

PANORAMIA

OF AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO

SUR LE FILM ET VIDEO



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Top: Fred Briggs 2008
Bottom: Joe Bochsler 2006



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Photo by Joseph Bochsler Jr.

Fred Briggs, FSCCA

In the July Issue of PANORAMA we just missed bringing you the bad news about the passing of Lou Lanser, a longtime member of the SCCA, and a founding member of the Vancouver Video Production Club. When the July Issue was emailed to our members, Lou Lanser's copy was returned because the email address no longer existed. I telephoned Lou to get his new email address, and received an automatic message that the number was no longer in service.

Assuming that Lou had moved, perhaps into a retirement home as so many do at this stage of life, I telephoned Roy Pachkowski to see if he could get me Lou's new contact information. Roy was surprised to learn that I wasn't aware that Lou had passed on, on May 28th, in his 88th year. Either Roy sent me a copy of Lou's obituary or I found it on the website of the Vancouver Sun. We're sorry that we weren't able to provide a link to the obituary in either the Sun or The Province, as neither paper carries their obituaries beyond 30 days.

However, the Vancouver Video Production Club did a very nice job of recognizing Lou in their June issue of Reel Talk, and you can read Pat Sheridan's moving tribute and [view pictures](#) of Lou there. While I never met Lou, I had come to know him and respect him through his long association with the SCCA, and I know I speak for all of us when I say that we share in a small way the loss suffered by his wife (whose name I don't have),

daughter Monique, son Derek, and grandchildren Ryan and Stephanie.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and find it useful. This is the third issue delivered by email, and with each issue we learn something new about the software we're using to put it together: this time it's how to use pictures that aren't "inline with the text" and how to flow the text around those floating pictures. Last time it was the Form on the back page which we asked you to fill in and click on to send the results to us. Unfortunately, only four, that's right, FOUR of you filled in the form and submitted it online. In addition, one member printed out the last page, filled it in, and snail mailed it to us, and another who had recently moved and changed his contact information, was taken a hard copy of the entire issue printed for him by another member, and he snail-mailed the form to us, too. Now we know something about six of our members, but that's hardly enough to help us know what YOU would like in PANORAMA.

This lack of response from our members has been a problem for several years, and every year we have great difficulty getting in 1) Membership Fees, and 2) Proxies. This year so many members are in arrears with their fees that the Proxies have become less of a problem.

We know that many of you, especially those living outside of Ontario, won't be planning to attend the 2008 Annual General Meeting and the Presentation of Winning Videos and Awards, but we ask you to please read the article on [Page 5](#) about the AGM, because the paragraph in the centre of the page explains how we will overcome this hurdle this year.

We're also asking you to mail in your cheque for your Membership Fees and send that in by mail, and go back to the July Issue of PANORAMA, fill out the form on the back page, and submit it to us online by clicking on the "Submit" button. You may have saved the July issue to your hard drive, or even copied it to a CD, but if you didn't, you can still get it by clicking on [this link](#). (In either case you will need to be online when you press "Submit". If you have a dial-up connection, you may prefer to print out the form, fill it in with a pen or pencil, and mail it along with your Membership

Fee (to Carolyn Briggs, 3 Wardrope Avenue, Stoney Creek, ON L8G 1R9).

I have corrected a tiny error on this issue that originated with the first email issue, the Spring Issue. The last issue with professional layout and printing was the Winter 2008 Issue, VOL. 42 No. 1, and because of the steep learning curve, I built up the Spring Issue by making changes and adaptations to that issue. Unfortunately I missed the No. on the Front Cover, so the Spring Issue was also VOL. 42 No. 1, and as a result, the July Issue was changed to VOL. 42 No 2.

This one is now VOL. 42 No 4, and the two issues you received earlier are incorrectly identified. As I indicated before, we are now delaying further the posting of the email issues to the website, but before they are posted (6 month after you get your copy) this correction will have been made.

We hope you will find much of interest and value in this issue of PANORAMA . Remember, as long as you're online, the blue links embedded in the articles will take you directly to the spot on the internet where you can find more information. We are always anxious to receive your input or ideas for articles, first through the form on the back of the July Issue, and at any time by emailing me at Pres@sccaonline.ca

Joan Bochsler, our Editor, is a little under the weather right now, so we aren't able to bring you her customary Last Word. ■

We will be losing at least two of the members of the SCCA Executive, and possibly more. We will be looking for Volunteers to replace them on the Executive. If you think you'd like to come on board, we'd love to hear from you. Perhaps you would like to nominate an SCCA member before the AGM. Please make sure that you have the permission of the person you are nominating.

The ability to attend Executive Meetings in Stoney Creek is not a requirement. We have been experimenting with meeting only every other month, and we will be looking for ways to exploit the new communications – email, telephone, conference calls, and online video meetings. Please [email me](#) for more information. ■

CLUB NEWS

By Thom Speechley

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By Thom Speechley

So here we are in those short days of the melancholy end of summer. The weather has been a 'mixed-bag' all across the country and so I hope everyone got in a satisfactory amount of video activity. Those little clusters of storms we had at least allowed me to save some nice stock files of thunder. The news is quite brief this time, since most clubs do not publish newsletters during July and August.

HAMILTON VIDEO/FILM MAKERS

Reel News, editor Dave Stewart

The Hamilton club continues to meet during the simmer so the August issue of *Reel News* featured a list of "themes" for upcoming monthly competitions. Dave Stewart, editor, reminds readers to visit the [club's website](#), newly updated by Dan Copeland.



Joe Bochsler

Trev and Rosalie Beard with Keith Gloster in rapt attention at the July meeting

VICTORIA VIDEO CLUB

The Bulletin, editor James Hatch

(The following was gathered from the club website)

Club Picnic 2008

Once again, Margaret was the consummate hostess and



welcomed club members to her trailer site in Crofton for the 2008 Club Picnic. Although the temperature soared to 32C, Margaret had managed to shade a good amount of space, and the breeze kept things comfortably cool.

As always, the discussion was wide-ranging, from film terminology, to club projects, to great places to eat. Picnickers also enjoyed the world premier of the Club Production, "Grandma's Gift." This short movie is based on a story by club member Alice Thomas that was produced under the careful direction and leadership of Stan Coe.



Following lunch, some members went for a wander along the boardwalk, visiting the local Crofton museum, and then it was back to the campsite for fruit salad with a dollop (or huge scoop) of ice cream. Another delightful club event ... Thank you Margaret.

[\(Continued on Page 11\)](#)

SCCA Annual General Meeting And Eastern Regional Meeting

September 19th, 2008

Council Chamber - Former Stoney Creek City Hall

We know this is a little short notice, but we did tip you off about the time, date and place in the July PANORAMA! This, now, is your Formal Invitation!

Everyone is welcome to attend. No Advance Registration is required.

Registration will open at 12:30 PM at the door, and the Registration Fee will be only \$5.00.

SCCA Members in Good Standing will be exempt from the Registration Fee. Membership Fees can be paid while Registering.



2006 AGM

First on the Agenda will be the Annual General Meeting, required by Federal Law. We will try very hard to keep the whole Business Meeting down to one hour, as usual. This is your once-a-year opportunity to hear reports on the recent activities of your Board of Directors and Executive, and your best opportunity to question them and express your concerns, wishes and hopes regarding the SCCA.

Stella Magic and Sandy Whitehouse have both given notice of their intention to retire from the Executive and we will be looking for replacements. We will open the AGM promptly at 1:00 PM.

Following the AGM we will Screen the winning videos from the Annual SCCA Competition, and present the Awards to the Winners.

We will adjourn for supper (on your own, at a restaurant of your choice) at

5:00 PM and reconvene at 7:00 PM for a presentation of videos from the CIAFF. We hope to finish by 9:30 PM, for those who travel a considerable distance to attend, but we guarantee that you will be out by 10:00 PM.

Our members have been very slow this year paying their Membership Fees, so our Members in Good Standing at this moment is low, and we expect no difficulty in having a Quorum (40% of the Members in Good Standing). Therefore, we will not send out Proxies, because so few members return them. This could be upset if we suddenly got a large number of Members in Arrears pay their Membership Fees and not attend the AGM. To avoid that problem any payments made between now and the AGM will not be banked and registered as paid until September 22. However, those who pay at the AGM will be present and contribute to the quorum and will be able to vote.

We would like to see the Membership Fees coming in, so you don't have to postpone any longer!



777 Highway 8

For those who have not attended an SCCA AGM in Stoney Creek before, the former Stoney Creek City Hall is located some distance east of the downtown area, at 777 Highway 8, at

the intersection with Jones Road. It can be reached from the Queen Elizabeth Way by taking Exit #83 (Fruitland Road) South to Highway 8, and then traveling east to Jones Road. It may be a little difficult to spot because the building is now the Stoney Creek Municipal Service Centre, with the Stoney Creek Community Policing Centre, a Hamilton Tourism Office, and a branch of the Hamilton Public Library, and is also home to an RCMP Detachment, and the big new sign, almost a billboard, dwarfs the small sign that used to say Stoney Creek City Hall and now says Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



Watch for this sign!

There is plenty of free parking.

If you [click on this link](#) you will go directly to the Goggle Map that will show you where it is. You can change the magnification of the map and move around it to see how to get to the general vicinity, etc., You can even print a copy to bring with you in the car. ■



RCMP Sign has replaced the stone Stoney Creek City Hall sign.

GET THE SHOT!

by Fred Briggs

In **Get Make Fake the Shot** in the Spring 2008 Issue of PANORAMA, I discussed at considerable length a number of software programs that would provide a facility for converting a photograph into an oil painting, watercolour, pen and ink sketch, charcoal drawing, etc., for use in video. At the end of the article I promised (threatened?) to continue in the following issue with an article on animating those “art works” for video, and also on some other solutions that might be available to act directly on the video to turn it into animated art work. Well, right there, that’s two very different subjects!

There are more than one way that might work to animate a small number of single frames to produce smooth video, and a proper examination of the methods, and the software available to accomplish it, will require a lot of work. There are other complications, one of which is the fact that many of the programs that might help have other features we might use for other purposes, but different programs have different features, and I was finding it a challenge to separate and organize all these different approaches, solutions, and software.

In the end, I took the easy way out in the July Issue and put together an article that evolved from some recent experiences and some older Get the Shot articles. Now, I’d like to make an honest man of myself, but the problem remains “Where do I start?”

Let’s start with collecting the pictures that we want to convert to art, but I know of no way to produce animation directly into a single still picture, and make a series of them flow as a video, except to start with a video scene in the first place. Suppose we wanted to start with a 5 second clip, extract each frame separately, convert each one into art (making sure that the “conversion process” is identical for each frame to avoid a horrible artifact which will be easier to imagine if you consider making the first frame an oil

painting, the second a water colour, the third a pen and ink sketch, etc.), and then putting them all back into the same original order. Well it would be smooth, anyway, but with 30 frames per second, we would have to extract, convert, and reassemble 150 frames! (And that’s ignoring the 2 fields per frame.)

Maybe we could use just the first and last frame, and then morph between them. The result would be smooth, but might bear no relation to the original action captured in the sequence. Maybe we could take 5 frames (one each second) or 25 frames (five per second) and maybe we could dissolve from one to the next, holding each one for a fraction of a second and keeping the dissolves short. (Let’s drop the math for now, as I expect you get the idea.)

In any case, we would have to do a lot of experiments to determine the most appropriate number of frames, and try different “animation” methods (dissolves vs. morphing) to find the best technique. I think you can see why I haven’t done this yet.

It’s easy to grab a few frames and save them as jpeg or bmp files, but if we’re going to do a lot of this, it would be nice to have some software that would automatically grab all the frames at the rate chosen, number them sequentially, and save them for you. I haven’t found this software yet, but I have confidence that it exists, because several years ago, when we edited linearly, I had software and a computer board that would extract black and white frames at intervals from a video for logging videos, and for help in editing by allowing me to choose the edit points and export an edit decision list (EDL) to use at the linear editing station. If we could do that about 10 years ago, we must be able to do what we need now.

Setting that aside, we come to the quality of the frame grabs. Remember, the original is only 720 X 480 pixels. I’ve found a very interesting program that will extract frames that are sharper than

the original by extrapolating between adjacent frames.

The program is called [PhotoAcute Studio](#), and it has a number of tricks for digital cameras that will improve the results that can be achieved with a camera less capable than the best (even a phone camera!). They claim “... take photos with more details and less noise, with higher dynamic range and less chromatic aberrations ... You can take better images - with PhotoAcute Studio, leading edge tool for improving digital photos. PhotoAcute software processes sets of photographs taken in continuous mode. It utilizes super resolution algorithms to convert a sequence of images into a single high-resolution and low-noise picture that could only be taken with a much better camera.”

My Olympus Camedia C-4000 digital camera is rather old, and has only 4 Megapixels. It was cheaper to buy this program (\$49) than to upgrade to a new camera, and the program has features that I wouldn’t get with a new camera. I since bought a new Pentax Optio M20 with 7 Megapixels at a very good price. It’s very handy, fits easily into my pocket and is always available, but the pictures are not as good as the Olympus, even without using PhotoAcute. Never underestimate the importance of the lens!

Rather than trying to explain all the functions, and how they are obtained, I’ll just quote the Help File:

Take photographs with resolution beyond normal matrix capabilities

This is the basic use of PhotoAcute Studio.

There are two main parameters of the digital image determining the quality: the [spatial resolution](#) and the [noise](#). Using PhotoAcute Studio, you can get pictures with higher resolution and lower noise than your camera allows.

To do this, simply take [continuous photographs](#) (4 or more recommended)



of the scene, transfer them to PC, load into PhotoAcute Studio and start processing.

Take incredibly good photographs in low-light conditions

Taking pictures in low light conditions (e.g. night photographs) usually requires using long [exposures](#) and high [sensitivity](#) levels.

While allowing photographing of low light scenes, long exposure leads to handshaking artifacts (the longer the photograph is being taken - the more the camera is displaced), while, a high sensitivity level results in high noise.

To take better photographs in low-light conditions:

1. Set normal exposure and high sensitivity (ISO) level.

2. Take several photographs in continuous mode.

3. Transfer the photographs to PC and process by PhotoAcute Studio.

4. Optionally, [brightness equalization](#) feature can be used to increase the brightness.

PhotoAcute Studio will automatically combine photographs and remove the noise caused by high ISO. You will get a clear image, as if you took the photograph using a tripod and had a camera with an extremely good matrix.

Automatically restore scenes overlapped with unwanted moving objects

Some scenes happen to be constantly overlapping with unwanted moving objects. For example, people walking in front of a site.

With PhotoAcute Studio, you can take photograph of such a scene and automatically clear away the unneeded moving objects.

1. Take several photographs in continuous mode (not less than 5).

2. Load the photographs in PhotoAcute Studio.

3. Process the photographs, using "Remove moving objects from the scene" option.

Take photographs of dark

Objects on a back-lit background

When taking photographs of a scene containing both shadow and highlighted objects (e.g., dark objects on a back-lit background), it is always a problem to capture both shadow and highlight details. Adjusting the camera settings to capture highlight details will result in losing shadow details and vice versa.

PhotoAcute Studio allows you to capture both shadow and highlight details.

1. Take several photographs in [exposure bracketing mode](#).

2. Load the photographs in PhotoAcute Studio.

3. Process the photographs, using "Expand dynamic range" and "Equalize brightness" options.

Get high-quality still frames from video

Note: Importing video frames is not available in the PhotoAcute Studio version for Mac OSX.

Still frames from a video sequence usually have rather low quality comparing to photographs, due to the lower resolution of video cameras, interlacing artifacts, high compression level, etc.

With PhotoAcute Studio, you can retrieve high-quality still frames from several sequential frames lingering on the scene.

Open the video file, select the desired frame range, optionally exclude unneeded frames, and process the frames just the same way as several photographs.

For more details on importing video frames please refer to [Importing video frames](#) section.

You can also expand the Depth of Field by shooting a series of shots at different focal lengths (which will each have a different depth of field) and then letting the program merge them by combining the best focused areas in each photo and producing a photo with a cumulative depth of field.

The software can also correct for chromatic aberrations automatically, and geometric distortion such as barrel distortion and pincushioning automatically. (This is especially useful when stitching together shots for a panorama of an architectural scene, as will be discussed in another article.) Geometric corrections and super resolution both require that the software has a profile of your particular camera. Before buying the program you might want to check the list of [camera profiles](#) that come with the program when you buy it. If your camera is not on the list, don't worry. When you have the program there is a step by step procedure for shooting the test photographs and emailing them to the company. They will extract a profile for that camera, add it to the next update of the program, and email you when you can download the update that includes your camera profile! No charge! In fact, they give you a free license for helping them collect profiles! I think that means the program is free, but I had already paid for it and didn't inquire about a refund.

I've tested most of the procedures available, with much success, and I wanted to go out and shoot all the photographs to illustrate all these features, but I've finally realized that the illustrations on the web site are more numerous and more helpful than the few that I could include in PANORAMA. [Have a look at the samples](#) and click on Next Example or Example List. Notice especially the Sand Castle around which the program has removed all the people! If people or things are moving, you should shoot video. If you don't have your video camera, and shoot a still, the "frozen" movement won't look good in your video. Solution: take several shots and clear out all the moving objects with PhotoAcute Studio! It sure beats shaky video! The program is worth the money just for this feature alone!

There will be more about this feature in a later article about image stitching programs. I just won't promise when this time! ■

COLLAGE CREATOR BY ARCSOFT

By Trevelyan Beard

 One way of spreading good-will and happiness is to give people a photograph of themselves. This opportunity comes when I find myself at a get-together in a club meeting or at a party. This has occurred several times recently and each time I have taken a shot of each person's smiling face looking at the camera together with a few random shots of small groups at dinner.



Figure 1

On getting home, it's fun to arrange these pictures in a collage and later present a copy to each individual at a later date. I make my collages 8 1/2" x 11"; they make great wall hangings set in a simple frame. There are several programs that make collages but I have settled on Collage Creator as my favourite. It's easily learned and does a magnificent job. Armed with my HP [Photosmart C4280](#) "All in One" printer (the one costing \$29.95 from The Source); I soon churn out attractive collages and get a great charge from handing these out to those people who are in them.



Figure 2

Take a look at the three shown here, in figures 1, 2, and 3. Aren't they a happy bunch? A collage is different from just a gallery of mug shots. There's a gaiety about them. Pictures can have fancy edges, they can be rotated every which way, they can overlap each other and they can be mixed with text and clip art and the background can be coloured. Not only that, a picture can be made as a mirror image (inside out). One fine day in the future, you'll be able to point to a face and out will come the person's voice saying, "Good Morning".



Figure 3

While some programs are well over \$100, Collage Creator sells for only \$39.99. Let's imagine you have it in the computer and are raring to go!

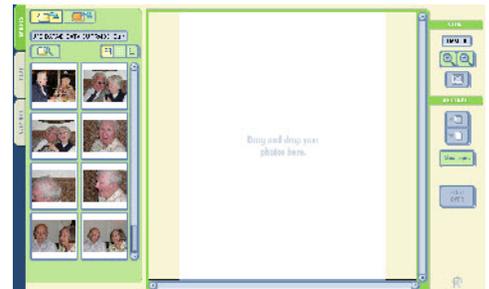


Figure 4

Bring up the workspace – it's all you need to do (see fig. 4). Bring your shots from wherever they are and place them in the column on the left hand side for storing. Drag and drop each one to the central pane, arranging them into rough position.



Figure 5

"Cropping", etc.

Make each shot the size you want using the cursor and dragging any of the corner handles to resize the piece. Position each piece to where you want it. To move multiple pieces at once, hold down the SHIFT key while clicking each piece. Apply a creative edge to your photos, or use the freehand crop tool to make scissor-like crop effects.

Effects. Apply artistic borders or frames to your images (fig.5)

Enhance. Make colour adjustments to your collage images.

Show Layers. Overlap slightly one shot over another if you wish.

Best fit. Change the overall size of the collage.

Brightness, Contrast, Hue, Saturation. Adjust sliders for these important effects.

“Rotating”

Highlight a piece by clicking it. To rotate the piece, click and drag the bar extending from the top (the rotate anchor). The piece will automatically “snap” into place when it nears each 90-degree increment.

“Right Click Options”

Cut — Removes the selected piece from the project and places it into the ‘project clipboard’ (memory).

Copy — Copy the selected piece to the ‘project clipboard’ (memory).

Paste — Adds the selected piece from the “project clipboard” (memory) into the project.

Delete — Removes the selected piece from the project.

Zoom In — Magnifies your collage so you can make fine-tune adjustments.

Zoom Out — Reduces the appearance of your collage so you may get an “overall impression.”

Best Fit — Fills the preview area with your collage.

Rotate 90 CW — Rotates the selected piece 90 degrees clockwise.

Flip Horizontal — Creates a mirror image of the selected piece over the horizontal axis.

Flip Vertical — Creates a mirror image of the selected piece over the vertical axis.

Set Background — Enables you to adjust the size of the collage workspace and change the colour of the collage background.

“Add Text”

Add colorful captions, titles and buzz words to your collage.

Add your text in the text box, then set the font, size, style, alignment and colour. Your text will appear in the main workspace, click Apply to finalize it as a piece on your collage. You can click and drag your text to position it wherever you like. A useful feature is to put a shadow behind the text in one of four positions. This shadow can be

adjusted for blur and opacity. And of course the text can be in any colour.

“Add Clip Art”

Drag and drop pre-designed clip art illustrations to your collage (fig. 6)

Save as Current Project — Saves/overwrites the current project

Save as New Project — Enables you to save the current project as a newly titled project.

Save as Image File — Enables you to save your collage as a flattened image (JPG, BMP, TIF, etc).

“Print”

Printing offers some very good choices. I’ll let you browse the Help file for this tidbit.

“Albums” —

This is a bonus feature, whether collaging or not.

With this feature you can visually organize your media files into album collections for easy access.

When you “add” a file to an album, a

small thumbnail image appears in the album. Each thumbnail image acts as a link or “shortcut” to its source file. In other words, albums don’t actually contain files, but provide direct access to them. It’s similar to the way shortcuts on your desktop work.

Deleting an album thumbnail does not automatically delete the file associated with it; it simply deletes the thumbnail link.

Albums can contain thousands of thumbnails (links).

“Where to get it”

Arcsoft’s web site is very difficult to navigate to the Collage Creator Download (15 day free trial) so I recommend that you download it through [Softonic](#).

(You can go there and follow the trail by clicking on DOWNLOAD (Evaluation), and then clicking on FREE DOWNLOAD (Trial Version From Publisher’s Website) and then follow the instructions.

Alternatively, you can just click [HERE](#), and then click on FREE DOWNLOAD as described above.

If you like the program you can buy the licence. I paid \$40. ■

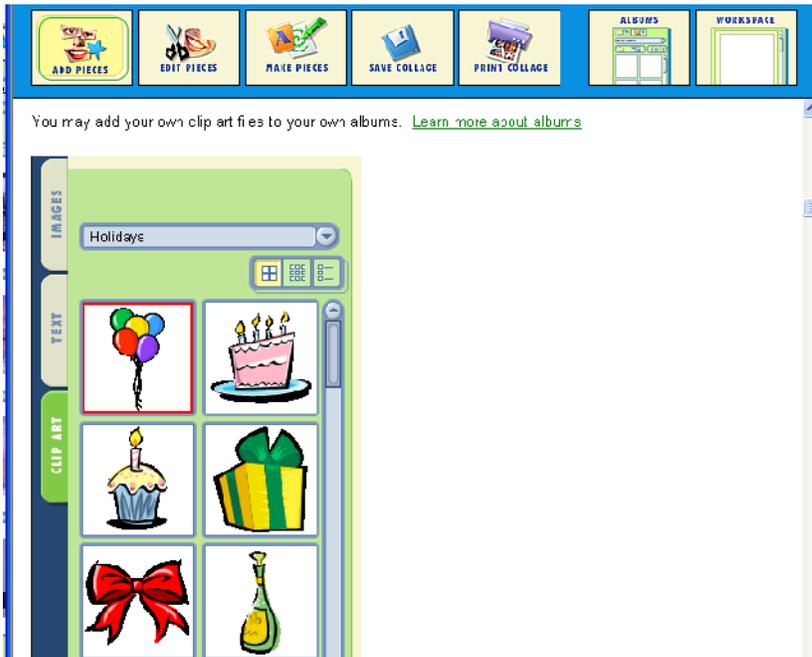


Figure 6

There is a collection of over 100 clip art images for you to use in your collages. Simply double-click or drag and drop a clip art thumbnail onto the workspace.

“Use the Doodle Maker”

Works like a digital sketchpad. Draw cartoon mustaches to apply to a face, or design your own colourful clip art.

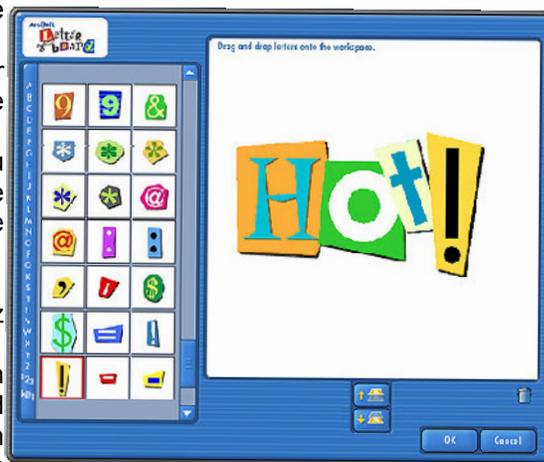


Figure 7

“Use the Letterboard” (fig. 7)

Use this for unique word form from letters that appear to be clipped from magazine pages.

“Save” — you have three choices

VENTURER MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

by Fred Briggs

In the July "Get The Shot" article I mentioned a Citizen LCD Viewer that ran on a 9 Volt Battery, that I used as a viewer on my high-angle extension pole, and it has occurred to me that some of you may be looking for something like that. I didn't include any photo of the LCD Viewer because it's no longer available, except possibly on eBay (or a garage sale!), but if you are looking for it on the internet, the Model Number was M938-1A.

The screen was about 3½" and today some of us are looking for something larger than the viewing screens on our camcorders. Some of us may be using a portable DVD player for this, but most of them have some shortcomings for this purpose.

About a year ago Michael Veronneau submitted an article for publication in PANORAMA about one portable player, the Mustek PL8A90, that had several features that were very useful in this regard. Michael even provided 22 pictures of the unit, but I couldn't use them all, and I went looking for a smaller number of shots that would show just what we needed to show, so I went to the Tiger Direct Web Site, since Michael had bought it at Tiger Direct. Unfortunately I learned that the item had been discontinued and they didn't have even one left, so there was no use running that article and getting you all excited over something that you couldn't buy!

I already had a portable DVD Player that I have used as a video monitor with my camcorder, but it wasn't nearly as good for that as Michael's, so I began my own hunt for something better. There wasn't much competition!

A few months later, just after Christmas as I remember, I discovered a couple of prospects in The Source (formerly Radio Shack and now owned by Circuit City). One featured a screen that swiveled through 180° which would make it more useful for other crew members

(that is, other than the cameraman) to monitor what was being shot, but the other one had TWO Screens. WOW! This would let the director watch one while the cameraman watched the other instead of bending over to keep his eye on the eyecup, or squint at the little side viewing screen. Or one could be mounted on the front of the tripod, facing "the talent" so he or she could see just what was in the frame – very handy for a subject who is used to talking with his hands, just as one example!

So I bought one. It was defective!

I returned it, and began a search of other "Sources" within 100 kilometers with one left in stock. It turned out that all those who still had one, only had one in the stockroom that had to go back to the manufacturer because of a problem, in most cases in the second monitor! Now I knew I didn't want one anymore, and stopped looking for one of those!

And when I go after something, I'm quite thorough, but all I could find was a few two-screen models made for the automotive aftermarket, and sold for very high prices in the automotive sound shops that install them.

I've been watching the market for six months now, and recently found something in Wal-Mart – a DVD player with a 16:9 screen with an 8" diagonal that has inputs for AV, and a second monitor of the same screen size with inputs for AV or from the DVD player! It looked good in the glass case, and the big box in which it was packed looked encouraging, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so I stuck my neck out and bought the Venturer PVS19388iR for \$168 plus taxes! You won't find it on the internet so this may be a discontinued product (or Wal-Mart Canada only?) but more likely a brand new product (manufactured in May 2008), as the name appears nowhere else but on the big blue box (and the unit itself) but not on the Directions Booklet! This model isn't even listed on [their web site](#).

The entire system is really designed for the back of the front seats in a car, but they have thoughtfully provided some of the features that make it possible to screen directly from your camcorder without recording first.

At \$168 you have probably decided immediately that either you have no need for this item, or you are interested in more details. If the former you can quit reading now. If the latter, read on for the capabilities, limitations, and some possible work-arounds for the deficiencies.

On the DVD Player, the screen opens as usual, like a book. It can be turned 90° one way, or 180° the other way (and tilts). In that position, the screen can be folded back down so the screen surface is on the outside. The player has a Li-ion battery that can be removed from or attached to the back of the player. The player runs from the battery or on 9 Volts from a 120V AC supply, and the Li-ion battery can be charged while in position with that same voltage adapter.

The accessory screen is powered by 12V from the cigarette lighter in your car or from the 120V AC – 9Volt adapter mentioned already, but not from the Li-ion battery pack. This screen has RCA inputs for Left and Right Audio, and Composite Video (Yellow), but no Audio or Video Outputs. There is a 9V output so that the separate monitor, powered by the 12V plug from your car, can power the DVD Player, and charge the battery on the player. There is a cable with the 3 audio/video plugs on each end, the power output plug from the monitor on one end and the power input plug for the player on the other end. Using only those two power cables (plus the 12V input from the cigarette lighter) and a separate cable for video and audio, your daughter could watch a DVD on the player from her seat, and your son could play a video game (or watch a tape on your camcorder) on the monitor at the same time. (Each unit has a pair of chrome loops though

which you can pass one of the two three-foot black web belts with a very generous length of Velcro at each end, to fasten the units to the back of the seats or headrests. There is also a convenient black fabric bag with three partitions and hand straps to carry everything together easily.)

Using 12V power to the monitor and all 8 connectors on the patch cord, they could both watch the same DVD at the same time. (By the way, there are small speakers in each unit, and each has a head phone jack.

What you **CAN'T** do is feed a signal from your camcorder into both units at the same time. (However, if you were doing a two-camera shoot, each camera could be shown on a different screen at the same time!)

Both the units can be varied for brightness, contrast, volume, etc. The monitor has a switch for 4:3 or 16:9. The format on the player can be changed only with the remote control.

I've covered most of it, but what about some possible solutions to the problems?

The first problem is that the monitor works fine with access to a 120Volt AC power, or near enough to a car (does yours have a cigarette lighter – some nonsmokers thought that they could save a few bucks when they bought their stripped down model without the customary smokers' accoutrements!) However, that doesn't work in the forest, or in a canoe! You can screen your camcorder output on the DVD using the Li-ion battery pack, but it can't power the separate monitor.

The easiest solution to apply is a 9V battery with the right connector. My first attempts indicated that one cell (with 170mAh capacity) doesn't provide enough current, so I set up a connector for 2 in parallel. Because of a bad connection this only ran for about 15 minutes before it started to flash just like my first attempts with one cell. I recharged the cells (NOMA 9V Rechargeable NiMH cells, one at a time on a multipurpose NOMA Universal Charger that will charge 8 AA or AAA, or 4 C or D, or half as many and 1 9V cell at the same time (in 8 hours). It charges Rechargeable Alkaline, NiCad, and NMH cells too, and in my opinion, that's the way to go! I bought it at Canadian Tire.) I found that with a freshly charged 9V cell I can get about 12-18 minutes running time before the monitor starts to

flash and then shuts down, and with 2 of them connected in parallel, about 32 minutes! It would be difficult to set up more than 2 in parallel, so you may as well use one at a time, but you'll need a small bag of 9V cells!

More difficult, but sure to work (if you can get everything right) is 12V battery power. I have found surplus brand new rechargeable 12V batteries for \$10 at Princess Auto. When I first looked they had two types, 2.6Ah and 3.6Ah (both at the same price) but the bigger ones were sold out when I went back two days later to get one! I bought the smaller (and longer) battery that's about 7" X 2¼" X 1¼", and a Powerfist 2/10A 12V charger with automatic overload, short circuit and polarity reversal protection that was on sale for \$30! I had to put together a female 12V cigarette lighter socket with a couple of the automotive type clips for the battery, but that rig should run this little monitor long enough for shooting a club epic!

Finally, how can we provide the same signal from one camera to both monitors? Remember that we aren't going to record the signals traveling along the wire to the two monitors – just look at them! These signals are a long way from HD – they aren't even S-VHS quality! I wasted too much time trying to solve this apparently knotty problem before suddenly realizing how easy it was. (It's always easier after you've figured it out!)

A simple RCA Y-splitter was all that was needed, and I had many of those from the old days of audio and reel-to-reel tape recorders. One male plug into the yellow jack on the camcorder, and a male end of any audio or video cable into each of the two female jacks of the splitter, with the other ends into the yellow inputs of the DVD Player and the second monitor, and there were the pictures! This could be a little more complicated, and harder to explain, if your camcorder uses on of those mini three-connector cables. However, assuming your cable splits into 3 RCA plugs at the other end, this problem isn't insurmountable.

In any event, you won't want the audio cables connected, because if the monitor is too near to the camera, you'll get feedback, and the director will hear the audio without any electronic assistance anyway.

If you get one, let me know how it works out and HOW YOU HAVE USED IT! ■

[\(Continued from Page 4\)](#)

INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS (IAC)

Film and Videomaker, editor Garth Hope

The June issue of the magazine includes a complete list of winners in the 2008 BIAFF competition. The number of entries is up slightly over last year, which is an encouraging sign that there may be a growing number of people wanting to show their work.

Sound or audio issues are always a concern for the video maker. Reg Lancaster reviews what appears to be an excellent book with many solutions to sound problems and suggestions for easily creating your own sound effects. At this time the book is only available, in English through Amazon Germany. The price is 22Euro. A short review can be found at the AMPS (American Motion Picture Society) [website](#). Open the May-June issue of their bulletin,

"Movie Maker". In another article by Tom Hardwicke, the author points out some shortcomings with his new digital sound recorder, the "Zoom H2" four channel recorder. The main problem is maintaining sync when using the recorder with a camcorder. Audio can be 12 to 24 frames out-of-sync in a one-hour recording depending on the recording format used. Apparently this is not a problem when using a MiniDisk recorder.

The August issue contains a more complete report on all the activities at the four day 2008 BIAFF.

Laurie Calvert tells about his success with uploading his films to "You Tube". He gives advice, working within You Tube guidelines to get the best quality and compression. He offers other tips for maintaining your space at You Tube. His [link](#) now contains over 100 clips. You can view them by clicking the link.

Alan Colegrave has written a short article about the advent of relatively low cost fluorescent flood lamps which overcome the heat problems associated with the older tungsten and halogen lighting systems. Effective wattage up to the halogen equivalent of 1000 watts can be found in two tube lights consuming only 110 watts at 117V. The tubes remain cool enough to touch, but that is still not advised. The article provides only a UK address for

[\(Continued on Page 15\)](#)

INTERNET UPDATES

By Thom Speechley

Extra Vigilance Needed – There are always a few bad viruses floating around but the current threat to browsing or ‘surfing’, is the more aggressive distribution of ‘MalWare’. These are infections which install themselves and behave as anti-spyware but they are in fact spyware programs in disguise. The people who created these ugly performers have hidden them in legitimate links (Some “Google” sponsored links) and innocent looking spam. “*MSNBC.com Breaking News*” and “*CNN.com Daily Top 10*” are two possible subject lines in an offending e-mail. One trap even masquerades as an offer for Internet Explorer 7 from Microsoft.

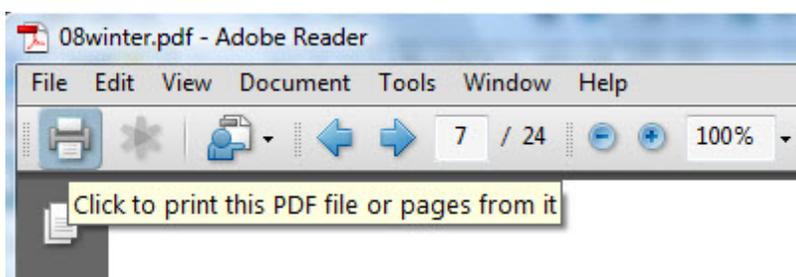
The most common “rogue” program contained in these links is called “Antispyware 2008 XP”. If you open the e-mail, it immediately runs a phony scan of your harddrive and pops up a message telling you how badly infected your computer is. Then it offers to remove all the bad stuff if you buy their product. Their ‘product’ of course is just another copy of the phony software. Removal of the offending program is not difficult but probably a challenge for the less sophisticated computer owner. To protect yourself, it’s back to basics: Delete ALL spam and any other unsolicited e-mail and keep your antivirus /Antispyware protection up-to date. While browsing, exit immediately from any website asking you to open or download any file you didn’t specifically ask for.

Two useful programs to help avoid and to remove offensive software are, **Malwarebytes’ Anti-Malware** and **Spybot-S&D**. Free versions of both are available.

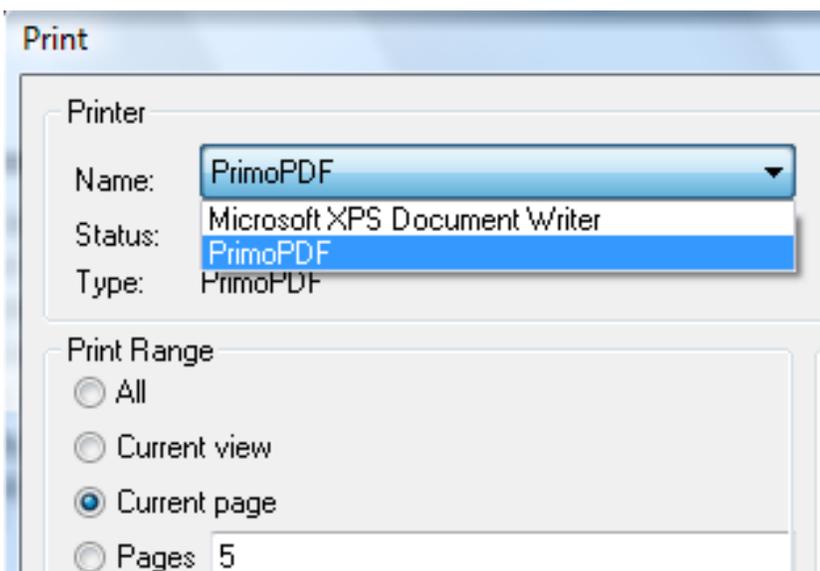
Some New Toys

Since we have been publishing PANORAMA magazine in PDF format and sending issues by e-mail, we have been looking for ways to make this system more helpful for our readers. One of the challenges is in deciding how to save any issue or valuable article for future reference. Many readers I’m sure, simply download the entire issue and perhaps start an archive by saving it to a CD-ROM. Saving individual pages or a single article is not possible with the Adobe Reader. Fortunately you can accomplish such a task by using two small, free programs. (**Note:** Once you have installed these programs you will find them very useful for managing all of your Acrobat PDF files)

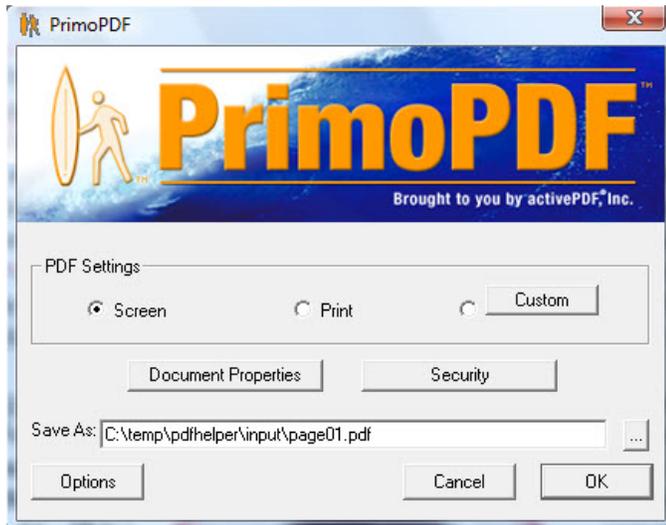
The first is a simple program that allows you to select individual pages and convert them to separate PDF files. (The same format as PANORAMA). The program, “PrimoPDF” is a [free download](#). Once installed, it shows up each time you open the ‘print’ command. The second freeware program is called “[PDF Helper](#)”. This program is used to combine any multiple saved files into a single PDF file. The resultant file is much smaller than an entire issue and perhaps easier to index for future reference. Step one is to open a copy of PANORAMA in Adobe Reader. Locate the first page you wish to save and click the “Print” button.



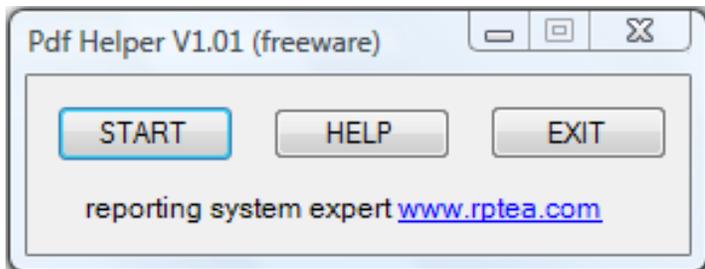
For the printer, select “PrimoPDF” in the drop-down menu and insure you have selected “Current Page”.



When PrimoPDF opens, use the browse button in the “Save As” window to select the destination folder. Give the file an appropriate name such as “page01”. Repeat the steps for each page if you wish to save more than one page.



If you have saved more than one page, you might find it advantageous to combine all those pages into a single file. This is where you use the PDFHelper program. To use the program, install it and it will immediately create three folders in your "C:/Temp" directory called "PdfHelper", "Input" and "Output". Locate the folder named "Input" on your "C" drive under Temp/pdfhelper. Then move all the files to be combined into that folder. Now, open the PDFHelper program and click "Start".



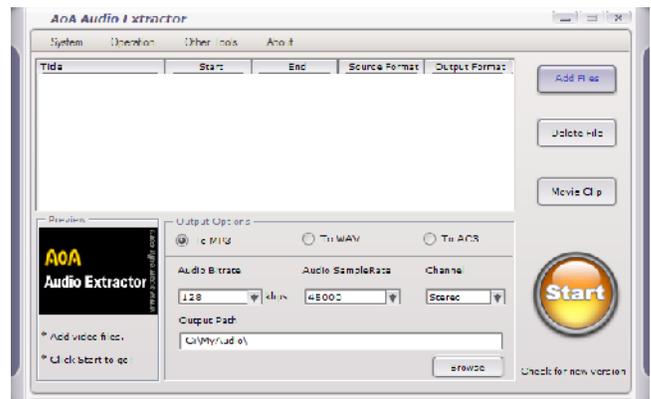
All of the saved pages will now be combined into one file and saved in the "Output" folder in the same directory.



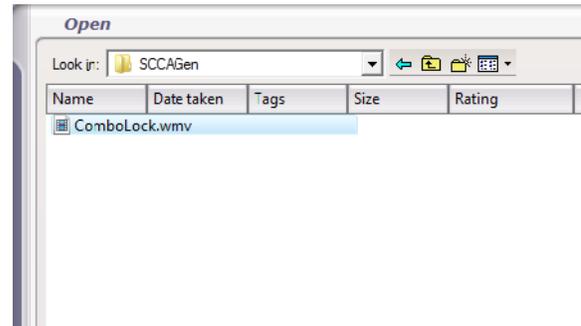
You can now rename and save the combined file for future reference or print it to keep a hard copy.

Audio Extractor

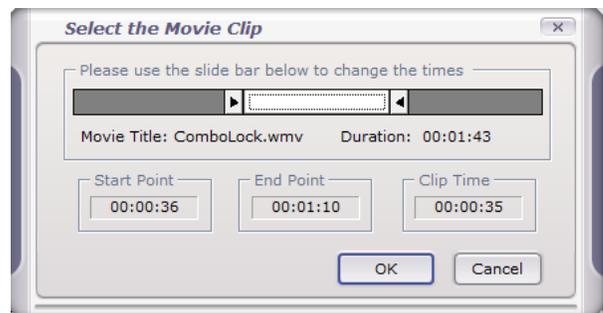
The AoA Audio Extractor enables you to copy and save a portion of the audio track of an existing video. This is useful if you are editing and need a particular sound or short musical clip and you don't have one in your immediate resources. If you remember that you have the desired audio on another project, this program will allow you to extract just the part you want without loading an entire file onto your timeline. Open AoA Extractor and select the format (MP3, WAV) and location for the saved audio file. Then click "Add Files".



Browse your system to locate the required video clip or file.



Click "Open". When the file has been selected, click "Movie Clip" in the main window. This opens a frame where you can select the precise portion of the audio track you want by moving the sliders. (This assumes that you have made a previous note of the "in/out" points of the selection.)

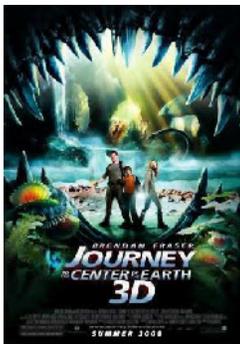


Click "OK" and the audio portion is now saved in the chosen folder. ■

BREAKING NEWS
& UPDATES



In the June PANORAMA we tipped you off to the new push by RealD 3D and Cinemark to bring digital 3D to a theatre near you. Shortly thereafter two of our readers emailed me with another development nearer home, announced on July 23rd. [Cineplex](#), who currently has 41 digital 3D theatres, plans to add many more. It wasn't clear if they will bring their total number of such theatres up to 175, or equip another 175 theatres.



I was thrilled with the quality of Journey to the Center of the Earth, and was very pleased that there was no ghosting (that flaw in the polarizing system in which the left eye sees a little of the right eye's image, and vice versa), that has plagued image separation by polaroid glasses since its inception. Only the expensive, complicated, and cumbersome electronic shutter glasses eliminated it up till now, but the new, perfected "sunglasses" achieve the same degree of excellence!

Macleans Magazine carried an interesting article about the new wave of 3D, also on July 23rd. There's a lot of information here and you can still [read it online](#).

Time Magazine also had an article about the new boom in [3D on August 25th](#).



On another aspect of 3D (that we introduced in the article about Samsung and Texas Instruments on Page 18 in the [Winter 2008 issue of PANORAMA](#) , Intel has now entered the arena in two

different ways. They've made a deal with DreamWorks Animation to provide hardware to "[enhance its content for 3-D cinema](#)", and together they have begun joint development of a new 3D system, [InTru3D](#).



I don't know how I missed reporting this earlier, but in May, Samsung demonstrated a new LCD TV at the 2008 SID symposium in Los Angeles. You thought you had seen the ultimate with HD 1920 X 1080p resolution? Think again. This 82-incher has "ultra definition" resolution of 3840x2160p. But maybe we'll wait for the upcoming 4k standard which has a 4096x1716 working resolution! Don't believe me? I don't blame you, but [check it out](#) yourself.

And Now For Some Real Meat – Unwrapped Mosaics!



On August 13th at Siggraph 2008 in Los Angeles, Microsoft unveiled some new research. This is a real breakthrough with a lot of promise, not just for Hollywood, but for those of us who would like to be able to make videos with the kind of Special Effects that are currently very technically challenging, resource intensive, and horrendously expensive. It isn't

available for us yet, and when it is, don't expect a free download!

They have published a paper which you can [read as a PDF file](#). I doubt any one of us will read it in its entirety, but these things always start out slow and easy before getting into the squiggly math, and it won't hurt you to take a peek.

There is also a [web site on this project](#) where they demonstrate what it can do, and how they do it, with two streaming videos. The first is 1 minute, Low-Res WMV 6.7 MB, and this will give you a quick and easy overview of what this is all about. The second is an outstanding 7 minute Hi-Res WMV demo that shows several uses for the

technique and more details about how it works, Unfortunately, it's 117MB, so it you have a dial-up internet connection it will take forever, and even with a high speed cable connection it may stop a few times as it refills the buffer. But you really out to see this!

Very Late Breaking News: On August 17th **they added a free download for the code** "so you can try it at home"! How, I don't know! In their own words:

"This code was developed as part of the Unwrap Mosaic project. The purpose of this project is to enable

home users to perform special effects in their videos. A paper describing this work was presented during SIGGRAPH 2008. The released code implements the

"embedding" stage, in which point tracks are embedded into 2-D, directly yielding x and y coordinates for each track. We assume that these tracks are given. Such tracks can be computed using standard computer-vision algorithms for interest-point detection and tracking. The code is written in MATLAB."

Anybody know MATLAB? I once knew a guy named Matt who worked in the Chem Lab! ■



Sometimes we have a little tip that isn't enough to constitute a full fledged article, and doesn't seem to fit conveniently into any of our regular rubrics. So I'm starting a new category!

Some time ago I ran across a product that looked worth investigating. I've seen many "Editing Keyboards" in *Camcorder and ComputerVideo*, but the prices are usually a little steep for a guy like me, with Champaign taste and a beer budget, and I'm always looking for something better, or at least, cheaper!

I found [EditorsKeys – Editing Keyboard Solutions](#), who makes sets of stick-on labels that you peel and stick onto your own keyboard. I know, this sounds pretty Mickey Mouse (and I don't mean that in the good way!). Various programs I've bought in the past came with stickers that you apply to your keyboard, and they start coming off in a few days or weeks, but this company, who makes labels for 18 different photo, video, and audio editing programs, claims to have over 30,000 customers in over 180 countries, so I thought it was worth a try. (I didn't even realize there are over 180 countries!)

I bought, online from England, *Video Editing Keyboard Set* designed for Adobe Premiere, and *Editing Keyboard Set* designed for Adobe Photoshop. Immediately after placing the order I received an email informing me that the labels would be mailed the following morning, and would take 5 – 8 business days to arrive outside of Europe. I don't remember how long it took to get them, nor do I remember any worry about if and when they'd come.

It doesn't matter if you use a PC or a Mac, or which operating system you use, or which version of the editing program you have. There's no magic here. The labels won't provide any shortcuts or functionality that isn't inherent in the program with which you use them – they merely provide a handy and easy reminder of which key performs which function.

The labels for Premiere are appropriate for Versions 6, 6.5, Pro, Pro 1.5, and Premiere Elements, and the stickers are arranged in groups containing labels "for

ALL versions", "... Only apply for versions 6.5 and BELOW", and "...Only apply to Pro editions". The Photoshop set is compatible with Photoshop, Photoshop CS, and Photoshop Elements. They may also work for newer versions. Ask them!)

There are good instructions for the application, but I must admit they were a little finicky to get on straight and perfectly centered, though they may be easy for those with 8 fingers and only 2 thumbs! But the best part is the quality of these labels! I bought them last October (2007) and while I didn't install them immediately, they've been in place about 9 months, and no label has any sign of any wear, has come loose, or even begun to curl at a corner!



The price today for these labels is £8.99 per set. I'm not sure how much I paid in £ per set, but I paid US\$31.98 for the pair, plus US\$4.99 for shipping, for a total of US\$39.97. I paid by PayPal, so there was currency exchange from £ to US\$ and then to CAD\$, which finally amounted to CAD\$37.74. (Hey, remember that week when ours was worth more than theirs?) I have no regrets.

The keyboard sets came in different envelopes, each with a picture of the labels installed on a different keyboard, and I decided that was the way to go!

I've upgraded my computers several times over the years, so I have a few spare keyboards hanging around, some with the old purple PS-2 connector (that replaced the earlier DIN-5 connector in 1987) and some with the newer USB connectors. I figured that if I installed the PS-2 and left the USB connector hanging nearby, it would be easy to unplug the PS-2 connector and pop in the USB connection. I knew that when I went the other way, I'd have to reboot for the PS-2 connection to take effect, so I had to run a few experiments to be sure about how much

freedom I had making the switch from one keyboard to the other.

Now here's the **BIG TIP!**

I found that I could leave the PS-2 connector in all the time, and that keyboard would always work. I also found that I could leave the USB connector in, and that keyboard would always work, too! No switching of connectors is necessary. No rebooting is necessary. I can run Photoshop and Premier simultaneously, and just move my hands from one keyboard to the other to switch between the programs (and, of course, select the active program with the mouse!)

Not that I do – I only have one brain! And it doesn't take much to mix it up! But it's nice to be able to switch between keyboards without having to shut down, switch keyboard connectors, and reboot to use the other program! Have you ever read that tip in *Camcorder and ComputerVideo*, *Videomaker*, or any of the PC magazines?

Whoops, that reminds me. I don't know if this is possible on a Mac! I have no idea what kind of connectors they use (and it might even be SCSI), and whether or not you can connect two keyboards simultaneously.

And I haven't tried it with a laptop, but I bet it would work with a PC Laptop, anyway. ■

[\(Continued from Page 11\)](#)

further data but at least [one site in Canada](#) lists a variety of these lamps.

This month Tom Hardwicke reports on his efforts to by-pass "Blue Ray" for the moment and optimize his existing system. He has a 46" Plasma TV and a SD up-scaling DVD player with HDMI output. The article includes convincing colour photos to support his conclusions, which are:

"My DVDs now look far superior to anything received via satellite Freeview; hugely better. Broadcast is far more heavily compressed than my DVDs, and their pictures are not being up-scaled remember. As TVs go 46in. is pretty big, but as screens go (thinking Super-8 projection) it's not big at all. If you've got an HD TV, I reckon the next thing you should buy is an up-scaling DVD player and let the price of Blue-ray players, films and blank discs drop to something more reasonable. OK, it's not as good as Blue-ray, but then it's cheap, and all the DVDs you own will now be seen in a new light." ■



RE-INKING PRINTER CARTRIDGES

By Trevelyan Beard

Re-inking, that is squirting the ink into an empty cartridge by your own efforts, has very few devotees.

Printer cartridges vary depending on which printer and which manufacturer we are talking about. All computer users need a B & W and/or a colour printer and some of us possess several of each due to upgrading from time to time.

Every now and then the stores put on a special deal – that’s when I bought a HP C4280 ink jet machine. It also handled scanning and copying (a three in one machine), all in colour. Price was \$29.95 from The Source (was Radio Shack). It works very well and is a pleasure to use (but \$29.95!).



I’ve heard it said when talking about ink that they only part fill the cartridges, making you replace them early. They make their money on selling lots of cartridges, more than making up for the low price of the printer. Whether true or not, I don’t know.

When you do a lot of colour printing, you use up a lot of ink and most people prefer to buy a new cartridge rather than squirt fresh



ink into the empty cartridge. In fact most users avoid re-filling themselves either because they don’t think that it works or they can’t handle the chore.



I started filling cartridges myself a few years ago when I got into still photography more than normal and began using up lots of ink. Being a do-it-your-selver, I bought an inking kit, read the instructions and looked for good results.

The results were dreadful – a calamity. When I finally examined the procedure, I was shocked to find that on the list of instructions the colours were incorrectly indicated and I had a cartridge with mixed up colours. Now I had a useless cartridge and not my fault. So ‘back to the drawing board’.

The back was removed using a fine toothed saw blade and this enabled me to correct the instruction sheet. Then I bought another kit. This time the results were satisfactory and I have had twelve months of use, re-inking this cartridge many times.



The last time I added ink, I made a mistake and put yellow in the red filling

hole. That spelled the end of cartridge number two. Curiosity got the better of me and I sawed open the back and took out the wads of sponge that hold the ink. It was an easy task to soak these in water and remove the ink. My next plan is to try again and this time to keep my mind on the job when re-filling.

It only takes a few days of heavy use before re-filling is called for and I am constantly trying to change this job from a chore into a pleasure. Washing the syringes and needles is a nuisance each time so now I leave them part filled, seal the air with tape at the end of the needle and store them vertically in a jar, ready for instant use when needed.



Usually the top plate contains filling holes, hidden under the label. Use a toothpick to confirm the ink colour in the chamber.

After filling, it is not necessary to worry about air getting in or ink flowing out. The label can be used again or left off.

It is important not to overfill each chamber, pump only 20cc at first until you get the hang of the operation. When filling a chamber, press the syringe needle into the sponge at least halfway down. Gently depress the plunger until bubbles or ink appear. Now suck a little ink out so as to leave a small amount of air in the chamber.

The people at Island Ink-Jet are very helpful and will answer any kind of question you throw at them. After a short time, you’ll enjoy the experience and the money saved. Best of luck. ■