

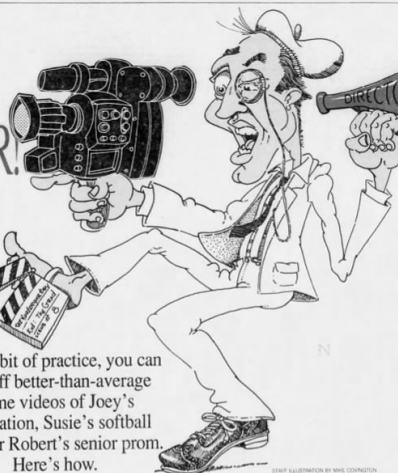
THE COURIER-JOURNAL
LOUISVILLE, KY.
MONDAY
MAY 6, 1991

FEATURES

LIGHTS! CAMCORDER! ACTION!



With a bit of practice, you can reel off better-than-average home videos of Joey's graduation, Susie's softball game or Robert's senior prom. Here's how.



STAFF ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE COLEMAN

By BOB DETLICH
Staff Writer

FOR NEARLY four years, Joe Nason has been the official video chronicler of his family's history: Birthdays, Eastern Christmas, Football and basketball games, Cheerleading camps, Gymnastics meets, Proms, Graduations. With his GE camcorder in hand, Nason has shot it all. And then some.

"He goes camera crazy sometimes," joked one of his three children, Amy, a senior at Jefferson High School. "Like at Christmas parties. He'll come up and tape you while you're watching TV or talking, and you're like, 'Dad, turn it off!'"

Not that Nason, a supervisor at the Ford Motor Co. Kentucky Truck Plant, doesn't occasionally try some more creative approaches.

"I've tried to get different shots; but when you get shots that sometimes you think are cute," Nason lamented, "other people, when they view them, don't think they're so cute."

More than 10 million video camcorders have been sold in the United States since 1981, when the gadget finally became a significant consumer product. In fact, camcorders recently ranked as the hottest-selling electronic product.

Yes, as this year's prom season rolls in, it's apparent that many amateur video enthusiasts have their hands full just getting something on tape, let alone worrying about crafting a piece of entertainment.

It doesn't have to be that way. With a bit of practice, almost anyone can reel off better-than-average home videos of lengths that are more watchable, from vignettes that are more intriguing and with story lines that are more interesting than many tapes currently shown in family room showcases.

What follows, just in time for graduation season, are tips from a variety of knowledgeable people, including Nason, and from publications like Video Review, Video Magazine and Popular Photography.

Perhaps the best overall advice, however, comes from Hilda Quisenberry, a frequent and media-arts specialist at Leno High School.

Quisenberry now is completing a video retrospective of the senior class at Leno. That means compressing four years of scenes involving all 200-plus students into about an hour of final tape. The effort has taken some 20 hours of after-school editing.

Think before you tape, urges Quisenberry, who decided only midway through her project to compile one epic video. "Had I realized four years ago what I was doing," she said, "I think I could have videotaped things better."

Meet your equipment

It sounds like a given, but many camcorder owners never sit aside time to learn where all the buttons are and what they do.

Put in a blank tape and experiment with the manual focus, the zoom, different lens openings and whatever options your equipment offers. Take shots of the same scene using different settings. Compare one setting in different locations — see the difference in clarity as you move from low indoor light to bright outdoor light, to outside shade, to outdoor sun.

Plan your shots

Even the simplest taping session can be improved by considering how you can best tell a complete story. That means including shots that show "where, who, what, when and why."

Start the story at the anniversary party with brief shots of the invitation, the food preparation and the pumping. Then get the guests arriving, the party, the gift.

Vary your shots

Whatever your shots, remember that the camcorder sees only what your fingers order. You must be a thorough transporter. Mix in a good amount of medium-range shots.

Interperse close-ups. They show the kind of detail and emotion that keep the story interesting. Fill the frame with a close-up.

The best way to mix the shots typically is to move between them, zoom in or widen out for the next shot, then resume shooting. Those "direct cuts" are more visually interesting than longer shots that ramble around.

Separate your scenes

One way to change scenes gracefully is to use the fade-out feature. If your camera has one...

If not, manually close the lens opening, or iris, to bring lights out on the scene, use the manual focus to blur in and out, or, as some creatively suggest, cover the lens slowly with a piece of jagged cardboard, like closing a curtain on the scene.

Another gimmick to be used sparingly: Have a human subject in your video walk toward the camera up to the lens to close a scene; then have someone walk away from the camera to begin the next scene. (Yes, you can do it.)

Play your angles

When you position your camera can change the feel of a scene. Kneeling and shooting from a low vantage point creates a more dominating, imposing view.

See BRING!
Back page, col. 1, this section

TIPSHEET



KEN NEUHAUSER

The best bet: Behind the eight ball

Many of the best amateur pool players in the country are competing in the Billiard Congress of America National 8-Ball Tournament today through Saturday at the Golf House East, Fourth Street and River Road. Spectators are welcome to drop by and watch. Daily hours are 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom. Admission is free. For some razzle-dazzle, be sure to see an exhibition with audience participation at 2 p.m. Wednesday. It features Paul Gerri, 61, recognized as the "World's Greatest Trick Shot Artist." He has been undefeated in official competition for trick shots and artistic pool since 1974.



Rockin' at the Pub

Scract, an all-female rock band from Columbus, Ohio, is performing concert at the Butcherblock Pub, 1333 Story Ave. The group, which released "Her Dream" on Rough Trade Records in 1989, is known for its "bristling snarling and whining harmonies," according to the pub's publicist.

Canastas, a group of rockers from Australia, will open the show at 8:30 p.m. The music will continue until midnight or a little later. The cover charge is \$5. You must be at least 21 to enter.

Mims the word

Lloyd L. Mims, who has been accepted as a baroque fellow for this summer's Bach Aria Festival in Stony Brook, N.Y., will present a faculty voice recital at 8 p.m. tomorrow in Stearns Hall at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2525 Lexington Road. The program will feature Schumann's "Dieckertel" and Brahms' "Lobenslieder Walters."

Mims will be accompanied by pianists Deborah Dirks and Dan Lawton, soprano Marie Jarrett Roberts and Sharon Lawton, and tenor David Smith. Admission is free.

A smart idea

The International Chapter of American Mensa Ltd., an international society for people with high IQs, is having its annual Derbyshire Gathering this week at the Golf House. While most of the activities are geared for members, there is one particular event many people may find curious enough to attend.

Local members will talk about Mensa and tests will be given for those who may wish to join at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the hotel's Grand Ballroom. The main requirement for membership is scoring in the 98th percentile on an IQ test or as indicated by SAT, ACT or GRE scores. For more information call (502) 265-4418.

"Redhead" appears Monday through Friday in the Features section.

BUYING POWER

BY LESLIE ELLIS

Paint by computer

Picking paint colors should rank high on any list of stress-provoking tasks. "Paint anxiety" goes like this: "You narrow your choice of colors after a confusing search through, say, 800 or 500 samples."

Then you take that paint chip, which is about the size of your thumb, and try to imagine an entire room, or the exterior of a house, painted in that color.

Alas! But now you can "paint" a room or the outside of your house on a computer screen and experiment with all kinds of colors and combinations before committing to even one gallon of Wythe Blue or Desert Dawn.

Disastrous color choices are dismissed simply by pressing an "Oops" button. The computers are in a growing number of paint stores. In the Louisville area they include nine Porter Paint stores, which have the ColorVision system. And Pittsburgh Paint's Accovision system is operating at Dages Paint Co. at 1149 E. Oak St. Color Concepts Paint and Decorating, 4925 Outer Loop, offers the Video Color Planner, from Benjamin Moore Paints. The systems are all similar and easy to use. You select colors by moving an arrow around on the screen and pushing a button.

Paint by computer

To "paint" the outside of a house, you choose a house style similar to your own from among dozens programmed into the system. A picture of it appears on the screen. (Systems that let you use a photo of your own house are in the testing stages.)

Then you can experiment with different color combinations for the walls, trim, window frames, garage door and other details.

Rooms are "painted" the same way. Call up a kitchen or living room or bedroom similar to your own. Then start playing with the colors. Or you can call up color combinations recommended by designers.

Ben Algorer, a salesman at Dages Paint, said the system helps take much of the guesswork out of choosing colors. Video tips like it too. "They want to know where to put the quarter."

Travel complaints

Vacations can quickly sour if the promises of a travel agent, or cruise line or tour operator don't pan out. Here are some tips on how to complain, and possibly get some of your money back, according to the Consumer Reports Travel Letter:

■ Try to solve the problem immediately.

Travel complaints

Contact the company's on-site representatives, or call your travel agent back home. If that doesn't work, try to haul out right away. It will strengthen your case for a refund later on. Get another hotel room or rental car, for example.

■ Increase what you paid for but didn't receive, or the monetary value of getting out of the bad situation. Forward the fine print so you know exactly what you were promised.

■ When you get home, write a complaint letter. Precisely describe the problem, including pertinent dates, room numbers, personnel you talked to, include names of other travelers who suffered the same problems. Keep it short and to the point.

■ If you think a refund is warranted, ask for a specific cash value. Keep in mind that a company may be more willing to offer credits for future service.

■ If your complaint elicits only a form letter, write again. Reassert your case, but be prepared to negotiate. You'll be lucky to get a partial refund. Set a deadline for the company to respond.

■ If you're still striking out, seek help from a government agency or trade group — the federal Department of Transportation. See BUYING POWER Page 4, col. 1, this section

INSIDE

- Ann Landers 4, 6
- Comics 4, 6
- Helaine Hand 4
- Lynette Doit 6
- Shelwood on Bridge 6
- Shore Clock 6



Sally Krawcheck battles an alien in a new tale on WORH-41 tonight. See Tom Dorsch, Page 2.

THE HAUNTED

See BUYING POWER Page 4, col. 1, this section