

ENJOYING VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

**SYDNEY VIDEO
MAKERS CLUB**



ELECTRONIC EYE

N E W S L E T T E R

2010

MARCH 2010

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Next Meeting
Wednesday
24th March

www.sydneyvideomakers.org.au



Through **The President's lens**

Everything old is new again...

At the January Meeting Eddie Hanham conducted a Q&A Session on the Competition Rules, which proved to be very successful. Eddie advocated an anonymous Q&A session because it encourages members to ask what they may consider to be “silly” questions, because there will always be others in the audience who also want to know “but were afraid to ask

Q&A

A member suggested we screen more member's clips and not only competition Videos. Peter Frybort reminded us that “That is one

Rob Nercessian
of the main functions of a Video club anyway”. So we ask members to bring along their Videos to show without any pressure of being competitive. That means Hi Def also.

Four new members have joined our club so welcome “on board”.

In April we bring back "Travel Videos", a few members have already handed theirs in. There is still room.

Change in Focus Night

It has been suggested that Focus Nights be moved to the second Wednesday in the Month. I put it to the Committee and Dougherty Centre and it looks like a goer. I will take a straw vote at the next Meeting Night on the

24th March to gauge whether members agree to starting in May.

SGM next Meeting

Apart from screening our first competition of the year on the 24th March there will also be a short SGM to pass the amendments to the Constitution foreshadowed in the February EE. These are a direct result of changes you wanted made - democracy is alive and well.

Club Competitions

Running and judging competitions has always been a problem in the club. Even in the beginning when there were only 8 members in this club (including Merv, Ted, and Noel). Merv Blanch told me the idea of even having a competition was so controversial that one member rode off into the sunset never to be seen again.

Well competitions have become an important part of the Club Calendar and Noel Leeder put a lot of effort into encouraging members to participate in international competitions, and those who participated found themselves better equipped to make successful films.

Up until last year, most entries into competitions in the past were by individuals, SVM members through members boosted the number of entries to well over 50. Coupled with your determination to become better film makers the committee has drafted new Rules and Guidelines more orientated to Teams. Obtaining competent Judges though has posed its own problems. The Competition Manager, Margaret Tulloh and I have secured the services of two expert judges, who do this professionally, for VOTY so we can expect better and more comprehensive feedback.

A Sub Committee is also drafting improved guidelines for judges. Judges identity will also be revealed for each competition.

As of now, all participating judges will be identified to the membership, However the judging results sheet will not identify which judge is responsible for each score as the judges will only be identified by numbers i.e. #1 or #4. This will enable anomalies identified by Competitors to the Competitions Manager to be satisfied.

SVM therefore continues to be a fun place where members can exercise their own particular abilities and I am heartened to see such close friendships continue to flourish.

This issue is but an aspect of any organisation, the general consensus is that we are doing exceedingly well.

Last Month's Catering

Malcolm and Susan, at short notice stepped in during Margaret's absence. Thank you Malcolm and Susan for doing such a terrific job.

Good luck everyone with 'On board'

**Robert Nercessian
Club president.**

competition corner

Remember to bring your 5 “On Board” Disks on Wednesday 24th March. Fill out Competition form. (You can download this from the Web). If you forget your form I will have a few with me.

The Judges will be named up front. Their names are:-

John Urquhart

Alan Petschack

Noel Leeder.

John Sirett.

Refer to the Presidents report as to how the judges will be marked. The Judges will be marked on your result sheet as 1 through to 4 and not by name.

Wishing you all the best.

MARGARET TULLOH
Competition Manager

HOW TO MAKE BETTER TRAVEL VIDEOS



Airport

For a number of our members, making Travel Videos is their main genre and interest. Even if you make other genre videos you will no doubt at some stage do some travelling and make a travel video. On the surface it would appear that all you need to do is travel, point at and shoot any-

thing of interest, stitch it all together and you have your travel video. The reality is somewhat different to this over simplification. We have all watched videos taken “on the fly” and the results are usually fairly boring because they rely totally on the visuals of places visited for interest. A common method of boring your audience is to include seemingly endless sequences, of say folk dancing or some other performance which you enjoyed and videoed on your travels. We need to ask ourselves, “Why are such performance inclusions boring in the video since we did enjoy the spectacle when we travelled?” The answer lies in the fact that at the time you and your fellow travellers enjoyed an event experience, which encompassed more than watching the actual dancing. It follows that we need to get some of that experience into the video and not just repeat the performance itself. How you say? We will come back to that later and expand on the thought.

The good news is that there is a lot that can be done to make a Travel video interesting and a very



Norfolk Island



A wet night

worthwhile record of events to put in the family archives for the future. All it requires is a bit of adherence to a few principles. Perhaps the following pointers will assist.

A travel video is a special interest form of documentary

and we all know that a good documentary is interesting and provides us with information. So what should be in our Travel Documentary?

- A** story about the particular part of our travels that we have chosen to video.
- S**omething about the “*travelling actors*” who were with you.
- I**nformation about the scenes and places we visited *not already obvious in our visuals* which will add to our story.

A good story has a beginning, middle and an end. This principle should apply to your entire video or to any subsections that you chose to create. The best way to get a story into the video is to capture what your traveling partners are doing. Just the other day I was reviewing some old 8mm film for use at a big number birthday for my daughter. I had great difficulty in getting useful clips out of those taken so many years ago I had lots of shots of a famous Opera House under construction but not too many of the



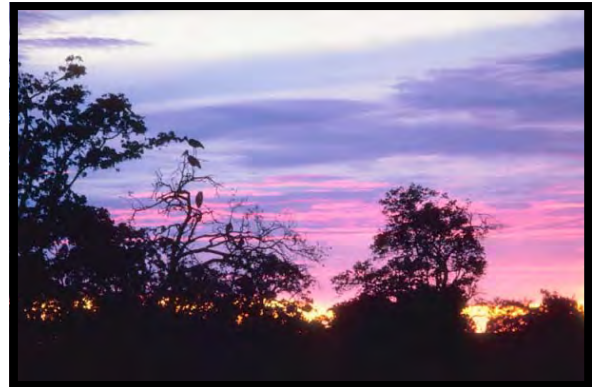
Golden Temple Japan



Enjoying it with the Locals

children enjoying the experience of a holiday in Sydney. All those years ago I had missed the point that the most important thing to capture was the children experiencing Sydney. At some point in the future the cutaway clips of your children climbing on the fence to see the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace will be of more value to you than the record of the changing of the guard itself. As a bonus these cutaways of your travelling companions will help you overcome any discontinuity in the guard changing sequence. This way you will have captured enough of an interesting event as background for the “We were there” content of your travel story. Further, you can edit in such way that a lengthy event capture it avoided, a sequence which would be boring for your viewers.

The lesson here is, since you cannot be too sure about “what comes next” on the itinerary, concentrate on your travelling partners enjoying the sights as your story theme. You can blend other information about your travelling companions into your video. Maybe dad took a fancy to a particular German Beer in Berlin. Without making him look like an AA member on the loose, include a couple of shots of Dad enjoying a cold one and embellish the point with tasteful voice over. Be bold! Maybe a close up of



Sunset in South Africa



Wedding season at Ankor Wat



Always ready for one

that beer in Dad's hand with label showing. Perhaps one of the group was particularly fond of "German Hot Dogs" so how about including a shot of member X buying one at the "Little German De Wheels" and a few CU shots of the gourmet delight being munched to oblivion until nothing re-

mains but the final licking of the fingers. I can predict even now before I know where our next trip will be that I will be able to get some good medium and close up shots of my wife looking at, and unfortunately, buying souvenirs from some market stall. Speaking of close up shots we seem to default to the tyranny of distance when travelling with lots of Tele shots but very few close ups. Break the habit and get some real close up shots which are great as cutaways.



Favourite Pastime

Part of the enjoyment of travelling is the unknown but that same aspect of travel poses a problem for the video maker as you have to be prepared for anything, well almost. Before you go and indeed again every day you plan to shoot try to get as much advance information as possible so that you can think through some likely story scenarios. Also forget to capture some of the "not in brochure" stuff like dad having a beer or someone



Girls Celebrating Cherry Blossom Festival



There is always one in the crowd

you need good quality coloured images of old masters they sell then in the museum shop.

eating a hot dog. Without going to extremes you can make a plan and don't forget some days it may well be best to leave the camera home and just enjoy what appears to be a non filmable day of events, like a visit to the Louvre. At the Louvre they will prohibit you filming and anyway if

Let's consider the special problems that we face when taking travel videos. Naming the most obvious.

Travel logistics prevent you from taking lots of additional equipment. A tripod is a definite no no! And at many locations is prohibited even if you do carry one.

If you are on a guided tour you are not really sure "What comes next" so that any location planning is limited.

If you are in a group you must adhere to the group timings, or get left behind.

Sound capture will often be difficult since you cannot control the environment at the location.

How do we deal with these limitations in practice?

On the subject of tripods and steady shots. If you are a bit on the shaky side then use a monopod and if you are in need of it the monopod can double as a walking stick. The monopod will give you vertical stability and if you



Religious Men



Anchor Wat

carry in the pocket or camera bag. They are useful to “set up” the camera on top of a low wall or the like when you want to use the remote and “be in your own video”. They are also useful to take that telephoto shot from the lookout etc. I suggest you test drive the mini tripod before you go away to make sure it fits onto and can safely support your camera.

Planning ahead has already been covered to a degree. From your pre travel research and the guide book you brought along you know what to look for and some of the background detail to go into your VO script will already be in your head. So if you are taking a shot of Catherine the Greats Hermitage as a backdrop to a VO comment make sure you take plenty of visual to cover the duration of your VO comment. Remember it is easy to dump excess footage but not so easy to create extra. Look for carvings, date signatures and small statues on buildings etc as these can save a lot of VO which can slow down the pace of your final work. Take plenty of CU shots of parts of structures and your fellow travellers looking at things as these will help you with your story thread and as



Having a good time



Norfolk Island

sequence breaks to assist with continuity. Going back to the “Folk Dancing” problem we discussed earlier use CU cutaways of spectators watching the dancing to enable you to break up the long sequence yet retain some good impression of what happened on the day.

Usually if you are on a tour there is free time after the guided portion. Where appropriate you can take a bit more time during the free time portion to film a particular visual aspect you want and you will not be concerned about being left behind or disturbing the group by holding them up. By the same token don't ruin your trip by consuming yourself in photography, unless that's what you want. Most of us take video of our travels rather than travel to take videos. It's up to you.

Sound capture can be difficult on travel videos. You have no control over the ambient around you. The best deal is to fit a reasonable size external mic. to the camera so that you firstly get better than the camera mic. quality sound capture. Fit a Wind sock or gag to the mic. and use a mic. that can be set to shotgun as well as normal. That way, when appropriate, you can focus onto the local audio to your front excluding a bit of the unwanted surrounding noise. Make sure you collect some uninterrupted uncorrupted audio at all of



Penal Settlement Norfolk Island

your locations so that you can use it in your final edit to avoid “silent gaps”. You can add quite a bit of human interest to your video by interviewing your travelling companions from time to time. Get them to provide detail that is not obvious from the video. Going back to the folk dancing event, if you want to capture a bit of the performance music let your camera run and just move from one cutaway shot to the next without turning it off. Later at edit you can use the “long bit of audio” as is, extract the Visual close ups and medium shots for cutaways and discard the unusable blurred visuals created as you moved the camera about whilst it was running.



Cherry Blossom Time

I hope that some of the pointers discussed might be of assistance to you. It is very difficult to describe in words something that is in itself pictorial and moving. The club runs Travel Video nights and anyone interested in improving travel video standard in the club should try to attend and either assist others with some “How I did this” comment or screen some of their own and ask for comment and positive critique.

Our next travel video night is on Tuesday 13th April at the Dougherty Centre 7.30pm to 9.30pm. A \$3 fee applies for Craft Room hire. Tea and coffee served at the break. There are still a few vacant spots in the program so let me know quickly if you want to submit a video into the program.

Ian Scott

Secretary SVMC Inc.

TURNING A 'TREATMENT' INTO A SCRIPT

Having decided that the treatment is suitable and will fulfil all requirements the next step is to produce a script. This is a fancy word for making up a list of what is needed to get the actions outlined in the treatment into some form so that they can be filmed. The amount of detail provided is really decided by how the film is to be directed. By that I mean how detailed should the 'stage-directions' be? If one looked at a stage play; the directions given in the script are often few and far between. The actual placing and movements of the actors are left to the director who spends considerable time and effort 'blocking out' the various scenes.

In fact during the many rehearsals over several weeks the scenes are run and re-run in various ways until it looks right to the director. The use of any props is rehearsed until it almost becomes second nature to the actors concerned and the setting of the furniture etc is set to the millimetre. This is apart from the actors having to learn their lines and movements. In our three to five minute films we have to do it differently.

First of all the script writer has to consider what he/she has to work with. Are the actors (if any) experienced in the way of acting before cameras? Does the director like to follow precise stage instructions or would he/she prefer to do it their way. Quite often in our group efforts and in others too the person that writes the script also directs it. At least he knows what is supposed to happen! Different people work in different ways and the method that I use is to be fairly prescriptive in my scripts.

I sit at my keyboard, and think about the story and look at what must happen on the screen in my mind's eye. Then I write down what I think is needed to achieve this in terms of camera angles, general placement of actors, props, lighting etc. The finer details of the lighting and composition of the individual shots is of course left to the camera person. After a air bit of experience in doing this one gets a pretty good idea of how things will turn out. Now and again due to unexpected circumstances it doesn't quite work out as thought and the advice from your crew can be very valuable. Always listen to what is proposed; sometimes a different perspective is very useful.

Having got all the action sorted out, try any dialogue that might be required. Writing good, convincing dialogue is a bit of a black art. You recognise it when you hear it spoken but to write dialogue requires a good bit of practice to ensure that what the actor has to say fits well within his character and the mood of the scene.

What does a script look like?

I usually start with a grid which I obtain from the Windows Table menu and then notate the various columns to suit. Thus 'Ref' is a reference no .so that the particular shot can easily be identified. "Type refers to the camera angle that I imagined (doesn't always work!) 'Dur'' is the proposed duration of the final edited shot (the editor really controls this). Video refers to what is seen on the screen for this shot, and Audio is any dialogue or sound effects or both

Phil Brighton

ATTENTION!!!

"Young at Heart film Festival

For the last three years a short film competition known as "Young at Heart" has been held as part of Seniors Week in New South Wales. The finalists are shown at the Dendy Cinema, Circular Quay. This year the films will be shown on **Thursday 25th March at 6 pm**. In 2009 Andy Doldissen and myself entered a film we'd worked on together on dragon boat racing entitled "Dragons Abreast Sydney". We were extremely happy when it was chosen as one of the seven finalists, out of approximately 100 entries. One of the entries and finalists for 2009 which we were up against was Warwick Thornton of "Samson & Delila" fame, so you can imagine how pleased we were to be awarded first prize. One of the conditions of entry for 2009 was that a member of the team involved in making the entry condition is that one of the actors must be 60 or over.

Tickets can be purchased directly from the **Dendy Cinema Circular Quay**, or **online** at http://www.dendy.com.au/sessions.asp?Cin_ID=14 - Click on the 6pm timeslot under "Cochlear Short Film Festival". Tickets cost \$5 plus \$1 booking fee if booked online for over 60's, or \$12 plus \$1 for under 60's.

The president will be attending, contact him if you wish to arrive as a group or arrange car pool.

A great event if you can make it.

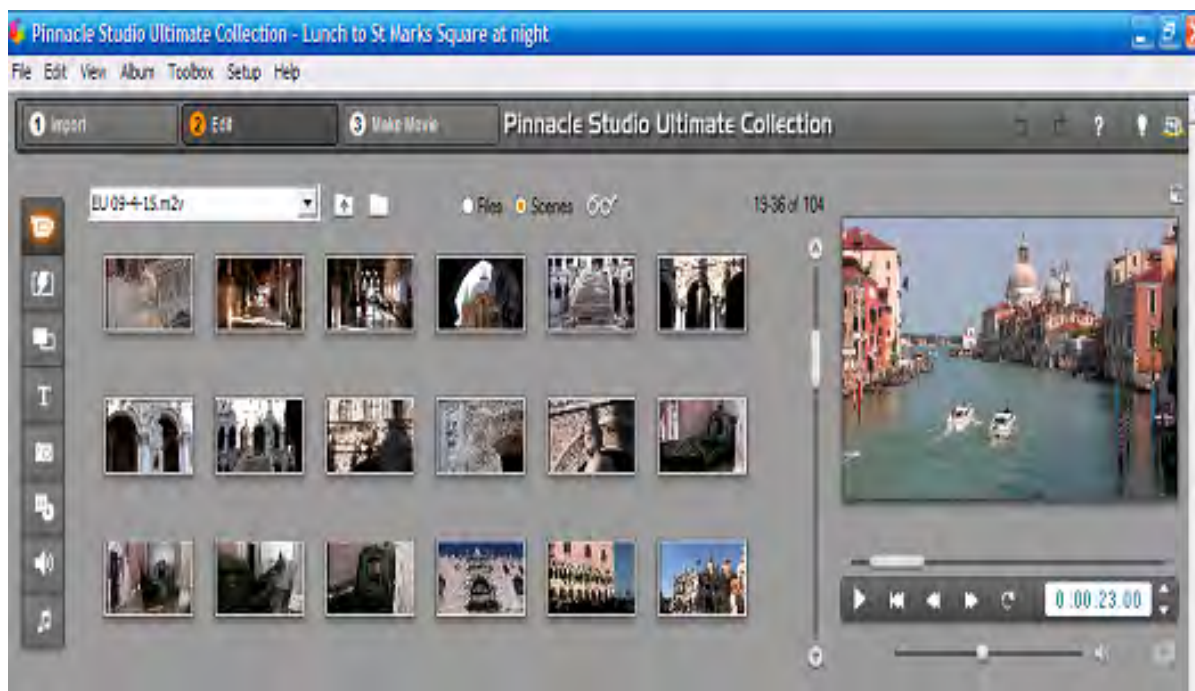
Chris Saville.

PINNACLE STUDIO ULTIMATE

VERSION 14

As many members will know I have been a long time user of Pinnacle Studio, starting with version 8 and moving through the ranks to version 14. In these notes I am commenting on some of the features in the new version 14 which I have found useful and others that I think may be useful in the future.

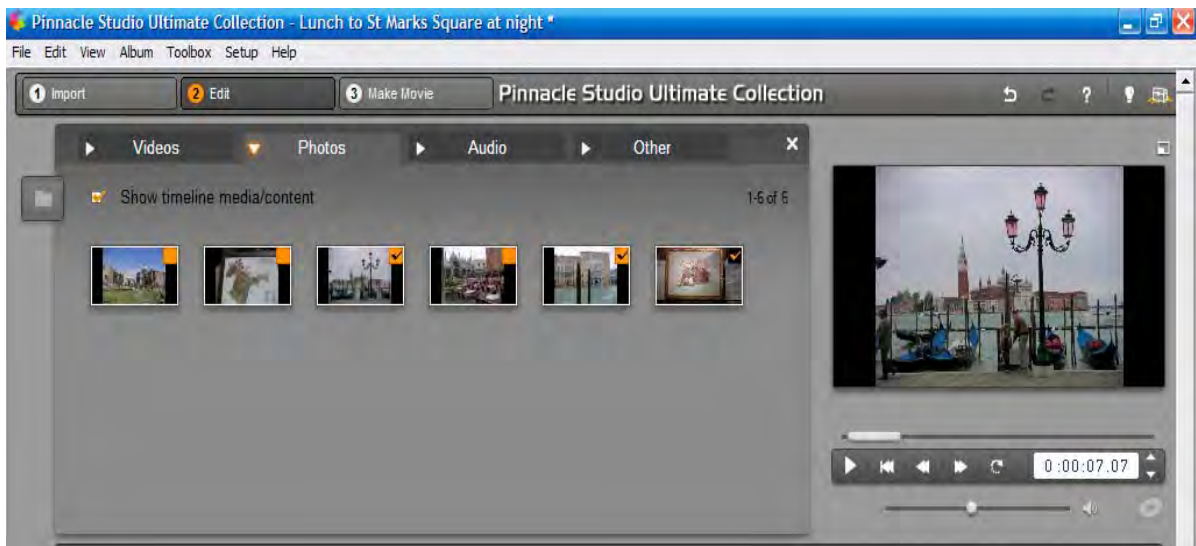
The New Album Display



The individual clips can be located easily because of the numbering system. The picture here shows 18 scenes numbered 19-36. The white bar on the right of the scenes moves up and down allowing other scenes in the same clip to be quickly located and if desired their number jotted down for

future reference or one or more can be dragged to the timeline.

The New Project Folder



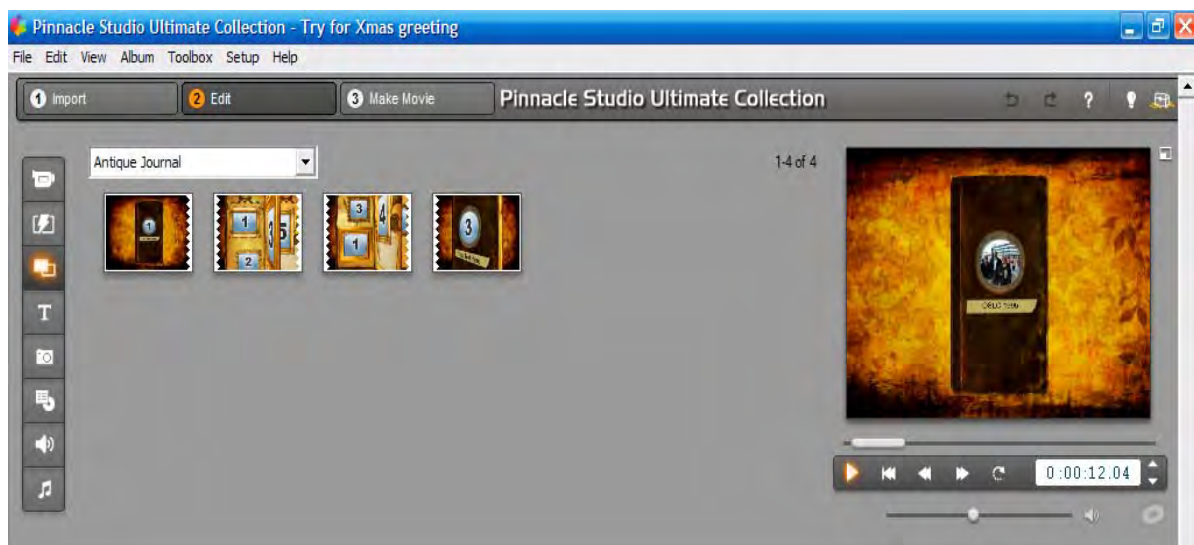
If you come back from holidays with a large number of still photos some of which you may wish to use in your video, the Project Folder enables one to scan and add to the folder any possible photographs without having to search back and forth one at a time. The square box in the top right hand corner of each photograph appears in the original source folio so if further searches are made one knows which photos have already been chosen. The tick in the top right hand corner indicates that the photo has been used in the current production.

A right click on any photo in the project folder brings up a menu which among other options such as rotating a photo 90 degrees allows the original folder to be opened to search for further photos.

MONTAGE THEMES & MOTION TITLER

These are similar in that Version 14 incorporates graphics which can be used in a video enabling a host of different features. I recently sent a DVD to relatives in Sweden incorporating an Antique Journal theme because I wanted to use video taken when visiting them in 1995 still shots from 1963 and a common ancestor taken in Bombay in 1926.

The Antique Journal starts with an ancient clock winding backwards which morphs into the front of an old book with a title of choice. The pages turn with photographs that can be stills or movie clips, eventually settling on one where the video progresses. The montage has a middle graphic which can be inserted allowing pages to be turned again and focussing on other clips or stills. The middle graphic can be used as often as desired. The final graphic focuses on the last photograph and then the antique clock turns forward to the present time with an opportunity to add a farewell message. I used some sound captured in 1995 with a discussion of our children. It had no relevant video clips but I was able to tie it in with still pictures. Music can be added in the usual way.



MOTION TITLE

Is similar to montage above as it allows control of background, either still or moving and then permits words, still and moving pictures and objects such as stars balls and a host of others to come onto the title, stay still or jiggle about and either fly off or stay there until the title ends. Letters, words and sentences can appear one at a time or separately and also stay still, jiggle about, fly off or fade away at title end.

There are many more new features and if anyone would like to contact me they would be very welcome to see a demonstration on my computer.

Good Video Making,

Jim Whitehead

Focus Night 9th March

You are the Director

Let's first look at a pretty boring video of an every day event at home – preparing a meal.

This 55 sec video was left un-edited, it had some long running shots, many taken from the same camera angle, a run of 4 jump cuts that jarred and an uninspiring story.

Now let's look at a better attempt.

It is edited, with titles, music track and commentary. The shots were taken from a variety of angles, ranging from mid shots to close ups, looking up, looking down etc. The commentary tied it all together to tell a story.

Even so, members commented on the points that there could have been bigger close ups, more natural sound of the prawns sizzling in the frying pan and more appropriate music. Nevertheless this 55 sec was dramatically better than the first attempt.

We then looked at a few clips produced for broadcast TV.

An advert for Leather coats, with dramatic angles, some dark images shot in available light, blurred objects in front of the subjects and quick shots. Some members questioned the use of short depth of field images saying that the director did not make full use of the screen.

Look closely at when short depth of field is used. Why is it used?

Viewing high quality video such as Desperate housewives, we see a pattern of editing that permeates the production and characterizes the program. Point of view perspectives from each character shot at their eye level. Over the shoulder views that show the edge of the head.

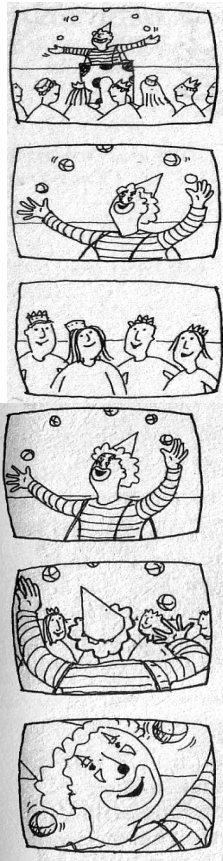
Other programs worth looking at are Boston Legal, Greys Anatomy etc. to study the camera frames used, to detect a pattern that is characteristic of the director. Look to see if tracking shots are limited to certain events. Why are tracking shots used? How do they effect the mood or dramatic effect?

As a director, you decide how to shoot the scenes. You need a language to communicate with other team members.

You also need to plan the script with visual outlines of each scene.

The following notes provide examples of a story board (visual script) and “language of film” to describe what type of shot you want.

A Visual Story

Have a Storyboard in mind	Develop a visual script
	<p>Wide shot of clown from rear of auditorium</p> <p>Mid shot of clown from front</p> <p>Wide shot of audience from stage. This type of shot is often referred to as a “cutaway”. A shot that is related to the main attraction.</p> <p>Mid shot of clown from front</p> <p>Mid shot of clown from behind</p> <p>Close up of clown</p>

The language of film

To communicate to others what you want in a video you must use a common language. Some of the terms used refer to:

Shot size - Big close up, Close up, Mid shot, Wide shot

Camera movements

Pan (horizontal movement)

Tilt (vertical movement)

Track (moving the camera with the subject)

Camera Angle

With the camera close to the ground, looking up at the subject – you make the subject appear to be larger than she is. In contrast, looking down at the subject makes her look small. A low or high camera angle can create interest because it gives an unusual perspective.

Shot sizes



Big Close Up (BCU)
gives a very intimate feeling to the subject



Close up
helps to build relationships



Mid shot

often establishes relationship between actors



Long shot

often used to establish the scene location

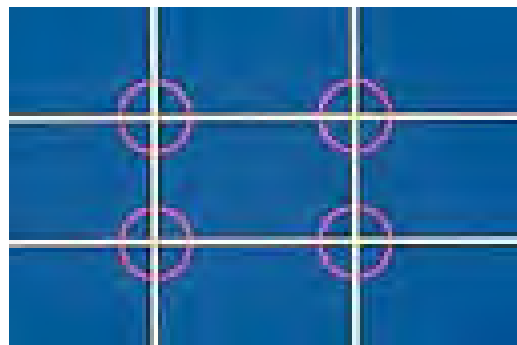


Very long shot

often used for atmospheric effect

Framing - Rule of thirds

A guiding principle in photography is known as the "rule of thirds". If you divide the screen vertically and horizontally into thirds, the points of intersection represent locations of high interest.





Using this rule, you can see that a single subject is often placed off centre. This emphasizes either the sky, the water or some other point of interest

Generally, people are framed so that their eyes are 1/3 down from the top of the screen. If the head is in the middle of the screen we say “there’s too much head room”

Moving into and out of frame

When a subject walks across the frame you need to decide whether to cut while the actor is in the frame or allow him to walk out of frame. Allowing him to walk out is very useful to speed time up because you can then pick up at another point that is not visually the same. Like wise you can start a shot without your subject in view and allow her to walk into the frame.

Jump cut

A jump cut is an edit point where one shot follows another in a jarring way. **For example**, the first scene shows a chef scaling fish. With the camera and subject in exactly the same positions, **the second scene** now shows her bending over placing a pan into the oven. She appears to have changed positions instantly.

To overcome this jarring edit, intersperse the 2 scenes with a **cutaway** – a shot of a related kitchen object or a person looking on.

Alternatively, change the camera position and angle to provide a completely different perspective. Some videos make deliberate use of jump cuts as an effect.

Peter Frybort

BRIEF NEWS

Ernest will be at our April Travel Video night, he has made a few Videos for TV which looked impressive.

Meanwhile, two of our members Barry and Lee Crispe are busy at the young at heart film workshop making a movie.

Why don't you join us at the screening of their film and others films at
YOUNG AT HEART SHORT FILM AWARDS

Dendy Opera Quays - Thursday 25 March – 6:00pm

For details contact the president or Barry Crispe.

Thanks for the Video clip and thanks again for the great Focus night, I learnt a lot.....Neville.

This is my 2nd year of Membership of SVMC & I have enjoyed very much the Focus Nights. However the last two Focus Nights of February and March have been the most educational nights for me because I learnt so much during these talks. Kent Fry's superb presentation on Cameras and their functions was brilliant and Peter Frybort's following talk on shooting in "You be the Director" was so well delivered and researched. These two sessions should be repeated each year. These are the sessions that really make a Focus Night valuable.....Gerry Benjamin.

Congratulations Kent and Peter on a well prepared and informative Focus nights they were enjoyed by all. Peter the only complaint I had was there was no recipes for the Prawns.....Editor & Caterer.



President:
Rob Nercessian

Vice President:
Kent Fry

Secretary:
Ian Scott

Treasurer:
Barry Crispe

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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Catering	Margaret Tulloh	9451 9718

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