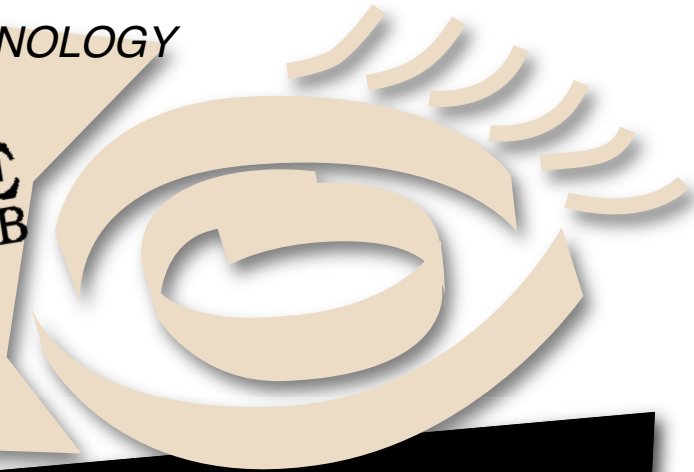


ENJOYING VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

**NORTHSIDE
CAMCORDER CLUB**
S Y D N E Y



ELECTRONIC EYE

N E W S L E T T E R

2008

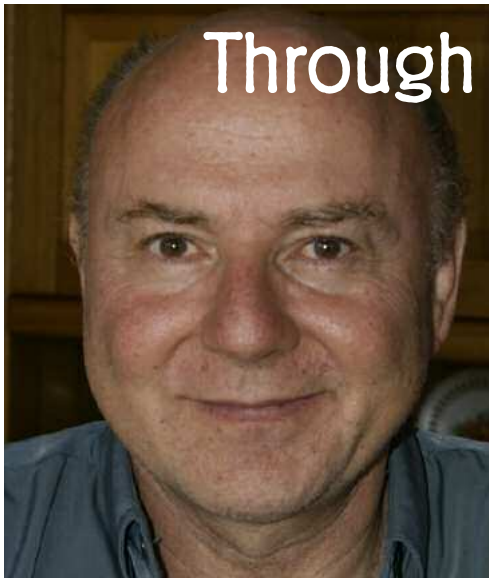
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**Next Meeting
WEDNESDAY
23rd January**

www.ncc.asn.au



Through the President's Lens

A happy new year to all members and welcome back to what we hope will be a better year. Already news is coming in of our member's great successes in overseas competitions. Congratulations.

Your committee has been working hard to develop a program that will educate, inform and interest members.

We have taken the video making process starting with "developing ideas" to "final product" and planned sessions that cover those areas to spread through the Club Night and Focus Night activities.

Have a look at the program on our Website or the Club Diary page of this newsletter.

We are planning a social event on Garden Island for Sunday 20th April (so put that in your diary) and an evening dinner in July.

The commercial battles this year will no doubt focus on the move to High Definition camcorders and the recording formats.

We will provide references for you to do your research on the options that will best suit your needs. But don't forget that the format is secondary to the story. An interesting and well shot 4:3 standard video will always make better viewing than a 16:9 HD video of uninteresting, poorly paced scenes. It's the old story – content is more important than technology.

So that's what our program will focus on.

I look forward to seeing you at our meetings and hearing from you about our program.

Peter Frybort, Club President January Meeting

January Meeting

Tonight we will screen 2 VOTY entries that didn't make it onto the big screen and another that was ruled out, but an excellent production by all accounts.

Ernest Chung's The Plot is a major effort by a large team (produced by the Hong Kong Boy Scouts Association with Ernest's guidance)

Following that, Andy Doldissen will outline team roles in video production.

We will view some winning entries in the 2006 Cotswold Competition and apply our Club Judging Form to evaluate the videos for ourselves. This process hones our critical skills that can be applied to improve our work..



"TRAVEL BUG ENTHUSIASTS"

Our next scheduled travel night is on March Focus night, 11th is the date. So get those travel videos edited up so that there is a good program on the night.

Usual limits around the 15mins max to let everybody have a go, and we use DV tape or DVD for convenience (as yet we can't do HD). There will be a notice on the Club board through Jan and Feb club and focus nights for you to let me know about your videos.

Happy travelling

Scotty



WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT!

How many times have you said that, or heard it said. As I get around and listen to conversations it would appear that the most prevalent reason for not producing a video is, that in one swift thought process the “non producer” goes through “no ideas”, “I can’t do it” etc. etc. and another production does not even get off the ground. The project is lost before it has ever had any chance of seeing the light of day.

If you really do want to participate and produce something, first decide which genre of video you wish to produce and then go about selecting a subject for it. Don't sit and wait for “a good idea” to come to you before you do anything. Develop one for your video production by yourself. If an idea does fall in your lap, so be it, however the process of getting to a finished video from that point is the same. I want to talk about developing a basic idea to get on with.

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

A point worth making right at the start is that two heads are better than one when developing ideas. A team is even better. Some form of brain storming session will generate ideas both traditional and offbeat all of which can be consolidated into a meaningful list. If you are a loner videomaker who is not part of a regular team get together with someone else just for idea generation. After all the only risk is that your trusted ally will pinch your brilliant idea, not really likely! Now there are considered to be right or left-brain individuals in the world, one thinks technically and the other creatively. I am never sure which is which but the assertion is true and you will know which of the two you are. It follows that you need both thinking and action styles to create and implement ideas, so look for a complementary styled associate and match up. Odds are that your opposite will appreciate your “non creative” technical assistance on their own project.



Now, basically, there are only two types of production screenplays and documentaries. Music and Travel are really just documentaries with a special focus in the presentation. Animation is a method of presenting content, which could be a documentary or, as is the more usual, a screenplay. The genre that we see least of in the Club today is the screenplay so I will concentrate on that genre.

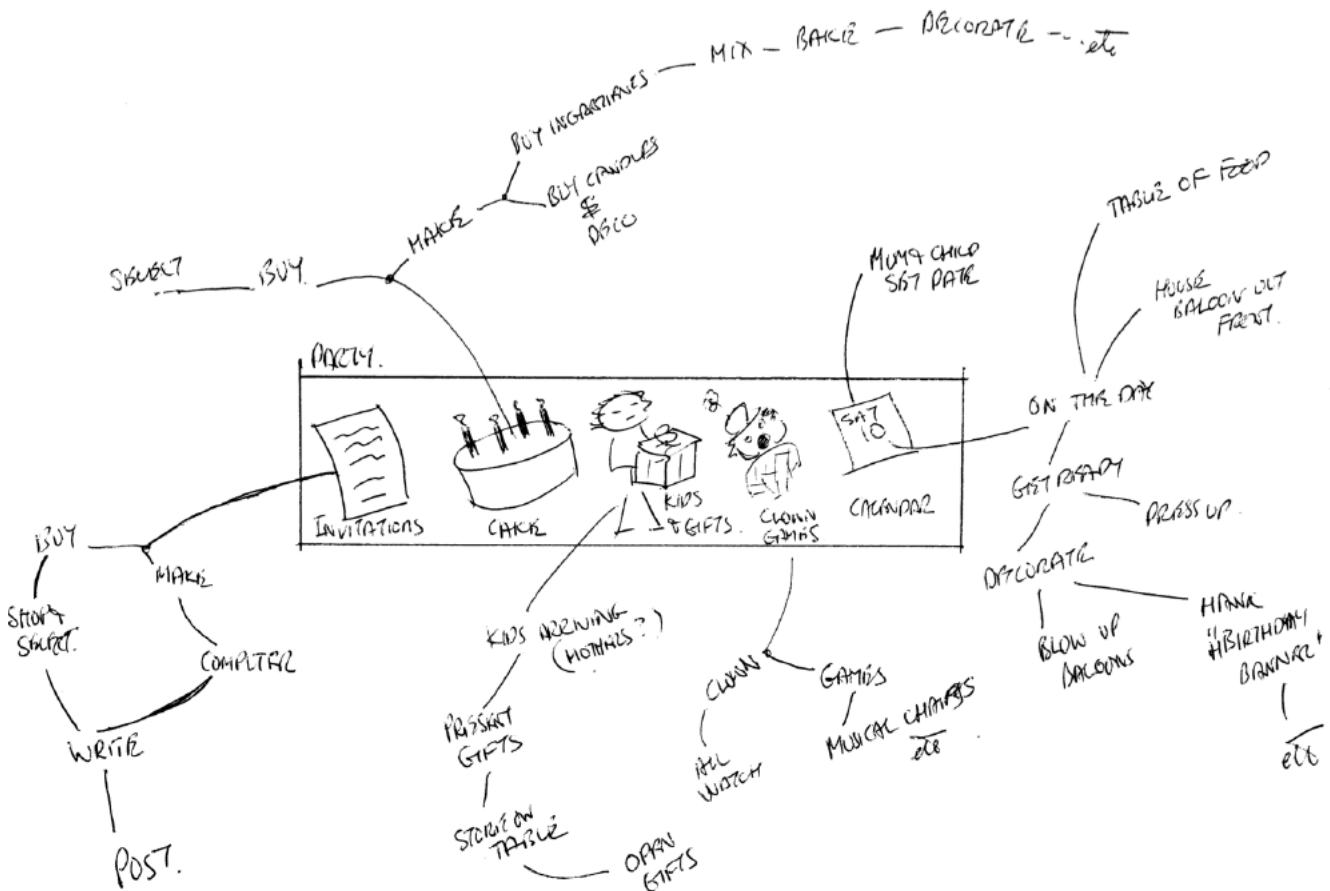
Let's suppose you want to do a story (screenplay) on something focused around the family, which turns out to be making a video about some grandchild's birthday party. Without any in depth preparation or thought we would turn up on the day, batteries charged camcorder at the ready and end up with some video of kids eating party food and singing happy birthday. Oh, of course, in one singular act of brilliance you capture images of the cake before it gets cut so that it will be able to be used in your Hollywood quality title of “Happy Birthday ankle biter X”. Whilst the video may become a tender memento for the ankle biter in later years, usually trotted out at the 21st party much to the embarrassment of X, it will not win

VOTY or the like. What we need is a birthday party story and script. By the way, when I say “script” that does not infer that all the various partygoer children will be given scripted lines to deliver. That would be unrealistic and doomed to failure. The script is for the shooting team to ensure that all the planned scenes and sequences are captured. The only “lines” we might need can be from associated adults to add detail not visible in the scenes.

We need to write a birthday party story and produce a script. What will we capture? Obviously we need ideas to write a story. Ideas which, we will later capture and edit into a final production. In order to write a story we need to have some overall concept of what comprises a birthday party and expand those basic ideas into specific ideas, which are scriptable.

MIND MAPS TO THE RESCUE

A technique, which I use personally, is mind mapping. Look at the diagram. I thought about a children’s party for a few minutes and in the middle of a blank page drew a box and called it party. In the box I sketched little icons of all the basics that immediately came to mind. A calendar, invitations, cake, gifts, partygoers, a clown and games.



If you were a real enthusiast you might finally add clean up, there could be some mileage here for an adult event. There may be others but you can refine the thing as you go and redo it until your idea has progressed to conclusion and you are ready to write a script. Start with any of the icons and think further about that item, as other things occur to you draw legs off the icon and jot down your thought as a word or two. Keep it brief so you don't interrupt the flow of ideas. Look at the diagram on "invitations". The legs here are "make on PC", "write" and "post" (or it could be deliver). Now the cake, "buy or make"? Etc. Within a very short time by writing thoughts as single words and letting the words stimulate other "legs" and words you will have a mound of ideas you can't jump over.

Take the mind map you have produced and from it start to generate some short phrases to describe the action you might be able to capture. Think again about the invitations.

1. *Child and parent at PC making invitations on the PC.*
2. *Child using list of friends writes names on invitations*
 - a. *Show on invitation in close up (use graphics image off PC)*
 - b. *Child writing one of the invitations (CU)*
3. *Mum and child at Post Office buying stamps*
 - a. *Put stamps on envelopes*
 - b. *Put invitations in letterbox.*

Now consider the cake. Is mum going to make it or buy it? Either way we can get some good content.....

I suspect by now you are racing ahead of this discussion generation your own set of scenes. You see it works! Sort your pile of "scene descriptions" into a sensible sequence. Get rid of the less appealing and develop the ones you keep into a coherent story. In no time at all you will have your outline strip ready to refine.

GET IDEAS OFF THE GROUND

A mind map is a powerful tool to unfetter your mind and get it to run free to cover any aspect of a subject quickly avoiding the need to resort to extensive written detail too early. I started this discussion by stating that most folk can't get an idea to work on because of mental block. Using a mind map is a very good way to unblock the mind and get ideas off the ground.



So get on with it don't give in before you even start. Try a mind map or two and see what happens. You will be surprised. In a later discussion we will look at producing a shooting script from the developed idea. In the meantime go and make an epic about one of your children or grandchildren.

Ian Scott
Vice President



John Maher has taken over as Club Librarian from Dave Mc Dougall, following Dave's move to the Central Coast. Here John appears in gunfighter mode (what else does one do in Jackson Hole, Wyoming?)

John says that, even if you are not into westerns, remember that the dramatic impact and quality of your videos can be improved by accessing the Club's library resources.

John responds to Dave's questions:

Country of Origin? : Australia.(Irish ancestry).

How did you hear of N.C.C and what was your experience with video before joining the Club?

I searched the net for video and film clubs and joined the Club in 2007. I first used a video camera in 1996, to record a trip to Rome, Assisi and Medjugorje in Bosnia- Hercegovina. Further overseas trips - to Wyoming, U.S, in 2003 and to Ireland in 2005 - were also recorded on video. A portion of the 2003 and 2005 trips focused on movie sites - “Shane” in Wyoming and “The Quiet Man “in Ireland. My experiences in Ireland led me to follow up on the life story of a member of my Irish clan of Maher / Meagher . Then I used my video camera for a kind of “travel documentary” on the subject, visiting some fairly remote places in Tasmania and Montana, U.S.

Can you fill me in a little on your work experience, hobbies and family?

For 39 years, I was in the Probation and Parole Service and for the last 28 years was an area manager. I resigned in November 2004 .I don't say I retired, although I receive superannuation, because there were serious issues affecting my staff and myself that the department would not address.

Writing short stories and 8mm movie photography were early hobbies (I worked on a Kinkara Tea delivery truck in school holidays to buy a Eumig electric 8 mm camera.) Bushwalking has always been an interest and I am member of the Catholic Bushwaking Club, although I am more of a bush-dawdler by inclination, leaving aside fitness levels.

My wife died in 1996 and two of my three adult sons currently reside with me in our 'bush block' home in Glenhaven (built to our 'species' 26 years ago). None of my sons are married and there are no grandchildren.

How would you describe yourself and what is your idea of how to live a successful life?

I guess I'm something of a mixed bag - I like to mix and .to organize social events but I'm also happy to do some things alone .I like reflection but also action (it is probably best to keep me away from soccer boots and 'all age ' competition) I can be a good diplomat in a tense situation but at times I can be confrontational on issues. Perhaps the confrontational bit comes with the name 'John ' (someone of that name finally lost his head for not 'minding his tongue'.)

My template for a successful life is to have priorities. God, family and work strikes me as the right order. But the trick with templates is how to apply them to life - and to see things in context.

What is your favourite food and drink?.

Roast beef, apple pie - plain food basically. I don't mind wine with meals or a beer at a barbie but I don't really have a favoured drink.

If you won one million dollars, what would you do with it?

Well, its not really a lot of money. No one would now insult an early- exiting C.E.O with a mere million .But I dunno. I would get a high definition video camera, maybe look at buying a moored boat.

What new experience would you seek, if it were possible?

Avoiding far flights of the imagination, I might go for literal flight, learning to fly a light amphibious plane.

Is there someone you greatly admire and would like to meet?

I'm not sure I'd necessarily connect the two. But I did admire Pope John Paul II and would have liked to have to have spoken with him. As with Maureen O'Hara, I'll have to settle for having captured him on video.

What travelling have you done?

Not much. As a young man I visited Fiji, with a Yasawa Island cruise included. My two brothers and I “did” mainland Oz (bar W.A), in a car camping trip in 1965, particularly memorable for my breaking my pelvis horseriding in a Pitjanjara area. My wife and I later did a road trip through Victoria and South Australia but, with children, our car/ trailer/ boat trailer trips were restricted to Port Macquarie or Shoalhaven Heads. For years we spent all January in our tent at Shoalhaven Heads. My wife was not well enough to come with me to Rome etc. (Harvest Tours group) in 1996. Since 1996, I have been twice to the U.S and N.Z, to Ireland and (briefly) the U.K. I also made one of the last car-ferry trips from Sydney to the Apple Isle (videod it)

What was your first camera and what do you use now?

My first still camera was a Box Brownie (still have it). I had a Eumig and Bolex 8 mm cameras. My first video camera used VHS (C) tapes. I currently have a Panasonic NV GS-400 and video edit on a G5 Mac with iMovie HD (iLife '06 suite)

What challenges do you face in making better videos?

Technically, (1) updating to HD while avoiding unnecessary expense and video handling pitfalls. (2) improving sound. Generally, improving on story telling, improving planning, scripting and shooting .But half the fun of videoing and story telling is in the process - going to places I otherwise would not go, finding something I was not looking for during research....



Rebel runs for 45 mins but is split into five episodes. Barry and Roger's retirement hobby draws on their years of behind-the-scenes experience with professional film and television.

Roger was a film optical effects supervisor and Barry a negative cutting supervisor.

Roger, who handled film editors' post production special effects requirements, worked on some classic Australian classics films, including Mad Max, Crocodile Dundee and Babe. €€

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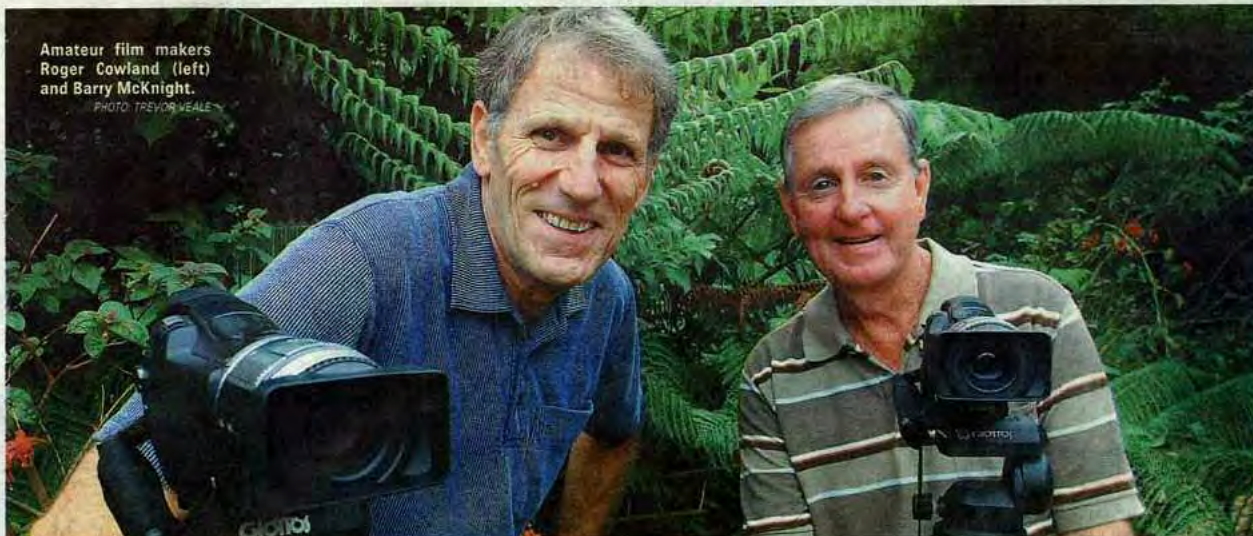
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Coffs Harbour film makers scoop major awards at Canadian Film Festival



Amateur film makers Roger Cowland (left) and Barry McKnight.

PHOTO: TREVOR VEALE

MOVIE MAGIC

By BELINDA SCOTT

COFFS Harbour amateur film makers Roger Cowland and Barry McKnight have just won two major awards in the Canadian International Film Festival. The pair won the

Competition Corner

With Mike Elton Competition Manager



VOTY 2007

The Entries for VOTY year were of a very high standard. I'm not alone in saying this many of the judges made the same remark.

The Video Of The Year and also winner of the travel section was "Come travel with me to Antarctica" by Ernest Cheung. A judge explained that it won because; "This could have been an ordinary travel film but the filming was so clear and clean. No heady pans or blasting zooms. Almost every shot was framed well and had movement in it. It showed a good combination of scenes, people, ships and animals. The editing was smooth and flowed beautifully. We found the dialogue was beautifully written and well presented. The excellent choice and use of music pushed this movie to the top of the point score."

Second in the Travel Section was Max Milgate with an amusing and thoughtful trip to the Melbourne Cup called "My cup runneth over" I liked the way the emphasis changed during the story.

The screenplay winner and also winner of the Ted Northover Trophy was Bob Hallet with "The Lotto Ticket". Well acted and directed it told the story of a ticket that didn't or did win a prize. It was the kicker after the credits that I liked best. The best documentary was "Galapagos" beautifully photographed with nice animal and bird scenes. It was produced by Andy Doldissen.

Ron Cooper took the music video prize with "Music Medicine". A record of an amusing concert in the Blue Mountains. John Sirett was a close second with his story of an astronaut with a fatal weakness called "On a distant planet".

Third in the music section was Juan Maravillas with "Zapateado" with guitar



playing and flemenco dancing. This entry also won the Gwen Stoney Award for most improved video maker.

Gerd Kogler won the award for excellence in photography for his music video called “Masters of flight”.

“Antartica” was awarded the Audience Popular Vote on the night.

The best Meeting Night Videography Team was again won by the BES team with “Predictions”, which was not shown.

Altogether a very satisfactory programme of videos.



In retrospect

I had no idea what I was letting myself in for when I had to prepare the VOTY entries. I had to assemble the mini DV entries on a tape and from this make DVD's to send to 6 judges. My first job was to separate 16x9 entries from the standard 4x3. I captured these 6 to iMovie and copied them to tape one. From this I made 6 DVD's on a Panasonic Video Recorder using FireWire in real time. To get the best quality each DVD had no more than 60 minutes at top recording setting.

The rest of the entries were copied to two more tapes and these were used to make 6 DVD's each After I had finished I found that an entry which was first sent as a DVD, then as an Mini DV tape, arrived after I had sent out the entries to the judges. I eventually was persuaded to make 6 DVD's from this and send them after the others. I know there are members who might say that I took the long road round but I was anxious to get the best images from each entry. Even so I found some problems. The sound on three entries seemed alright when I first played them while recording, but when played back the high notes were distorted. I puzzled over this until I captured the MiniDV's to Final Cut Express which copied the sound perfectly. The other major problem was that many entries had no preroll which made it difficult copying to DVD's on the Panasonic DVD recorder. So in future when putting in entries make sure that you are careful with sound levels and make sure there is at least 10 seconds preroll or at least 10 seconds of blank tape before recording..

When sending in a tape don't have anything else on it. Some entries were recorded twice and others had more recording on the tape. This can be confusing.

On the whole I was very impressed with the general quality of the entries and this is the feedback I got from many judges.

Entries for contests are best sent on MiniDV tape and not DVD. Its difficult to copy several entries on one tape when using DVD entries. This may change with improvements to techniques and the use of Hi Definition recording.



This years competitions.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if I explained what was on my mind when I came up with this years competitions

Well first we start in January with an open competition and this is 3 minutes long and should contain the colour red in at least one scene. The idea is to show how important red can be in a picture to draw attention and give an impression of depth in the scene.

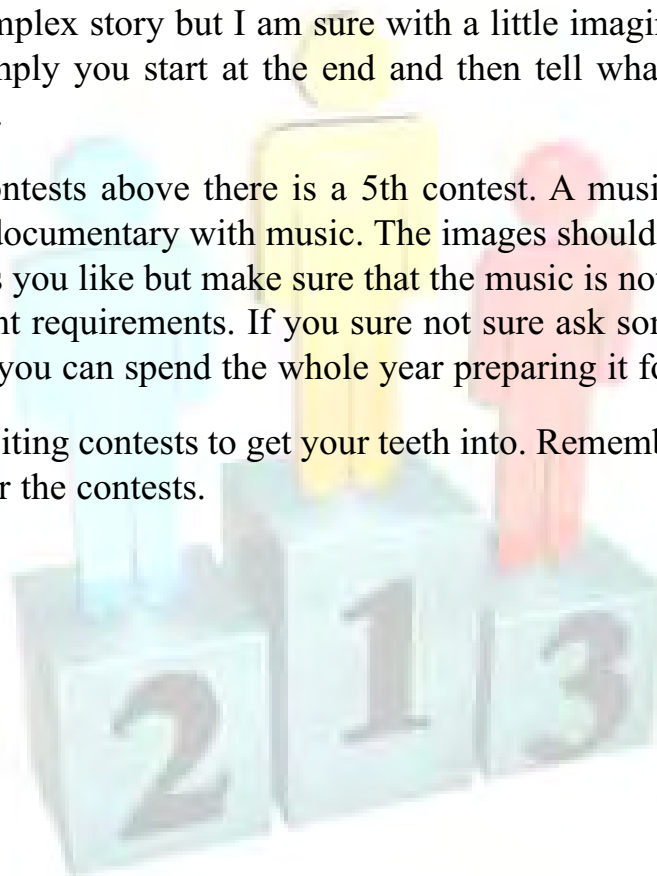
The second is Autobiography. Showing scenes from your life showing say a period or time of special importance. This is a great opportunity to make use of the Ken Burns effect using stills and commentary to tell a story. An alternative is to make a mockumentary telling a fictional story as if it were your own. 5 minutes is allowed for this and entries must be received in March for showing in May.

The third contest is “The Chase”. This is going back to the beginning of film making when every film had to have at least one chase scene in it. I do not mean Chatswood Chase. This could be with humans or animals. On vehicles or trains, boats or on foot or a combination of all of them. This should tell a story and 4 minutes are allowed. June is the month for entries.

The fourth contest is “Flashback”. While not as popular as it once was The flashback was vital to many films. Its true that even with the 6 minutes we allow for this there is not a lot of time to present a complex story but I am sure with a little imagination you can come up with a story. Stated simply you start at the end and then tell what led up to that ending. Entries close in August.

Concurrent with the contests above there is a 5th contest. A music video which is a real music video and not a documentary with music. The images should help and accentuate the music. Be as abstract as you like but make sure that the music is not copyright. Be sure you understand the copyright requirements. If you sure not sure ask someone at the club. Time allowed 3 minutes and you can spend the whole year preparing it for entry in August too.

There you are some exciting contests to get your teeth into. Remember the best way to learn video making is to enter the contests.



2008 CLUB DIARY

<i>Wednesday 23th January</i>	Club Meeting	"Red" competition entries close.
<i>Tuesday 12th February</i>	Focus Night	Know your camera.
<i>Wednesday 27th February</i>	Club Meeting	Developing ideas into concepts.
<i>Tuesday 11th March</i>	Focus Night	Travel night.
<i>Wednesday 26th March</i>	Club Meeting	Producton planning. "Autobiography" competition entries close. "Red" screening.
<i>Tuesday 8th April</i>	Focus Night	Creating music tracks.
<i>Wednesday 30rd April</i>	Club Meeting	Location and capture lighting.
<i>Tuesday 13th May</i>	Focus Night	Audio capture.
<i>Wednesday 28th May</i>	Club Meeting	Audio capture. Action control. "Autobiography" screening.
<i>Tuesday 10th June</i>	Focus Night	Using graphics and other media.
<i>Wednesday 25th June</i>	Club Meeting	Frame the shot. "The Chase" competition entries close.
<i>Tuesday 8th July</i>	Focus Night	Post fix problems.
<i>Wednesday 23rd July</i>	Club Meeting	Evaluation.
<i>Tuesday 12th August</i>	Focus Night	Travel night.
<i>Wednesday 27th August</i>	Club Meeting	Editing and pacing. "The Chase" screening. "Flashback" competition entries close. "Music" competition entries close.
<i>Tuesday 9th September</i>	Focus Night	SFX video.
<i>Wednesday 24th September</i>	Club Meeting	Technology upate.
<i>Tuesday 14th October</i>	Focus Night	Video for the web.
<i>Wednesday 22nd October</i>	Club Meeting	"Flashback" screening. "Music" screening. VOTY competition entries close.
<i>Tuesday 11th November</i>	Focus Night	Social night.
<i>Friday 28th November</i>	VOTY 2008	

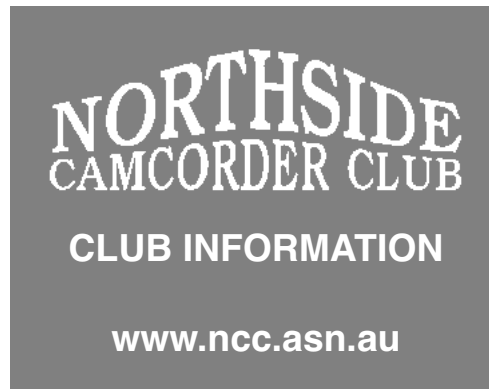
To include your club event in the Club Diary then send an email to:
Glenn Booth at membership@ncc.asn.au

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 CHATSWOOD NSW 2057



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Peter Frybort

Vice President:
Ian Scott

Secretary:
Kent Fry

Treasurer:
Elvio Favalessa

The Club meets on the **FOURTH WEDNESDAY** of each month (except for November & December) at 8PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood. Tea & Coffee are available from 7PM.

FOCUS nights, which usually cover technical subjects, are held on the **SECOND TUESDAY** of each month (except January & December) at 7.30PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood.

The Committee meets on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** of each month. Members are always welcome to attend, and for meeting time and venue, see any committee member.

Member’s guests may be invited to meetings; the first visit is free, subsequent visits are \$5. New members are always welcome. Annual membership is single \$56, self and spouse \$76, country member \$28 - with an initial joining fee of \$10.

Note: Equipment brought to a Club night is not covered by the Club’s insurance. Members should study their household insurance and check whether their video equipment is covered away from their premises and consider whether their cover should be extended.

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