

Viewfinders

*Next Club Meeting: Tuesday September 11th, 2007, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA*

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Its a Wrap

The club movie has been completed. Party time! Page 6



August Meeting Highlights

Main Feature:

Audio for Videographers

A Panel Discussion

A well attended meeting in August attested to the interest among our club members to learn how to achieve good sound for our movies. The set-up for the evening was first an explanation by our panel members on three aspects of the art, followed by a question and answer period from the floor.

The panel members and their topics were:

- 1). **John Dietrich** on microphone types and their characteristics.
- 2). **Gordon Peterson** on recording the best location sound and after.
- 3). **Bernie Wood** on how to do voice-over narrations for your movies.

which means that the user should bring the mike as close to the subject sound as possible to emphasize it over other sounds. If you have a camcorder with a built in mike and no ability to attach an external one, your camera probably uses the omni-directional type.

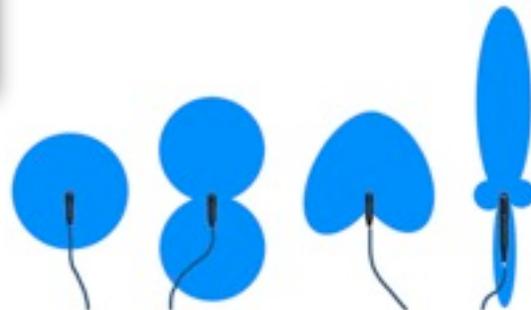
Bi-directional. Often used in interview situations where it is placed between the interviewer and the interviewee. This mike picks up sound from both in front and behind itself.



Let's begin with John and microphones

Mike patterns from left to right:

- Omni-directional
- Bi-directional
- Cardioid
- Uni-directional



MICROPHONE PATTERNS

Omni-directional. As the name suggests, this type of microphone receives sound from all directions, front back and sides. Its best use is for background and ambient sound

Cardioid. Probably the most used and most handy single microphone pattern. The heart-shaped pattern rejects sound from behind and becomes more sensitive to sound as it nears the front of the mike. More extreme versions of these are called

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Supercardioid and Hypercardioid wherein the pattern becomes narrower. However this can cause a more pinched sound whereby the bass falls off as it moves away from the front of the mike.

Uni-directional. This group of microphones includes the shotgun type. It focuses on sound coming from immediately in front and ignores sound from other directions.

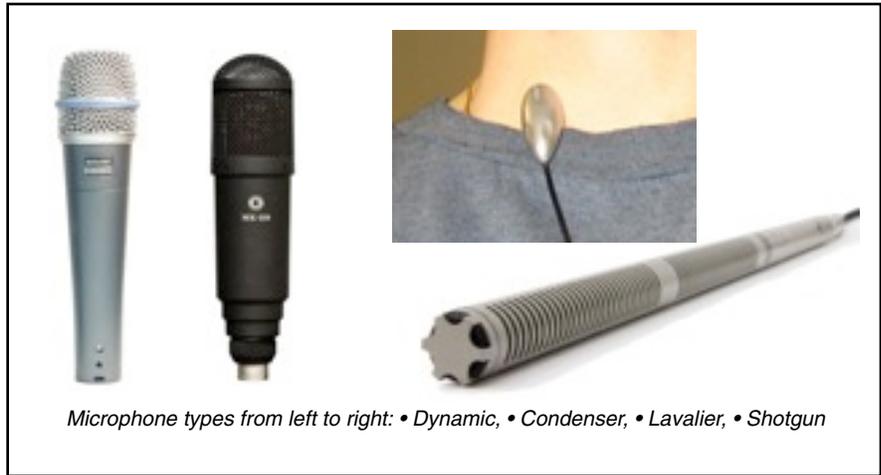
MICROPHONE TYPES

Dynamic. These microphones are usually inexpensive, rugged, can take rough handling and do not require a source of power. They tend to produce a 'fat' sound which some people prefer but are unlikely to produce as clean and accurate sound as other microphones. They are, however, very useful in boisterous situations where more sensitive mikes could be damaged.

Condenser (also called Capacitor). Fragile. These mikes have a solid reputation for very accurate sound. At one time expensive, digital technology has brought costs down and accuracy up, however some people find the sound from these mikes too cold and transparent. They do not flatter. A power source is required.

Electret. Fragile. A variant of the condenser microphone. They are usually small and light and also fairly cheap. While they handle sound extremely well from the lower mid range to the highest frequencies, they perform poorly in the bass range. Most useful for voice recording where they produce excellent clarity at the cost of sound accuracy.

Wireless Mikes. No trailing wires to worry about but they require a transmitter. This is often built-in with larger hand held models. Lavalier mikes usually use a transmitter in a belt pack carried by the cameraman. The downside is that wireless mikes are prone to pick up interference from outside sources.



Microphone types from left to right: • Dynamic, • Condenser, • Lavalier, • Shotgun

Lavalier Mikes. These are usually of the electret type and may be wireless or corded. They are small and usually clipped to clothing at the upper chest or collar. Frequently used in interviews where the electret technology shines in voice recording clarity. ■

Now to Gordon Peterson on

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SOUND

According to Gordon, the sound dimension of your movies is more important than the visual and most likely requires more time spent planning and capturing it if you want the best results. His presentation outlined pretty much all you need to do to get it right. It included:



Good sound doesn't just happen

- Anticipate, before you shoot, the sounds that you will need at the editing stage. Your camera is a sound recorder too so always record a minute or so of ambient sound.
- The best sound for your movie may not occur or be available while you are shooting. You may need to record better sound at another time or from a different source.

- Be prepared with suitable sound equipment for the location. Give some thought to the types of mikes to use, a mike boom possibly, spare batteries, sound mixers and cable connectors etc.
- A good quality audio recorder, whether tape or digital, can be expensive but will add enormously to your ability to capture superior sound.

Ambient or background sound

- You need it but be aware that you may be picking up noise that you don't need in your sound track.
- Use windscreens on your mike or use the built-in feature if your camcorder has it.
 - Listen carefully and turn off things like refrigerators, electric fans and cellphones. Especially those things that we have become so used to we no longer consciously hear them.
 - Omni-directional mikes pick up sound from behind the camera so control heavy breathing, people talking, rustling notes or script pages.
 - Listen for sounds such as airplanes, cars and motor cycles and quit recording until they can no longer be heard.
 - Consider connecting your mike to a sound system and listening through headphones (not ear buds) to the sounds that your camcorder is receiving for greater control.

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Recording interviews

- Use lavalier (lapel) mikes whenever possible. A shot gun mike on a boom held or secured outside camera range gives excellent results. A table microphone stand should best be out of camera view. Beware of hand holding microphones if you, or your interviewee tends to talk with hands or be animated.

Recording event speakers

- If possible, tie your camera or other sound equipment into the sound system. You need to determine whether special plugs or adapters are needed.
- Place your wireless microphone near the sound system speakers or on the rostrum mike.
- Use a shotgun microphone. ■

HOW TO DO A NARRATION FOR YOUR MOVIE

by Bernie Wood



At the point where you have completed to your satisfaction the editing of your movie scenes, you may feel that a voice over narrative will help to explain and compliment the visual story line. Bernie has years of experience in this art and has many tips to get the result just right. Here are some of the methods he has applied to his own work.

Writing your script

- First off, run your final video edit and write down notes on where the movie could use some verbal explanation to help the story. Be aware that your future audience is unlikely to be as familiar with your subject as you.
- Use these notes to write your story. At this point, timing the length of the narrative is not important. Clarity of story telling is. Think about your

audience and don't talk down to them or try to be too verbose. Economy in writing while still providing clarity is an art and takes a fair amount of re-writing to achieve.

- The next step is to run your movie while reading your narrative *out loud*. Make notes on your script where you need to either shorten or extend it to time-fit the scenes. If a scene does not require verbal explanation, don't apply one. If your movie is a long one you may break it down and work one section at a time.
- Re-write, as needed, your script (or alternately edit your video) to achieve a comfortable fit for both the aural and visual aspects of your movie.
- When you are satisfied that script and video are working well together, it's a good idea to put the script aside for a day or two before reading it again. You may find weaknesses or omissions to the original work that you overlooked at your first reading.

Recording your script

- Whether you prefer to stand or sit while reading, place your mike in a suitable position to talk into. Run your movie editor and speak at a comfortable level while adjusting the audio input gain to an optimal level. Put your script (with scene cues noted on it) on a reading stand in front of you. You should now be ready to begin.
- Begin running your editor. If you have included a music track fade it down just before your narration starts and back up again when it ends or pauses.
- It is often convenient to record short portions of your movie and move on only when you are satisfied with the result. If not, re-record the sequence until you are.
- Remember that a narration does not have to fill the entire movie. Use it only where it is needed to explain or enhance a scene. If your visuals are good, let them do the work. ■

Themed Contest Screening:



Delayed from the July meeting because of that month's very full program, we screened the entrants to this quarterly contest in August. Disappointingly, there were only three movies entered. Perhaps the subject was too daunting. They were, in order of members' preference:

"Images of Liberty"
by **Jack Gorham**
"Freedom Isn't Free"
by **Stan Smith**
"American Liberty"
by **Brian Lucas**

All three movies made heavy use of stills but edited in an imaginative way. The first two were accompanied by their producers' narratives which provided story lines for the images. The third movie relied on a patriotic song to underline the choice of images.

Congratulations go especially to Jack Gorham who received the top vote for the last themed contest who's subject was "Water".

Prizes will be given to the three entrants at the September meeting. The next contest theme is announced elsewhere in this issue.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sitting here in the warm (can we say hot?) days of summer makes one forget that Fall is approaching. With the shorter days and cooler nights of Fall come some annual events and changes to a club like Viewfinders.

I want to remind you all that a club like ours runs on the efforts of its members. Each member in turn must take on a different role each year to help make things happen for the other members. Each year the members that become the Board must organize the year's events and make sure they happen as planned, some members act as presenters at meetings to share their knowledge with the group and some members back fill in positions and work to help the entire club. So, as you may have already guessed, it is that time of year to find members willing to step up and take on all of these positions for next year to make sure the club operates as it has in past years; to the benefit of the members. If you are willing to fill a position from President on down please contact myself or Brian to find out what you can do and where you can help. None of these are large jobs by themselves. Others before you have done these jobs and are still with us today, both physically and as members. So, it can be done. Step up and volunteer to do your part for next year.

Another thing that comes with the Fall is the Annual Viewfinders Member Video Contest. It will be held at the **October Meeting** with awards presented in November. This is your time to shine! This event allows each

member to enter and show 15 minutes of their video(s) to be judged. You can enter more than one video if time allows. So, finish up those final edits, find that special music track and get your videos ready for competition.

The rules this year are very simple:

1. Entrant must be a Viewfinders Club member
2. Media may be VHS, S-VHS, miniDV tape or DVD
3. Length of movie may be up to 15 minutes in runtime
4. Bring your movie to the meeting on October 11th
5. There is no entry fee.

While on that subject, we do have another Inter-Club Video Exchange night on Friday, September 28th with the Peninsula Movie Makers club. Our club needs to provide 30 minutes of videos (hopefully different than the ones we recently shared with the San Jose club). If you have something to share bring it to the September meeting and get it to me.

So, as we enjoy the warm (hot) days of summer, let's do as we do in our video work and look forward to plan the next things on the horizon. Become involved in the club by filling a position next year and finish up those videos to share and compete for the awards as we close out the year.

Bob Meach

**Viewfinders
PICTURE PUZZLE
by Frank Swanson**

This month's puzzle is another one of those picture puzzles that I've taken from our first Club movie "Maybe Today". There are nine differences between the top photo and the bottom photo. See if you can find them all. The answers appear on page 7 of this newsletter.





VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On Progress

There are some people that just drool over modern electronic gadgets. I'm not one of them. Call it age but I just don't see the "progress" in progress. It beats me when people use the word to describe viewing screens a few centimeters square, buttons (not switches and knobs) too small for adult fingers, irritating programable menus with a zillion options, and automatic features

that won't tell me how they do what they do. My camcorder is a small marvel of technical cleverness but I'd swap it at the drop of a hat for my old Nikon R8 super 8 camera if the R8 could shoot digital video. Huge lens, complete manual control (albeit with a few basic automatic features), zoom, focus and aperture rings galore, switches (not buttons), a solid cast alloy body built like a truck and a heft that sits comfortably in the hand without "floating", and all essential parts made of metal. The Japanese built that too so they know how to do it.

The trouble with all this automatic stuff is that it deigns to educate one in the basics of our art. Even the thick manual that came with my camcorder appears to be imitative of a work of medieval alchemy. It seems odd to me that when I have braced myself to purchase some new technical marvel that I KNOW will be unavoidably and horrendously complicated, I am always forced to

trudge, sourly, to a bookstore somewhere to buy a book or two to try to explain what I have just purchased.

Years ago I worked for the Varian company in a division that manufactures scientific analyzers. Gas chronometers and so forth. All, of course, state-of-the-art electronic wonders. The company sold large orders to Chinese firms and frequently we'd get calls from those customers when the equipment failed or did something unexpected. Our tech reps would laugh. The trouble is, said the techies, those workers have been trained to operate the machines but have no education in the rudiments of thermal analysis. If the machine stops, the lab stops.

I know how they felt.

Brian Lucas

SEPTEMBER MEETING

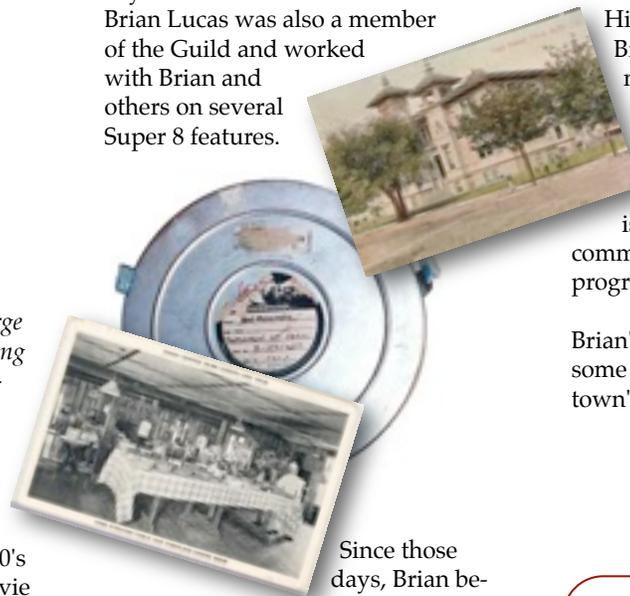
Recording Your City's History

A Presentation by guest speaker Brian George.

Our September meeting will feature a talk and demonstration by Brian George on how he goes about digitally recording much of his home city Palo Alto's history.

Brian was past president of the Palo Alto Film Guild, a prominent organization in the '70s and 80's who's members were hobbyist movie makers. Shooting films in mostly Super 8-mm, the club was similar to Viewfinders in that the members shot and edited their own movies, including adding sound tracks to the films, and invited guest speakers from the independent film world. The Film Guild eventually evolved into the Palo Alto Film Festival at the old Varsity Theater on University Avenue but eventually expired when the Var-

sity was sold. Fellow Viewfinder Brian Lucas was also a member of the Guild and worked with Brian and others on several Super 8 features.



Since those days, Brian became a member of the Palo Alto Historic Association while his wife Caroline joined the Palo Alto-Stanford Heritage Society who's mission is to preserve the local environment. With ever increasing property development, Brian became concerned that much of old Palo Alto was disappearing.

With access to the Palo Alto Historic Association archives, Brian collects still photos and old movies and has the equipment to digitize them. He also goes out on site with a camcorder to shoot locations and also interviews residents. His work is aired every month on his local community television channel in a program called "Heritage".

Brian's work and talk may inspire some of us to consider our own town's disappearing histories. ■

REFRESHMENT VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the members below who have undertaken to provide refreshments for upcoming meetings.

- Sept Frank Yap
- Oct Stan Smith
- Nov Fred and Joann Pfost

Travel and videography
in India

A Short History of Agra

By Gordon Peterson

Gordon's story of his video journey through India will continue in subsequent issues of the newsletter.

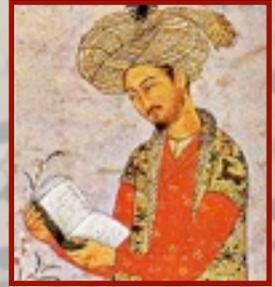


Shah Jahan (Khurram) - son of Jahangir succeeded his father.

He rebelled against his father but was beaten in battle by his older brother Parwez and was forced to flee. When Jahangir died, Shah Jahan marched against his successor, Shahriyan whom he defeated, and assumed the imperial title. His favorite wife, **Mumtaz Mahal** died in childbirth. A year later the grieving Shah Jahan began work on a magnificent memorial to her, the Taj Mahal.

Barbur, the first Mogul Emperor.

In 1526 Barbur, a warrior, poet and writer, invaded India from Afghanistan. From his capital in Delhi he, as a moslem, ruled the hindus and wrote a detailed account of the country's people, geography, climate, arts and industry.



Humayun - son of Barbur succeeded his father.

Defeated in battle with rival, Sher Shah, he first sought sanctuary with his brother Kamran, governor of Kabul but was refused. He then fled to Persia and adopted the Shia islamic religion. Equipped with a Persian-backed army he captured Kabul and had his brother's eyes put out. Returning to India he next defeated Adil Shah Sur, successor to Sher Shah and recovered the throne.



Akbar the Great - son of Humayun succeeded his father.

Initially defeated in battle against hindu general Hemi, he fought again victoriously and moved the capital from Delhi to Agra. In subsequent battles Akbar proved to be a superior but ruthless warrior. At the battle of Chitor fort the defenders, including women, fought to the death or committed suicide. Enraged by this, Akbar slaughtered 25,000 non-combatants. He was the first to include hindus in his government. He also called together representatives from India's many faiths in an attempt to create a new monotheist religion called 'Din Illah' (Divine Faith) but it found little success.



Nuhammad Jahangir (Salim) - son of Akbar succeeded his father.

A most evil man, he was addicted to opium, decadence and sadism. One of his sons, Khuru, rebelled but was captured and Jahangir has his eyes stitched closed. His third son Khurram proved to be a superior general and defeated many old enemies for which his delighted father awarded him the title of Shah Jahan (Ruler of the World).



Aurangzeb - third son of Shah Jahan succeeded his father.

Aurangzeb (The Schemer) plotted against his three brothers for the throne. Admonished by his father, he coolly pointed out to Shah Jahan his own murders of his brothers and then had him imprisoned in the Agra Red Fort for the last eight years of his life. From his prison rooms, Shah Jahan could gaze on the Taj Mahal. On his death he was interred beside his favorite wife. ■



Dearly Departed Wrap Party

It's in the Can!



shown or made available to members until after the festivals are concluded.

To celebrate the occasion and to screen the complete movie (and add several more last minute changes for our over-worked editor to deal with), the crew and principal actors and spouses got together for a wrap party on Friday August 24th. Joann and Fred Pfof were gracious enough to host it at their house in Los Altos. This was remarkably generous of them after giving up their home for several long shooting days there for scenes in the movie, and suffering patiently the disruption of their household. Thanks go to them both.



After a long summer of effort and dedication the crew of this year's club movie has completed the project and it has now been shipped off to several amateur movie festivals. The three major ones are: AMPS International Movie Contest, AMMA International Movie Contest and the 10 Best of the West Contest. We will also be submitting it to our regional NCCAMC contest. We will know how it fares sometime in October. Meanwhile, be patient as the movie will not be

Dietrich, Sound Designer Jack Gorman, Sound Technician Skip Stevens, Production Assistants Fred Pfof and Frank Yapp.

We all had a wonderful time, but now thoughts are turning toward our next year's production. Viewfinders are encouraged to join the team for the new venture. We are also looking for a new story so if you have one up your sleeve that you wouldn't mind sharing, please get in touch with one of the persons above. More news will come later. Keep tuned. ■

Among the guests were our principal stars, Donna and Frank Jeler (and Fred but he had to be there) and the crew: Producer Bob Meacham, Director Brian Lucas, Director of Photography Franz Helbig, Videographer Frank Swanson, Video Editor John



New Themed Contest

After a rather tough subject last quarter we are selecting a more general theme for the new contest.

You can interpret "Road" as Street, Highway, Lane, etc. From interstate superhighway to your own home street, the choice is yours. Your short movie, however, should tell a story. Simply sticking your camcorder out of the car window while driving along will not do. Tell us something of you subject's history, or its specialness, or it's relevance for you. A byway we didn't know but would like to journey along it after seeing your video.

Movies submitted should not exceed 5 minutes or so and can be as short as one minute. The contest screening date will be our January 2008 meeting. **Good luck.**

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR AUGUST 2007

Bank Account Beginning 8/1/07	\$ 678.65
Income Total	\$ 5.00
DVD Sales (1) \$5.00	
Expenses Total	\$ 60.50
Contest Entry Fees (3) \$28.00	
Contest Mailing Costs \$32.50	
Bank Account Ending 8/31/07	\$ 623.15



Frank Swanson, Treasurer for 2007

Answers to this months Picture Puzzle

1. Fred has 5 buttons on his sleeve instead of 3 (D5)
2. Picture on wall behind Fred's head is gone (A7)
3. Fred's label flower has changed color from red to pink (C6)
4. Two tile grouts are missing under mantle (E3 & E4)
5. There are now two pocket watches on mantle (D3)
6. There are three sets of wooden dowels above Fred's head (A6)
7. The glass pitcher now has no handle (D1)
8. The marble on shelf in front of Fred's head has doubled in size (B6)
9. Fred bow tie is missing in the mirror's reflection (C2)

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Viewfinder Newsletter is published during the third week of each month for Viewfinders Camcorder Club of Cupertino members. Please send announcements and articles for submission to the publisher during the two weeks previous to the following monthly issue. Send address and email corrections to the publisher.

MONTHLY CLUB MEETINGS

Held in the Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center. 10188 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino, California. Watch the calendar for programs updates. Admission is free.

OFFICERS

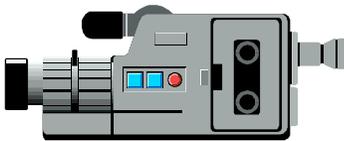
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
 2007

<p>JAN Jan 3 Meeting: "10 Best of the West" and NCCAMA movies screenings. Jan 5th San Jose Meeting: "Gorillas..." Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"I've Been Framed"</i></p>	<p>FEB Feb 7 Meeting: Fred Pfof on "The History of Video Tape" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"Steady Camera Work"</i></p>
<p>MARCH March 14 Meeting: John Dietrich on "Matting and Chromakey Techniques" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"Creative Camera Work"</i></p>	<p>APRIL April 4 Meeting: Members Quarterly Short Video Competition screening. Theme: "Water" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"Light and Shadows"</i></p>
<p>MAY 2, Wednesday Meeting: Club Members Video Screening Night. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"Shooting Interviews"</i></p>	<p>JUNE 5, Tuesday Meeting: Inter-club Exchange Night Tech Tips: Frank Swanson <i>"Transitions"</i></p>
<p>JULY 11, Wednesday Meeting: Nimitz Grade Sch. Videos Monte Vista Student Videos</p>	<p>AUG 1, Wednesday Meeting: Panel Discussion of "Audio in Video: Microphones, Capturing, Editing and Voice-overs" American Liberty "Themed" Contest</p>
<p>SEPT 11, Tuesday Meeting: Recording Your City's History - Guest Brian George Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCT 3, Wednesday Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screenings. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOV 7, Wednesday Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DEC No meeting this month</p>

