

# A little planning is called for

## Some advice from an expert on how to use your new camera

**I**F YOU GOT A video camera recently and want to make videos that reflect the quality of your equipment, take advice from some experts: Film your movies one scene at a time.

"The best thing to do is to set up a scene and shoot it for five seconds and then shoot another one," said Lou Tyrrell of New York City, who's 50-year film career includes covering Hudson's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Detroit Grand Prix for ABC-TV and producing, CBS Sports Spectacular for a decade.

"Don't pan! Let the people move. Everyone washes the camera around like a paint brush and only gets shakes. The times you should pan are few and far between, and you should know where you'll start and finish. Think about movies, there's very little panning."

Be it a birthday, sporting event or family gathering, keep the shots short and sharp. That saves film and sustains the interest of your viewers. "The whole thing should be under 30 minutes," Tyrrell said. "No one wants to sit through one that's long-

er. You don't want your audience walking out if the best stuff is at the end."

**A KEY TO** corner-cutting is planning. Make the movie in your mind before actually filming the events. This also eliminates the need for time-consuming editing of unwanted footage.

"If you plan for 20 minutes, that will pay off tremendously," Tyrrell said. "There's not a professional in film who doesn't know what he's going to shoot first, second and third."

"If it's a family dinner, start by shooting the whole table, and do it only once, and stop. Then shoot the host. Then alternate with closeups and shots of couples, so you don't get everyone like a jail shot. Wrap up with something on the table - the turkey or the cake - to change the scene. There you've got a complete show and you don't need to edit."

A cloudy day may be the best time to film your child sledding or skiing downhill, Tyrrell said, because sun-



**'Hold steady'** is the advice given by William Schneider of Super Video, Inc. to new video camera owners.

light reflects off the snow and "blinds" the camera.

"If you start at bottom of the hill, the closer the kid gets to you, the better the picture will be. But if you stand behind the child at the top of the hill and get him sliding down, the picture will be much better."

But for inside filming, too much lighting is never enough, according to Gerry Derwish, president of Troy Video. He said otherwise-good home videos are blighted by poor lighting.

"Most people will accept less than a perfect picture just to avoid carrying around auxiliary lights," Derwish said. "But if the room is dim, you lose color performance. Use as much light as you can indoors. People should buy extra light for sharp images. Store rent or sell free-standing or camera mounted lights. And low-power battery lights are less disconcerting for the subject."

It's best to shoot in different lighting situations to test the camera's light sensitivity.

**DEVICES ON** the video camera or camcorder, let you add finishing touches to your tapes.

Most have a fade button which, when pressed, will gradually black out the scene being filmed.

It's useful to separate different scenes, said Ed Swart, owner of Broadfield Electronics. It gives you a better impression that some time has elapsed.

Switching the camera to manual from automatic focus lets you take clear shots of different elements in a scene that appear in varying distances.

Most cameras focus on the majority of screen, Derwish said. What's closest to the camera comes in clearest. Manual focus allows you to go from a blurry to a clear subject. For example, if two people are standing one behind the other, you may want to focus on one person first and then on both later.

But if you're a novice, keep it simple, says William Schneider, president of Super Video, Inc. in West Bloomfield.

"Ninety percent of the people who rent camcorders from me are first-time users," he said. "I always tell them to leave it on automatic focus and automatic white balance (which controls the light exposure)."

Schneider said the manual functions may be necessary in heavy-action scenarios, like car racing or concerts.

"If there's constant movement, the camera is constantly going to shift its lens, so it's going to develop a blurry picture," he said. "If it's possible, it's best to know ahead of time how people are going to move so you can use the manual to stay in continuity with them."

**NO TECHNOLOGY**, however, can compensate for a lumpy photographer. With a hand-held camera the reason for error is small.

A very disturbing thing about small cameras is that you can't hold them still, Tyrrell said. "With a camera weighing three pounds or less, it's almost impossible. Every little wiggle of your hand will show up."

Derwish suggests using a tripod when possible, while Tyrrell recommends using a shoulder brace, which he says costs around \$40, or simply training yourself to be still.

Other cavates include:

"When filming, keep all light behind you, never behind the subject and between the subject and the camera."

If there are candles on the dinner table, don't let them get between your camera and the subject."

Know how your camera is programmed on play or record or on manual or automatic focus and white balance. Make sure you don't switch modes while filming.

Take care of the camera and batteries. Keep both away from sand and water. Recharging batteries only when they're exhausted prevents their life. "Most of the service problems I see are due to abuse and mistreatment," Swart said.

Label recorded tapes to avoid confusing them with blank ones.

## DIA volunteers begin 29th year of service

The 507-member Volunteer Committee of the Founders Society, Detroit Institute of Arts, has started its 29th year of dedication to the museum. The group gave 61,123 hours of service during the 1989-90 year.

Volunteers donate their time and talent on eight separate service com-

mitters. They present docent-guided tours in the museum to the public and school groups. Slide talks are given in schools in the metropolitan Detroit area. They coordinate mailings, staff the museum shop, assist visitors at information desks and in the galleries. The beautification of

the lobbies with plants and flowers is another task completed by volunteers. Memberships are increased by their enthusiasm and many hours of service.

Serving on their 46-member board of directors are Farmington area residents Betty Shaffer, co-chairman

of Rewards and Awards; Florence Nitzkin, vice chairman of Welcome, and Elaine Gundersen, liaison chairman to Friends of Art and Flowers.

For information on serving on the Volunteer Committee of the Detroit Institute of Arts, call the Auxiliary Services Office at 833-9247.

## Nursery school opens enrollment Feb. 4

Farmington Presbyterian Nursery School staff will be taking enrollment for the 1991-1992 school year.

There are two-day-a-week and three-day-a-week programs. Each class consists of 18 children led by two teachers.

The Monday, Wednesday, Friday

morning or afternoon classes are for children who turn 4 years old before Dec. 1, 1991.

The Tuesday, Thursday morning class is for children who turn 3 years old before Sept. 1, 1991. The Tuesday, Thursday afternoon class is for children who turn 4 years old by

March 1, 1992.

Enrollment for the Monday-Wednesday-Friday morning class will be Feb. 4, Monday-Monday-Wednesday-Friday afternoon enrollment will be Feb. 6. Enrollment for the Tuesday-Thursday morning class will be Feb. 5 and Feb. 7 will be for

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## Artstart Preschool takes registrations

Artstart Preschool and Kindergarten is now taking registrations for fall 1991.

The school's focus is on the cre-

ative arts with students learning through a variety of activities in art, music, drama and science.

Students in preschool and kinder-

garten are from 2 1/2 to 6 years old. Summer camp is for children from 3 years through third grade. The school, at 21195 13 Mile Road, is

open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, all year round.

Inquiries are taken by Sue Ingram, 626-2850.

## 50 jobs available

Fifty human service jobs are available for group home providers. Caring people are needed to form non-profit organizations to provide group home care for people with developmental disabilities.

To find out about the personal rewards of helping and use your management and human services skills, call the Macomb-Oakland Regional Center at 286-2780.

If you want to know what's going on in your community, read The Observer & Eccentric

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