

# Aspiring filmmakers gain advice from expert at OCC

"Your frame's all right, but you're a bit jerky."  
 Some students might resent that statement, especially in a posture class, but advanced cinematographers at Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills are getting advice from an expert on how to manage a movie camera.

The Detroit area may be a boomtown when it comes to producing independent films, particularly industrial ventures, but academic training for young filmmakers is hard to find, according to Vic Hurwitz.

"This town grinds out independent films by the ton, but kids who have an interest in filmmaking should go to Hollywood or New York," advises the WWJ producer-director.

"It's just hard to find academic training in this area," he says, but he does his best to pass on his knowledge in his once-a-week class at OCC.

"I want these kids to know what goes into the production of a film," he says. "We hit techniques identical to those that a director uses in making 'King Kong' or 'Network.' But we're skimming."

Giving an overview of the mechanical aspects of filmmaking is still an expensive kind of class, which is why there's a lack of training, Hurwitz says.

"WHAT I'VE FOUND with most classes is that there's too much talk and not enough getting your hands on stuff and doing it. Film is almost a passe thing in schools because it's much easier to get television equipment."

To make sure his students literally have a hand in cranking out a film, the class' project is the production of a five-minute film, including script,

characterization, plot, sound, editing—"everything."  
 "They'll cast it, shoot it, cut the film, sound track, titling, music—you get the picture," he quips.

Fortunately for the students, the community college has some of the most expensive and technical accoutrements for cinematography of any school in Michigan.

"It's an expensive kind of class," he says, and a moviola at a cost of about \$4,000 allows students to work like professionals.

The machine allows the student to mark the film for editing, making a work print simultaneously, and is essential in synchronizing the sound track with the visual film.

Using this kind of equipment is not something most students get a chance to do, Hurwitz says, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm production-oriented, so this class is production-oriented," he says. "I ask them to do all they can do."

IN ADDITION to producing "Profiles in Black" and editorial opinions for WWJ, Hurwitz produces films, videotapes, and video cassette productions for his own company, Hurwitz Enterprises.

Although he would like to produce more films, his work is mainly limited to commercials. But he enjoys teaching the film class once a week.

"I wouldn't do it full-time, but I enjoy it this way. I really learn more than my kids do."

The 20 nervous novices in his class were busily engaged in criticizing a short exercise in camera work, most of them working for the first time with 16mm cameras, and enduring the sometimes embarrassing moments as cameramen for a variety of reasons.

Ted Villella has an avid interest in film and signed up for the class because the location was good and the prices are cheap.

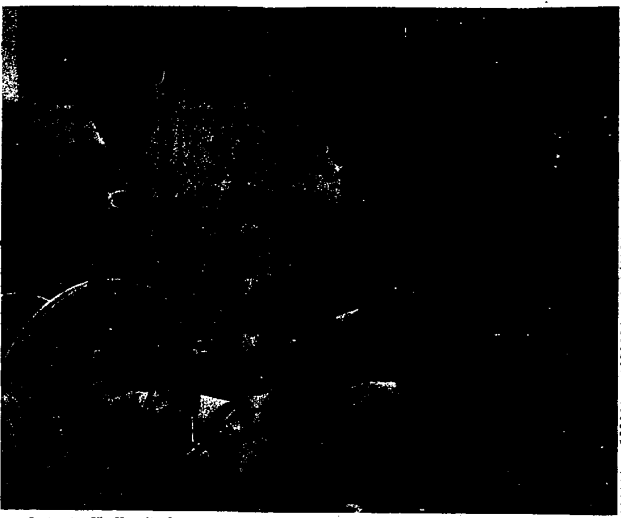
"I intend to go into psychological therapy, and I can see a lot of uses for film in that kind of work," says the student from White Lake.

"People are already using film in social work," he explains, and he enjoys editing, "the most important aspect of filmmaking," he says.

Dave Duda of Troy is in the photography program and the class is required as part of the curriculum. But Duda finds he's getting more interested in cinema rather than his prior interest in still photography.

LIKEWISE Nancy Miller of Livonia is taking the class as part of the photography program but thinks it will be useful in her future career as a freelance still photographer.

Perry Parker wants to start his own cinema business some day, and plans to work at a company like General Motors in the film department.



Instructor Vic Hurwitz demonstrates the capabilities of a \$4,000 moviola to his novice cinematographers at Orchard Ridge. (Staff photo)

## School action set for March

Farmington residents will have plenty to do to keep up with school district action in this month and into April.

Farmington School Board officially set the four-mill renewal election for April 5 at Tuesday night's meeting.

Numerous meetings were announced in other board action, including a meeting of the Task Force on Surplus Facilities at 4 p.m. March 8 in the administration building.

At 7 p.m. March 9 in the media center of Shiawassee Elementary School, 3015 Shiawassee, the Farmington Education Association will hold a public relations workshop.

The board of education will hold a regular meeting at 8 p.m. March 15 in William Grace Elementary School, 2940 Shiawassee, with a curriculum presentation on Cycle 11.

The Task Force on School Organizational Structure (SOS) will meet at 1:30 p.m. March 21 in the administration building. Dr. Roger Boline will

speak on the Open Meeting Act at 8 p.m. March 22 in the administration building.

The public is invited to attend all the school functions.

**Farmington Observer**

Published every Monday and Thursday by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48150. Second-class postage paid at Livonia, Michigan 48151. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579) to P.O. Box 2428, Livonia, Michigan 48151. Telephone 261-3800.

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