going silent at three, then ticking off the last two with your hand, etc. Finally, remind your talent at every opportunity to hold their initial and final expressions for five seconds, and then give them a consistent signal at the end of the take like saying, "cut". You might prefer a different approach but keep it consistent from shot to shot for the whole shoot.



In summary, plan your shoot. Determine how you will direct and stick with your signals. Be familiar with the script, shot sheet and intended purpose of the production. Schedule more time than you think you'll need, often twice as much. If you do this you'll have a successful directorial debut and say: "That's a wrap!" ■

Worth a Look Online

For motion graphics fans:
The Beatles Rockband Intro.



www.motiongraphics.nu/advertising/beatles-rockband-intro/

A Rubberband for Smoother Pans



www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj6fMcJ18aA&list=PLB4060E1DB65463B0

DIY Motion Timelapsing



www.youtube.com/watch?v=74eylGJaHY

CREDITS

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 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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JUMPLE PUZZLE ANSWER from Page 5

ACROSS:
 1-COLORS, 5-RAYON, 6-VIEWS, 7-FRESH
 DOWN: 1-CURSOR, 2-LAYOVER, 3-RENDERS, 4-ERASE
 BONUS: OUR AWARDS

CLUB MEETING EVENTS 2013

<p>January 16th, Wednesday</p> <p><i>Award Winning Amateur Movies:</i> screenings from recent AMPS 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 Everyday.</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. <i>Election of officers for 2014</i></p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>No meeting this month</p>