

Viewfinders

*Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, October 3rd, 2007, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Cupertino Room, Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd., Cupertino, CA*

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September Meeting Highlights

Main Feature:

Preserving your City's History

With guest speaker Brian George

Faced by unrelenting property development, neighborhoods are changing in an unprecedented manner more so than any time in the past. It becomes difficult, as the years go by, to remember what they looked like in previous times.

Most cities and towns have historical societies to preserve photographs, pictures and films to add to their written records. It used to be that one had to visit one's local historic association to view these but with the advent of local community television channels,



Alto's community channel under the title "Heritage". He uses a mix of photographs and old movies from Palo Alto Historical Association's archives and on-site interviews and video which he takes himself. His most important tool, apart from his editing station, is a Telecine machine that copies and digitizes movies frame by frame. During the evening we viewed scenes that included: pa-



October Meeting
CLUB MEMBERS' MOVIE NIGHT
Bring a movie and win a prize!
See President's Message Page 2

volunteers like Brian George have arranged them for broadcasting to one's home.

Brian's presentation comprised of examples of some of the monthly programs he has produced for Palo

rades, civic building commemorations, bygone business premises, school events, transport

Continued page 6



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's Movie Time! Our program this month will be the Annual Viewfinders Member Video Contest and it promises to be a very nice evening. That is of course, if you finish up your entry and bring it to the meeting for all to see.

The success of this event is dependent on you, the individual member, contributing to the viewing pleasure of the other members. So, complete the edits, tweak the audio, burn the disc and bring it to the meeting night on Wednesday October 3rd!

At a time when video is exploding, all over the Internet, on TV, on iPods, in

players in cars and on cell phones, I would think you would want to learn more about how to shoot, edit and share your video work with others. Along with being a place to bring and share your videos with the members, I would like to make the club place to learn by sharing. We have implemented the "Tech Tips" section of our meetings (and I have learned lots from them, even reinforcing some things), we strive to have a number of our monthly programs be educational on all aspects of video and we want to do more.

We cover a lot on camera work already, and discuss types of videos; documentary, trip and movie making but I think the two areas that are difficult to cover in a large base are editing and sharing. Since all of our members today use computers to edit, and most are on either a PC or a Mac, I would like to know if there is interest in establishing both a PC and a Mac User groups. Would you be interested in investing a couple hours a month discussing editing on your platform with other users of that platform? This is something that can start out as a discussion group and evolve later into going to someone's home and actually seeing and doing work directly on an editing software. I would be willing

to get both group started and even manage the PC group. If you are interested in committing some time to improving yours, and other member's, skills by participating let me know.

Also, we have a group of members that are working at finally getting the club's web site rebuilt. As part of that, and along the lines discussed above, I think it would be great for the club to put together a brief for its members on how to prepare and upload videos to various hosting sites on the web. Then we can place links to our members uploaded videos on the new club site. You benefit from learning how to do it and also widen your audience by creating visibility on our club site. What I need is someone, or someones, to take on the task of researching the various public sites (Google, YouTube, etc) and creating the brief for the members to follow. Anyone(s) care to take this task for the benefit of others?

So, it can be an exciting time in video, but first, why don't we all sit back and enjoy the work of our fellow members. Bring your videos to the October meeting. Start the projector, please.

Viewfinders Club SUDOKU Puzzle

The goal of Sudoku is to fill in every empty box with one of nine letters. Each letter can appear only once in each horizontal row, as well as only once in every vertical column and only once in each of the nine 3X3 squares. This month's puzzle contains the letters ADENOSUV and W. To help you get started, let's say you wanted to put an "A" in the top row across. You couldn't put it in the top left or right squares because there is already an "A" in those 3X3 squares. Since there is an "A" in the fourth column (bottom middle square), the "A" has to go in the second square just to the right of the "D". As another clue, the

word "SOUNDWAVE" appears somewhere in the puzzle. The answer to this month's puzzle appears on page 3 of this newsletter. Have fun!

	E		D			V
A		S		V		
				E		A W
		V			E D	
	A					W
	D N				U	
O W		A				
		V		W		E
N			O		S	



New Themed Contest

You can interpret "Road" as Street, Highway, Lane, etc. From interstate superhighway to your own home street, the choice is yours. Movies submitted should not exceed 5 minutes or so and can be as short a one minute. The contest screening date will be our January 2008 meeting. **Good luck.**

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Logos

The Board has decided that the club could use a new logo to replace the current one designed by Irv Webster many moons ago. We are in a new digital age and an updated image to reflect the times seems sensible.

Over the years I have designed hundreds of logos. As the ex-art director for a Silicon Valley ad agency, many of my commissions were for high-tech companies. A typical client brief to determine the nature of the company went something like this:

"Ours is a bleeding edge DIRFT organization." - *Right.*

"Our core competencies are to benchmark, without undue discontinuous change, our industries best practices." - *Got it*

"Empowering a contingency workforce, including a cross-functional team designed to avoid black-holing, we provide time-based competitive solutions to pre-determine a competitive edge for our client's' product distribution. We don't tolerate road kill!" - *I see.*

"Within our corporate culture our management information system encourages intrapreneurial responsibilities. We practice de-layering as an ongoing process " - *No?*

Insourcing is our watchword, corporate genetics is our life blood, Empowerment is our mantra." - *Really?*

"Our mission statement reflects our open door policy implicating a paradigm shift in the direction of Total Quality Management." - *Nice.*

"We have an evaluation meeting scheduled for Thursday in the big board room. We'll need it seat our 170 engineers who'll participate and discuss your designs. Can you make it by then? Do you have enough information?" - *Thursday?*

Brian Lucas



DOLBY TRIP

By Fred Pfost

On September 30th ten of our club members met in the Quinlan parking lot for a car pooling-trip to the Dolby Labs in San Francisco where we were met by two more of our members from San Francisco. We and members of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers were invited to attend a presentation about some of the new processes and products Dolby has developed for the motion picture and television industries.



Ioan Allen, Senior V P of Dolby, who joined Dolby in 1969 as employee

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2007

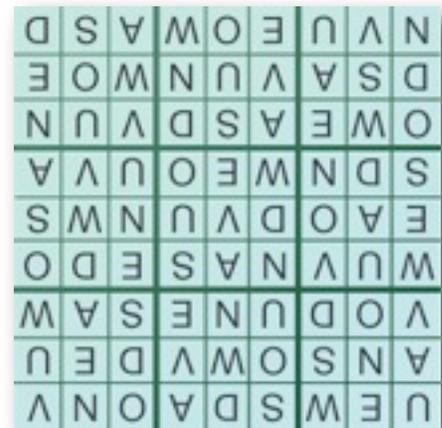
Bank Account Beginning 9/1/07	\$ 923.15
Income Total	\$ 15.00
DVD Sales (3) \$15.00	
Expenses Total	\$ 0.00
Bank Account Ending 9/30/07	\$ 638.15

Frank Swanson, Treasurer for 2007

number 20, gave the opening talk about some of the characteristics of the listening room we were in, the projection and sound equipment and some comments about today's film formats.

Other speakers talked about "Dolby Digital Cinema" and the modern, all-electronic cinema; a device to control the loudness of sound in television and movies; and finally, a presentation of a totally new 3D movie process which uses a single projector and special viewing glasses. This process is so simple (even using a standard projection screen) and the picture so realistic it is bound to make a great impact on the future of 3D movies. ■

Answers to this months Picture Puzzle



Travel and videography in India

Part 4

By Gordon Peterson

AGRA AREA AND THE TAJ MAHAL

From the top of our hotel, about 3-4 stories high, we could look out on the Taj Mahal. What a beautiful building! It is constructed of a translucent white marble that reflects the color of light you see around it and the colors change throughout day and the seasons. Tables and chairs are placed on the top of the hotel from where you could order meals to be brought up from the ground floor kitchen. There were also monkeys that ran over the rooftops with the intention of sneaking over to grab some food. While I was watching them they would approach but stay just out of range and watch for a chance to rush in and grab something. The hotel staff, armed with slingshots, fought to keep them at bay. To get to the roof, one had to traverse a steep, very narrow stairway which zigzagged up from the ground floor. Two small people could just pass if they turned sideways but it was hopeless with two typical "American"

sized people. Our room cost about \$15 a day. Much of the time the lights didn't work because the circuit was too over loaded. They could go out at any time. Also, we only had hot water for showering for two hours a day, from 10 am till noon.

Typical Agra streets were only as wide as one side of a two-lane road in the US. and the street at the front of the hotel was even narrower, at about 8 feet wide. The streets were filled with people and animals. One of the amazing things was the collection of manure. Each morning cattle were driven down the streets, probably to pasture somewhere. They would deposit their poop along the way and for the rest of the day people would walk through it. The smell would get pretty strong in the heat of the sun.



Along the roads two wheeled trailers, the size of pickup beds and filled with wet dung, were pulled by animals or people. At other places we saw large open backed wagons about 10 feet x 20 feet with sides 10-12 inches high, enclosed with tarps, piled to the top with dry "cow pies" (flat rounds of dried dung). I think these were used for cooking fuel. There were three wheeled bicycles with dump boxes about 4 feet by six feet

square with 18 inch sides filled with trash to be deposited in a yard along the road to the Taj Mahal, less than 300 yards from the east entrance. Brahma cattle and donkeys were allowed to graze on what they could find in the trash.

If you are planning a trip to see the Taj Mahal, be aware that it is closed on Fridays and that if you are there at the full moon you can arrange to tour it at night. As it opens at 7:30 am we went early enough to be the first in line for the day. You must have exactly 750 rupees (about \$20 worth) for the fee, although native Indians pay much less at about 50 cents. Inspectors and armed guards man the entry gate. When I tried to enter with my camcorder, I found I had to go back and get a permit (\$1.50) to carry it in, and

then I was permitted only to take video from the entrance steps, about 200 yards away from the building. In front of the three story high entrance gate to the Taj Mahal is a large enclosed garden area surrounded by fortress-like red stone walls about 30 feet high. The garden area sides are flanked with rooms in which pilgrims could, at one time, stay. The "gate" to the Taj Mahal is a vast archway in the red wall. Surmounting it are 11 spheres rising from the top of the wall on each side and representing the 22 years it took to build the Taj Mahal. Construction started in December of 1631 and required 20,000 laborers to complete it.

Being one of the first to arrive, I maneuvered to an ideal photo location at the center of the stairs looking down on the reflection pools that lead to the Taj Mahal. I had planned to get a series of shots as the sun came up and

record the changing light on the translucent marble. As it turned out, there was a heavy fog that morning which nearly obscured the building and didn't lift until around 10 am. I waited steadfastly on my chosen spot for over an hour. Other photographers were quite perturbed that I had staked out the ideal position that they also wanted to shoot from. Some of them politely asked if they could stand there to take a photo. When they asked I gave way but when they didn't I refused to budge for most of the hour until my conscience got the better of me. After all, they too had traveled long distances to see the marvel. So I vacated my highly desired spot.

I had hired a guide, who spoke pretty good English. for his fee of 650 rupees (about \$16) to tell me about the Taj Mahal. He provided some cloth covers to go over my shoes so that I wasn't required to take them off when we walked on the Taj Mahal's raised platform. I had to check my camcorder with the gate guards.

The building (144 feet high) and the 4 minarets (towers, 131 feet high) one at each corner, are incredibly impressive. The minarets lean slightly way from the Taj Mahal so that if they fall they would fall away from the building. The marble sides are inlaid with black marble and calligraphic panels of verses from the Koran. From the ground they all look the same size, because they are cunningly cut larger the higher they are placed. The whole building is intricately inlaid with semi to fully precious stones. The marble is carved, sometimes engraved and other times in relief. Some of the panels are "filigree screens", daintily carved (with a design created by cutting away the marble clear through the 4-6" solid marble panel leaving only a thin veneer of marble) from a single block. The day before we had visited a marble shop where they showed us how they shaped the marble and inlaid the precious stones and also explained the nature of the translucent marble used in building the Taj. They told us that when the workers finished their work on the Taj, their forearms were cut off to prevent them doing similar work on buildings but my guide told me that

was a myth. Each year the inlays are inspected and any necessary repairs are done. The raised platform on which the Taj sits and the surrounding patio are both white marble. Inside there are marble tombs, a large one for Shah Jahan the ruler, and a smaller



one for Mumtaz Mahal, his favorite wife who died in childbirth bearing his 14th child. Their actual graves, however, are in a dark crypt below the upper tombs and are closed to the public. I was both enthralled with the grandeur of the building and surroundings and chagrined at the fact that I could not take video of it. If you plan to go and you want to take pictures, be sure you have a still picture camera!

Both Bart and I had bought entrance tickets early in the morning but he did not immediately enter. He returned to the hotel to have breakfast with his wife and planned to bring her later. I was concerned that he would come back into the fog, so I exited early to tell him to delay his entrance until the mist had lifted. Unfortunately I could not reenter on my original ticket. Thinking back on it I wished I had paid again so I could have spent more time inside looking at everything. There are a number of other buildings including mosques within the walls to visit, as well as a garden outside the east gate.

At the back of the Taj Mahal, on the east side, is the Yamuna River. It was mostly dry and being used for farm-



ing when we were there. The river also acts as a big outdoor laundry. Women dip cloth in the river, rub in soap and slam it on sloping boards to squish out the water. When it is rinsed and clean they lay it out on the fine sand along the bank of the river to dry in the sun. The river laundry was strung out along the south side of the river, east of the bridge. Now, crossing the bridge was quite an experience. Take all of the traffic on a busy Indian road and funnel it onto a narrow two lane bridge, add deep potholes and you have it. All sorts of vehicles; cars, trucks, buses, camels, Brahma or water buffalos drawing two wheeled carts, bicycles, golf cart sized vehicles, tractor drawn trailers, and so forth.



There too was Itimad-ud-Daulah's tomb, Lord Treasurer of the Mughal Empire. It was built earlier in 1622 and took 6 years to build. His tomb shares a similar architecture to the Taj as it too is build of white marble with filigree screens and inlaid marble and surrounded by a high red stone wall. From the back, which is on the Yamuna River, you have an excellent view of the Taj Mahal. Another of Agra's grand places is the Agra Fort, (Note: free on Fridays) which was the home of the rulers. It is mammoth in size and built of red stone and has gardens and many interesting buildings. It is said that the wife of the ruler would swim in marble pool filled with thousands of rose petals so she could bathe in scented waters. The Fort contains dungeons, baths, mosques, courtyards, open halls and throne alcoves. Shah Jahan was imprisoned there, for 8 years by his son, before he died and was buried in the Taj with his favorite wife.

About 23 miles from Agra is Fatehpur Sikri. Built in 1571 by Akbar, the father of Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj, it was abandoned after 14 years after



Akbar died, because there was not enough water in the area to sustain it. Now it is one of the interesting places to visit. Next to it stands the grand



open mosque, Jami Masjid. I could take video in the Fatehpur Sikri, but not in the Jami Masjid mosque. We arrived, early in the morning, to be greeted right away by a very persistent person who wanted to be our guide. We kept saying no, no, but he persisted until Bart yelled at him that he was very rude and that we didn't want his services. Later, as I was looking things over, a young man came up to me and asked to show me around. I told him I was not interested in hiring a guide. He replied that he wasn't a guide, just a student who wanted to practice his English, so I agreed to have him show me around. His English was pretty good. He took me to the mosque, but they wouldn't let me take video or enter without taking off my shoes. I had kept the cloth shoe covers from my visit to the Taj, but they insisted I must take off my shoes. My feet were just too sore from walking on the uneven floors of the caves and besides I need the support of the inserts in my shoes. From what I could see from the entryway it was a vast beautiful place but I didn't go in the mosque. It also had an enormous front gate (177 feet high) and a number of stairs leading up from the front side road. As we walked away from the mosque to the Fatehpur Sikri the young man asked me for money. I answered that he had told me he was

just a student and not a guide. I refused to pay him anything, mostly because he had lied to me. I had found from experience that almost everyone who offered me kindness in India seemed to expect payment. It was one of the factors that rubbed me the wrong way during my time there.

We hired a car to take us to see the evening sights of Agra on a Saturday night which is an auspicious time to get married. We were able to find two different wedding parties in the area.



Indian weddings are certainly big affairs. They lay on loud blaring music from bands or recorded music. The dress is most elegant too. One procession was powered from a portable generator that lit florescent lights with four 2-foot long globes. The electric cord stretched on both sides of the procession about 50 feet along the road. The groom was mounted on a white horse with a gilded saddle and carried a small boy in his lap. I suspect it was his child. The whole affair was crammed tightly into a narrow roadway and heading toward a pavilion. A Hindu man told us earlier that Hindus limited the size of their families, but Muslims did not. Also in India, girl babies are not desirable because the custom of giving a big dowry at marriage can leave a family destitute. He felt that the Muslims were wrong not to limit family size as India is predicted to have a larger population than China by the mid 2000's.

Next month the final episode – Escape from India. ■

REFRESHMENT VOLUNTEERS

Oct Stan Smith
Nov Need a volunteer

Continued from page 1

systems, historic residences and, most interestingly, a round-the-world grand tour by Palo Alto amateurs filmed in 1926 on 16 mm.

Many of the photos and movies date back to the early 20th century and are still in very good condition which attests to the durability of film. This brings up the question of how permanent is the digital medium that we have gravitated to today. Brian voiced concern that much of what we shoot and store, whether on CDs, DVDs, flash cards or hard drives may not have the permanency of film and may be prone to loss or degradation in a comparatively short time. Backing up and making copies frequently is now more important than ever. (See below)

As we see our own towns and cities changing, especially a young city like Cupertino, recording the evolution to give future generations an appreciation of their heritage appears to be an important thing to do. ■

Guideline to Preserving Film, Video and Photos

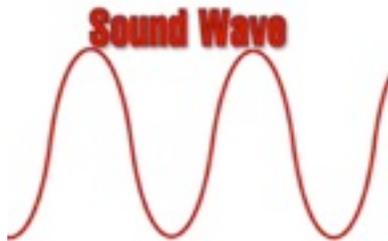
- 1). Store at a stable temperature. Avoid humidity
 - 2). To prevent chemical attack, store media in chemical free (archival type) containers
 - 3). Valuable and irreplaceable media should be protected from water or fire damage
 - 4). Avoid touching media surfaces with bare hands. Skin oils can cause damage.
 - 5). Prolonged exposure to sunlight will cause damage.
 - 6). **Digital media:**
 - CDs and DVDs have a finite time life
 - Hard drives eventually deteriorate and crash
 - Flash drives have unknown life and are costly for storage.
 - Be aware of future storage technology obsolescence
- Answer:** Back up and copy frequently

TECH TIPS

By Frank Swanson

After a two month hiatus because there wasn't time available at the end of our July/August meetings to screen a short instructive Tech-Tips, we finally got one in at our September meeting, entitled "Sample Rate" from Digital Juice. You can see this video and others at their website: www.digitaljuice.com by clicking on "DJTV" menu item at the top of the page and searching "sample rate". This particular video uses animations and audio examples to explain the fundamentals of sample rate and how it affects the quality of digital audio.

1. What Is Digital Audio? First you need to know that sound travels in waves through the air. The distance between the peaks of the waves and



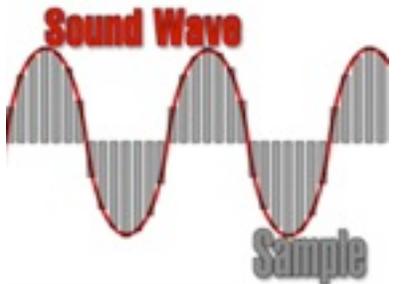
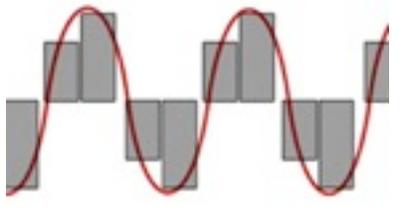
the speed of the wave through the air determines the frequency at which these waves pass us by. For example,



the frequency of 440Hz is the middle "A" on a piano keyboard. In order to record a sound for our video work, we need to measure the intensity and

frequency of these waves with a microphone and convert that information into digital data. Our camcorders automatically do this function quite well for us. This data, however, is only an approximation of the real analog sound that we hear. Anytime we convert this analog sound into discrete digital data we necessarily lose some information.

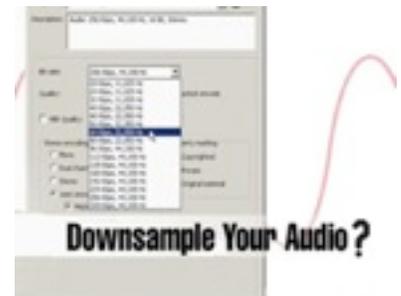
2. How Does Digital Audio Work? To record a sound wave digitally, we take



a sample. The rate or frequency that we take these samples determines the accuracy of the recorded audio. Sound waves are measured in Hertz and so is the sample rate of our digital recordings. The more samples we take per second, the greater the fidelity or accuracy of the recording. The minimum sample rate required to accurately represent a sound is twice the frequency (or pitch) of that sound, known as the Nyquist Rate. The highest note on a piano is 5kHz which can be accurately represented by a sample rate of 10kHz. We can reasonably hear sounds up to about 20kHz which can be represented by a 40kHz sample

rate. CD audio comes in at 44.1kHz sample rate, and DVD video comes in at a 48kHz sample rate, so these sampling rates will do quite nicely for us humans. Some CD recordings and the newer expensive camcorders sample at up to 96kHz, but we generally can't tell the difference.

3. What Should I Know about Digital Audio? Well, most of our video projects are going to need to be digitally compressed for the internet or for CD/DVD media players. Therefore we need to compress these files as much as possible while still maintaining as much quality as possible.



Though cutting the sample rate down from 44kHz to 22kHz will cut the file size down by half, it could (and frequently does) result in nasty and very audible aliasing or artifacts. Keep this in mind when you're given the choice of the audio sampling rate in your project settings. Don't be tempted to select a lower editing sample rate such as 22kHz or even 11kHz just to reduce the file size of your completed movie. Choose the highest sampling rate possible with your equipment and software to maximize the fidelity and quality of the audio in your movie. ■

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Viewfinder Newsletter is published during the third week of each month for Viewfinders Digital Video 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

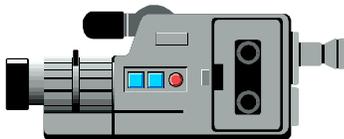
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2007	
<p>JAN</p> <p>Jan 3 Meeting: "10 Best of the West" and NCCAMA movies screenings. Jan 5th San Jose Meeting: "Gorillas..." Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "I've Been Framed"</p>	<p>FEB</p> <p>Feb 7 Meeting: Fred Pfof on "The History of Video Tape" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "Steady Camera Work"</p>
<p>MARCH</p> <p>March 14 Meeting: John Dietrich on "Matting and Chromakey Techniques" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "Creative Camera Work"</p>	<p>APRIL</p> <p>April 4 Meeting: Members Quarterly Short Video Competition screening. Theme: "Water" Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "Light and Shadows"</p>
<p>MAY 2, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Club Members Video Screening Night. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "Shooting Interviews"</p>	<p>JUNE 5, Tuesday</p> <p>Meeting: Inter-club Exchange Night Tech Tips: Frank Swanson "Transitions"</p>
<p>JULY 11, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Nimitz Grade Sch. Videos Monte Vista Student Videos</p>	<p>AUG 1, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Panel Discussion of "Audio in Video: Microphones, Capturing, Editing and Voice-overs" American Liberty "Themed" Contest</p>
<p>SEPT 11, Tuesday</p> <p>Meeting: Recording Your City's History - Guest Brian George Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>OCT 3, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Club Annual Video Contest screenings. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>NOV 7, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Annual Gold DVD Awards and Social. Tech Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>DEC</p> <p>No meeting this month</p>

