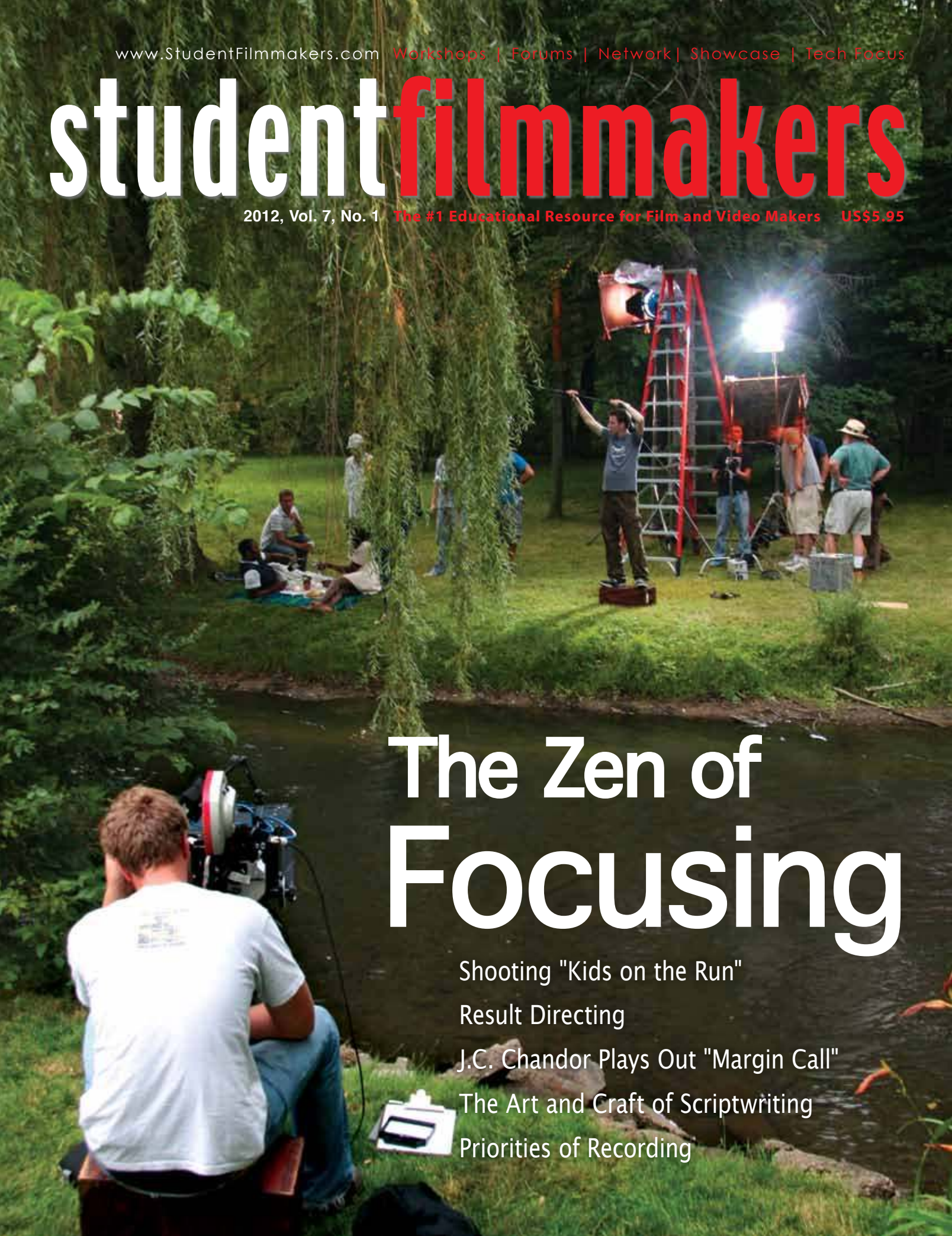
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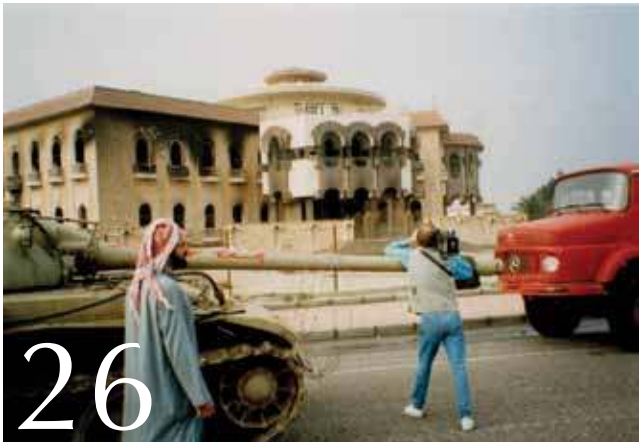
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On the Cover:

Setting up "evening picnic" scene, shot from across the river. *To Live and Die in Dixie,* film shot by Jack Anderson.







Publisher's Desk

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The # 1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers



This exciting, new edition of *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine highlights educational articles in the categories of Cinematography, Directing, and Production. Filmmakers and writers in this issue discuss working with various cameras including the digital cinema cameras, DSLRs, professional camcorders, and more.

In the article, "The Zen of Focusing," Jack Anderson writes about the most critical aspect of the first camera assistant's job: keeping the picture in focus. "Shooting Kids on the Run," highlights a key scene where several DSLRs were used to capture various perspectives. In "Never Stop Shooting," Scott Spears discusses an important rule in filmmaking. David Lent shares his "Five Keys to Mastery," Check out the vintage photo of Dave with an early Panasonic camera. Close Up interviews in this edition feature J.C. Chandor, Rashaad Ernesto Green,and Sam Levinson. Check out the filmmakers in the Networking Department who created and produced contest-winning films. Enjoy all the great articles and departments in this issue!

Never stop learning. Never stop networking.

Truly,
Kim E. Welch
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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The Zen of Focusing

by Jack Anderson

On the surface focusing seems simple enough.

During a blocking rehearsal, marks are laid (that's the job of the second) to indicate the places on the set where the actors will be stopping and standing during a scene. The first assistant measures the distance from the focal plane (on the camera) to each actor's position using a cloth or fiberglass tape. The first makes notes or memorizes the distances that will need to be set when the scene is shot. The director calls "Action," and the first, using the geared knob attached to the barrel of the lens, adjusts the focus to whatever distance the actor is from the camera as the scene proceeds. Voila!

Well, not so fast, my friend. The first thing that can go wrong is that actors often don't hit their marks; or they lean; or they move suddenly. You need to have a really good mental measuring tape in your head. You have to react to errors by actors and to erratic moves and to moves that were never rehearsed. You have to know which of several actors in the scene is most important and make sure you keep the focus on them. You have to try to keep several actors in a shot in acceptable focus all the time—even though this is impossible, according to the laws of physics.

All this time, you are standing next to the camera, eyes at the film plane (the precise place where the film is when it's exposed). One eye is on the actor, one eye is on the lens. This leaves no eyes to look at the video monitor, so forget it. It's just a distraction anyway. It's also tough to see the scene and the lens unless you're walleyed. We all develop routines to deal with it. (I look at the corner of the matte box, so the actor is in my left peripheral vision and the lens markings are in my right. It's tricky.)

You may have gotten the idea by now that the job of focusing is a hard job that takes a long time to learn. Yes. The first time on a set, I couldn't believe regular human beings did this job: *without looking through the viewfinder*! And that's just as well because if you tried to focus through the viewfinder or by using a monitor you'd always be lagging



"An evening picnic by a river." *To Live and Die in Dixie*, film shot by Jack Anderson.