

*Next Club Meeting: Wednesday, February 10th,
7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Cupertino Room,
Quinlan Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd.,
Cupertino, CA*



IN THIS ISSUE: FEBRUARY 2010

Opera and Wildlife Movies

Fred and Peggy Heiman take on Opera San Jose and the Kalahari. Pages 1 and 2

President's Message

Jack Gorham discovers that lighting for video is a tricky business. Page 3

ABCinema

This interactive digital internet movie course claims to be the world's first. Page 3

VP's Message

Editing the club's movie reminds Milt Kostner that planning ahead pays off. Page 4

Letter from Susan Woods

Nimitz Elementary teacher planning a fine May program Page 4

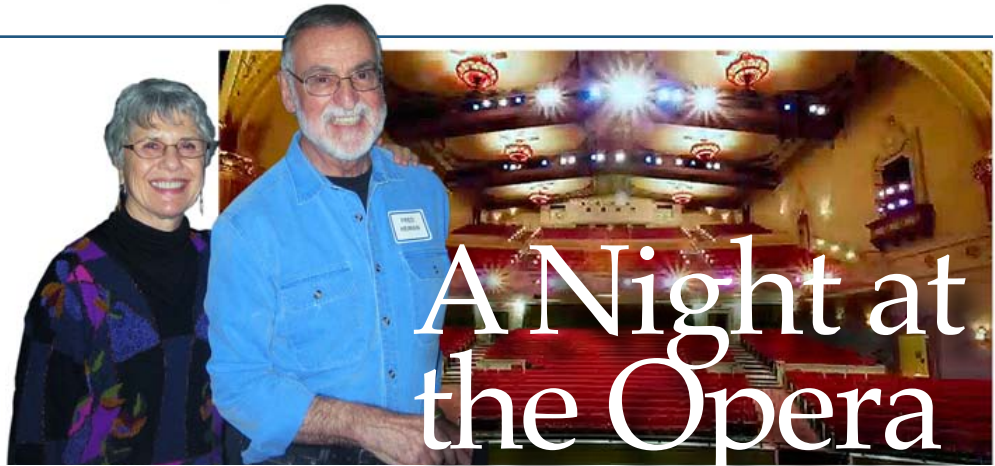
Tech Tips

Frank Swanson talks equipment care whilst traveling. Page 6

January 2010 Meeting

Highlight

High Definition Africa and Arias



A Night at the Opera

The January meeting kicked off the new year with a very entertaining presentation of High-Definition videos by Fred and Peggy Heiman.

Fred's resume reads like he's a man who could be satisfied just to look back on a lifetime of achievements

February Meeting
Working with Celtx

Vice President Milt Kostner has been investigating this popular (and free) scripting and screenplay application.

He'll demonstrate it and explain why we should make use of it when planning our videos.

but he is certainly not resting on his laurels. With a Ph.D in physics and a successful career with Intel among other high-tech companies before retirement, he still found time to pursue a second career as a film maker. Underwater and wildlife movies are his speciality, and he edits not only his own videos but those of others as well, along the way garnering many awards from National and International film festivals. Fred generously and freely donates his movies to schools, dive clubs and other non-profit organizations.

Since 2006 he has concentrated on shooting in High Definition which is apparent in the extremely high quality of his productions. His wildlife movies may be seen on his web site: www.globevideoproductions.com and also on the Discovery Channel

and National Geographic Television where footage of his work has been aired.

January's club program was split between two parts, with a short underwater video, "*Mantas of the Maldives*" as an extra. Peggy Heiman is the resident narrator and is heard on all Fred's productions.

Part One: Opera San Jose

Fred and Peggy began producing promotional videos for the local opera company after becoming members. They learned that Opera San Jose had previously limited it's publicity to print, static web site announcements and radio advertising,

Continued page 2

Continued from page 1



OPERA
SAN JOSE

so offered their services as film makers. Starting in April 2009 with "Carmen", Fred shot and produced videos that were aired on YouTube and Opera San Jose's own web site www.operasj.org. Beginning with the September 2009 season, and for each opera, his videos were also edited for 15 second TV commercials that ran on ABC Channel 7 Sunday News. B-Roll footage was utilized by ABC and NBC for their on-site dress rehearsal interviews and appeared in TV programs made by the stations.

Viewfinders enjoyed watching Fred and Peggy's promotional videos of Opera San Jose's productions of Bizet's "Carmen", Massenet's "Mannon" and Rossini's "Cinderella" as well as an outdoor performance at Santana Row in San Jose. The afternoon show to promote the company entertained shoppers with a medley of operatic pieces by several of the company's singers. Fred used a two camera set up and shot a great deal of tape. From this he blended both video and audio down to short sequences that required careful editing to smoothly segue from one song to another.

"Opera in a Box", an Opera San Jose outreach program is also supported

by Fred and Peggy. These informal art appreciation events designed for children take the company's performers into school classrooms. Fred videos the story tellers and singer/actors and captures the children's expressions as they experience an art form that rarely enters their lives. Filming theater productions is always a difficult business as theatre lighting, designed to illuminate the performance for audience appreciation, is not really suitable for video capture. This has forced Fred to spend many hours at his editing station color and light correcting his footage. The result, however, is excellent.

Part 2: "The Kalahari Trans-frontier Park"

After the refreshment break Fred screened his wildlife movie shot in Botswana and South Africa. Surprisingly for such an arid land the Kalahari supports a wide range of birds and animals and a people that can live harmoniously with nature. The



area is vast and allows man and creatures to roam far and wide to eke out an existence in this dry scrub land. An amusing, if alarming scene in Fred's movie photographed an inquisitive lion taking a little too much interest in the safari vehicle. The occupants were startled when the curious lion reared up on the side of the car intending to get a better look inside. With it's huge paws on the door sill and it's head attempting to stretch through the window the passengers moved smartly away from it, reluctant to become a meal. Fortunately one quick minded passenger wound up the window, disappointing the animal but ensuring that Fred and Peggy would be around to show us this video. ■

Do Fred and Peggy (and yourself) a favor.

When the club asked Fred what we could do to reward them for their presentation they simply said "Please patronize Opera San Jose. Helping to ensure the success of the opera company would be reward enough."

So Viewfinders, do yourself a favor and experience the opera real time. High Definition movies are wonderful but there never has been a substitute for the real thing.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Fascinated by the Light**

As Director of Photography for our latest video project, I was reasonably comfortable as we shot our script on the streets and park in Cupertino a couple weeks ago. With an overcast sky, the light was evenly spread over everything. However, when we moved indoors to shoot a scene in the house, it got complicated. Light stands were set up, extension cords plugged in, furniture moved and the lights rearranged. First they were aimed at the subject, then the walls, then the ceiling, trying to capture a natural light. Then we changed from incandescent to fluorescent lighting. It took nearly two hours to get it right. It's not easy to make lighting look natural.

I have not had much experience in lighting, but I am fascinated by how it is done effectively. Recently, I shot a video inside a building and I tried setting up some lighting. I could not get it right; it cast shadows behind the person I was shooting and looked very unnatural. Finally, I shot it with out any extra light. During the past several months, I have been particularly interested in how movies are lit. I look at the faces of the people to see how they appear; are they bright, shadowed; does it look natural? Where is the light coming from; a window, or a bright light off screen. Sometimes, I lose the story line because I am concentrating on the lighting.

I am reminded of a photography class that I took many years ago. We met at various locations every Saturday morning at 8:00 am. The early hours in the morning was the "good" light, as was the late afternoon light. We always quit shooting about 11:00 am, had lunch and discussed the pic-



Interactive, Digital Film Course

Sue White of the Sacramento Movie Makers sent the following information to Bernie Wood who suggests that it could be a feature of our monthly meetings. If you agree, please let one of our board members know. Alternately you may wish to take the course individually.

The Foundation ABCinema proudly presents the international edition of the world's first interactive, digital film course.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

There are many good books about making movies but they have their limitations. A book tells the story of the movie in words, whereas the film consists of images. ABCinema is based on the latest techniques where word and image go hand in hand. The course explains not only the strength of a shot or a particular scene, but it also shows it directly.

Audience

The course is for the beginner to the more experienced filmmaker. But it also appeals to the movie fan who is interested in film in general. ABCinema is informative, and much fun.

tures we had taken. Then, at 4:00 pm. we could begin shooting again. One summer day, we were to meet at a park, just north of Half Moon Bay. When we left home, it was a bright and warm morning, but when we arrived at the park, it was covered with fog. A few of us moaned because of the heavy overcast sky, but the teacher thought it was wonderful. We could catch the dew drops on the plants and the cobwebs. Instead of bright washed-out colors, the flowers were intensely saturated. The light was uniformly even, without deep shadows, perfect shooting light.

The Movie Player

ABCinema contains a large collection of film clips from 1878 until now. Each fragment is an example of a new discovery: film language, editing, camera movement, image cutouts, sound, talkies, color film, acting method, etc.

The Animation Player

Topics like "point of view", "direction of movement" or the "180 degree rule" are clearly illustrated in the animation player. For each subject, a scene in 3D has been designed which comes to life on the floor plan, as well as in the 3D-player.

Animation of Famous Scenes

Furthermore, the movie player has been linked to the animation player. Famous scenes are animated and then synchronized with the original movie. In this way, you get an excellent insight into the structure of the original scene.

The course

The course consists of text (over **300 pages**) and motion pictures (over **14 hours**). For a general idea of the course we've made a preview of each chapter and prepared it for the Internet (**www.abcinema.org**). In addition, a couple of instruction videos will give a clear picture of design and result.

Harry Fitié (Chairman) Foundation ABCinema,

Intro price \$79.00. ■

Lately, I have been looking for light stands to purchase. There are all kinds, incandescent, halogen, fluorescent, LED; all pretty expensive. What are the best? I'm not sure. I know I need to do more reading and learning about the proper way to light a scene. It's not easy. In the meantime, I will be shooting most of my video outdoors. I will also continue to watch how the lighting is done in movies, as I am fascinated by the light.

Jack Gorham.

V.P.'S MESSAGE



My Two Cents

First off, a correction to my November VF article on Premiere Elements. Version 8 is available for the Mac as well the PC. If you are still using Movie Maker or iMovie, take a look at this useful and relatively inexpensive video editing application from Adobe.

While I, as VP of VF, should be trying to build up the membership of Viewfinders (something all of us should do for the future club existence), nearly all my available hobby time (and then some) has been tied up lately doing rough edits of the current video project by the Viewfinder Production Group. I'd tell you the title but for two reasons: First, we haven't settled on the chosen title, and second, the working title would reveal the plot. So much as Apple has used mystery to publicize their new iPad, you'll have to guess what our current plot is about. (However for the price of the future club DVD purchase, after you sign a Secrecy document, I'll whisper it into your ear,.)

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JAN 2010

Bank Account Beginning 1/1/10	\$1078.01
Income Subtotal:	\$500.00
Membership Dues (17)	\$460
DVD Sales TI (4)	\$40
Expenses Subtotal:	\$25.00
VPG miniDV Tapes	\$25
Bank Account Ending 1/31/10	\$1553.01



JOIN THE VIEWFINDERS CLUB FOR 2010 NOW!

Bring your check or cash to our February 10th meeting to renew your Club membership early for 2010. The annual dues are \$30 for individuals, \$35 for families, and \$5 for full-time students. Make your checks payable to the "Viewfinders Club".



Working with many clips from the video's scenes has reintroduced me to the following advice I'll pass on to you for free. As much as you can, plan your work to detail each activity. (In March I'll be demoing Celtx, a free open source application that will assist you greatly in this effort.) Watch your light sources, especially on partly cloudy days where the sunlight varies rapidly.

Maintain continuity between related shots to permit smooth flow of the story-line. Most new cameras allow for the shooting of stills as well as video. Consider taking a still at the end of each shot and viewing that against what you plan for your next

shot. (I don't know if this is practical – the thought just came to me. Try it!)

Audio is just as important as video. If this is a controlled shot, make sure there is quiet from your crew and audience. However ambient sound is important to have in your pocket. Capture ambient with a few minutes of non-action for patching over sound goofs.

Lastly, watch out for incorrect white balance, and for over-exposure (zebras, if your camera has this ability). These are just a few thoughts to make editing an art, and not a series of Band-Aids.

Milt Kostner

A letter from Susan Woods of Nimitz Elementary School

Hello Brian and all Viewfinders,

Thank you for including me in your newsletters. I always enjoy reading them. I am writing you a little note to see if you might be able to use it as an update for a future edition of the newsletter to let everyone know what's happening so far with my little third grade movies.

First, I would like to thank The San Jose Movie Makers Club for donating their ending balance to me and my iMovie program at Nimitz. Last summer during my presentation at your Viewfinders July meeting, I was fortunate enough to meet **Mr. Gordon**



Peterson. He was a former member of the San Jose Movie Makers Club and approached me with such a generous offer. I since have purchased a

new 21.5" iMac desktop computer and am taking weekly one-on-one sessions at The Apple Store to learn the new version of iMovie. It is all coming together.

I am in the middle of filming some excellent movies created solely by my third grade students. This year the categories for the movies were their ancestor doll reports and country they are from, our science unit on crayfish, or anything about Going Green. I am pleasantly surprised by the thoughtful Going Green projects

Continued page 5

Continued from page 4

my students have produced. I think your club will enjoys these finished products this May.

There are plenty more movies about tsunamis, Mexico, Rosa Parks, The Exodus from Egypt, Scotland, and more.

One team of four boys are in the middle of starting a school-wide composting project with the leftover lunch food! Another student is explaining why it's important to recycle our old cell phones and he is doing a cell phone recycling fund raiser to raise money to donate to the composting project! So please tell your members that I would gladly take any of their old cell phones and chargers and it will generate dollars for our school!

I would also like to extend an invitation for any Viewfinders member that might be interested in coming to speak to my class about movie making in any capacity. It could just be inspirational or informational. Please call me at 408-807-9099 if you are interested or if you would like to donate your old cell phones. Thank you, and see you in May with our movies.

I was also intrigued by your Vice President's article about attracting new members. I would love to be an active participant in your club. I have been interested in photography and film making since I was a child. I am glad that I am able to do as much of it as I do with my students. And although I love it, my schedule limits me from enjoying it as much as I would like to. I work two jobs and am consumed with it. I do some movies of my vacations but not nearly as much for myself as I would like. Please know that I would someday like to join your club as an active and enthusiastic member!

Regards,
Susan Woods, 3rd Grade Teacher
Nimitz Elementary

Viewfinders PICTURE PUZZLE by Frank Swanson

Refreshment and Networking Time at Club's November 2009 Meeting.

This scene of Bob Meacham, Joann Pfost and others at the refreshment table has had a makeover with ten changes. Can you spot them all?



Answers on Page 7

TECH TIPS

SHOOTING TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Part 2 by Frank Swanson

This article is the second in a series of eleven that I will be writing on the topic of "Shooting Tips for the Amateur Videographer". The information you'll be reading has been accumulated over the past several years from various videography magazines and my personal experience as a videographer for the past twenty years. Last month's topic was about the amateur videographer's minimum set of equipment to help you shoot good footage for your movies. This month's article is about Videography Equipment Travel Tips and Equipment Care. Before you jump in the car for that trip to visit your relatives or hop on that plane to some exotic place for your vacation, what should you do to prepare and plan for if you're going to take along your camcorder? Here are some handy tips to consider:

1. Video Camera Bag Essentials:

Besides your camcorder and tripod, here are a number of accessories and pre-trip things to do before you leave home that could come



in handy when you arrive at your destination:

- a. **Camcorder**, of course: power it up and check all the major functions – then power it down.
- b. **Camcorder batteries**, two or more, fully charged.
- c. **Camcorder battery charger** to recharge used-up batteries for use later on your trip.

- d. **Blank tapes**, two or preferably many more – tape is cheap; pre-label them all.
- e. **Microphone kit(s)**, preferably wireless (handheld and lavalier) for recording at any distance.
- f. **Headphones** to monitor actually recorded audio, especially when using a wireless mic.
- g. **Standard 9-volt batteries** for wireless microphone transmitter and receiver units.
- h. **Extra microphone cables** in case one becomes broken or misplaced.
- i. **Cable adapters** for getting into your camcorder's audio: XLR to mini-jack, XLR male-to-male converter, dual RCA to stereo mini-jack, etc.
- j. **Lens filters**: polarizer (to reduce glare), UV filter, etc.
- k. **Lens tissue** for cleaning dust, dirt and moisture from your lens. Never use facial tissue, your shirtsleeve or a napkin as they can easily and badly scratch your lens.
- l. **Accessory light** that can be camera mounted and used in dimly lit environments.
- m. **Collapsible reflector** to redirect light to better illuminate your subject (e.g. car's window sunshade will work nicely).
- n. **White balance card** for manually adjusting the camera's white balance (e.g. white paper, foam core, white handkerchief).

- o. **Labels and pens** to write event and date/time on recording tapes for later use in editing process.
- p. **Camcorder power supply** for recording from a fixed location where an electrical outlet is conveniently available and to conserve your batteries for mobile recording at the same event.

- q. **Gaffer's tape** to tape down your cables, hold wireless mic receiver to tripod, etc.
- r. **Power strip** to power your camcorder, TV monitor, floor light, etc.
- s. **Extension cords** to reach the outlet that's close, but not close enough.
- t. **Weather gear** when shooting outdoors in case of inclement weather.

2. Airport Travel and Security:

When you're taking air travel to your destination, there are a number of rules to know about from your air



carrier regarding what you can and cannot take as carry-on baggage. You should find out what the rules are before you leave home so that you're not taking things out and/or putting things into your checked and carry-on luggage. Beyond these rules, there are a number of other tips that I've found useful over the years:

- a. **Carry your gear through security.** A packed camcorder in your checked-in luggage may trigger a checked bag inspection, which can be very time consuming and perhaps causing it to miss your flight, not to mention the possibility of theft.
- b. **Prepare to demonstrate your camcorder.** A unit that really records video is unlikely to be something else in disguise; so check your unit through with a charged battery and a tape in it.
- c. **Keep all your stuff in one place for quick and easy inspection.** If your equipment is scattered in a carry-on, your coat pocket and handbag, you may find yourself being shuttled aside by an impatient inspector, delaying your walk to the gate.
- d. **Don't worry about x-rays.** X-ray radiation will not record or erase anything on your tapes, nor will they affect the read/write heads in your camcorder.
- e. Finally, the number of carry-ons, types and sizes allowed on planes may vary amongst airlines and airports as the security rules evolve, so find out what the limitations are before you leave home.

3. Simple Steps for Equipment Care:

While your traveling and shooting video footage, here are some handy tips to ensure your equipment stays reliable:

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

a. Camcorder Care: Clean the body with a microfiber cloth, just slightly dampened with plain water. Some benign kitchen solution could wipe the lettering off your buttons or even dissolve them. Keep everything out of the tape transport except your recording tapes. Don't attempt to mop the interior with cotton swabs and carbon tetrachloride; use only a head-cleaning cartridge approved by the camera's manufacturer. Modern tapes don't shed much iron dandruff, so utilize the cleaning cartridge sparingly, especially since they're mildly abrasive. One or two head cleanings per year is about right. Your LCD



viewing screen is delicate, so clean it with great care using a lens cleaning solution

and a microfiber cloth per the manual's instructions.

b. Lens Care: Keep the front lens element (or on some models the protective glass) clean as you possibly can. Foreign pollutants and abrasives like fingerprints, dust and salt spray degrade the sharpness of your images. In bright sunlight, wide-angle shots can have such extreme depth-of-field that spots on your lens will be in sharp focus. If your camera has filter threads, purchase a transparent filter (e.g. UV, 1a, or skylight) and leave it in place at all times (to guard your expensive lens inside). A \$20 filter is a painless sacrifice (from scratches, salt-water) to protect a \$1,000 lens.



c. Video Tapes: Remove partially-recorded cassettes from the camcorder and label them. MiniDV labels are quite small, so just write the date and a one-word description of what's been recorded so far. Don't rewind these tapes right now, but leave it at its position will save a tedious search for blank tape and maybe prevent taping over previously recorded footage. When a tape is full, or nearly full, rewind the tape to the beginning, remove the cartridge and **slide the write-protection switch to the protect position** to prevent inadvertent re-writing over your good footage. Update the label with the date of the last recorded footage and description. Then, install a new tape in the camcorder for future ready use, but be sure to put on a blank label first.

d. Accessories: Keep your camcorder batteries warm before using them for more efficient functioning. Run them



all the way down in the camcorder, to help defeat that memory effect that may or may not exist. Recharge them immediately after use and then top them up immediately before the next use. Store them outside the camcorder (i.e. don't leave them installed), because there is some very small continuous discharging occurring even though the camcorder is turned off. Keep your polarizer and/or neutral density filters in their original rigid plastic container. As for a tripod, keep it clean and folded-up. Check for loose or missing rivets and get them repaired now. If you've got a quick release mechanism for your tripod, where's its mate – on your camcorder, in your camera bag, in a jacket pocket someplace? Get a second camera-side release plate and keep it in your camera bag for times when the original fails to turn up when you need it. And, keep all your videography gear in a dedicated bag or case.

Well, there you have the rest of the story on videography equipment. Next month I'll cover some pre-shooting preparation tips and some specific tips for specific events that you might find yourself shooting. ■

PICTURE PUZZLE ANSWERS

C6 - A third bottle of Canada Dry is on the table

D3 - JoAnn's name tag has moved to the other side

B4 - Bob's shirt length has shortened

E7 - A second set of plastic cups appear on the table

A5 - The chair behind Bob has disappeared

G2 - Bernie grew a head of hair

B1 - The light on wall has disappeared

F3 - Wally's name tag has doubled in size

E5 - The bottle caps have changed from white to red

F6 - The cookies have disappeared from the plate

CLUB MEETINGS
REFRESHMENTS
VOLUNTEERS

The Club thanks all those who have volunteered.

- Jan 13th Fred & Joann Pfrost
- Feb 10th Bernie & Nancy Wood
- March 10th Brian Lucas
- April 14th Richard Brownlie
- May 12th Irv & Mary Webster
- June 9th Linda Grodt
- July 14th Open
- Aug 11th Open
- Sept 8th Stan Smith
- Oct 13th Frank Yap
- Nov 10th Janet Holl

CREDITS

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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. 10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino, California. Watch the calendar for programs updates. Guest admission is free.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

- \$30 for individuals
- \$35 for families
- \$5 for full-time students

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CLUB MEETING EVENTS

2010

<p>January 13th, Wednesday</p> <p>Fred Heiman movie maker: Presentation and Opera San Jose, & wildlife documentary videos screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>Feb 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>Celtx pre-production software demonstrated by Milt Kostner</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>March 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>AMPS 2009 Contest winners movies screened by Frank Swanson</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>April 14th, Wednesday</p> <p>De Anza student's movies screened and discussion</p> <p>"Theme Challenge" announced for June screening</p>
<p>May 12th, Wednesday</p> <p>Nimitz Grade School movies screened and presented by teacher Susan Woods</p> <p>August "Creative Editing" contest announced by Fred Pfof</p>	<p>June 9th, Wednesday</p> <p>"Theme Challenge" movies screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>July 14th, Wednesday</p> <p>Adobe Representative Presentation: Photoshop and Premier elements</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>August 11th, Wednesday</p> <p>Members "Creative Editing" clips screened</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>September 8th, Wednesday</p> <p>Movie maker Amy Do screens her movie "Rabbit Fever"</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>	<p>October 13th, Wednesday</p> <p>Annual Member Video Contest videos screened and judged</p> <p>Tech-Tips: Frank Swanson</p>
<p>November 10th, Wednesday</p> <p>Meeting: Awards presented to member video contest winners, board election and social</p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>No meeting this month</p>