## VOL. 43 No. 2. MAR. 2009

# **OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO**

# SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO



 $\mathbf{OR}$ 

The Publication of the SOCIETY of CANADIAN CINE AMATEURS / SOCIETE DES CINE AMATEURS

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JMarch 2009



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

## Fred Briggs, FSCCA

Tell, we made it through the Winter! As tough as Winter was, it doesn't appear to have claimed any of our members, at least any I know about. touch wood!

And while I still haven't heard anything good or bad about Muriel Frazer, or Roy Pachkowski, I did get an email from Hugh Dimaline, and we spoke at length on the phone. It seems that Hugh was shooting video in Ontario, and suspended his internet and telephone services for a couple of months, on "Holiday Leave"! He's renewed his SCCA Membership for the past vear, and the next year, and everything is tickety-boo again with him, and all his contact information has been restored to what it was before he left! (So we're still bicoastal, from The Rock to Vancouver Island!)

In January I reported on the invitation we had received from UNICA, and I asked you for your opinions. I was surprised and heartened by the number of members who responded, as it's always nice to know that someone is reading PANORAMA and this column. There was very little skepticism or negativity, and several people said

they were in favour of the proposal if we could receive copies of winning videos from UNICA. and there were a few other questions about membership. I emailed the Secretary General, Jan Essing, with the questions, twice, but have still not received a reply. It's possible that Jan is no longer in that position, or is travelling. Or, as we all know so well, there's also "computer problems"! When this PANORAMA goes out, I'll take the time to try again to track down Jan, or anyone who may have replaced him.

about holding an SCCA Convention this year in Ottawa, and we've negotiated the date with the Ottawa Film and Video Makers.

the RA Centre on Riverside Drive in Ottawa on Saturday, September 12th and Sunday, September 13th. Our hosts will be arranging an Ottawa tour on the Friday. late enough to accommodate members who are driving in Friday morning, and another on the Monday, early enough to allow attendance by most of those driving home later that day. For anyone who will have to arrive late and leave early, they will certainly miss out on something, but we'd rather have that than not have them there at all! For those who can, we suggest you plan to make a holiday out of it, coming a day or two early, and staying a day or two late so you can enjoy some of the many wonderful sights in and around the National Capital Region on both sides of the river. Who knows, we may have timed this perfectly for a splash of autumn colour!

We aren't planning to all stay in one hotel as we used to do in the past, but we'll provide information about likely accommodations in

the May PANORAMA, so you can make early reservations if you like. We'll be able to provide much more detail about the convention itself in the July PANORAMA, as our plans develop, and give you a lot of suggestions for interesting sights to take in on your own before and after the convention. Meanwhile, all you really need to do is mark the dates on the calendar (September 12 & 13), and try to keep your schedule clear.

In the January PANORAMA we printed the Information about the We also got encouragement Rules and Award Categories for the 2009 Annual SCCA Film & Video Competition. In this issue you'll find a copy of the Entry Form.

You don't need to go to the SCCA The core program will be held at Web Site anymore to print out a copy. Just use the Print icon right here in Adobe Reader and you can easily make as many copies of the Entry Form as you will need. And while you're at it, why not print a few extra copies to give to your video friends and members of your video club? They don't need to be SCCA Members to enter the competition. All Canadians are elegible, in additon to all SCCA Members wherever they may be.

### **GIGAPAN**

We're always looking for more ways to improve PANORAMA. We've been providing a lot of links in the body of the text, but this issue has an Easter Egg: just click on the front cover photograph to go to the web site where you can view that picture at much higher resolution, roam around throughout it, and zoom in to see individual faces! The picture consists of 220 shots stitched together! After you've played with the picture, and looked at some others, you can get all the info you'll want (like "How can I do it?) right there on that site!



As I write, my radio announces that the local temperature will reach +14C today! And sunshine is streaming into my room. Am I dreaming? I'll try to keep this report a little more upbeat that usual.

#### **BRANT VIDEO MAKERS**

Brant Camcorder News editor, Dan Kennaley President Dan Kennaley's January newsletter is a cheery salute to the New Year and he wishes everyone good health and lots of opportunity to pursue the things they wish in video making. He asks members to think "new" and "NEW BEGINNINGS" will be the assigned theme for the January meeting. The theme for February will be "The families in our world". "Perhaps it is with our family, at play, at work, or out in the world." Themes for the balance of the year were also introduced in the February newsletter: March - Media, April - Country, May -Homes, June - Sport.

#### **BUFFALO VIDEO-MOVIE MAKERS**

"Camerama" editor John Weiksnar

The January meeting started with a carefully remastered DVD version of Phil Utech's first major undertaking, .8181084. -- a take on sci-fi meets espionage with creative staging and foley that has stood up well to the test of time. Terry Kimmel did a little presentation on plot ideas/structures inspired by the book .20 Master Plots (And How to Build Them) by Ronald B. Tobias, as a possible incentive to stir up some ideas among members in order to make a film for the March contest.

Canadian members Jon Soyka, Alex Szatmary and Dan Copeland also showed short offerings of their work.

The February newsletter reminds members that the closing date for this year's annual contest is the March meeting, at which time entries will be shown and judged by members present. The usual 30 min. limit applies but members are encouraged to keep their entries as brief as possible.



The February BM-VM meeting began with a documentary teaser from Challenge Films and Buffalo Nickel Productions of their feature movie production, 'Henry's Future.' Donna Marie Vaughan gave a short introduction. That was followed with a look at end credits from the 2006 'Dreamgirls' movie, narrated by Rebecca Utech. During the second half of the meeting, Member Jon Soyka started with what it is hoped will become a regular practice at the BM-VM. This new routine entails constructive yet candid feedback" on member movies which are screened.

## HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS

*Reel News*, editor Dave Stewart At the December 2008 Christmas meeting, Jon Soyka displayed a large assortment of photographica from the estate of Jack Carey, which was for sale. Much of the material was purchased by interested members, despite the fact that many of the pieces were unidentifiable to today's photographer.



photo Joe Bochsler Curious members examine artifacts from Jack Carey's collection.

meeting, seven member's videos were shown, including a Grand Canyon 3D slide show by Dan Copeland. As the main attraction of the evening, Ken Davy who is the president of the Burlington Historical Society, presented a book on the Brant Inn and he included a verbal history, a slide show with big band music and finally a few moments of the DVD "Meet Me at the Brant Inn" produced by the BHS.

The January meeting featured what is hoped will be a regular format for future meetings, a "Critics Night". This was to be an 'open' and frank criticism of members' work. Members brought in samples of their work, which they genuinely wanted to have critiqued in order to understand where they could make improvements in future. In this spirit, eight videos were shown and the comments at the end of the meeting indicated that the effort was very helpful and should be repeated at a future meeting.

The February meeting was back to the usual format and featured six members' videos. The most noteworthy was a production by Robert Prince, and featured a woman, sitting on a sofa in silhouette, talking bitterly about her husband's infidelity. Unfortunately, in reporting this story in the newsletter, Jon Soyka refuses to offer any resolution or further explanation. This is intended to be an inducement to members to never miss a meeting!

#### LONDON VIDEOGRAPHY CLUB It's A Wrap editor, TBA

The February meeting was devoted exclusively to the David Belne and Peter Adams produc-

During the festive part of the tion "The Saint Is Dead". This is a new meeting place, The Anne documentary about the life of The Johnston Health Centre. Members Hon. Henry Edward Dormer' a agreed that it is quite 'comfy' with British soldier who came to Lon- a convenient kitchen arrangedon' Ontario in 1866 and died in ment. Some minor adjustments the same year at the age of 21. Dor- will have to be made to accommomer is remembered as a much- date audio-video equipment. Two honoured member by the local Ro- Christmas theme videos were man Catholic community for his shown as well as some 'golden devotion and unselfish contribu- oldies'. Additional videos from betions to the city's poor. The show- yond five years are scheduled for ing was very well received and the showing at February's meeting. authors answered many questions The March newsletter contains a from club members.



Peter Adams and David Belne talk about their production "The Saint Is Dead"

At the March meeting, President Kim Brown presented a very thor- since this is a UK program, it outough tutorial and demonstration puts video in PAL format. You will of the editing power of Adobe Premier CS3. His presentation was titled "Marriage of Video and Sound to make an exciting production." As they departed, members were each presented with a DVD of video clips which they are expected to turn into a finished video for viewing at next month's meeting. The disks were prepared by Bob Plumsteel and Kim and were handed out randomly.

### THE TORONTO FILM AND VIDEO CLUB

"Newsletter" editor Josephine Black

The February newsletter reported on the Club's experience at the first meeting, in January at their

very thorough description by member Robert Porter of an animation program called "Moviestorm". The 'basic' program package is free and provides an adequate starting point for easy production. Additional movie packages of sets, characters and 3D effects are available from their web site for an average £8 each. Members were extremely impressed with a short feature Bob had prepared for the club's February meeting. A word of caution: have to export your production to an editing time line and then save the production in NTSC format.

## VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB

The Bulletin, editor James Hatch

The February meeting was held in the new location at Goward House, a volunteer run establishment not far from their old meeting place. It contains a 'theatre' like lounge where meetings are held. This meeting was informal in nature and gave members a chance to get comfortable with their new surroundings

The March bulletin announces the annual Awards Banquet. scheduled for Saturday March 14. The March meeting will include projects and discussions cancelled from previous meetings due to unfavorable weather. Ideas are being sought for a series of humorous skits involving doctors and patients. The assignment for the April meeting is "It's A Wonderful World", inspired by the popular song recorded by Louis Armstrong.



photo by Michael Veronneau Victoria Club members enjoy a Christmas brunch at Margaret Chamberlain's

## WINNIPEG AMATEUR MOVIE AND VIDEO CLUB

Bulletin editors. Wallace and Jeanette Robertson

One of the challenges to us 'down-easter' clubs is coaxing members out when it is -6C and snow is accumulating on the streets. It's usually a battle, except for the hardiest. Well note this! The Winnipeg club enjoyed a very impressive turnout for their January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting when the temperature dropped to -45C! Editor Wallace Robertson had to comment on that event in the February issue of the Bulletin. The evening featured some warm weather travel video from a trip on Lake Winnipeg to a Trans Atlantic cruise, which gave member John Charrette an opportunity to photograph a shipboard wedding. Club executive and volunteers are making arrangements to begin was considered a success. Also nothe long task of converting the table was the judge's observation

club's video archives to digital for more convenient storage. A workshop was scheduled for February 18.

At the February 12th club meeting, visitor Jon Soyka presented several of his productions to a delighted audience. An unedited video of a New Year's party by guest Aiden Ritchie was also shown. Members contributed suggestions regarding editing techniques.

# **INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS (IAC)**

Film and Videomaker editor, Garth Hope

In the February issue, Canadian corespondent David Fuller (Victoria Video Club) begins a two-part article about the future of amateur video clubs. David attempts to explain what has changed over the years which might account for the current absence of the spirit which made cine and movie making clubs so popular back in the 'film' days. For example, clubs, which were once the only place to exhibit one's work, are now competing with the Internet. The second part of the article, in the April issue, suggests ways in which club group activities can be exploited and made more attractive to potential members.

A related story in April about the popular Surrey Film and Video festival also emphasizes the current difficulties in attracting participation in amateur events. The entry period had to be extended in order to obtain a sufficient number of entries for judging. Finally there were 33 entries selected for judging and in the end, the festival

that many of this year's entrants were in a younger age bracket than in former years.

Tom Hardwick's "Positive Image" series covers a variety of subjects from depth of field to choosing a HD camcorder. He explains that although extremely short focal lengths of today's camcorder lenses make selective depth of field difficult (without adapters) there are creative ways of framing and lighting can achieve effects similar to shallow focus. In addition, the extreme depth of field available can be used to advantage in selected compositional situations. Tom also devotes space to explain the advantages of a mono external microphone over a camera's built in stereo mics. The better directional control minimizes unwanted sounds and avoids confusing shifts in sound localization during camera movements.

The April issue contains a helpful article by Jan Watterson explaining how to prepare and upload your videos to "YouTube" and "Google" and describes the major differences in the requirements and quality levels of each streaming site. There is also a tip on how to "embed" any video from those sources on your own website.

REMINDERS **SCCA ANNUAL VIDEO COMPETION:** Deadline June 15th **INTERCITIES THEME "GOOD TRADE"** PLEASE DO NOT USE THE **"THEME" AS THE TITLE! 2009 SCCA CONVENTION** Ottawa, September 12th & 13th



Now where did we leave off? (Please excuse the major error of ending a sentence with a preposition. I do know better!) For those with short memories, and those who may be reading this without having read the previous articles in this stream, it might be useful to briefly look at where we have been and where we are trying to go.

As an overview, I've been exploring the problem of affordably converting moving video into moving paintings, and along the way the possibilities, problems, and possible solutions associated with animating pictures, including paintings, in a video. We have looked at several techniques for enhancing still photographs imported for video, including scanning tricks, improving the acuity of stills from a video or photographs made with a digital camera, colourizing old black and white photographs, turning colour (or colourized) photographs into paintings, and a few ways to add some motion to these pictures, including (in the January issue) a couple of programs that will let you add moving water to a still photograph.

I've been putting off examination of both software that will add painting effects to moving videos (because of the high cost), and the problem of animating paintings, regularly promising "to deal with that issue next". was to extract still shots at intervals (to reduce the number of stills) throughout a live video, "apply the paint" to each still, and then dissolve successively from one shot to the next, repeatedly, to rebuild the sequence. Originally, I expected to have to do this with a series of dissolves of overlapping fade-ins and fade-outs, but this won't make for smooth animation unless there are a large numbers of "key frames" (and an awful lot of work producing them all). I began to look at animation programs for "in-betweening", often called simply "tweening", and I eventually realized that this operation is done very smoothly by morphing programs.

Like so many words in our confusingly overly rich English language, morphing has different meanings for different people, and the process itself has different uses for different people. The multiple meanings led me into a lot of places on the internet that I wouldn't have thought to go, as it's an important word in the realm of 3D Model Computer Animation (which has been enthralling me for several months now), where it refers to changing the shape of a mathematically constructed person or prop.

The morphing I wanted means the smooth translation of one thing into another, as in turning the face of one person into the face of another, or a series of baby portraits through childhood into

So here it is. My first thought adulthood. And that's my subject as to extract still shots at inter- today!

Early attempts to do this in the movies involved simple dissolves, and it wasn't till the early 1990's that this was attempted using computers. Back in the days of Super8 film, I remember planning to dissolve through a long series of portraits of Hollywood Movie Stars and other celebrities, with an accompanying soundtrack of an American politician railing about how aliens had taken over Hollywood. The idea would be that all the "aliens" were Canadians, mostly not recognized as such by most Americans. This was going to be a lot of work since all dissolves would have to be in*camera* dissolves of photographs.

Another Idea I had was to dissolve slowly through a succession of variously coloured fruits and vegetables, shot in close-up so that all you would see would be the colour of their skins, and they would be dissolved through the entire spectrum. It was the acquisition of the photographs in the first case, and the bringing together of all that produce at the same time in the second case, that made me give up on those ideas!

Technically, in-betweening involves drawing each in-between picture separately and completely, and if it is done by a computer, each in-between picture is calculated by the computer and rendered in full detail. Morphing is a combination of in-betweening and dissolving. If you examine a demonstration of morphing from one face to another, with different backgrounds, you'll see that the faces evolve step-by-step smoothly while the background dissolves from one shot to the next.

There is a good overview article on Morphing on Wikipedia, with illustrations, examples, descriptions, and even a couple of free program (xmorph and gtkmorph).

This is exactly the process that I expect will do the job I need on my painted key frames, and you might find it useful too, but there is still a problem. There are many programs available at prices varying from FREE to about \$100, but most people buying these programs will use them to work with faces, as I expect most of our readers will too, if they decide to use them at all.

Some television programs are now using morphs to transition between one scene and the next, and you may have noticed that it's regularly used on the Rick Mercer Report whenever an edit in an interview would otherwise produce a jump cut. I don't like that effect, but you might love it!

faces. Most of the less expensive programs require you to place dots on points of similarity on the two faces -- eyes, nostrils, point of the nose, etc., and that isn't too bad, because you won't be using the program a lot and it isn't difficult to do. Some more expensive programs will find these points automatically. Some of the programs will only work with faces. Will vou?

For a quick and dirty demonstration of the way these dots or points are placed and used, you can watch a <u>demo for beginners</u>

on youtube, and another in German (I think, but it doesn't matter because you will understand the visuals).

I want the flexibility to use any points of similarity in landscapes. mechanical devices, or body parts like hands and feet, depending on the subject matter, adding them myself where necessary, or leaving it to the program when it can handle it.

Most morphing programs will also handle "warping", the changing of some of a picture without changing it to another, and without the second picture implied by "another". Examples of this would be winking, raising an eyebrow, or pursing the lips as for a kiss. How about puffing out a child's cheeks and letting the air out again as you bend the flame on a candle? (Notice we're back to the subject ber Xerberpix who brought you of animating a still picture here!)

Other examples might be growing a politician's nose as you play an audible quote, expanding a model's bust line, or even creating a caricature. Remember the example in Ray Bayliss' video on You-Tube we told you about in the November PANORAMA? Go to But back to the morphing of Ray's Page and check out "Demon Face". It will only take a minute!

> Besides wanting to make morphs, I'm going to assume that you want to be able to add the resulting video clip to your own video, in your own editing program.

There are a great many Morphing Programs on the Internet, and each of us has different wants. so I'm **not** going to test drive them for this article. Instead I'll point out a few you might want to check out, and point out some of the think morphing is hackneyed, strengths and weaknesses. All of them have a free download with see what can be accomplished

some sort of trial period before you have to buy a licence, so you can test for yourself the ones that look promising to you.

At the cheaper end, there is WinMorph FREE As well as a standalone program, there is also an Adobe Premiere plug-in (also FREE) so you can work right in Premiere. Will it work with your version of Premiere? Download it and test it for yourself! In the past I haven't found the free programs from this author to be the easiest to run. There is a video demonstration that you just have to see. It's an extremely slow, smooth transition through the faces of Angelina Jolie, Jessica Alba, Scarlett Iohannson and Naomi Watts. Be patient. It looks like one very long still picture!

Sgirlz Morph 2.0 FREE Remem-Sqirlz Water Reflections featured in this column in January? They're also giving away a Morphing Program. While not perfect, and missing of the some more sophisticated features available at considerable cost, it is handy. It can make one person with features from more than one other (build another brother?). It will save as an AVI file, though my preference of DV wasn't offered, I was able to set it for 30 fps and no compression. However, the resulting file wouldn't run properly. And it claims to allow video to video morphs, though I haven't yet tested that, and it will warp. I have some more work (or should I admit to playing around?) to do, and I suggest you start your own training here, too.

If you're like most people who corny, and overdone, you have to with a free program in the hands of an artist! Check out the links on the web site to Paula Rosa's work (especially <u>Morph4.2</u>), Swordflasher's <u>Rose Deva</u>, and glorfindelo's <u>Rembrandt Alive</u>.

**FotoMorph** FREE, with text watermark, \$10 Registration to remove the watermark. Does both morphing and warping.

**FaceMorpher Lite** FREE Works with two vertical full faces (head with no glasses and mouth not open too much) only. Finds points of similarity automatically. Can't do multiple face series. Yes, you could make several two-face morphs and then string them together in your editing program, but that uses a lot of dissolves, that don't look as good as true morphs. No warping with this one. MorphMan 2000 \$20 Quote: "ZDNet Software Library has awarded MorphMan 2000 with the topmost 5-stars rank which means "Outstanding in all respects. One of the best of its class'". However, I don't think this program will export full resolution AVI files. See MorphMan4.0 below.

**<u>FantaMorph</u>** Three Versions.

**Standard at \$30** Can't do multiple face series. Warping.

**Pro at \$50** Multiple Morph, Feature/Shape Curve for controlling morph, add background, foreground, mask, etc. to morphed clip.

**Deluxe at \$100** Adds camera effects like pan, zoom, and rotate image, Auto Find Faces and Add Points, Face Extractor, other additional features too complicated to explain here – see web site

**FaceMorpher Multi** \$40 Load several pictures, the program will automatically find the points and make the morphs. You can fine

with a free program in the hands tune the points, but it's faces only. hi-end photo-to-photo and videoof an artist! Check out the links on No Warping. to-video morphing" and "morph-

## VidMorph Two Versions

**1.0** \$30 I can't vouch for details. Be sure to try (several) before buying!

<u>VidMorph Pro</u> \$100 This one boasts of many features, including morphing video to video!(?) Also crop, zoom, video duration, etc., and add sound (though you can already do that in your editing program). It supports many still and video formats. Might be just what you need, Try it first!

<u>Morpheus Photo Morpher</u> Three versions.

## Standard at \$30 (No AVI),

**Professional at \$60** (AVI, plus transparency support), and

Industrial at \$100 (adds ability to morph from video, plus other features you may or may not need) . It seems these programs don't include warping. For that, they sell two more programs, Morpheus Photo Warper at \$30 and Professional at \$60, that warp but can't morph, and suffer the same limitations as their morphing programs. If you think you might want to do both, you might as well buy one program that does both!

MorphMan4.0 \$100 While the English seems strange at times (apparently Stoik is a company founded by young physicists and mathematicians formerly emploved in the Russian Space Industry) this program seems to have more going for it than any other I found - Advanced features include "layered morphing, live multi-mode preview, vector shape tools for setting transition markers, nonlinear transition paths, canvas layer, ... Onion Skin interface mode ", "edge detection, and motion estimation for creation of

hi-end photo-to-photo and videoto-video morphing" and "morphing transition between video clips with its unique Propagate function ". The site provides explanations of many of these things, plus demonstrations and tutorials online. It also includes a full featured Video Editor (Video Man 3.0) and Video Man Capturer bundled with it.

The Help File is a series of seven Tutorials: Simple Distortion, Simple Morph, Multiple Rendering, Video to Video, Propagate, Layered Distortion, and Layered Morph. These Tutorials aren't videos, but automated step by step instructions for performing the operations. They were very helpful and worked well except for the Video to Video, Automation. Apparently the correct video clips aren't installed where they should be or as they should be. I haven't had time to prepare and test my own clips, but I'm going to dig deeper into this one, and I suggest you give it a try too. I did find that in this program (and probably most), AVI is dependent on the codecs it finds on your computer, and I was able to save morphed clips in 720 X 480 NTSC format, and every option - DivX, CinePak, MPEG, etc, - was available to me.

When you find one that you think you like, be sure to test it right through to the video export and import it into your video program. Often, to some people, AVI will mean just 320 X 240 and/or 15 fps, not good enough for *our* videos!

I'll keep looking and testing, and if, and when, I find one that's best for *ME*, I'll let you know in a future PANORAMA.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

March 2009



#### by Fred Briggs

F or many years now I have been extolling the multitude of features available in Band-in-a-Box that will make it easy for you to produce Copyright Free Music (not exactly, but you own the copyrights to your own music!) for use in your own videos, either as an amateur or as a producer for a commercial market. The program improved so much every year that sometimes I had to write two articles in the same year, and some years I also presented a demonstration at an SCCA Convention or Annual General Meeting.

I've already described in considerable detail how you could import MIDI music that was in the Public Domain and change the speed, the key, the style, and the instruments that were used to play it, and choose from a large number of harmonies using many different groups of instruments. You could silence the Melody line and substitute Solos, based on the music and style and the individual styles of a great many famous Soloists.

In addition, you could let the program create original compositions with which to work, that are quite free of any copyright restrictions, and while there are more possibilities for jazz styles than any other, you have a very wide choice of styles, from AB-BA to zydeco, and including ballroom, big band, blues, bluegrass, boogie woogie, bossa nova, bubblegum, classical, country, dixieland, ethnic, folk, funk, marches, operatic, pop, rock, rock and roll, swing, tango, and western, to name just a few that come quickly to mind.

I updated you so often that I began to feel that you must be tired of hearing about it, so I haven't written a Band-in-a-Box article since Spring 2007, but the most recent demonstration, at the 2007 Convention in Hamilton, was very well received and seemed to elicit more excitement about the program than ever before. This may have been because Band-in-a-Box had recently added the capability to construct (with new compositions) music designed especially for people who want to add original musical accompaniment to their own videos (see PANORAMA, Summer 2005), or it may have been the quality of the music they heard, as PG Music had just added REAL DRUMS SOUNDS to replace the synthesized drum sounds.

PG Music produces a major update annually, and a minor update between each major update. Many software producers make a habit of listing on their website all the new features (or fixes) that have been added each year, or with each new version of their program, but PG Music makes so many improvements in older features, and adds so many new features with each update (usually 50 or more!), that they only list on their website the changes included in the very latest version.

This makes it very difficult for me to report on each of the features added since my last report (In the <u>Winter 2007 PAN-ORAMA</u>). In that issue I also described some methods for importing MIDI Music into BiaB. In the Spring 2007 Issue I reported on a few inexpensive MIDI Sequencer Programs, and recommended PG Music's Program, Power Tracks Pro 11, for editing MIDI files, and for mixing up to 48 tracks of music including BiaB files, MIDI, MP3, WAV, WMA, and CD-Audio. That program has now been updated to Power Tracks Pro 12, but you may not need it with the latest version of <u>BiaB 2009</u>!

So what's new for 2009? Actually, the big breakthrough began with BiaB 2008, with the addition of RealTracks for instruments. RealDrums were live recordings of just that; recorded drum patterns (1 to 8 bars – not just drum samples) by real drummers in a studio just for PG Music, and introduced in BiaB 2005, along with New Styles and Demo pieces that used RealDrums. In all versions of BiaB 2005 or later, those drums could be specified so the program would replace the synthesizer drums in older songs and styles.

RealTracks, introduced in 2008, were produced the same way, with top studio musicians playing bits and pieces that could replace the synthesized sounds called up by you in BiaB. The 2008 program originally came with 3 RealTracks, but during the year PG added another 70 Real-Tracks. In the 2009 version they have added an additional 101 RealTracks, and there are even more in production, soon to be available!

The main thrust of PG Music is music for accompanying individual musicians who are learning, practicing, or just playing for enjoyment, and this is the main group that has been targeted so far. As a result, the

RealTracks fall into the categories of Pop/Rock, Country, Blues, and Jazz, and will improve the music you use for your videos, if it is selected from within those categories. If your taste, or the needs of your video, is for classical music, or bagpipes, or a marching band, or the more unearthly, atmospheric music provided especially for us video makers (introduced in the 2005 Version), you may be limited to using synthesizer sounds. Mind you, that isn't a bad thing, because the Roland Virtual Sound Canvas VSC-3 synth provided by PG Music is excellent, and to my ear, often indistinguishable from live music RealTracks. You weren't longing for a real Theremin, or way files of a real intergalactic space ship anyway, were you?

But now in 2009, besides the new styles and demos that use RealTracks, they have added a capacity to import specific Real-Tracks of your choice into the component instruments used by any style, even the older styles added to BiaB before the Real-Tracks were introduced to the program. While it's a little more work, it will noticeably improve the final quality of your music output so not even a trained musician will complain about the quality of the sound.

I mentioned above my earlier suggestion to add PG Music's PowerTracks Pro to your arsenal to provide for editing MIDI files in a sequencer and a 48 Track mixer. but in 2008 PG introduced RealBand that combines the most popular features of both Band-in-a-Box and PowerTracks Pro. and handles RealDrums and RealTracks, and this program is included when you purchase BiaB. I'm not even going to try to provide details about RealBand, or the features that differ between the programs or how to use any of them, as RealBand has a 183 page User Manual on a pdf file, the PowerTracks Pro Version 12 User Guide had 293 pdf had pages and the BiaB 2008.5 User Manual PDF file is 511 pages.

RealBand can play your BiaB tracks, MIDI Tracks, Wave Tracks, MP3 Tracks, Sound Effects Tracks, etc., up to 48 tracks, and each track can be designated as any type. Sometimes you may choose to compose your BiaB Melody, choose the Style, Instruments, Soloists, Harmonies, etc., in BiaB, but much of that could alternatively be done in RealBand. In either case, you can play them back with all the rest of your Sound Track using RealBand. Naration and Dialogue? You could include that too, but you'll probably prefer to mix those in (and spot effects) using your video editing program.

I've gone as far as I can in what should be a brief introduction to the new features of use to video makers, but I urge you to visit the PG web site where you can view more than four hours of Streaming Video Demonstrations of <u>Band-in-a-Box and Tutorials</u>.

There's a great 18 minute streaming video Introduction of the new <u>RealBand</u> Program or you can download the zip file for later use. And if you go to the <u>Store Page</u>, put your cursor over "Products" and click on RealTracks or RealDrums, you can listen to demos of each set.

*Pro Band-in-a-Box* with RealBand 2009 for Windows would cost you \$129 and includes Styles Sets 0-3, Soloist Set 1, Melodist Set 1, RealDrums Set 1, and RealTracks Set 1. To that you could add other sets, generally at \$29 each, and that could be enough if your needs were narrow and you don't want a big choice of anything.

The MegaPAK Includes Band-in-a-Box, RealBand, Style Sets 0-77, RealTracks Sets 1-6, RealDrums Sets 1-6, Soloist Sets 1-11 & 16-20, Melodist Sets 1-8, and the Band-ina-Box Video Tutorial PAK, and costs \$269, but you get a lot more for your money.

The SuperPAK adds 6 more RealTracks Sets (1-12) and 14 more RealDrums sets (1-20) to all the above, for \$369, and for \$449 (UltraPAK) you can get an additional 17 Real Tracks (1-37), all on a 80 Gig Hard Drive (or on a 500 Gig Plug 'n' Play USB Hard Drive for \$549). You see, all those RealTracks take a lot of Disc Capacity!

And for \$50 more you can add all of the 101 Riffs and Phrases Series, all of the Fakebooks, all of the Master Solos series, 50 Country Guitar Solos, 200 Folk songs, CopyMe, and Duets.

Well, you have to admit that it's a lot cheaper than a new camcorder or computer! And it's much less expensive than starting out at the bottom and adding new Sets at \$29 each! About \$4,500 less expensive!!

FOR SALE BAND-IN-A-BOX 2005 UNUSED \$60 OBO Link to the Details of that Version Margaret Chamberlain 250-590-7178

# **TECHNOLOGY** BY JEANETTE ROBERTSON

sn't technology grand? Benefits galore! Living is so easy. Right?

The marketers and media ads extol ad-nauseam about all these time saving, absolutely 'must have' electronic gizmos and gadgets. However, what I'd really like to ask these geniuses who get us to part with our money is: "If technology is so great, why do we still have basic problems?"

Let me explain.

Film... 8mm, Super-8, 16mm and 9.5. The film would occasionally jam in the projector, sprocket holes got larger with use, and splices came unglued.

Camcorders now have buttons that only the nimble fingers of a three year old can manipulate. What about that neat black on black print on the operating buttons! Why? Quite often I have caught my husband mumbling about how Sony makes great camcorders and excellent sound equipment. But for the life of him, the poor man, can't fathom why this company can no longer put the two together.

Vinyl records got scratched by the needle or inattentive handling.

Radios still have static.

VHS tapes would occasionally jam or snap.

TVs still get snow or pixilated and the ads can be heard at your neighbour's house four doors down the street. Now with the super duper TV transmission signals to the plasma and digital TV's, can you tell me how the new improved format works for the average person wearing glasses? You need the eyes of an eagle to discern the difference.

Hi-Fi, stereo, surround sound, Ipods et al. How do you measure sound quality, if you wear a hearing aide or when your spouse can't even hear you asking, "Honey, did you take out the garbage?"

DVDs and other discs are subject to scratching and warping, and quite often you may not be able to play many of them on your machine.

Computers send your edited films and e-mail off to cyber space on a regular basis. The aliens must be wondering about us. Then there is the computer



Jeanette Robertson ASCCA

police hiding inside the computer, telling you the action you performed is illegal. I just need to know step-by-step as to how to undo the problem and continue with my project. And can someone tell me why all the manufacturers assume we are all computer literate and don't require nor will never ever need a manual for hook-up and operating purposes?

I won't even deal with the snakes' nest of wiring laying on the floor, and desk tops, poised and ready to attack like a boa constrictor, when vacuuming or dusting.

Cell phones ring everywhere. At one time if you saw someone talking to themselves, well... you can imagine... what people thought. They are the epitome of rudeness today, particularly when you go out with two friends for lunch, and one friend spends all her time eating and talking to the invisible guest. It made me wonder just how much a friendship was worth and I don't think I shall ask her to lunch anytime soon.

Then, when an appliance does need repair, you find out it is 'disposable' or too expensive to repair. That is 'if ' you should find a shop that does repairs on that item.

So if these minor, irksome annoyances can't be fixed and fine quality is almost non-existent... then... what good is this wonderful technology?



reative Commons – In the <u>Winter 2006</u> issue of Panorama, we published an article describing drawing a line around the required area on the • the growing amount of creative material offered via the Internet for free use under non-restrictive licensing. Material included music, photographs, moving images and literature. Much of this could be useful in augmenting other resources you might have for putting together a video production. The field of "Creative program or pasted into the time line of your video Commons' continues to grow and even that Canadian institution, The National Film Board is getting involved by helping to promote materials created under this scheme. Check out the video "Rip! A Remix Manifesto" at the NFB streaming site.

For more information of current activity in this area, check out Open Source Cinema and Creative Commons..:

Also announced earlier this year is the availability of virtually all films in the NFB archive for free viewing. Anyone remember "Neighbours"?

Screen Capture Using all, or a portion of the information on your computer screen for insertion into a video is often a useful feature. For instance, if the video is instructional (a tutorial) or refers to a part of a software program being used, a small clip of that visual portion may be needed. Several free programs are available which make capturing of any desired area possible. "Lightscreen" is one I recently evaluated and recommended to a friend who wanted to capture only part of an online road map for inclusion in his video. The interface is very simple and allows you to define 'hot-keys' for executing the program, selecting how the screen area is to be selected (all, or a portion of the screen) image format and a directory for saving the image.



In the example below, the selection is defined by screen using a cursor selected with the left mouse button. When the button is released, the captured, lighter coloured area is saved in the selected directory and also on your clipboard. The image can then be further manipulated in your favourite graphics editor.



"Lightscreen" is available from SourceForge.

Another free capture program is "<u>Snapshot</u>". It has options and features very similar to "Lightscreen.

File	Edit	Capture	Help		
		Captu	re Full Screen re Active Window re Rectangular Area	Ctrl+F Ctrl+W Ctrl+R	
		Includ Prefer	e Mousepointer ences		

About Codecs - With more and more programs available for converting various formats of video and audio, it helps to be able to identify the format of the material you may be working with. In addition, if you download a particularly impressive clip in streaming format, you may want to record the codec used by the author. We have already mentioned "G-Spot" and now a somewhat more elaborate program has been created. "MediaInfo" lists not only video but also audio codecs (if available)

for several video files at once. It has a very friendly interface and the data collected can be saved in a variety of formats.

A service for updating codec data is available from the <u>author's website</u>.

An 'options' window allows you to select the specific data to display.

Format	🔽 File size
Overall bitrate	Duration
dio	Video
Format/Codec	Format/Codec
Bitrate	🔽 Bitrate
Sampling rate	🗖 Framerate
Channels	🗖 Video size

The display can be in graphic format or plain text. The data can then be saved in text or HTML format.

yourcall02.flv	General		
	Complete name	C:\ClubStuff\yourcall02.flv	
	Format	Flash Video	
	File size	25.5 MiB	
	Duration	4mn 23s	
	Overall bit rate	810 Kbps	
	Tagged date	UTC 2007-10-19 21:47:1	
	Writing application	Riva FLV Encoder	
	Tagging application	inlet media - FLVTool2	
	Video		
	Format	H.263	
	Duration	4mn 23s	
	Bit rate	746 Kbps	
	Width	320 pixels	
	Height	240 pixels	

# The "Production Process" For A Small Amateur Video Club

By David Fuller

[The following is all "old hat" to experienced video-makers, but may serve as a guide for members of small clubs or ones with inexperienced members.]

t begins with, "Hey, let's make a storyboard movie, eh?

Two alternatives emerge. Use a copyrighted screenplay or stage script and pay the fee, or, write an original nar-



David Fuller

rative. Both ways will need conversion to a "Director's Screenplay Version."

And both choices will face two time-honored limitations, viz., finding suitable, willing actors and finding locations. **Actors and locations.** 

Simply, "Can we pull this thing off?" Before we get all "ambitious", be practical and realistic!

If the "writing" appears first in prose-form, the writer alone is first to "see" images and "hear" dialogue in her mind, where she conjures up a plot-structure, puts conversation into the mouths of characters and imagines their body movements. However, it may transpire that much of the prose is written in indirect speech and in the third person. From the writer's vision comes a prose-written narrative, the base for our Club movie.

A skit may be discovered by word of mouth, on a web-site, or, for example, in a book of short "Party Jokes." If you negatively prejudge the merit of using "stale-looking" material -"these weary old, worn-out jokes can never cut it" - bear in mind that you can still bring a fresh *treatment* to old stuff new twists. Even if the "copy" is written almost completely in "indirect speech" (reported words), with only brief hints about "stage movements" and emotional responses, reading INTO the words of the play makes a difference. An imaginative reading INTO the given "script" determines what kind of *treatment* the script might receive. Who <u>are</u> these characters? Can we make a movie that an audience will "go along with "? It's a "fresh" treatment of what you dig up that counts most.

Will it become a farce with a spontaneous laugh from the audience following the amusing conclusion or will he generate from the same script something that inspires an audience to do some more thinking about what it has seen? Is there a subtlety?

So the Writer meets with a group of Club members for discussion. From this meeting, in a realistic assessment, members make a measured *commitment* to make the story into a Club Movie.

Now, the writer's story has to be transformed into a Screenplay. This secondary "writing" process possesses some characteristics different from a purely prose version. In the

"re-write" version, the Screenplay, the prose is transformed into scenes, some with spoken dialogue and some without, with visible actions indicated, with "frames", with sequences and something else more elusive.

A hundred readers of the prose version will visualize the story, its characters, its plot and setting in a hundred different ways, but with many commonalities. Viewers of the Club's finished movie will be offered a more limited vision, as created by the Screen-writer and the Director.

How many times have you heard the cry, "I liked the book better than the movie." How many times have you heard about a writer who claimed that the Director "had got it all wrong?"

Back to the drawing board. Members may contribute, but ultimately the Director's vision, partly his or his only, must prevail. The Director's Screenplay version is written with as much detail as possible, not only with its dialogue, but with directions for body movements, camera positions (point-ofview), "cut-ins", etc.

step is to "play-read" the Director's Master Copy, pencil in next take. From a side monitor, the Director has viewed changes and estimate how long the final movie will run.. Nice the "location rush". to have the camera-person and editor present at this playreading.

Narrative? Recall how members knew that they had to have and-forth, unnecessarily repetitive relocating of equipactors and a "workable" location?

They made sure that they had a location that could be easily lit, where the décor of the room wasn't distracting, and where the "room acoustics" could be managed by using "close-in" on-camera mikes, or better, with a shot-gun boom mike. Keep things simple as possible and "focus" more on the artistic elements of production.

For the editing dimension, I've already outlined how to use Time Code as a substitute for "slating". Again, keep it simple.

Take a drink-break here and there, but don't linger very long, sipping away time and losing "momentum." Order lunch in and get on with the Shoot promptly - while everyone's "hot to trot." By 4:00 PM, nearly everyone gets an attack of the most likely on one or two or three locations . "fidgets."

take on the duties of Producer. But for the amateur club, so for us. much responsibility seems to inevitably fall on the Director's shoulders.

He deserves his lofty title, not only for his single-minded tech. crew, and editing – one job, one person – lucky team! initiative, but for his ability to get the Screenplay written and the movie Shoot completed - expeditiously. And without upsetting club members or actors, he has to assume control for everything that happens on the set. Tact and diplomacy, a sense of humor, engendering good collegial relationships, timely praise and other (ostensibly "unassuming") leadership skills are needed. He's in charge, and as many people know, managing artistic talent with finesse can be most challenging.

However well the Club movie is received at its "premiere" showing, what matters at least as much, is the "Club glue" that was generated through the experience, particularly by participants, but by all members basking in the warmth of belonging to an active video club.

## AMATEUR VIDEO-MAKING

# The Case for Editing with **TIME-CODE**

**By David Fuller** 

• ome video clubs have faded to black some are approaching dissolution while others are flourishing.

The secret to a video club's continuing viability lies in its members' willingness and ability to MAKE MOVIES . It's a "glue" that holds members' interest. So, if a club can find ways to produce the "glue" by keeping things simple so that as many members as possible can be "on the team", members will be back and new members recruited. Imagine:

The buzz of the Panvision studio camera, mounted on Assume the Club has acquired actors and location(s). Next its pedestal, dies away. The lad readies his slate for the

The 20 episodes in a series of this "Crime Show", with each episode lasting 45 minutes, will be shot using Remember, before the Club made that *commitment* to the a well-orchestrated plan that minimizes the costly, backment and people to the locations. Shooting sequentially would be outrageously expensive.

> How can a Director, cameraman, editor, etc. keep track of all this apparently chaotic reshuffling of the potentially monumental list of scenes and takes, stored on shelves of 1,000 ft. rolls of negative film - so that it all comes out coherently?

> Absolutely essential is the "slate", complemented with separate documentation!

> Now, from these grand multi-million dollar movie blockbusters to us - the bottom-feeders, the amateurs joyfully creating our five-minutes-long masterpieces.

Don't mistake me: "slating" is a good practise for us, It's nice to have a member with sufficient knowledge to too. By all means, if it makes directing and editing easier

> If a Video Club has the luxury of enough members for Writing, Screenplay creation, directing, acting, "slating",

> For most of us, with ever-present limited resources, there's a simple alternative to "slating."

> The camera and editing platform have "slates" built in. Time Code. Since Hi-8 became a popular choice for amateurs in the early 1990's, Sony's time code made possible relatively accurate editing from two or more sources. Time Code could be used to identify "scenes & takes". And still can.

> One 60 minutes long DV blank cassette will hold all the takes for a short amateur movie of four minutes length.

With 60 scenes listed on the Director's Master Screenplay, including cut-ins, etc., the average scene length after the final edit, will probably work out at 5 seconds. This scene length is consistent with what we find today in professionally-produced Narratives.

#### **Before the Red Button is Pressed:**

Here's an overview of the artistic process of creating a Screenplay, a "Director's Master Copy". It begins with a "what-if" in the Writer's mind. Then, mentally, a train of events, translated into words on her manuscript. Next, the Screenplay-writer visualizes the transformation of the printed words into "movie frames & scenes"; to sequencing with varied points of view and cut-ins; with directions for actors and camera-person. Then it's off-location rehearsals and finally to takes and reviews of takes – and more retakes as needed. Then editing.

Remember, getting together and holding together an amateur team is a challenge. On Day 1 of the Shoot, some of the technical things like setting up lights and portable TV monitor and testing audio may proceed simultaneously as the Director rehearses on location with the actors and camera-person. No "idle" time.

Keeping things as simple as possible for us amateur neophytes also has merit. And shooting most of the Narrative *sequentially* is a simple way to keep the team together and in an appropriate and a consistent "psychological frame of mind.".

As I've suggested above, one of the vital pieces of pre-Shoot documentation is the preparation of the Director's Master Screenplay . Screenplay Writer and Director collaborate, but it'd take a book to include ALL the "thoughts" about their vision for the production, but they can write some stuff about how he wants his actors to speak their lines, perform movements, including "facials", etc.

After actors have pre-read the final version of the Screenplay, before they meet the Director on "Shoot" day, for rehearsal, they'll have more than an

inkling about how the emotions of their performance should go.

#### The Relevance of Time-Code Editing.

To quickly review, video cameras and editing platforms use a Time Code, which in turn, can become a kind of "slating" device. From the numbered scenes and takes on the Directors master copy, the Director identifies his choices by Time Code and the Editor takes over.

Before the Shoot, run the DV tape through on "record" to install a Time Code on the whole of the tape. Why?

During the shoot, if you have occasion to remove and later reload the tape, the Time Code will remain intact.

On the Director's Master Screenplay copy, with plenty of blank spaces between scenes, place the "Dialogue and Set Directions" to one side of the sheets, and leave room on the lefthand side of the sheets for four columns:

Scene number

Time Code (three columns)

Everyone on the set receives a copy of the Director's Version of the Screenplay, so that on "Shoot Day", everyone's on "the same page". For example, when the Director calls for shooting scene number 18, the team is "with him."

Viewing the "rushes", both during the shoot and later on at home, the Director and Editor can confirm the "edit-decision list". Chosen takes are identified by time code. NLE editor programs work similarly in principle: in essence, they load all the raw video and the editor guy chooses the bits he needs.

#### A slating alternative.

For a four-minutes-long amateurproduced Narrative, all of the scenes with their retakes and cut-ins can be accommodated on one DV tape. This includes the "Re-takes" on the second day of the Shoot, as needed.

At a later date, if you want to use scenes from this famous Narrative for another purpose, just review the Editor's Master to locate the needed scenes – by Time Code. 30

January 30th, 3009 3DTN Format Set to Make Big Splash During Super Bowl and a Broadcast Movie

<u>February 6th, 2009</u> <u>What The New</u> <u>Video Dimension Means For AV</u>

> <u>March 5, 2009</u> <u>3-D TV Scheme Seeks</u> <u>To Replace Regular TVs</u>

# UPDATE

In the January PANORAMA we reported on **The Photographic Historical Society of Canada** and their monthly <u>Newsletter</u>, published by Robert Lansdale.

If you're wise, you'll watch this site regularly. If you don't yet, you might be interested in an article in the <u>April Issue</u> in which Robert reports (on Page 3) on an interesting and useful site he found on the internet that details a procedure for restoring the colour to old faded Kodacolor Prints. Susan Price is the author of the page, and the tutorial can be found on her <u>Home Page</u>, or you can <u>go straight to it</u>.

> The PHSC's next big Photographica Fair (Flea Market) will be held SUNDAY, MAY1st, 2009

For the first time in as long as I can remember, we haven't needed to direct the reader to another page! Hoorah! :>)