PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO   SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO AMATEUR

CONTENTS

NOTE:
Always be
careful to use
only the latest
current
information.

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PATRONS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

Fred Briggs, FSCCA

It seems that, as President of a maturing society, a regular recurring responsibility is the reporting of the passing of our friends and members. As surely as the clock ticks for scheduled activities like writing this column, it ticks away our lives.

Howard Aubrey Williams, who we all knew simply as "Bill" Williams, passed away peacefully in Sunnybrook Hospital surrounded by his family, on November 21st, 2005. Bill, a longtime member and supporter of both the Toronto Film & Video Club and the SCCA, was in his 88th year.

Bill was born in Wales, earned his MA and P. Eng at Cambridge University, served six years with the Royal Corps of Engineers in North Africa and Italy, retired as a Major, and was awarded the distinction of Member of the British Empire. After retiring from Ontario Hydro in 1983, Bill was able to devote more time to his hobby of moviemaking.

Bill is survived by his wife Sally, their son and daughter, and three grandchildren, and we belatedly extend our sympathy to all of them, and to all those who knew and will miss the always cheerful Bill.

Those of us who attended the 2005 SCCA Convention in Port Stanley will be shocked to learn of the death of one of our Guest Speakers, **Chris Doty** of London Ontario, who took his own life on February 3rd, at the age of 39. Chris was London's most active historian and documentary maker and had recently entered theatrical production, with two critically acclaimed plays produced in London. He appeared to be in good health and was "at the top of his game"

at the end of a one-week first run of his latest play. Chris was highly respected by all who knew him, or of him, and his passing was accompanied by an outpouring of accolades by the people of London, who will miss him for a very long time.

SCCA Club Reps

In the Fall Issue of PANORAMA we indicated that there were only two clubs that had not yet found a volunteer to replace their President as SCCA Representative. That has now been reduced to one as Josephine Black has just announced that Richard Ogner, 12 Dustan Crescent, East York, ON, M4J 4G5 has taken over the responsibilities of SCCA Club Representative for the Toronto Film and Video Club. Welcome aboard, Richard!

Now is there anybody in the Vancouver Video Production Club willing to relieve Greg Caravan of a few of his responsibilities?

Club News

And speaking of relieving people of their responsibilities, we are actively looking for someone willing to replace Joe Bochsler, who is finding his job of Club Reporter getting more difficult, and wishes to retire. Joe stepped forward to fill the shoes of Wally Robertson ASCCA of the Winnipeg Amateur Moviemakers when Wally wanted to devote more time to his genealogy quest, and now Joe would like to pass the baton on to another. It isn't necessary that the Club Reporter live in Southern Ontario, or attend meetings. We would arrange for the various clubs and societies to put the new Club Reporter on their mailing list and keep him or her informed of their activities. Five pages per issue isn't demanded, and the present format isn't iron clad. Each new Club Reporter puts his own stamp on the position, and produces a column that reflects his or her own style. About the only qualification (beyond willingness) is a computer with an internet connection, as many of the clubs now distribute news of their activities by email. It's also easier to send a computer file to PANORAMA than to snail mail a typed report!

Now that I've announced the opportunity to one and all, I now address YOU in particular: Please give it some thought! And we ask that volunteers please form an orderly queue!

This Issue

In spite of a late start because of the busy Christmas Season, we have put together a very full edition, thanks to

all those who have contributed articles, and those who have permitted articles from other sources to be reprinted. In my opinion this is a very interesting issue with more diversity than usual. However, some material had to be held back for the Spring Issue! I'm trying to do my part here by limiting this column to just 2/3 of a page! ∎

AT THE BIJOU

by *[signature] Valentino*

Throughout much of 1980, the letters section of Movie Maker has been the battleground for a number of movie makers arguing the respective merits of vintage vs. modern professional films. The controversy led Chris Taylor to write:

"What relevance does the screening of a 38-year-old movie on TV have to an amateur movie magazine in the eighties?...after all, this is Movie Maker, - not Picturegoer, Sight and Sound, Films and Filming, or any of the other publications intended for the watchers as opposed to the makers."

Perhaps it was the patent logic of that argument that subconciously prodded me to preface the introduction of this column in the last issue with such a vigorous and lengthy defense of its raison d'etre. In any event, it is the seductive quality of Chris' proposition, and not a sadistic predeliction to beating dead horses (to which I regretfully admit) that leads me to quote from Movie Maker Editor Alan Cleave's reply in the December issue, which arrived on my stoop too late for inclusion in last issue's column.

CLUB NEWS

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

Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

Christmas and New Year have gone by and we're into the serious part of Winter.

Back in the latter part of November the annual Light-up Night in Caledonia took place. This starts at the Old Mill, with Christmas carols sung by a group of school children. Then prizes for the colouring contest are awarded, followed by a visit from Santa Claus. There is a trek over the Heritage Grand River via the Caledonia bridge (the only 9 span bridge in Canada), through town and on to the railway station, where a number of booths were set up to dispense hot cider and buttered popcorn. Santa is present again to greet the small fry and to have their picture taken with him.

I took still pictures of the event with my Canon Pro 1 Digital camera, as it was extremely cold, I decided that I would make a slide show to go along with the documentary of the Santa Claus parade. Two days later. I video-taped the parade with my Canon Gl 2 camcorder, with a Sony mike attached, complete with a wind-screen.

There are highlights which make the Winter more bearable.

One occasion which took place at the end of January was the first public showing of films which I produced and shot in 1959-60-61 of the Marian Days, which took place at the Hamilton Civic Stadium. If I remember correctly, the film was 16 mm Ectachrome at 24 fps with a Bolex silent and Auricon optical sound cameras.

I positioned myself in the south stands, about 20 seats above the field. The 3rd year I used the Auricon sound camera and the Bolex camera was used at ground level to film the marchers and floats in the parade and the stationery exhibits. As I didn't have zoom lenses, I used the lenses on the turret lens-mount to change the focal length.

I gave a copy to the library to be placed in their archives, apparently the tape was misplaced or lost. Now, 46 years later I was approached and asked whether I had filmed the event. I answered in the affir- mative. I had the Master in Super VHS in my file and offered to have a DVD copy made, after running off a copy on VHS for approval by the library. They were very impressed and had the DVD projected on a large screen at the 150th anniversary dinner of the school board at the Hamilton Convention Centre in January. Joan and I were honoured to be at the head table.

We wish everyone a belated Happy New Year. My wish is that I may be able to retire in my 85th year from **Club News** and let someone younger take on this assignment.

BRANT VIDEO MAKERS,
BRANT CAMCORDER NEWS,
Edited by Dan Kennaley

December 14, 2005… This meeting was our Annual Christmas Party at the Greenwich Family Restaurant. Dan Kennaley, President, gave a special welcome to all the wives and husbands who support our members all year. The primary reason for this party is to bring everyone together at Christmas to say thanks in a special way.

Don Bradley said Grace. Joe Szaloky was in charge of the projector and DVD player to show videos. Randy Hicks videotaped the proceedings.

This was the occasion of presenting the **Laurie Ross Award.** It is provided by Joan and Joe Bochsler in memory of Laurie. He worked with Joe in the movie industry, writing, directing and shooting some impressive movies. Laurie was a member of our Club for many years and filled a number of different positions. One of his last duties was editing our Newsletter. He loved to do art-work. Laurie died quite suddenly from cancer. He is greatly missed. This year the Award went to Joan Jacquemain. The gift was a beautiful leather briefcase. It will be a great asset to her as she takes the Club minutes during the meetings. Joan was also presented with an inscripted plaque. Joan is very pleased with the Bochslers' generosity. She also had a high regard for Laurie and his talents.
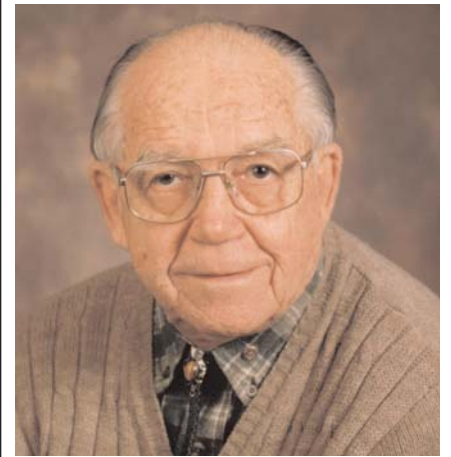
- One of Laurie's videos, *Niagara Falls Christmas Lights* was shown. Marilyn Rogelstad also shot some of this video.
- Edith Crow's *Baltic Cruise* and *Brantford Villages* was viewed next. It had been edited by Frank Birch.
- An animation, *First Kiss,* was played. Alex Szatmary was the creator.
- Joe Bochsler shot the *Caledonia Santa Claus Parade* and showed it to us.
- *Epiphany Sunday at Tarpon Springs Florida* was next. This video was Nestor Rosa's.

Everyone enjoyed the socializing and the partaking of a good meal. Many thanks go to Dan Kennaley for organizing this Christmas Party single handedly every year. It is appreciated very much by everyone.

Critique Night

"WITH A DIFFERENCE" - We want everyone to bring 2 minutes of video and tell us why and how it could have been improved. Just a clip from something different. Perhaps moved closer to the subject, shot it with more light, or maybe used a tripod. There are so many ways to improve, and if we remind ourselves of some of the things we should be doing, maybe, we will think of it the next time. Did we shoot a location shot that tells us where the action is taking place? Did we set a time and a date or give a verbal (today is Tuesday Jan. 18, '06.) - Some of the more difficult "what could have been", used some of the tools that the camera people gave us to make our videos more interesting - directed the action to give it a flow - angles/angles/angles, location /location/location. - tell us what you could have done and we can use it as inspiration, knowledge and ideas. *Dan Kennaley.*

BUFFALO MOVIE-VIDEO MAKERS, CAMERAMA,
Edited by John P. Weiksnar

To MIC or not to MIC. Since the inven-

tion of the home camcorder, all of us videomakers have used it as a creative tool in our ambitions to shoot the perfect movie. After all it has auto iris, auto focus and auto audio level settings. How can we go wrong? While there are many instances when using an "auto function" is the best or only choice, in most cases <u>auto</u> can be translated as <u>uncontrolled.</u>

To me, the most problematic auto trap is the built in microphone and handy auto level setting. Yes . . . there are times when it will be just what's needed to grab the sounds of crowds, trains or the ambient sounds of deep woods. Unfortunately there are more instances when the use of a level on-camera microphone undoes the effect you are trying to achieve.

The first that comes to mind is actor or on-camera host dialogue. Unless you are shooting with the camcorder only 12 inches from your speaker's face. His or her voice usually becomes lost in a symphony of background sounds that register as loud or louder than the voice you are trying to record. Your camcorder may possess all the clever bells and whistles you could buy, but it isn't clever enough to sort out the important sounds from the noise. The auto level – not knowing the human voice is the important sound – amplifies everything until a suitably loud sound is recorded.

The answer to this noisy dilemma is the addition of a separate microphone and long cable that you plug into the jack labelled "ext. mic." on your camcorder. (Most camcorders in the medium to high price categories offer this option.) The added mic doesn't even need to be an expensive one. (Radio Shack?) It just needs to be positioned near your speaker no matter where the camcorder is. Using a homemade boom gives you even more control over your sound. A simple broom handle and duct tape will do as long as your boom has a gentle touch.

Finally, those background sounds I mentioned can still be a problem. We can't control all of them, and it never hurts to yell "QUIET ON THE SET' before each take. Doing so will eliminate a lot of human noise. Besides we've all wanted to yell that since each of us discovered we wanted to make movies. *By Fred Calandrelli*

HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS, REEL NEWS, Edited by Liz Stewart.

Thanks to Barb Owen, we will have a record of the films shown at the meetings in case you need to look back and find one that you really liked. It will enable our members to contact the film maker in the future.

MOVIES SHOWN
- Fred Briggs: "*THE BRITISH*" The re-enactment of the War of 1812. This segment was one part of the complete video which showed the British army on the sailing vessel St.Lawrence during the American invasion at Niagara on the Lake. The video was accompanied with background music.
- Harold Cosgrove: "*TEMPLE SQUARE*" This 4.5 minute video was a travelogue of the Cosgrove's tour of Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church) in Salt Lake City. There was footage of an organ recital in the Tabernacle, a tour of the Conference Center which seats 20,000 and the surrounding gardens.
- Ken Davey: "*MEMORIES OF NOVA SCOTIA*" a 13 minute narrated travelogue of Ken's trip to Digby, Nova Scotia, Due to DVD technical problems we were unable to view it.
- Stella Magic: "*FINLAND*" An 8 minute narrated travelogue of Stella's tour of Helsinki, Finland. The viewer saw the city in two different ways; through raindrops settling on the buses' windows and a sunny walk around tour.
- Stella Magic: "*TRAVELING WITH MONET*" A narrated travelogue accompanied by a soft musical background of Stella's cruise to Venice, Italy. The cruise liner was called Monet. The viewer saw the wonderful sights of Venice by gondola and a walk around tour in the sun and rain.
- John Hanson: "*BURLINGTON SOUND OF MUSIC*" The video was filmed entirely on a Pentax 750Z AVI digital camera. Each segment was edited together showing John's young granddaughter enjoying the festival rides.
- George Gerula: "*GENERAL VIDEO – PART 2*" Due to technical difficulties of the original video to be viewed "Monarchs", a 7 minute video accompanied by a musical background about the behaviour of wasps in their nest was shown instead.

Joe Bochsler has again come away with the first prize for the Caledonia Fair video by default. It appears he scared off the competition again this year. Way to go, Joe!

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

Video celebrates basilica's beauty, by James Reaney, London Free Press Devonshire Avenue's dynamic duo has completed its first journey in London DVDdom – a memorable and inspiring visit to the heart of Catholic worship of the Forest City.

Peter J. Adams and David Beine have just produced a fine documentary The Journey, a celebration of the history, beauty and spirituality of St.Peter's Cathedral Basilica in downtown London, ON. "It's the most magnificent structure in London and it's on a prime piece of real estate", Adams says of St. Peter's.

"My parish is St. Martin's (on Cathcart Street) and David's not Catholic," Adams smiles. It's a marvel how the two, starting with a shared interest in life on Devonshire Avenue, went on to create what they are proud to call "the only major documentary film to have been produced on the cathedral."

Adams and Beine say the Journey took "11 months of solid work" to complete and runs 59 minutes. Its potential audience takes in the 450,000 Catholics in the Diocese of London and a modestly low estimate of 50,000 non-Catholics.

The Journey began by happy coincidence. Adams, 67, grew up on Devonshire Avenue, in Old South London, England, in the late 1930s and 40s. Adams moved away, but always recalled the place. Decades later, Beine, 66, arrived on Devonshire. He became fascinated with the avenue and its history. Having begun to explore videography as a way of recording his surroundings, he learned of Adams and his unofficial role of Devonshire sage.

The retirees – Beine from sales and Adams from financial products – clicked as a documentary team. "He's got such a gift for researching and finding information," Beine says of Adams.

As a counterpart of that effort, Beine brings the eye and vision to put that research into focus. He's a proud member of the London Videography Club. "And they're happy that I am not a member," laughs Adams. "No, no, no," Beine laughs back.

Adams then wished to make a video of his wife, soprano Diana Svilipa Adams. The 15-minute film would be used for family purposes. St. Peter's. with its acclaimed acoustics, was considered as the setting. A visit to St. Peter's instantly transformed the family video. "(David and I) met with Larry Lewis for a tour of St. Peter's…We knew my personal quest had become a diocesan quest," Adams says. Lewis is the cathedral's sacristan or sexton. As soon as Beine and Adams listened to Lewis speak about St.Peter's, they knew they had found the voice for the documentary.

There are so many others who took part in the Journey that it's a little embarrassing to see my name on there, encouraging you to buy a DVD because "it does not have one uninteresting minute." Let's

put it this way instead: Enjoy the Journey a few DVD chapters at a time, or in one 59-minute sitting. It will make you see one of London's enduring beauties in a new light

St. Peter's Basilica DVD

What: St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica – The Journey, a 59 minute DVD devoted to the downtown London Catholic Cathedral. Production team led by Peter J. Adams, its director of film production research and co-editor of narrative, and David Beine, director of digital videography, photography, editing and production.

OTTAWA FILM AND VIDEO MAKERS,

Bulletin currently not published

TORONTO FILM AND VIDEO CLUB, SHOTS AND ANGLES,

Interim Editor, Josephine Black.

Trev Beard reports that Editor Sam Spence is up and around and slowly getting his strength back. Good news, and it is hoped that soon he will be returning to the Club.

The assigned theme for 2006 Intercities Contest is "It's in the Bag" This is a Club effort. Our Club hasn't had an entry since Double Trouble won two years ago. This year perhaps some members can come up with a script and organize another entry. Since this will be a Club entry, all expenses will be paid by the Club up to $50.00. Entries are due in the Spring.

VANCOUVER VIDEO PRODUCTION CLUB, REEL TALK,

Edited by Cathy Caravan.

The main feature of the November meeting was a showing of the 2003 CIAFF (Canadian International Amateur Film Festival) award winners in the categories of Amateur, Independent, and Student entries.

The CIAFF is the premier Canadian amateur film and video competition, as it regularly sees entries from numerous countries around the world. A wide range of styles and genres was on view - including animation, experimental, music video, drama, comedy, and documentary. We plan to have a showing of the 2004 and 2005 CIAFF winners over the next 12 months.

My quest for the perfect stand-alone DVD recorder for the club continues. Let's see, so far there's been…Oh, I've forgotten now! I'll have to go over them by manufacturer. Curtis, LG, Phillips, Sony, and now the latest one… Electrohome. No, we won't be keeping this one either.

There isn't much point mentioning the model numbers because they become obsolete so soon. The latest DVD recorder I'm in the process of trying, the Electrohome, we bought at Canadian Tire of all places. Its price was the lowest of all the ones I've tried so far, $180. And I picked it up in the middle of December. Canadian Tire has a pretty liberal return policy, 90 days, so I thought why not.

However, I don't like the picture quality on this unit. The highest quality mode is acceptable, but the second highest mode shows many compression artifacts in the picture. I haven't even bothered to try the lower quality modes.

Interestingly enough, this Electrohome DVD recorder was advertised by a different chain in one of the many Boxing Day sales. It was being sold for $96. Yes, the same unit as what I had paid $180. For two weeks earlier. That's another reason why it's going back!

I am astounded at how low the prices have dropped on DVD players, DVD recorders, DVD-burners (for computers), and blank DVDs. Two or three years ago, DVD players were seldom found below $200. I've now seen them in stores for as little as $30. I recently bought a spindle of name brand DVD blanks, 25 for $2.99 (with rebate). What's that, about 12 cents a piece? It doesn't seem that long ago that blank DVDs were $20 each. Yes, each disk! If my math is correct, that's a reduction in price of 99.4%. Amazing.

Club member David Cooperstone bought one of the first stand alone DVD recorders available about two or three years ago for $2000. Now there are DVD recorders available for less than a hundred bucks. Ya gotta love the way the prices drop on this stuff, but you also have to wonder about the state of our own economy when 99.4% (thought I'd use that figure again) of these goods are now being made in China. The Electrohome DVD recorder I have here today has absolutely nothing in common with any Electrohome goods manufactured twenty years ago. Well, other than the name stamped on the front panel. Electrohome used to manufacture its electronic components here in North America. Those days are long gone.

So yes, it's great that we can buy today's electronic toys at dirt cheap prices, but at what price ultimately? At the price of sacrificing our own industry? No matter how cheap the toys are, if none of us have jobs, we won't be able to afford them.

Not sure why I went off on this tangent. Oh well, whether it's DVD recorders or columnists, you probably get what you pay for! By Pat Sheridan

VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB,

BULLETIN, edited by Sheila Perkins.

At a recent meeting, we had as our speaker, Barry Casson, the President of the Victoria Motion Picture School. Barry was trained in Hollywood as a director/cinematographer, and spent nine years as a TV news cameraman with CHEK Television here in Victoria. Several club members have attended workshops at VMPS. Barry was very informative.

The Birth of Jesus - Our Church Production, by Michael Veronneau, Victoria Amateur Movie Club is featured in this issue of Panorama. *Club News editor*.

WINNIPEG AMATEUR MOVIE AND VIDEO CLUB. BULLETIN, Edited by Wallace and Jeanette Robertson.

SEVENTY YEARS! NOVEMBER 27TH 1935 - NOVEMBER 27TH 2005

On Saturday, November 27th, 1935, eight people met in the Free Press Auditorium on Carlton Street and attended the first meeting of the Winnipeg Cine Club now known as the Winnipeg Amateur Movie and Video Club. The two young men who initially started the group were Ken Mitchell, a local sales representative with the Eastman Kodak Company and Ken Davy, a sales representative with the Hudson Bay Company. Each man, later on , had distinguished careers in film. Ken Mitchell ended off his years with the Kodak Company as Vice-President of Sales for Canada and Ken Davy had many successful years heading up his own film company here in the city. As a special note, Ken Davy was the first cameraman to produce both training films and later the first movies of the Canadian Football League games. In those few years the membership grew slowly. Just coming out of the depression most people could not afford something as frivolous as movie cameras and film.

When the Second World War came along the club went into a bit of a decline, because film was mainly being produced for the war effort. Even if one could procure some film, the individual would have to be very selective about what they shot. As we understand it, there was only one member who made enough money to travel, a Miss Doupe. She was a school teacher and it has been said that when she returned from her vacation everyone waited in anticipation for her latest photographic movie presentation.

Over the years we have had our ups and downs. There have been great moments and memories and an angry

The Birth of Jesus – Our Church Production

**by Michael Veronneau**
Victoria Amateur Movie Club

It's a wrap. Our church production had its official release on December 24th 2005 to an entertained and enthusiastic congregation. Titled "*The Birth of Jesus: Luke 2: 1-20*", it was quite a team effort. But with some patience, good planning, and a touch of luck, it was a successful club project.

Looking Back

On Thursday October 6th Margaret Chamberlain and I met with Mark Green, a minister at the Cadboro Bay United Church, to discuss the project. Mark related how the church, in the past, had staged a nativity play or used a multimedia presentation to tell the story of Christ's birth. But, with the club's help, he now wanted to tell the story with a movie – combining footage of children from the Sunday school, with narration, and set to an original musical soundtrack. Margaret and I were hooked, and after discussion with the Victoria Amateur Movie Club executive, agreed to head up the production.

Clearing the Hurdles

What do movies and the 100-yard hurdle have in common? They're both challenging to complete, with lots of obstacles to get over. We took a few deep breaths, did some mental calisthenics, and got started.
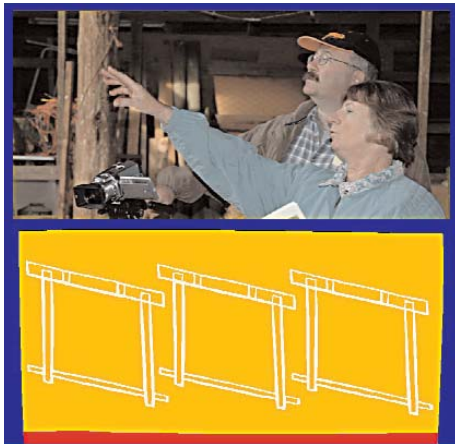
The first few hurdles were cleared quite quickly. Mark said that he had a narrator in mind ("He has a beautiful voice," said Margaret), and also indicat-ed that he would organize the children and costumes. A few more hurdles dropped behind since we didn't have to worry about location sound or children 'remembering' lines – *hallelujah for narration.*

But I thought the next hurdle would be huge: finding the right location, and getting permission to shoot. But Margaret surprised me with a phone call to announce that not only had she found two perfect locations, but she also had tentative permission from the owners. And the farms were just across the road from each other! I was ecstatic. We teamed up on October 16th for a scouting trip, and we happily agreed that a major hurdle had been cleared.

Welcome Aboard...

We knew that we couldn't do this on our own. So the call went out and we were gratified to welcome Mila Werbik, Don Jensen, and Ray Painchaud aboard. Their help would turn out to be invaluable.

On October 26th Mila joined Margaret and me for another scouting trip to our manger site. We compiled a list of 'required equipment', including lights, extension cords, and so on, and discussed shooting angles and composition. During the visit Mila suggested a location for Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, and this turned out to be a breakthrough – like one domino falling into another, because suddenly a number of staging decisions, such as camera placement, actor movements, and numerous other decisions just seemed to fall into place. Thank you Mila!

Tell it like it is

On October 27th Mark notified us that Paul Miles was looking forward to doing the project's narration. We quickly scheduled a recording session for November 1st and Margaret improvised a 'recording booth' for the session using a small table, a metal frame, and some blankets (to dampen reflected sounds) at her house.

We had Paul read the narration several times, using different pacing and

NARRATION
Paul Miles & Margaret Chamberlain during recording session

emphasis for each reading. After he had a chance to listen to the recordings he went back and re-recorded several sections. Then I took the recordings and used WaveLab Lite software on my computer to merge the best takes into a 'final version' of the narration. Narration hurdle cleared!

Planning is Key

As the Nov 13th production day rushed towards us, Margaret and I became more and more aware of the very limited time that we would have to video the children. We knew that we had to be really organized to ensure that we could get the shots we needed. How could we best prepare?

Well, a 'shot list' can get you organized when you are preparing to shoot a simple event (e.g. a birthday). A list with "children arriving", "playing games", "breaking the piñata", "singing happy birthday", "blowing out candles on cake", "opening gifts", "saying good-bye" can serve to remind you of the important shots that you need to shoot at your event, and later 'tell the story' with your editing.

However, for a complex event, where there are more people involved, Margaret and I knew that we needed something that could focus discussion, record decisions, and communicate with all the folks involved in the production. We knew we needed a storyboard.

A storyboard is a shot-by-shot plan of how the movie will look. It creates a common point of reference that validates how the actors will be positioned,

Nativity

filmed, and directed. So Margaret drafted the initial storyboard and then, on November 3rd, Mark, Margaret and I met and refined the draft. Mark was able to "see" the shots, and request variations, because he could tell how the story would unfold. We even estimated timing for shots and determined where Mark wanted pauses in the narration for "musical punctuation".

It's hard to explain, but when you are developing a storyboard you start to get a feeling for what will work and 'not work' in the movie. We spotted 'jumps' in the story that had to be filled in, and we were also able to come up with some cutaway shots that we thought we might be able to use later in editing. Don't get me wrong, on the production day you're still going to think of alternative shots that you will want, but the storyboard keeps you on track for the "minimum" shots that you need. And we knew that if a shot was missed it was very unlikely that we would be able to get the children back for another take! So time spent fine-tuning the storyboard was time well spent.

When Margaret and I met on Tuesday November 8th we agreed on the final, or shooting version, of the storyboard. Subsequently, each storyboard image was printed on a single page, with blanks for key information (shot#, description, transitions, etc.) and with plenty of room for comments and notes.

Was this a hurdle? You betcha - storyboards are time–consuming. Did we clear it? Certainly. But by now our planning was paying off, and we had overcome our pre-race butterflies. In fact, we had established a rhythm for the project that would see us through to the finish line.

Manger Arranger

One of the last hurdles before production day was the setup of the manger scene. On Saturday November 12th we dragged around tables, hay,

fencing and other props to get our manger prepared. I had downloaded a number of images from the Internet, showing several variations on the traditional manger staging and these helped guide us in our decisions. We experimented with lighting and shot angles until it looked right, and then packed up for the night.

At this point we should have felt happy. But the weather report for Sunday was predicting 100% chance of rain – which would mean rescheduling the outdoor shepherd shots – so our spirits were actually a bit low as we headed for our homes.

Production Day...

Arrived cool, clear, and windy. Yahoo! We were all amazed and energized: all systems were "go"! The crew rendezvoused at our manger site at 11:00 am and spent some time fine-tuning the manger setup, and discussing the afternoon's activities.

Our plan was to shoot the shepherd's scenes first so we headed down to the "Shepherd" site and were greeted by our enthusiastic bands of Shepherds and Angels and their parents! In no time the children were dressed in costumes and the cameras were rolling. However, one major hurdle became apparent. The fields that had been filled with sheep were now filled only with waving stalks of grass, and one sheep on a leash.

The sheep that were supposed to be coming out of the barn to join us had taken a page from the donkey handbook and were stubbornly refusing to come out. They all had nice wool coats on, but it was too cold, apparently. We shot a bit of footage with our shepherds and our 'one sheep' – but thanks to

Margaret we had a backup plan (footage of sheep that she had shot during one of our scouting visits) so we carried on shooting our planned shots.

In the blink of an eye an hour had passed and we were piling back into cars and heading across the road to shoot the manger scenes. Another hour passed and the film crew waved a tired but happy good-bye to the departing actors & parents. A relatively quick clean-up occurred and we called it a day (well, it felt like a day-and-a-half).

Post-Production

We ended up with 62 minutes of footage and a great storyboard to guide the editing down to approximately a four-minute movie. Margaret and I individually edited the footage into a rough cut and then we met to compare notes. With input from Mark, we merged our efforts and ended up with the release version.

Mark took this release version and worked with musician Christine Chepyha, who played the Bandurra, and sound engineer Gordon Miller (www.millermusic.ca/) to produce the soundtrack.

Meanwhile, Cynthia Werbik produced a "making of the movie" video from footage and photographs shot by Mila. The movie nicely captures the "behind the scenes activities" and it was a joy to be able to add this to the final DVD.

In Closing

Margaret, thank you for all your time, energy, and advice that made this project a success. You are amazing to work with. Mila, Don and Ray, what can I say – without your help we couldn't have done it. You really came through for the project. Thanks! ■

fd's flickr toys

by Michael Véronneau
michael_veronneau@telus.net

I'm the kind of guy who likes to dot the "i"s and cross the "t"s. So when we were wrapping up our club's production of "*The Birth of Jesus*" last fall I started thinking about what else we could create to compliment the release of our movie. "What about a movie poster?" I thought. We could post that at the church to 'advertise' the movie, and it might make a nice graphic to use on the DVD case.

With this goal in mind, I started searching the Internet looking at movie posters to find some design ideas, when I stumbled across a site (http://flagrant-disregard.com/flickr) that said, "Make your own customized movie poster. Be a star!" One click later, I realized that I had found a shortcut to my goal. The title of the web page was "Poster: Create a customized movie poster from your digital photographs", and there was a sample of a poster that looked pretty good. Bingo!

The first step is to indicate what photo to use. I chose to upload a picture of the manger that we had used in our production, but you can also give the web address of any photos that you might have on-line. There are limited options for the placement of your photo, but there are choices to keep the photo 'centred' or bias it towards the left or right. In my case the resulting cropped image had a pleasing composition so I left the default as centered.

The next few choices change the overall appearance of the poster by varying font style and colour and by selecting whether the poster fades to

black or white at the top and bottom (the sample here shows fade to white). I changed the font colour to match the colour scheme for our DVD design and was happy with the result.

The next step is to type in the text for your poster, such as the movie title, who is presenting the movie, the acting credits, production credits, release date and taglines. You can even assign a rating (G, PG, etc). Then click on the "Create Poster" button, at the bottom of the page, and after a few moments you will be admiring your first poster.

If your first attempt needs some

tweaking then click on "Edit this poster" and you will be returned to the editing page. I ended up going through four drafts until I had my final version. *Tip.* If you leave the site and then return, all your text is gone - so consider copying all the text into a document and saving that on your computer. Then if you need to come back later you can copy and paste your text into the relevant sections.
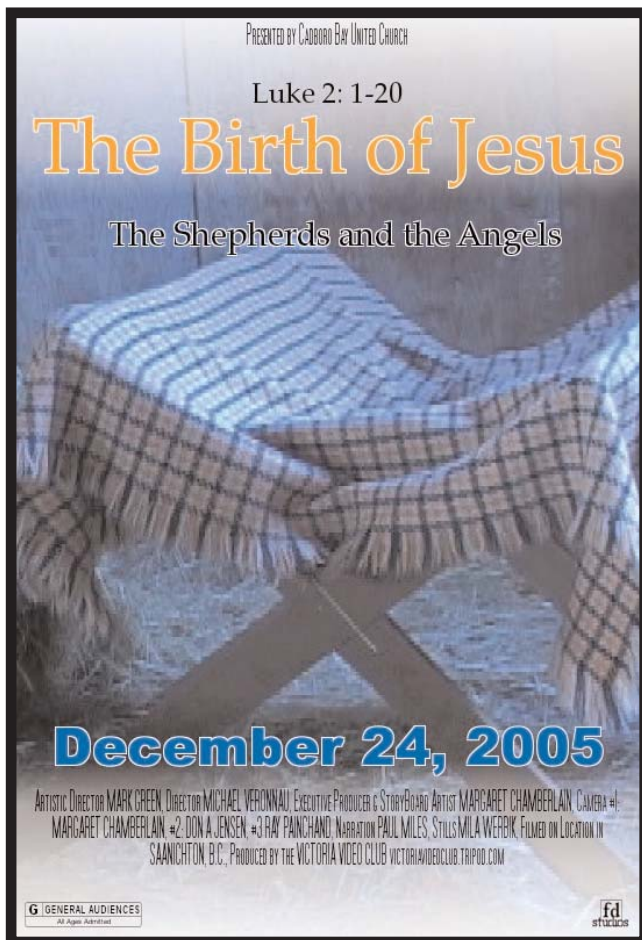
When you are happy with what you see, just right-click the image and choose "Save image as…" to save the image to your computer. The image is 800 x 540 in jpeg format so it can be used comfortably as a cover for a DVD case, or printed on letter/legal size paper. If you want it bigger you can order high-resolution prints from them (up to 16" X 20") for the Motivator (below) or Magazine Cover, at prices starting at $10.

And there are other "Flickr Toys" to play with - such as the billboards, captioner, trading cards, photomosaics, and calendars. They all offer unique ideas for images to compliment your movie case, or just for a fun item to e-mail to friends and family.

After making the poster, I inserted the poster in a "billboard" setting, and the result appears on the cover of this issue of PANORAMA. Of course, the SCCA wouldn't print these without copyright clearance so the web site was contacted. Their reply was that you are free to use your creations anyway you like!

Hope you find this useful. ■

THE 'PUBLIC DOMAIN' MAZE

By Thom Speechley

The resourceful amateur filmmaker is well aware of the many alternative sources of content to add to their production. Still pictures, background music and sound effects are all needed from time to time. But most of the material we use was created by someone else. That may be acceptable for a 'home movie' or even for a club showing but a line is drawn when a production is considered for entry into a competition or public film festival. Many competitions will reject an entry if the creator cannot prove they have the right to use such material.

SCCA has been successful in establishing a library where members may access music and sound effects, which may be used free of copyright or royalty considerations. (Details are given in the Fall and Winter 2002 issues of "PANORAMA", available at the SCCA website.) But what about images and video or film clips? There are many sites out there where such materials can be purchased, often for $50 or more for a still photograph or $200 plus for a few seconds of video. That might be all right for a commercial video operation but hardly attractive to an amateur contest entrant.

Welcome to Public Domain

So wouldn't it be nice if there were sources of materials that don't belong to anybody and are there for the taking? Well, there is "Public Domain".

"*The public domain is a space where intellectual property protection does not apply. When copyrights and patents expire, innovations and creative works fall into the public domain. They may then be used by anyone without permission and without the payment of a licensing fee.*" *From:* **http://www.publicknowledge.org/resources/introductions.**

And there is a great deal of material of all kinds in the public domain and readily available through the internet. The following will provide you with some places to explore and steps to take to insure that whatever you download, is in fact, free for use. That is the 'catch' with public domain, and that is why I titled this The Public Domain Maze. (I might have called it "The Public Domain Minefield") But don't get discouraged, there is still much material out there with minimal strings attached, all clearly indicated at the website which offers the material.

At this time throughout the world, copyright, fair use, public domain and related issues are being hotly debated. This is because of the growing access to, and use of materials on the Internet. While the entertainment industry is busy trying to tie up ownership ever more tightly, more enlightened movements are struggling to redefine these issues in the interests of greater freedom and public access. But that is another topic, to which I direct you later, with some additional links.

Where to Start
Canada versus the USA

It must be noted that at the present time, the life of a copyright, or the term of protection, is not the same in Canada and the USA. (It may also vary in other countries) Since much of the material you will find exists in the USA, keep this in mind when verifying dates. The term in the USA is until the death of the author and for the next 70 years. What is staggering about this fact is that, from the date this law was enacted, nothing created in the USA will enter the Public Domain until 2047!

In Canada it is:

The term for which copyright shall subsist shall, except as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, be the life of the author, the remainder of the calendar year in which the author dies, and a period of fifty years following the end of that calendar year.
R.S., 1985, c. C-42, s. 6; 1993, c. 44, s. 58. *(This quote downloaded February 4, 2006)*

There is currently pressure in Canada to add the extra twenty years to conform to the USA terms.

Another thing to remember about copyright is that as soon as something is taken from the 'Public Domain' and modified in any way, that new, modified version is automatically copyrighted!

One site I visit has MP3 files of old 78RPM records now in the public domain. Unfortunately I cannot download and use them because that copy of the disk on the website's server is now copyrighted.

Go visit just for fun.
http://turtleservices.com/jukebox.htm
If you "Google" 'public domain', you will get about 122 million hits, and one of the first of these is the "Wikipedia" site. **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain_resources.** Wikipedia is a sort of interactive public encyclopedia covering a multitude of topics, any of which you can contribute to by way of comments. This site devotes a very long page to this subject, with several links explaining the current situation in many countries, including Canada.

Still Photo Sources

We will start with stills because there are so many good sites and most with few strings attached.

By going to the 'Canada' link at the above "Wikipedia" site, you are also directed to sources of public domain materials at Canadian locations. One I have used frequently, looking for historical pictures is:

http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet

At the top right of the home page, enter "photographs" in the search box.

This opens a list of their major photo collections. Many of the locations contain pictures for which the copyright is expired and there are no restrictions on their use. However, you are expected to give credit for their use in your project. The rules of the Library and Archive are found in several places on the site. Read them to make sure you are comfortable with your planned use of the material.

http://www.collectionscanada.ca/notices/016-200-e.html

Another favourite site, available through the Library Archive is:

http://www.imagescanada.ca/index-e.html

It contains a series of links to "partner" collections across Canada. These partner collections have fairly liberal terms for usage. The most common conditions are stated as:

All images can be reproduced, in print and/or digital format, for the non-commercial purposes listed below. The images must not be altered or manipulated in any way and proper "Credit" credit must accompany the images.

Non-commercial purposes:
- **educational**
- **personal**
- **private study**
- **reference**
- **research**

Some sites require permission if items are to be used for public display. (For example Club Meetings and competitions) For commercial use it is always necessary to contact the individual source, and any costs are usually higher. If you explore the "Copyright" link at the above site, you can determine the specific requirements of each source.

You might also try your local public library. Many of the larger centers have gone digital and encourage the use of their collections, particularly for historical subjects.
Visit: **http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/**

One of the most fascinating sites for still pictures is the US Library of Congress "American Memories" section. **http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/index.html**
Most of the material originally published by the US Government is in the public domain. Most of the other material is subject to current copyright laws. Here is their disclaimer:

The Library does not grant or deny permission to use the content mounted in American Memory.
Consult the Legal Notices page for more information.

Going to the "Legal Notices Page" is very helpful in explaining their policies regarding copy and privacy rights but you have to observe any links pertaining to legal matters on every page you visit.

A popular spot is their beautiful collection of panoramic photos of many cities and places in North America. One in particular is a panorama of Crystal Beach ON taken in the 1890's.

On the access page for that picture, you can scroll down to the comments:

Special Terms of Use   **No known restrictions on publication.**

Opening the link **[Rights and Reproductions]** on the same page, takes you to a more detailed description of the copy status of the picture. In this case, there *appears* to be no restrictions for use and simply giving credit to the source in your production is probably all that is required.

A recent entry to the internet is **http://openphoto.net/.** This site actually invites you to use their pictures. If you have pictures you would like to share, you can even upload your own.

Video and Film Sources

The American Memories section of the US Library of Congress also has a collection of historical footage, which might add some atmosphere to a production. Their usual disclaimer is that most of the films were copyrighted before 1919 and that they are unaware of any other claims for the material.

If you look closely at the catalogue for these items, you will note that some of the material was donated to the Library much later than 1919 and the donor should be consulted, before copying the film, for possible restrictions.

Film and video are also available from Canadian Archives but nothing is available in electronic format from their Collections Canada website at this time. Video copies of historical newsreels for example, can be purchased. CBC and National Film Board have similar services.

The best place to start looking for moving images is at the "Internet Archive". **http://www.archive.org/**

This is one of the sites referred to above, which is attempting to "liberate" the internet by creating open sources for written and other artistic materials. It was established primarily for the use of researchers but most of the material is available to the general public.

If you go to "Moving Images" you will be taken to a page of more than 25 links to film and video sources.

I have downloaded a lot of material from The Prelinger Archive. Much of it is considered "ephemera", consisting of old TV commercials, company training films, and propaganda and (amusing) sex education films from the early 1950's. If you open the link to a film, you will be given options to view or download the film in a format appropriate to your internet connection. You will note on the right of the film's thumbnail, details about the film, in particular the copyright status.

The sample above is licensed under a "public domain" agreement, in which the owner of the material allows the item to be placed on a website while retaining only limited rights. Copying for personal use is usually permitted. Clicking on "Public Domain" will take you to the "Creative Commons" standard statement.

To read the entire statement and an explanation of the license, you can go to their website.

Full-length PD movies are available for download at: **http://emol.org/movies/faq/index.html**. A valuable listing of films in the public domain can be found at "Desert Island Films". **http://www.desertislandfilms.com/clindex.html**. This site sells footage from those films to professional producers but does not provide a "retail" service which an amateur might use. However, this will tell you the status of many films and what is available, as an aid in your search for specific kinds of material. Since many are in the public domain, there may be duplications of the preceding site.

A Labor of Love

by Bob Barnes

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Bigger is not necessarily better – especially when it comes to sound effects libraries. Most of the SFX collections marketed today are created primarily to support the film or video media. Many are *huge,* full of superfluous sounds, and cost hundreds – sometimes *thousands* - of dollars. A lot of these behemoths are ill-catalogued or over-catalogued making effects hard to find. The catalogues are the size of telephone directories and some list *multiple* libraries published by the same company – you'll often find the effect you need in the *catalog,* but it's in a library *you don't even have!* (I once located "bag pipes" which when auditioned was the sound of someone placing metal pipes into a paper bag! Weeks later, I found the "bagpipes" I was searching for in the same catalogue but in a subdirectory under "Music Cues.")

What's needed – especially for the commercial radio producer – is a *small* library of intensely useful, easy to find, identifiable sounds. Oddly enough, just such a library was created by the legendary recordist Jac Holzman (yes, THEE Jac Holzman of Jimi Hendrix and Doors fame) nearly 50 years ago! And, while most of the sounds remain highly useful even today, it's difficult to find the library in its original, unspoiled edition.

In the early 60's, the Elektra label published 13 vinyl stereo LPs under the less-than-catchy name "Authentic Sound Effects." The hundreds of sounds in this library are more than just sound effects – they're *production* effects in every sense of the word. "Overstuffed Closet" would do Fibber McGee proud. There's a "Mockingbird" track that is perfect for establishing any kind of outdoor scene – golf course, back yard, camping. And no pictures needed here.
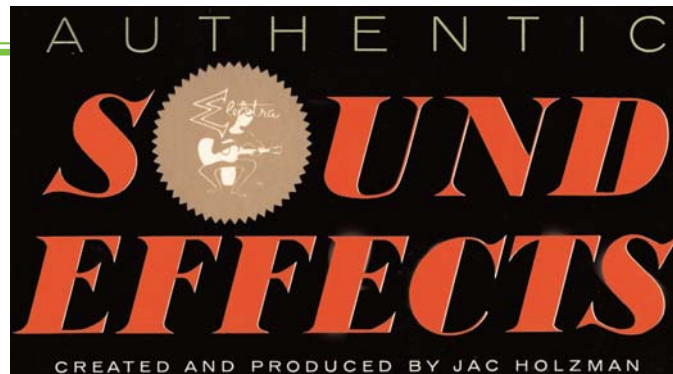
Each sound is arch-typical and instantly identifiable *by ear.* I own 14 complete SFX libraries and a truckload of partials, but after 40 years of producing radio commercials, Elektra is *still* the library I reach for first! Yeah, okay, it *IS* analog – but it's *THAT* good! (And don't knock analog – it still has the highest sampling rate in the industry!)

Unfortunately, unless you have very *old* LPs, produced from the very *first* stampers (and very few remain after all these years) you don't have the *REAL* Jac Holzman library. Y'see, while Jac undoubtedly oversaw the original mastering of this collection of great sounds, later *RE*-mastering (done in the 70's and 80's) must have been handed off to an intern who would've much rather been in the other room lathing a Hendrix LP. The LPs weren't really *mastered* – just *transferred* verbatim with little attention to VU meters or tape speeds. As a result, the later releases are full of effects mastered at wrong speeds, widely varying volume and EQ from track-to-track, and even multiple effects superimposed onto each other (caused by differing head configurations.) Lion roars sound like alley cats, subways sound like sewing machines, and "New Year's Eve at Times Square" sounds like the munchkin scenes from The Wizard of Oz.

It's easy to understand how this happened when you know the catch-as-catch-can practice of collecting effects on the street. If you've ever recorded sound in the field you know that you often have to grab effects when they occur or you just don't get them at all. Here's a typical scenario that might have gone down: Ol' Jac and his trusty Nagra are out recording with a film crew when a shot is delayed due to "ambient sound." Let's say there's a Shriner's parade coming down the street. Now, the parade would make a great edition to Jac's stock library, but he only has 50 feet of tape left on the 5-inch reel. Jac has 3 choices: 1) roll tape and get a partial recording, 2) take time to thread up a new tape and chance missing the effect altogether, or 3) switch the Nag to a slower record speed to double his record time. It's a no-brainer – especially for Jac - since he knows *he'll* be doing the mastering of the effects and can match the tape speeds "on the fly" during the lathing process. Not so with the intern!

The library suffered even more when it "went digital" in the mid-80's. The CD version of the library had only 4 discs. Less than a third of the tracks from the 13 original LP's made the cut! Both the vinyl and CDs were soon relegated to the bargain bin at Goody's. So, little wonder that most people who got into audio production after the Johnsons left the White House have ever *heard* of this great little library.

Well, late last year during a move to a new home, I stumbled upon a nearly untouched Elektra Authentic Sound Effects Library I'd stowed away in a box with some other old vinyl. Only two volumes were missing and all but two more were still in the original shrink wrap! I vowed that as soon as we got settled, I was going to restore this great old collection of production effects.

What followed was truly a labor of love. I started by copying each LP to CoolEdit Pro 2000 using a great old 1958 Empire 208E turntable with a Shure SME tonearm and Stanton cartridge routed through a Dynaco Pat 5 preamp. I then compared the effects from the vinyl to the ones on the CD edition of the library. When I found duplicates, I replaced the vinyl cut with one digitally imported from the CD.

Next, I re-sampled and corrected any sounds that were mastered at the wrong speed. (Only a couple on the two missing LP's where I had to improvise from the "Intern Edition.")

Then came the hard part – cleaning up the remaining analog cuts. Although CoolEdit Pro has a pretty good "pop & click" removal" plug-in, I *manually* removed any pops, clicks, and scratches *one* at a *time*. Not only was I more discerning than the software, it gave me a great opportunity to re-acquaint myself with the effects and their layout. I also used CEP's fade in/out feature to ramp 4 seconds of complete silence in between each cut.

I then made one CD .wav master for each of the 13 LPs with the exact same tracks in the exact same order as they appeared on the original LPs. I filed each effect under a filename that began with the letters EK (for Electra) and a 4-digit code that related to LP number and cut number, followed by the effect's title as it appeared on the vinyl. Example: "EK0504 Blizzard.wav" i.e.: "Elektra Library, Volume 05, Cut 04, Blizzard." I made protection copies of the 13 CD's and filed them away for safe keeping.

Finally, I used CoolEdit to batch convert ALL of the cuts to 256k, 44.1 .mp3 files, and… *PUT THE ENTIRE LIBRARY ON JUST TWO CDs!* I carry it in my briefcase so I have it wherever I'm producing. I also left the entire .mp3 library on my hard drive so I can import any effect in a heartbeat when I'm working in my own digs. To make each sound easier to find, I made three major folders – one each with the cuts arranged by volume number, by title alphabetically, and under sub-directories by sound type (Transportation, Weather, Crowds, etc.)

The whole thing worked out so well I'm now looking at other old vinyl SFX - including a Hanna Barbera Library, the classic CBS "gray-label" LPs, and a Big Sound Library produced by Warner Bros in the 50's. It has lots of great Looney Tunes effects – not those cheap imitations you can buy on CDs cluttered with silly character dialog. No, sir. These are the real thing - right off the Warner Bros mag stripes! Zip-pow-bonk! "Th-th-that's ALL, Folks!" ∎

"His implication was, of course, that our terms of reference should be to cater to those who are actively engaged in producing movies rather than for those who are passively appreciating them. But is it really that simple?

...I don't think so, and that's because I'm a great believer in the principle of learning from example. If some particular technique or dramatic device can be seen to have worked in practice, then surely it must help those who are trying to make movies themselves.

Therefore I suggest that there is no inherent contradiction in a magazine with the title Movie Maker occasionally bringing to the attention of readers professional films - old or new - that could be instructive by giving them a greater insight into the medium."

Alan then continues with some examples:

"I learnt, for example, that you could get visual humour out of a pompous character at a railway station by lining up the shot so that smoke from a locomotive appeared to be puffing out of his top hat (I Know Where I'm Going)…

...How, for instance, do you cue an aeroplane to zoom into shot on a given line of dialogue? There is just such a moment in A Matter of Life and Death ...

David Niven, as the pilot who thinks he must be dead because he baled out over the sea without a parachute, is walking up a deserted beach. He encounters a pipe-playing young lad and, believing himself to be in the Next World asks where he has to report.

"Report?" queries the boy; "Oh, you mean the aerodrome over there."

"The aerodrome!" responds Niven with surprise - as a large plane suddenly roars over head.

Of course, the trick is that the scene is really done in two shots. The boy delivers his you-mean-the-aerodrome speech, then we cut to a slightly different set-up as the aircraft flies into frame and Niven

2006 SCCA Annual Competition

A new season of SCCA film competition is upon us, and as contest chair I hope you are busy in these cooler months of the Canadian year, in preparation of your submissions for the early summer.

Again this year the competition will include a Division for Scripts:

Class "F" - The SCCA Award - Presented for the best script and should be an original simple single story. The treatment shall not exceed 1200 words. It should describe the story, as it will unfold on the screen, by giving the producer and production crew a clear picture of the writer's mental concept of the action transpiring. Locations should contain sufficient description to enable the director to establish time of day, mood, atmosphere and pace. Outline the story in terms of its major scenes. Keep narration to a minimum. Complete verbatim dialogue is not necessary. The idea is more important than the verbiage. However, a sample of a scene or sequence of dialogue will be expected. A "shooting script" is not required. Simplicity should be its chief value.

This category has not had sufficient entries recently to make a challenging contest, and it is hoped that this contest category may be revived to past glories.

As an assistance to script submissions, and with the able assistance of 'screenwriter" Thom Speechley from the London Videography club, I am including here a SAMPLE script which I hope will spur your imaginations, and guide you in the preparation of your prize winning script submissions this year. This script illustrates all the suggestions above, and uses a clear formatting, but isn't necessarily the only way to conform with the guidelines.

Remember, YOUR script may be the basis of a video made in the future by other club members, and I would encourage you to start writing!

Keith Gloster

Hoist With My Own Petard

Tom, a man in his late thirties and Kenny, a seven-year-old boy, are seated on the front porch of a house. Tom looks anxiously at his watch.

Tom
Where is that guy? It's been over an hour.

An automobile turns into the driveway. Tom walks to the car.

Tom
Where have you been? We were supposed to leave over an hour ago.

Tom walks around the car, inspecting it and shaking his head. It is a nine-year-old convertible, in bad shape, with the top down. Tom was expecting Mike to arrive in his 2 year old Falcon.
The delay was necessitated in order for Mike to transfer his insurance to the older car.
All get into car, back out of driveway and drive off.

In the car, on a gravel road. Dust billowing up from the floorboards.
Tom insists that Mike stop and put up the top to help stop the dust.
Car pulls to shoulder and Mike, muttering begins to raise the top. They drive off.

The car is now on a paved road. Mike looks at gas gauge and declares they will have to stop for gas.
Tom chastises Mike for not filling up for lower prices at home. Car pulls into service station
Attendant proceeds to fill tank. Suddenly a man runs from the office shouting excitedly in a Slavic tongue:

He rushes to the rear of the car pointing at the gasoline cutting a channel in his newly paved lot. Tom gets out of car while Mike starts to fumble with the trunk and notices that his license plate is missing. Mike wants to go back to retrieve the plate but Tom insists they find out where the gas leak is. When the trunk is opened they can see a gaping hole in the spare tire well and gas running onto the lot. Tom comments that this means they will have to stop for gas again.
They resume their journey.

As predicted, they have to make another stop for gas. After buying a snack they walk back to the car. Tom asks if he might drive for awhile. He thinks Mike is driving too fast. Mike hands Tom the keys. A short time after resuming their trip, there is a loud bang and the car lurches to the right.

Tom
A bloody tire's gone.

Mike
Grabbing the wheel

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I thought everything was OK

Tom
Steering to the shoulder

Let go of the blasted wheel! I've got it.

At the shoulder they sit a few seconds in silence

Tom
You OK Kenny?

Kenny
Uh…. Yeah

Thom
Turning to Mike

Well! Are you just going to sit there?

Mike turns to get out of the car but pauses with one leg out the door

Mike
Oh!

Tom
For Heaven's Sake don't tell me. You don't have a spare.

Mike
Yes, I do. But it's flat

Tom
In other words, we're stuck out here, miles from nowhere and we don't have a spare!

A few more seconds of silence

Tom
Well. It's about six or seven miles to Port Elgin. It's now 10 o'clock.
With any luck there might be somebody open who can help you.
You'll have to thumb. Lets hope a few kind-hearted people come this way.

Mike removes the spare, carries it to the edge of the road and waits for a car. And waits. Tom makes sure Kenny is comfortable and suggests that he get some sleep. A car with three teenagers, coming from the other direction, stops and offers Mike a ride to Port Elgin.

It is now after 11PM. Kenny is asleep. Tom is listening to the radio, hoping the battery is not the next thing to go! A pickup truck arrives, makes a "U" turn and stops in front of the car. Mike and the driver, laughing and in animated conversation, begin to replace the flat on the convertible.
Tom is now really annoyed but Mike explains that his helper, Earl couldn't leave the gas station unattended until 11 o'clock. The tire is changed and they drive off.

They eventually arrive at the cottage where they are greeted by Tom's wife Eileen.

Eileen
Well, you're in a great mood. What's wrong?

Tom
Never mind. We can discuss it in the morning

Next day, Mike has just returned from a trip to Owen Sound where he has purchased a new tire and parts for his Cadillac. Tom steps out of the cottage to greet him.

Mike
Boy! Was I lucky. They not only had a new door handle but a complete
lock assembly for the boot. All new!

Tom
You are putting new parts on this piece of…pause ..crap?

Mike
But this car is a collectible!

Mike asks Tom to help him install a new trunk lock, which he has purchased.
Tom agrees but advises that he is waiting for his infant daughter to wake up and that she will need attention.
After finding his tools and a flashlight Mike crawls into the trunk and asks Tom to close it slowly so that he can adjust the striker plate. Tom slowly lowers the trunk lid while Mike calls out instructions.
After several minutes Tom hears his daughter crying from the cottage and he quickly goes in to attend to her.
Inside he picks up Meg from her crib and carries her to the living room to change her. Meanwhile thumping and banging still coming from the trunk. Then Tom hears, faintly:

Mike
Tom! Oh! Tom

Tom
Oh Shoot! I forgot Mike!

Mike has managed to partly extricate himself by crawling feet first out through the convertible top.
His legs are waving frantically. Tom calls out:

Tom
Can't you get out?

Mike
No! It's locked. My torch went out. I can't see.

Tom opens the car door and checks the ignition for the keys.

Tom
Where are the keys?

Mike
Oh! They are in my pants pocket

Tom

To himself

Of course! Darn! Why isn't he parked on a dock?
Just a little shove would do it.

Mike manages to remove the keys from his Pocket, shove his arm out the opening in the soft-top and presents the keys. Tom opens the trunk, Mike exits, with some effort

----

Next day Tom and Eileen are fishing from a small pontoon boat
Eileen chastises Tom for treating Mike so poorly. Why did he invite Mike?
Tom explained that he needed a ride because it would have cost too much to pay for use of his company car.

Eileen
So! You are being rewarded for your cheapness.
I think the phrase is "Hoist with your own petard"

Tom
Yes! Yes! I know.

Someone is swimming towards the boat.

Eileen
My gosh. Is that Mike? Yes. He's heading straight for us.

Mike arrives at the boat and clambers aboard.

Eileen
Mike! We're trying to fish

Mike
Oh don't mind me. I just want to dive once or twice.

Mike dives. The boat rocks. Eileen waves angrily at Mike.

Eileen
Do you want to drown him? Or may I do it?

Creating Your Own Movie Music

Those who attended the 2005 SCCA Convention will recall that John Conley, a musician familiar with Band-in-a-Box, was to be a Speaker. Unfortunately, John was suddenly taken very ill at the last moment and was forced to cancel. Almost as disappointed as the rest of us, John offered to provide this article for PANORAMA.

by John Conley

Music. It may be the rhythmic sound of waves breaking on a rocky beach, the distant cries of seagulls and the lilting laughter of children drifting over the subtle sound of the surf. Or it may be the frenzied sound of a New Orleans Jazz Band marching up the street during Mardi Gras with horns and a crowd providing background to the cacophony. Every video project can use music of some sort. Music can be as simple as a one note repeated over and over. It can be just percussion, or it can be a whole orchestra and choir.

Let's explore a few basics. I'm going to use a simple example the TV show "M.A.S.H." The 7 most common notes of the melody would probably be recognized by each of us. They show up at the start of the show and the end of the show. Well, that's not a new concept, Mozart's operas basically start with a theme and tempo and resolve back to that to make a conclusion, even if many minutes have passed. But during the T.V. show the music is used to make us feel something. The same notes come light and airy when that's the mood desired, but turn sinister as the plot turns. When sad is called for, the notes take a slow turn, and the instrumentation becomes 'ominous'.

A University teaches courses in Music Composition. You take Music History, Theory, Theory of Composition, study, practice, learn to write simple lines, but wait a minute...you have a video and need to produce some music to go with it. There are no fast food music outlets, you can't go to a drive through and ask for 10 minutes of an appropriate arrangement to use as an introduction to your latest video you are calling Roses Blooming at the Royal Botanical Garden at Dawn. With a little side order of a hummingbird darting about the flowers, where you want a faster tempo, light and airy and playful. Oh, and give me for desert a little ditty for my slow motion shot, a close up in the dewy mist where a petal falls from a rose and flutters down to sit on the damp black earth.

Technology has a wonderful way of solving problems and dropping new ones in our laps. Colour in movies and television has only been available for a few scant years on the timeline of life, yet now anyone with a few dollars can purchase a system that movie-makers in 1960 could only dream about in science fiction. We have the ability to do some amazing things, and buried in that array of new and exciting tools is a way to produce music using a computer and some imagination. That tool is Band-in-a-Box.

Band-in-a-Box is an apt name for a product that is just that, but in many ways has gone far beyond that. It's an orchestra in a box, a songwriter in a box, a recording studio in a box, and a practice tool in a box. It can make you decent music, and with a little patience to get past the learning curve, will become a source of enjoyment for years to come. After all, making a video is a form of communication, and music is an integral part of getting your message into the heads of the target audience.

Let's go back to our project. We need some music. New age, drifting, slow beat, and we need about 4 minutes of that. In Band in Box there are styles, hundreds of styles. In short a style will match a type of music. For example the 'twist' style. A 60's thing, a dance beat, pretty fast. We don't need that. The creators of Band-in-a-Box developed some styles for use in soundtracks. If we were doing a video or film about a cruise night with guys in ducktails and 57 Chevy's we just might try that twist style. However I have a look in the styles library and I discover a style called float. That has promise. Along with a current version
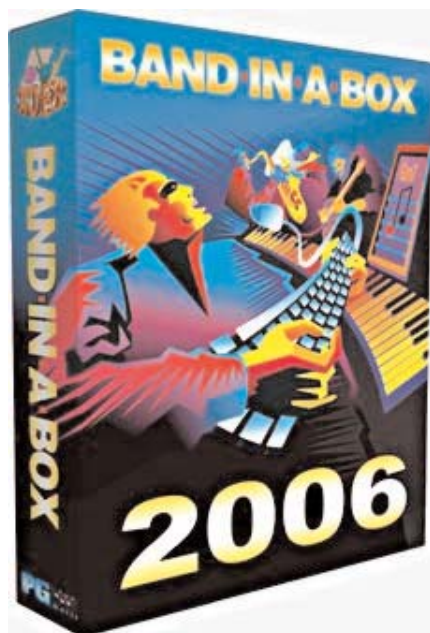
of Band-in-a-Box you get a "fakebook" This fakebook has songs already written by the people who make Band-in-a-Box to demonstrate what the product can do for your project. Note that I said I wanted something slow and dreamy. So I choose the float style. This is dreamy style. We can listen to examples of the float style in the fakebook to get an idea.

Inspiration can come in many ways. The theme from "M.A.S.H." has some nice chords. So we go to the internet and amongst the users of Band-in-a-Box search the some almost 10,000 tunes that we can download and stick in a library on our computer. These contain old things like "Grandfather's Clock" to newer projects users have done like the music to "Phantom of the Opera". I get the song, and load the theme from "M.A.S.H." It's 18 bars long, with 3 verses. No need to do the math, we need 4 minutes of music as an introduction, but Band-in-a-Box will display the length of your piece at the very top of the screen. We now apply the float style to the music. This will change the instruments, and the tempo. I ignore a few warnings; of course this is an experiment. We can undo, redo, or change directions many times.

We cannot use the actual tune from M.A.S.H. due to copyright restrictions, so we press Melodist. From there I can choose a type of melody. Let's try the tranquil piano soundtrack option. By making some selections the Melodist options we can choose to use the chords for M.A.S.H., which cannot be copyrighted. We apply the Melodist to our project and it writes for us a new melody. If we don't' like that result we just do it again, it's only taking a few seconds to write us a new melody. Once we return to the main screen we will change the style, so we find the float style that was designed for soundtracks. Selecting that style gives us 3 verses at a particular tempo. We can change the verses and tempo until we arrive at our time, about 4 minutes, let's add a few seconds for fade in and fade out and we now have 4 minutes of music that we own. At this point each instrument can be

changed, that's just a mouse click. We can change the melody instrument from piano to 'atmosphere', which sounds like a choir. We can change the volume of each instrument with a mouse click, and we can change where it sits in the stereo spectrum, that is move it left or right. We can add reverb and chorus. We will choose to leave the melody dead centre, and pan the drums and strings or whatever instruments we want to broaden the spectrum we have available. We experiment bringing up the melody, making it an octave higher, an octave lower; try other instruments until we get a feel that this should get saved!

We open the WAV button, and direct render the project to a .wav file to use with our video. It's 4 minutes 3 seconds long, and will probably be just less than 40 megabytes of data.

An experienced Band-in-a-Box user can probably crank out a project like that in about an hour. I will share one thing with you though, I will then load the file into a free download you can find on the internet called Audacity. This is an editing tool. All I can say is that it polishes the project, letting you apply effects, add volume, adjust the dynamics, and fade in and fade out. It would even convert your .wav file to an mp3 if you wish. There are audio effect plug-ins that allow you to preview your track with a reverb resembling a cathedral or a garage. This step is often part of what the audio people call mastering. You can Google that!

I suppose at this point we might launch into a discussion about how to use this material. Do you drop the music onto your timeline and edit to the music? Do you cut on beats, off beats, or do you use either Audacity or your editing software to create crescendo's. Well, we will all have opinions in that regard and that's another discussion for another time.

In conclusion Band-in-a-Box is more than the band. It can be your compos-

er, your inspiration, and tool that you can add to your video 'garage'. And what good is a mechanic with a little basket of 2 or 3 tools. Music can set the mood, add punch, and compliment your production. And if you ever played an instrument and still have it kicking around you are going to have a blast with this multi-faceted and entertaining software. You can find Band-in-a-Box online. It is the creation of Peter Gannon of PG Music in Victoria, British Columbia. The website has an excellent users' group. They will provide you with lots of help and suggestions, and are very friendly. They provide excellent customer service and stand behind their project. There is a free download trial version, but it does not contain the soundtrack styles.

I should add one technical note as a postscript. Band-in-a-Box uses MIDI. This is a music standard for computers. Many computers come with little intrinsic soundcards that play through a ten-cent speaker. The music sounds cheap and cheesy. For a few dollars you can buy something better. For a lot of bucks you can buy a whole commercial sound system. I have a $50 external USB soundcard from Creative Labs, which I think is great.

Other members of the Band-in-a-Box users group have hundreds of dollars more gear that runs 'SoundFonts'. I will however stress that the user's group will help you through picking what is right for you at a price you can afford. ∎

Notes:
PG Music website:
http://.pgmusic.com
Examples of music for soundtracks are at:
http://pgmusic.com/styles50.htm
Audacity is at:
http://audacity.soundforge.net
USB SoundBlaster is at:
http://us.creative.com/products

Finding Music and Sounds

Previous articles in PANORAMA have listed several sites for free sound effects and of course SCCA now has a very large collection of assorted sound and music tracks which members can access without royalty fees or copyright considerations. However it's useful to have additional links if you ever have more specific needs.

If you got to the "Audio" link from the "Archive.org" page, you will be presented with a listing of music and sound sites similar to the one for moving images. There appears to be less free material in this category up there. Most are downloadable electronic music tracks requiring a modest fee, or free "loops" to be incorporated into your music software program. One site worth visiting with actual free tracks is **http://freesound.iua.upf.edu/**, which also operates under the Creative Commons licensing scheme. It also has a few "payfor" links but most offer materials without cost

We may have to wait awhile to find out how successful the activists are in making intellectual property more freely available. The Canadian Heritage Minister, who was promoting a more restrictive Act, was defeated in the recent federal election. Several websites are dedicated to that legislation, Bill C60. Other links can be found at **http://www.digital-copy right.ca/links.shtml activists.** This is also a useful site to locate specific details about copyright in Canada and abroad. To keep abreast of Canadian legislation, go to the Canadian Copyright Board.
http://cb-cda.gc.ca/new-e.html.
Another valuable site is Canadian Intellectual Properties Office website: **http://strategis.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/ cipo/welcome/welcom-e.html**

In conclusion, to borrow a well worn phrase: "There Ain't No Free Lunch". However, if you have the time, and the appetite, browsing for public domain material is fun and rewarding. This is a legitimate way for the amateur to use someone else's creation in their production. ■

Thom Speechley © 2006

WHAT'S *New* IN HIGH DEFINITION TV?
(PART 5)

By Bryan Belfont

Here at last is the article and chart that I have been promising all of you for the past year. Last issue I dealt with all the latest gear from Sony and this time I will look at the rest of the market. If you have all read <u>and kept</u> my article from Part One of What's New in the Spring 2005 issue of PANORAMA you will have some idea of the specifications and choices in choosing a High Definition TV (HDTV).

Specifications and Choices

First a quick review. The TV signal we have been using for the past 50 years is now called Standard TV (SDTV). It has 480 lines <u>interlaced</u> (480i) and is equivalent to VHS in quality. The next step up is Enhanced TV (EDTV), which has 480 lines <u>progressive</u> (480p) and is DVD quality. Now we are in the process of moving up to High Definition TV (HDTV). At present, this comes in a couple of flavors. HDTV programming is transmitted in 720p or 1080i. There is some debate as to which is better but you have no choice here as you get the signal that was sent to you. The only thing to be aware of is that your new TV should receive both 720p and 1080i. Of course, in a few years' time all this will change as the TV broadcasters are already talking about 1080p. But for that you will need a TV with a resolution of 1920 x 1080. The important thing to know is that in June 2006, all US TV stations must broadcast all programs in HDTV (which is digital) and in SDTV (which is analog). In December of 2006 the US stations must cease broadcasting in SDTV. If you have not purchased an HDTV by then you will need a "set-top box" to download and convert the HDTV signal to SDTV.

Tuners

Just because your TV has HDTV resolution does not mean it will be able to show you HDTV programs. Your current analog TV has a National Television System Committee (NTSC) tuner. To receive HDTV signals you must have an Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) tuner. In fact, for now you will need a TV that has both NTSC and ATSC or you will not be able to watch any of the current programming. (Be careful; some TVs are advertised with "Two Tuners" but they are both NTSC to give you picture-in-Picture).

Displays

The other choice you will have to make is on the type of display: <u>Plasma</u>, <u>LCD</u>, <u>LCD Rear Projection</u>, or <u>DLP Rear Projection</u>. There is a ton of information on the Internet regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each of these displays. In my opinion it all comes down to your budget As you can see in the following chart, you can buy a 42-inch LCD or DLP Rear Projection for about $2,500. If you want a TV to hang on the wall, the choice is a 42" Plasma or a flat screen LCD for $4,000 or $5,000. If you have the money and want to go really big your choice is limited to LCD Rear Projection or Plasma. Sony has a 70" <u>Qualia</u> TV for $17,000 while Panasonic has a 65" Plasma for $20,000! Now let's get back to the real world.

How long will my TV last?

At present the life of a Plasma TV is the shortest. If you choose Plasma you should be aware that while the Plasma TVs have a life of 60,000 hours the gas inside has a half life of 30,00 hours and the TV will now only be half as bright as when it was new and the gas cannot be replaced. If you buy a flat panel LCD you should expect your TV to last about 60,000 hours. However as time goes by some of the LCD pixels will die and tiny black dots will appear on your screen The big advantage of the LCD and DLP Rear Projection sets is that they have a lamp that can be replaced for about $200. Manufacturers put the life of the lamp at 80,000 hours.

But don't worry too much, if your TV had a lifespan of 60,000 hours, and watched it 24 hours a day, it would take you almost 7 years to wear out your TV display. With more normal viewing habits of, say, 8 hours per day, you can extend the lifespan of your TV to about 20 years!

I hope this information is helpful in choosing your HDTV. For your information I bought the 50" Sony KDF-E50A10 LCD Rear Projection. "Bigger is Better". ■

This article appeared first in the Vancouver Video Production Club's REEL TALK, and is reprinted with minor changes with the permission of the author.

Bryan Belfont at belfont@telus.net

What's New in HDTV? (Part 5)

DIGITAL TELEVISION COMPARISON CHART - NOVEMBER 2005

SOURCE	MODEL	SIZE	DISPLAY	FORMAT	PIXELS	INTERFACE	TUNER	PRICE
Hitachi	42V525	42"	LCD Rear Proj	EDTV	1280 x 720	HDMI	NTSC	$2,000
LG	RU-44SZ80L	44"	LCD Rear Proj	HDTV	1280 x 720	DVI	NTSC	$2,000
Sony	KF-E42A10	42"	LCD Rear Proj	HDTV	1280 x 720	HDMI	NTSC	$2,300
Sony	**KDF-E42A10**	**42"**	**LCD Rear Proj.**	**HDTV**	**1280 x 720**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$2,500**
LG	**RU-44SZ8D**	**44"**	**DLP Rear Proj**	**HDTV**	**1280 x 720**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$2,500**
Samsung	HLR-4264	42"	DLP Rear Proj	HDTV	1280 x 720	HDMI	NTSC	$2,000
Toshiba	44NHM85	44"	DLP Rear Proj	HDTV	1280 x 720	HDMI	NTSC	$2,000
JVC	**LT-40X776**	**40"**	**LCD**	**HDTV**	**1366 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,000**
LG	**42-LP1D**	**42"**	**LCD**	**HDTV**	**1386 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$5,000**
Sharp	**LC-45GD7U**	**44"**	**LCD**	**HDTV**	**1920 x 1080**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$7,500**
Samsung	**LNR-408D**	**40"**	**LCD**	**HDTV**	**1368 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,000**
Sony	KLV-S40A10	40"	LCD	EDTV	1366 x 768	HDMI	NTSC	$3,500
Sony	**KDL-V40XBR**	**40"**	**LCD**	**HDTV**	**1386 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,500**
Hitachi	**42-HDT52**	**42"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 x 1024**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,500**
Hitachi	**42-HDF52**	**42"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 x 1024**	**DVI**	**ATSC**	**$4,000**
JVC	PD-42V485	42"	Plasma	EDTV	852 x 480	HDMI	NTSC	$3,500
LG	42-PX10	42"	Plasma	EDTV	852 x 480	DVI	NTSC	$3,000
LG	**DU-42PX12**	**42"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 X 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,000**
Panasonic	TH-42PD50	42"	Plasma	EDTV	852 x 480	HDMI	ATSC	$3,000
Panasonic	**TH-42PX50**	**42"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1366 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$4,000**
Pioneer	**PDP4360HD**	**43"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$5,000**
Pioneer	**PRO-930HD**	**43"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$7,000**
Samsung	SPP-4231	42"	Plasma	EDTV	852 x 480	DVI	NTSC	$2,500
Samsung	**HP-R4252**	**42"**	**Plasma**	**HDTV**	**1024 x 768**	**HDMI**	**ATSC**	**$3,500**

Models shown in bold have HDTV resolution and an ATSC tuner and are recommended for HDTV viewing.

Note that some models have HDTV resolution but no ATSC tuner.
One Panasonic model has an ATSC tuner but only EDTV resolution.

time too, when the club had nearly split apart with dissention. Fortunately, some cooler heads prevailed and thanks to those people we are still here. We may not have a large group as we had in the 1950's, with a membership of over 125 people, but we are still here and we are still plugging along, which I believe gives credit to that group of eight people who sat down in that room in the Free Press Building all these many years ago.

AMATEUR MOVIE MAKERS ASSOCIATION,
AMMA Monitor, Edited by Mark Levy.

To the Editor: The rules for an amateur event should be constructed such as to make it a fair, level playing ground for all contestants. I will address a couple of the specifics in a minute, but, in my opinion, the amateur contest should be based on one inviolable condition:

The producer (contestant) should not receive any compensation from any source, nor should anyone involved in the project be compensated for participating. This would include expenses. Sometimes we see entries produced with "grants" from corporations, government agencies or tourist or trade associations. Ostensibly, this may be to secure permits and to compensate the actors for living and travel expenses. I am totally opposed to this practice. Nobody in an amateur production should be paid. This includes narration, editing, lights, etc. If the producer wants to include 500 elephants and an army of thousands crossing the Alps, then it is going to require some work to get this done without pay.

I personally don't think we should limit the number of people in the project. Some projects will require more people than others. (It's no easy feat to co-ordinate 500 elephants, let me tell you!)

Now, I would like to comment on some specific issues.

Professional

If a contestant had Roman soldiers in uniform, this may or may not have been professional. As far as "looking professional", all amateurs should strive to have great white balance, exposure, audio, lighting, and shot selection. The wonderful equipment available to us now makes it possible to have a movie projected on a large screen looking like a Disney production.

Professional Video Clips

The legal aspects aside, we have, in the past, allowed the use of brief movie or network television clips, if proper credit is given. A length of 10% of the total movie has been mentioned. Well, people, that is a heck of a lot in a 15-minute production. The Board should decide whether to allow this usage or not. If so, how much would be allowable?

Buy-Out Audio

I personally have used buy-out audio in my productions the last few years; however, many have not, and have used commercial audio. Yes, New York, New York seems to have been used quite frequently. Some productions just can't use buy-out music. I thought Ron Reinie had a very moving and wonderful production last year (in AMPS, I believe) when he set some beautiful fantasies to "Windows of the Mind". I'm glad we did not have the "buy-out rule" in effect. Again it is up to the Board to decide the matter.

This wraps up a few of my thoughts on the subject. I would be anxious to hear from others. - **Malcom Colditz**

I.A.C. THE FILM AND VIDEO INSTITUTE,
FILM & VIDEO MAKERS, Edited by Garth Hope, LICI

Wind noise, by Howard Gregory

Sound waves are air in motion. Wind is air in motion. The energy in typical wind may be a hundred thousand times as great as the energy in typical sound. We have a problem.

There are several aspects to the problem, and several solutions. Obviously we'll have to deal with them one at a time, but in a real solution more then one effect may be happening simultaneously, and more than one solution may be needed simultaneously.

Wind produces energy at extremely low frequencies. The overwhelming majority of wind 'sound' is, fortunately, below the range that we can hear (i.e. infrasonic). Only the very highest wind frequencies are audible as a rumble. However, infrasonics can effect our microphones, our AGC Circuits (see later, and listen to the CD) etc. and cause side-effects which ARE audible.

Wind affects a mic in two ways: wind pressure variations acting directly on the diaphragm of the mic itself, turbulence of the wind over the outside of the microphone and anything near it, like the noise you get from an open car window, but on a smaller scale.

Different mics react to these two components in different ways.

Directional mics obtain their directional characteristic by the use of various ducts, ports, interference tubes, dual diaphragms etc. The upshot is that they respond to the pressure DIFFERENCE between two points or ports, which can be some distance apart. They are thus very susceptible to wind pressure gradients near the mic.

Omni directional mics on the other hand respond to pressure at one point. They are almost immune to the effects of pressure gradients.

Both types pick up the rumble produced by local turbulence .

These differences mean that a windshield designed for an omni-directional mic (i.e. just reducing turbulence – possibly just a lozenge of foam rubber) may not be adequate for a directional one. However, a windshield designed for a directional mic will be equally good for an omni. Most professional shields fall into this category. As far as I know, the largest manufacturer is Rycote Microphone Windshields of Stroud, England. You see their products daily on TV, all over the world.

Perverse as it may seem, good quality mics are usually more susceptible to wind disturbance than cheap ones This is simply because cheap mics tend to have a restricted bass response, which is why they produce such thin and weedy-sounding recordings. Far better to use a decent mic and put it into a decent windshield. On a calm day, an omni may appear to be OK with no protection at all. However, I don't recommend this. Conditions can deteriorate surprisingly rapidly, and a never-to-be repeated event may suddenly happen in a nearby exposed location. You wouldn't want to miss it. As an absolute minimum, use a foam rubber 'pop' shield. These are really intended as protection from a singer's close breath, but also have a 'smoothing effect on wind flow over the head of the mic, reducing turbulence noise. Turbulence over the mic body won't be a problem until higher wind speeds, but you might have trouble due to wind entering via holes around switches, connectors, etc.

Some recordists use a second foam shield, lower down the body, to smooth airflow over switches and connectors. You can often see mics thus equipped, mounted on stands outside 10 Downing St. just behind Andrew Marr's right ear. That might be OK under specific, predictable, conditions, but when I go out, I like to feel that I can cope with whatever I find, so I strongly recommend enclosing the whole mic in larger basket-type shield. ■

takes the cue for his line <u>from the plane.</u> The camera angles and image sizes are so carefully chosen that the audience is hardly aware of the cut and it's only when you're watching out for it on subsequent viewings that you notice how it's been done.

Yes, there's a lot to be said for watching - and discussing - movies - even if you're a film maker."

Agreed?

Agreed!

Almost.

The problem is, how many times do you have to see <u>Psycho</u> at the theatre or on TV just to count, let alone study, the myriad of shots Hitch used just for the shower stabbing scene? You really need to rock and roll the print on a Movieola to study the niceties of technique. Or...If I just had one of those fancy VTR's with slow motion, single frame advance, and all the bells and whistles, I could properly study the cutting of any film that ever comes on TV. Wow!

Meanwhile, with just $4.25 (or at no added expense in my living room), I can try to pick up some more general pointers from the pros.

Currently setting box office records is <u>Stir Crazy,</u> bringing together again on the silver screen that wacky duo from <u>Silver Streak,</u> Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor. Most people with whom I've discussed the films agree that the former (actually the latter, chronologically) is not as funny as the latter (actually the former).

They also agree that the latter part of <u>Stir Crazy</u> is not nearly as funny as the first part. It starts out funny, and stays funny for a long time, but then the humour lets down, or rather, gets bogged down in the plot, as the protagonists plod through the intricacies of a complex escape plan reminiscent of <u>Mission Impossible.</u> (Remember how funny that was?)

It's instructive to compare <u>Stir Crazy</u> with two other films which shared a more successful formula. <u>Silver Streak (The End)</u> begins seriously, developing quickly into a humourous film starring Gene Wilder (Burt Reynolds) until, in an audience-shocking scene, the director introduces the zanier second banana, Richard Pryor (Dom DeLuise) and the film achieves a consistent hilarity from that point right through to a big finish. <u>Stir Crazy,</u> which comes later, suffers by comparison.

You can draw your own conclusions, but I think this illustrates two observations:

Observation 1: An audience tends to remember (and judge) a film by its ending.

Observation 2: An audience tends to sub-consciously compare what they are looking at now to what they have just seen.

Corollary 1:

A film looks poorer than it is if the preceding film was better. (Ask the man who puts together your club's film shows.)

Corollary 2:

A film looks poorer than its average if what comes before is better than what comes after.

The second corollary is more often operative in amateur than in professional films.

One reason is that the competence of professionals is more uniform. I can recall three amateur films which I have seen in the past year which disappointed me this way; one sinned by having brilliant satirical humour in the first few sequences, one foundered on a beautifully handled opening mood of mystery and expectancy, and the third was cursed with gorgeous cinematography and stunning optical effects in the title shots. The obvious solution, of course, is the one for which we all strive so diligently:

Consistent Excellence!

Failing that, as we all do, we might heed the plea of Dom DeLuise in his comedy-magic act: "Save it for the end!" This brings us to the second reason why professionals seldom run aground

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MEMBERSHIP FEES; June 1st 2005 to May 31st, 2006

<u>Class "A"</u> *(voting)*

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on corollary 2; the placement of the climax. I'll spare you a full review of dramatic structure, pacing, and all that stuff, if you'll just stay with me for my Big Point.

Let's suppose your holiday cruise visited three islands, you have good footage of them all, and you want to put them all into one little film. But the first island was the most beautiful, the sun was always out, the locals were very active and photogenic, and you did your best work there. Cheat! Put that island at the end! The film will look better, and be more entertaining, if you overcome your feeling of guilt about historical accuracy. Hollywood, that great revisionist, rarely lets truth spoil a good yarn!

So it's obvious that the same principle can be applied to narrative films. Even at the script stage it is evident that some scenes are inherently less interesting than others. First, of course, you try to punch them up, or change their locale, or write alternative scenes that will still advance your plot, but in a more attention-grabbing style. If all else fails, you may have to resort to manipulation of the chronology of the story to ensure the optimum placement of the parts in the whole. (Can you think of any other reason for flashbacks?)

Lastly, I want to make certain that I don't appear to be promoting the proliferation of my pet peeve! By "saving the best till the end" I don't mean that the climax should be the last shot! Nothing irks me more than the blackout film; the one gag joke that ends abruptly on the "punch-line". Unfortunately, this seems to be what-we-cut-our-teeth-on. (Me too!) I realize this is probably personal taste, and I may be unique in this aversion, but with the cost of film making being what it is, if you just have a joke to tell me, why not just tell me verbally?

If, on the other hand, you've gone to the trouble of engaging my interest in your plot and in your characters, please stick around a moment after the climax to tidy up the loose ends. Admittedly, this should be short. Stir Crazy's problem was that the *denouement,* the "and they all lived happily ever after" took far too long on the screen, and the audience stopped laughing. ■

This article is reprinted from the March 1981 PANORAMA, with the permission of the author. It was the second, and last, of a very short series.

Assigned Theme for
2006 Class E Intercities Award
"It's In The Bag"
It's not too early to start working!

The Last Word...

I just checked the outdoors from our balcony. Yes, it is snowing, and there are more than a hundred geese on the snow across the river, who are not going to Florida. There's even a few ducks who are not going anywhere either. So, Dame Winter, you can shake your feather bed as much as you like, we're staying here till Spring, no matter what the weather does, so there!

Having just warmed up myself with hot chocolate, now I can take on Canada at her mid-winter worst! When you look inside this issue, you'll find information that will take your mind off the weather as well.

You may want to check on some interesting Sound Effects, or see how Thom Speechley deals with the "Public Domain" maze.

Maybe you can share this issue with a prospective new member. ■

Joan Bochsler, Editor.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

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