

SYDNEY VIDEO MAKERS CLUB

ELECTRONIC EYE

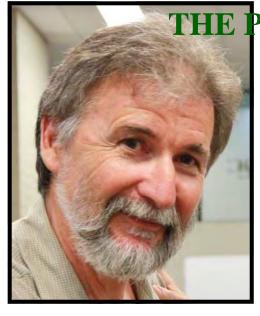
NEWSLETTER

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Next Meeting Wednesday 23rd May. 2012

www.sydneyvideomakers.org.au



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome

I'd like to thank Neville Waller for presenting at last months club night. Even though he had some equipment problems with his laptop interfacing to the projector he still managed to show us some superb images from his many years as a professional photographer in the magazine industry. The basics of good composition hold true for both stills and video, so take that extra care when next framing your shot, it can

make a difference.

The Piet de Vries workshop is on Saturday, 26 May. If any more members would like to attend please call or email me immediately. We have more than ten attending but there is always room for one more.

As I explained at last months club meeting there have been some VOTY screening anomalies. The committee has adjusted the rules to screen the highest scoring entries. Someone queried whether this may eliminate screening a category altogether but the rules also state that first and runners up in each category will always be screened, so those concerns raised at our last club meeting have been addressed. Ian has clarified this in an article in this month's edition.

Kent presented our May Focus night. It was all about video effects, from titling, explosions, day for night effects and colour correction. Most current editors will have a colour correction capability. I urge you to take a few of your recent clips and make some colour adjustments to see what can be achieved. Its not all about altering colours, ensuring the image has a good black and a good white highlight can usually be achieved by adjusting sliders next to the colour wheel. And remember less adjustment is better than more.

Our club crane was shown at the April Club meeting. It is now waiting for you to borrow it. It comes on a very robust tripod support with a selection of weights. While it is something you may not use all the time, when used it can certainly give your next production a lift!!!

Willoughby Council has a Spring Fair every year and in some past years this club has been involved. Gerry Benjamin & I met with council representatives to see if there was a suitable activity that would benefit our club and the council. Our suggestion was our club would run a video competition but due to the lack of time between now and September and also because

sponsorship would need to be organised the committee is postponing it to next year. A video competition may attract new members to our club.

This months club meeting will be about lighting and screening the video entries in our last competition. Please bring along your camera and tripod as you will have a chance to video some different interview lighting set ups. We will demonstrate some affordable light kits and show what sort of results can be achieved. If you have a light or a kit that other members may be interested in bring it along as by sharing our knowledge and techniques we all improve.

Stay Focused Andy

May 2012

WHAT DO ALL THOSE ACRONYMS MEAN AND WHY DO I NEED TO BOTHER?

It is very interesting to listen to a couple of "experts" talking about computer video media handling, within a couple of minutes we become absolutely certain that they are actually conversing in telephone numbers, or some other mathematically encrypted language. But are they? It is of course a problem which occurs when we tune in to some technology discussion where there is a significant amount of jargon associated with that technology. This is the case with digital video today. However, just as we can drive our car and use it successfully without an in depth understanding of the workings of an IC engine, oops! sorry Internal Combustion engine, so it is with producing video, we do not need to know the inner details about every acronym to make good videos. Again referring to the car analogy we could avoid some possible problems for our selves by knowing that the engine needs the right amount of oil in its sump to remain working and of course making sure that oil is there. So it is in the video technical field we do not need to be knowledgeable about the exact details of a file such as AVI but rather be aware of what it is for, then how and when to make use of it. AVI by the way stands for and Audio Video Interleaved, it was introduced in 1992 by Microsoft as part of Windows. It takes the vision and audio content of a video and interleaves them so that they can be stored as a computer file, which has the type designation <.avi. > So let's say you make a video called "baby's first birthday" in your NLE(non linear editor) and store it as an AVI file it will become <babys_first_birthday.avi>. If you use any Media Player such as the Windows Media Player and load the file the player will recognise what it is by the <.avi> file extender and play it for you appropriately.

Now there are virtually hundreds of file types, formats and codecs, oops! there we go again. If you would like to know more about the jargon of video come along to focus night on 6th June when I will lead a session on the subject. I will be dealing with the subject at the essential "Must know" level. Perhaps we will touch on some of the "Should know" items as well but will not have time to get to the "Could know" level. The subject extends from right inside the Camcorder all the way onto the Television Screen.

So see you on focus night June 6th.



I Scott Secretary SVMC

"WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT"

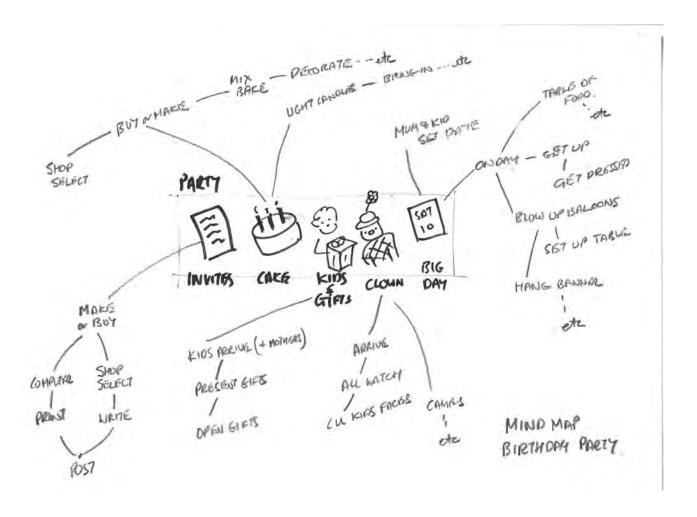
Why didn't I think of that, how many times have you said that, or heard it said. It does not pay to dwell too long on that thought because we all have ideas within us it is just getting them out of your head so they can see the light of day that is the problem. It really is amazing how many good ideas can be developed by those who think otherwise. In the last couple of years of Club history we have enjoyed a lot more video productions than we did in the past. The catalyst has of course been teams, not only is it a more rewarding social atmosphere it proves that more brains on the job of idea creation will produce results. So even if you plan to go it alone try to get some associates to assist you with development of your idea. After all the only risk is that your trusted allies will pinch your brilliant idea, not really likely! Some form of brain storming session will generate ideas both traditional and offbeat all of which can be consolidated into a meaningful list.

It is an acknowledged fact that each of us is principally right or left-brain. The right thinks predominately creatively and the left logically and technical. You will know which of the two you are especially when you start developing ideas as groups. Best overall results need both creative and technical styles to create, develop and implement ideas, so look for a complementary styled associates and match up. Odds are that your opposite will appreciate your "technical" bias to complement their "creative" bias on their own project as well. This is where the group approach to ideas development pays off because of the variety of right and left brain distributions in the group.

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 treatment and presentation. Animation is a method of presenting content, which could be a documentary or, more usually, a screenplay. I will concentrate on the development of screenplays.

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, especially if trotted out at the 21st party of the embarrassed X, it will not win VOTY. 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. 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 if 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 o



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 into a treatment. Now you will arrive at the Birthday party armed not only with charged batteries but charged up with an outline shooting plan.

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. We can use the very same technique to develop ides for handling a competition theme, trust me it works.

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.

On June Club night we will be working on the mind map system to develop some ideas and associated with that we will cover some likely sources which will assist us in finding some basic themes and ideas for further development into productions.



Ian Scott Secretary SVMC.

Detective Story

It started when I decided to upgrade from my Canon 600D to the Canon 5D Mk 2. Every time I shoot alongside a team mate's 5D Mk 2 and look at the footage of both camera's my heart breaks. The difference in the grain in indoor light is huge. One reason for the difference is that the sensor on the 5D Mk 2 is 1.6 times the size of the sensor on the 600D and larger sensor area gathers more light. The other is that the 5D2 does more noise reduction processing.



With the launch of the 5D Mk 3 – the price of the Mk 2 dropped. Prices on eBay for a used 5D Mk2 vary between \$1,500 & \$1,850 so the time is right.

Any normal paranoid would then think: "What else is there?". As I consider myself to be normal, I thought I'll check the rumours on the Internet. There are sites that publish rumours on specific products. For the Micro Four Thirds it's http://www.43rumors.com/category/rumor/. That site covers Olympus, Panasonic and Sony.

For Canon, it's http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/cameras/ Canon-650D.html. As I read these sites I found rumours about Canon 650D, or T4i. The rumours suggested the following features:

A1.A suggestion for 24MP or maybe just 18MP.

- 2. Digic V processor.
- 3. Auto-focus for video.
- 4. Some new lenses suggested, including a video optimised (quiet) EF-S 18-135 mk 2 for the 650D/T4i.
- 5. Touchscreen.
- 6. Improved viewfinder.

Canon will probably not give the 650D a 24MP sensor which could confuse prospective buyers into thinking it's bigger than the 5D Mk3. The reality is that putting more pixels into a smaller area will not improve low-light performance. HD Video only uses 1920x1080 pixels which are roughly 2MP.

But Digic V processor is something else. The new DIGIC 5 processor is 6 times faster and creates 75 percent less noise than the DIGIC 4 processor on the 5D Mk2. If the 650D gets a Digic V processor, it may match the noise reduction of the 5D Mk2.

Auto-focusing in Video Mode is a game changer for Canon. I know the Panasonic GH1 & GH2 have it, but Canon did not – until now. Maybe....

WHEN?

Detective work on the Internet finds clues:

Feb 4th: Price drops on the 600D/T3i and low stock levels in UK stores.

April 9th: A large retailer in the US is showing the Rebel T3i as "**discontinued**" in their stock system.

April 15th: In the US, the various T3i rebate deals run until April 21st

May 7: Amazon Canada advertises "Canon 650D for Dummies" (in French): http://www.amazon.ca/CANON-EOS-650D-POUR-NULS/dp/275404017X/ref=sr_1_1?
ie=UTF8&qid=1334228530&sr=8-1

This title will be released on May 7, 2012. Pre-order now! Other sites put the date as 16th May.

So now, we wait.

By the way, there are rumours of Canon 7D Mk 2...

Your truly

Ami Levartovsky

Some Answers, Insights & Lessons Learnt from the Open Competition!

Since the open competition a number of people have asked me how I did the Genie shots in the video I entered. The questions have ranged from 'whether I cropped the video to get the Genie', 'how the effect colours were done', 'how I disintegrated the brother' and 'what software it was all done in'.

I owed Margaret an article for the Newsletter anyway and so I thought I'd quickly jot down some of the answers, along with perhaps some of the lessons I learnt along the way which might be useful for someone else trying something similar! I would certainly not claim to be an expert in any of this, it's the first time I have ever used a Green Screen so lots to learn! And of course, it certainly didn't all go according to plan - although before you ask, there was a plan!

Software wise everything here was done in After Effects and then exported to Premiere Pro for the final editing.

The Plate Shot

Because I was working on my own I didn't do a story board but I did have a very clear idea in my head as to what the final Genie scenes would look like. So, when I shot the blank 'plates' onto which I would later place the Genie etc. I knew the angles I wanted and what else needed to be in the shot.

The two shots below were the 'plate' shots for two of the scenes.



1. A long shot from low down with slight side on aspect to the genie and Aladdin.



Low shot looking up at the Genie.
 Used for the OTS (Over The Shoulder)
 shot, the foreground person was added later).

Fixing the Plate

For the right hand of the two scenes shown above (picture 2) I intended to use the bush line as the baseline for the smoke that came with the Genie but, as you can see in the highlighted area of the picture below (picture 3), there was a gap in the bush line just below where the Genie was going to be!

If this gap remained the smoke not come from a fairly straight line, i.e. the bushline, and quite apart from not looking as good, it would make for a lot more complicated masking and feathering - so best avoided if possible.

I asked the Genie to grow me a new bush but he said that wasn't an option, I was clean out of wishes so, instead I 'created' one in After Effects! Well not quite.

Using a second copy of the same scene I just masked out all but a small amount of the bush from further along (picture 4) and then simply placed it over the gap (picture 5). Once the mask was feathered it blended in fine, has the same lighting, any wind movement would have been consistent and so on. Even if you know it's there now you can't spot it so an easy solution and literally minutes work, if that!



3. The Hole!



4. The fix



5. All done!

The Green Screen

I used a simple pop-up green screen which is a nightmare to fold but works well for shots with just one person and not much movement in the scene. To get the angle I sat up on a low balcony so that the camera position was low and angled up to match with the plate shot position above (pictures 1 and 2). In both cases the green screen was actually too close to me but there was little I could do about it since there was a pillar stopping it from going back any further and I needed the balcony to create the angle.

As a result of it being too close you can see in the keyed frames below the shadows which remain (pictures 8 & 9).

Fortunately some of this was ultimately to be covered by smoke but there are still a couple of shots in the final film where some dark shadow appears by the back of my neck, caused mainly by not having the screen far enough from me. Also, ideally the screen would have been lit but I don't own any suitable lights so I relied on fairly bright sunlight - which was actually ok, in this case distance was the issue really!



6. Too much shadow on the screen really



7. Using same camera position but I turned to face the camera for the second angle shot, i.e. to go with picture 5



8 Shadow remains after keying and some simple playing around with settings to remove some of it.



9. Also had to be careful not to let my hands go outside the screen edges

The portable green screen was really useful and was used a lot including for the lazy brother shot prior to him being disintegrated in After Effects and also for the OTS shot just in case I needed to move the foreground person (pictures 12 & 13).

I would think that some of the advantages of using a portable green screen placed in situ like this are that the camera doesn't need to move to get the plate shots, you know the ultimate position will look natural, the lighting is identical, and finally any atmos sound is captured at the same time.



10. Portable Green Screen saw a lot of use!



11. End product



12. Shot with a green screen to give even more flexibility on final position!



13. In position

The Genie Effects

With the Genie keyed out and masked from the green screen the smoke and 'emitting' effects needed to be added to both create the sense of 'magic' and also to provide a little more cover for where the lower body is cut out.

The smoke was fairly simple, I used a royalty free smoke clip which I colourised slightly from the original smoke colour.

The particles were then added using the Particle World feature in After Effects. This can be a quite fiddly feature to work with but is extremely powerful and can be used for all sorts of things. I used it in a number of other scenes for the video including four shown below:



14. Purple and white smoke comes from the lamp as it's rubbed by Aladdin.



15. A purple and green starburst effect comes from the Genie's finger



16. Chunks and sparks come from the disintegrating brother



17. Created using Particle World

I used multiple layers of Particle World emissions to build up the final effect into which the Genie was finally placed.

Then, once the various layers of smoke, particles and the Genie were in place I had to create a final mask so that things on the original plate that should actually be in the foreground continued to look as though they were! Without the mask in picture 18 all sorts of stuff would have appeared over the top of the bushes in the foreground! A bit of a fiddly mask but very effective!



18. Masking to keep foreground items in the foreground

Some Simple Lessons I Learnt!

Although the scenes ultimately worked out fairly well there were a few useful lessons learnt along the way which I thought might help others avoid the same problems:

Wardrobe!

The most obvious - and most easily avoided - is to make sure there's no green in the costume! Pretty obvious but caught me out!

If any green clothing is not at the edge, or it doesn't move much, then there are ways around it but they're fiddly and time consuming and all in all best avoided! This shot had to be done again the next day.



19. Obvious when you think about it but there's Green in that hat!



20. Keying removed large parts of the hat! Shot needed to be done again!

Lighting and distance of the green screen from the actor.

In this case I had little choice, I didn't have space to get away from the screen or any lights but if you look carefully the consequences can be seen.



21. Shadow creeping in to the final render.

Watch carefully when your actors are acting against thin air!

Byron (Aladdin) did really well but he forgot to look up at where the Genie would be on some of the plate scenes. As Director it was my fault since I couldn't expect him to know what was going to happen or precisely where I was planning to put the Genie. Also, I possibly didn't focus enough on the detail of the shot as I was doing it - the perils of doing it alone and working with children can mean that you get easily distracted and pulled into persuasive mode!

A storyboard would have helped as we would all have been thinking about the composition of the final shot - as would having more people involved in the shoots etc.



by

Ruskin Spears

FOCUS NIGHT REPORT

9th May 2012

SPECIAL EFFECTS FOR VIDEO



Kent Fry

Kent Fry was our presenter for a session on Special effects. Twenty three members came along to tune in to Kent's well prepared overview of the subject. Adobe After Effects was the platform for most of the session, although some Photoshop inevitably came up.

The presentation closely followed the informative article which Kent placed in this month's EE. Introductory comments, props and screen captures on the basic principles in use, namely layers, key frames and transparency brought the EE article to life. Judging by the questions and facial expressions the subject hit the "learning spot" for quite a few of the attendees.

Kent used screen captures from his own computer to illustrate his talk. He also showed interesting and illustrative examples of special effects, captured from local TV stations. For those interested the screen capture system Kent uses is a freebie down loadable utility called "Hypercam". Using screen captures transferred to DVD proved out as a good system of presentation, leaving the presenter free to interact directly with the audience in lieu of focussing on his Computer implementing a "live" demo procedure.

After the tea break Kent ran through the procedure to produce a "Night time" look from a scene shot in subdued daylight. This has a timely interest as our next comp requires one such scene to be used in context. So attendees, now you know how to do it.

For those interested a couple of web sites were identified where you can download "stock footage" of things like explosions and cloud formations, for use in your own special effects. To get the full Monty down load you need to pay, but there are also samples that can be accessed free.

VIDEOCOPILOT.net ARTBEATS.com

Kent also used a "Tutorial" from:

CREATIVECOW.net

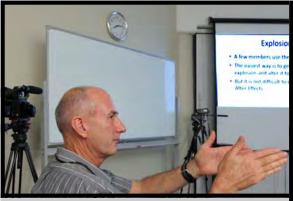
You can try these, "HYPERCAM" and other websites for yourself.

Thanks to Kent for a well prepared, presented and informative session.



Ian Scott Secretary SVMC

Kent Demonstrating Effects.





Kent Fry Kent's Cameras





Ron Cooper & Kent Fry



Just before Tea Break.



Andy Doldissen & Marg. Tulloh

Tea Break



Glen Booth & Jim Whitehead



Beryl Stephens & Barry Crispe



Ron Cooper & Kent Fry



Gerry Benjamin & Marg.



Colin Cooper



Jim Whitehead & Ron Cooper

COMPETITION CORNER

It is now half way through our year and time to start thinking about VOTY. Organisation is the order of the day.

I would like to congratulate John Sirett for attaining equal Second Place in the Frome 5 Minute Festival for "Banana Split" in the Comedy Category. Well done John, we are all looking forward to this years Voty.

Keep up the good work.

The results for our Competition 'Excellence in Audio" are in and will be shown and announced on Wednesday 23rd May. Well done to all who entered.

Our next competition "Who Done It" is due to be handed in on the 27th June and to be no longer than 5 minutes. A story where at least one NIGHT SCENE must be used in context.

The last competition will be a 60 Second Ad, and the subject is "Roadside Service".

Please read the Screening Amendments on page 19.

Once I would like to thank the Judges for giving of their time to take on the job of judging your entries,

They do a great job. Thank you.



Margaret Tulloh.

Competition Manager.

SVMC SCREENING PROCEDURES.

Current version4 as amended April 2012

The screening procedures have been amended to remove some minor text and wording errors which did not alter the context of the content.

The major amendment was implemented to ensure that relatively poor standard entries which have moved into contention for an award purely because they are only contenders in a particular category, in common vernacular they are "One horse race winners", will not be listed for screening in lieu of higher scorings entries from "other" categories. In fact the anomaly can occur for the first and second places in the category. When this occurs the President will use his discretion in accordance with the Club Procedures to decide if the entry or entries involved should be given an award at all. Any entry which the President decides does not warrant an award will then be ranked with all other entries in the event to decide which are to be included in the screening list. If awards are granted by the President then those entries will be screened regardless of ranking in the screening list. Runner up entries, that is, third in category, will only receive a certificate and are included in the screening list purely on the basis of ranked score.

It is of interest to note that the anomaly in question has only occurred twice in the last ten VOTY events and even then impacted on one only entry. Albeit it is disappointing to the producer of the "Bumped" entry, although the ranking and scores are not made public so that the producer involved would be unaware of the scoring anomaly.

Normally for VOTY we have more entries to screen than there is screening time available and it is inevitable that typically about three or four are not able to be screened on the night. The list is assembled in accordance with Club screening procedures and the total actual number included will depend on the accumulated time of all the entry durations and the time available for screening. The VOTY program is run efficiently and to a strict time schedule organised so that the maximum number of screenings is possible. Long verbal dissertations and presentations on stage are avoided to maximise entry screenings.

I encourage you to review the amended screening procedures which are now on the Club website. Review is worthwhile not only to catch up on the amendments but to refresh your understanding of the procedures. *After you have reviewed* them feel free to clarify any points with myself or the President.

I Scott

Secretary SVMC.

Club Meeting 26th April,2012





Neville Waller

Andy Doldissen





Chris Saville

Neville Waller





Andy Doldissen

Chris Kembessos



Chris Kembessos

Congratulation to our speakers on the night. Neville Waller, Andy Doldissen and Chris Kembessos.

Club Meeting Night April, 2012



NEWS IN BRIEF

I have been asked to enquire if anyone would like Pinnacle Studio Ultimate Version 14 with Tutorial. IF any one is interested would they please contact Margaret.

I hear our Photographer will not be around for a while, he is going overseas for eight weeks . Have a great holiday Neville.

Please all remember to bring your Cameras & Tripods to the club meeting on Wednesday 23rd May, and be prepared for hand on.

We are still looking for a Caterer for our club nights. I feel I can't stretch myself any further than I am.



Margaret Tulloh
EE Editor

Andy Doldissen
Vice President: Gerry Benjamin
Secretary: Ian Scott
Treasurer:

David Rogers

President:

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 WEDNESDAY 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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Catering	To be Decided	

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