

VOL. 38 No. 1, WINTER 2004

PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR



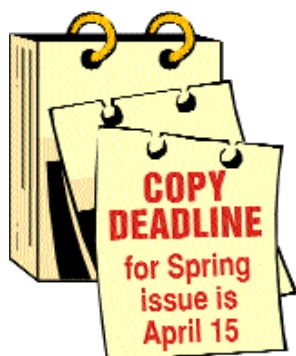
The Publication of the SOCIETY of CANADIAN CINE AMATEURS / SOCIÉTÉ DES CINE AMATEURS CANADIENS (Inc. 1969)

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Front Cover:

After the Storm
Photo by W. L. Richard Vielrose



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Layout, Design and Typesetting
Athens Printing - Tel: 1-888-549-6719
2004 ISSN 1187-28207

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.

Fred Briggs, FSCCA

"Changes"

We have had a "cabinet shuffle" here in Stoney Creek, with one member retiring, another moving into his place, another replacing *him*, and a fourth resuming some of his duties after an extended leave of absence.

Jan Bekooy originally joined the Ottawa Movie Makers in 1952 and remained a member until 1965 when he had to resign because of the pressures of his vocation. He rejoined in 1968 on his retirement, has been a member of the Ottawa club ever since, and has given long service in many capacities to that club.

In 1991, as part of the Ottawa Club's 50th Anniversary, Jan started a program of screening films made by club members to shut-ins in hospitals, nursing homes, and retirement homes. The following year he screened films in 48 institutions, and that work has continued until very recently. Of course, the members weren't turning out enough new work to provide the program variety that was required, so Jan took up much of the slack by also shooting and editing films, and then videos, to continuously refresh his programming.

Jan has been a valuable member of our team since coming onto the Executive as Secretary when Vic Adams became President in 1988. Jan continued as Secretary until 1993. At that time his contributions were recognized

with an Associateship in the SCCA, and he began new duties as Honours Committee Chairman. He continued in that capacity until 1998 when he was elected Eastern Vice President.

In recognition of all the above, as well as his many contributions to PANORAMA over the years, and his many trips to Toronto to help judge the CIAFF entries, Jan was named a Fellow of the SCCA in 1999.

Now, sadly, Jan is suffering from declining memory, to the extent that he can no longer continue his hectic schedule of entertaining shut-ins. He tells me that he can no longer shoot and edit video either, or maintain his interest in the Ottawa Club or the SCCA, and wants to be relieved from his duties as Eastern Vice President. Indeed, he is unable to continue in the SCCA in any capacity.

Jan will be sorely missed, and long remembered, by his friends on the SCCA Executive, the Membership in general, and especially by the many friends he made in the hospitals, nursing homes and retirement homes of Ottawa and Hull.

We are also deeply indebted to Ben Andrews for his great devotion to the CIAFF over so many years.

When the Federal and Ontario governments withdrew the grants that they had been contributing to the CIAFF, the current Director, Betty Peterson, wanted to suspend the CIAFF for two years while she concentrated on getting those grants restored, or finding a replacement for them. A sizable portion of the SCCA Membership believed that a two-year suspension would be the death of the CIAFF, as our regular entrants would find other festivals which would accept their work, and many would never return to the CIAFF.

A Committee of new volunteers was formed to administer the CIAFF, but in the first year, the Financial Officer, Arthur (Bunny) Upton passed away. The following year other members left, and while some were replaced, the number quickly declined. Eventually, there were only two of us, Ben and myself. Ben was Director, and I looked after bookkeeping and incidentals. When I had to retire too, Ben soldiered on alone, for many, many years, with only a little help scattered here and there from time to time.

His contributions were so great that the Executive made him only the second person to receive the highest Honour of Honourary Fellow of the

SCCA. Ben didn't rest on his laurels, even then, continuing to perform the job almost single handedly for many years.

However, in the last couple of years, Ben's private life has become tumultuous, with changing jobs, retiring, moving twice (thrice?), etc., and the CIAFF has become a low priority requiring the intervention of others. Now things are settling down for him, but his new business responsibilities will require him to travel very widely and extensively, and Ben has found it necessary to submit his resignation from the position of CIAFF Director. He has, however, accepted an appointment as Eastern Vice President.

Jon Soyka has been picking up much of the slack from Ben, and has gradually taken over most of the day-to-day activities of the CIAFF, as CIAFF Executive Director. Jon has many new ideas for streamlining the CIAFF, reducing expenses, and increasing the number of entries, and has already put many of them into motion, but he has been slowed down in much of this by the need to place everything before the Director for approval. Jon has now been named CIAFF Director, and the Executive Director position has become redundant.

Finally, we are pleased to report that Thom Speechley, who resigned from his dual positions as Secretary and Membership Chairman last summer because of health problems, has recovered from his surgeries to the point where he has accepted a reappointment to the position of Membership Chairman.

The Executive Panel on Page 2 will now reflect that Ben Andrews is Eastern Vice President, Jon Soyka is now CIAFF Director, and Thom Speechley is Membership Chairman again. The position of Secretary is still open.

Saga of VISA and MasterCard

When we left this story last issue, we had asked you not to pay fees by credit card until June. A couple of days later, probably before most of you had received PANORAMA, we received payment (and a donation) from one of our American members, by credit card. I telephoned and told him about this problem and asked him to pay by cheque, which he did.

Then I received a bank statement. Moneris had extracted \$20 as a mini-

Continued on page 22

CLUB NEWS

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



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

It's winter, which brings the festive season - which includes Christmas, New Year and my birthday. There are plenty of opportunities to put my GL2 Canon camcorder to use taping my children and grandchildren. My Canon GL2 has a Memory Card to record still images, but it only has a capacity of 1.7 pixels. With my Canon Digital Rebel EOS 300D still single lens reflex camera I have 6.3 pixels which allows for a much greater latitude, especially with the built in flash.

Christmas Eve is one time when I enjoy taping the celebration with my family. When they arrive I capture the lively "hellos". It's been a while since many of them met. Next comes the food and eating all the pot-luck home-made goodies. Getting close-up shots of the food, showing the many hands picking up the delicate morsels of shrimp, sausage wrapped in blankets of pastry etc. Then come the gifts. (Imagine 20 people unwrapping presents, with an average of 5 per person!) I like medium shots of the children with their gifts, and the remarks coming from them as they see their gift. Gradually come the goodbyes until the next time, which could be in

the spring, when another grandchild will be wed. More opportunity for videotaping! Remember, although tape is cheap, editing in the camera saves a lot of time in the final edit. A last tip -- get plenty of close-ups to show the expressions on their faces!

BRANT VIDEO MAKERS, BRANT CAMCORDER NEWS, edited by Dan Kennaley.

"The December meeting was a lovely Christmas dinner at the Greenwich Restaurant. Dan Kennaley single handedly organized it. Keith Gloster and Randy Hincks were on hand that day to help in setting up. It was well attended.

"The Laurie Ross Award was presented. This award was sponsored by Joan and Joe Bochsler. Laurie worked with Joe as script-writer for Joe's documentary films for Bochsler Studios Ltd. for a number of years. This Award was set-up in his honour. Laurie was Editor of the Brant Camcorder News and was very generous of his time for the Club. We miss him very much.

"Our President, Dan Kennaley, received the award last year, in the form of a briefcase. This year the Award was

presented to Frank Birch, age 92, for his tireless effort for many years in promoting our club. He has advertised, put articles in the newspapers and always has business cards which have club information on them. He often encourages the members to be creative and to look for ways to improve their techniques. The Bochslers presented Frank with a hard cover coffee table book, titled 'THE GRAND RIVER' authored by Carl Hiebert.

"After dinner we viewed one of Laurie's tapes Titled 'Swans and Friends'. Other tapes shown were Alex Szatmary's video titled 'Falling Is Fun' and Joe and Joan Bochsler's Video 'Festival of Lights' taped at Niagara Falls. Joe Bochsler and Vern Johnson were the photographer and videographer respectively for the evening.

"Speaking of the elements that make a good video, the most neglected of all is sound. Any sound is better than no sound at all. If your ambient sound is too loud or not loud enough, or not really relevant to the video, you should replace it with an audio dub or some appropriate background music.

Check your camera for an audio insert setting. If it is there, it is easy to copy over the sound. My Sony TRV315 digital 8 camcorder doesn't have an audio dub feature, which is unfortunate. They put in a video dub feature, which I have never used and probably won't. Too bad they didn't switch. How can it be done then? If you have access to a VCR with the dub feature there is no problem. If not, connect a tape player to a mixer, then the mixer to the VCR. Keep an eye out for a small mixer at a cash converters type of business or check with Radio Shack. I have had good success using a portable CD player direct to the VCR. You can borrow a CD player from one of your Grand kids." *Dan Kennally.*

BUFFALO MOVIE-VIDEO MAKERS, CAMERAMA,
Edited by John Weiksner.
The Good And All The Rest.

"As film and video makers, we all benefit from viewing the work of others, whether that work is good or bad. If that work is good, we gain appreciation for the creativity, techniques used, point of view and camera work. If the film is a success, we learn, even from those with less experience.

"There is however, a special benefit from watching bad film work. Who hasn't watched a bad film on video and said to himself or herself, 'I can do better than that'? It bolsters the old self esteem whether we really can do better or not. We all need meters to measure our own growth and sophistication; where we are in the field, seeing a film with mistakes,

can give you a rush.

"Afterwards we begin thinking about what we would do to fix it. We should support and view each other's work, no matter what level that work is at. That way we grow together. I guess what I'm saying is, IT'S ALL GOOD!"*Buck Burdette*
Low Budget Lighting.

"For those of you who are currently working on your own interviews, public access shows, or planning to film the latest WNY epic, and you have the time to dedicate to lighting your shots, here's something I've done recently for Halloween but could be applied to creating a video.

"If you are including windows in you shots, try using tracing paper or newspaper stock over them. It gives the light a very soft look. You can neatly tape the paper to the windows, or for an edgy look, tear the paper, and even mix different pieces together.

Twin halogen work-lights are becoming less and less expensive these days. You can get them for \$19-30 at Walmart or Big Lots. They provide two 500 watt sources that are very bright and can be turned on independently.

"An alternative for a soft light that you could bounce off a white wall or ceiling, and/or with a little ingenuity, you could make a frame that attaches to the light to support color and diffusion gels. I use some electrical wire and clothespins. (C-20's) Experiment and have fun!" *Phil Utec, President.*

HAMILTON
VIDEO/FILM MAKERS.
REEL NEWS.

Edited by John Taylor.

Feature Article. The HVFM Club Video Library. Reviewed by Joan Bochsler, Club Librarian, of library tape #21:

The remarkable war time documentary, by George Stevens. The Secret War; D-Day to Berlin.

"This is a separate documentary made at the same time as the official one for the BBC. It covers events that occurred from the landing at the 'Juno' Beach by the Allied Expeditionary Force on 6th June 1944. It is one of the most evocative films recorded of World War II. It begins with a beautiful sunset but changes to include the stark reality of the War.

"All the filmmakers were leaders in their own fields before being chosen by General Montgomery and General Bradley for this task. Bill Hamilton took the pictures. As a reality thrust we are reminded that there were fifty thousand troops killed in the first twelve weeks after D Day; while fifteen thousand were wounded.

"The Germans had a quarter million casualties. The Allies used their superior air power to destroy many towns in Europe. More than two thousand bombers kept coming overhead hour after hour for the liberation of towns famous for their medieval buildings, which were flattened. People were also at risk, 800 civilians were killed in one raid. This was repeated over much of Normandy.

"The smell of death still disturbs some people after more than fifty years, even in their dreams. There was another smell; that of sweaty leather.

This was noticed on the 200,000 German soldiers who surrendered. They wore more leather than the Allies.

"The film shows a platoon bridge build about thirty miles from Paris. Then it explained how a Paris Legion was permitted to liberate Paris itself.

"The film showed the streets lined with citizens- mostly women and children - while the Allies are moving into Paris. The German controller wanted to capitulate quickly to save Paris from destruction. A photographer noted 'You didn't know whether you'd get shot or kissed' because of the street-by-street fighting that continued in Paris.

"A bailey bridge upside down became the reviewing stand for the surrender.

"The Allies had to continue the street to street fighting throughout Paris, then moved on to northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands. This was fighting in winter, and the troops had to try to keep warm, while enduring their Christmas away from home. As they entered Germany they found the huge underground factory of Nordhausen, where 200-mile missiles were being developed, and the V2 rockets were sent out at 700 a month.

"Thirteen thousand slave labourers worked underground, who had not seen daylight for a long time, were rescued. They expected about 150 thousand German prisoners, but instead 320 thousand surrendered.

"At the town of Torgas the Allies met up with the Russians in late April.

"One and a half million peo-

ple were repatriated from German POW camps. Germany became a crossroads of Europe with people starting to walk to their own homes on foot.

"The final part of the film covers the death camp at Dachau, and is not for the faint-hearted. Over twelve years, thirty thousand died at the camp."

LONDON VIDEOGRAPHY CLUB.

IT'S A WRAP,

edited by Robert Thorn.

"Jon Soyka took the stage. Jon, as always, is an entertaining presenter. The first half of his presentation was on event videography. 'Location, Location', 'Location' were the words of the night. Not always is it best to be strapped to a tripod as he showed from some of his footage. He gave us all tips on shooting racing events, parades, school concerts and even weddings - all covered in his informative talk.

"After a coffee break, he delved into a truncated teaching session on the Pinnacle Fluid Edition 5.5. For those into video editing it was a good demonstration of the Pinnacle product. He did not really have time to go into all that the system could do, but left us all with the impression that this was a far more reliable system than the Premiere one he had used previously.

"Jon explained the top situations that you would be video taping: 1) Weddings, 2) Sports, 3) School Functions. In all cases your top priority in any one of these situations is 'Position'. For example, when you are shooting a wedding,

always have the bride facing the camera if possible. When shooting an outdoor event try to pick a spot like a corner, where the action might be going around, to maximize as much of the action coming towards you, as well as going away. One thing to consider is try to always have the sun behind you so you get the best lighting possible for the event you are shooting, plus you will get great pictures of their faces, not their shadows.

"When you think you have your best spot, look around and see what is going to be in the background of your shots. Is it a garden, a park, a parking lot, or is it the front yard with a bunch of cars and pick-up trucks rusting away on cinder blocks. Look to see what will enhance your shot, not hinder it.

"When shooting, try to limit the amount of 'sky' you get in your shot. It helps to keep your audience focussed on what you are showing them, unless you are intending to shoot lots of sky for effect. Try to get a great scene or an overview of the city and then pan into your event or area. It's always nice to have a wide city shot if possible.

"Many, many more ideas were explained. Jon is a wealth of knowledge and expertise. We would be happy to have him come back again in the future."

TORONTO FILM AND VIDEO CLUB,

SHOTS AND ANGLES,

edited by Sam Spence.

Raising the Bar. "To create movies that put you 'above the pack' there is a certain mindset

that you have to acquire. First you have to create, that is, to produce an idea that is different from the usual travelogue, or pretty scenery type of production that we have gotten so accustomed to producing.

"Secondly, you have to decide that you are going to produce something different. You are going to break new ground for yourself. You are going to try and produce something in the way of a comedy, or how about a drama, something with lots of suspense that keeps your viewers on the edge of their seats.

"Of course, the above is easier said than done, and maybe, that's why we usually drift back to the regurgitating of the vacation movies. Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against vacation coverage. These are a mini record of our lives for our offspring and believe me, I have my fair share of them. It's just that for other viewers they can be so....what is the word I am searching for? How about 'boring'.

"So how do we get started in producing something with a little more zip, something a bit livelier? How do we put our minds in motion to generate, to start gushing out all the different ideas that will not only lift your movies above the rest, but will also stretch, or challenge your capabilities as a moviemaker.

"Without elaborating on the details, it is necessary to get started. Like everyone else, you will have lots of reasons for postponing the effort to try harder. The reasons may run from, oh, I can't find the pencil sharpener, or, I haven't had my

coffee as yet. Sooner or later you have to face the fact, you either don't want to raise your level or you don't know how.

"So to get in the mood, you have to start. You need to keep a notebook to jot down any ideas that come to mind. At least you will be attempting to do something. The greater the number of ideas you get down on paper, the better your chances of coming up with one that is do-able.

"By do-able, I mean something that is within your means, both physically and financially and you have access to the equipment and location. You will have to resist drifting off into fantasies of movies that you can't achieve.

"You should also set a reasonable time limit. Where your vacation movies may easily drag on for hours, here you are limiting yourself to maybe three minutes maximum. Oh, you can't get your idea across in three minutes you say? Just check any TV commercial and see what they can do in thirty seconds.

"Once you decide on an idea, keep your eyes on the target. That is, don't start working on a different idea in the midst of the first project or you will never finish anything. And of course, if you don't succeed at first, try again. Perseverance is the only way to Raise Your Bar!"

**VANCOUVER VIDEO
PRODUCTION CLUB,
REEL TALK,**
edited by Cathy Caravan.

Setting It Straight by Pat Sheridan, President. "This is the third year that Bryan

Belfont and myself have been using Pinnacle Studio video editing products in our video editing classes. There was the original Studio DV, followed by Studio 7, and then Studio 8. Our students have often been asked if Bryan and I are somehow affiliated with Pinnacle because we only use their products in our courses. We've just laughed at the suggestion as Pinnacle doesn't even know we exist. Well they didn't know we existed until last month...

"At the Pinnacle website, Pinnacle hosts a number of forums for each of their various editing products. I spend a fair amount of time at the Studio 8 forum. Normally its users of Studio 8 who are posting at the site, but last month I noticed a message from a Pinnacle employee, Joe McCloud, who was seeking feedback from people who might be interested in forming a Studio user group in this area. Here's a direct quote from his post. 'If you're a member of an existing Studio User Group, or would like to get one started in your area with a little help from us, please email us at promotions@pinnaclesys.com with the title "Studio User Group" in the subject line.

'We're hoping to find groups out there that exist and get together on a regular basis. (Once every month, once a quarter, twice a year, etc...) Maybe you share tips and tricks that you've learned using Studio. Maybe you hold mini film fests to show off your latest projects. Maybe you go over filming fundamentals. Whatever it is you guys get together and talk about, we want to hear

about it.

'Let us know where your group is located, how many members you currently have, how often you meet, and a link to your user group website (if one exists).'

"I thought, 'why not?', so I sent Joe McCloud a short email describing the Vancouver Video Production Club and also mentioned the video editing classes that Bryan and I teach. I explained that we use Studio 8 exclusively in our classes, and although our video club is made up of members who use a variety of editing programs, we do have many members who currently use Studio 8 to create their videos.

"Ten minutes after I sent my email I received a response from Joe asking for more details. After a few more emails back and forth, I was then asked to participate in a conference phone call with Joe and another Pinnacle employee, Eric, at Pinnacle headquarters in Mountain View, California. The timing of all this was interesting as well because Pinnacle was about to officially announce the release of Studio Version 9. What this has eventually led up to is that Pinnacle is sending Joe and Eric up from California to demonstrate their brand new product, Studio 9, for us.

"I've had a chance to scan over the new features listed for Studio 9. Among the features that catch my eye are:

- Ability to capture, edit, and output widescreen (16:9)
- Image stabilization to steady shaky footage.
- Automatic colour correction to rescue poorly lit or shot

footage.

- Analog cleaning to restore old video tapes.
- Noise reduction to remove wind noise, hiss and camcorder whine from your footage,
- SmartMovie automated editing, just choose a video and a song, the program does the rest.
- Image filters to apply cool looking effects like old time movie, ripples, lens flares and more.
- Audio effects like reverb, normalize, and graphic EQ to let you ""sweeten"" your soundtrack.
- Stereo panning and surround sound panning for professional sounding DVD soundtracks.

Joe McCloud is still looking for people who might wish to start their own Studio user groups, so if you're reading this, outside the Vancouver area give Joe a shout. (The contact info is in the quote from his post earlier in this article.)"

VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB, Edited by Sheila Perkins.

"Pictures Judges See. Festivals today are flooded with a variety of film and video types and styles. Judges have to sit through the bad ones hoping a few good ones will come along.

"Following are descriptions of what festival judges see today, starting with the least worthy efforts:

"The Family Film. These were plentiful in years gone by but, thankfully, they are not as common today. They depicted the family on outings, celebrating birthdays, Christmas, pursuing hobbies and glimpses of other

personal activities. It is rare to see these subjects in the winner's column any more, largely because today's picture maker prefers to try something more creative and challenging.

"The Moving Image Film. This is what the judges have been waiting for, movie making at its best, a story told primarily by its moving images with a minimum of dialog and talk. Fine, but why are so many pictures like the above examples seen on a festival program? Because there are so few really fine pictures made, the judges have to sort out those not as exemplary for the second place and the honourable mentions. Were the awards made only for classic examples of the best in filmmaker's art, few trophies would be given.

"The Filmed Verbal Joke. These are quite common. The filmer hears a funny story and thinks it would be a great movie. But the story is told in dialog, and the climax, the final line, is always spoken. What became of sight gags, the main staple of classic screen comedy? Good film comedies are seen, not heard.

"The Diary Film. Normally it describes a family experience, but of somewhat greater interest to the general audience. The diary film documents a family experience, often a trip to a foreign land, known here as travelogs (Europe calls them tourist films.) When treated as a diary, showing family members in countless scenes and a personal commentary by the maker, these are indeed a diary on film. Such films can make fine documentaries when treated objectively, that is, when the

maker leaves himself and his family entirely out of both the picture and narration. Diary films should never be submitted to a major competition.

"The Interview Film. It is surprising how many of these are submitted to festivals. The worst consist of people looking at the camera, and expressing an opinion, reading a poem, championing a cause, or relating a personal experience. There is no action, nothing moves, and they can in no way be called a motion picture,

"The Illustrated Radio Play. Festivals get a lot of these. A story is being enacted on the screen, but in a "voice over" the narrator tells what the story is, what the actors are doing and even at times, what they are saying. Such efforts could just as well be on radio as the images are no more than illustrations of what the narrator is saying. A good judge spots these films quickly for what they are.

"The Filmed Stage Play. A producer reads a one-act play, likes it, and decides to film it. He often uses one set and all the filming is done on that set. His actors speak their lines and tell the story verbally, exactly as is done on the stage. While the story may come across clearly, it is delivered by the spoken lines of the actors, not by their visual action. If such a picture wins, you may be sure the judges were not on their toes.

"The Copied Stills. This genre was quite common 30 years ago and is occasionally seen today. A filmer 'copies' someone else's photographs, usually from a famous book or album. On the screen, the narrator describes what is being shown.

The maker, having heard movies should move, moves his camera slowly from side to side and uses his zoom lens. The picture as such may move across the screen but the subject in the frame remains static. When these pictures win it is because the judges were swept away with the subject and the story, and not with the production method.

"The Filmed Book. Many a good book makes a good movie, but usually not the way the book was written. In books, the action is described with words. On the screen the action must be shown. Book passages must be transformed into action and not all books offer this possibility. When the story in the book can be told in action, success is close at hand. But a lot of effort has to go into the script to meet this challenge." By George Cushman.

WINNIPEG AMATEUR MOVIEMAKERS.

BULLETIN, edited by Wallace and Jeanette Robertson.

"How about--- 'Dr. Sigurdson's Legacy'?...Would that be an appropriate name to give an ongoing movie project, suggested by our club's late Dr. Sigurdson?

"Dr. Sigurdson was truly an amazing person and one of the most outgoing approachable people I've known. He was always jovial and interested in what you were 'doing'.

"I remember once telling him how impressed I was with both the skills and warmth of one Dr. Isaacs—at the time, probably in his late '50's' who had recently performed the most amazing surgery on me. His

reply 'Oh yes, Dr. Isaacs – He used to be one of my students.' He had taught him well!

"In 1985 Dr. Sigurdson delighted our club with the screening of his Kodachrome movie made on a cruise he and his wife were on – in 1935! The year Kodachrome made its debut. And guess what? The colour was (still) superb – 50 years later! I was truly impressed with the movie he had made and the fact that the film and colour were, 'just like they were shot the other day!' What testimony to both Dr. Sigurdson and the Great Yellow Father of Rochester. Both had performed amazingly well.

"Shortly after that Dr. Sigurdson was musing with our members one evening and came up with a suggestion that we undertake a club project to recognise some of the great things our city has to offer. This was to be accomplished in whatever manner possible, but he suggested that one way – back in the good old days of – (1985), when the word 'security' rarely rose its head—would be to approach building custodians and ask them if they would be willing to participate by detailing some of 'their' building's history for us and possibly take us on a 'camera-tour' of the building and its surroundings – replete with ongoing commentary of course.

"We could then turn this into a work in progress, by planning visits to other noteworthy buildings/sites in our city.

"The project sounded like a great undertaking for our club which would have significant historical value as the years slipped by.

"Well, for many of the same reasons still in existence today the project never got off the ground, and soon after, sadly, Dr. Sigurdson passed away.

Recently, both Don Comstock and John Gauthier came up with some great suggestions for us to create some short videos of historical significance and they have been kind enough to allow Wally Robertson and myself to get involved with them in the making of these short stories. Any member of our club was, and is, welcome to assist in these undertakings and from my point of view, it's very rewarding! Don and John gave flawless performances and the videos are truly enlightening. I'd like to think that 'Dr. Sigurdson's Legacy' has just been born! Wait and see what this baby can do! Here's our opportunity to get in from the start and make this a legacy we'll all be proud of. We need lots of great ideas like John's and Don's, so let's hear from you and get involved with the acting/taping as required.

"There's something for everyone, as the saying goes. Let's not disappoint Dr. Sigurdson! See you all!"

Al Ross, President.

AMATEUR MOVIE MAKERS ASSOCIATION,

AMMA MONITOR, edited by Mark Levy. AMMA Monitor Profile: Harold Cosgrove, by Kate Karlson.

"While Harold Cosgrove of Niagara Falls, ON Canada is equally passionate about movie making and motorcycle racing, his competitive success in one is far greater than the other.

" 'I won only one race, and I fell off the motorcycle in the middle of the race and remounted!' said the 70 year old Cosgrove. The Lancashire, UK native, who moved to Canada in the late '50's, has a much better track record with his movie making, winning nearly 90 awards from competition in the USA, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand, Japan and Great Britain over the past 40 years.

" 'My enthusiasm is divided between motorcycle racing and movie making,' said Cosgrove, who studied the sport and then raced on the Isle of Man, located between Wales [sic. Northern Ireland Ed.] and England, between 1962 and 1973. He routinely returns there to watch racing, as well as visiting American motorcycle racing venues.

"A mechanical engineering draftsman by training, in the early 1970's Cosgrove started selling by mail order the specialized movie equipment amateurs needed but couldn't find locally. 'It was a sideline that grew into a business,' he said.

"The onslaught of video a decade later caused Cosgrove to lose 90 percent of his business within two years, forcing him in a new direction. For the past 25 years, his home-based business has provided video services to the Niagara peninsula. These include editing, some industrial video making, and transfer of home movies, slides and photographs to video.

"Cosgrove's initial interest in photography led him to movie making. He has made over 100 movies, much of it based on

footage shot on holidays in the US, Canada and overseas.

" 'I do mostly travelogues of things I find interesting, as well as some story films,' Cosgrove said. 'I never stop shooting - I have enough footage to last the rest of my life.'

" 'For me, the most important part of a film is editing - that's where the film is made,' he explained. 'Amateurs are in love with their own footage, and are reluctant to leave stuff out, which makes their movies boring. Professionals don't edit their own footage and the best filmmakers, like Spielberg, were editors.'

"Another amateur failing comes in equipment choice.

" 'People tend to buy equipment they don't need. No one is more interested in technology - I've got to have the latest gadget, but once I start filming, all I'm interested in is what I see in the viewfinder,' Cosgrove said.

"For example, his preferred computer program for film editing is the free program that came with his Macintosh, and he has won awards for films edited this way.

"Cosgrove keeps a keen eye on the technology horizon, and predicts the recording medium of DVD will change movie making within the decade. Solid-state memory, as found in a new model of Panasonic camcorder with no moving parts, is another up-and-comer.

" 'The picture quality of amateur video is closer to professional than ever before,' he explains. 'Digital video is great because it allows Amateurs' films to go down three or four generations and still hold the

quality.'

"Unlike motorcycle racing, which has an obvious winner, Cosgrove acknowledges the subjective nature of movie awards. He has had the same film take the best in one competition, and not place in another.

" 'I don't make films to win awards, I make them to show people and my family.' Cosgrove said.

" 'Motorcycle and movie making are the same: once you start, you can't stop,' he added."

I.A.C THE FILM AND VIDEO INSTITUTE,

FILM AND VIDEO MAKER,
edited by Garth Hope, LACI.

Community TV-your choice for fame! Ina Morris LACI looks at the Community Channel's new slot, "Here's the Story"

"I recently worked with Paul Neuberg, an experienced British television producer who is now in charge of a new slot at the Community Channel, and who worked with me two years ago on a project that resulted in a multimedia community presentation to an audience of 200 in North London.

"The Community Channel, which goes out SKY, BBC, Digital and NTL, and is funded by the Media Trust to broadcast a mix of programmes that aim to help enable people make more of their lives, is now launching a new slot called 'Here's the Story.'

"In a recent conversation with Paul, he described 'Here's the Story', and I thought it might appeal to some enterprising members of the IAC –

who, after all, would not like to see their work appear on TV?

" 'Here's the Story' is where you get a chance to tell your story in a video you've made. It's the spot where the community talks to the community.

"Click on <http://www.raindance.co.uk> will introduce to a world of online resources about film making and storytelling. But first here are some of our tips you should read before committing yourself to tape:

"What sort of thing could it be?"

"It could be the story of one person or a group. It could be the story of someone struggling back into a world they knew, or the story of somebody searching for their roots, in Britain or in another country. It could be about people in a situation crying out for something to be done about it. It could be of a story of a group getting together to help each other cope, or the story of a community putting on a party. It could be any story you might have about something that made a difference to somebody's life. Perhaps the story could make the difference to the lives of people who see it. It could be funny, or moving, or both, or just good to watch.

"Will it make a story?"

"A story is a tale of anything that's happened or is going on now. So the first thing to decide is whether what you want to tell people is simply an interesting fact - which could make a news report. - or, how it came about, which would make a story.

"Does it have a narrative?"

"The best stories all have a driving narrative - something

that interests people at the start, keeps them involved as it develops, and has a sense of being resolved at the end.

"Do I need a hero?"

"It's a great advantage to have a clear hero or a clear set of heroes in a story, though they don't in any way have to be heroic characters - they can be anybody. People are much more likely to stay with a story told through the experience of a well-identified person or group, with everybody else involved as part of that experience.

"Can you help other people tell their stories on the screen?"

"If you are a media professional who would like help to support community film makers living in your part of the UK we'd love to hear from you too. We'd like to build a network of mentors who can help people with projects.

"Concerning payment, the Community Channel has a blanket license that will take care of the broadcast rights, but the movie-maker will have to have cleared the so-called T2 rights, which are for inclusion of a piece of music in a work for UK satellite and cable use.

"In summary, I think the guidelines above not only will help you decide if you may have an idea for, 'Here's the Story', but could well be useful for any 'people interest' documentary you are planning for the future.

"I hope this opportunity sparks some interest in colleagues in the IAC – and if you are successful, do let me know!" ■

WHAT'S *New* IN VIDEO EDITING?

By Bryan Belfont



Let us look at the Hardware and Software choices for Video Editing on a computer. This information (as of January 2004) is directed at people who have a PC. I suggest the following configuration:

COMPUTER

Intel Pentium or AMD Athlon 500 MHz
128 MB RAM (256 MB recommended)
Windows 98SE, Millennium, 2000, (XP recommended)
DirectDraw compatible sound and graphics card
Video Card (ATI) Radeon 7000LE 64 MB with TV out
Mouse
CD ROM Drive
Boot hard drive 20 Gigabytes (40 GB recommended)
Video Hard Drive 40 GB (120 GB recommended)
1394/Firewire board for capture from DV / D8 camcorders
CD-RW drive for burning Video CDs
DVD-R/RW or DVD+R/RW for burning DVDs and CDs
17" Monitor

HARDWARE

I have listed the **hard drives** currently available. You must have a second hard drive to capture your video. Be aware that it takes 12 GB to capture just one hour of DV video. If you intend to burn your video to DVD, you will have to render it to MPEG2 and if you want to work on more than one project at a time, you can double that number. So, get the most Gigabytes that you can afford. I would recommend 120 GB.

I have listed all of the **DVD burners** and optional hardware on the following page. I personally recommend the **Sony** burner. Whichever burner you choose, I strongly recommend one of the "Multi" burners which will burn and playback DVD "Plus" and DVD "Minus". Note that the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturers) prices are available from companies that build PCs (for example, Netlink at www.ncix.com)

If you already have a CD burner, keep it as it will burn CDs much faster than your DVD burner and it won't wear out your DVD burner as fast.

There is still a big difference in the price of **CRT Monitors** versus **LCD Monitors**. Keep your CRT for a little longer as the prices of LCDs are coming down every time I check them out.

SOFTWARE

My first choice for **video editing software** is the inexpensive and intuitive video editing program from **Pinnacle Studio DV Version 8**. This program is readily available at \$99. This program will capture your digital video; edit; add music, titles, sound effects, transitions, and stills; and if you want to burn to DVD, it will add Menus and Chapters. Pinnacle Studio DV will burn VCDs, S-VCDs, or DVDs.

Based on my experience with **burning DVDs**, I also recommend **Nero Express 6.0**. This is my choice for a CD and DVD burning program. A "Lite" version comes bundled with most CD burners. Nero is faster and in my experience the finished DVD is more compatible with DVD players.

For **Storage Media**, I use Memorex or Maxell "DVD Plus" DVDs and find them to be more compatible with my older DVD players. But you should try out various storage media on your own burner and player to see which ones work best for you.

VIDEO CAPTURE CARDS

If you are just starting out, you will need hardware and software to set up your PC. I recommend the Studio DV Version 8 package that comes complete with 1394 "Firewire" card and firewire cable to connect your camcorder to your PC, and the software to edit your video into a professional-looking project.

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

HARDWARE BUYER'S GUIDE - JANUARY 2004

OEM	FEATURES	SPECIFICATIONS	PRICE
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HARDDRIVES

Maxtor / Western Digital	40 GB	IDE Harddrive 7200 rpm	\$ 75
	80 GB	"	85
	120 GB	"	125
	200 GB	"	225

CD Burners

LG (Goldstar)	CD-RW	52x 32x 52	50
Sony	CD-RW	52x 24x 52	50

DVD "Plus" Burners

HP DVD-300i	DVD+R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	DVD+R 4x DVD+RW 2.4x	250 OEM
HP DVD-300e	DVD+R/RW, CD-R/RW External 4.7 GB	DVD-ROM 8x CD- 16x 10x 40x	600

DVD "Minus" Burners

Toshiba SD-R5112	DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	DVD-R 4x DVD-RW 2x	160 OEM
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DVD "Dual" Burners

NEC ND-1300	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	DVD+R 4x DVD+RW 2.4x (4x)	160 OEM
Pioneer DVR-A06	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	DVD-R 4x DVD-RW 2x	160 OEM
Plextor PX-504	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	DVD-ROM 12x CD-R 24x	160 OEM
Sony DRU-510A	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW Internal 4.7 GB	CD-RW 16x CD-ROM 32x	180 OEM
Sony DRX-510UL	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW External 4.7 GB		500

DVD "Multi" Burners

LG GSA-4040	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/RW DVD-RAM Internal 4.7 GB	DVD+R 4x / DVD+RW 2.4x (4x) DVD-R 4x / DVD-RW 2x DVD-RAM 1x	150 OEM
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DVD - RAM Burners

Panasonic LF-D201	DVD-RAM / DVD-R Internal 4.7 GB	DVD-RAM 1x DVD-R 2x	800
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MONITORS - CRT

ViewSonic	17" Flat Screen E70F	1280 x 1024	200
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MONITORS - LCD

ViewSonic	15" LCD VE155	1024 x 768	65 Hz Refresh	400
	17" LCD VE170	1280 x 1024	60 Hz Refresh	600

SOFTWARE BUYERS' GUIDE - JANUARY 2004

OEM	PROGRAM	FEATURES	PRICE
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SOFTWARE

Adobe	Premiere 6.0	Pro Video Editing Program for PCs	999
Apple	Final Cut Pro 4.0	Pro Video Editing Program for Macintosh	1,499
Nero	Express 5.0	Burns Video CD and S-Video CD	89
	Express 6.0	Burns CDs and DVDs	99
Pinnacle	Studio Version 8	Video Editing Program	99
	Hollywood FX - Plus	288 3-D Transitions	49
	Expression	Authoring Program to burn VCD, DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW	49
Roxio	Videowave Movie Creator	Analog or Digital	59
	Easy CD and DVD Creator 6.0	Rip and burn CDs and DVDs	99
ULead	Video Studio 7.0	Video Editing Program for PCs	US \$99
	Media Studio Pro 7.0	Pro Video Editing Program for PCs	US \$495
	DVD movie Factory	Burns CDs and DVDs	US \$49

FORMAT	OEM	FEATURES	PRICE
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STORAGE MEDIA

CD-R	Memorex	80 mins	24x	700 MB	\$1.00
CD-RW	"	80 mins	12x	700 MB	2.00
DVD-R	Maxell (5" diameter)	120 mins	4x	4.7 GB	3.00
DVD-RW	"	120 mins	2x	4.7 GB	5.00
DVD+R	"	120 mins	4x	4.7 GB	3.00
DVD+RW	"	120 mins	2.4x / 4x	4.7 GB	5.00
DVD-RAM	"	120 mins	1x	4.7 GB	20.00
DVD-RAM	"	240 mins	1x	9.4 GB	30.00
DVD-R	Panasonic (3" diameter)	30 mins		1.4 GB	20.00
DVD-RAM	"	60 mins	1x	2.8 GB	50.00

NOTE:

There are two competing DVD formats: DVD -(minus) and DVD +(plus). Listed below are the manufacturers who support each format.

DVD Alliance

DVD+ (plus) Compaq, Dell, HP, Mitsushita, Philips, Ricoh, Sony, Thomson, Verbatim, Yamaha.

DVD Forum

DVD- (minus) Hitachi, Panasonic, Pioneer, Sharp, Toshiba.

VIDEO CAPTURE CARDS BUYER'S GUIDE - JANUARY 2004

HARDWARE

SOFTWARE

ANALOG

PINNACLE	STUDIO AV - Version 8	\$169
Composite and S-Video inputs & outputs	Output to tape VCD / S-VCD / DVD Video Capture 640 x 480	

DIGITAL

ADS	PYRO Basic DV	\$ 79
OHCI compliant 1394 Video Capture Board Firewire cable	Ulead VideoStudio 6.0 SE	
ADS	PYRO 1394 DV	\$129
OHCI compliant 1394 Video Capture Board Firewire cable	Ulead VideoStudio 6.0 SE Ulead DVD Movie Factory SE	

DAZZLE	DV EDITOR SE	\$99
OHCI compliant 1394 Video Capture Board	Dazzle MovieStar 5.0 SE	
ADS	DV EDITOR for PCs	\$119
OHCI compliant 1394 Video Capture Board	Dazzle MovieStar 5.0	

PINNACLE	STUDIO DV - VERSION 8	\$169
OHCI compliant 1394 Video Capture Board	VCD / SVCD / DVD Authoring	
Firewire Cable	Video Capture 720 x 480	

ANALOG - DIGITAL

DAZZLE	HOLLYWOOD DV BRIDGE	\$399
Analog/DV external Breakout Box with Composite / S-Video / Firewire inputs / outputs Firewire cable	Dazzle MovieStar 5.0 Dazzle on DVD	
PINNACLE	STUDIO DELUXE-8	\$329
Analog/DV external Breakout Box with Composite / S-Video / Firewire inputs / outputs Firewire cable	Studio DV Version 8.0	

USB

ADS	USB Turbo 2.0	\$49
Upgrades USB 1.1 to USB 2.0 ports		

Note: Pinnacle has purchased Dazzle as of July 2003

ALIVE AND WELL SERIES

Super-Duper 8

by Rick Palidwor

Article written for the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) Newsletter, Sept/Oct 2002



When you insist on shooting film instead of tape but you don't have any money, super 8 is the natural choice. If you want to make it wide-screen, super-duper 8 is the way to go.



Mitch Perkins and I recently completed a feature-length drama, *Sleep Always*, which to our knowledge is the first feature to originate in the super-duper 8 format. (We'd previously made several music videos with this format).

WHAT'S IN A SUPER (DUPER) NAME?

(a selective history of film formats)¹

In 1932 8mm motion picture cameras were introduced. These cameras use special 16mm film with twice the number of sprocket holes and expose only one-half of the film at a time. Once processed, the film is slit into two 8mm strips. This format is often referred to as Double 8mm.

In 1965 Kodak introduced the super 8 format: 8mm film packaged as a single strip with smaller (and repositioned) sprocket holes, allowing it to record an image 50% larger than regular 8mm.² This was the third time the word 'super' was used to describe a film format.³ (See Figure 1 for a comparison of typical 8mm formats.)

'Super' was used again in 1970, this time to describe a wider than normal 16mm frame. Super 16 achieved a 20% wider frame by growing in the opposite direction - toward the edge normally occupied by a second set of perfs or, in some cases, by the sound stripe. (See Figure 1 for a comparison of 16mm formats.)

In the mid-1980's, Greg Miller (one of the original owner/operators of Exclusive Film and Video, the Toronto super 8 lab) and Mitch Perkins (the film processor at the time) made an astute observation. Super 8 film - despite the "super" moniker - still had room to grow. One entire edge of the super 8 film strip was reserved for the sound stripe but could easily be turned into additional image area, as was the case with super 16. All they had to do was widen the gates on their super 8 cameras.

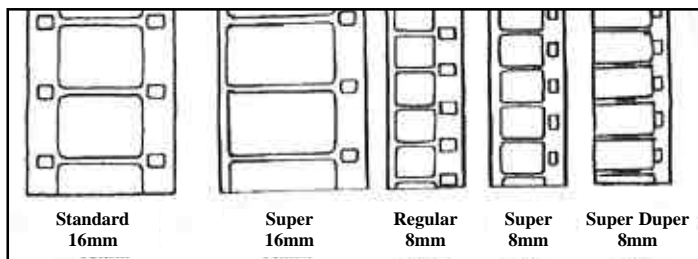
The technique was (and is) simple: remove the gate from the camera (provided it's held in with screws, not rivets), file down the left-hand edge, re-install. Mitch claims that they had never heard of Super 16 at the time, which is not hard to believe. Although it had been introduced to the market much earlier, Super 16 was not recognized by the International Standards Organization until 1981 and was slow to catch on in North America.

I'll never forget Mitch telling me, back in the mid-late

1980's, that he'd "shaved his gate". I scrunched my brow and shrugged. I was not involved in film at that time and had no idea what he was talking about. Little did I know that the revolution had begun.

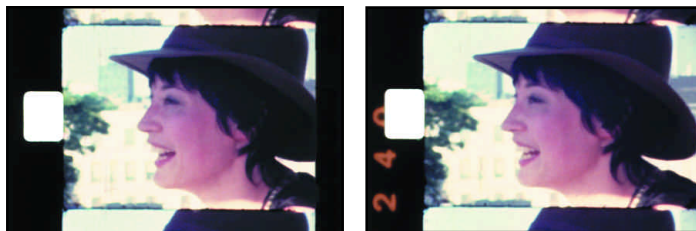
Over the years Mitch continued to experiment with his camera gates, carving them wider and wider by small increments, expecting the running film to buckle at some point during transport. To his surprise it didn't, probably because it is so small, allowing the film to be exposed from the perfs all the way to the opposite edge, recording an image 13% wider than normal super 8. Thus, super-duper 8 was born.⁴ (See Figures 1 and 2)

Figure 1 - A Comparison of 16mm and 8mm Film Formats



You will notice that the super 8 frame above does not extend all the way to the perforations. Most cameras in fact expose the emulsion up to the perforations but most projectors mask this tighter and you end up with something like the frame shown here. The Super-duper 8 frame shown above extends all the way to the perforations because in the Mitch Perkins custom super-duper 8 telecine this part of the frame actually makes it onto the screen.

Figure 2 - Frame grabs from *Sleep Always*.



The picture at right shows the full super-duper 8 frame. The picture at left shows the same image as if it were shot with a standard super 8 camera. Notice how the picture at right has extra emulsion exposed on the right-hand end: this is the super-duper 8 part of the frame. The black line inside the frames illustrates the approximate size of the final screen image after projector masking: notice how the Mitch Perkins super-duper transfer uses more of the frame by eliminating unnecessary masking. (Photo shows Laurie Maher as Nada.)

HAZARDS OF SHOOTING SUPER-DUPER 8

There are several "flaws" with the super-duper 8 system, but they are either insignificant or easily overcome.

Technically the system is slightly off-centre, but because it's such a small gauge it does not appear "off" to the eye and no

realignment is necessary.⁵

Second, the camera was not designed to "see" the wider frame. (The extra 13% is on the right-hand side when looking in the viewfinder.) Therefore, you have to compose the shots with this unseen area in mind.

Also, some camera lenses are subject to vignetting on the right-hand side. This may restrict lens settings, whereby you have to avoid focusing too close or going too far to the end of the zoom ring.

APPLICATIONS OF SUPER-DUPER 8

The benefits of super-duper 8, which are precisely the same as with super 16, are only realized in projection, which can take many forms.⁶

Film Blow-up to 35mm

Regular super 8 has an aspect ratio (frame width divided by frame height) of 1.33:1 (as does regular 16mm). If a 1.33 frame is blown-up for 35mm release, which typically has an aspect ratio of 1.85:1, a significant portion of the frame is lost due to cropping. A super-duper 8 frame, on the other hand, has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 (as does super 16) and is cropped significantly less when blown-up.⁷

The super-duper 8 (or super 16) frame also requires less magnification to fill a 1.85 frame (compared to their regular counterparts), thus resulting in less image degradation during blow-up.

Transfer to Widescreen TV

The emerging standard for widescreen television is 16:9, which can also be expressed as 1.78:1. As with film blow-ups, super-duper 8 (and super 16) require less cropping to fill a widescreen TV frame.

Letterbox Transfer to Regular TV

A regular TV screen has an aspect ratio of 4:3 (or 1.33:1). A widescreen image must be letterboxed when transferred to a 4:3 screen, otherwise the left- and/or right-hand edges would be cropped.⁸ In a letterbox transfer the image must be shrunk (or, more accurately, enlarged less, as with the blow-up scenario) during the transfer. As a result, grain is tighter and the image noticeably sharper.

Sleep Always was transferred to a 4:3 screen, letterboxed, as described above. Mitch made the necessary modification to his super 8 projector in the same way he modified his cameras: remove the projector gate, file down the left-hand edge, re-install.

Importantly, Mitch carved the projector gate more than strictly necessary. Since most projector gates are slightly smaller than camera gates, the outer edges of the frame, especially on the perf side, never make it to the screen in a normal telecine set-up. By carving his projector gate as much as possible Mitch ensures that no part of the image is unnecessarily lost in the transfer. In fact, the super-duper 8 frame, once transferred to tape, is about 30% wider than a normal super 8 frame.

Since Mitch had carved out his projector gate on all sides, the "raw" transferred image displayed a sliver of the adjacent frames at the top and bottom of the screen. (See Figure 3 for a sample of a "raw" super-duper 8 frame after transfer.) All the *Sleep Always* footage was transferred in this raw form the first time around and a 1.85:1 matte was applied digitally in the edit suite. The digital mask was too sharp for our tastes - it looked like a video effect - and although the rendering time wasn't ridiculous, it was a nuisance every time you wanted to

make a trim.

Months later we re-transferred the footage and this time Mitch devised a physical 1.85 matte which was placed in the image path. The result is a softer letterbox edge, and there was no need for rendering.

FINAL WORD

We think that super-duper 8 could be the way of the future for low budget shoots that want to originate on film. The modifications are relatively simple and the resulting images are significantly better than regular super 8. ■

Figure 3 - A frame grab from *Sleep Always* prior to 1.85 masking.



Slivers of the adjacent frames are visible along the top and bottom edges. (Photo shows Ed Fielding as The Neighbour).

Footnotes

1 The following discussion of film formats touches on a few historical points as they relate to super-duper 8. The history of film formats is much more complex - there have been nearly 100 different formats since Edison introduced his Kinetoscope in 1894. An excellent history by Michael Rogge, "More than 100 years of films sizes", can be found at www.xs4all.nl/~wichm/filmsize. See also www.film-center.com/fformats for an informative table of film formats in history by Mark Baldock. Unless otherwise stated, the technical data sighted here was lifted from these two sources.

2 Super 8 was revolutionary for a number of reasons. Visit <http://www.kodak.com/US/en/motion/super8/> for more information.

3 Super Technirama was introduced in 1958 and Super Panavision in 1959. Neither is in use today. For details go to www.film-center.com/fformats.

4 Interestingly, Michael Rogge claims that "there are suggestions to enlarge the image size [of super 16] even further by introducing vertical perforations similar to those used in super 8mm." If they're stuck for a name we'll suggest "super-duper 16".

5 In a 16mm environment modifications to the camera were necessary for the conversion to super 16. Visit <http://www.factsaboutfilm.com/abelparts/S16Guide/s16guideframeset.html> for more information.

6 Both super 16 and super-duper 8 sacrifice the sound stripe area of the film. In the applications outlined here, however, the sound stripe area would never be used anyway, so it's really no sacrifice at all.

7 A super 16 blow-up increases the useable image area by 46%, compared to standard 16 when blown-up. See <http://www.factsaboutfilm.com/abelparts/S16Guide/s16guideframeset.html> for more details. A super-duper 8 blow-up would probably result in similar increases in usable image area compared to standard super 8.

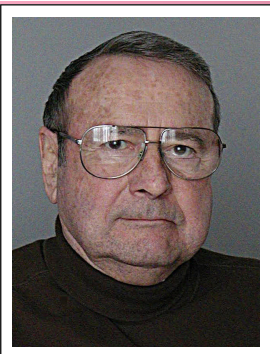
8 The alternative to a letterbox transfer is a "pan and scan", whereby a cropped image fills the entire screen and (in theory) the transferred image is recomposed (panned and scanned) when important details happen off screen (in the cropped part). It's rarely done well and is a poor substitute for showing the entire wide-screen image. Call TV stations to complain when this happens. I once saw an extreme close-up of the bridge of Bill Pullman's nose on Showcase.

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16:9 - Is It Worth Trying?

By Thom Speechley

The screen ratio of 16:9, or more properly 1.78:1, is the format adopted for high definition TV that is a part of the switch to "digital television", (DTV) which will be the only type of TV broadcast by the year 2006. (But don't

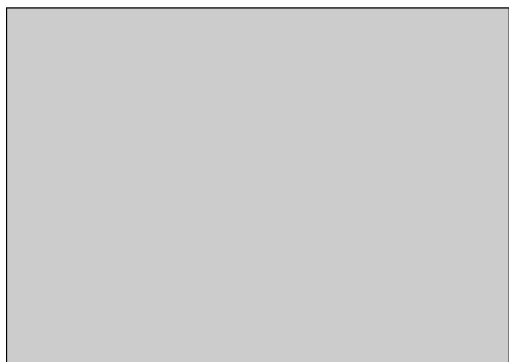
hold your breath! There are still many issues to sort out.). Digital TV and High Definition are already available by way of cable and satellite but only one Canadian station is actually broadcasting HDTV "over the air" at this time.

If you have purchased a new camcorder in the past few years, you will have noticed that you now have the capability to shoot in 16:9 wide screen format. Perhaps you have tried it out. If so, you may have also discovered that your playback system, that is, your TV set, cannot display that format properly. Many new TV sets will display 16:9 and more and more sets are actually configured to those dimensions. Wide screen is here, so you might begin to consider how to use it when you eventually buy a new TV or projection system. If you

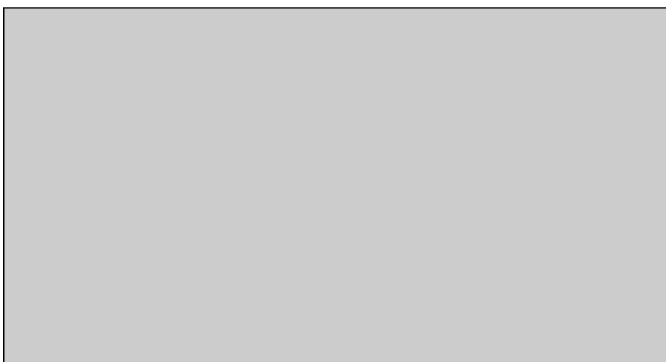
already own a "wide screen" capable TV or projector and have that feature on your camcorder, I encourage you to give it a try.

So what is 16:9?

First, a brief explanation of how 16:9 differs from regular format. The traditional TV/Video format is 4:3, or 1.33:1, which is a carry over from the very beginning of movie film. It means that the width of the picture is 133% greater than its height. 16:9, or 1.78:1 is therefore 178% wider than it is high. This is close to the lower end of the many wide screen formats that have evolved since the 1950's. Most commercial films are now shot in the popular 1.85:1 format. Those films will require less manipulation to make them fit the new HDTV standard. Most new commercial DVD's and DVD reissues of older films are marked "Enhanced for 16:9" or "16:9 Screen Format". This reaffirms that this is the new standard. By the way, this is not new to amateur film. In the 60's and 70's there were several active groups shooting Super 8mm film using anamorphic lenses.



4:3 version



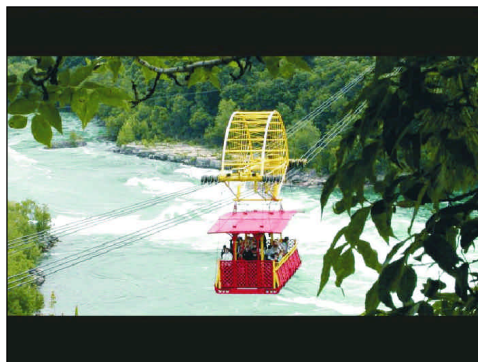
16:9 format

Several years ago, some Hi8 camcorders had a feature that simulated 16:9. This was accomplished simply by creating black bars at the top and bottom of the picture to produce a "letterboxed" effect. The problem with this technique was that you actually lost the use of about 25% of the pix-

els on the CCD, resulting in a significant compromise in picture quality. Putting it in "editing" perspective, instead of a potential capture resolution of 640x480 (typical for Hi8) you got a resolution of only 640x405.



4:3 version



letterboxed version

The Digital way

With newer digital cameras there are presently two ways to produce a wide screen picture. Professional and high-end consumer cameras produce a true 16:9 image. With those cameras having 1/3 inch CCD's, the camera actually formats the imaging device for those dimensions. In this way the maximum available pixels are used.

The second method employs a kind of electronic "anamorphic" effect. This simulates the optical "squeezing" of the picture which is the method used to produce "Cinemascope" and "Panavision".

However there is some sacrifice in quality because of this electronic trickery. What the camera does is remove the areas

represented by the black bars as seen in the above picture, and then stretches the picture vertically to fill those spaces. The advantage is that it uses all of the available pixels and keeps all of the picture information you see in the viewfinder. The loss comes when the TV set or projector "unsqueezes" the picture to restore the proper perspective and create the 16:9 screen ratio. It is not clear if all manufacturers use the same algorithm to achieve this effect (although I'm sure there is a common patent on it!) but if you are investigating a camera for this purpose, it may be wise to research this carefully. Naturally, lens quality and CCD size will still have the greatest influence on the results.



**Anamorphically processed 4:3,
as displayed on a "normal" TV**



**Displayed "unsqueezed" on a
"normal" TV with 16:9 capability**

A TV set with a display in the actual 16:9 format will remove the black bars and fill the entire screen.



A TV set with true 16:9 display will look like this

Most camcorders show the 4:3 view in their viewfinders. This can be a little disconcerting but you do learn to concentrate primary subjects in the central area. In any case, the final picture sees everything you saw in the viewfinder. My Sony TRV210 Digital 8 actually displays the 16:9 view on the LCD screen and the 4:3 view if using the regular (B/W) viewfinder.

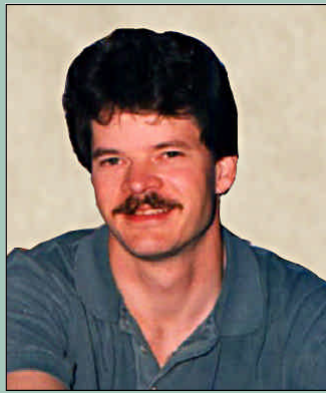
But what about quality?

I became interested in wide screen when I discovered that my "In Focus X1" DPS projector could handle the 16:9 format. Looking for some guidance on the internet revealed that most reviewers feel that the quality of the anamorphic method was

Continued on page 23

The Video Club Challenge: Building Membership

by Greg Caravan



One of the biggest challenges facing many amateur video clubs today is building membership.

The club I belong to, the Vancouver Video Production Club, was formed in 1952 as the Vancouver Home Movie Club. We reached our peak membership in the 1970's at the height of the popularity of Super 8 film, when we exceeded 100 members.

But by the early 1980's membership had declined drastically, mainly due to the increasing cost (and falling popularity) of film, and prior to the advent of consumer video. Our low point was reached in 1983, when we had only 17 members.

This changed in the mid-1980's with the onset of video, and continued into the 1990's as video increased in popularity and quality, while at the same time editing solutions became cheaper and easier to use. As a result, over the past 20 years our membership has slowly climbed to today's level of 55, and our numbers continue to increase by 2-3 members a year.

I would like to throw out a few thoughts on how our club was able to grow its membership over the years, and hopefully other clubs might find them useful...or you might wish to share some of your own ideas in a future issue of Panorama.

1. Cultivate a relationship with Video Instructors.

This has been the #1 reason for our growth over the past 15 years. We are fortunate enough to have as active members two individuals who jointly teach Night School courses on camcorders and video editing through the local School Board. Every month we provide them with 20-25 copies of our

Club newsletter to hand out free to their students, and every month 2 or 3 of them will come to our meeting to see what we are about. Typically, at least 1 student will join the club each month. The relationship works both ways, since many of our members also attend their courses, so it's a win-win situation.

2. Make monthly meetings informative and entertaining.

Of course, getting new faces at the meeting is only half the battle; we also need them to enjoy the meeting, learn something, and sign up. So the meetings have to be both informative and entertaining. A few pointers:

Avoid spending too much time on dry topics like administrative issues and competition rules. Cover those off in separate Executive Meetings.

Always have a variety of topics, e.g. competitions, guest speakers, product demonstrations, Q&A panels of technical experts, and different types of videos.

Avoid showing videos that are more than 30 minutes in length. Unless it is an exceptional production, most members don't want to spend the whole evening watching one production - they want variety.

Conversely, always show at least 30 minutes of videos in an evening - preferably several different, short videos from a mix of genres. It's better to show six 5-minute videos of different types than to show one 30-minute travelogue.

3. Survey the membership periodically.

Once every 2 years is probably appropriate. Make sure your pro-

grams are what the membership wants to see - otherwise they won't come back. This is important for clubs like ours, where technology changes so fast that we need to make sure we are staying in tune with what the members want. If 90% of your members edit their videos with a computer, you probably don't want too many demonstrations of analog equipment!

4. Have a Club website.

Since we started our own club website, we are getting more and more guests arriving at our meetings who otherwise would never have heard of us. A website (which is basically free) is a lot more cost-effective than putting ads in the newspaper.

5. Plan Social Events.

For example, an annual summer picnic (especially if you don't meet during the summer) and a Christmas dinner. We also have 20-minute coffee break mid-way through our monthly meetings to allow people to socialize and network.

6. Take advantage of your club's resources.

One thing our guests are often impressed with is the range of various talents in our club (from video instructors to independent filmmakers to computer experts...you name it). If we want to have a guest speaker, it often isn't necessary to find someone outside the club, because we already have so many interesting and talented members that we can draw from to talk on a number of different topics.

7. Have a separate Workshop group.

Since we typically have 35-40 people at a general meeting, hands-on video production is not very practical. Instead we have a Workshop group that has its own monthly meetings, organized by a Workshop Chair. This serves those members who want hands-on experience and working on a group project.

Continued on page 23

HOT LINKS

By Fred Briggs

HomeBuiltStabilizers

The Ultimate in HomeBuiltStabilizers

The S-C-C-A.ca web site has a great collection of links, currently standing at 1,835! That's an awesome number of links, and utilizing those links could be just as awesome. Fortunately, they are arranged (rather loosely sometimes, because of the difficulty in pigeonholing everything accurately) under a large number of categories, to help you quickly find what you want. There are also subcategories, and in a few cases sub-subcategories. While the classifications are constantly under revision, they are already much easier to use than a search engine like Google or Yahoo.

Suppose you wanted to get some information on video editing. Maybe you want to investigate which software you should buy, so you type "video editing" into Google. Just now that search returned 4,760,000 results (in just 0.14 seconds)! It's going to take much longer than that to see them all!

Fortunately, the first one up today was "video editing resource center, nonlinear editing, post production, DV editing and nle software news and tutorials." That's pretty good, and may be all you need. But if not, the second link returned was "... has entered into a Definitive Agreement to acquire Visual Circuits Corporation, a leading manufacturer of networked digital video systems, based in Minneapolis ...", probably not what you are looking for! And the third? "... iMovie is a free digital video editing program that comes bundled with every new Apple computer. ..." Well that's great if you have an Apple computer, but if you do, you probably knew that already. And if you don't, do you care? Probably not. There seems to be more chaff than wheat turned up in this typical search, and most people never look past the first page of the 4,760,000 results.

On the other hand, the SCCA Links page has collected together 21 Links under the Category *Editing Software and Hardware*. Immediately below are 17 more links under the subcategory *Editing Software* (as opposed to systems which are sold with hardware.) Here you will find some programs that I expect you have never heard of before. Dropping down you'll find some of the more popular products, the Big Name Brands. Start surfing through these links and Google doesn't seem so good anymore!

Further down the list, under *Mounts, Support and Stabilizers* you'll find 26 links to companies who make tripods, Steadicams, Glidecams, jibs, cranes, etc., most of which very, very, few of us could afford to rent, let alone buy. Then why are they there? As a source of information, a chance to study the tools of the big boys, see how they work, and try to figure out the principles behind all the high priced high tech! And to show you how much you could save designing your own do-it-yourself rig!

As a subcategory you'll see *DIY Stabilizers*, with only 2 links. And one link isn't working anymore! (It appears that that link was put up on a college or university computer, and the student has probably left school, and lost his web page. This highlights a problem with a huge Link List like this one: new web sites come along daily, and some die every day. Removal from this list isn't as easy as deleting a web site from your bookmarks. For even a single addition or deletion, the entire database has to be uploaded to our server by FTP, so it isn't done lightly. After all, the site might work tomorrow! Nevertheless, I would really appreciate a notice by email if you find any dead links. I can't monitor them all, you know!)

Whoever ran that \$14 Steady Cam

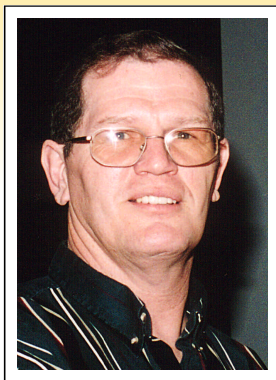
Page has probably seen that it is more useful to everyone interested to have his Steady Cam design incorporated into the other site listed under *DIY Stabilizers*.

Home Built Stabilizers, to quote the webmaster, is "A fantastic collection of DIY Full Rig and Hand-held Stabilizers, Dollies, Cranes, and various gadgets ranging from a Matte Box and Barn Door Sun Shade to a Remote Controlled Airship and a Gyro Head!"

There are currently 35 "full rigs" which are attached to the body. All are different, all built by a different hobbyist, and all with close-up photographs of all the parts. Many even have detailed written instructions for you to follow. There are also 39 Hand Held Stabilizers, 22 Dollies, 17 home built Jibs or Cranes, and 7 other accessories or devices, from a home made matte box and a chest pod, to a Gyro Head (sorry, only one picture and no plans here), and a remote controlled camera platform dirigible! And that's not all - 14 of the builders have supplied video clips that show their rig in use, or the results with and without the rig being used. One even shows an animated reverse exploded view showing how to assemble all the parts!

One of the designer/builders ties together the list of "Pro" sites and this web site when he says "I designed it by heavily researching on the Internet. I looked at all the other designs or pictures available for free. There are jib arm designs for sale, but I feel no one should buy those because there are so many great free web sites with people sharing information with others. Then I looked at the pro models to see how they are designed. Then I sat down and created my own design, stealing from everything. I learned from the designs available online."

Go! See! Enjoy! ■



Tinker's *Tips and Tricks*

by Don Svob

Hi to all! I hope everyone had a good start to the New Year, with many hours of family and friends, taking videos for fun.

One of the most enjoyable parts of video is seeing how we have changed over the years, and our friends, as well. My grandkids never stop changing their appearance, and the new words they use, every time I see them. But when do we take the time to see all the video that we have shot?

I've been working on a one-hour tape of the life of each of my grandkids. This can [will] take a lifetime to complete, but at any time I can enjoy seeing how much that little baby has become a little lady or young man.

What do you edit out? How can I edit out the first step, first butterfly, first ride on their bike, etc. Well, do I have to edit it out to the floor? No! I'm trying to edit to 10 minutes or less for each year of their life. So, one hour is age six, seven, eight, nine and ten. But in the ten minutes, I'll show how they have changed in the way they look and see things. Each ten minutes is a short story of that year.

Yes, it is hard to edit 30 minutes of the first cake making to one minute, but that's how you make GOOD videos. Short and sweet! Remember, you're making this video for one person; YOU! So you're doing it for FUN! Go ahead and enjoy your family and video editing. The reward is better than anything you have ever done.

Cool Your Lights Before You Put Them Away

Use one of the hand fans from a dollar store taped to the light stand, blowing onto the light, to safely cool it in record time.

Never put a COLD tape into a warm Camera

Don't forget to acclimatize your camcorder and tapes during the cold weather, and to a slightly lesser degree, in extreme heat as well. Never put a warm tape into a cold camera, or vice versa. There is a possibility of damaging the recording heads. When it's necessary to bring your camera inside after outdoor shooting, put it into a plastic bag till the camera warms up to room temperature. Water will condense on the outside of the plastic bag, and not on the camera.

Do your tripod feet slide out on you on smooth floors?

Try putting a towel, carpet, or coat (cloth) on the floor and your tripod legs on the cloth. It works! Make a tripod leg spreader yourself. All you need is 3 chains or ribbons the same length all joined at one end. Now put each tripod leg on a different ribbon or chain on the floor. The legs won't slide.

Don't Pull Your Hair

Don't rewind your videotapes in the field. Back at home, write PROTECT on the Label of your tape, [or break out the recording tab on VHS tape, or use the sliding lock on a miniDV], and then rewind. This way you will never record over good footage.

Stop that Hum

Silent recording without the mic is desirable sometimes. How? Put a patch cord in the mic plug. But what is that hum? It's from the camcorder AGC circuit overworking. Try this: use a dummy load instead of an open jack. With a 1000 ohm resistor soldered between the two wire tips of a 1/8-inch mini phone plug this will give you true silence. But if you put a variable resistor across the mic leads you can adjust the AGC go to it's max. This is like turning it off a little at a time.

Two for One

Need a camera support on vacation,

but didn't bring a tripod? Try a plastic freezer bag full of trail mix. It will shape to the camera and ground/fence post/whatever, and best of all, it's food for the birds, animals and you.

2004 Intercities Theme "The Chase"

President's Message

Continued from page 3

mum payment, and we hadn't even used the service! This was just what we feared might happen, so, as preapproved by the Executive, I telephoned to cancel the service. I had called before this actually happened, identified the account, explained that we were a charity and couldn't afford such an expense, and threatened to cancel, but this time, when I gave the order to cancel, I was asked "Did you say you were a charity?" It seems that since we were a charity (and about to cancel), they could waive the minimum fee (and drop our discount rate!), if I could supply proof that we were a charity. After a couple of days trying to figure out how I could provide the uncontestable proof for which she was asking, I thought of the Canadian Government Charity Web Site, <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/tax/charities/menu-e.html>. I reached the woman again and walked her through all the hoops to reach our official listing with the government. That was the ticket! "If you had taken me to your own web site, I couldn't have accepted that, but this is a secure government site, so we will drop the minimum fee and cut your discount rate." Eureka! Back in business! The internet comes through again! I informed the SCCA Executive of the happy results at the next meeting.

But the next month, the \$20 was deducted again! I called again, and it took several days to reach the right person. Finally, I was assured that the \$40 would be returned to our account. It was, and as long as they don't start taking it out again, we're back to our former position, and will be able to accept payments (and donations) by credit card number! So "As you were!" and Touch wood! ■

too poor to be recommended. However I persisted and late last fall I had produced a short DVD using various material I had shot over the summer.

My experience has been limited to Digital8 and a 1/6" 3 chip "Panasonic" model 953. While I am very excited about the results, I must confess that critically, there appears to be some loss in quality, primarily in image sharpness. However I have only had a chance to preview my work using my SVGA (800x600) projector. There appears to be some loss in sharpness when compared with 'normal' footage shot at 4:3. This could be mainly a limitation of the projector, for while I had a hard time noticing much difference between my work and commercial DVD's, I expect that if displayed by an XGA (1024x768) or higher format projector, I might get a better indication of the true quality. That notion is now in question if I am to believe remarks found at a website promoting the sale of a particular brand of projector. It reads:

"Finally, educators must remember that higher resolution projectors are not any better at showing video images. This is because composite video requires, at most, 500 lines of resolution, while the SVGA projector delivers 600 lines. So,

an SVGA projector will show a video image as well as an XGA projector with its 768 lines. HDTV even looks just as good on SVGA as it does on XGA."

Nevertheless, I find the effect so pleasing on certain subjects that I intend to continue using this format where appropriate. I have received positive feedback from all of the audiences who have seen my efforts and so I would definitely encourage anyone with the appropriate equipment to give it a try. ■

Some Handy References:

If you want to explore this further, here are some useful sources:

<http://www.thedigitalbits.com/articles/anamorphic/>

http://www.camcorderinfo.com/content/article_widescreen_mode.htm

<http://gregl.net/videophile/anamorphic.htm>

<http://www.projectorpoint.co.uk/projectoradvice.htm>

If you want to explore the history of wide screen, go to:
<http://www.widescreenmuseum.com/index.htm>

8. Have a quality newsletter.

It doesn't have to be professionally produced, but it needs to be (like the meetings) entertaining and informative. Members should receive it 5-7 days before meetings so that it also serves as a timely reminder.

I'm sure there's more, but hopefully your club finds a few of these pointers useful. ■

Greg Caravan has been a member of the Vancouver Video Production Club since 1980 and is currently the Club Treasurer. He can be contacted at caravanvideo@shaw.ca

MORE HOLLYWOOD RULES

- A man will show no pain while taking the most ferocious beating, but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.
- If a large pane of glass is visible, someone will be thrown through it before long.
- If staying in a haunted house, women should investigate any strange noises in their most revealing underwear.

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 SCCAdonation 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

Special Donation to SCCA\$????.00 (Tax receipts issued for ALL donations)

Connections

This Is A Good Time Of Year To Connect With Your Past

by Joan Bochsler

Our President, who doesn't hear from many of our Life or Honourary Members often enough, except in the line of duty, like when Andrew Antenucci of Calgary moved and his PANORAMA was returned, tells me that just a few days after the broadcast of Expo '67 - *Back to the Future* on CBC, he received a DVD from former President Armand Bélanger in Montreal. Armand lived just a few blocks from Expo, and visited the fair 70 times, making several 8 mm films including four years of its construction.

When Betamax arrived Armand transferred the films to Betamax, edited them, and added soundtracks. Later he transferred them again, this time from Betamax to 8mm video. Now he has copied them all into his computer as mpg files. At 85 he wasn't about to re-edit them, but he has put them onto a DVD as data files that can be shown on a computer with the right DVD equipment.

Perhaps you've forgotten, but some of your films or videos may have been shot ten, twenty, or even sixty years ago. There is more than one reason to review these videos or films. The first is to run through some of the older ones to reminisce about our past, and also to condition our videos and films. It is also an opportunity to decide whether we should transfer them to the new technology of DVD, for longevity.

There are many memories of holidays and family gatherings such as birthday parties, weddings, and trips to many parts of the world. Many an evening can be spent enjoying our past, whether it be just last year or sixty years ago. Family movies should be shown only to members of the family. Family movies can be boring to others. Movies of travel and special events can be of interest to visitors or video club members.

We should keep in mind the videos we shoot today, will become part of our history many years ahead. We are also making a connection with our future.

Don't forget that if you come across footage of Canada during the years of the Second World War, contact Karen Shopsowitz, 1-866-927-3456 kshopsowitz@yapfilms.com.

And if you missed the Expo '67 film, it will almost surely be shown again in reruns now that the series is finished for the season. ■

The Last Word...

Out my window there are cracks in the river ice, but Winter still has a hold on the country. It has been a cold, uncompromising season, even the geese cannot make up their minds whether to go South or stay and put up with the inconvenience of Canada in Winter.

We humans don't have much choice either. I know some of you travel South when it gets cold up here, but most of us stay and wrap ourselves up well, and look at warm videos instead. It does help a little. We also have a warm fire in the fireplace on cold evenings, and that helps a lot!

I have to remind myself that one of the reasons I chose to live in Canada was because it really does have four seasons every year, while Australia has about two, either Hot and Hotter, or Wet and Dry, depending where you are.

Perhaps the Canadian year could be done in colours. Right now all I can see is White on both land and water. There is that special Green in early Spring, and a whole rainbow of pastels in Summer. And there is nothing in the world as beautiful as Canada in the Fall, with leaves of gorgeous gold and screaming reds.

But now is a great time to record our sleeping, snow-covered country, just wrap up well and put plastic over your equipment, and go out and brave the Canadian elements, just for an hour or two at a time. What you get will look really good next summer when you are melting away in the heat! ■

Joan Bochsler, Editor.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

MEMBER INFORMATION *Please print clearly* SCCA:

Classification

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Society Honours: _____

Address 1: _____ City: _____ Prov./State: _____

Postal Code: _____ Ctry: _____ Area Code#: _____ Home#: _____ Work#: _____ Fax#: _____

Member of Club: _____ E-mail: _____

YES | Please give my address to Visual Convergence so that I may receive a free subscription

NO! | Do not give my name and address to Visual Convergence.

Fees:

Signature

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Joined:

Address 2:

Other:

Please return this application form with payment to;

*Payment accepted in Canadian funds only;
Personal or company cheque (Canadian only)
International Money Order (outside of Canada)*

Credit Card Payment

**CAROLYN BRIGGS
3 Wardrobe Avenue South
Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada L8G 1R9**

Signature as on Credit Card

VISA

MC

#

Exp