

Video Is A Key Tool in Oral History Say Village History Consultants

<http://mailchi.mp/8897a895b7e3/videogram-june-2017?e=7ec4040826>

NOTE: The Video Club of Laguna Woods has a proud record of past achievement in the service of history, having recorded scores of videos with the then Leisure World Historical Society as part of the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.



"Oral history is the history of the everyday, the average person, not the powerful and successful who dominate conventional history," according to sisters Cindy (left) and Jennifer Keil, consultants to the Laguna Woods Village History Center, pictured at right with

President Steve Carman. **The two discussed the key role video plays in their approach to oral history** at the Video Club's May 18 General Meeting.

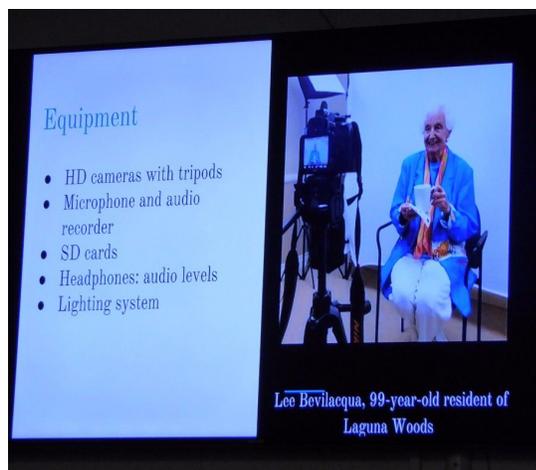
Below, Dean O. Dixon, Chief Executive Officer, and his wife Gail S. Dixon, Chief Administrative Officer of the Laguna Woods History Center, were guests at the meeting to hear the Keils' presentation.



Through their Newport Beach-based firm, [ChismeChick](#), **the Keils are pioneering a 21st-Century approach to the Village's history**, involving video interviews linked with written materials -- readily accessible online to multiple generations. Videos are transcribed and indexed with a YouTube-based indexing system developed at the University of

Kentucky. They explained that, balancing its "digital presence," the Village's Community Oral History Project is coordinated through a "physical home," which hosts meetings, selects interview candidates, and manages budgets, among other activities.

The Keils recall growing up in a "household of book-lovers" and both hold master's degrees from CSU Fullerton -- which, they stressed, "has an amazing oral history collection." Detailing their video interview procedures, **they offered useful video tips for club members who often find themselves recording memories with family and friends.** Here's how ChismeChick does it:



Slide at right lists equipment used by the Keils to video 99-year-old Village resident Lee Bevilacqua for the History Center.

1. Plan carefully. Advance steps include completing agreement forms and gathering background information. Request photos and documents with captions and titles. Do a pre-interview in-person or on Skype. Be aware that the pre-interview can be an emotional experience for the subject.

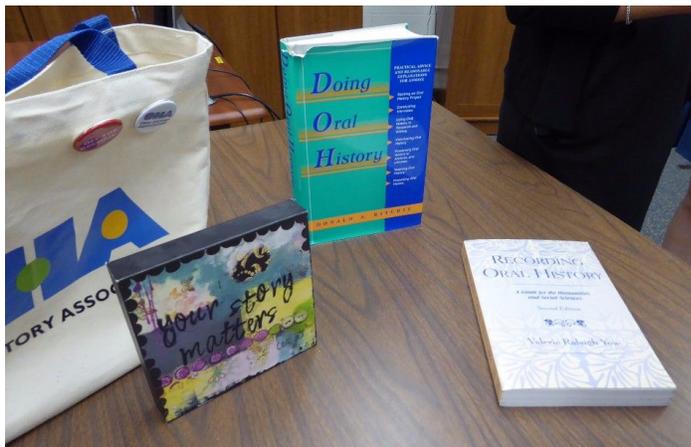
2. Conduct the interview in a controlled environment. Use quality equipment, including an external mic for good sound. Light the scene carefully, using three-point lighting, with key, fill, and backlight. Keep the background simple. To put the subject at ease, offset the camera (so it's not in the subject's face). Pre-test all technical elements so that full attention can be paid to the subject during the interview.

3. Remember that everyone has a story to tell.

4. In post-production, the Keils use Adobe's Premier Pro and After Effects. They also employ special equipment to make a word-for-word transcript, which is sent to the subject for review and clarity, then provided to the host center. Finally the video and other documents are uploaded to the website, lagunawoodshistory.org/, and deposited in the History Center archives. All raw video and other media are retained.

5. Be mindful of what you share publicly and of who owns the shared material.

6. Be cautious in how you store history. Consider every method to protect valuable data. "Since we don't know what the future holds, we use multiple storage options," explained Jennifer Keil, adding that oral historians rarely adopt the latest technology, but instead seek tools that are widely used.



Resources the Keils

recommended include the website oralhistoryonline.org for technical methodology, USC's Shoah Foundation (an Institute for Visual History and Education), the Southwest Oral History Association (to which Jennifer Keil is the California delegate), and materials

pictured here, *Your Story Matters*, *Doing Oral History*, and *Recording Oral History*.