Audio Visual News

From the Chair

Greetings

It's late autumn going on winter in Melbourne, but thankfully that means we are rid of the horrid heat, until next year.

Entries rolled in for the Autumn National and include some newer contributors, as well as our reliable older participants.   Before too long it will be time to send in your entries for the APSCON National. This year's AV exhibition entries will be judged in Perth by a capable team put together by John Guthrie, our Editor. I am hoping that members from Perth and surrounds will be able to take the opportunity of sitting in as a "silent" audience and viewing the entries from around Australia. It is a great way to learn something of what can be done with AVs.

I'm pleased to announce the establishment of our first AV Folio. Ray Lockett from Queensland has generously taken on the challenge of organising this folio, and although I think it is fully subscribed, I'm sure that Ray would be happy to divulge his method of organising this to anyone else who is prepared to get a second folio up and running. So, please let us know if you would like to join a folio, and especially if you would be prepared to act as Secretary.

Barb Butler (Chair)
Barb Butler AAPS (Chair)

Contents

AV Committee

Chairperson & Image Correspondent	Barbara Butler
AV Newsletter Editor:	John Guthrie guthriej@eftel.com.au
Committee Member	Craig White
	Louise Wolfers
	Meredith Briggs
	John Hodgson
APS AV Website	http://www.a-p-s.org.au/av.html
Member's Forum	http://www.a-p-ss.org.au/index.html

Contributions

Please let us have some contributions and feedback so that the newsletter can be relevant to your needs

From the Editor

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the Winter issue, sadly no one has responded to my last request for items to go in the newsletter apart from the usual suspects.

John Guthrie

APSCON National

Judging with a "silent" audience is scheduled for Saturday July 10, the venue is to be the MJAC theatre in Midland, corner of Great Eastern Highway & Cale St.

For full details please email John guthriej@eftel.com.au

Barb Butler AAPS

Random items

WA Members

Would you like to form a local group to meet on an informal basis to exchange ideas and show AV's? If you are interested please contact either myself: guthriej@eftel.com.au or Chairperson Barb **barbyb@tpg.com.au** so that we can get the ball rolling.

John Guthrie

Two members of AV Division Council were asked, along with Graham Hawkins from Adelaide, to help out again with judging the National AV Salon in South Africa. John Guthrie and Barb Butler had an interesting time looking at the work of our S.A. colleagues.

John Guthrie

Something to think about

How many of you have calibrated your laptop/notebook & digital projectors?

Projecting at our local club can be quite an eye opener, what was perfect at home on the main monitor can be dramatically changed when played back using a different laptop and projector. Also I've noticed that when competition entries are entered by email they sometimes change.

The Spyder 3 Studio Pro is capable of calibrating projectors but I have yet to try this

I guess that the one consolation is that all the images are treated equally well or badly on the setup on the night!

We shall of course do our best to get everything as close to perfect as possible for the APSCON judging.

John Guthrie

AV Folio becomes a reality

By Ray Lockett, Secretary, AV Folios

I'm happy to be able to facilitate this inaugural AV folio, something I've considered should be available to AV Division members for some time. I've been making AVs since the 1980's and also dabbled in cinematography and documentary video, so I am confident with the technical aspects of the process. I've also got a few quirky AVs lying around unseen in competition, which can now find a new audience, hopefully inspiring others to try something original, or just "have a go"!

I won't revisit the background to establishing an AV folio which can be traced in the online Forum (remember that?) or in previous issues of the newsletter, suffice to say I'm sure this approach will accommodate all those wishing to participate. (There are 8 members thus far in folio 1).

Most would agree it is be best to provide the AVs in a high-quality platform-independent format. Our chosen format is a standard DVD show which most AV software now can produce. This does limit the resolution to Standard Definition TV size, but the quality is still way above Youtube or other format-independent Web-based playback. Maybe one day web-based playback will allow universal easier access, but for now we are off and running by mail!

A survey was taken of the 8 participants to determine their workflow, how often they produce AVs, and their preferences for timing of the folio rounds. The results show that we have 2 members using PicturesToExe, 4 using Proshow and 1 uses Fotomagico on Mac. One is still away, presumed on holiday.

Their responses were:-

AVs made / year	Folios / year desired	Synchronise with APS Comps?	AVs likely to be available for each folio
3 or4	2 or 3	Yes	2 or 3
2 or 3	2 or 3	Yes	2 or 3
6	3 or 4	Whatever works	2
5 or 6	3	Good Idea	2
5	3 or 4	Yes	3
4 or 5	2	2 months prior	1 or 2

The structure of this postal AV Folio varies from tradition round-robin for the reason that AVs take a long time to produce and comment on. The basic procedures and rules therefore are as follows…

-

AV Folio becomes a reality continued

All folio members forward their AVs to the secretary in DVD format (if possible) or AVI or MOV by a given start date.

 Each member also sends an "artists statement" (biographical profile and statement of aims/ feedback preferences etc) to all others by email.

- The secretary makes copies of the DVDs for each participant and also transposes any that are in other formats to DVD, combining onto fewer discs where possible.
- The secretary mails out copies of <u>all AVs to all members, at the same time </u>as soon as possible.
- Members can view and comment on the AVs over time at leisure - by email (cc to all others in the group.)
- If authors agree, each member can show AVs at their camera club and supply extra feedback from that source.
- <u>The deadline for the next round is known months in advance</u> – in some cases it is prior to the APS spring/fall AV comp deadlines to allow fine-tuning based on feedback received.
- The cost to members is only $1.20 postage once per round to mail their DVD.
- Members can submit 1 or more AVs to each round.
- Feedback may be general or based on the 12 areas used by AV judges in Qld .

All members agree to refrain from copying, distributing, internet uploading or loaning out AVs to any other person. Only showings authorised will be where folio member is in attendence at a photographic group and retains the DVD.

Thank you to the 8 participants who have joined Folio 1, if there are any questions or are others keen to join a folio please contact me at ray@aanet.com.au
The 12-area judging guide referred to has been used in QLD since the days of BID-FEST and looks like…

Continued over.

P R O D U C T I O N	**AUDIENCE APPEAL:**	The ability to entertain, educate or stimulate the intended audience.
	CONCEPT:	The idea, theme of story style, originality and development of theme to sustain interest.
	NARRATIVE:	Skill in expressing thoughts and communicating ideas.
	PRESENTATION:	Choice of suitable fade rates, the timing to sound fading techniques and special effects.
S O U N D	**MUSIC:**	Selection and suitability to "set the scene" and convey mood.
	SOUND EFFECTS:	Selection and ability to create the appropriate atmosphere.
	NARRATION:	Suitability of voice. Quality of delivery.
	RECORDING TECHNIQUE:	Skill in laying down and combining the elements of sound.
I M A G E S	**QUALITY:**	Technical quality of all images, including titles and graphics.
	CONTENT:	Choice of subject matter and the ability to illustrate the concept.
	SEQUENCING:	Arrangement and progression of images in regard to format, colour, tone and brilliance.
	TRANSITIONS:	Skill in creating transitions between images for effect

Ray Lockett

A-Z of Audio Visual

A- Audacity – A free audio editing application (highly recommended) allowing trimming, fading, joining and re-timing (tempo and/or pitch) of wav or mp3 audio files.

B- BIDFEST – Brisbane International Diaporama Festival – a legendary international competition that occurred between 1980 and 1987 due to the efforts of Eric and Cherie Arch, Jim and Brenda Amos and other trailblazers who put Australia on the AV world map.

C- Cut – an immediate transition from one image to the next, originated in motion picture editing room. For dramatic effect you can't beat a cut – even better if synchronized to a beat in the music.

D- Diaporama – European term for a dual-projection slide show.

E- Ending – Together with the beginning, the most important part of your AV. All performances (especially programmed ones such as AV) need to have a logical progression from beginning through the content to a logical conclusion!

F- Fade (often called Dissolve) – a gradual transition from one image to another lasting from 1 to many seconds. Again derived from movies, dissolves were originally done chemically in darkrooms, so the number used was limited by the post-production budget!

G- Get up and go. Just do it. Nothing to lose.

H-Humour- Hardest of the 5 current competition categories.
Others are Theme, Natural History, Documentary and Music/Poetry/Song.

I-iPod or iPhone– don't forget you can use common devices you already own to record sounds for an interesting soundtrack.

J-Joy- The end result of your efforts – for you and your audience.

K- Ken Burns Effect – devised originally by legendary documentary film-maker Ken Burns. The technique arose in historical documentaries where film or video material was not available. Life is given to still photographs by slowly zooming in on subjects of interest and panning from one subject to another. For example, in a photograph of a baseball team, one might slowly pan across the faces of the players and come to a rest on the player the narrator is discussing.

It can be abused or over-used in AVs – as a rule never switch direction without stopping, never zoom strongly into a particular feature unless there's a reason to, and always add movement as a last touch embellishing particular passages only (not the entire show!). Movement should be an incidental or even unnoticed adjunct to the show, not an annoying distraction, which can leave some viewers nauseous!

M- MP3 – a common compressed format for sound files, more correctly it's MPG layer 3. Variable or different levels of compression can be selected. Mp3 file are often only 10% the size of wav equivalent.

N-Novice- Sub-section of the APS national Autumn and Spring competitions allowing those new to national competition to be rewarded for their work.

O- Opacity is the state of being impenetrable to light. The crucial property to consider in images when striving for a "Third Image" effect. Hard to describe in words, 3rd image is regarded very highly by judges schooled in traditional AV styles originating in the pre-digital era. One example would be a tunnel entrance (almost black) framing a scene over which is superimposed another image with complimentary content such that the combination depicts as an interesting image in its own right, different from either of the 2 images from which it is formed. Shape and colour must also be considered when planning this desirable effect.

P-Photo Harmony – Now abandoned category for APS AV competition. Generally used to describe pictures put to a single piece of music without a narrative, an uncomplicated form often used by AV novices.

R- Return – the practice of dissolving from picture A to B then back again, originated in the slide days when programming devices such as the Kodak used "Half Advance/Return" for titles over a static shot.

A-Z of Audio Visual continued

S-Sections (or chapters) – something missing from many long AV sequences which fail to hold viewers interest because nothing really changes for many minutes. Sections allow authors to structure the progression of the "narrative" (even if there's no dialogue your show is still telling a story!) and inject "Forward Motion" - a sense that the audience has confidence that the author knows where the show is going. (Always a good thing).

Shift-focus – a fabulous effect for AV where 2 or more shots at differing focus settings are faded together.

T- Tension and Release are the basis of all drama, which in turn is the basis of much storytelling. Use it!

V-Variety – indispensible ingredient in your AV repertoire. Even a showcase of images set to music must have some variety or progression to hold interest.

W- WAV – an uncompressed audio file format.

X-XFactor – That indescribable ingredient making a sequence stand out from the crowd.

Y-You. Put something of yourself into the sequence. Consider songwriting or poetry as creative processes, in these usually authors draw on life experiences and infuse some of their values – why not in your AV?

Z- Zoom – An increase or decrease in image size. When used in moderation it can be effective in highlighting particular aspects of an image. Often over-used, it is best used very sparingly.

3rd Image – see Opacity.

Ray Lockett

Obituary Byron Heath

Byron Heath

It is with Great Sadness that the A/V Club of South Australia report the passing of Our Esteemed President on the 5th of April 2010. Byron joined the A/V club in 2005, and was a valued member. Three years ago Byron became the President, and he was a great promoter of our Club. Byron will be sadly missed by all members, and our thoughts are with his wife Moira and Family.

Carol Packwood

Hints from Ron Davies

The work of Ron Davies from the UK is well known to many members of the Division, but you may not know that Ron is a member of the Division.   His beautiful, usually very moving, sequences have won many awards.   Ron has produced a set of guidelines for making a sequence and has kindly agreed to their publication in our newsletter.

Images to single piece of music

The easiest type of sequence to produce is where a single piece of music is chosen and images are selected to interpret this. However, the relationship between the type of images and the music must be carefully considered. The mood of the music should be reflected in the content of the images. The music will play an important part in 'driving' the sequence, with the images being dissolved in time with the music without becoming too predictable. Long, slow dissolves and punchy, lively music, and vice versa, are not appropriate combinations. Any change in rhythm should be reflected in the dissolve rate and image change. If anything dramatic happens in the music then there must be a corresponding change on the screen. This type of sequence relies much more on the quality of the dissolves than those sequences with text.

Script writing

If text is used, the script may have been written before, at the same time as, or after the images have been taken. I prefer to write the script, or its broad outline first, then take the images to suit a storyboard. The storyboard may only be mental images stored in the mind or a set of rough notes or sketches of the type of images needed to complement the script.

Ideas for scripts may be culled from any source but I prefer to draw on personal experience and life-scripting, which determine attitude and values. In other words, I write about what I feel closest to and most strongly about.

A good script has a beginning, a middle and an end. Some refer to this as sonata form. It is essential to grab the attention of the audience immediately, to have a 'hook', then have a clear development of the idea with a satisfying end. You have only one chance to communicate your message to the audience, therefore it is important to write the script in short sentences which are easily assimilated. It is also important to allow the script to 'breathe', in other words, allow time for the audience to think about what is being said, rather than have continuous commentary throughout. The pauses will be determined by the complexity of the idea being conveyed. As a rough rule of thumb I would suggest that the script occupies no more than two-thirds of the total sequence time.

Hints from Ron Davies cont

It is essential to write words which are intended to be "spoken" rather than "read". We don't always speak in sentences, we speak in conversational style, which is different from descriptive passages in a book.

I try not to describe what can be seen on the screen but add information which would otherwise not be apparent. In other words I don't "talk to the slides" but use parallel commentary.

When writing the script, I keep in mind the "aim at the top of the light box", and do not include anything which does not contribute directly to the aim. This gives me a more structured and coherent production and stops me going off at a tangent. (This also applies to sorting the images.)

After I've written the basic script, I leave it for a while, then come back to it and see if I can improve it. I make sure it flows, I eliminate any superfluous words and I try to make the prose more poetic. The art is to convey as much meaning as possible in as few words as possible. I try to make the script as short and tight as possible, always bearing in mind the aim at the top of the light box.

I try to convey moods, impressions and feelings rather than facts and figures. Therefore I prefer to write stories in the first person in order to achieve this.

Examples, which illustrate some of the points mentioned, are as follows:-

In terms of a hook to grab the audience's attention in "The Survivors", the sequence starts in Polish. The Pole then introduces himself, speaking English in the first person.

When developing the idea I attempt to use imagery in the words with accompanying visuals, or vice versa.

In "Idwal Bach", the words "It felt like Sunday in my heart" are used. This statement is based on personal life-scripting of Welsh Methodist traditions, of hell and damnation, an awe of God, a fear of death, etc. This was an attempt to encapsulate all those feelings in one statement using the imagery of words. The accompanying visual image is of a Celtic cross, dissolved in and out of the previous image as a half advance return, to signify his thoughts.

Again, in "Idwal Bach", a lamb is used to signify the death of innocence and dashed hopes of a bright future when Idwal has to leave school to work in the slate mine. The accompanying words are "Sadness and pride came over me as I left my classroom for the last time. That, and a feeling of what might have been. I realised now what I was leaving behind but I couldn't let Mam down."

Hints from Ron Davies cont

Another example of visual imagery to complement the script is used in "King Cotton". A close-up of a large, round bottle glass window fades to two metal posts in the pavement outside the original Co-op building in Rochdale, This dissolve is used to depict "The cotton barons grew fat on their profits. The workers grew thin on their labours."

Also in "King Cotton" there are examples of poetic prose with imagery and music or rhythm in the words. "No more the wheezing of fibre-filled lungs, made noiseless by the deafening, lip-reading chatter of loom after loom after loom." "No more fingers split by mending never-ending broken threads."

In the sequence "Y Bugail Tal-y-Braich" (The shepherd of Tal-y-Braich) the shepherd comes home from the market and "A chorus of coins sing in his tattered pockets".

In terms of endings I have found that it is sometimes satisfying to come full circle, in other words end with a similar image to one I started with. For example, in "Idwal Bach" the sequence starts with a scene depicting the family home and its environment. The final image is a similar slide of the family home. The accompanying words, echoing the impact of events, are "Who will look after Mam now?"

Ron Davies

Photo Gallery

Chairperson Barb at Camberwell with Barbara M.

The APS Autumn AUDIO VISUAL Competition Judging at The Melbourne Camera Club Sunday May 2nd 2010

Names withheld to protect the guilty. (Names not supplied)

AV AUTUMN NATIONAL 2010

TITLE	Maker	RESULT	
Documentary			
THE SURVIVORS	Ron Davies	1st/Champion	Emrys was a POW and escapee in Poland during WW2. Stefan was the only survivor of the family who sheltered Emrys during his escape. A true story.
FROM OUT OF THE RUBBLE	Barb Butler	2nd	From devastation, through courage and determination, to a city proudly maintaining its heritage.
A PIONEER WOMAN	Barbara Mullins	Merit	The life of a pioneer woman, Georgina Molloy, after leaving England for Western Australia
NEW ZEALAND WALK	Barbara Mullins	Merit	A walk alongside a New Zealand river
AUSSIE TREES	Allen Russell	Acceptance	no summary
Theme/Humour/Natural History			
MUSIC IN SPACE	John Hodgson	1st	A celebration of the shapes and textures of contemporary architecture
THE ETIQUETTE OF EATING SOUP	Gabriel Knauth	2nd/Novice	A humorous interpretation of the Do's and Don'ts of eating soup
COLOURS OF GREECE	John Hodgson	Merit	An exploration of the colours and textures of the Aegean Islands

LAMENT OF THE HIGH COUNTRY	Barb Butler	Merit	In 2003 the High Country was devastated by bushfire. This sequence depicts the very slow pace of regeneration - it will take generations to return to what it was before.
NATURES HUES	Peter Bellmont	Acceptance	Designed to show nature's ability to create beautiful hues and the beauty of changing from monochrome to colour
FATAL ATTRACTION	John and Judith Hodgson	Acceptance	A chance discovery has lethal consequences
BEHOLD THE SEA	Max Biddleston	Acceptance	Photographed in Sardinia and Corsica, the images are of the sea, fishing boats and fishermen - their journey out to sea and their return

Music, Poetry or Song

PARADISE LOST	John and Judith Hodgson	1st	A lament for the loss of wilderness and wildlife caused by urbanisation
OUTBACK	Allen Russell	2nd	A poem from the heart of various facets of "my outback"
WINTEREISE	Judith Hodgson	Merit	A young man mourns the loss of his lover
ULURU	Alia Naughton	Merit	A story of Uluru told through poetry, music and images
YOUR MOVE	Neil Gray	Acceptance	A phantom game of chess
SUNRISE IN EGYPT	Alia Naughton	Acceptance	Starts with images of Egypt, to set the scene, then the poem begins, showing images taken at sunrise from a hot air balloon, acompanied with music.

18 Acceptances from 28 entries