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PANORAMA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO

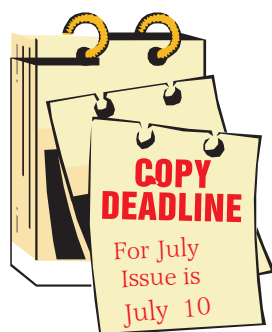


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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

Fred Briggs, FSCCA

Since the March Issue of PANORAMA, we have had indications that Roy Pachkowski is OK, and there has been no bad news about any of our SCCA Members. Hooray! Keep on Truckin'.

However, you may have noticed that Thom Speechley's "With the Clubs" hasn't carried any news about the Amateur Movie Makers' Association (AMMA- formerly the Society of Amateur Videomakers and Cinematographers, and before that, the Society of Amateur Cinematographers), since the November PANORAMA. That's because after their Annual Convention in Buena Park, CA, in October, we heard rumours that they were about to fold their tent, and we didn't want to be the ones to notify you, or some of their own members who read PANORAMA but weren't in California. A Final wind-up Issue of the AMMA Monitor was planned, so we waited for the AMMA to make the announcement themselves.

Without going into all the details of the mix-up and their subsequent problems, that last issue arrived just a few weeks ago.

The SCCA Executive had already made plans to invite all their members to become members of the SCCA, but we didn't want to be grave robbers, so we were waiting for the AMMA to send out that final issue, and we expected that it would carry a suggestion that

their members consider keeping up with the hobby by joining the SCCA. In the meantime, we finally put together a fairly up-to-date AMMA Membership list with their email addresses and telephone numbers, and when the Monitor hadn't arrived by April, we decided it might never come, so we should go ahead with our invitation before the opportunity expired.

We offered every American Member of the AMMA who wasn't also already an SCCA Member, a Special One-Time Only Deal: we offered SCCA Membership for the remainder of the 2008-2009 year, and the entire 2009-2010 Membership, for US\$20. We included the September, November, and January back issue of PANORAMA, provided the link to the sccaonline.ca website where they could view and download the past ten years of PANORAMA, and invited them to explore the web site and see the many benefits of SCCA Membership. Many of the email addresses were out of date, but we telephoned most of those and got new email addresses. As a reminder, we sent the March issue (when it was sent to you) to all the AMMA Members we had been able to reach previously.

Over a period of a few weeks we were able to add to our Membership Brenda Lantow in Quincy, CA, Ray Marr in Dallas, TX, Salvatore Tufo in San Francisco, CA, and the Sacramento Amateur Movie Makers in CA. There are also a couple of others who have written of their intentions to join, but we haven't yet received their cheques!

Speaking of Membership, Membership Fees were due on June 1st. We have received a few already, and some who were quite late with last year's dues paid this year's dues at the same time. In the past it was our practice to send out to all the Members, including those in arrears, a list of all our Members in Good Standing. It would be very bad taste to send out all the names with everyone marked either Paid Up or In Arrears, but the way we did it allowed each of you to check to see if you were on the List of Members in Good Standing, or not.

That List was printed on a separate paper and slipped into the PANORAMA when we mailed them out, and it was easy to put the PANORAMA on the internet without the list, as we don't think it's right to "publish" your home address where all and sundry around the world can read it!

This year we're planning to produce instead a small pdf file that contains the name, city, telephone number and email address of all our members, whether in Good Standing or In Arrears. You can store this SCCA mini-file on your hard drive and put a small icon named simply SCCA on your desktop, so it you want to contact any of our members you can call up that little database and find their telephone number, or just click on their email address to send them an email. If you want their street address and Postal Code, you can ask them for it, and they can control who gets it!

Thom will send out the same pdf file to two lists, one In Good Standing, and One in Arrears, with a message either thanking you for your Membership Fee, or asking for it! (New Members should provide us with their full address just for our official records in case we need to send them something in the future, but the old Registration/Renewal Forms aren't needed anymore, as everything is kept on computers and backed up. However, PLEASE inform us of any changes to your Address, Phone Number, or Email ASAP so we don't lose the ability to contact you!)

This PANORAMA will itself be a reminder to some to send their dues, so Thom won't make up the lists and send out the notices till June's over.

In an effort to invite new members, and encourage your club members to attend the Ottawa Convention, we would like to reach members of the clubs who aren't SCCA Members themselves. Thom will send this May Issue (sorry it's June already!) and the July Issue (which has to go out in July!), in a separate list to the SCCA Club Representatives, asking them to forward these two issues to all the members of their respective clubs.



CLUB NEWS

By Thom Speechley FSCCA



We are a little short on club news this time, due I suspect to the winding down of some club activities toward the end of the traditional club year. However, we do welcome a newcomer from the South.

BRANT VIDEO MAKERS

Brant Camcorder News editor, Dan Kennaley

The March meeting was devoted entirely to the work of member Alex Szatmary. Ten of Alex's short features were shown. The videos employ several techniques including animation, motion effects and the effective use of music. Dan presented Alex with an *Award of Excellence* from the club for his outstanding contribution.

The April newsletter reminds members that the subject for this month is "Country" or as explained by Dan, "rural, cows, horses, and / or barns etc." He would prefer that a video would somehow reflect the 'traditional' view of a simpler more peaceful setting.

The May newsletter offers some suggestions for creating a video with the theme "Homes". Create a tour, try to show how a person's home reflects the owner's personality. The June subject of "work" might be presented in documentary fashion.

BUFFALO VIDEO-MOVIE MAKERS

"Camerama" editor John Weiksnar

The March meeting featured the screening of the five entries in this year's contest. Also shown were selected clips from Marie Vaughan's feature "Henry's Future". The cast and crew were guests for the evening and were introduced to members. Emil Novak showed video from the early 1930's wide screen "Grandeur Process". That process was too far ahead of its time and was abandoned. (For more info browse this [website](#) for a fascinating history of wide screen and movie sound)

The May meeting was not only important for the awarding of trophies for this year's contest entries but more significantly for the celebration of the Club's 75th Anniversary! Contest results were a First Place tie between "Roommates" by CHRIS SCIOLI and JARED GARLIPP, and "The Immigrant" by ALEX SZATMÁRY. Second place was also a tie,

between "The Battle That Never Happened" by JON SOYKA and "Tilt/Shift-O-Rama" by JOHN P. WEIKSNAR.

Other important events of the evening were the awarding of Lifetime membership to Adam and Agnes Huston and the Most Distinguished Member Award (The Chuck Burdette Award) to Jon Soyka. The three recipients are also members of the Hamilton Video and Film Makers. Congratulations.

HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS

Reel News, editor Dave Stewart

The March meeting featured eight members' videos. Subjects ranged from diving at Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, to a short cops-and-robbers feature and the Hamilton Mardi Gras parade in high definition. In his newsletter report on the evening's showings, Jon Soyka provided a rundown on the longest film productions in history. I think this added trivia was intended as a hint for future member submissions.

The April meeting was 'election night' and the club executive was chosen for the coming year.



Photo by Joe Bochsler

REAR Manfred Ernst - *Public Relations/Promotion* JR
John Stultz - *Contest* Jim Small - *Equipment*
Harold Cosgrove - *Harold's Corner* Jon Soyka -
Treasurer/Meeting Program

FRONT Dave Stewart - *Newsletter* Mary Cosgrove -
Membership Dan Copeland - *President*
Carolyn Briggs - *Secretary*

Also announced that evening was the club's contribution of a \$200 cash award for the winning entry for cinematogra-

phy in the Hamilton 24-HOUR Film Contest. Several club members indicated that they would be participating. This activity has provided the club with some valuable publicity.

LONDON VIDEOGRAPHY CLUB

It's A Wrap editor, TBA

The April meeting was organized in an informal manner due to double cancellation of selected presenters. At the March meeting, members were presented with DVDs of several GB of raw DV and instructed to use the footage in any way they wished, and show the results of their work at the April meeting. This evening we got to see the results. Considering the specific lack of directions, several members came up with very creative productions. Phil McLeod used short clips of US military ships and planes to show a satirical comparison with the Canadian equivalent, "Theirs and Ours". Jim Town combined footage of ATVs and motocross events with appropriate music to produce a fast moving action video. Jiri Jelinek used the military footage, supported by martial music to produce what may have passed for a recruitment film.



Photo by Rael Wienberg

Paul Herbert explaining the use of "Pro Show Gold"

Our guest at the May meeting was active still photographer Paul

Herbert. His presentation demonstrated the convergence of still photography and moving pictures by showing a series of DVDs in SD (720X480) and HD, (1920X1080). The material consisted of selected still pictures assembled using the program "Pro Show Gold". This was much superior to typical slideshow productions and vastly superior to (should I even mention it?) "PowerPoint". Paul's excellent choice of music and transitions produced a perfect sensation of motion.

SACRAMENTO AMATEUR MOVIE MAKERS

News provided by Bob White, President

First of all, let's welcome the Sacramento group to our club news roundup. We look forward to learning about the kind of activities that can be carried on where the sun always shines. Here is Bob's outline of the subject of the current club project.

"In 1864 the owner of a store in Austin, Nevada Territory lost an election bet and the loser had to carry a 50-pound sack of flour through the street of the mining town. Rueul Gridley was the loser and to jeers and cheers he carried the sack to a saloon whereupon he said he didn't want the flour and held an auction, the proceeds to go to the US Sanitary Commission, a forerunner of the Red Cross. Each winner called for a further auction and at the end of the day \$5,000 had been raised as well as the enthusiasm of the nearby mining towns who sought to better the amount raised by Gridley. Buoyed by this success he traveled to Sacramento, San Francisco and eventually to the East Coast raising an unbelievable total of \$275,000 which today would be millions. Gridley paid for his travels, and returned to Austin, broke and ill and died at the age of 41 leaving a wife and children. Earlier he had moved his family to Stockton California and years after his death, newspaper editors, learning of his deeds, erected a monument to Gridley with the inscription, "The Soldiers Friend." Thanks

Bob, and good luck with your project. Readers can learn about other activities with this group at their [website](#).

WINNIPEG AMATEUR MOVIE AND VIDEO CLUB

Bulletin editors,

Wallace and Jeanette Robertson

The April issue of the *Bulletin* opens with a detailed report by President Al Ross, of the March showing of an 8mm-film transfer from a 1967 production by Dr. Don Rogers. It takes viewers to far north Inuit settlements and other northern activity of the period. This is another excellent example of the value of good amateur historical recording.

This issue also reports on the continuing efforts to archive the clubs valuable film collection on DVD. Special attention is given to collecting the works of Chris and John Gauthier, copies of which will be given to their daughters.

The sardonically humorous article on technology by Jeanette Robertson, which appeared in the March *Panorama*, is included in this month's *Bulletin*.

The April meeting featured travel video by member Dr. Louis Villa. In the May issue, Al Ross describes the effectiveness of Louis' productions and comments on the great amount of effort required in their making. The May issue also contains a helpful article on the subject of wedding videography. Wally Robertson offers some valuable tips to help make the finished production more enjoyable and to avoid the kind of disasters which can occur at such events. Wally and a second camera catch the separate pre-nup preparations of the bride and groom in a unique way. They synchronize watches and shoot short clips at scheduled intervals. It sounds like a military operation but I'm sure, when edited, it can be very effective.

INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS (IAC)

Film and Videomaker editor, Garth Hope

The June issue is the 'big' one which lists all the awards for this year's BI-AFF competition. According to the Chairman's report, this was a very successful festival despite predictions that

the downturn in the economy might have a negative effect. In fact, organizers had to arrange alternative accommodations after the reserved hotel in Chesterfield was fully booked. Top prize this year went to Holger Lowe of Germany for "Aus der Seele" (From the Soul). It is available on "YouTube" and I encourage you to [take a look at it](#). SCCA member Alex Szatmary, of the Brantford and Hamilton clubs, is once again the lone Canadian among the award winners.

This issue contains two interesting opinions about the age-old question of 'what is an amateur?' IAC member Lee Prescott argues for the substitution of the term "Non-Professional". He makes the point that the digital age has been a great leveler and so-called amateurs now have the creative resources of the professional crowd. In a related article, US writer Ned Cordery takes the hard line that "you can't be a little bit of a professional once we have been paid for it". Again, this relates to the fact that the digital revolution enabled amateurs to 'dabble' in wedding and event video for pay. Both writers make reference to the way in which digital has enabled younger people to participate in movie making in ways which make amateur events and clubs obsolete. In the end, both seem to agree that the term 'amateur' now suggests a serious lack of competence, rather than someone engaged in some kind of 'noble' pastime.

Tom Hardwick's always-helpful column this month reviews a selection of LED on-camera lights. Tom compares them with his trusted Sony 20DW2 halogen light. The prices quoted seem rather high to me but perhaps in time they will be more competitive with the old-fashioned hot, battery-hungry halogen types. One good observation in the article is that the cooler colour of some LEDs may take some adjustment in selecting shooting settings. LED products cited are the Swit S2000, available in Canada from Vistek for \$450 and the "Pro-X" XD-L32 which sells for £85 in the UK.

■

OFF TO OTTAWA!

It's too early to plan your trip to Ottawa, but it isn't too early to plan to go! Ottawa has so many fantastic attractions that we suggest you arrive early, or stay late, or both, for a vacation you'll never forget!

We can't give you all the information you'll need just yet, but we can give you some idea of what will be available, so you can make your preliminary plans.

The Convention will be held at the RA Centre (for Map, Google RA Centre, Ottawa) at 2451 Riverside Drive on the Rideau River, on Saturday, September 12th and Sunday, the 13th. Friday, September 11th and Monday, the 14th are Optional Tour Dates.

The Program has not yet been finalized, but some part of it has already been arranged, and we can promise a spectacular weekend! The Program will be announced in the July Issue of PANORAMA.

That issue will also carry your Registration Form, and we will also try to send you a Form even before that Issue goes out, as soon as we can settle a few outstanding details. The Registration cost will be modest - \$35 per SCCA Member and \$40 for nonmembers of the SCCA for both days, with a \$10 reduction for Early Registrations received by August 20th, bringing the cost down to \$25 or \$30 respectively. For nonmembers of the SCCA who wish to attend only one day, the Registration Fee will be \$20 per day.

Our Hosts, the Ottawa Film and Video Makers, will arrange a guided tour for Friday Afternoon and Evening and another for Monday morning.

Friday

The Friday tour, for those who can get settled in their accommodations early enough, will be at the stupendous Museum of Civilization (just across the Ottawa River from the Parliament Buildings) that includes the First IMAX theatre in the world to incorporate both the IMAX Dome (showing *Under The Sea*) and the IMAX big screen (showing *Mysteries of the Great Lakes*). We plan to see *Under The Sea* at 5:00 PM, and then go outside and nearby for supper.

We plan to meet at the Museum for a 75 minute Guided Tour of the Grand Hall and the Canada Hall in the early afternoon (at a

time to be announced later), leaving some time for you to explore the other exhibits on your own, and enjoy *Under the Sea* on the IMAX Dome at 5:00 PM. We need 20 people for a Group Tour and Group Rate of \$16 for the Museum Entrance, Tour, and the afternoon IMAX film, paid with (ie. in addition to) your Convention Registration. (Regular Admission Price \$17, \$14 for Seniors, with no Tour)

A Hollywood Feature Film will be shown on the IMAX screen at 7:00 PM, but it hasn't yet been selected. We hope to have that information ready for the July PANORAMA. At worst you will find out what it is when you arrive at the IMAX Theatre. Those who wish to go back into the IMAX Theatre after supper for the Special Evening Presentation, and those who arrive in town too late to join in the Tour can meet us at the IMAX theatre, for \$12 (or \$10 for Seniors) to be paid at the door.

Monday

On the Monday morning we'll be visiting [Parliament Hill](#). With a minimum of 10 people we can have a Tour of the Centre Block at no charge.

The tour is limited in number each day, First-Come, First-Served, there is no charge, and will be 20 minutes to an hour long, depending on whether or not Parliament and/or the Senate is in Session. Both the House of Commons and the Senate should be in Summer Recess until September 21st under the current schedule, but anything can happen, and often does. However, these dates are reasonably safe, even if Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition pulls the plug before the end of June!

If Parliament is recalled earlier, for one reason or another, we can try to reserve (through a Member of Parliament) some seats in the gallery for a group of 10 or more, and after those seats are set aside, you can try to get in (first-come, first-served) anyway. Everybody wants to attend Question Periods so they can carp to all their friends about the abominable behavior of our Members of Parliament! This is a long shot so we won't provide all the information about security and decorum here, but if the House is in session, and if it looks like we might be able to get in, we'll provide you with the necessary information at the Convention.

Other than that, you'll be free to visit, on your own or in small groups, other important attractions like the [Peace Tower and Memorial Room](#), and wander the grounds inspecting (and photographing or videotaping) other important items like the many [statues of historically important persons](#). Stick around long enough to take in the [Carillon Concert](#) at noon!

Unfortunately we're too late for the Changing of the Guard (August 23rd), the tour of the East Block (September 11th) or even the [Sound and Light Show](#) on Parliament Hill (September 13th).

But if you get to Ottawa a day or two early, you could take in those last two sights on your own before the convention!

The Monday morning visit to Parliament Hill has been planned for those who don't have to leave for home immediately after breakfast. Those who have to leave in the afternoon might want to look around the area and explore some of what Ottawa has to offer in the area near Parliament Hill before they leave, and those who are making a mini-vacation out of it will want to look over some of the local attractions while they're there (and the car is already parked!)

Most of us will want to pay our respects at the [National War Memorial](#) just across Wellington Street from Parliament in Wellington Square. [Canada's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#) is close by in the Square.

Nearby (just one block from Parliament Hill) you might want to explore the [Spark Street Mall](#), an historic outdoor pedestrian mall with more than 30 heritage buildings, 150 shops and boutiques housing artisans, crafts and tourist items, and Ottawa's most significant heritage street.

You might want to have lunch at another very historic spot, the four-block [Byward Market](#) only a little further along, and maybe even a Beaver Tail like Obama bought! Or maybe you'd rather splurge for supper at one of the [many fine restaurants](#) of all types.

While there, you're very near the world's only Monument to Peacekeeping, Canada's [National Peacekeeping Monument](#), just a couple of blocks away at St. Patrick's Street and Sussex Drive.

And if you are staying longer you might very well want to take the [hour-and-a-half boat trip](#) on the Ottawa River, that starts just under the shadow of Parliament and the Chateau Laurier Hotel, at the foot of the Ottawa Lock at the end of the Rideau Canal, and takes you on a pleasant voyage to Rideau Falls and back.

If you're lucky enough (and smart enough) to come early and stay late, there are so many things to see and do in Ottawa that I can only list them, with links to more information on the internet.

Very near the National Peacekeeping Monument is the [National Gallery of Canada](#). Many years ago Carolyn and I visited the [Canadian War Museum](#), and it made a lasting impression on us. That museum is gone now, and a new museum has taken its place. The exhibitions are changed frequently, but none of them glorify war. This, like the Museum of Civilization, is a MUST SEE, so I'm providing two very different links. Be sure to follow the CBC link to the Architect's ([Raymond Moriyama](#)) story and read his 2004 Convocation Address to Carleton University!

[Canada Science and Technology Museum](#) is another that shouldn't be skipped. The web site will tell you more about it than I ever could, including "Where is it?"

The [Canada Aviation Museum](#) is one of the best in the world, and a lot closer to downtown than any aviation museum has any right to be! Rockcliffe Airport is just a bit further down the Ottawa River than Rideau Falls, and easy to get to by car – Sussex Drive turns into Rockcliffe Parkway for another river drive! High on my list!

Did you read recently, or see on television, about the missing link to the evolution of seals that was recently found in the High Arctic? It was found by a team from the [Canadian Museum of Nature](#), and it's on display there right now. Though they change their exhibitions, I'm betting that this one will still be displayed in September. See what else they have!

While most of us have a deep interest in film and video, there are some with a strong interest in Photography. If that's you, you may be interested in the [Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography](#).

Have you noticed that we are now getting into the realm of Special Interests? Of these, The [Bank of Canada's Currency Museum](#) seems to be the most popular. I've never been in it, but I know many people who have. It might be just your piece of cake!

Similarly, a bore to some is a passion of many, and all philatelists will head straight for [Canada's Postal Museum](#). Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately, depending on how you see it), it's incorporated into the Museum of Civilization. If that's your bag, they host some [Online Exhibitions](#) you can view right now.

That isn't all, by any means, but except for the [Canada Agriculture Museum](#) (Ottawa is claimed to be "the only Capital City in the World with a working farm at its heart"), the rest can be covered quickly in one line, as their main patronage will be those with an interest in local history: The [Billings Estate Museum](#), [Bytown Museum](#), and [The Cumberland Heritage Village Museum](#).

There are two others, each very interesting to some of us, but both have a serious drawback for those whose time is limited. One is [Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War History](#), but that's 35 kilometers outside of Ottawa!

The other destination I've been eager to get to for several years, but it looks like doing all the above properly would require a week's stay. The one that's missing here is the [Library and National Archives of Canada](#), and that would need another week!

For more information on things to see in Ottawa we suggest you sign up for a free subscription to the [Ottawa Kiosk Events Newsletter](#). Every week (Thursday) you'll receive their Ottawa Events Newsletter telling you about upcoming events and things you can visit while in Ottawa during the convention. You can easily cancel, or stop, the emails after the convention!

You'll need a place to stay! Unlike some of our Conventions in the past, we aren't using a hotel, so we aren't begging you to book the same hotel to get us a reduced rate for the meeting room! Some people will be staying with their Aunt Bessie in Ottawa. Some like a posh hotel (I've heard the Chateau Laurier is nice!), some like an Inn or a Suite, some like small motels (we like a ground floor with a door opening onto the parking lot). Some like to be in a quiet place, while others want to be near either the Convention venue, or some of the places they want to visit. I know some who want the tops in town, and others who want the lowest price in town. So we hedge, or cop out! Pick your own, to your own likes and budget.

Here are some suggestions to start your search: [Ottawa Tourism Official Site](#), and [Online Accommodations in Ottawa](#). That's enough. You can pick a place for yourself better than I can pick for you.

So decide if you plan to attend, and how long you plan to stay, and then go on the internet and find something! Then book it! Don't wait for the Registration Form in July. Start planning now!



In the January Issue of PANORAMA I reprinted an email from Jan Essing, Secretary General of UNICA, inviting the SCCA to join their Organization, and detailed our actions on this matter up to that time.

We have asked our members for their opinions on this matter and the SCCA Executive have considered your opinions and asked for more information from UNICA.

All the correspondence between UNICA and the SCCA since the January Issue is reprinted below.

January 2, 2009

Jan:

Happy New Year, Jan. It's nice to start off the year with your invitation!

I have just forwarding a copy of your email to all the member of the SCCA Executive, and asked them to consider your invitation, read the material, pass on to me any questions they might have, and to give me their preliminary opinions. This stage may take a week or more, but a final decision may take much longer.

I'll be in touch with you from time to time, to ask for any clarifications we might need for our deliberations.

At this point, I'm just letting you know that I have received your email and we will be considering the invitation.

Fred Briggs

January 3, 2009

Dear Fred,

Thank you for your fast reply. I'll be looking forward for the results of the discussions in Canada.

On my behalf and of that of the UNICA Committee I wish you and all members of the SCCA all the best for the coming year. May 2009 bring what you expect from it.

Br.

Jan Essing

February 10, 2009

Jan:

I apologize for the delay in emailing you again, but we have been considering the matter. We have reprinted your original invitation in our Journal, PANORAMA, and asked our members for their comments. There has been very little response from our membership at large, so we have recently emailed them all asking them again to send me their thoughts on this proposal.

Our Society is quite small now, consisting of just 8 Affiliated Clubs, 8 Family Memberships, 31 Individual Members, plus 6 Honourary Members and one Life Member, so you can see that while the Membership Fee would be much less for Canada than it is for many European Countries, it is, nevertheless, a considerable amount of money for a group as small as we are.

First, we see absolutely no chance of ever hosting one of your Congresses, and while one member of the Victoria, British Columbia, club, a Czech woman, has attended two of the congresses, and speaks favourably of them, you will see if you look at a globe, that she will not likely attend another. Visits from Canada to Europe are relatively rare, and those who do make the trip usually have other things on their mind then attending an 8-day Festival of Amateur Films.

However, several members have expressed interest in seeing the film/videos in your library. Would it be possible to borrow the compilations, and make about 10 copies of each of them, so we could distribute a copy to each of the SCCA Clubs, and hold a couple back for loan to Individual Members, many of whom live hundreds of kilometers from any club?

There is a great concern on this side of the Atlantic with problems regarding copyright. Do you have the rights to distribute the winning videos to members of UNICA who might make copies for home use and for showing at video clubs?

I see that some of the yearly compilations are listed as being on DV tape, while for the more recent years the media isn't stated. Can I assume DVD? Secondly, are the DVD's on PAL, NTSC, or SECAM? I understand that in Europe most DVD players will play all formats, but this isn't so in North America. We can usually find DVD Players that will play PAL, but making NTSC copies that could be played by all the clubs might be a problem. And PAL DV Tapes could be an even harder problem for us.

We have also had questions regarding the possibility of advertising our Canadian International Annual Film Festival (CIAFF) through your organization. You have mentioned "publications" in your first email, but I don't see any information about publications on the UNICA Web site. The SCCA Executive will be meeting on Thursday, February 19th to consider this proposal, so I would appreciate hearing from you on these matters before that date. I hope that we can work out something to allow us to affiliate with you.

Fred Briggs, President, SCCA

February 26, 2009

Jan:

I originally sent this email more than two weeks ago, and have been waiting for a reply, thinking that maybe you are away from home on business or vacation. We did have our meeting, and in the absence of a response to our questions, it was decided to postpone a decision until we have had your reply.

Please let me know the details about borrowing UNICA videos and any publications you might produce, as detailed below.

Fred Briggs, President, SCCA.

My January 10, 2009 email was reprinted below this email.

April 12, 2009

Dear Fred,

I'm sorry my answer is still not definite, because the UNICA-Committee will discuss our e-mail correspondence during their meeting next week in Gdansk (Poland). I have gathered various information and now it's up to the Committee to decide whether to assign funds for this matter. I'll be in touch shortly after the Committee's meeting.

Best regards,
Jan Essing

April 19, 2009

Jan:

I'm very glad to hear from you again. I have just finished the latest issue of our bimonthly journal, and it will be going out to our members tomorrow. In it I have reported that you have not yet responded to my questions on their behalf, and I thought that you may be travelling, or been replaced in your position by someone else. I planned to contact you again next week!

When I read your response I didn't understand "now it's up to the Committee to decide whether to assign funds for this matter". So I reread my first email to you, and I think you may have thought I was asking you if you would bear the costs of making copies for us. I assumed that probably you already make a few copies for your library so they can be circulated among your member associations, and then returned. I was also asking if we could make copies of those DVD's to put in the libraries of our member clubs in Canada. We would do the copying, at our own cost, if this was allowed. I would also expect that we would pay the cost of mailing DVD's from you to us and back to you again. Nor was I asking you to take on the cost of converting PAL to NTSC, if conversion was necessary. I'm sorry if I didn't make my questions more clear.

Perhaps you could inform me before your meeting what was meant by "assign funds for this matter" so that I could clear up any further misunderstanding before your meeting in Gdansk!

Fred Briggs

There has been no response to this last email. It is now eight weeks since I sent the above clarifying message, and seven weeks since the meeting in Gdansk. I believe that, at least for the present time, we should consider the matter dead.



Fixt the Shot!

By Fred Briggs

In the March Issue of PANORAMA I explored the capabilities of various Morphing Programs, hoping they might make it possible to extract individual frames at intervals from a video, convert the still shots to paintings of various kinds, and then assemble the individual shots back into video using a morphing program to extrapolate the frames “in between” to make the action smooth again. I did quite a bit of “research” on the internet, examining the likelihood that some of them could do the job, and even did some practical tests of some of them to evaluate their usefulness for making morphs from one photograph to another for use in a video.

But actually extracting stills, turning them into sketches, oil paintings, or watercolours, was such a daunting task that I procrastinated, again, promising to get to it for this issue. And then we got into summer, - opening my pool, moving all my tropical plants outdoors, pruning bushes, etc., as well as all the small jobs like getting my snow tires off, cleaning windows, getting a new storm door installed, etc., etc., etc., and then here I was again, a month late on PANORAMA!

I cast around for a quicker substitute subject so I could catch up!

In the beginning, you may remember that I want the ability to camouflage live shots to obscure some of the details. Whenever I asked for coöperation of British and American Re-enactors to act out various bits that are critical to my tale, I made a point of recording their

names. Sometimes I even got written releases! However, I’ve been working on this project for more than ten years, my memory is failing, and I’ve grabbed a great deal of action by re-enactors in the field without permission to use their faces.

On top of all that, many of the details of their uniforms portray regiments that, while accurate for the period, weren’t the units involved in the events I’m trying to recreate. (Most people wouldn’t know the difference, but the re-enacting community will!)

Faced also with the need to use a great number of paintings to depict a naval battle in a gale, (the opportunity to videotape something like that hasn’t arisen yet, and I can’t wait forever) I have captured many shots of sails, tall ships, waves etc., and have arranged for the use of a large number of great oil paintings by Peter Rindlisbacher, with his permission to “cut them up” and use them as bits and pieces, edited in with the live shots. It was these gorgeous paintings that gave me the idea to turn these scenes, and others with similar problems, into “animated paintings”.

That led me into a search for the software I would need, and I quickly found that everything was very expensive, or was only available for use with software that was very expensive, mostly Adobe After Effects (current version, CS4, US\$999!).

After disappointment following disappointment, the only one I could find was [Video Gogh](#), by Re:Vision Effects, at US\$119. The only demo

I could find on the internet wasn’t very encouraging, because the effect distorted the picture so much that it wasn’t just disguised, it was barely recognizable! It was described as “Compatible with Adobe After Effects for 5.0 and later on Windows, Adobe After Effects 7.0 or later on Macintosh, Apple Final Cut Pro 5.1 and up (read about limitations), Fusion 5.01 and up via Fusion’s After Effects plug-in adapter (only the 32-bit version of Fusion is supported because 64-bit Fusion does not yet support After Effects-compatible plug-ins), Autodesk Combustion 3.0.4 or later, and Quantel Generation..” See why I was discouraged?

But then I noticed that reference to After Effects-compatible Plug-Ins! My Adobe Premiere Pro 2 is compatible with After Effects Plug-ins, so I downloaded the Free Demo and installed it as a plug-in to my Premiere.

I applied the plug-in to a video clip, and hated the effect. It had a watermark, or course, but it also had an “overlay” that looked like dried rain spatter on a window, that varied with every frame so the whole pattern moved over the video, like sunlight patterns on the bottom of shallow water. Very annoying! I kept my \$120!

Every now and then I Googled again for something better, but it wasn’t till this week, looking for a better alternative to all that testing I had planned for this issue., when lo and behold, I found more!

First I tracked down [Toonit 2.0](#), formerly of Digital Anarchy, and

now a product of Red Giant Software.

It had some promise, and just might do the job, but the price is US\$399! I installed the Free Demo Plug-in into Premiere Pro 2 (so I could report on it for you – maybe you can afford it!), but kept looking.

Finally, I managed to find [Paint Effects](#), by [NewBlueFX](#). There are versions for Windows and a Mac running Intel. Each is US\$119. Paint Effects is a collection of Plug-ins and includes Cartoonr Plus, Charcoal, Colored Pencil, Halovision Plus, Impressionist, Mosiac, Mural, Oil, Paper Collage, Pencil Rubbing, Posterize, and Water Color.

Just from the samples on the Web Page, I knew I didn't really need Charcoal, Halovision, Mosaic, Impressionist, Paper Collage, or very likely, Posterize. I could see myself using Mural, Oil, Pencil Rubbing, and Water Colour.

The most interesting of all was Cartoonr Plus, and right there on the same page, they were offering an [older version](#) of that program - FREE!

I downloaded it, installed it, and ran a lot of tests. You choose the clip, open NewBlue Free Effects, drag the Cartoonr plug-in onto the clip, and you can see the effect of the filter on the clip. On the Video Effects Controls Tab, you can open the Cartoonr folder, and select presets. As you click on each one (with the Red Line in the clip) you'll see the effect of each of the 16 Presets. When you've chosen the Preset nearest to what you like, you can select one or more of more than a dozen properties, and adjust each one with a separate slider (maybe dials on other NLE programs). You can then store any successful modification that you will want to use again without having to repeat all the settings, by renaming the new

Preset and saving it to the collection. The Smooth Slider will get you something very close to the Mural Effect in the \$120 product. Choosing the Rich Colors Preset and increasing the amount of colour with the slider will come close to Posterize. Picking Pencil Test and increasing the colour approaches the Pencil Rubbing, etc., so I'll put off purchasing the Full Paint Effects until I've had longer to get familiar with the effects available in the FREE Cartoonr. Paint Effects may be worth the investment: time will tell.

After learning something about adjusting the Cartoonr effects, I returned to the Red Giant Plug-in, which contains Toonit Black Light Edges (no way!), Toonit Goth (not likely either), Toonit Outlines Only, (maybe, occasionally) and Toonit Roto Toon (most like the Cartoonr results). Originally (before I found the sliders) I didn't like this one so much because it drew a heavy black line on the horizon between the lake and the sky. Who wants that? Now that I know that I can control the effects in this one too, I like it a lot better, but not \$400 worth!

Finally back to the first one, Video Gogh. Now I find that it has 3 Presets – Oily, Watercolor, and Chalk. It looks more capable now than it did on my first examination (though it's still the same copy on my computer – a newer version may be available, or soon will be). The blurb on the web page says “*Providing an easy and intuitive interface, Video Gogh employs the powerful technology used in "What Dreams May Come," 1998 Academy Award Winner for Best Visual Effects.*” I don't think Video Gogh was used for those extraordinary sequences in “What Dreams May Come” (absolutely a Must See!) that inspired my search for this treat-

ment. I'll bet that software cost 1,000,000 times more!

And those swimming wavy lines turned out to be the paint brush strokes! It may be an inherent problem with any program using visible brush strokes. I was afraid of that from the beginning, and I'm half expecting the problem to exist even in the “painted stills re-assembled into a video” strategy. It may be that the only way to do that is to mask out the background, toon the moving figures, use a moving panorama painting and pan it behind the moving figure, blue screening to combine the two separate clips. I can't see doing a lot of that! It may be Cartoonr all the way!

So for now, it's the FREEbie, Cartoonr until something better comes along (and I'll keep looking) but if nothing else comes along by the time I have to use it, I expect I'll go for Paint Effects by NewBlueFX. Oh, by the way, it will work on Pinnacle 10 or Premiere Elements 3, so it doesn't have to have a high-end NLE Program, but it will even work on Final Cut Pro and Avid editors!

Compatible Video Editing Host Platforms:

Adobe After Effects 7.0 and higher (video effects only) for Windows and Intel Macs.

Adobe Premiere 7.0 or higher, Adobe Premiere Elements 3.0 or higher, Adobe Premiere Pro - all versions: Windows and Intel Macs.

Apple Mac OS X 10.4.10 (FCP 6, FCE 4, and CS4 need at least OS X 10.5) Final Cut Pro version 5.1.2 and higher, Apple Final Cut Express version 4.0 and higher, and Apple Motion for Intel Macs. (Note: AudioFX are not compatible with Apple Final Cut products.)

Avid AVX 2.0 compatible NLEs for Windows, including: Avid Media Composer, Avid NewsCutter, Avid Symphony and Avid Xpress for Win-

dows and Intel Macs. (Note: AudioFX are not compatible with these Avid editing systems.)

Avid Liquid version 7.1 or higher
Corel (formerly Ulead) VideoStudio version 9 and higher.

Pinnacle Studio versions 10, 11 or higher

Sony Vegas/Sony Vegas Pro and Sony Vegas Movie Studio versions 4 or higher (32-bit) and Sony Vegas Pro 8.1 or higher (64-bit)

Thomson Grass Valley (formerly Canopus) EDIUS version 4.6 or higher.

All Windows-based software listed above must work with Microsoft Windows XP or higher.

Some Good News!

After writing the above I learned that NewBlueFX allows a [FREE Trial Download](#) of any of their many sets of video effects, transitions, and other effects. I downloaded the set of Paint Effects, installed them into Premiere, and began testing many of them. I didn't think it necessary until this point to explain that when you install the FREE Version of Cartoonr, you have to send your email address to NewBlueFX, and they send you an email that contains a Activation Serial Number to enter into your program, as well as a Password that will give you full access to their web site. You can then go onto the web site, enter your email address as a User Name and paste in the password you have "copied" from the email. Having thus logged in, you can then go into your "Account" and change your password to something you can more easily remember. To download a trial of any of the sets of effects you must be logged in, and then it's as simple as clicking the Download Button for the set in which you're interested. Installation into your NLE program is even more straight-

forward than installing the FREE version of Cartoonr, and the effects on trial are fully functional. Most software trials use either a limited time trial that I always find times out before I can really give it a thorough test, or the results produced are watermarked, as these are. This suits my habits to a T, as I jump around (flit?) from one thing to another all the time, and am very easily distracted from the butterfly in my hand by the one flying by!

As I expected, many of these effects can be dismissed quickly as not suitable for my needs. Others give strong indications of fulfilling my hopes admirably. Some of the effects in Cartoonr have been improved, and some new Presets have been added. (One I greatly appreciated is "Reset to None" for removing effects I have already explored on a clip, but unfortunately it isn't present on every Preset. There must be an alternative way to do this that I just haven't found yet.)

Best of all, Mural, Pencil Rubbing, Oil and Watercolor performed as well as, or better than, I had hoped! And contrary to my experience with other software, and in spite of my fears, the entire range from minimum (or highest detail) to maximum brush stroke size was very useable) for both Oil and Watercolor (with "useable" depending on the image size (close up or distant) and the amount of detail I might want to show or distort), **with none of those "squirmy effects"** I had seen previously when either the subject or camera moved!!!

My testing, of course, has only been preliminary and I'm a long way from mastering all the possibilities. I might be able to get by with just the FREE Cartoonr, but I'd love to have some of the expanded capabilities that the Paint Effect Set provides. But at US\$119, I'm not rushing into

the purchase. NewBlueFX made a point of extracting my email address before letting me activate the FREE Cartoonr, so they know that I'm interested in their products. Add to that the reinforcement I have provided them by downloading the full Trial of Paint Effects. Now they know I'm interested. Maybe if I wait awhile they'll eventually come up with a "Special One Time Discount" and make me an offer I can't refuse, and don't want to! After all, they wouldn't be the first company to lower the asking price, even if it isn't until they are about ready to introduce the next new version!

So where does this topic go from here? Actually, I think I've found what I was looking for, for so long. I'll try to run some tests on a few video frame extractors, photopaint programs, and morphing programs to join them back together as video, for July.

Or, I just might take off in a new direction with something I've been holding back for several months now, till I finish this thread!

Meanwhile, if you find another good program for converting video to animated paintings, *please* let me know! ■

A Special Request From One of Our Members

In November of this year, Keith Gloster will be operating a "SALE TABLE" for

St. Andrew's United Church in Brantford, in an effort to raise church funds by selling donated, clean, original, **DVDs, CDs, and Audio Books.**

Any contributions of these items before that time to Keith, would be MOST appreciated!

10 Seneca Crescent, Brantford, ON
N3R 1K2

keithgloster1@rogers.com

(I will pick up if possible!)

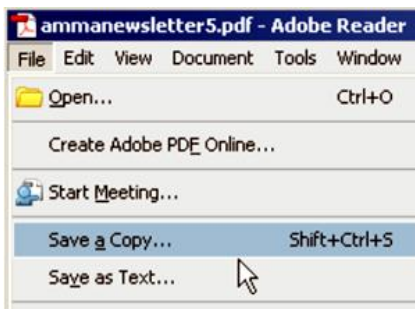
If you know of anyone disposing of **used DVDs, CDs, or Audio Books**, please let them know.

Thanks, Keith.

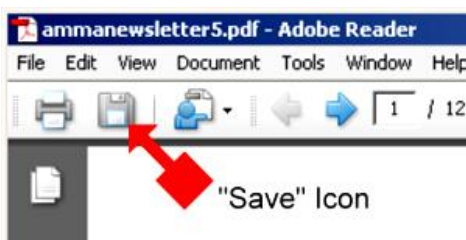
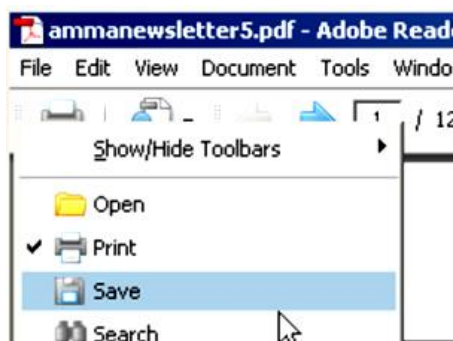
NEW FROM THE INTERNET

By Thom Speedhley

Saving PDF Files – For reading your latest issue of Panorama, we have recommended that you update your Adobe Reader as often as necessary. This allows us to take advantage of any new and helpful features of the PDF format when we are preparing each issue. We noted recently that when installing a new version of “Reader”, the options on the menu bar of the program might not be the same as the previous version. In one instance, the symbol for saving a copy to your computer (a small icon which looks like a floppy disk) is not in its usual place on the menu bar. It is still possible to save a copy by left clicking on “File” and selecting “Save a Copy”.



If you prefer to have the ‘save’ icon on your Menu Bar for convenience, there are several ways in which it can be restored. The easiest way is to place your cursor at the far left side of the menu bar and right click. From the menu that opens, select the option of ‘Save’. The floppy disk icon now appears on the menu bar.



And while we are on the subject of PDF.

PDF Reader Alternatives – The Adobe Reader is the recommended utility for opening and browsing PDF files. However, some users complain that all versions take up too much space and are ‘intrusive’: they have to be updated or patched too frequently. Some people are looking for ways to carry and use PDF files on portable devices such as flash memory cards or thumb drives. (“Portable Computing”, and I’m not talking about lap tops or net books, is becoming a popular topic which I will discuss at a later date.) Here is a quick review of the most popular Reader alternatives available as freeware.

“[Foxit](#)” is the most popular alternative, its main advantage being that it is about 1/10 the size of Reader 9 and users claim that makes it faster.

“[Sumatra](#)” is only 800kb in size and used mainly on portable devices. It’s not fancy, has a rather plain interface and only reads and prints. It does not have a search feature, which makes it difficult when viewing multi page documents.

Another alternative is “[PDF-Xchange Viewer](#)”.

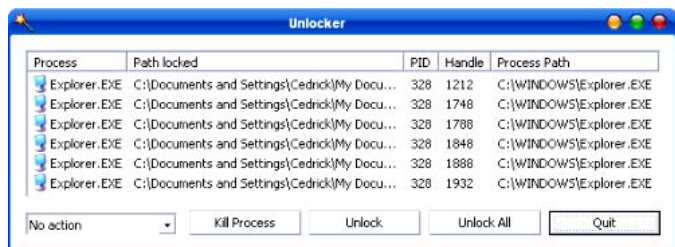
The free version is also available in portable format which is somewhat larger than Sumatra but looks more like the Adobe product. It has a search feature and the usual print and save options. It has menu bars for the “Pro” (purchased) version which are disabled and can be removed. However, they look so useful you might be tempted to buy the upgrade.

Unlocking Windows” “Explorer” – On occasion I have found that Windows XP will not allow me to delete a file, claiming that the file is presently in use by another program. You may have seen this message:



In many cases, there is obviously no other program running and examining the ‘Task Manager’ fails to indicate what program or process is interact-

ing with the file. Shutting down and restarting the computer will sometimes solve the problem but there is a simpler way. A small program called “Unlocker” can reside on your task bar and be called up next time a stubborn file is found. Right clicking on the file in question opens a menu indicating the status of the file and listing the ‘locked’ process or program. Selecting the offending program and clicking ‘unlock’ allows you to then delete or otherwise modify the file. “[Unlocker](#)” also offers three other functions which can be used as well on files which are not locked.



“Unlocker” will autostart after installation but that feature can be turned off if you don’t expect to require the utility often.

Now Where’s That @#&? Manual? – One of the frustrations of being an acquisitive person is that we also accumulate stacks of user manuals, operating instructions etc. Saving and accessing them becomes a separate task in maintaining our hobby. On occasion we discover that it’s time to look at the manual! (For some people it’s the last thing they do) But it may not be where it’s supposed to be. What now? I have a S3000 Sony Hi8 deck. I think they only made one model! I bought it used and it came without the manual. I’m not quite finished with it but, in fact, it may even be a saleable item on e-Bay when the time comes. It would be worth considerably more if I had the manual. There are sites that sell obsolete user and service manuals but they can be quite costly. Then I discovered “Diplodocs”, a sort of open-source exchange where you can download manuals for free. And I got extremely lucky. They had a source for the Sony manual as a 5Mb PDF file. If you find yourself in a similar position, go to [this website](#): The site has a variety of search options and downloading is quite simple after typing in a key code.

Diplodocs help download the user guide SONY EVS3000.

Please note that the user guide is in .



BREAKING NEWS And UPDATES

More 3D Developments

October 30, 2008 The [Consumer Electronics Association](#) said it started efforts to define 3DTV standards, beginning with an upgrade of the HDMI spec for carrying left and right eye images.

March 4, 2009 [3-D TV scheme seeks to replace regular TVs](#)
As TV makers ready 3-D models, a company called Dynamic Digital Depth claims its automatic 2-D-to-3-D conversion algorithms could help replace conventional TVs.

April 13, 2009 [SMPTE to kick off 3DTV effort in June](#)
Stereoscopic 3-D content is taking a small step closer to the home TV. The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers said it will define a single mastering standard for viewing on TVs, PCs and mobile phones stereo 3-D content that could come from optical disks, broadcast networks or the Internet.

Not All News Is Good!

April 14, 2009 [Philips exits 3-D TV market](#)
Philips Electronics said it will shut down its 3-D Solutions operation which had been readying an autostereoscopic display designed to eliminate the need for special 3-D glasses.

April 20, 2009 [Has 3D Become Mainstream?](#)
While stereoscopic technology and content has had a cult following of devotees for decades — with ebbs and flows of interest from content creators and audiences alike — 2009 seems to be the year 3D finally breaks big.

Internet Protocol Television

April 20, 2009 [IPTV Sees Widespread Consumer Adoption](#)
IPTV is no longer a telecom-only proposition and major deployments and mainstream consumer adoption are on the rise.

LED TV

June 11, 2009 [What Is An LED TV?](#)

Start On Your Own Search For Information Here
[Samsung LED HD TV](#) [SONY OLED HD TV](#)

GIGAPIXEL PHOTOS

In the March 2009 PANORAMA we printed a fantastic high resolution photo of the Presidential Inauguration, which you can zoom into and study at high magnification. We hope you followed the link and explored the technology. If not we present here a quick overview of the necessary software to make these pictures yourself.

[Gigapixels For The Masses](#)

The GigaPan Software, along with a web page on which you can display your results, comes with the robotic hardware. A FREE version for the masses is promised, but meanwhile you can try the Beta version FREE at

[GigaPan Stitcher \(Beta\)](#)

WHAT'S UP?

A Very Personal Film Review

By Fred Briggs

I've been using computers since 1964, and that one was an analogue computer! I've never used a Mac or a Casablanca, but I've used just about everything else. I remember learning to program in BASIC, and then some other operating systems whose names I no longer remember, then DOS, Gem, and finally Windows 3.1!

I can remember Bulletin Boards before there was an internet, and I remember when libraries first began to connect with one another. I remember, when email began, trying to understand why anybody would be bothered passing your email around till it reached its destination.

I remember when Yahoo was new, and then I had another search engine that was really half a dozen search engines working together. Now Google finds everything I need.

I sure don't know everything, but I've tried almost everything, and I've gone through an awful lot of software, much of it obsolete long ago.

But I've never been on Facebook, or Twitter!

I remember when I was a kid rigging up two tin cans and a string to communicate with the kid next door, and then graduating to Morse Code by wire. But I found CB radio to be frequented by obnoxious people with nothing to say, and wouldn't have any part of it. I had a mobile phone in the car when they were big and clunky, and I called an ambulance once for a football player who was unconscious, and for a woman who fell off her bike and knocked herself out, but I never used it to chat with friends. I now keep a cell phone in the car for emergencies, but it's never on unless I have to call out, and no one knows my number, not even Carolyn, not even me! (Yesterday I saw a woman in Fortinos grocery store call a friend on her cell phone to ask which brand of olive oil she should buy. They

have about 30 different brands at Fortinos!)

Now, everyone who knows me, knows I can talk for ages on the telephone about something I consider important or at least interesting, and if you ask me about my research for my history video, I'll go on and on and on.

Why not Facebook! Why not Twitter?

I guess I just don't have any desire to tell all my friends every little thing I do, or inconsequential thought I have, all the time! (Sometimes, I admit!)

Yet every now and then I see something that I just have to share with everyone. Now and again I've told you about a film or video that I think you should watch to grow in your hobby, but this one's very different.

Today I saw *Up*, a new 3D film on a huge screen, made by Disney and Pixar. You remember *Pixar*, the people who made an adjustable desk lamp seem human and gave it emotions!

Disney bought Pixar, or something like that, it doesn't matter. What's important is that they are working together now, and the result is very special.

The 3D was astonishing, without flaws, and tastefully used. That is, they weren't constantly throwing things in my face: I only noticed something entering the audience space once (other than the Titles!), when something broke in a collision and a piece of it flew off the screen, but not directly at me.

3D is definitely here to stay now. In fact, every Preview they showed before the Feature Film was for a 3D film, mostly, if not all, Disney/Pixar Presentations!

The film was shown on two different screens in the Cineplex Theatre—one in 3D and one flat, and the 3D version cost \$3 more, but it was definitely worth the money, and I heartily recommend that you find this film and see it in 3D.

Like going to Disneyland or Disney World, it's always been a lot more fun for adults if they go with their kids, or grandchildren. I remember taking my granddaughter to see *Aladdin* several years ago, and I laughed hard at Robin

William's wisecracks that went right over her head. Disney had discovered how to entertain the parents as well as the kids! And they have learned that lesson well.

My daughter is reaching Middle Age now, and my granddaughter's grown up and working, so Carolyn and I went to the matinee alone on a weekday, and were nearly alone in the theatre. We went to see the 3D!

But the film was so good that I soon stopped noticing the 3D!

I don't want to give away any of the story, but it begins with a couple of kids who grow up together, marry, and are unable to have kids. There was a great sequence showing the passing of the years with the wife repeatedly tying his tie that goes through all the styles of the passing years, and it reminded me of all those ties I still have and will never wear again. The wife dies, and the husband grows old alone.

This old man sitting alone amidst all his collections of precious memories of his wife and his life, regretting the things they had meant to do together and never done, hit me so hard at my age, just a month before our Golden Wedding Anniversary, that I teared up. (This seems to be a new thing lately, as my doctor warned me that one of my medications would make me more emotional. I don't see it as a problem, but it can be embarrassing.)

All that is described up to this point is quite early in the film. A young boy is introduced, and together they set out to complete the old fellow's childhood dream, and we have an adventure film with challenges, setbacks, and small triumphs, as well as loads of laughs. Again, these small triumphs moved me to tears, this time tears of joy, several times. And while watching this I was reminded of the old adage that a film maker has to make the audience care about the characters, and I sure cared, suffering through the bad times with him, and soaring with the good times. And it was in the theatre that I realized that I had to share this experience, and advice, with you, right away. ■

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

By Thom Speechley

In the "Club News" section of this issue, reference is made to an article in the June IAC journal by Ned Conderly discussing the definition of "amateur". Some of the points he makes about the possible definitions for today's non-professional video maker lead him to speculation on the future survival of video/film clubs. Ned makes reference to letters to the magazine and an article by David Fuller of the Victoria BC club, which attempt to address this subject. The issues of declining club membership, mainly through attrition, the demise of the AMMA and changes in the nature this hobby seem to be hot topics. The following is an attempt to summarize these comments and suggestions and might serve as the basis for further discussion at club meetings.

After reading all the comments, there appears to be a consensus regarding the probable causes of declining participation in clubs. The first and most obvious reason is that survivors from the film era where it all started are quickly becoming unable to participate. And those who arrived after the advent of video aren't getting any younger. While it is wonderful to see some members still active well into their nineties, unless a younger cohort emerges which is willing to move the clubs into the future, club activity as we know it will cease.

So why aren't we attracting that younger group? There was a time, during the early stages of analog video, that many students and independent young people did join clubs. They didn't always come back in subsequent years but when they did attend they participated and seemed to appreciate the help and advice of the older members. There were

additional incentives in those days and many of the younger members went on to jobs in the TV and video profession.

But the greatest influence on the changing interest in this hobby is that the making of movies, the very mechanics of taking moving pictures, has changed so drastically. Both Fuller and Conderly take us step by step through the familiar progression from hand wound cameras using black and white film, through the agony of linear editing systems to digital 'high definition' wide-screen productions which potentially make an amateur look as good as a professional.

All of the writers make the observation or imply that the turning point, or to use a more popular term, "tipping point" came about with the introduction of full digital technology. While this great leap forward liberated the serious amateur from problems of cumbersome editing equipment and gave vastly superior image quality, it actually endowed everybody with the same new freedom to make movies. Conderly uses the term 'level playing field' and points out that the young, now equally liberated, see the challenge on movie making "in a completely different way from the older generation". What has happened is that the motivation, the reasons we older enthusiasts banded together for mutual support and to learn from the experience of others, simply no longer exists. Clubs have, in effect become redundant. There is still an active element of socializing, and I know several members whose only reason for belonging to a club is to stay in touch with the friends made over the years. But as Conderly also points out, younger people are not interested in "the Club evening with tea and biscuits viewing vacation films with people old enough to be their grandparents". He also makes humorous reference to videos shot from skateboards and profuse with four letter words.

While all this sounds quite negative, each writer in this discussion makes a few

possibly helpful suggestions to keep clubs alive or to potentially increase membership. Promotion and public relations are the first areas of activity which might be explored. For example it would not be obvious to a person buying their first camcorder that clubs even exist. Local advertising in community type newsletters or papers is a good place to start. Most local arts councils or community social organizations now have web sites. One of the newer opportunities is to exhibit the clubs work on one of the many video streaming websites. (YouTube etc.) We can try to reach newcomers to town (students for example) who are looking for a constructive pastime during their stay.

Many of our current members got interested in video only after they retired. We should find some way of networking through already retired members who are still in touch with former co-workers. (Retiree associations). Community run seniors centers, where many retirees look for activities will welcome a demonstration of your club's work and that could lead to new members.

Once you are able to sign up new people, take a hard look at the type of programming you have been offering. We tend to get into a rut and a fresh approach is essential to keep new members coming back. It helps to simply ask them what their expectations are and plan a few evenings based on their needs. Holding breakout sessions during regular meetings provides an opportunity to offer some basic training for beginners.

Most SCCA affiliated clubs are quite healthy and a few are actually showing signs of growth. I don't hear any talk of people wanting to 'pack-it-in' and most groups have already announced plans for their coming year. If we can further refine our understanding of what direction this activity is taking, we can take action to keep it very much alive.