

Sets help channel surfers catch a show's wavelength



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These days, television remote controls are almost as common as televisions themselves. "Channel Surfing" is a part of living in the '90s. It's also one of the ways Channel 12, our local community access channel, has widened its view-

You might want to build your own flats for background design. Flats are pieces of 2 by 4 wood nailed together in a rectangle with cloth stapled over them and painted. You may want to cover the flats with scenic murals purchased from the wallpaper store. What about asking the carpet store for the cardboard tube used to roll carpets? Paint the tubes, vary the lengths and stagger them on the set. How's that for an economical and unique design?

Set the mood with lighting. Lights can create a somber, light-hearted or intense atmosphere. Background lighting, as well as the use of colored gels are options. Have you ever heard of a cookie, that's short for cuculorous? It is a cut-out pattern which when placed in front of a spotlight produces a shadow pattern. These shadow patterns come in everything from cityscapes to clouds to the Statue of Liberty. This is another inexpensive idea for a backdrop.

What about using a lighting stick found at the local hardware store? This is a long thin line of fluorescent light that may be set on the floor behind the talent giving the illusion of a horizon where the light is brighter at the bottom and dissolves as it goes to the top. Yards of fabric and drapes

hanging from the ceiling look great, too. With the magic of fish line, you can hang other props from the ceiling as well. You might want to bring some items from home to use as props. For example, stuffed animals would look great on a children's set.

What about shooting on location for a different look? Or calling a local furniture store to deliver furniture the day of your show in return for mention in the credits? Florist shops are oftentimes willing to lend silk or fresh floral arrangements for mention in the

credits also. Catch those Channel Surfers — hook them in by taking a little time and effort and creating something special. Your imagination is your only limit. SWOCC even has grant money available for allocation to set design. Leigh

Byrd and Jon Whitener are more than willing to help you with your questions or concerns. The same goes for MetroVision's production specialists Marcie Hensley, Joan Lillis and SWOCC's production specialists Donnell Conway and Todd Whitman.

ing audience. When viewers stop their surfing to sample a program, it has to do not only with the content of the show, but the appearance as well. Channel 12 producers, don't underestimate the importance of set design in your pre-production plans. As MetroVision's Community Access coordinator Leigh Byrd and production specialist Jon Whitener told me, "If you want your show to be unique, show it in your set." Both Leigh and Jon gave me some ideas on how to put together an unusual set.

It's important to watch TV and make a list of things that catch your eye. See how the professionals use flats, lighting and props as effective elements in the area of set design.

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