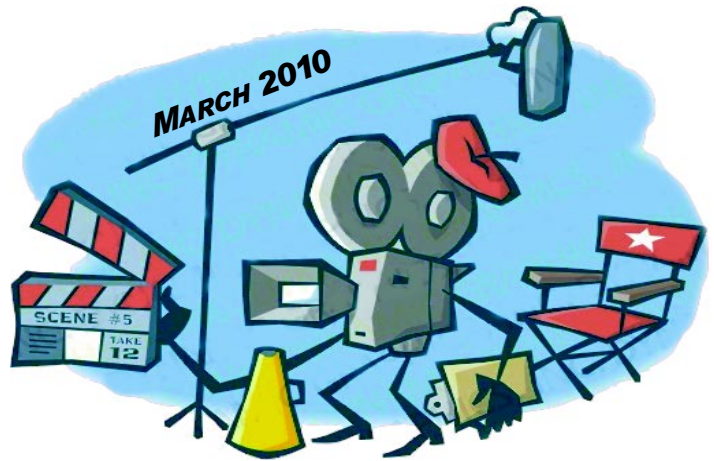




REEL NEWS

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THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

I usually wait until the end of the newsletter to say thank you to the volunteers who assist in making each meeting of the Hamilton Video/Film Makers a good one. This time I figure that they should go up front.

A huge THANK YOU to Carolyn Briggs, Agnes Houston and Mary Cosgrove who each and every month bring, set-up and then clean-up the supplies that provide us with nourishment. The coffee urns, coffee, cream, pop, donuts and accoutrements. They collect the funds donated and clean up the mess when everyone is finished.

Les Carter, or Evelyn Rosa when he is not able to, shows up faithfully with his roll of tickets and then spends his time roving the hall gently cajoling members to part with some of their funds in the hope of winning a windfall amount back in the 50/50 draw. He takes the money, splits the tickets, counts and divides the funds and then sits down at his station at the back of the room and works the lights.

For years Joe Bochsler and now Manfred Ernst and newcomer Ingelbert Lievaart II spend parts of the evening lurking around in the background, or sometimes right in your face, with their trusty cameras snapping away at every opportunity. These gentlemen not only provide the photos that grace this newsletter but they are the keepers of the club history. The photos are a tangible record of members present and past who have graced the rolls of the HV/FM.

Jim Small faithfully loads his van the first Thursday each month with projectors, DVD & Video players, speakers and wires and whatnot. He makes his way through weather, good and terrible, from Caledonia to Hamilton where he unloads everything into the Legion, sets it all up (*sometimes while being bugged with questions from unthinking members*), operates it during the program, packs it all up again into the van for the trip back to Caledonia where it goes back into his house one more time. This is usually done without help from members except during the leaving of the Legion.

And of course Mary Cosgrove who maintains her station in the center of the room where she provides the membership information, takes the membership funds and hands out the membership name tags. She keeps the records of visitors names and e-mails and answers all myriad of questions about the club. At the same time her other half (*I am not going to get into an argument as to which is the better half*) Harold Cosgrove esconces himself in the back corner and regularly provides information about the art of movie making to those who seek out his wisdom.

I cannot forget about Liz Stewart who is seldom seen (*which is our loss*) but a very integral part of the club. Liz is the angel who each month without visible annoyance receives my misspelt mangled English overly wordy manuscripts and magically turns them into what I think is the most colourful best produced monthly video club newsletter on the planet. She also designs and assembles the productions for the annual awards banquet.

***Meetings held the first Thursday every month at the
Royal Canadian Legion Hall – 12 King St. E., Stoney Creek
Videomaking Basics – 7:00 p.m., Regular Meeting – 7:30 p.m.***

There are also those who do not perform a particular task at each meeting but nonetheless they do assist in many ways. These include Ralph Trouten who runs the annual AGM meeting and relentlessly goes after members to serve on the executive and as president as well as Adam Houston who has over the years donated effort and skill in providing the club with memorable gifts for draws and door prizes and eating at various meetings. And lastly those who contribute food or in kind gifts to the Visitors Night and Christmas meetings.

I thank these people for their dedication and selflessness for their support of the club, especially since many have been doing it for years, and I would ask that you think of it the next time you see them doing whatever it is that they do. They do not do it for glory or financial gain - they do it so that you can have a comfortable, pleasant and memorable night. Say Thank You.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD - BUT GREAT INFORMATION

The February 2010 meeting was introduced, orchestrated and wound-up with a resounding finale by the maestro from Simcoe - Nestor Rosa. And a great conductor he was. But lets go back a few steps and talk about the new High Definition gear that was introduced and got its first workout at the meeting.

Dan Copeland, Jon Soyka and Jim Small got the system up and running and anticipation was high that we were going to see some fantastic stuff. Hmmmm. Remember the good old days when you put in a VHS tape and all you had to consider was if it was recorded at SP, EP, or LP speeds (*and usually that was not a problem as the machine worked out the details*). Well, we're not in Kansas anymore Toto and the world is spinning out of VCR-DVD control. Too many formats, too many methods of getting the information to where you want it. But more on that later.

Nestor announced the four visitors that were in the audience, Bill Riley, Cliff LaRose, Wayne Curnew and Don Babb, and introduced them to the audience.



Manfred Ernst checks his photos while Nestor Rosa looks over his meeting notes.

Nestor then read his notes and realized that this was the point at which he would turn the microphone over to Dan Copeland to introduce our guest speakers for the evening - Bill Reily and Steve Passmore of Smalltown Productions in Grimsby. Dan had donated a crane they needed for a special shot in one of their films so they agreed to come and speak at the club. After a short introduction about their work history and where they lived they got the show on the road by projecting their first short film "Pricks".

I am torn between knowing something about a film before seeing it and going in cold. Usually I prefer to go in cold and see if the writer was able to tell me the story without first having to verbally lay out all of the details. How much of it will I work out on my own and how much will I miss by a mile? "Pricks" was shot on a DVX-100A and edited with Adobe Premiere Pro 1.5. It was pointed out that when you work with volunteers you will probably end up with a lot of corrections in post. The film cost between \$1,200 and \$1,500 in total but no breakdown as to how much was for beer. The actors were family, friends and amateur theatre folks. It was entered in several film festivals and although it received different responses from different festivals in the end a distribution deal was done. When questioned about how a short gets distributed it was pointed out that it can go through a station such as Movieola, or the internet, or a phone app and even appear on an in-flight schedule.

There were several good questions about the shooting locations (*school hall & back alleys*), the equipment used and the processes of entering festivals. The 10 minute film took about 5 days to produce. Editing took about 600 hours including extensive colouring (*not with crayons*) and removal of unwanted logos. The final objective for going the short film route is to - PLEASE PAY ATTENTION HERE FILM WANNABES - learn the craft, solve the problems on a smaller stage and to get production credits for when they apply for production grants to produce longer films. DUH. You learn on the small stuff before moving on to the larger works - not the other way around.



Ralph Trouten (right) grins as he sets up Jon Soyka with the "Are you running for president?" question.

As for the content of the film.... well I do not think that anyone in the room got all of it on the first showing and I am not sure they would have on the second, however after an excellent explanation by the two gentlemen the room possessed a much greater understanding as to their intentions. So, it begs the question, do we have producers stand up front and explain their films before we show them or do we wait until after to hear what it was about. Personally I feel that if you have to give a detailed explanation as to the meaning or content of a production, either before or after seeing it, then I feel that you have failed in your work. What do you think? Why not write a little blurb on this subject for the next newsletter. Become involved.

The second film "The Nickel" was easier on the eyes and the brain. It followed the imaginary trail of a 1941 five cent coin through the years. From a football referee to a waitress to a parking meter attendant to a boy & grandfather to a treasure hunting diver the film was 7 minutes long and took 6 days to produce and numerous hours to edit. The special effect that garnered the most interest was the spinning coin. It was explained how it was glued to the end of a power drill and placed in front of Dan's crane. With the drill off camera the coin was spun while in front of the appropriate background and because of the crane, moved up and down naturally. Steve Passmore did the underwater shooting with an inexpensive video camera within its own housing and is good for down to 10 ft. It may have been a Sony FX1000 or a DSC-U60 or a Upside-down inside-out cardboard box with built in helium balloon for stabilization - I don't remember and I can't read my notes. Club member Rick Doelle was another cog in this production wheel when he announced that he was the one who taught Steve Passmore how to dive.

Overall I think the members were witness to a couple of interesting films and a wealth of information about film making in the scenario genre. Thank you Steve and Bill.

The new video gear had worked flawlessly at this point but like all good things, it had to come to an end. For our first club members films we turned to Rick Doelle's "Monkey Care". Shot on a trip to Indonesia in 2009 the film has been viewed at the club in the past. The difference this night was that it was in High Definition and that is where the problem arose. The poor monkeys looked like they were caught in a vice and were being slowly squished to death. The new equipment comes with a menu of approximately 7,948,256,883,297 options. Dan and Jim tried to sort it out but it did not work and the monkeys to this day remain squished. The joys of High Definition.

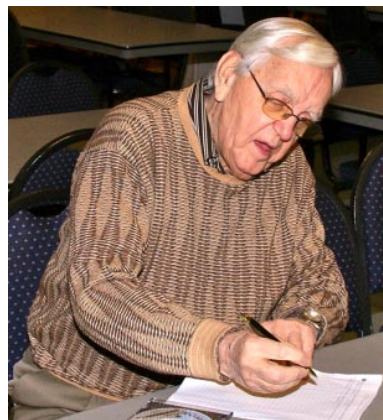
At this point Christine Whitlock told the members in attendance about the "February Freeze" video equipment sale in Toronto and then Keith Gloster reminded everyone about this years compulsory theme for the SCCA Annual Contest Intercities Trophy - "The Road...". Are you working on your version?

The second production was 3 minutes of potshots of Harold & Mary Cosgrove on the "Jewel of the Sea" cruise liner in Boston and Bar Harbour. This was a High Definition sampler and was not edited to the final stage. The quality was very good but I must also point out that most of the shots were done in bright sunlight and this helps the image.

Ken Davy's production titled "Pompei" was a combination of video and still images. Ken and Iris made the trip in 2008 and Ken did not take enough video footage to make a good film so he went on the internet and downloaded several photos and drawings to drop into the production to fill in the story line. I think that some people had a problem with the concept of using others work and some with the quality of the images. Personally I like the fact that he used his head to come up with an idea that allowed him to finish the job. The story was good and in my mind that is what it is all about. What do you think? Write a short piece for the newsletter with your views.



Bill Riley and Steve Passmore of Smalltown Productions happily answer questions from the club members.



Ken Davy tries to remember how to spell "Pompei" for the production sign in sheet.



Rick Gaunt (left) discusses with Rick Doelle the advantages of being named Rick.

Rick Gaunt came in with production number 4 at 3 minutes. Rick is a singer/songwriter so he took one of his pieces and set it to shots of Niagara Falls and called it "Over The Waterfalls". The crowd liked the music and gave several suggestions as to where it could be used to promote the waterfalls in Hamilton. Rick will follow up and report back to us on the final result.

Johnathan Garfield brought in a production called "Bill & Pearl" which was reported to be 52 seconds long. We never found out as his disc would not play in the system which merely highlights the fact that if you are going to produce DVD's these days you have to have a pretty good knowledge of your equipment and how to burn a disc properly. If you play back a disc on the machine that you burned it on - it will always work. Burn it on one machine and then play it back on a totally different system to see if you have a workable disc, BUT, there may still be problems on other machines. This takes us back to my starting statement that we have too many formats and trying to get everything right is a big pain in the butt. Remember - there is an international standard for blank discs, recording machines, recording methods and no standard at all for playback machines.

John Cook did not bring in a production this month so it was left up to George Gerula to be the High Definition Standard Bearer. He brought in "Blu-Ray Samples" from his production of Spring, Summer & Fall. The program ran for 50 minutes but we only showed the first five minutes once the problems with playing the disc were sorted out. I told George that I got no more than I expected and was disappointed in the show. It was basically a slide show of flowers with music and as such photos of the flowers would have been of higher quality. George maintains that anyone who appreciates nature and music would understand the beauty of the showing which was highlighted by being in High Defini-

tion whereas I maintain that it did not contain a story and as such lost my interest very quickly. Maybe George would be prepared to explain in an article for this newsletter why he chooses the subjects that he does. What about it George?

Paul Bently, who is our host for the March meeting, produced an audition tape for a friend who wanted to apply for a position on "Coronation Street", the world's longest running TV soap. It generated a lot of discussion and got some excellent comments as to its strengths and weaknesses. Some of the visitors had some very insightful comments to make and Paul will now go back and re-shoot the production.

It was 10:25 p.m. at this point so Nestor said goodnight to everyone and we all went home. Yeah, right.

IMPORTANT NOTE -

Please, please, please write the following information on both your DVD's and their sleeves when you bring them to be shown at the club meetings.

Format - 4:3 or 16:9 or widescreen or whatever you chose to burn it in

Running Time - From the start of the music or image to the end - what is the running time?

Audio - Do you know if it is stereo or mono?

Identification - Clearly print your name and the name of the production

Any other important information that the projectionist should know - ?

I have found that various DVD players will start a disc anywhere within the first 2 to 5 seconds which is why I always put at least five seconds of black before the production starts and at least five seconds at the end.



Johnathan Garfield shows his happiness at not having to run the meeting.



Harold Cosgrove feels seasick after watching his video in HD so he hangs on to the mic for support.



Paul Bentley (the March host) waits for a question about his audition video.

MARCH 2010 MEETING -

As you are all aware we are using different hosts or MC's each month at the moment. For March it will be Paul Bently. When I asked him what I should write or what the program would be he said, and I quote "Nothing I can think of. Perhaps you can say how privileged and honoured you are that Paul Bentley has agreed to be the Master of Ceremonies for the next meeting." He's's right. We are privileged and honoured that he has stepped up to the challenge. Now which ones of you are available for April, May, June and July? Bring your productions and lets make this a great meeting.

Regards
Jon Soyka

P.S. - I think I am forgetting something but the Canada Hockey game is on so I will figure out later what I left out.



The crowd gathers as the new HD gear is started up.



What kind of idiots stand around with coffee cups over electronics?



The boys line up at the watering trough.



Agnes Houston is mortified while Adam is amused at whatever just came out of Trev Beards mouth.



Jon Soyka practices his pose for his new job as either a preacher or a census taker.



Trev Beard tries to explain how big the one that got away was.



George Gerula gives that look when he sees Soyka is about to ask a question.