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PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR



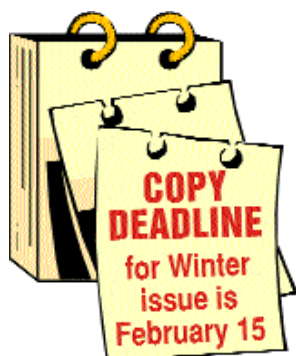
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Autumn on the Grand River
photo by Joe Bochsler



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NOTE: Several telephone numbers and email addresses have changed since the last issue. Please be careful to use only the latest current information.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

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"The Road to Hell"

If, as they say, the Road to Hell is paved with good intentions, we are indeed right on track! The Summer Issue was late, and we were determined to get the Autumn Issue out in late October or early November. Now here we are struggling to get this to the printer before Christmas, and just as determined to get the Winter Issue in the mail in late February or early March!

There are always new items requiring immediate attention. Some are group responsibilities, like getting the CIAFF films judged, the awards prepared, and the presentations of the winning videos and awards made.

Some are the responsibility of individuals, like preparing the Charity Report for Canada Customs and Revenue.

And some are individual personal responsibilities, like family events, some joyful, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, weddings and anniversaries, birthdays and reunions, and others worrying or sorrowful, like sickness and even death in the family. And there are other various interruptions like home renovations, travel, etc. (Some of us foolishly try to live lives outside the SCCA too!) Fortunately, most of us are retired, but that only seems to add things to the "To Do List".

And of course, there is always the pandemic problem of computers,

Internet, or email going down. (Even Macs!) Which brings us to another item.

Progress Slowed on Links

I'm sorry to report that during the recent whirlwind of activities, the collection and posting of new links for the SCCA Links Page on the s-c-c-a.ca web site was set aside for awhile, and has only been continued on a sporadic basis. However, some progress has been made with manually adding a few choice links, and there are now 1,650 links to explore.

I'm sure that many of you are using Google, or another search engine to help you focus your browsing. I use Google regularly, and other searches occasionally, but I find that they often return a large number of essentially duplicate web sites, and many that are way off my target. That's why I have put so much importance on building a link page for moviemakers.

Most of the links were submitted for my approval, or disapproval, by Zeus, a robot spider that works under my command. I have looked at thousands of web sites for consideration for this page, and rejected far more than I have approved, but I don't expect that all of you will find that they all match your own interests. A few people also send me links for consideration (please continue!), and I have included some of those, along with others that I have found in my own browsing.

I have included many web sites that didn't interest me at all, but will probably interest some of you. A good example is the large number of links about digital photography and photography in general, because I know that many of our members have also purchased digital still cameras, or are considering such a purchase.

I also know that only a few are still interested (if they ever were) in 8mm., Super 8, and 16 mm. film, but some are, so I have included everything of any value that I have found on that subject. Similarly, I know that I am one of a very small number with an interest in the History of Photography and Cinematography, but I find some of the information so interesting that I can't believe that others won't also enjoy those pages.

Searching the Internet is basically targeted, so you will only find information that you already know a little about, but exploring our LINK Page will sometimes bring you to heretofore unexpected items, like browsing in a bookstore.

So if you haven't yet visited some of

the sites found on our Links Page, please give it a try. It wouldn't surprise me if some of you found the page so useful that you made s-c-c-a.ca your new home page! And see Page 18!

Work is also proceeding slowly on a brand new website which will eventually replace the current SCCA and CIAFF web sites. Much of the old sites will be carried over, of course, but it will offer some new facilities.

Meanwhile, the 2004 Competition Rules and Entry Forms are available on the current CIAFF.org site.

Changes re VISA and MasterCard

We recently received a shock from Moneris, the financial company that handles payments made to the SCCA or CIAFF by VISA or MasterCard. For some time now we have offered this alternative to our members and competition entrants, and because of the convenience, especially for those living outside Canada (with problems of currency conversion and writing cheques in a foreign currency), we have been willing to accept the small discounts to Moneris and the bank.

Now we are told that there will be a minimum discount of \$20 each month! So when someone puts his SCCA Dues on his card late, eg. September, we will only net \$10 of his \$30 Fee!

So beginning immediately, we must ask that if you haven't yet paid your 2003-2004 Fee, please pay by cheque. Because of the many payments made for the contests in June, we will accept credit card payments in that month only, as the monthly minimum won't be hitting us as hard when there are many payments. However, if we only get a few payments next June, or Moneris starts applying the minimum discount even when there have been no credit card payments, we may have to terminate the VISA and MasterCard service completely in the future.

SCCA Libraries

There has been only a small demand for the VTC Training CD's, and the Music Library has been used by several of our members, but not as many as we expected. Happily, there are now complete sets of the FreePlayMusic Library, (439 Full versions in MP3 for auditioning, and all in regular Audio CD format, plus 4 versions in shorter lengths for 390 of them), available to members in the Brantford, Hamilton, London, Toronto, Victoria, and Vancouver clubs! You may copy all this music free for use in your amateur videos. Please see the revised conditions of commercial use at freeplaymusic.com. ■

CLUB NEWS

By Joseph Bochsler, F.P.P.O., A.S.C.C.A.



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

As I write this in the middle of October, the leaves have just turned to red and gold colours (here in southern Ontario), but they won't last long, with the rain and frost on the way. It certainly has been a beautiful autumn, temperature and all!

I have just said good-bye to my cousin Lisebeth, who visited us for 2 weeks from Switzerland. She lives high in the Alps from where I emigrated when I was 6 years of age. This was a good time to put my Canon Gl 2 camcorder to work, taping Lisebeth with numerous relatives at many gatherings. Now it's time to do some editing! Up till now I've been using a JVC SR-VS20U Mini DV/VHS combination videocassette editor/recorder, but I have available to me a Pinnacle Studio computer program as well as a Pinnacle System DV500 Plus. I'll probably use the Pinnacle Studio as I'm told that it has an easier learning curve.

Most of the video clubs are back in full swing again, noting by the newsletters I've been receiving. Some clubs carried on for the summer months in a more relaxed mode. One club was the Hamilton Video/Film Makers, who had an attendance of 30-40 members and visitors at each meeting even without a newsletter announcing the upcoming event.

It has come to my attention that some of the clubs are finding it hard to find an editor and help to publish a newsletter. The London Club was without an active editor for the last year. Now the Hamilton club has

just found a new editor. Dave Picco was the editor for a long time, until he found himself unable to continue because of job commitments. In order to put out an interesting newsletter or bulletin, the editor needs input from the members as well as information about both upcoming and past meetings. Photographs of club activities help make a monthly newsletter much more interesting, especially when it is so easy to capture pictures and transmit them with the use of digital still cameras as well as digital stills from camcorders.

BRANT VIDEO MAKERS, BRANT CAMCORDER NEWS,

edited by Dan Kennaley.

Problems and solutions. By President Dan Kennaley. "Bring your video problems to the meetings. This summer I encountered a couple that I hope that someone will have a solution for. Put them down on paper or better still bring a clip of the video that will illustrate the problem. Sometime there are tricks that we never think of. Often it is, as in real estate, location-location-location. If you don't have any problems, just bring your solutions. I think of Peter Janssen and his hood for the LCD screen. Joan Jacquemain and what to do with the lens cap. If you have any great ideas, the meeting will be your opportunity to share them with the members. See you at the club."

"I want to encourage as many members as possible to attend our meetings. When prospective members see a good turnout, they are

more likely to be impressed and decide to join the club. Dues are minimal (\$20 per year) and should be paid in November. This amount is sufficient if we continue to maintain our goal of at least 20 members. Last year we had exactly that number and we hope to add a few more in the coming year.

"The quality of camcorders continues to increase and the prices have dropped. I feel that this will encourage more people to take up the hobby and we must all work to reach out to as many as possible and bring them into the fold. Remember, our main focus is to provide a forum where members can show their videos, and by watching others, can learn how to improve and by improving, instruct others on how it can be done."

BUFFALO MOVIE-VIDEO MAKERS, CAMERAMA.

Edited by John Weiksner.

"Recently an informal meeting was held at Phil Utech's home. The members talked about making movies and shared information about the current projects they are engaged in. Club members got a look at some of Phil's simple-to-make low-budget sound solutions, such as a homemade windscreen for a boom mike made from faux fur and cotton batting. They ate some delicious pasta salads and other goodies, including JPW's Scrim Salad, Nicole K.'s Post Production Pasta Salad, Jeff S.'s

"Mom's" Lobster and Crab Salad and Cindy L.'s famous CTO sugar-free Jell-O.

"The August meeting went very well, even though there was a lot of rain, some of the BM-VM managed to show up at Rebecca's for a few hours of good food and a club member's equipment demonstration. Special guest Mr. Justin Sammarco presented a demo of a camera crane system, which he had been using on his films to get interesting "Hollywood-like" shots. Fred C. gave a demo of a cam-rail system (type of dolly track) he designed and built. Other members brought their "toys" to show and tell, which included tripods, camera braces, LED lights, soft box lighting set-ups and professional studio mics. If you missed this meeting, look forward to future meetings, when members present and talk about other exciting video and filmmaking equipment.

From our present Constitution. "The purpose of this society is to encourage interest in movie making and to promote mutual helpfulness in the betterment of amateur cinematography".

HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS. REEL NEWS, Edited by John Taylor.

"I want to thank John Taylor for taking over the newsletter, the "Reel News". I hope everyone lends him a hand with blurbs and articles to make his life easier. I also want to thank Al Opalchuk for getting the web site up and running again - "hvfm.ca" or email at info@hvfm.ca. One last thanks to Dave Picco for all the long hours and hard work that he put into the Newsletter and Web Site with Fred Briggs. Thank you both for your work, and Dave, we hope to see you soon after work slows down again. See you all at the meeting." Dave Stewart. President. Dstewart5@cogeco.ca.

"The Visitors Night was well attended, with visitors from Buffalo and Toronto. The food was plentiful and the general mood was

good. Jon Soyka used Premiere Edition to play the winning videos in various competitions won by club members from his computer without a glitch! The President asked if there was a club member who would like to take a turn in running a future program to approach him or a member of the executive to arrange it. Pick a month in the future to lighten the load on the executive."

"The members were asked to bring items for the food bank at the December social. The Club librarian, Joan Bochsler, is reviewing a number of CANUSA tapes for each issue of the Reel News. She asked that the club members consider taking instruction tapes to improve their knowledge of video making."

"Harold Cosgrove is manning Harold's Corner at 7 pm, a half hour before the regular meeting time for Beginners Classes in Video Making. It has been noticed that more and more of our more experienced videographers are sitting in on Harold's lessons. They must be finding that he goes beyond the basics and is providing useful information for them as well. After all, Harold has been making successful movies for a long, long time."

"Do you need a helping hand? If you have a video project that could use a helping hand, your colleagues at the Hamilton Video/Film Makers can help. An announcement could be made at the next club meeting. You just might get the help and expertise you need. Plus, for those who get satellite, the cable channel "Tech TV" is often a good source of recent news in video technology."

LONDON VIDEOGRAPHY CLUB, IT'S A WRAP, edited by Robert Thorn.

Robert.thorn@sympatico.ca

"The first meeting of the season started off with a BANG! Our inaugural meeting of the season started around the picnic table outside the Junior Achievement Centre. The advertisement in the London Free

Press was a repeat of that for our June meeting. So those who read it (and those of us who had lapses of memory and forgot that at the June meeting it had been decided to commence once again at 7.30) [were late]. There was no Harvey Hackland and no key. A frantic telephone call to Kim Brown revealed the misconception under which we arrived so early. Another call to Harvey told us that he was 'on his way'."

"We had many videos from members this evening. From Ron Jacobs we had a fascinating look at rocks and trees and more rocks and trees! Well done, Ron! From Harvey Hackland we saw a lively look at Scotland and the Highlands. Jim Town showed us last year's Christmas Parade in Woodstock with Grand Kids and another video on rocks and trees, well, hills and valley AND the best way to get your car washed. Thom Speechley brought in his new toy, his portable DVD player. He also demonstrated the different aspect ratio and quality in shooting in 16.9, burning 16.9, and setting the projector for the same to get the best picture. The meeting was well attended with two newcomers and a 'guest' who wanted our help in producing a 'video on roses'. Rael Wienburg had been contacted by Steve Elkerton about helping out with shooting and preparing a video on 'roses'. The demonstration was to take place in St. Thomas a week from Saturday. On such short notice, no time for a Club joint shoot decision, there wasn't time to take up the offer and do the shoot."

"For the following meeting the members were asked to bring their equipment, any problems they are having and "pick the brains" of other club members to try to find the solutions."

"The Club founder Rael Wienburg advised the Club at the October meeting, that personal commitments make it necessary for him to officially leave the Club. The members were asked to bring

in their camcorder or other equipment for an open discussion and Q&A of the various features found on current products. This was also an opportunity for "newbies" to ask for help with questions concerning their equipment. It was announced that Jon Soyka has confirmed his attendance for a presentation at the November meeting."

THE TORONTO FILM AND VIDEO CLUB, SHOTS AND ANGLES, edited by Sam Spence.
Co-Presidents' Letter-2003

"Dear Partners,

"The club depends on individuals to keep it going; we have been fortunate during the past season in having some very dedicated people working to keep your club afloat.

"Particularly noteworthy is Arnold Meyer's continuing work as Secretary and critique collator, he's also the author of several scripts.

"Richard Vielrose has continued his sterling work on competitions and from time to time has worked the projector; the projector's normal operator is Robert Porter and the club should be grateful for his dedicated service. Then there's Hugh Demaline, who arrives early at each meeting to set up tables, chairs and the projection system; Sally Williams works behind the scenes to produce the end of meeting refreshments.

"In my opinion, our other co-president and senior executive, Josephine Black is in a class by herself as regards dedication to the Club. She surely deserves extra special thanks and recognition. Besides her official burden, in recent months, she has carried the load of the Treasurer because of Norm Anderson's continued ill health. Frank Corrigan is a faithful executive member who regularly volunteers to host meetings and workshops.

"At events, such as the clubs' Christmas Dinner, George and Peggy Elliott have led singsongs; these really have added to the fellowship present at these events.

"Our Club meetings take place at

the North Toronto Community Centre. We learnt of the Centre's 10th anniversary celebration this year and put together a group movie covering the event. As one of the camcorder operators, I learnt that whilst shooting cutaways (snippets of the action) one should listen to what is going on. This way your shots can be put in context in the edited video.

"Fred and Marg Attridge are also longtime club members; unfortunately ill health prevents them from attending meetings. Another couple who did much for the club now live in Niagara-on-the Lake so can rarely attend club events.

"After showing a movie or video, we now have instantaneous critiques by Trev Beard, Peggy Elliott and myself; comments by Jack Carey (our distinguished senior film and video maker) and prizewinner Stella Magic are well received. This initiative has proven popular.

"The club has welcomed several newcomers; one is Dr. Larry Gaum, who brought in a very outstanding video of the singer Al Jolson. Mike Adamski has returned to the club, complete with an interesting travelogue on Krakow, Poland.

"Several club members took part in a production for Belmont House, a well known seniors' residence complex in Toronto. The video covered every event in Belmont's 150th anniversary year; the video was well received by Belmont House and resulted in a substantial donation to our club.

"This letter opened with the phrase "Dear Partners", this was done deliberately to drive home the fact that the club's health is dependent on its members. This point has been highlighted several times by Editor Sam Spence in our Newsletter "Shots and Angles"; he himself is another very hard working executive member of the club.

"In conclusion, the executive wishes to thank everybody for making the club the going concern it is."

Bill Williams, Co-President

THE VANCOUVER VIDEO PRODUCTION CLUB, REEL TALK, edited by Cathy Caravan.
Setting It Straight, by Pat Sheridan, President.

"Another September rolls along, September brings to mind the coming autumn, the start of a new school year, the first meeting of our video club after a summer hiatus. Now it unfortunately also reminds us of the terrible deeds that took place two years ago on September 11, 2001.

"I was watching footage taken of the World Trade towers from that day, on a news program this month, and the images are just as terrifying to me now as they were two years ago. I often wonder how the shooting of this footage has affected the lives of those who took it. Are they able to watch their footage without being transported back in time to the hellish conditions of that day? Does it bring back memories of untold horrors that they witnessed but didn't capture on video? Or are they able to sit back and watch their own footage with a judgmental eye (i.e. That was framed poorly...I wish I hadn't zoomed out there...Why did I pan so much?)?"

"I suppose everyone's response to viewing his or her own footage is quite different. I don't enjoy almost anything I've shot which was handheld. Sounds silly perhaps, but I feel if it's worthwhile keeping, it's worthwhile shooting with the camcorder on a tripod. I also have great difficulty watching most of my old Hi8 footage. Not because of anything I may have done wrong, but it's all the "dropouts" which prevent me from relaxing and enjoying the shots. Yes, I know, therapy might help!

"If the truth were known, I shot very little video this summer. I instead focused on post-production, mostly DVD creation. With the price of DVD-writers dropping below \$200, and with the cost of blank disks as low as \$2 a piece, legions of people now want to learn how to transfer their footage

to disk. I wanted to become very familiar with the process and over the last couple of months I've spent much too much time in my computer room. Bryan Belfont and I are now offering an advanced editing class (taught in the same room as our club meetings!) which among other things, will cover how to transfer video to disk using Pinnacle Studio 8, I might add that this four week class is only available to those who have taken our multi-week video editing course through the Vancouver School Board. We don't want students asking basic questions in an advanced class. Should be fun, I'm looking forward to it! I'm also looking forward to our club's first general meeting after our break."

VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB,

edited by Sheila Perkins.

A Burning Question: "It seems to me that there are a few good reasons why we should want to abandon "tape" technology (VHS, DV, etc.) One involves image degradation, another longevity of the tape medium.

"Other side benefits - less storage space - less weight for mailing (just in a letter envelope!)

"How?" (said Cactus Flower. "When?" replied her handsome Brave)

"For those of us who are able to accommodate the wondrous maze and difficulties of a computer, buying adding 'add-ons' to install in your PC to burn DVD's from blanks is a significantly cheaper route to travel. And you can continue upgrading as technology changes without frequent visits to your less than friendly bank manager.

"For others among us, there are the 'stand alone' machines that already possess their own computers built into the 'box' they come in. It's pretty obvious that the days of the venerable VHS VCR are limited, to be replaced at present by disks. Video rentals on DVD display such improved resolution and splendid audio as well.

"But there appear to be a couple of 'bugs on the raster' at the moment. Manufacturers are 'doing their own thing' with standards, so that it's not always a 'sure thing' that my 'home burnt' DVD will play on Uncle Charlie's DVD player, nor Greg's own installation, nor Charlotte's "stand alone".

"If I were a guy who found any pleasure in throwing money into the sinkhole of a poker machine, I'd be betting on Sony's current two products because it looks like Sony and buddies will win the Standards War, eventually. Sony presents two stand alones now -one that burns directly onto a blank disk and t'other first stores the data on an inbuilt 20 Gb hard-drive. Look for four figures on the tag - and maybe I'm wrong about casinos!

"For many members of our club, 'time' may be 'of the essence' when it comes to decision-making. There's so much new and better technology descending on us at an accelerating speed. Our whiz-bang 'stand alones' of October, 2003 may look like an overpriced toy in October, 2004 -or worse -obsolete. David Fuller.

**WINNIPEG AMATUER
MOVIEMAKERS, BULLETIN,**
edited by Wallace and Jeanette Robertson.

From the President, Al Ross.
"I've facilitated a couple of photo courses in the Adult Ed. Program along with two three hour portrait seminars, cut the grass four times (?) I think--not much rain this summer, photographed a few weddings, organized and ran our seventh annual Photo Safari at Riding Mountain National Park on the September long weekend with Thelma's help and, oh yes, went on my 21st annual canoe trip from the Big Whiteshell Lake to Lake Mantario, (on the Manitoba/Ontario border)-just 21km / seven lakes and six portages to facilitate a week of photography for the Manitoba Naturalists Society.

"It was only 35°C the day we went in. But other than that -

where *has* the summer gone?!! Gee whiz! Did I cut the grass in the back yard this summer?? Must have. Thelma's been able to get to *her* garden and back to harvest some incredible lettuce, beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots and other neat things which she says are sooo good for us. Thelma and I managed several 5km walks on the trails in neighbouring Birds Hill Provincial Park, this despite her severe work load at work, what with several away on "summer" vacations and getting things 'tidied-up' for her pending retirement. It's really neat going through the forest trails in the park and having the little chickadees flutter down into your hand to pick over a few sunflower seeds. The odd time we've come across a deer that will just stand there with us a dozen or so yards away and return the gaze. It would have been nice to capture momma and papa goose with their goslings close in tow at sunset, as they venture out of their hiding places at dusk to 'stretch their legs' as it were, paddling around in the small man-made lakes."

Short Takes - Wallace and Jeanette Robertson. "Here we are starting into another club season and I wonder, as Al Ross stated in his current 'President's Message', 'Where did the summer go?'

"There were a number of things I missed, getting down to Morden, for the Annual Corn & Apple Festival and visiting with our good friend Roy Friesen. This has been a busy year with so many family and personal commitments. You always tell yourself that this summer we are really going to enjoy the warm weather. Unfortunately, life seems to get in the way.

"I did, because of the family activities, take a few impromptu videos, and they are presently sitting on my video kiosk waiting to be edited. Of course, they are sitting on top of those videos which I took last year and which also require that final editor's touch. (Typist's observation: I believe my

husband has film back even further than he seems to recall).

"Most of our groups seem to have one common problem, that of trying to increase membership. Ultimately, the first suggestion is always: 'We need more younger members.'"

AMATEUR MOVIE MAKERS ASSOCIATION,

AMMA Monitor,
edited by Mark Levy.

President's Corner,
by Malcolm Colditz.

"In the past we have talked about producing our personal, or family history and also writing and producing our own script. Today, let's think about adapting one of our favourite short stories to a thirty-minute video. Wow, that would be a project! We would probably need to allow several months for the production, but achieving this goal would be a very satisfying accomplishment. Today, let us examine the difference between a written short story and a movie based on that story and how we might go about solving the problems.

"Quite often people will view a movie based on a novel, which they have read and exit the theatre saying 'the movie was nothing like the book!'

"Usually, this is stated in a tone of disappointment; however, there is very often a sound reason for this situation because the story-telling format of the written word and the film or video is very different. The author of a written work has the luxury of describing in some detail how the characters feel and what they are thinking. To present this in the form of a video, you must show the viewer these things about the characters. This is probably going to be a challenge, and this is where the book gets 'changed' as it appears on the screen.

"A good start for preparing your production is to define the author's primary purpose in writing the story. Who is the main character? How can you best convey the

author's intent by externalizing the description of the character? If the story involves a single character, then you have to create a second character in order to have someone to whom the main character can verbalize important decisions. Of course, if you do this you should weave the new character into the story so that it doesn't appear this is a character just to receive the narrative (which it is). This type of adaptation is the one that the professionals do to convert a written story to the screen, and you can have fun trying it also.

"The story should be presented as a series of sequences where problems are encountered by the main character, leaving the viewer in a state of suspense. Ultimately, the sequences must also show change (usually positive change, or growth) in the main character and in the resolution of the problems.

"If you are going to expend the effort to tackle a project of this magnitude, the first step is to carefully select the story from the technical standpoint of making the movie. One of my favourite short stories is 'I Shoulda Seen a Credit Arranger' by Les Edgerton. This is a fascinating, suspenseful story; however, it involves cutting off a man's arm (which we may be able to handle with blue screen) and burning a house to the ground. I may be able to improvise some way around these difficulties, but I may also spend a lot of time and effort and not have the results to satisfy my own standards. I am better off to select another of Edgerton's short stories, which only involve three characters talking on the beach.

"By now most of you readers are certain I have gone off my rocker to suggest such an ambitious project. True, it would be a large undertaking. But certainly one which would provide an enormous satisfaction if completed. Consider doing this as a group or a club.

"Let's get busy! I want to see several of these at next year's convention on the cruise ship!"

I.A.C. THE FILM AND VIDEO INSTITUTE, FILM AND VIDEO MAKER, edited by Garth Hope LACI.

FVM POST Bang The Drum. "All hail to Ken Wilson on his "Bang the Drum" for amateur filmmakers in the July/August issue.

"We can have the best of both worlds as we can have a professional approach but still enjoy a certain freedom in our content. We are not stifled by corporate needs or aims and can allow our creativity more outlet.

"Taking into account the fact that most of us have to make do with either a small, or even no budget, a reliability on making our own props and producing our own actors, venues etc. I personally consider we are pound for pound worth a great deal more than your average spoilt professional.

"On the subject of using professional judges to judge amateur films, I fear the majority have little idea of the problems that the amateur faces; but on the other hand, those that do, can be helpful in giving us advice to create better films.

"Regardless of whether the judges are amateurs or professional, have any of them ever thought of asking themselves whilst judging "Is this film enjoyable and entertaining?" Surely this needs to come into the equation, but many are so obsessed with the technicalities that this obvious fact seems to pass them by. Does it really matter if someone happens to 'cross the line' if the film is enjoyable and creative? Is there any point in eulogizing on the 'glint of the glass' if the rest of the film is snore making?

"This is our Hobby, would you believe it, for Enjoyment! Perhaps a little more lateral thinking and a holistic approach to our creativity would encourage more amateur filmmakers to participate in film festivals!"

Val Weller, LACI, Competition Secretary, Medway Camcorder Club.

CIAFF REPORT

by Jon Soyka,
Executive Director, CIAFF



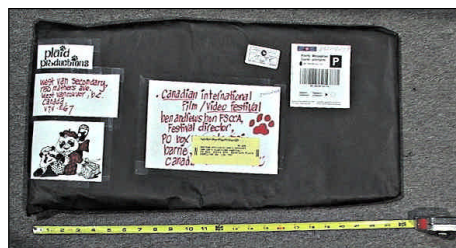
The 2003 version of the Canadian International Annual Film Festival was another unqualified success. That is if you define success as 132 various video productions arriving successfully in Hamilton from various points around the earth, each one was paid for, they were all judged appropriately by a variety of competent volunteers and the expenses were kept to a low level. Not bad, eh?

In this, my first year of working directly with the festival (I received all the entries, sorted them, helped with some of the judging), I confirmed some suspicions that I had about the attention spans of some people and was surprised with the quality levels of some productions. All in all, an interesting contest.

We had several entries from Shirley Low in B.C. who enthuses many age groups into producing a variety of productions about the Penticton area. He charges are all amateur in status but like a large local video club had had some useful input from guest speakers and film production teachers in the community. Once again we had several productions from the students of the Campbell River area in B.C. who over the past few years have been receiving a lot of great teaching, information and assistance from the knowledgeable staff at Timberline Secondary.



I was a little disappointed by the group of students who spent a large sum of money mailing a supersized package (maybe they have been spending too long at McDonalds) containing just three small mini-DV tapes. The package (see photo) almost required two postmen to carry it, yet the contents contained more packaging than the average Mailboxes store does.



The sad part is that we do not accept any other format than VHS tapes, so I had to contact the group and ask for the correct entry, which later arrived in a package only slightly smaller. They must have spent over \$50.00 in postage. The entries in the end were never judged as the group never paid for the tapes to be in the contest, this despite several e-mails to the contact person. Makes you wonder!

The judges performed admirably in their duties and I would like to give a big tip of the hat to all of them. It is not easy to sit in a room and watch video after video after video after

video... ok you get the idea. A really good production raises the spirits and makes the job a joy, however, a series of productions that are too long, or identical in scope, or cannot be audibly understood properly make the job a real pain in the keister. Fortunately there were very few entries that had the judges calling "help" or had them running from the room screaming. Along with having to view each video the judges must be aware of what the person is trying to say in their production, how well did it come across in the various categories of script, editing, camerawork, audio etc. It is also difficult to then write in a constructive manner, some comments about how the subject and its treatment got to the judge.

After the judging each of the sheets are tabulated and put into a point order and the appropriate positions and awards are then noted. It is not a short



job nor is it always easy to carry out with checking, re-checking and going over everything to make sure nobody got short changed. But, the system works.

The showing of a selection of the winning videos took place this year in Toronto at the National Film Board theatre. Whereas we would love to have the room packed and thousands more waiting outside, screaming to be let in to see the films, we settled for about 50 attendees and a great afternoon.



The productions looked great on the big screen and a great thanks goes to the staff at the NFB for their professionalism and help. Several of the producers showed up for the showing and our aim for next year is to get triple the amount out to receive their prizes.



I would now ask each and every one of you to consider at this point what you are going to supply to the 2004 CIAFF. Will it be a new production that will be complete by the June 30th entry deadline or will it be something that was recently done and maybe got a good review at your local club. Would you like to be on the judging panel at the end of July or early August of 2004. Start thinking now and let me know how you want to be an active part of the CIAFF. For a complete listing of the rules and entry forms please go to CIAFF.ORG and if you have any questions or comments you can write to me at the e-mail site or call me at 905-388-5840. ■

See you in 2004!

Regards, Jon Soyka

Preparing Videos for Competition

By Jon Soyka,
Exec. Director, CIAFF

This little tome is the result of some frustration, mixed with a bit of need to teach and stirred with the wisdom of those who are smarter than I. Take what you will from it and I will be happy to know that I was successful if at least 99% of you pay any attention to what I am saying.

The rules for 2004 CIAFF (Canadian International Annual Film Festival) have gone through a minor revision and are now viewable at CIAFF.ORG. Please note that for judging, we are now sticking very tightly to the rules and will again, as this year, reject entries that do not meet our criteria. It takes a long time for the five judges to view, mark and critique (if warranted) the large number of entries that we receive. We do NOT pre-judge the films with only what is figured to be the best films going forward for final judging, but rather every single entry is viewed by the five independent judges. In light of this I have some suggestions to make regarding your entries for next year. Please make my job easier and not only read the suggestions, but follow through on them.

I went to the movies last week - twice. On Sunday the babe and I went to see "The Last Samurai" an American action flick with an over the top amount of plot and character development (for a Hollywood production). Other than some hokey computer generated scene on a boat the picture had reasonable acting, good lighting, good cinematography and even with the slightly excessive sound levels in the theatre, I understood everything they said.

A couple of nights later I went by myself to Toronto to attend the "Digital Gun Awards 2003". (Go to "digitalgunawards.com" for more information). The contest is a challenge in which the crews of mainly film students

and independent film artists are required, after being given a general theme, to write, shoot and edit a six minute film within three days. There is a version of this in the United States in which you do the same thing within a 24-hour time limit. The final results of the top 15 entries were to be projected on the large screen at the Bloor Cinema. I got there early, found parking (six blocks away), bought my ticket (\$10.00) and then stood in line outside the doors in the cold fall night for at least half an hour. The newspaper said it started at 8:00pm - the lady taking my money said it started at 9:00pm - and after loading almost 800 semi-frigid bodies into the theatre and allowing all of them time to get popcorn and pop, the movies started at 9:55pm. The theatre seats 850 and I did not see very many empty chairs. (It turns out that nearly all of the patrons were either in the movies, worked on the movies or was a neighbour of someone who knew someone involved with the movies). Of the 15 entries, in my opinion, about eight were good, three were bad, two were great and the remainder fell into so-so land. However...

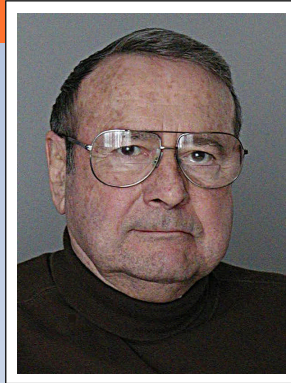
Let me move off to the side here for a moment and fill you in on the reason for this little babble of mine, then we will continue.

Under the guidance and advice of Ben Andrews I did some of the work on the 2003 CIAFF (Canadian International Annual Film Festival) including accepting, logging and checking the VHS entries, checking the entry forms and contacting the entrants when clarification was needed. At the end of the event I had to admit that I was surprised at how poorly a lot of the entrants did their work, not from the production standpoint - but from the entry forms and tape presentation.

I find it staggering that a person or a crew will spend hours, days, weeks or months on putting together what they consider to be a great piece of art... and then not bother to check the final result. It is as if they sit at the editing console, view the finished masterpiece, eject the tape and consider that all in the world is perfect. The finished master tape is not the end of the project, unless you are a hermit and did it strictly for self-gratification. ■

YET MORE NEAT STUFF FROM INTERNET

By Thom Speechley



If you spend much time surfing for useful programs and other material on the Internet, you will eventually accumulate a considerable number of files. If the material is worth keeping, you have a number of alternatives for storing it. It is usually advisable to store such files on removable media, floppies or CD-ROM, in order to keep your hard drive uncluttered, and in the unfortunate event that have to reformat or otherwise reinstall a program.

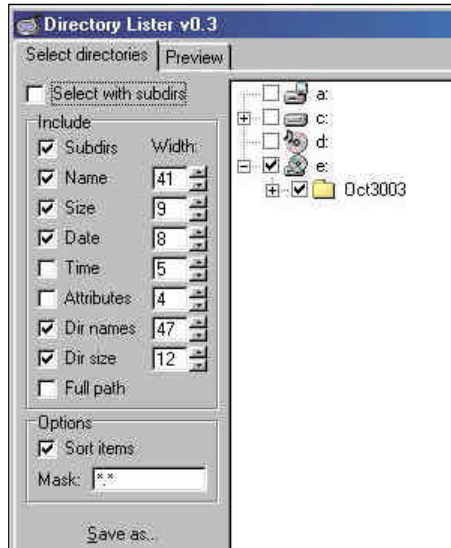
Downloaded files are usually assigned to a separate directory, which makes them easy to locate as long as they remain on your drive. However, once transferred to disk, it requires a little discipline to carefully record the pertinent data and location of each item. Popping the disk into your computer will display a directory of the contents but unless you have descriptively re-named each file before saving, it may still be a challenge to find what you are looking for. A well-organized person will open a word processor, laboriously type in all the details and print out a list for storage with the disk. There is a better way.

A hard copy of the disk contents is nice to have, but after acquiring several disks, you need a better way to search them all to locate any specific item. Again, the dedicated person will open a database program and produce an elaborate catalogue. That's a lot of work!

I have developed a procedure which uses three very small programs to produce a list of contents which can be annotated (a description added) and searched by key word. Several such lists can be consolidated so that eventually you have a "master" list for all your download disks.

Three Steps - When my working directory starts to get a little full, about

the 300MB level, I will decide to clean up the directory by eliminating unwanted files, and create an 'inventory'. The first program I use is "Directory Lister". (<http://freeware.prv.pl/>) This program creates a directory listing in plain text format and saves it as an MS "Notepad" file.



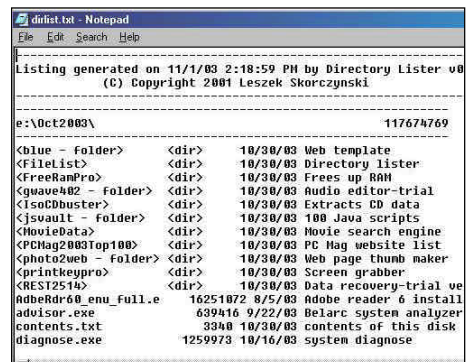
Open this program and, in the right hand window, select the directory containing your downloads. You can configure the screen to display as much directory information as you want to capture. Press the 'Preview' tab to see how the final TXT file will look. If you just want a basic list, exclude sub-directories. When the data is displayed the way you want, save the file to your download directory for annotating. "Save as...." giving it a name such as "Index" or "Contents".

Many downloaded files bear cryptic titles, which do not describe the function or purpose of the program they represent. (Now let me think; what is GWAVE401.zip?) You could simply change the name of the file to something more meaningful (audioeditor.zip) but this could cause problems if you want to go back to look for the original source on the Internet. In addition, if the file is some kind of data file (example, a readme.txt or INI file) used by another program, changing the name would make the file and the program unusable. That's why it is worth taking the time to add appropriate comments.

Open the file in "Notepad" (double

click on the file name). Now you can tidy up the list by removing any unwanted references and, add comments to describe the nature of each file or program.

Select key words you are most likely to remember in future. Common types of programs can be classed as "graphic", "photo", "audio", "utility", "thumbnail", "music" etc. Use such words in short descriptive sentences. Your edited file will look something like this.



Reading the List - A small disk load may contain over 100 file names, depending on how much detail you need and how you configure "Directory Lister". Scanning the list on your computer screen can be a real strain. Therefore some kind of "search" facility must accompany the index or contents file. Current versions of Windows "Notepad" have a search feature but for systems before XP, file size is limited to 57KB.

Your collection could get that large. You can open the file in "WordPad" or "Word" and search using **Ctrl/F**, but you may not have either of these installed. Other word processors have a search feature but why boot up such an elaborate program just to find a few key words? It makes more sense to have a separate program to do the searching right on the disk with the files. If you do not have the newer Notepad installed there are several small, free programs out there. The smallest (44KB) and most versatile one I have found is "Win32pad" from:

<http://www.gena01.com/win32pad/>

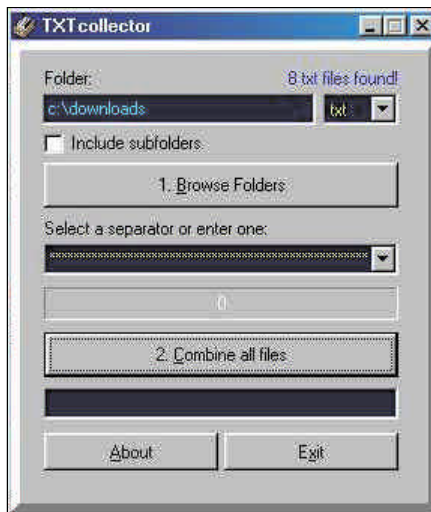
It will load any size file and has a very efficient search feature. Another similar program is "Notepad+" available at:

<http://www.mypeecee.org/rogsoft/>

(Please note that there is also a shareware version out there called "NotePadPlus". However, you must register that one for \$14USD.)

Consolidation - In order to save the time and effort of searching disk indexes one at a time, it helps to be able to combine all of the lists into one master table of contents. There are ways to manually combine text files, such as "copying" to the clipboard and "Pasting" at the end of a previous file. You can do this in NotePad.

However a program does exist which performs this task for you with a simple menu and a few keystrokes. The program is another free download called "TXTCollector" available from: <http://bluefive.pair.com/>



This tiny (96KB) little item reads all txt files in a directory (or directories) and creates a master file called 'combined.txt', which you can rename as you save it. You can keep on combining txt files, pyramid fashion, to whatever final size you think you can manage.

These tips are intended to help you organize a collection of downloaded programs and utilities. However I think you might recognize that this combination of small programs could also be used to catalogue any collection of computer files. I use it routinely to keep a master index of all my graphic and photo files. Most photo handling programs come with some sort of "album" feature for organizing your pictures but I prefer the option of adding descriptive notes to further facilitate any future searches. Combined with individual pages of "thumbnail" pictures, anyone can browse the disks with ease. ■



Just Back from Nicaragua

by Jim Town

I have recently returned from my fifth visit to the Central American Country of Nicaragua, the largest of the Central American States and in so many ways, the very poorest Country in all of Latin America. It shares, with Guatemala, the lowest literacy rate in all of Central America.

I took the occasion to use whatever skills I have developed as a video producer to videotape the activities of several individuals, groups and Canadian Government sponsored organizations. Although I got different types of footage, the mini-documentary that impressed me most was of what Canadians have been quietly doing to rid the world of these horrible weapons of war-the anti-personnel landmine.



The problem has always been that these devices are not cleared when war ends, and peace is declared. It is the civilian population of a country that suffers. It is the kids and unsuspecting peasant who steps on the mines and is lucky if all that happens is a leg gets blown off.

Although the Sandinista National army labelled and mapped where they planted all of these ordinances, they did not attempt to remove them once the civil war was over.

In 1998 Hurricane Mitch hit Nicaragua as well as Honduras. The mud slides that resulted from Mitch dislodged the mines that had

been planted, and now no one knows for certain where they all are. Worse still, the Geiger counters only detect metal down to 6-8 inches.

I asked one of our officials what would happen if someone stepped on a mine that was 9 inches underground. He didn't answer me.

Canadians have been instrumental in lobbying in the United Nations and individual nations of the world for a complete ban on the production, stock piling and use of these horrible devices. The major hold-out Countries to date have been the USA, Russia, China and North Korea, along with a few others. The majority of the countries in the world have signed the "Ottawa Convention" agreeing to ban and police the use of all anti-personnel landmines.

The Canadian Government has donated over 6 Million dollars to the Organization of American States to destroy stockpiles and locate, detect and destroy still-planted mines. A portion of these funds goes to provide prostheses for the victims and teach kids the dangers of landmines.

I was told to contact Bill McDonough, the OAS person in Washington in charge of the demining procedure in Central America, through their office in Ottawa prior to leaving home.

When we arrived at the office of the Deputy Minister of Defence for Nicaragua, the woman meeting us asked what I was doing there. I told her that Bill McDonough had told me to call on them. She said "Col. McDonough?"

Within minutes we were ushered into the office of the Vice Minister, a



woman. She arranged for us to see Major General Orozco, the OAS commander in charge of the Nicaragua demining programme. He in turn sent us to see Major Vassi, the one in charge of the Corps of Engineers of the Nicaraguan army.

They would see that we were transported to Zone four in the northernmost part of Nicaragua where there were still lots of active landmines, where the most injuries and deaths have occurred, and where our Canadian dollars have been directed, along with money from Norway, to rid the country of landmines.

The terrain is so wild up there that conventional Geiger counter detection is supplanted by mine-sniffing dogs, but we didn't see any of the canine units.

Also, in the interior, they have large machines that denude the sparse underbrush and destroy the mines.



The first day we stopped to visit several men who had had their legs blown off by landmines. All in all we saw eight or nine men with mostly leg amputations although the one above had his left arm blown off as well.

Another man had his one leg traumatically removed and after being rehabilitated and outfitted with a prosthesis, (Canadian money is being used to provide these prostheses and the six months rehabilitation needed), had his other one blown off less than a year later. His first prosthesis was also demolished in the explosion.



That day culminated in a visit to a

school on the border of Honduras. These hills, less than two miles away were still harbouring active landmine sites.



Two of the teachers from the OAS were victims of landmines. They were at this school to impress upon the kids the dangers of landmines and the caution needed when walking off the main dirt road. Not only did they use flip charts and personal experience in their talks but they left each of the kids with a T-shirt, a year's calendar and a volley ball for the school, all with the warning and telephone number to call if they saw anything that looked suspiciously like a landmine, or other military ordinance.



This woman heads up a group of mothers who are lobbying against the use of landmines and who are in the forefront in warning their kids of the dangers these harmless looking devices carry with them. She expressed her appreciation for what Canada was doing for her people.

The next day we were guests of the Nicaragua military. They showed us the various types of mines that had been used in the area.

The Major told us that they only had about 60% of the known mines discovered and destroyed. He gave a lengthy discourse in Spanish, which I still do not fully understand, but he had his team demonstrate the landmine detection procedure and the way they carefully expose and then detonate the weapon.

The role of a video documentarian is certainly rewarding. You get to go places,

see things and learn so much that otherwise would be impossible to do.

There is one caveat though. If you are going to do this kind of thing, you need to have a strong determination, and at times a "strong stomach".

Hopefully when I get the Spanish deciphered, I will have a documentary that can be shown to a wider audience.

Keep the cameras rolling! ■

Some Rules for Typical Hollywood Movies



A friend sent me these observations. I just love them and have a few of mine own. You probably do too. If so, please send them to Fred Briggs for possible inclusion in the future.

-It does not matter if you are heavily outnumbered in a fight involving martial arts: your enemies will wait patiently to attack you one by one, dancing around in a threatening manner until you have knocked out their predecessors.

-Honest and hard-working policemen are traditionally gunned down three days before their retirement.

-All beds have special L-shaped sheets that reach the armpit level of a woman, but only the waist level of the man lying beside her.

-At least one of a pair of identical twins is born evil.

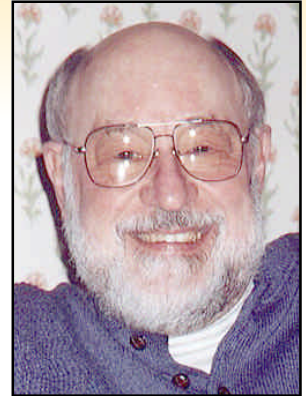
-Most laptop computers are powerful enough to override the communications system of any invading alien society.

-All grocery bags contain at least one stick of French bread.

-You're very likely to survive any battle in any war unless you make the mistake of showing someone a picture of your sweetheart back home.

WHAT'S *New* IN CAMCORDERS ?

By Bryan Belfont



I revise my textbook every few months and still it is hard to keep up with the new products on the market. Let's look at the ten different formats and where they stand today (as of December 2003). First a quick look at **analog** camcorders.

The **8mm** format is dead.

The **Hi8** format is kept alive by Sony, Canon and Samsung but the end of analog camcorders is near. The **VHS-C** and **S-VHS-C** formats are almost dead with JVC and Panasonic offering a total of 3 models.

Even some of the **digital** formats appear to be on their last legs.

Sony now manufactures two **Digital 8** models but only one model plays both analog and digital tapes. If you still have a Hi8 camcorder and lots of Hi8 tapes you had better move up to the Digital 8 format now as this may be the last year it is available.

The **Micro-MV** format from Sony is now down to two models. Rumour has it that Sony will discontinue this format once these two models are sold off (cleared out). I never did recommend the Micro-MV format. As it records in MPEG 2, it cannot be edited successfully on any of the DV editing programs.

Mini DV is the way to go for the foreseeable future. There are 40 models to choose from 6 manufacturers. In addition there is a choice between one and three chip Camcorders. Editing on a computer is a snap with this format (along with Digital 8) as numerous companies offer editing software.

There is a new entry from JVC: the first consumer **HD** (High Definition) Camcorder. This model can shoot in 480i in 4:3 (the same as regular Mini DV), 480p in 16:9 (the progressive version referred to as SD or Standard Definition) and 720P in 16:9 (this is the progressive version of HD or High Definition).

All of the previous formats are tape-based one trend is move away from tape to **DVD**. This format still

has some teething problems, as the various manufacturers have not yet settled on a common standard. Hitachi and Panasonic have **DVD-RAM** models. They use a DVD-RAM disc that will not play-back on any current DVD player. These camcorders can also record to DVD-R but these discs cannot be re-recorded.

Sony has entered the DVD field with two new camcorders now available. Sony's choice of formats is the **DVD-RW/R**. Surprisingly they have chosen the DVD-RW (minus) from the DVD Forum over the DVD+RW (plus) from the DVD Alliance of which Sony is the leading member.

Be warned that all of these DVD formats record in MPEG 2 and are not suitable for serious frame-accurate video editing on a computer.

The next development we can expect is a **Memory Chip** that can store up to 5 GB. Sony already has a Memory stick at 1 GB and they are working on one that can store 5 GB, which will store one hour of MPEG 2 video! Panasonic is also promising a Memory Card with 4 GB in 2004. Of course, the ultimate goal in a tape-less, disc-less camcorder with no moving parts and full motion video stored on a memory chip that can be shot in a camcorder, popped into a computer slot for editing, and then popped into a TV slot for viewing!

Bryan Belfont, the owner of VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS, is the video instructor for Adult Education with the Vancouver School Board. Contact by e-mail: belfont@telus.net [Bryan provided this article, and another about hardware and software for video editing, which will appear in the Winter 2004 Issue. Ed.]

CAMCORDER BUYER'S GUIDE - DECEMBER 2003

MAKE	MODEL	FEATURES	PRICE
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SONY CAMCORDERS

Hi8

SONY	TRV-118	20x (560x)	2.5" LCD, BW, M	499
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DIGITAL 8

SONY	TRV-250 *	20x (700x)	2.5" LCD, BW, EIS	649
	TRV-350	20x (700x)	2.5" LCD, BW, MS, EIS	799

* Will not playback analog 8mm/Hi8 tapes

MINI DV

SONY	DCR-TRV19	10x (120x)	2.5" LCD, CZ, BW, EIS	849
	DCR-TRV22	10x (120x)	2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, MS, EIS	999
	DCR-TRV33	10x (120x)	1.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, MS, EIS	1,099
	DCR-TRV38	10x (120x)	1.0 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CZ, CV, FR, MS, EIS	1,199
	DCR-PC105 (mini)	10x (120x)	1.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, FR, MS, EIS	1,199
	DCR-TRV70	10x (120x)	2.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, FR, MS, EIS	1,699
	DCR-TRV80BT	12x (150x)	2.0 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CZ, CV, FR, MS, EIS	1,999
	DCR-PC330 (mini)	10x (120x)	3.0 Mega , 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, FR, MS, EIS	2,499
	DCR-TRV950BT	12x (150x)	3 x 1.0 Mega CCDs , 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, TL, MS, OIS	3,299
	DCR-VX2100	12x (48x)	3 CCDs , 2.5" LCD, CV, FR, TL, MS, OIS	4,499

MICRO-MV

SONY	DCR-1P1	12x (120x)	1.0 Mega, 2.0" LCD, CZ, MS, EIS	1,599
	DCR-1P220BT	12x (120x)	2.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, BT, MS, EIS	2,999

DVD-R/RW

SONY	DCR-DVD100	10x (120x)	2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, TL, EIS	1,299
	DCR-DVD200	10x (120x)	1.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CZ, CV, TL, EIS	1,499

For explanation of features see page 17

CAMCORDER BUYER'S GUIDE - DECEMBER 2003

MAKE	MODEL	FEATURES	PRICE
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DV - DIGITAL CAMCORDERS

CANON	ZR-60	18x (360x) 2.5" LCD, CV, EIS	699
	ZR-65MC	20x (400x) 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	799
	ZR-70MC	22x (440x) 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	899
	Elura 50	10x (400x) 2.05" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	1,099
	Optura 10	16x (320x) 1.3 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, EIS	999
	Optura 20	16x (320x) 1.3 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, EIS	1,099
	Optura 300	10x (200x) 2.0 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, EIS	1,699
	Optura xi	11x (220x) 2.0 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, EIS	1,999
	GL-2	20x (100x) 3 CCDs, 2.5" LCD, CV, OIS	3,499
	XL-1S	16x (32x) 3 CCDs, CV, OIS	5,999
JVC	GR-D30	16x (700x) 2.5" LCD, BW, EIS	699
	GR-D70	16x (700x) 2.5" LCD, BW, MC, EIS	799
	GR-D90/91	16x (700x) 3.5" LCD, BW, MC, EIS	899
	GR-D200	16x (200x) 1.3 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	999
	GR-DV500	10x (300x) 1.3 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	999
	GR-DV800/801	10x (300x) 1.3 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	1,099
	GR-DV900	10x (300x) 1.3 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	1,199
	GR-DV4000	10x (300x) 1.3 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, EIS	1,499
	GR-DX95	16x (700x) 3.0" LCD, BW, MC, EIS	1,299
	GR-DX300	10x (500x) 1.3 Mega, 3.5" LCD, BW, MC, EIS	1,499
	GR-DVP9 (mini)	10x (200x) 1.3 Mega, 2.0" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	1,999
PANASONIC	PV-DV103 (mini)	10x (700x) 2.5" LCD, CV, TL, EIS	749
	PV-DV203 (mini)	10x (700x) 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, TL, EIS	799
	PV-GS50 (mini)	10x (700x) 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, TL, EIS	999
	PV-GS70	10x (200x) 3 CCDs, 2.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, TL, EIS	1,499
	PV-DV953	10x (120x) 3 CCDs, 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, TL, OIS	2,499
SAMSUNG	SC-D21	10x (400x) 2.5" LCD, BW, EIS	699
	SC-D23	10x (400x) 2.5" LCD, BW, MS, EIS	799
	SC-D5000 (DuoCam)	10x (480x) 4.1 Mega, 2.0" LCD, CV, MS, EIS	2,100
SHARP	VL-Z3	10x (500x) 2.5" LCD, BW, MC, EIS	899
	VL-Z7	10x (500x) 1.3 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, MC, EIS	1,099

CAMCORDER BUYER'S GUIDE - DECEMBER 2003

MAKE	MODEL	FEATURES	PRICE
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ANALOG CAMCORDERS

Hi8

CANON	ES-75	22x (800x) CV, M, EIS	499
	ES-8400V	22x (800x) 2.5" LCD, BW, M, EIS	599
SAMSUNG	SC-W87	22x (880x) CV, M	349
	SC-L810	22x (880x) 2.5" LCD, BW, M	429
	SC-L860	22x (880x) 2.5" LCD, BW, M, EIS	499

COMPACT VHS-C

JVC	GR-AXM250	16x (600x) 2.5" LCD, BW, M, EIS	399
PANASONIC	PV-L353	20x (700x) 2.5" LCD, BW, M, EIS	499

COMPACT S-VHS-C

JVC	GR-SXM750	16x (600x) 3.5" LCD, BW, ET, M, EIS	499
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DVD - RAM

PANASONIC	VDR-M30	10x (240x) 2.5" LCD, CV, USB-1, MC, EIS	1,299
HITACHI	DZM-V350	10x (240x) 2.5" LCD, CV, USB-2, MC, EIS	1,299
	DZM-V380	12x (240x) 1.1 Mega, 2.5" LCD, CV, USB-2, MC, EIS	1,499

HD

JVC	GR- HD1	10x (200x) 1.2 Mega, 3.5" LCD, CV, FR, MC, OIS	3,999
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FEATURE CODES:

BT - Bluetooth	HD - High Definition	MS - Memory Stick (Sony)
BW - Black & White Viewfinder	L - Leica Lens	MV - Micro Video
CV - Color Viewfinder	LCD - Liquid Crystal Display	OIS - Optical Image Stabilizer
CZ - Carl Zeiss Lens	M - Mono	S - Stereo
DV - Digital Video	Mega - Mega Pixel CCD (1 million+)	TL - Top Load
EIS - Electronic Image Stabilizer	MPEG - Moving Picture Experts Group	
FR - Focus Ring on Lens	MC - Memory Card (still photos)	

All D8 camcorders have TimeCode, Firewire, Digital Stereo

All DV camcorders have TimeCode, Firewire, Digital Stereo, Audio Dub

MV and DVD camcorders record in MPEG-2 and use USB-2 ports instead of Firewire

NOTE: We have tried to be as accurate as possible in the Camcorders Buyer's Guide.
Please contact the author if you are aware of any errors.

HOT LINKS

By Fred Briggs

SilverFast® The Imaging Power Tool

Almost three years ago I submitted a pair of articles about scanning for video. The subject wasn't exhausted so I thought that perhaps I would continue the series, with information about setting gamma, black and white points, and other parameters in the scanning software, before the scan is made, and the conventional advice that sharpening should be left till last, in your photo retouching software, after resizing, adjustment of brightness and contrast, retouching, and any filters, etc.

However, there were no comments or questions, so we went on to other things. I do recommend that you reread both articles, in the Winter and Spring 2001 Issues of Panorama (still available on the s-c-c-a.ca web site). I just reread them both now, and they're positively brilliant!

Now I want to draw your attention to 2 links. In the second column of our Links Page you will find *Photography*. Below that (a couple of lines above *SCCA Members Pages*) you will see *Scanning*. Click that to show *Digital Imaging Software Review: SilverFast 6*, and later *Welcome to LaserSoft Imaging*.

The first is a review of software that is sold by LaserSoft, and the second is the web page for LaserSoft.

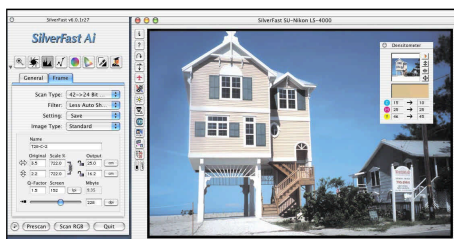
I have been working for 5 years now on a history video project that requires me to scan a very large number of old photographs, which I beg, borrow, and buy from many sources. One sequence in my video will illustrate a naval battle fought by the British and American Fleets on Lake Ontario in 1813, in a gale! The latter detail makes it even more difficult to reenact, so I will have to recreate it, in part from paintings.

I have been fortunate to find an artist, famous in his field, who has painted about 80 pictures of War of 1812 Naval History on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and he has agreed to grant me permission to use his paintings.

However, he has already sold them all, and they are very widely distributed, but he does have an 8 X 10 Transparency of each of them. I am going to provide him a high-resolution scan of each, in return for their use.

I'll jump over the long saga of my purchase of three used scanners, all of which failed to properly scan 8 X 10 Transparencies, and get to the point in time when I finally had a scanner that worked. However, the quality of the scan, using the software provided by the manufacturer of the scanner, was disappointing, even though it gave me some control over black and white points, gamma, etc.

I remembered having once read the Digital Imaging review discussed above, so I reread it and downloaded the software from LaserSoft as a free



test. The results were remarkable! And the artist is just as thrilled with the first few scans as I am! At 600 ppi the scan clearly shows the texture of the canvas, and every brush stroke! (The 8 X 10 transparencies had been produced on a process camera - a room size camera - in a printing shop, and were therefore very sharp in the first place.)

The software isn't available for all scanners, and the price varies a little according to the scanner for which you are buying it. I'm guessing that this software extracts so much more detail out of the scanner because it takes over the scanner itself instead of using the TWAIN driver normally used these days, but I'm not sure if that's how and why. (For an explanation of TWAIN, I say again, "Read the 2001 articles!")

The Digital Imaging article describes the "professional version", SilverFast 6 AI (for Artificial Intelligence, I think),

and this version can be provided for a great many scanners. First you select the name of the company that made your scanner, and then you select the exact model number, and finally you get the price. I didn't check many (mostly for the scanners I own) but the price seemed to vary from \$119 to \$199 US. It doesn't matter what the range is: all that matters is "Is it available for your scanner? And if so, what is the price?" For mine, it was \$199 (wouldn't you know!).

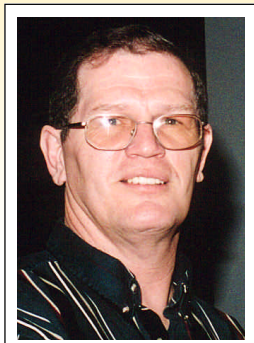
However, there is another version, the SE, or Light Version. This software



doesn't have as many features and adjustments as does the Pro Version, but it did a great job on everything I want it to do (I don't need all the extra professional features - Batch Processing, CMYK Output, etc.) And while it is available for far fewer scanners, the price of the SE is only \$49 US, regardless of the scanner, as long as it's listed. And mine was listed!

So, I urge you to go to both sites, check whether or not the software is available for your scanner, and if so, download both versions to compare them. (Until you Register, and Pay, every scan will contain small Logos, but you get a good chance to see whether or not you think it's worth the money to you. And since it's a download, there are no shipping costs, taxes, etc.) It's especially important to test the software before you buy it if you are running XP or Mac OS X. If it works, run a comparison test against your regular scanning software, supplied by the scanner manufacturer. And if it isn't available for your current scanner, make sure that the next scanner you buy is listed, before you buy it! ■

Tinker's Tips

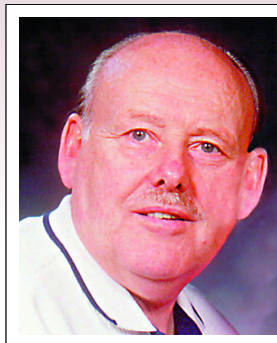


by Don Svob

Here are some more Tips from my emails. Again, they're not really video tips, but some are very good. If you have a tip to pass on to "Tinker's Tips", email me: dsvob@becon.org

1. If you accidentally over-salt a dish while it's still cooking, drop in a peeled potato and it will absorb the excess salt for an instant "fix me up."
2. Wrap celery in aluminum foil when putting in the refrigerator and it will keep for weeks. This really works: it will keep forever and a day this way.
3. Brush some beaten egg white over piecrust before baking to yield a beautiful glossy finish.
4. Place a slice of apple in hardened brown sugar to soften it.
5. When boiling corn on the cob, add a pinch of sugar to help bring out the corn's natural sweetness.
6. To determine whether an egg is fresh, immerse it in a pan of cool, salted water. If it sinks, it is fresh, but if it rises to the surface, throw it away.
7. Cure for headaches: Take a lime, cut it in half and rub it on your forehead. The throbbing will go away.

Harold's Tips



1. Most of us use multi-outlet AC power strips to divide a single source of electricity among various pieces of video equipment. They can be kept handy and much easier to change plugs by fastening a large "spring type clip" to the back of the power strip. The strip can then easily be attached to the edge of

- a table, a tripod leg or any other convenient spot.
2. If you've ever had a screw-on filter stuck on your lens so tight it seems a "pipe wrench" is the only thing that will remove it, read on:- Try wearing a rubber dish washer glove or put a rubber band around the filter to give you more grip. Even better, always carry a stiff rubber disk in your gadget bag, to remove a filter place it in the palm of your hand and flat against the filter then give a quick "twist". This almost always breaks the tight bond.
 3. A tripod is the most awkward piece of equipment we have to carry. However it can be made much easier by adding a simple "door pull" type handle to the balance point on one of the tripod legs. The handle can be attached easily with "Jubilee Clips" (worm clamps) and a screwdriver. you can use a "dog collar" or a "bungee cord" to hold the tripod feet together for transport.

MEMBERSHIP FEES; June 1st 2003 to May 31st, 2004

Class "A" (voting)

GROUP Membership	.....(Clubs)	\$.075 per member -- Min. \$20	_____ members on April 30, 2003
INDIVIDUAL Membership	...(Repeat)	\$ 30.00 per year	
	(First time ever)	\$ 20.00 first year only	
FAMILY Membership	.....(Repeat)	\$ 35.00 per year	
	(First time ever)	\$ 25.00 first year only	
LIFE Membership	.....	\$ 600.00	
SUSTAINING Membership	...donation of	\$ 100.00 per year or more	(Tax receipts issued
PATRON of the SCCA	.....donation of	\$ 500.00 per year or more	for all donations)

Class "B" (non-voting)

STUDENT Membership	.....	\$ 15.00 per year	Age_____ School _____
ORGANIZATIONAL Membership	.....	\$ 30.00 per year	
INDUSTRIAL Membership	.....	\$ 50.00 per year	
<u>Special Donation to SCCA</u>	.....	\$ ???.	(Tax receipts issued for ALL donations)

The Last Word...

Let me tell you a little about Jim Town, who has made several trips to Nicaragua. He's a retired Canadian doctor who goes to Nicaragua delivering medical supplies to hospitals, and who helps out there in disasters such as earthquakes. We have seen his



video documentaries of events in London and Woodstock as well as footage from Nicaragua.

We have been seeing another publication in the video field. It is called Amateur Videographer. It says it is "To inform, to educate, to entertain camcorder owners everywhere." It comes from Toronto, its Publisher/Editor is Sam Spence and as well it is free! Letters are welcome, and should be sent to SASCAN Publishing Company, 2343 Brimley Road, Suite 868, Toronto, ON. M1S 3L6

As I write responses to Christmas cards and look at the Grand River gliding past snow-covered fields, I realise this issue of Panorama is much later than it should be. But winter will be here for quite a while longer, so I hope everyone has some quiet time to read what we have put together, in some place where it is warm.

May the spirit of Christmas be with you all, in whatever way you celebrate it, and the New Year bring you new achievements and new video (or film) opportunities. ■

Joan Bochsler, Editor.

The SCCA Executive and the Contest Chairman have chosen the theme for the 2004 Intercities Competition. The theme will be "The Chase", and is intended to describe the genre rather than to dictate the title. We expect this theme will provide a lot of fun for those individuals or groups who take up the challenge, and a number of entertaining films should result. Good Luck! But Good Management will be more important. Start soon!

Connections

Our President tells me that he was contacted by the CBC because they were looking for some amateur Super8 film of Expo '67 to use in a special they were planning. Since the Summer Issue was already at the printer at that time, there wasn't time to publicize the request to all our members.

Fred had footage of his own somewhere, which he finally found, cleaned, checked over, etc. and it amounted to almost 90 minutes! He had made two trips, one with his wife and daughter, and one with his Sea Scout Troop, and the latter especially interested them. He was asked to try to locate some of the boys who accompanied him, and he finally found three. He also mentioned that Eckhard Kries and his wife had visited Expo, and emigrated to Canada a year later as a result, and they were interested in talking with Eckhard, too.

This week Fred and Eckhard were interviewed on videotape at the CBC in Toronto, and two of the "boys" (now approaching fifty) were interviewed on audiotape for voiceovers at a Hamilton hotel.

In the beginning, Fred asked how much footage they had found, and they mentioned someone who had made six twenty-minute films. Realizing that it must be someone from Montreal, Fred asked the name, as he knew many past members of the Montreal Movie Club. It turned out to be Walter Strickland! They also had found a few other people with film, so they didn't want Fred to look for any more through the SCCA.

It seems now that two of those people still can't find their film (a lesson to all of us), and the air-date is approaching too fast to wait much longer, so they are scrambling to edit what they have. It appears that some of Walter's footage will make it into the program (he was always an excellent cinematographer, who usually won the Best Travel Film and/or Best Film Depicting Canada in SCCA Annual Contests). We can expect some of Fred's footage to appear, too, possibly along with Fred, and some of the people he found for them.

There is another connection, too. Fred later discovered that the man behind the camera for his interview was none other than Michael Sweeney, the Director of Cinematography for *Canada, A People's History!* The 2001 SCCA Convention had visited Barrie to hear Michael, and Mark Starowicz, the Producer of the series, talk about how it was made.

The program is scheduled for February 19th, at 9:00 PM EST, on the CBC. The Program is *The Canadian Experience*, and the episode is *Expo '67*.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

MEMBER INFORMATION *Please print clearly*

SCCA:

Classification

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