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North County VIDEOMAKERS

Helping you make better videos for over 10 years!

January 2009

Editor: Randy Elwin

CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Greg McKeen
VICE PRESIDENT	Wade Varney
TREASURER	Hans Mesch

MEMBERS at LARGE

Dennis Dupont	Tom Kristensen
Joe Gionet	Sal Tostado
Ed Kamps	Jack Weber
George Sullivan	

For NCV member addresses, telephone, email addresses, and renewal date see your membership list.

On the web: www.ncvideo.com

Email: info@ncvideo.com

View member videos, see action pictures, and visit informative links!

NEXT MEETING at KOCT

Wednesday:	January 21, 2008
Doors Open:	6:00 pm
Meeting Time:	6:30 – 8:55 PM

What's inside this month:

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President's Message

Meet Our New NCV Prez, Greg McKeen!



I approach my new duties as your President with mixed feelings of anxiety and hope.

The anxiety stems from taking on my very first leadership role in a club environment, a role I have carefully and skillfully sidestepped in other organizations. But the position with your club is different. I really want to tackle it because I am looking forward to working with you, a very talented group, in an environment that will allow us to (1) express our creative selves, (2) share our experience and knowledge, (3) enjoy each other's videos, (4) work on communal projects, and (5) create some art that we, as a group and individually, will be proud of.



My hope is that through these processes we will accomplish one thing – learn together to make better videos.

And, as I see it, that is no little achievement.

Moving on to showbiz news, my lovely wife, Kathy, and I just got back from our annual week's trip to New York. We took in six plays – "All My Sons," "Mary Poppins," "Speed the Plow," "Forbidden Broadway," "Pal Joey," and "The Marvelous Wonderettes."

"All My Sons" stars John Lithgow, Dianne Wiest, Patrick Wilson, and Katie Holmes, who happens to be married to Tom Cruise. A friend of ours, Danielle Skrastaad, is Ms. Holmes' understudy, so we were able to go backstage to visit her and see all of the stars up close and personal. Great Fun!

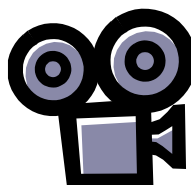
A couple of hours before we had to head for JFK airport, I trekked from 47th Street where we were staying to 34th Street and 8th Avenue to have a look at the Bell and Howell Superstore, which is most famous because of its big catalogs. I just had time to look around a bit, meet some of the friendly staff, and jot down the model numbers of some stuff I want to order. I felt a bit nostalgic thinking of the B&H 8mm movie camera I bought in 1953 – and still have. It has an almost indestructible metal body and built-in slow motion. They just don't make them like that any more. But all things pass, and, truthfully, new video cameras are much more versatile, get better pictures without having to wait for the film to come back from the processor, and produce output that is easier to edit. Still, though, I can't help missing, just a bit, the joy and excitement of using my first camera that took pictures that actually moved.



See you Wednesday.

Greg McKeen

Vice President's Message



A New Year

Happy New year! Welcome back to North County Videomakers!

Come to the January meeting and hear the Inaugural speech by our newly elated president Greg McKeen and see what sumptuous inaugural treats he has in store for us. Will they be pheasant under glass or cookies ala supreme?

Coming Attractions

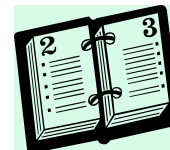
Also to start the New Year off right we are going to have the winner of the 48hr film festival! Mike Bruggemeyer is a director of photography and he will be on hand to show and discuss his 2008 48-Hour film festival award-winning short.

We will also have a presentation from club member Bill Harms and some tutorials and selected film shorts to start the new year off.

So come one come all and we will see you there!

Wade Varney

Video Calendar 2009 (and Local Stuff to Video)



- February to April: The whales are back – but only passing by... Gray whales are headed north to feed in the Bering Sea. Several tour companies in San Diego offer whale-watching cruises. Grab your camera and a Dramamine and go have a look.
- Tidepool Tours: aquarium.ucsd.edu has all the info on tours of local tidepools at Swami's and Scripps beach. Sea critters make great subjects for experimenting with polarizing filters, macro lenses, and salt-waterproof gear.
- March 21,22: Old Town Temecula Bluegrass Festival. More info at temeculacalifornia.com .

Video in Action

Share Your Video Production Experience (or a relevant review)

Life with a Cheap Camcorder, Take 2

I reported last newsletter that my small inexpensive camcorder quit working – it gave me 4 good years and captured many great moments and outdoor adventures. Since I missed having a small inexpensive travel camcorder I looked online for a replacement. Boy, was I lucky! B&H Photo and Video was selling a JVC 850 MiniDV camcorder for \$189, including free shipping. I checked a few online reviews and didn't find anything bad about this model so I ordered it. After a few days it arrived and I fiddled around with it to see how the controls worked and to get an idea of how it performs. The camcorder works about as well as I expected and is typical of most sub-\$500 camcorders.

What to expect from an inexpensive camcorder:

- Standard definition, perhaps with a 16x9 wide-screen mode.
- Good picture outdoors with sunlight.
- Automatic everything.
- Few manual controls.

Conversely, you get what you pay for, or rather, you *don't* get for what you *didn't* pay for.

What not to expect from an inexpensive camcorder:

- Good picture indoors or in low light. Most inexpensive camcorders do not perform well in low light. Low light can mean room lighting with 2 or 3 60 watt lights – this might be ok for your eyes but most camcorders convert this scene into a grayish red blur. This camcorder has a white LED light but this only works on subjects 3 feet away, and makes them a ghostly blue.
- Automatic focus accuracy, especially in low light. Low light color fade is annoying but having your subject fade out of focus is more annoying. Use manual focus if possible.
- Manual controls. Adding buttons and knobs is expensive so most cheaper models don't include many manual controls. A common compromise is to have a multi-function (or a Menu) control that allows manual control, but it's not very convenient to access.

For the most part this camcorder fulfills its purpose and does what I need, and not much more. As with most video equipment you'll pay more for better quality and more features, and you should have a

good idea of how you'll use the gear – don't use a cheap camera for event videography, such as a wedding, because you can't control your subjects' lighting and sound and the camcorder will have a tough time indoors with dim lighting and soft sound. By the same token you don't take your larger Sony FX7 to video the kids at Disneyland – your picture will look good but your arms will get sore, and don't get it wet on Mt Splashmore!

Send the NCV editor (Randy) interesting pictures and a short write-up of yourself on location during a video shoot and it'll appear in the newsletter. Email to: info@ncvideo.com.

Video Media Archiving

(from videomaker.com)

The latest Videomaker magazine has an interesting article about various methods of archiving digital video.



They recommend tape format of all things. Stored properly, tape lasts 20 years or more. Also of interest is that DVD-R is not recommended for long term archiving, as discs are prone to chemical decay. DVD also requires MPEG compression, which may not be desired for archiving. Hard drives are not recommended as they'll fail eventually and this means you'll lose all of its data – many gigabytes of data. Flash media is a bit of an unknown and requires a bit of compression (similar to DVD) to store more than a single MiniDV tape (13GB). Flash is also expensive and unproven for archiving.

What's all this mean? Easy – don't throw out your tapes! And don't throw out your old Hi8 camcorder if it still reads tapes – you may need it someday to read an old tape, or to transfer to another format. Who knows, even VHS decks may be useful again. Hopefully we'll have a better archiving technology available before our MiniDV tapes start to decay.



Get to Know KOCT and be Shown on TV (repeat)

Visit the KOCT website to find out more about our new meeting location.



For NCV members submitting video for airing on KOCT you must adhere to their technical requirements and fill out release forms (see the end of this newsletter.) Contact Bill Harms for assistance and if you need to use him as a local producer contact.

KOCT is shown in San Diego County on Channel 18 and 19 on COX cable, and streaming online.

KOCT website: www.koct.org

Forms and paperwork:
www.koct.org/pages/forms_and_applications.html
(I'm going to leave this info here for a few more issues)

Randy's In/Out List

In: videoing Christmas holiday family activities.

Out: family holiday activities seem to go on for weeks and all your video looks the same – cute kids, goofy relatives, people eating, more eating, still more eating...



In: Watching old holiday videos with family – if you did a good job editing then they're actually fun to watch, and short too!

Out: everyone is skinnier in these old videos...must be all that eating, more eating, and still more eating...

New Year's (video) Resolutions

Everyone makes a list of New Year's Resolutions (if you didn't then make it your only New Year's Resolution) to improve themselves for the coming year. New Year's resolution has its history in ancient Rome, where the mythical two-faced king Janus could look back on the past year while looking forwards to the future. The Romans named their first month after Janus (January) and traditionally exchanged gifts, looked for forgiveness from enemies (resolution.) They also videotaped in VHS, which as we know lasts 1000's of years if stored properly in a cool, dry catacomb. If you visit the catacombs you can still hear the ancient echoes of Trinus! Trinus! Trinus! (tripod!)



New Year's 2009 Video Resolutions

- 1) I will use a tripod, bipod, monopod, or some sort of camera support. If unavailable I will use both hands to steady my shots with no "hose" pans or elevator tilts. When in doubt keep the camera still and let your subject move.
- 2) I will avoid zoomitis – or at least cut zooming shots from my edited projects. Zooming is a great framing technique but not for watching video.
- 3) I will light my subject. Camcorders capture light, and need a decent amount to capture accurate colors, shadows, and details.
- 4) I will pay attention to sound and audio quality. Recording good audio with your camcorder is challenging – headphones and microphones help. Learn how to edit audio so you can add voice-over and music to your projects.
- 5) I will tell a story. Easy to say, harder to get right. A good story makes a great video, great video without a story is boring, a great story with great video wins all sorts of awards.

North County Videomakers

Club Meeting Schedule for 2009, KOCT

Jan 21	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 15	May 20	Jun 17	Time 6:30 -8:45 PM
Jul 15	Aug 19	Sep 16	Oct 21	Nov 18	Dec None	

Directors Meeting Schedule for 2009 (location varies)

Jan 28	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 22	May 27	Jun 24	Time 12:00 -2:00 PM
Jul 21	Aug 26	Sep 23	Oct 28	Nov 25	Dec 31	

Directions to KOCT Meeting Location

[KOCT](#), 3038 Industry St., Suite 101, Oceanside, CA.

Take **HIGHWAY 78**, to the **EL CAMINO REAL** exit & go **NORTH** approximately **1.3** miles. After crossing over the **RAILROAD TRACKS** turn **LEFT** onto **INDUSTRY ST** & go **0.1** mile to **3038** (Entrance facing the **RIGHT** side parking lot). By the way, the new Sprinter train stops at the corner of El Camino Real & Industry St.



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