NEWSLETTER OF THE VIEWFINDERS DIGITAL VIDEO CLUB OF CUPERTINO

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April 2013 Meeting

# Highlights

- An On-line Editing Option
- Members Videos Screened

*Tired of purchasing all that expensive memory gobbling video software, that seems to need upgrading more often, at an accelerating pace? If it is, and you were at the April Viewfinders meeting, you would have discovered the latest move in video creation. Cloud based video editing.*

**May Meeting**

## Nimitz School Kids Put On Another Show

Miss Woods and the 3rd Grade children of the Nimitz Elementary School will be back to show us their 2013 iMovie projects.

Movie stories include History, Dog Training, Science, Geography, Nature, Christmas, and a Pop Star.

A varied program that will keep us entertained. Don't miss it.

**Krishna Menon** of **WeVideo**, a Palo Alto based company which claims to be the leading online video editing program, explained how this novel form of editing works. Up to now, video editing required one to load specialized and memory hungry applications on one's computer. Cloud computing however requires only a connection to the internet and a browser. All the software is online and the final edited movie is distributed by WeVideo to wherever the owner wishes to send it, in a form applicable to it's destination. WeVideo's purpose is to make video editing and distribution easy and seamless for everyone.

*Video editing on the move.*

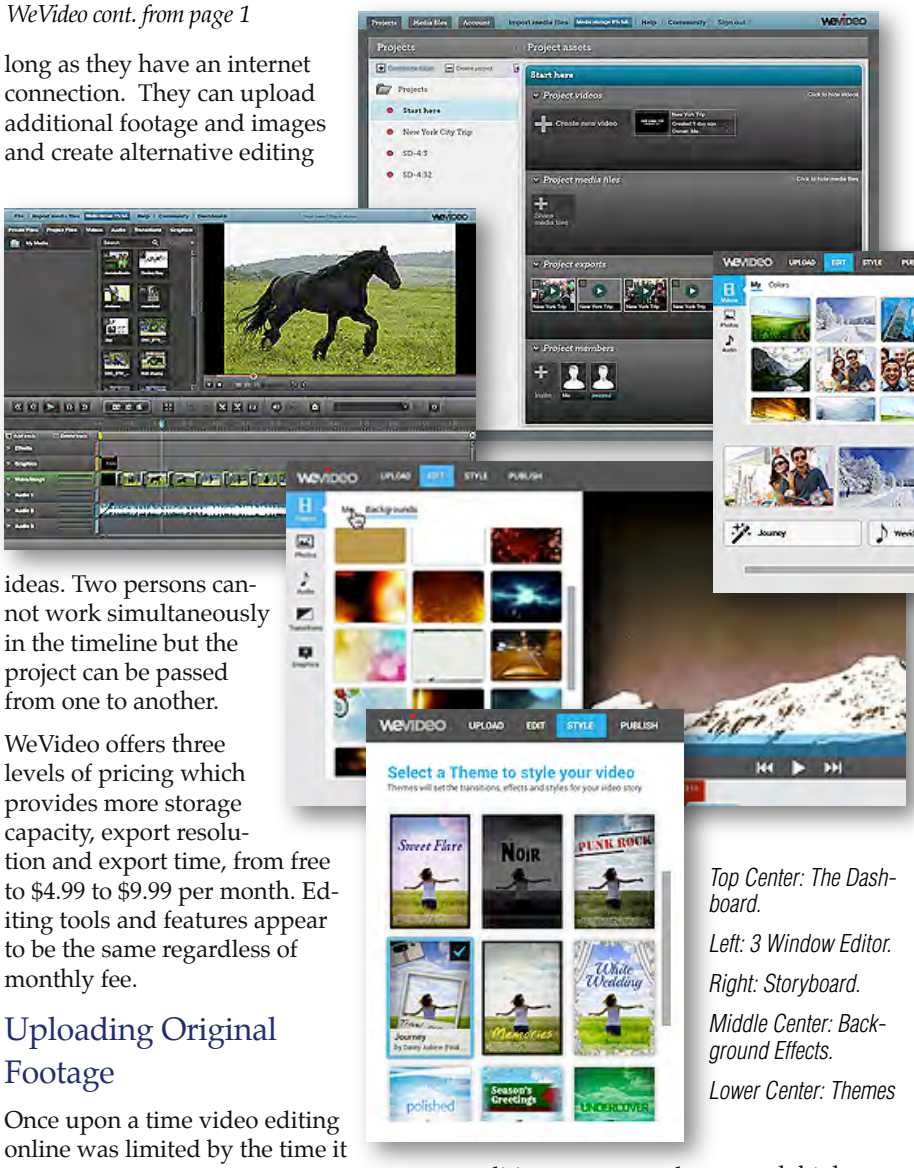
The company originated in Norway in 2007 and was developed for students and school projects. With the injection of large amounts of investor cash it is now a world-wide operation with a large user base. A" lite" version of the program is available for free but has major limitations. Only 5GB of online storage space, export resolution is limited to 480p, and a max of 15 export minutes of watermarked video per month. Still. the free version makes a nice introduction to the service. Once you start paying it gets a lot better.

Collaboration is a key selling point: the user can work remotely with friends anywhere on the planet, as

*Continued page 2*

*WeVideo cont. from page 1*

long as they have an internet connection. They can upload additional footage and images and create alternative editing ideas. Two persons cannot work simultaneously in the timeline but the project can be passed from one to another.




*Top Center: The Dashboard.*

*Left: 3 Window Editor.*

*Right: Storyboard.*

*Middle Center: Background Effects.*

*Lower Center: Themes*

WeVideo offers three levels of pricing which provides more storage capacity, export resolution and export time, from free to $4.99 to $9.99 per month. Editing tools and features appear to be the same regardless of monthly fee.

## Uploading Original Footage

Once upon a time video editing online was limited by the time it took to upload original footage. Most internet providers have much slower upload than download speeds which usually meant spending hours uploading video files. Fortunately Dropbox, Google Drive, Facebook and other cloud-based storage services came along to which WeVideo connects seamlessly. In the program the "Upload Files" window will allow you to browse through media applications on your computer such as Dropbox and Facebook. Just select the file(s) in the media application, click "Open" and uploading begins.

When the video footage, in whatever format it is, arrives at WeVideo an accurate copy is made at a much lower res. format and it is this copy the user works on. The reason for making a low res. copy is so that uploading and downloading during editing can proceed at a much higher speed than if the original footage was used. Once the editing is complete and the user is satisfied with the final result, all editing is then applied to the original footage at the original resolution for return to the desktop computer or portable device.

WeVideo controls the distribution of the final movie for sending out to YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, etc, or one's desktop, in a suitable format.

## Editing with WeVideo

The user may edit on a desktop computer, a laptop, a tablet or a smart phone.

The first window one sees when beginning a project is called the Dashboard. To the left are tabs for one's various projects and on the right are boxes for project video, media content, export destinations and collaborating editors. Project video is what is created in the timeline.

The easiest method of editing is called Storyboard. Using this method the user simply assembles and organizes in sequence various video clips. There are no video tracks, only a timeline. Video clips are stored in a window at the upper left of the screen, along with photos and audio clips. A review window, or "canvas" that shows one's editing actions sits at the upper right and the timeline runs across the bottom of the screen.

This method in itself would only produce a rather banal little movie but the enhancement comes to this simple clip assembly through a feature called Themes.When applied, these give a creative polish to the video and are very effective. One's home movie takes on the sophisticated look of a professional production. When a Theme is chosen it will automatically set the transitions, effects and styles of the samples chosen, the user need do nothing more. Themes can be employed to the whole movie or individual clips within the movie.

For the hands-on video editor who wants to use the program as a more traditional editor, WeVideo's movie editor uses a standard three window layout. Libraries of contents and effects occupy the upper left window, to the upper right is the preview window, and the timeline runs across the bottom with both video and audio tracks. Various buttons provide typical editing functions. This editor will be familiar to anyone who has worked with any of the better known, i.e. Adobe, Apple, Sony, Pinnacle, etc., video editors.

There are other online video editors available, most notably from Adobe

*Continued page 5*

# Member's Movies

## Screened at the April Meeting

*Love My Dogs* by **Glen Moody**

Glen's short movie, comprised of both photos and videos of himself and his two dogs and complimented with pooch pix gathered from the internet make a warm homage to the favorite family pet. Audio and video of balladeer Cat Stevens singing the title song pulls it all together. For the dog owners among us, what would we do without them. ■

*Amaryllis* by **Fred Pfost**

In this time lapse movie, Fred placed a young amaryllis in the spare bedroom, drew the drapes and kept it lit for 24 hours each day. To catch the flower blooming, Fred shot it at a camera rate of 1 picture every 4 seconds, which made a one hour movie. He then reduced it down to 1 minute, at a time lapse reduction rate of 60 - 1, or 1 minute per frame. ■

*Seren's Dive* by **Fred Pfost**

Fred last showed this movie at the club about 6 years ago. This is a freeze frame movie of Fred's dog Seren diving off the backyard diving board into the pool. Frozen-in-time-shots show Seren's body configuration launching from the board, her position in flight, and how she enters the water. An intriguing little move demonstrating how efficient is a dog's body and timing. ■

*Namibia* by ***Barbara Naden***

In 2012 Barbara and her husband Rex took a 3 week African safari. Beginning with Namibia and then continuing to the Kalahari desert and other South African parks, her movie records the Namibia portion of the trip, and is sub titled "Land of the Oldest and Largest Sand Dunes".
The Nadens arrived in South Africa at Cape Town and then flew to Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. After one day in the capital they drove to the Namib-Nankluft Park, Africa's largest nature park to stay at a chalet before exploring the dunes the next morning.
These dunes are the tallest in the world, in places rising almost 1000 feet above the desert floor and estimated to be at least 2 million years old. In the vicinity is the strange Deadvlei, a place of black, fossilized trees surrounded by cliffs of sand. 900 years ago a river flooded the area, allowing camel thorn trees to take root in the sand. But during a period of drought the dunes encroached and cut off the water supply. The ground cracked into dramatic white plates and the trees died but were preserved by the arid climate. The result is otherworldly. Unlike Lake Sossusvlei, which attracts flamingos when filled with water, this salt pan has long since declined as a place of refuge in the desert. Amazingly, in this apparently barren and parched land, wildlife has adapted and Barbara captured some of them, ostriches, springbok antelopes, birds and flowers, in her film.

The changing color of the landscape, caused by the time of day and the position of the sun is a great magnet to photographers from around the world. Barbara's movie demonstrates why. ■

# Worth a Look Online

**NAB 2013 review from Vimeo**

New designs for camera stabilization, portable jibs, 4K video cameras and a merged monitor- camera. Several videos on this page.
http://vimeo.com/videoschool/lesson/382/vimeo-takes-nab-tech-news

**India Ink**

The magic of ink in motion. No motion graphics software required and only a modicum of artistic ability. You can do it.
http://vimeo.com/21157000

**Breaking the Fourth Wall**

When Hollywood breaks the illusion and actors talk to the audience. A gimmick or a valuable dramatic device? A montage. http://vimeo.com/60845952

**Lost Rockers Promo**

So what happens to old Rock and Roll stars anyway? This preview of a new 2013 movie release suggest that theirs is not a happy lot.
http://vimeo.com/56329586

## The Viewfinders Club SUDOKU May Puzzle by Frank Swanson

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 nine letters A, E, I, L, O, R, S, T, and Y. As a clue, these nine letters form a word that usually refers to the payment to an owner for the use of property, and it appears correctly spelled somewhere in the puzzle. The answer to this month's moderately-difficult puzzle appears on the back of this newsletter. Have fun! ■

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | | | | Y | | | | |
| | | S | | O | | I | | L |

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR APRIL 2013

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bank Account Beginning 4/1/13 | | $1589.47 |
| Income Subtotal: | $95.00 | |
| Dues (4) $95.00 | | |
| Expenses Subtotal: | $0.00 | |
| Bank Account Ending 4/30/13 | | $1684.47 |

**YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP FOR 2013 STANDS AT 33**

The Club had 31 renewals of membership from last year along with 2 new members so far this year. We need at least 10 more renewal/new members to exceed last year's total membership, so help the Club by spreading the news about the Viewfinders Club to other amateur videographers when you meet them along the way. The membership dues for 2013 are: $30 for individuals, $35 for families and just $5 for full-time students. Bring your check or cash to our next meeting on May 8th. Make your check payable to the "Cupertino Viewfinders"

**Frank Swanson**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Perchance to Daydream**

One of my hobbies as a kid was to gaze off into space and to day-dream. I would read some exciting book or short science fiction story and then sit back and try to recreate the images in my head. I remember that I used to be able to picture in my mind a whole scene from a story, and every detail, down to the textures and lighting. I would put on my headphones and listen to a whole record with my eyes closed, not thinking about any homework or anything else in the real world, but letting my imagination soar, making up new pictures and images as inspired by the music. I could conjure up drawings and I could picture those "draw this cartoon" ads down to every line and think "if I can see it in my mind, I should be able to draw it with my eyes open. Real artists must do this very well. Think it, see it in your head, do it".

I still think it's possible to daydream, but it's so hard to concentrate nowadays. As budding film directors (I hesitate every time I say film) we are always imagining what a scene should look like, whether its looking for a place to stand at the parade, or how to frame a shot, or where to cut the scenes while editing. Wouldn't it be great to be able to close your eyes and picture clearly in the viewfinder of your mind, the shot and everything in it. Add a light over there, change the color of the costumes, move two more people into the scene, swoop down from a crane shot and steadicam around the house. Do it over and over changing the details, until you have it perfect. Then go about making it happen in real life.

Well, I've been trying to recapture that hobby. Closing my eyes, I see clouds, movement, forms, but it is not the high fidelity daydream of before. When it's quiet, and dark, I can conjure up a little 320 by 240 window that might contain a figure or a setting near to what I've been trying to think of. It's easier just after I've awakened, a continuation of a legitimate dream, before the real world intrudes again. A sleep dream can be so like real life, all the sights, smells and sounds are available. I've even dreamed in 4 part harmony. Why is it so hard when you're fully awake? Lucid dreaming is a skill I've, well, dreamed of, but haven't been able to successfully employ. I remember being able to have more control over my daydreaming. It's too easy to just fall asleep now when the conditions are quiet, as it only becomes convenient at night.

But there is video to the rescue. When you have an idea, and you start to mentally put pictures and actions together, and you shoot a scene, and rearrange things and shoot it again, and take it into your computer and adjust the framing and set the lighting and bring in the sound, well it's almost like day dreaming. Dreams you can share. Making movies is the art of comparing your ideas to what's on your screen and trying to eliminate the differences. I just wish I could refine the art of daydreaming.

**Ron Rhodes**

### Viewfinders Web Site

**viewfindersclub.org**

*Latest Updates*

**Meetings Page:** Video of the Month features the President's Award for Technology Golden DVD Award for 2012, *Ano Nuevo Elephant Seals* by Wayne Ott.

Download the short video clip *Star Logo Revealer (7.7MB).* (Revealers are short video clips used for bringing text on and off the screen).

Link to Chet Davis's *"Preserving Your Digital Memories"* webinar.

**Productions Page:** Click on past club video production titles to view excerpts. ***"Hollywood Film Directing"*** - links to seminars on the topics of film directing and screen writing

**Newsletter Page:** Download all Viewfinders Newsletters since January 2007 with a list of selected articles.

Webmaster: **Frank Swanson**

*WeVideo cont. from page 2*

(Adobe Anywhere) and Avid (Avid Interplay). Those have been designed primarily for the professional broadcaster. They may have more features than WeVideo but at a higher cost, and many of those extra features may not be of great use to the amateur film maker. Overall, for those who can use the option of editing on the move, and from any location, and with any portable devise, and those who prefer to keep video editing simple, WeVideo appears to be a valid and valuable option. ■

**REFRESHMENT VOLUNTEERS**

*Please let Brian Lucas know which month you will be available to volunteer. The Club will recompense expenses up to $20.00 per meeting.*

| | |
|---|---|
| ***January*** | *Brian Lucas* |
| ***February*** | *Bob Meacham* |
| ***March*** | *Greg VonWaaden* |
| ***April*** | *Irv Webster* |
| **May** | Nancy Wood & JoAnn Pfost |
| ***June*** | *Sal Trufo* |

# TECH TIPS

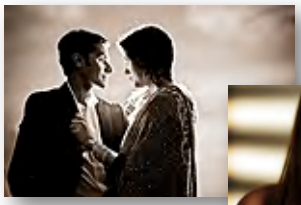
**SHOOTING TIPS FOR THE AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER: Part 31**
**by Frank Swanson**

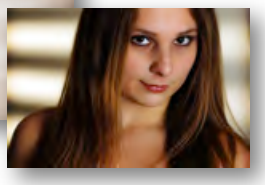
***Casting Background Shadows***

*Last month's Tech Tips article told about some tips to help you create more professional looking videos with better lighting on your subject. With key, fill and back lights you can begin to create depth for your subjects by creating shadows and highlights. But, there is more to consider than just the lighting on your subject. The background of your shots need a special kind of lighting to create backdrops that make for a pleasing and interesting visual image for your audience.*

Videography is photography at 30 frames per second, with sound. The word photography tells us a lot. The roots of the word are "photo" which means "light", and "graphy" which means "writing". So, with photography we're writing with light. Video is similar. When we shoot, we're writing with light at 30 frames per second, with sound. Light is the single most important element that affects the final video image. Lights and where to place them in your scene are only half the story when you think about lighting. What about the background shadows? Umm, never thought about providing background shadows before? Why should we provide shadows anyway? Well this article will help take you to another level of making better-looking videos by casting background shadows.

***1. Why Use Shadows:*** TV is a two-dimensional medium. With shadows you can make your video images look less flat and more realistic – hence a three-dimensional look. Providing depth to make for a more realistic shot is accomplished by manipulating the shadow's look and density. Shadows direct the eye of the viewer to where you want it to go. A shadow can emphasize or de-emphasize an element within the frame of the shot. A shadow can add texture and color. A shadow can make people look beautiful, ugly, sinister or angelic. A scene lit with spotlights to define the subject provides a bright, crisp feeling – a punchy quality. A scene in which the lights seem to wrap around the subject and glow softly on the background sets a much more passive mood. The lists of reasons why using background shadows is important can go on and on.





***2. Shadow Mechanics:*** A shadow is an area of darkness created by an object that passes in front of a light source. The position of the object in relation to the cast shadow, the type of light being blocked and the amount of other light in the area all affect the quality of the shadow. The first and most important thing to know about a shadow is that the closer the object casting the shadow is to the background, the sharper the shadow's edge. Conversely the father away the object is from the background, the more blurred will be the shadow's edge. If the background is not blurred too much one can make out the object casting the shadow – in this case a staircase railing.

When shooting a scene, the shadow-casting object is usually just out of the shot though that is not always the case such as when the object is part of the story. The type of light to use is very important when casting shadows. Small intense lights create a hard-edged light that casts very sharp shadows. Large soft lights create a very diffused light that does not provide much of a shadow but some shadowing nonetheless.

The density or darkness of your shadow depends entirely upon the amount of ambient light falling on the shadowed area. If you are able to control all of the light falling on a surface, the shadows that you cast will be very dark and dense. However, any other light in the area will reduce the density of the shadow and turn it from black to gray.

***3. Shadow Tools:*** The motion picture industry coined the term "Gobo" for a pattern or design cut out from a plywood panel and mounted on a stand between the spotlight and the actor. The origins of the term are vague but a good guess is that it was short for "GOes Between the light and the Object". Another term for such tools is a "cookie" that creates a patterned shadow. Windowpanes, doorways, leaf patterns and fencerows are just a few of the many types of gobos you may want to consider using. Because they cost net to nothing to make, you can cutout a pattern in a piece of large foam core to provide a nice lined pattern on the wall behind your subject.

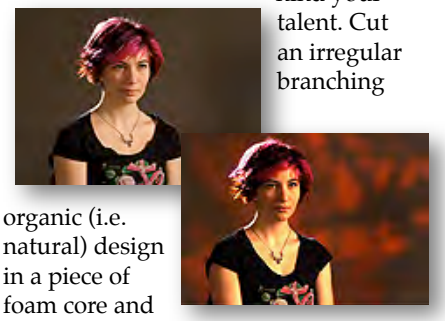
If you have access to a pattern projector, there are a number of small metal slide gobos you can purchase or make by yourself. They can project tree leaves, fireworks, company logos or thousands of other designs on a wall behind your subject.

***4. Casting Shadows:*** There are some simple but standard lighting situations where you may want to cast a background shadow to jazz-up your video. Shooting an interview is one of the most typical times to create an

*Continued page 7*

*Tech Tips cont. from page 6*

interesting background that otherwise would look bland. After setting up your standard (three-point) lighting, set-up one more light so that it is focused on the blank back wall behind your talent. Cut an irregular branching



organic (i.e. natural) design in a piece of foam core and place it between the light and the wall, always making sure it is out of camera view. Look through the viewfinder to decide on the look you want. Simple as that, you have turned a flat ugly wall into a three-dimensional background. You can make the background even more dramatic by using piece of colored cellophane over the light or pasted on the foam core.

What if you're shooting a movie and want the shadow of a doorway or windowpane over the subject and the background? Set-up your shot and place a small, hard light so that it lights up the area on the set where you want the shadow. Place a door-shaped or windowpane-shaped gobo as close to the set as possible, keeping it out of

the shot. Adjust its position to achieve the desired effect. Keep in mind that you don't need a real-sized door or windowpane to create the shadow. The further way the gobo, the bigger the shadow will appear. Use a hard light so that the shadow has a good sharp image.

Finally, what if you just want a simple background so that it doesn't detract from your subject? Well why not try the split shadow technique where you use a gobo with a wide vertical cutout. Position the gobo such that the vertical line between the dark shadow and the lighted portion falls directly behind the subject's head. Move the gobo toward or away from the subject to create as much or as little blur you want between the two.

Knowing how and when to cast the

perfect background shadow is often the key to good lighting. Practice using the techniques described here, and place your shadows so that they create the most dramatic effect. Shadows and light are the key to great video. Practice, experiment and enjoy the end result.. ■

## California Film Festivals & Contests 2013

Part 1.

American Black Film Festival
www.abff.com

American Film Institute Film Festival - AFI Fest
www.afi.com/onscreen/afifest/2009

American Film Market
www.afma.com

American Indian Film Festival - San Francisco
www.aifisf.com

Beverly Hills Film Festival
www.beverlyhillsfilmfestival.com

Big Sur Short Film Screening Series
http://www.henrymiller.org/shorts.html

Burbank Int. Film Festival
burbankfilmfestival.org/

California Independent Film Festival
caindiefilmfest.org

Carmel Art & Film Festival
www.carmelartandfilm.com/

Cinequest - San Jose Film Festival
www.cinequest.org/index.php

City of Angeles Film Festival
www.cityofangelsfilmfest.org

Contra Costa Int. Jewish Film Festival
www.eastbayjewishfilm.org/09/home.html

Film Arts Foundation - San Francisco
www.filmarts.org/home.php

Fresno Reel Pride Film Festival
www.reelpride.com

Hollywood Black Film Festival
www.hbff.org

Hollywood Film Festival
hollywoodawards.com

Humboldt Int. Film Festival now.
humboldt.edu/news/film-festival-marks-42nd-year

The 17 Annual Int. Family Film Festival
www.iffilmfest.org

Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival
www.vconline.org

Los Angeles Int. Film Festival
www.lafilmfest.com

Los Angeles Latino Int. Film Festival
www.latinofilm.org

Malibu Int. Film Festival
www.malibufilmfestival.org

Marina del Rey Film Festival
http://mdrfilmfestival.com/

Mendocino Film Festival
www.mendocinofilmfestival.org/

Method Fest Int. Film Festival
www.methodfest.com/

Mill Valley Film Festival
www.mvff.com/

Napa Valley Film Festival
www.napavalleyfilmfest.org

National Film Challenge, The
http://filmchallenge.org/2012-film-challenge-registration.html

NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA)
www.nfmla.org

Newport Beach Film Festival
www.newportbeachfilmfest.com

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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**SUDOKU PUZZLE ANSWERS** from Page 4

# CLUB MEETING EVENTS 2013

**January 16th, Wednesday**

***Award Winning Amateur Movies:*** screenings from recent AMPS and SCCA events

**February 20th , Wednesday**

***The 12 Essential Story Questions.*** A discussion by Ron Rhodes

***Editing Methodology using Final Cut Pro X*** by Wayne Fogle

**March 13th, Wednesday**

***Comparison of Sony's SLT-A37K DSLT camera and Canon's HV-30 camcorder*** by Milt Kostner

**April 10th, Wednesday**

***WeVideo Cloud-Based Video Editor.*** An online platform for collaborative video production in the Cloud

**May 8th, Wednesday**

***Nimitz Grade School Video Screenings*** by Susan Woods' 3rd Grade Students.

**June 12th, Wednesday**

***Comparing CyberLink & Adobe Premiere Editing Software.*** A presentation by Milt Kostner.

**July 10th, Wednesday**

***3D Video for Everyone.*** John Dietrich will discuss the Pro method and Ron Rhodes will examine the DIY angle.

**August 14th, Wednesday**

Program to be announced

**September 11th, Wednesday**

Program to be announced

**October 9th, Wednesday**

***Annual Member Video Contest:*** Screening of the year's best Club members movies.

**November 13th, Wednesday**

***Golden DVD Awards Night:*** Award presentations to the Annual Member Video Contest winners.
***Election of officers for 2014***

**DECEMBER**

No meeting this month