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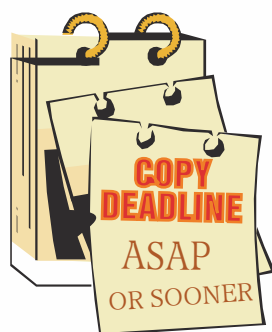
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Front Cover

*PowerDirector
Ultimate Suite V11*



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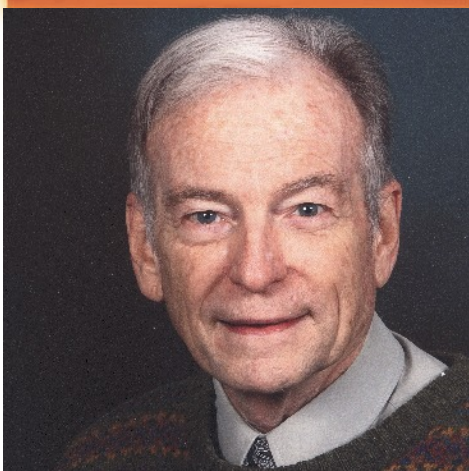
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Fred Briggs, FSCCA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I don't know how many of you were able to view the two-hour version of *A Desert Between Us and Them* that I scrambled to alert you of what might be your only opportunity to see it. As it was to be shown on TVO, I asked Zach Melnick, the Director/DOP/Editor, if it would be shown outside of Ontario (Does Newfoundland, Winnipeg and Vancouver TV carry TVO?) or on American PBS (after all, I get PBS from Detroit) and his reply wasn't very clear, but he did mention "end of October" and I took that to indicate, that as a Sponsor, TVO had exclusive access to it till then. Maybe later, somewhere, somehow. If not, you should buy the 3-hour version! Not because I recommend it, but because you'll watch it repeatedly, especially if you live outside Ontario and your friends and family haven't seen it. It knocks the spots off the 3-hour 1812 Forged in Fire that has been screened here repeatedly for three years!

We currently have 37 (Clubs, Life, Honorary, Courtesy, Family, and Individual) members in good standing. We recently sent 17 reminders to Members in Arrears (for June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014) asking them to bring their Membership up-to-date, or let us know if they wished to be removed from our roster. Only one member asked to be

removed, and one Club (Cupertino), sent us their Membership Fee. How about you? You may think you paid your Membership and are now wondering if you are one of those who haven't paid. Relax, if you didn't get a reminder, you probably paid your fees. But if you got the email and think it was an error on our part, please contact me Pres@sccaonline.ca, 905-662-4406, who sent out the messages, or Rick Doelle, Treasurer and Membership Chair, Treas@sccaonline.ca 905-578-0456. Our Membership Fees are \$20 for an Individual or Family Membership, and \$.75 per Member with a minimum of \$20 for a Club Membership, and won't be due again until June 1st, so most of us have plenty of time!

Speaking of Cupertino, we have some bad news for our readers. As far as we know, everyone is well, and the club (*Viewfinders Digital Video Club*, formerly *Cupertino Viewfinders Camcorder Club*) is still going very strongly, but Brian Lucas, who has put together their newsletter for 7 years, is taking a year off while they look for a new Editor. Why is this bad news for our readers? Since September 2011 PANORAMA has reprinted two pages of TECH TIPS in every issue, with permission from Frank Swanson, who writes most of them, and Editor Brian Lucas. The good news is there is still a good collection available to us, about 40 pages, which will grace 20 Issues of PANORAMA, enough to last us for another three years! Just in case something happens to the club and/or

their website, I have just downloaded those final issues.

For seven years, ten or eleven issues a year have been packed with excellent and helpful information, more than you can get in any magazine as far as I know. And they're all available for anyone and everyone to read online on the club's [website](http://www.viewfinders.ca). The only reason I don't go after permission to print many, many of these articles, is one of pride, or should I say shame. The SCCA is bigger than the Cupertino Club, and should be able to provide the material to fill PANORAMA's pages, but that shouldn't keep you away from their web site. Read and Enjoy! And let them know that you appreciate their site.

And speaking of filling PANORAMA's pages, I could use your help! I'm finally getting this January Issue out just as February closes, and it's time to start on the March issue. Then I still want to go back and publish those missing issues from 2012 and 2013. Certainly I want more articles, but even if you can't write a piece for PANORAMA, maybe you can suggest a topic, point out a source of information, or in some other way give me that kick I always need to get started. It all starts with an idea! Got any?

Meanwhile, it's not too early to start on your video projects for the SCCA Annual Competition, and the Assigned Theme for the Class E Intercities Trophy, the 10 minute Maximum "Assigned Subject Video". The theme this year is "A Sure Thing". That should stimulate your juices. And remember the Theme is Mandatory, but as a Title, it's verboten! We don't want half a dozen entries all named "A Sure Thing". ■



The Executive has chosen the last weekend in September for the Annual General Meeting.

We are wondering if more of our members would attend if the meeting was held on the Saturday instead of the Friday, when many are working. Please let me know your preference so we can book the Stoney Creek Council Chamber for September 26 or 27.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE ANNUAL CONTEST WILL BE JULY 31ST



As promised in the November 2013 PANORAMA, in this issue I'll be trying to give you all the 411 on Cyberlink's PowerDirector 11, but it won't be easy!

This is a very powerful program with many features that may interest you, even if you don't need the 4K or 3D editing and output! You may be satisfied with output to mobile devices, or simply direct uploading to internet websites, but if you have a Blue-ray burner you can author Blue-ray discs. You may only produce small and easy projects, but the PowerDirector will let you use up to 100 video and audio tracks all at once, though most of us would be satisfied with far fewer tracks. Nevertheless, some of us will appreciate the 64-bit code, graphic card acceleration, and even multiple CPU's for those who have them.

Of course, you don't have to be an expert to find value in this program. There are many alternatives offered: you can even edit your video clips as a slide show, or elect to select Easy Editor, and let Magic Movie Wizard assemble your video for you. Beginners might find Content Aware Editing a great help. This choice will let the software analyze your video clips and find the best and most exciting bits, and the bad parts that needs fixing. You then decide whether or not to fix the bad ones or just discard them. The software can identify Zooms, Pans, Faces, Motion, Shaky Video, Poor Lighting. Recommended Segments are marked Light Green, Segments Needing Fixing are marked Light Brown, Segments you have already Selected are marked Blue, and segments you have Deselected are marked Darker Brown. Most of the problems found in the analyzer can be fixed by a click of a button! Some problems will call for careful adjustment of parameters, and some, like how long should the clip be and where should it start and finish, are left to you as an artist! I won't dwell on the details of this as most of our readers have progressed beyond this feature.

There's so much here that you really should start with the PowerDirector User Guide, 263 Pages, that comes with the program. But that's not all! There're also separate User Guides for the three programs that are included as part of PowerDirector. The AudioDirector User Guide consists of 90 pages, the Color Director User Guide is 81 pages, and the PhotoDirector user Guide (the one included with the program we looked at In November), is 120 pages. All four of the User Guides are included with the program when you buy it, but if you want to read the User Guide before buying, you can download them from Download [PowerDirector 11 User Guide](#), [ColorDirector User Guide](#), and [AudioDirector 3 UserGuide](#). PhotoDirector 4 was made available to you with a link in the November 2013 PANORAMA. These are the versions that accompanied PowerDirector 11, but some of them will have been updated if you order the latest version of PowerDirector!

Nobody wants to sit down and read **all** that information before trying to use the program. Most of us will jump right in and try to do something with the program, and if you run into a problem, or a question arises, you'll try to find the help you need in the main guide, PowerDirector User Guide. Usually the information given there will cover all the information regarding the main functions of a video editor, but if it doesn't answer your question where you look first, you are usually offered links to expand the details within that User Guide.

For a lot more sophisticated editing of still pictures, audio problems, or colour control, you should turn to the pertinent special User Guide.

I had expected that you would be able, at the very least, to open PhotoDirector from inside PowerDirector, and I was curious to know if you could modify something in a clip and have it automatically change as its position changes during the running of the clip. No such luck! It seems that PhotoDirector cannot be operated from inside PowerDirector, though it would be easy enough to park PowerDirector at the bottom of your screen, open PhotoDirector, load the photo you want to PhotoDirector, make your modifications to the image, save it into the Media Room, park PhotoDirect, bring up PowerDirector, and pick up the image from the Media Room and put it on your timeline. :>)

So how can you remove something in a clip you don't want?

I won't pretend that I've tried all the many operations that are possible with this software, but I have had a problem bringing my miniDV footage into the computer. This isn't because of a problem with the Cyberlink software – I've had a problem with this for months before I obtained this program to test. What little editing I've done in the last couple of years has been with digital footage, most of it HD, on SD cards, and the only problem I've had has been with footage shot by someone else on their camera, in a format that produces a separate file for each shot, but it always worked eventually. The last time I imported any miniDV tape recording was using PowerDirector10, and it gave me no problem then. But I've had a long standing need to convert some British Red Coats in an 1812 re-enactment into American Blue Uniforms for my big epic history of Burlington Beach, and this software promised to handle the job.

I had a problem with my computer crashing several times and it took it in for repair. After that I found that my computer wouldn't connect to my Firewire input, so I took it back to the shop. I was assured that all I had to do was go onto the internet and reinstall the driver for my SONY DVX2000 that connects with Firewire. It seems that SONY will no longer provide a driver compatible with Vista, and Microsoft can't find a compatible driver either.

On a few occasions when I had to get a file into the video computer I worked around the problem by connecting the camcorder to an old XP computer with Firewire, started Move Maker, and imported and saved the file on that old computer (which isn't networked to the Vista computer) and then transferred it to the Vista computer using an external hard drive, from where I could make the file available to whatever editing software I wanted to use. This is less than satisfactory as I'd much rather let the program and computer import the video directly. A second SONY camcorder with Firewire didn't help either, but I finally found I could import the footage to the VISTA with a Panasonic camcorder that used an exotic (to me) USB cable with a weird end that fitted the Panasonic camcorder. Once I had the footage in the right computer, and opened it in PowerDirector 11, I tested the colour replacement feature, changing the red tunics in the rowboats from an high camera position to blue, so the footage shot in Discovery Harbour in 2001 could pass for American troops rowing ashore for the looting and burning of the King's Head Inn in 1813.

My first concern was "will the colour exchange track the moving target, changing size as well as position? As I hoped, it did!

I was surprised that the colour replacement appeared immediately, and could be adjusted with results visible immediately. I was also relieved to read that the changes aren't permanent until they are saved and can be restored to the original. I was disappointed that I was going to have to break the scene down to shorter shots to get just the right amount of replacement in every shot as the shade and intensity of the target colour varied with lighting conditions, shooting angles, etc.

I was shocked that the changes aren't permanent until the video is rendered! Oh well, with more than 200 hours of miniDV footage, spread over 15 years so far, only an idiot might think this was going to be easy! With so many shots of different subjects at different locations, different types of light, different times of day, and with different camcorders, plus archival photographs and film, old colour slides of different makes, Super 8 and Single 8, 8 mm and 16mm, in black and white or colour and 640 X 480 miniDV, 1280 X 720, 1920 X 1080 HD, (but there won't be any 3D!), it's been obvious for years that this would have to be a series of rough edits on sections or subjects, and then finally decide how they will fit together, then write and record the narration, and then trim the parts to fit the narration. My "best tool for each task" looks like a necessity. I'm a long way from editing this whole project, but somehow I'm encouraged that I have software up to the job! And new and better tools come along every year!

I mentioned in the PhotoDirector article in the November 2013 PANORAMA that I had used PowerDirector 10 to use both 4:3 and 16:9 images on a 16:9 format, leaving me with room I could use for another purpose, like a vertical timeline on one side of the 4:3 image. This was performed using picture-in-picture (PiP), and it's still available in Version 11, and there are numerous modifications available here – fade-ins and fade-outs, rotation, motion effects, shadows, borders, masks, 3D effects, varying opacity or transparency, and more, controlled by key frames.

Another feature may or may not have been in the earlier version, but in 11 at least, you have frame cropping that lets you trim a portion of a clip, not just in time but in height and width, and you can even enlarge an image to cut out something at an edge that you don't want there, or enlarge a 4:3 image to fill the width of a 16:9 frame, throwing away bits at the top and/or bottom to fill the frame. And making this even better is the ability to zoom in and zoom out on the picture, moving the centre of vision, and controlling it all with key frames! This opens up a whole new world of improving your poorly planned framing.

Other Power Tools include converting 2D images to 3D images, playing Audio and/or Video in reverse, varying the speed of a video using Slow Motion Video with Frame Interpolated Technology and match the length of the audio portion between 2 X and 0.5 X using Stretch Audio, or you can also enter a new duration in New Video Length video to manually increase or reduce a clip's speed, or hold down the CTRL key on the keyboard while you drag the edge of a clip to manually change its speed to fit your needs. You can also Freeze Frame any clip anywhere for any length of time.

In my own videos I don't think I've ever used anything but simple cuts, fade-in's, fade-outs and lap dissolves between my shots, but this program has a Transition Room! There are 136 transitions you can choose – things like blurs, drains, twists, grids, ripples, slips, wipes, etc., (plus 2 more for audio). I think a zip-pan might be useful, but it doesn't seem to be there! Oh well, since the transitions can be modified, I'm sure I could find a way to do it if I really had my heart on it!

CyberLink has provided 148 (they add more with each new version) items in the Particle Room. This is where you find snow or rain, flames, pennies from heaven, rainbows, falling leaves, etc. to add to your scene. Each can be modified, and you can make your own. Years ago I wrote an article in PANORAMA about Wonderland's particleIllusion SE. That program has long been replaced with particleIllusion 3.0 and now sells for \$389. CyberLink's may not all be as professional as Wonderland's, but you can't beat their price -- FREE with the program!

PowerDirector makes chroma keying easy. Your background doesn't have to be green, or blue, as long as the colour in the background isn't in your foreground. Don't get too fanatical about the lighting of the wall either (but you should still avoid shadows). Chroma Key here lets you pick up the background colour and then use sliders for Tolerance of Intensity and Tolerance of Hue. I haven't tested it yet, but I've used a similar system in another program with very good results.

However, there's one feature missing that I would really like to see in PowerDirector. I don't know how widespread it is, but on a very old (2006?) Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0 I had a feature that I was hoping would be in this 2013 program. The Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0 feature I have planned on using is "Difference Matte Key". I shot a steam train approaching and passing a cement wall (so there wouldn't be any waving of plant material from the trains passing). I kept the camera running till after the train was out of the shot. The camera, of course, was on a very stable tripod, and I didn't pan or zoom at all. A frame before the train enters or after it leaves the frame can be converted by Pro 2.0 to a Difference Matte Key and be converted to a transparent background which can be replaced with another still or moving background. That way I planned to move that train from the Tottenham to Beeton tracks to the Rail Trail on Burlington Beach with Lake Ontario and the Lombardy Poplars in the background, showing up between each coach.

I've seen this feature in another editing software, but with a slightly different name that I can't remember, and I was hoping it would be in CyberLink's PowerDirector as an alternative to chroma keying, but if it's here, I haven't found it. Googling it leads me to believe that it's only available in Avid and After Effects (and Amiga and Final Cut Pro?). Note to CyberLink: Please add it to your next version!



I had high hopes for a quick and easy way to use chroma key without planning for it at the shooting stage, but I'm disappointed that my hopes haven't panned out. Testing and reviewing PhotoDirector had shown a possible shortcut for PowerDirector. In PhotoDirector I was impressed with the ease of selecting either a foreground subject, or a background, and deleting it, or replacing it with a solid colour. All that was needed was to magically select the subject by applying Instant Color Effects to the photo or use the Removal Tools including Content Aware Removal to remove objects, and removing the subject or the background. My first thought was that this would be very handy for removing

telephone or electrical wires from scenes where they didn't fit, like a heavily wired building a couple of hundred years old. My second thought was that if I wanted to change any background in PowerDirector I could paint the background a solid colour and then apply chroma key and substitute another background. Unfortunately, the Users Manual for PowerDirector makes no mention of either possibility. Nevertheless, I can remove wires (or other objects) from a still photo and put in a shot of moving clouds or windblown trees behind the house, turning the still of the house to a video clip (houses don't move much anyway!) and I'm already cooking up a way to paste up several frames of the steam train to make a very long still photo, remove or paint out all the background, animate those stills of the cars to turn them into a video clip again, and replace the chroma key background with my footage of the lake shore and poplar trees. I just don't know yet how I can make the wheels revolve and the smoke billow out of the locomotive! Oh well, I've skinned a lot of cats in my day and none of them got away with their skin!

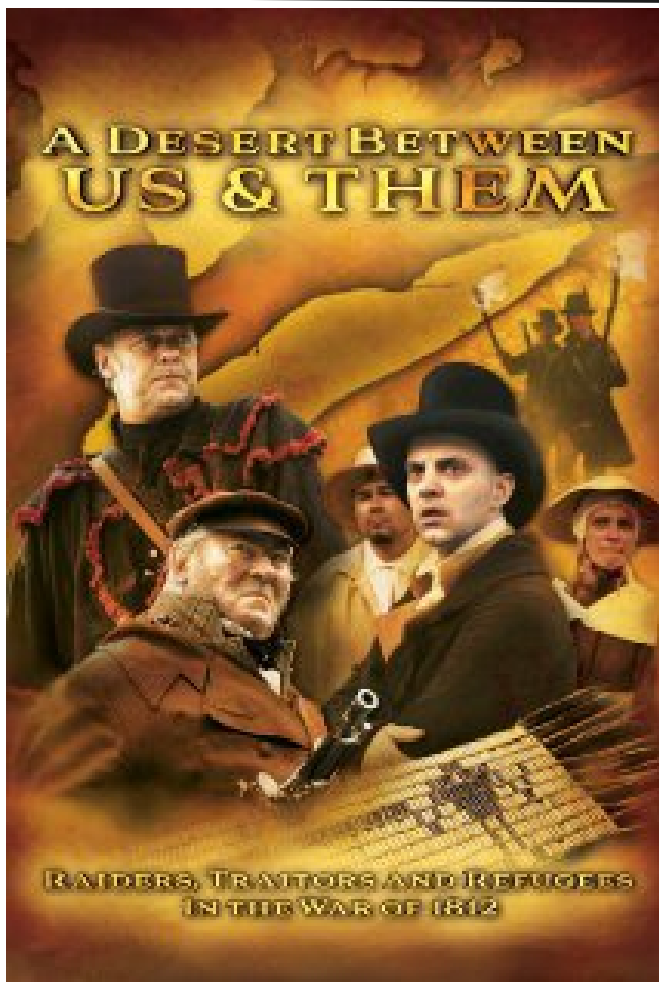
If CyberLink reads this and contacts me with a solution to my problem, I'll be sure to let you know.

This is certainly not an all encompassing report or review of all the features in PowerDirector. I've made no mention of hand drawn (or written) animation objects you can create in the Paint Designer, nor all the fancy styles for Titling, possibly because I personally have never felt a need for them. There's a whole slew of features related to making your final video or DVD, like Menus, Chapters, and Subtitles, because I've always been far more interested in the contents of a book than the appearance of the cover, but I won't argue that these things aren't very important to some of us. I love Hot Keys, but I haven't found them important enough to describe here.

And I haven't even mentioned the extremely complete AudioDirector! This isn't just a little tack-on like most video editing programs for the masses. This one is a full Recording Studio with features that will blow you away. There's so much here that it would take several more pages just to run over them, and I certainly don't feel qualified in this department, so I invite you to download the 90 age AudioDirector offered in the above second paragraph and peruse it yourself. It's not as good as hearing the tracks, but it will give you some idea of the scope of this portion.

In the November 2013 Review of PhotoDirector I made mention of DirectorZone, but it holds much more for users of PowerDirector (if you can modify it, many people have, and you can download their files), and it now boasts over 441,000 Free Presets, Particles, PiP Objects, Sound Clips, etc. You can see (or hear) them all [here](#).

If you weren't able to be at the October AGM in Stoney Creek, you didn't get a copy of the Free 30 Day Trial of PowerDirector Suite, which includes the ColorDirector, AudioDirector and PhotoDirector. We still have a few copies left so if you have a PC, and want one, contact me at once (Pres@scconline.ca) and I'll try to get a copy to you (for SCCA Members only). And don't forget that if you decide to purchase this software your would be buying a more recent version than I have been reviewing and we saw and heard at the AGM. ■



A Review by Fred Briggs

In the July 2011 PANORAMA, on pages 11 – 15, I wrote an article entitled “Videotaping the War of 1812”. The purpose of the article was to present a few hints of techniques that might prove valuable to an amateur video maker wanting to record some of the many War of 1812 Re-enactments that could be expected to occur over the following couple of years. The tips were connected to my reviews of several professional documentaries on the subject.

I’m not going to repeat those comments because they are still available for you to reread, but I want to remind you that none of them pleased everyone. On the internet site for re-enactors no one criticized the shooting, or the editing, but there were many complaints that someone’s favourite battle, usually the one closest to the writer’s home, didn’t get enough coverage. While it’s true that the History Channel (American) gave much more time to battles that were fought on American soil, and the old Canadian program made by Gala Films of Montreal for the National Film Board devoted about 20% to Battles in Quebec (which no one else thought significant enough to include), First Nation viewers uniformly felt that the natives on both sides were under represented. The WBEN Buffalo PBS Production appeared to me to be the most balanced of all, which shouldn’t be surprising since they advertised themselves as being based in both Buffalo and Toronto, and I think they get more pledges from Canada than from the USA!

I’d have to go back and look at them all again to see if there was any mention of any military action north of the

Canadian Border in the final year, 1814, but it is a fact that the action swung strongly to military and naval activities in American waters and on American soil after the defeat of Napoleon.

My research for my own video on the history of Burlington Beach included only a few incidents involving American forces on the shores at the Western End of Lake Ontario, the most important of them being the burning of Government House/King’s Head Inn in 1813. The outbuildings (barn and stable) were also burned. I have some excellent footage of a very old stable interior, with a couple of beautiful and powerful draught horses in their stalls. The military records make no mention of the horses – shot, burned to death, or released for the British to round up again after the Americans returned to their base. If I knew that they were shot, I can easily dub in the shots over an external view of the stable, but I thought I should look at the records of what the Americans did at other times, in other places, to see what likely happened in that stable.

It seemed that in my time frame and neighbourhood the most vicious thing the American did was break the windows of Joseph Brant’s Widow, but there was some nasty business on the St. Lawrence by the troops of American Major General James Wilkinson who looted and burned farms and stores at Cornwall. Wilkinson failed badly at Crysler’s Farm and Lacolle Mills, defeated at both by much smaller British Forces. He faced a court of inquiry for his wartime conduct but was exonerated on all counts.

I also learned that on the north shore of Lake Erie, in South Western Upper Canada, there was a great deal of plundering, vindictive attacks on civilians and the destruction of their homes and crops, but that was in 1814, and didn’t seem to help me with my problem about the horses.

Some years ago I was contacted by some people from Brantford who wanted to confer with me about the research I may have done, and I was consequently visited by Zach Melnick, Yvonne Drebert, and another lady who I can no longer name. When they told me about their project that would cover the ground from Detroit to Ancaster in 1814, it was clear that their own efforts had far surpassed my research in that time and place and they left empty handed.

Later, when I saw in the television guide that the video “A Desert Between Us and Them” was to be shown on TVO at 9:00 PM on Saturday, October 10th, I set me recorder to record the program for future viewing and study.

I was thrilled with the 2 hour program when I viewed it, and I burned it to a DVD for safe keeping. The credits showed that it was made by Lock3Media and Zach Melnick and I checked my contact file and found his name and information.

I record a lot of video over the cable – a very few Hollywood Films because there isn’t much I can learn from them for my videos. But I can learn a lot from documentaries of all kinds, especially videos about small towns mostly made for the people of those communities, usually produced by small television studios and individuals with a small budget. I already have several videos made by Lock3Media, Zach Melnick, and Yvonne Drebert, and even a couple I had bought retail about Hamilton! You can see a listing of all their videos, and buy online the ones that appeal to you at [Lock3Media](http://Lock3Media.com)

When I first saw this War of 1812 video, I assumed that it would be televised again in 1814 when there would be a

dearth of Bicentennial 1812 projects, and I planned to review this video in PANORAMA. In January 2014 I contacted Zach to find out where I could buy the full three hour version, and ask him if he would write a piece for PANORAMA about the making of the video. He agreed, and arranged for me to get a copy of the full version. But before I received it, I got word that the two hour version would be broadcasted again in a couple of days, and I emailed all the SCCA Members to bring it to their attention.

Now here's the review.

This is not an amateur video! The equipment used is professional grade, the camera work is very professional, and so is the editing. I quote from a Letter from Yvonne Drebert, Executive Director of the Living History Multimedia Association.

"The Living History Multimedia Association engages communities to help them tell their stories through our Ontario Visual Heritage Project Program. Using an inclusive, participatory production model, the LHMA works with municipalities and non-profits to create high quality educational media for the classroom, the general public, and educational broadcasters. In operation since 2003, we have worked with more than 150 organizations and municipalities, to complete 27 hours of programming that have been freely distributed to 5,000 schools and enjoyed by over 5,000 people at free screenings and over a million people through our broadcast partner, TVO. More than 1,300 volunteers have come together to help bring the stories of their communities to life, participating as actors, storytellers, advisory committee members, production assistants, and transcribers."

How can a lot of amateur volunteers make such a good production? And how can seeing it help you make better videos?

The three hour DVD is designed for education use for Grades 7 to 12, in school or at home. The DVD is divided into three parts: Raiders, Traitors and Refugees, each about 50 minutes in length. Each section is divided into 16 or 17 chapters that can be accessed individually for study, but they flow through automatically. Each segment has a common opening and a full list of Credits at the end, which isn't shown three times on the 2 hour television version.

That isn't what you and I need to learn. We want to know how you can hold an audience that long!

There are some very clever and beautiful graphics, animated maps over which we "fly over", that help to keep us in the picture as the story moves from one place to another, which I suppose was done by Yvonne Drebert.

There is a voiceover, unseen, that sets up the historic background and explains context, reasons, and motives. It comes in when needed, but it isn't continuous for three hours!

There is considerable storytelling by 36 experts, many of whom I recognize and whose research I respect, who have detailed knowledge of their part of the story. Some I have heard at a lecture, some I know as curators of a museum, some I know from 1812 seminars, many are very experienced re-enactors, several have written very own history book about the war, or part of it, and several have already recorded narration for me for some part of my own project. A lot of passionate historians talking about their favourite thing, is much more interesting than a few general historians wading through something they've only read about.

We see each one briefly when they are introduced with their name and connection with the history or place they will narrate. While each is mostly just a voice over, they are shown now and again so you can keep straight who is speaking, sometimes with their identity again, especially when storytellers are changed. Most of the time we follow the action on the screen, not talking heads!

The third source of off-screen narration is voice actors reading directly from actual records.

This video isn't about armies or battles, It's about people -- real people with names, characters, and problems. Sure, there are many re-enactors in arms on both sides, but there are many civilians. They illustrate the story, not as a pantomime, but as people. These actors rise above re-enactors because they do more than march, fire their muskets, and fall down dead. They all play parts -- individuals. They talk to one another, and they have lines, but we don't hear their voices! The sound is recorded, and mixed down to background sound behind the narrator or storyteller, except for rare occasions when we can actually hear what they are saying.

The organization is miraculous. We don't just see people marching past. We see some people going this way, some in another plane behind them are going the other way, some in the distance are walking away from the camera, and some in the foreground are moving towards it. This isn't just acting -- it's choreography! How many times did they rehearse these scenes?

There were many "crowd scenes" of civilians, not very big crowds in those days, but enough to make the point. I was first impressed by the fact that no actor playing an individual in one community or group, ever popped up in another group. If I missed it, it was because the director/editor knew exactly what he, and everybody else, was doing.



There were some beautiful shots of frame buildings burning down, (at night, of course). There is good use of historic buildings -- not just as back-

grounds, but as sets, through which the actors can move naturally, and the "set decoration" was excellent. Old equipment was handled and used by the actors, their clothing was exactly what it would have been, and there were horses all over (16 were named in the Credits!), and people in the right clothing or uniforms were riding them like they knew what they were doing! And there was real mud! You could see the actors' breath! Was that "snow flurry" real, or excellent use of "particles"? Everything says "Hollywood"!

Beautiful moments? There were some. Sometimes troops move in slow motion, but it's not overdone -- just enough to make it more "symbolic". And I'll never forget the shot of the feet on the final edge of the wagon in the hanging scene. Right up there with the crows in "Battle Hill -- The Battle of the Longwoods"!

The video was shot in HD and can be bought on Blu-Ray for \$30 or \$25 for a DVD online at [Visual Heritage](#). ■

What's All This OTA

(OVER THE AIR)

TV Hoopla All About Anyway?

by John Cook

MUSINGS

Do you remember watching TV before the era of cable and satellites? Some remember terrible reception full of ghosts. A few were rescued by initially reasonably priced community antennas. Most of us don't even want to think about the tens of thousands of dollars we've handed over to these cable and satellite companies over the years. Psst! How would you like to get your TV for free? (Nudge, nudge, .. wink, wink - know what I mean?) No, no, it's perfectly legal and it's called OTA. (See title for meaning of OTA). OTA has evolved in the shadows to the point where over 14% of consumers in a recent survey say they intend to dump their cable and satellite services. While a lot of the sentiment is due to Internet TV, OTA has also become more attractive, provided you're not in a problem reception area.

We live in the boondocks, half way between Toronto and Barrie. There's no cable here, and satellite with its dropout with rain and high cost was just too unattractive for us. With no cable, our wireless high speed Internet is not fast enough for Internet HDTV. So we've always lived with off-air TV with rabbit ear antennas getting only Toronto and Barrie stations, until the age of digital TV made it convenient to more than double our selection by adding Buffalo channels.

DIGITAL TV REVOLUTION

Antenna Size Shrinks

The switch to digital and HDTV has certainly made OTA ghost free TV more attractive. With digital TV, most transmitters have moved to the UHF band (Channel 14 to 59), where antenna size is greatly diminished. Gone are the days of 10 foot long and 4 foot wide antennae.

Going totally against the modern trend to UHF with its smaller antennas, CFTO, CTV-1 went back to channel 9 after being on channel 40 at the dawn of digital TV and cut its power drastically. Similarly Channel 3, CTV-2 now transmits on Channel 10. Seems that Bell, who now owns CTV wants to discourage losing its satellite customers by moving CTV back to the old VHF large antenna channels and drastically cutting power. It appears to be your fundamental conflict of interest. Nevertheless, we can still pick up 9 and 3 with our old rabbit ears here near Tottenham.

The UHF antenna of choice today is the 4 or 8 bow-tie (or bay) design. The 4 bow-tie assembly is 33" high by 20" wide by 4" deep. The 8 bow-tie is two 4 bow-ties side by side. As you can see from the illustrations, prices at factorydirect.ca are reasonable. The ability to bring in weak signals is a function of the gain of the antenna. The higher the gain the stronger will be the signal to the TV. The 4 bow-tie antenna claims a gain of 10 to 13dB while the 8 bow-tie claims a gain of 17 to 22db. The 8 bow-tie unit illustrated has the ability to point the two halves in different directions, which may eliminate the need for a rotor in many locations.

The antennae are shallow enough and can be mounted with their back right up against a wall. So I mounted ours on the side of our house and brought the lead-in with a special piece of coax that can be squished flat through our living room window, rather than drilling a hole through the wall..



Digiwave Ant2084 4Bay
Multidirectional HDTV Antenna

Our Product Code DW2084

Today's Deal
\$24.99
Canadian Dollars

1

Shipping only available in Canada*



Digiwave Ant7287 8Bay
Adj. Multidirectional HDTV Antenna

Our Product Code DW7287

Today's Deal
\$49.99
Canadian Dollars

1

Shipping only available in Canada*



Coax Cable

Since UHF is at Ultra High Frequencies, the signal loss down coax cable can be high. To minimize losses use the RG-6U rather than the cheaper RG-59U coax cable. If you keep your cable length short you can get away without an antenna amplifier. If you need long cables or are feeding multiple sets, you should use an amplifier right at the antenna to help push the signal down the coax. I use a \$25 amplifier which does the job, though others (G. Gerula in particular) swear by the \$100+ Channel-Master variety.

While coax cable, connectors and splitters are available at your local hardware store, you'll get the best deals at www.FactoryDirect.ca (stores in Ontario or on line) or other electronic surplus companies like Sayal.

Antenna Location

Some people will still use a tower and rotor, while others will have separate antennas pointing in different directions and then select the antenna with a coax switch or use a combiner. Most splitters also work as combiners. One can combine the outputs of several antennas pointing in different directions into one feed for all your TVs, which ChannelMaster actually recommended to me on the phone, as it saves the hassle of using a rotor. One can also combine the outputs of a UHF and VHF (say for channel 9 and 10) antenna. While some mount their antenna on the wall outside their window, others may stick their antenna in the attic. We built our house with aluminum backed drywall and low e windows which both acts as radio wave shields, necessitating outside antenna locations for UHF. The antennae are light and small enough to check reception at different locations while holding them in one's hand. Signal strength indicators built into most HDTVs are very helpful for this purpose.

There's often plenty of signal from local stations, so their antenna doesn't require an amplifier, though an antenna amplifier is a must for distant stations, long coax cable lengths and multiple combiners and splitters.

OTA Channel Numbers

Each transmitter can now transmit up to three different programs at once, typically designated by -1, -2, -3 and -4, as well as 3 separate audio channels for each picture program. Interestingly, it is rare indeed for the advertised station ID channel to actually transmit on that channel. For example, WNED, the PBS affiliate in Buffalo displays on your TV as 17-1 for PBS and 17-2 for Think Bright. 17-1 actually transmits on 43-3, 17-2 on 43-4 and 43-10 is a classical music audio only station on the same transmitter channel.

So how do you look up the TV stations broadcasting in your area? Ontario's Golden Horseshoe has a wonderful website which lists all the stations in the area, their advertised channels, their actual channels, their antennae heights and patterns as well as their transmitter power. It's great for keeping up with station developments. The site also has a map so you know which way to point your antenna. remotecentral.com/hdtv.

Another site is antennaweb.org which works by postal codes, but only in the U.S. for now. You may have to Google for your area.

OTA is BEST Quality

If you are quality conscious, you will notice that OTA picture quality is superior to what you get on cable or satellite. That's because both cable and satellite drastically compress the signal to jam as many channels as they do on their systems. I remember arguing with friends who insisted they had HD cable, insisting that it was SD, before I realized this reality.

Viewing Distance

If you want to truly appreciate the picture quality of a 1920 x 1080 HDTV image, you should watch it at the same relative distance as your PC monitor, where you want to see every detail on screen. We're talking one to two screen dimensions away for evaluating picture resolution. ■

(A Further Article About Recording Full High Definition Video Over The Air Will Be Included In the March 2014 PANORAMA)

TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

*Do you know the two hallmarks of amateur video? Well, they're **poor lighting** and **shaky handheld shots**. This Tech Tips article addresses the second of these two challenges: **image stabilization**. Of course the simple answer is "use a tripod", but there's a lot more to getting professional results than that. From hand-held electronic image stabilization to fluid-heads and flying camera mounts, there's a lot more to know.*

When you watch TV's America's Funniest Home Videos or browse around YouTube, most of the original videos scream "amateur". And while garbled audio and poor lighting are at least partially responsible, the one aspect that is the easiest to correct is the shake of a hand-held shot. Tripod use is one solution, but some shooting styles require the mobility of hand-held shots.

In-camera image stabilization is a feature of almost all consumer camcorders and many professional systems. This functionality comes in two varieties: **1) Electronic**, and **2) Optical**.

Electronic Image Stabilization [EIS] is an image processing trick that relies on a slightly oversized image sensor. As the camcorder detects uniform movements across the image sensor (or CCD), the post-CCD processor corrects the position of the pixels in the frame and records a stabilized image on the recording medium (e.g. miniDV tape). Depending upon the



image sensor's size and the amount of correction required, EIS can reduce the effective resolution by as much as 40%. In most cases the loss of resolution is not that high, and so EIS is usually beneficial when shooting hand-held.

Optical Image Stabilization [OIS] uses a lens element that is actuated by gyrometers that move the light entering the camera around so that it casts a steady image on the CCD. OIS is superior to EIS, but more expensive and still results in 10% or so resolution loss. Expensive professional camcorders usually use optical stabilization while affordable consumer camcorders mainly rely on electronic image stabilization.



An Additional problem with in-camcorder stabilization systems is the need to somehow distinguish between unintentional bumps and intentional camera movements like pans and tilts. In some cases the image stabilization system erroneously corrects the beginning of a pan by freezing the image for a moment and then jumping to catch up with the current position of the pan. For this reason you might want to turn-off image stabilization when you have your camera on a tripod and performing camera movements. When given a choice, a tripod is always preferable to hand-held. Yes, they can be inconvenient but there really isn't any substitute for what is essentially a most ancient piece of essential camera technology.

The most important part of a good tripod, the head, is responsible for most of the price, and a fluid head video tripod is a good investment. The fluid in the head actually resists movement and smoothes out camera pans and tilts dramatically. They start at around \$50, but usually cost a great deal more than that. The other component of a tripod, the legs, should be



sturdy and those with flip-lever locks are handy for security and convenience. Other features that you might consider are those that provide variable shooting angles, low/ high head positions, durability, rigidity, flexibility, and weight. Entry level fluid head tripods start at around \$100 for consumer cameras and \$1000 or more for professional tripods. The latter may seem like a lot of money, but a good tripod system will outlast your current camcorder, and your next camcorder, and probably the one after that. A good tripod is one investment that you will not regret.

The third camcorder stabilization technology to consider is the rather expensive **Flying Camera Mount**. The most famous example is the

Steadicam. A flying camera shot can add a certain cinematic look to some scenes, but can look distracting if not used



correctly or at the right time. Flying camera shots should be considered a special effects shot and used sparingly and not a substitute for EIS or OIS. All counter-balance flying camera mounts work similarly. The camera is mounted on a gimbal that gives the camera a free range of movement. Hanging below the gimbal is a counter-weight that provides balance to the camera's weight and resist camera movement. The trick is getting the balance precisely right and requires practice in setting-up and operating the rig.

Well, there you have it. This Tech-Tip can be seen at

www.digitaljuice.com

at their DJTV series. I'll select a new tech tip for screening at our next meeting, so be sure to come and learn something new. ■



TECH TIPS

SHOOTING TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Videography Equipment

by Frank Swanson

This article is the first in a series that I will be writing on this topic which I have gathered from videography magazines and my personal experience as a videographer for the past twenty years. I'll be covering Equipment, Pre-shooting Tips, Camcorder Operation, Shooting Techniques, The Seven Deadly Camera Sins, the Art of Composition, the Art of Videomaking, and more.

The camera bag: what's in your bag? If you're headed on a three-day wilderness shoot on foot, you'll want something simple and lightweight to hold, perhaps, only your camcorder, a small lightweight tripod, and a few accessories. Most camcorder companies offer these kinds of bags. If you're going to shoot an event that you can reach by car door-to-door, you'll need something that can hold more items such as a microphone and lighting equipment, a large sturdy/ heavy tripod, etc. In these situations look beyond the camcorder manufacturers to such sources as Tamrac, Petrol, Case Logic, Bogen, Targus, Vidpro, and others.



What is the environment in which you plan to shoot? Take a look at weatherproof bags such as Lowe-Pro and Cinebags.

Some bags are customizable and easily carried as a backpack such as those from Kata and LowePro. If you need something more durable and can be checked with airline baggage or resist fire, dust and moisture, you'll want a sturdy aluminum case as those from Zero Halliburton, Pelican and PortaBrace.

Most bags and cases, but not all, come in scuff resistant black exteriors and have top access to the main compartment with a zipper or Velcro side pouches.

How much are you willing to spend? Although it's tempting to save money, cost shouldn't be the deciding factor. For amateur videographers with only a small DV camcorder and a few accessories (e.g. extra battery and tapes) to protect, then an inexpensive pouch may be just fine. But, if you've got a high-end camcorder, lots of accessories including lenses, filters, wireless microphone kit, and lights, you should focus on semi-hard to hard cases with reconfigurable interiors. You should also consider the longevity of your purchase to handle future purchases of, probably, more expensive and/ or additional equipment. Some companies offer lifetime warranties, like Zero Halliburton and LowePro that might be less stressful on the wallet in the long run.

But you say you don't shoot weddings and other serious stuff, just a lot of family gatherings and family vacation stuff. Well, here's a list of the equipment you should acquire and use for these occasions:



Camcorder Gear: your camcorder; remote control; add-on lens converters (e.g. wide-angle, telephoto); lens filters (e.g. transparent, UV, skylight, neutral density ND6 or ND9, polarizer).

You may not own most of these camera accessories now, but over time they're something you should have in your camera bag.

Lighting and Sound: a micro-light that mounts on camera's accessory shoe; white reflector (e.g. car sunshade); headphones (aka "viewfinder for the ears"); shotgun camcorder microphone that mounts on camera's accessory shoe; hardwired microphone; wireless microphone kit. Extra lighting is especially important for those locations where the ambient lighting is insufficient or comes from a bad angle. A pair of headphones is always good to have for monitoring

the recorded audio while you shoot.

Because camera microphones are notoriously bad, using an external microphone will get you good clean sound from the subject, especially for those "interview" situations.



Power Supplies: at least two batteries (with a third in the charger); the battery charger; cigarette lighter plug cord for charging batteries in the car (or a 12V to 120V inverter to run your AC battery charger); a foreign country voltage converter kit. Batteries that come with new camcorders lasts as short as 30 minutes so purchase the largest (i.e. longest runtime) battery you can afford. I would rather not come up short and miss those last few shot opportunities at the end of the day.



Tripods and Accessories: lightweight tripod if you're going to be doing a lot of walking (a small monopod will work in most situations); heavy fluid-head tripod for those situations where you need steady camera positioning (e.g. telephoto shots, strong winds, camcorder panning up/ down & left/ right). As a rule of thumb, it should cost about as much as

your camcorder, and should outlast the lifetime of three camcorders. Using a poor tripod is probably the most significant mistake of amateur videographers; lens-cleaning supplies.



Well, that's half the story on equipment. Next month I'll finish with tips on care and how to handle airport security when you haul your gear to those far away places. ■