



Newsletter November 2014

Christmas is coming, so it is time to think of what you might like in your Christmas Stocking - naturally, something photographic !

As a bonus, the germ of an idea blossom into your next AV masterpiece.

Speaking of masterpieces, let's see the results of our first Annual Competition, which Jeff arranged for the Melbourne AV Club to judge.

Thanks are due to all, for such good support. Congratulations to all who achieved success.

Thanks to Jeff for arranging and facilitating the judging, while he was in Australia

A special word of thanks and appreciation to the Melbourne AV Club for doing the judging !

Results of the 1st Club AV Competition

1st place – Fracking the karoo by Mary Hunter

2nd place – Halong Bay by Frank Reuvers

Honourable mentions (no particular order):

The Persian kitten by Ingrid Gane

Testament of a fly fisherman by Eric Thorburn

Love itself is gone by Juan Venter

Willie McBride by Mary Hunter

Top Novice was John Arseniou with Ghosts of Dead Vlei

(For the benefit of the Editor, there were 20 entries and the 'acceptance' level was therefore 35%.)

Comments and thoughts from the judges:

"The Top Novice had good images but the sequence was too long for the subject matter – could be improved by adding a bit more variety;

"A little too much pan and zoom in a couple of sequences;

"There was a reminder to authors to use the same aspect ratio throughout the AV (don't mix 1024x768 and 1920x1080, for example).

"We had quite a discussion about how, like us here, a lot of workers are relying on the use of a powerful song plus their images, to make the impact, rather than doing the hard yards and building the story and mixing the music for a more complex AV."

Well done to Mary on winning another medal and to all those who were successful. Jeff

Jeff's visit to Australia

Jeff had a wonderful visit to Australia, where he met many of the "movers and shakers" from Down Under.



Figure 1. Sydney harbour.

I would like to share with you some of my impressions of the state of AV in Australia. I

was there for a

month and attended the week-long APSCON convention. I stayed with one AV maker (who put on a barbie for me) and gave a talk on AV in South Africa to the Camberwell Camera Club. Everyone was friendly and all went out of their way to make me feel at home.

As far as making contact with and meeting AV makers from Australia and New Zealand is concerned, the visit was a great success. I met most of the people I have already had email contact with and made a lot of new friends.

There is a small, strong core of AV makers, sharing many of our challenges, including huge distances,



small numbers of active workers and ageing demographics. The debates are similar too: use of images other than your own, inclusion of video, music copyright, remote judging, scoring system for judging, acceptance cut-offs.

Contact for the first time with the Chair of AV in PSNZ was very productive and future collaborative initiatives are certainly on the cards.

Figure 2. APSCON audience.

The Australians held a national AV workshop weekend earlier this year, similar to our Cherry weekend. Delegates from Australia and New Zealand attended. They are planning another for next year. A venue has been chosen, centrally located, and most delegates will fly in. I mention this just to give an idea of their commitment and how they are prepared to overcome distance for their hobby.

There is a small Movie section in APS that is being re-launched. The situation with inclusion of video clips is interesting. It is not allowed in Club, State or National competitions but is allowed in the FIAP-patronized international AV Fest 2015.

APSCON was attended by about 180 delegates. Apparently numbers are dropping. Also,

interestingly, membership of APS is dropping drastically. The presentations were mostly worthwhile and the displays of prints were impressive.

This was a photographic convention and there were a few sessions devoted to the showing of AVs and a talk by Charles Hulse (guru AV maker) on emotion in AV was excellent. I will include a short summary of it in a future Newsletter.

I attended the AGM of the AV Division as a visitor. A new Chair was elected and normal house business attended to. The incoming President of APS attended this meeting and seems very supportive of the Division. In Australia the Chair of the AV Division is supported by a committee, which seems like a good idea.



Figure 3. Camberwell meeting with Wolf Marx (Chair) (photo by John Spring).

My talk to Camberwell Camera Club went off well. The chairman counted 30 in the audience although I thought there were fewer. It was apparently a good average for one of their meetings. They thoroughly enjoyed the club AVs I showed and participated in healthy debate about each. It is always easier to be critical when the author is not around. They showed interest in the history of the development of AV Makers from Pretoria AV Club and how we handle communication with our wide geographic spread of members, similar to their own. One of the states may follow our example and form an AV Makers club with membership from all the camera clubs in the state.

In conclusion, we have great friends in Australia and New Zealand and I see opportunities for building more bridges.

Jeff Morris, Chairman, AV Makers South Africa

Welcome new member

Our newest member is Tanya Green from Pretoria

Welcome, and we look forward to both meeting you, and seeing your work soon

1st East Rand Super Circuit

Congratulations to all, and we look forward to an opportunity to view these productions in the near future So far, I have heard no news of the "Presentation Evening" promised for this East Rand Salon It appears that there was a very low number of entries, so there were NO medals awarded, and the

number of Acceptances was also restricted. Such a pity ! Does PSSA have some rules that need to be reviewed ? (See what "Simple Simon" says a bit further on)

Fstop	Creative	Pizza	Thomas Niemeyer	1st	Acceptance
Fstop	Creative	Dirty sticky floors	Luana Laubscher	2nd	Acceptance
Fstop	Documentary	Fracking the Karoo	Mary Hunter (AV Makers)		Acceptance
Benoni	Creative	Dirty sticky floors	Luana Laubscher	1st	Acceptance
Benoni	Creative	Pizza	Thomas Niemeyer	2nd	Acceptance
Benoni	Documentary	Fracking the Karoo	Mary Hunter (AV Makers)		Acceptance
Springs	Creative	Dirty sticky floors	Luana Laubscher	1st	Acceptance
Springs	Creative	Pizza	Thomas Niemeyer	2nd	Acceptance
Springs	Documentary	Fracking the Karoo	Mary Hunter (AV Makers)	1st	Acceptance

2014.11.15 - 1st Lowveld AV Salon (date revised)

There is still time to enter this Salon. Entries now accepted via internet transfer. See www.pssa.co.za

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"Simple Simon Says"

"Simple Simon Says" is a bubblegum pop song from yesteryear that starts:

"I'd like to play a game

That is so much fun

And it's not so very hard to do ..."

It is an elimination game based on one's ability to distinguish between Reasonable (Achievable) and Unreasonable commands, when the leader chants "Simple Simon says - do this or that"

If the dancer attempts an Unreasonable instruction - he is eliminated (as in a "Paul Jones")

Most of you older ones (that could be most of us !!) must have heard and danced to this at some time or another !

NOW (following 2 recent National Salons)

With this as my theme, I would like to invite one and all of you to respond on the subject of entering your AV into a local Salon, and how it succeeds or fails according to current judging norms.

PRINTS and DIGITAL SLIDES

Starting with a nice picture (not difficult with modern technology) simple enhancements such as tweaking exposure, increasing contrast, and cropping can be enough to achieve an acceptance or even a medal in a Print or Digital Slide Salon, without even opening Photoshop ! The time taken ?

Usually less than 1 hour ! This is possible - as I can personally attest

The problem starts with these Digital Salons - here up to 4000 entries are commonplace. Print Salons equally attract large numbers of entries. For some strange reason - as it is a rare occasion

that these are ever exhibited at a Salon (which is what a Salon actually means !!!!) the judges are instructed to whittle acceptances and awards down quite drastically.

ENTER the PERCENTAGE SOLUTION

Typical examples in Digital Slide competitions are 30 % Acceptances, and 10% COMs

Now "Simple Simon says": Apply the same criteria to AVs !!!!

Is this a REASONABLE or UNREASONABLE command ?

CONSIDER

Both here and overseas, there is constant reference to the need to ENCOURAGE AV producers.

AV producers are few and far between, and most clubs do not have an active AV section.

WHY ? Is one reason that it is such a challenging and time-consuming hobby ?

Let me set down just a few of the required skills necessary - skills that one individual has to develop, in sharp contrast to the team of experts that produce commercial film and TV - and against which some of our judges - quite understandably - may tend to measure our individual offerings.

With Editorial licence - the question which I have often heard "Do all our judges have a track record in making AVs themselves, with an insight into what follows below ?" -

- An idea / plot / story to tell The main difference between a slide series and an AV !!
- Excellent standard of photography - not just one or two images, but often 100 or more.
- IT skills, in configuring the images into HD or other formats.
- Editing skills, facilitated by modern programmes, with enhancements the order of the day - examples are animation, masks and keyframe functions. The cost of these programmes is also considerable (Guesstimates: PicsToExe R 800, Proshow R 1500, Wings R 8000).
- Sound: Here the author may have a good knowledge of music, but most of us learn by trial and error, and spend many, many hours trying to source suitable music.
- Voiceover: We cannot afford professional fees, so have to look to friends or our Parson for a voice that will record well.
- Soundtrack: Audacity is popular, and free - but here one has to learn recording skills. A decent microphone (another cost) is a prerequisite.
- Final editing of the visuals to match the soundtrack, (quite a demanding exercise) before one can finally transfer one's masterpiece to disc or flashcard !
- Time: How long has one taken to reach this point ?
- Another guesstimate = at least 30 plus hours , for a 3 – 5 minute Audio Visual. The mind boggles !!

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Once again

Simple Simon says - Judge AVs in the SAME way as prints and slides, and apply the same quotas !

Is this REASONABLE or UNREASONABLE ?

Will your answer eliminate you from the game ?????

Is PSSA about to be eliminated ? Are they averse to change ? Can they take this chance ?

I think it is high time for a total rethink in the AV Community.

I am NOT suggesting a drop in QUALITY.

QUALITY is what it is about ! Irrespective of how many entries in any given AV Salon.

If there are NO good productions - then NO AWARDS.

If 10 GOOD sequences (with only 10 submitted) - then 10 Acceptances and Awards are in order. One enters an AV Salon in good faith. We know that there is a paucity of good producers – so the chances of a low number of entries is possible. However, if the winners are outstanding, why should PSSA (according to the current numbers game) withhold awarding a medal or two ?

The other side of the coin is when there are a large number of entries (eg the recent PE Salon).

Here again the “percentage fixation” surely led to many of our local producers not achieving any recognition for what must have been many excellent productions - productions that subsequently went on to win recognition both here and overseas.

Quality is apparently not a consideration - just the numbers.

Is this fixation just and fair ?

Therefore :

I (Simple Simon) invite our members as well as PSSA to come to the table. The Society is very much part of this branch of our hobby.

We would value everyone’s input - most especially regarding seeking Quality above mere numbers and percentages.

I contend that a more realistic and balanced approach is needed, if we are to continue to be enthusiastic about this branch of our hobby, and continue in our quest, together with the satisfaction it gives, to turn out new and better sequences !

I invite your views, and look forward to sharing your thoughts with us all in the next Newsletter.

(NB You may choose to respond anonymously - that is quite OK with me.)

Replies to me at wenderic@absamail.co.za

In anticipation of a lively debate, and possibly a new way forward

Eric T

Visit by Edgar and Linda Gibbs

The couple of distinguished AV makers from Wales are winding up their holiday in South Africa as this Newsletter is being finalised. Their talks in Cape Town, Knysna, PE and Pretoria have been well received. There will be a full report in the next Newsletter. We hope to include their impressions too.

Looking forward

With 2015 just around the corner, it is time for our Committee to do some forward planning

Possible activities could include –

- Should we attempt an AV Salon ? If so, do we have the manpower ?
- When should we have another workshop ? If so, when and where ?
- If not a workshop, then what about another “Cherry Weekend” - the last one in the Free State, hosted by Len Cousins, was a great success?
- Ingrid Gane speaks for all of you who live in scattered and remote parts - she has suggested a “Buddy” scheme, where two or more enthusiasts can get together and help one another. With WeTransfer, Dropbox and other electronic systems now readily available, this seems a great idea (Thanks, Ingrid !)

This is YOUR club - so we look forward to all and any ideas !
Therefore, please drop a line to either Jeff or myself

In closing, may I wish you all the best, and keeping working on your newest sequence

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