

The SMPTE Technical Conference — A History

By Carol King

Since its inception, the SMPTE has been committed to the education of its membership via meetings and conferences that allow the exchange of information as well as the debut of new technologies. In celebration of the Society's 75th anniversary, this article traces the history and growth of the Society's 132 technical conferences and mentions some of the highlights of those years.

Conference Program

The Early Years

In 1916 the first SMPE meeting was held in Washington to discuss the possibility of forming a technical body in the motion-picture industry. It was attended by nine interested parties, some of whom traveled from Chicago, New York, Boston, and Cleveland. Interest at that meeting was so great that by the Society's first anniversary in 1917, four meetings had already been held. By 1921, SMPE meetings had taken place in New York, Atlantic City, Chicago, Rochester, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Dayton, and Buffalo. All of the Society's meetings were held in hotels or resort areas until 1985, when they began to alternate between convention centers in New York and Los Angeles.

Originally the Society's conferences were held two to three times a year. In 1918 they became biannual events held in the spring and the fall of each year. This tradition lasted until 1975, when they were reduced to one a year. Of note, the first six meetings were all two-day events. Because of the influx of quality papers submitted for the conference program, it was later expanded to three days, and by 1922 the first four-day meeting was held in Dayton.

Although the SMPE has always been entertained by some of the prominent firms whose representatives were members of the organization, it was at the 1926 Spring Conference, in Washington, that it



The Apparatus Exhibit at the 1931 Spring Conference included the first historical exhibit of the SMPE.

was received by the Motion Picture Operators' Union, the first occasion that the Society was treated to a social function that was sponsored by another technical association.

It was also at this conference that the Society was received by the White House, and President Calvin Coolidge graciously permitted himself to be photographed in the midst of a group of Society members.

The 1930s

The conference papers programs continued to develop and expand. The 1931 Spring Conference, held at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, became the first five-day conference. Before this meeting, an announcement was made by the Papers Committee requiring that all manuscripts be submitted by April 1, 1931, to allow a one-month period of review. The committee noted that such a procedure was necessary in order to apply uniform standards for all papers accepted for the program. Plans were also announced for the distribution of abstracts and preprints at future conferences so that attendees would know the general character of the program and not miss sessions that were of particular interest to them.

In order to make the papers program more interesting and to create a competitive climate, a prize was awarded at the end of each session to the person who presented a paper in

the most interesting manner. This contest was also held at the following conference in Swampscott, Mass.

Owing to the prevailing conditions of the Great Depression, the 1932 Fall Conference was held for one day only at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, coinciding with a meeting of the New York Section. In 1933 it was deemed advisable to limit the number of conventions to one, which was again held at the Hotel Pennsylvania from April 24 to 28. However, this decision was later overturned, and a 1933 Fall Convention was held in Chicago, where attendees were able to take advantage of the Century of Progress World's Fair and see the exhibits.

The 1937 Fall Conference, held in New York, was graced by the presentations and demonstrations of three promising and immediate-future developments of outstanding importance to the industry: stereophony, stereoscopy, and television. As part of the conference, a television demonstration was arranged by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and held at the RCA building.

As these new technologies developed, the conference attendance grew. At the 1939 Spring Convention in Hollywood, attendance at each session never fell below 150 persons. In fact, to accommodate the large number of people who could not leave work during the day, evening sessions

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were added to the conference program.

The SMPE convention again coincided with the World's Fair in the fall of 1939 in New York. Several sessions were presented at the Fair, and attendees were able to visit exhibits by RCA, Eastman Kodak Co., and AT&T, where they saw a demonstration of two-channel recording and reproduction on steel tape. A number of SMPE delegates participated in the demonstration by having their conversations recorded. It was not until the 1964 Fall Convention in New York that the convention was again held at the same place and time as the World's Fair.

The 1940s

At the 1940 Fall Conference, held in Hollywood, it was decided that each third semiannual conference would be held in Hollywood. This way, the results of the annual elections and the presentation of the Society's Annual Progress and Journal Awards would be made alternately on the East and West Coasts.

Despite the difficulties brought on by World War II, the SMPE conference committees proceeded with their tasks. A decision was made to continue with the traditional two conferences a year, as long as they did not interfere with the war effort. In fact, it was felt that the continuance of Society activities was important in an age when both peacetime and wartime activities were so highly technical.

At the 51st Semi-Annual Conference, held in Hollywood in 1942, sessions continued to be offered during the evening to accommodate working members. According to reports on this conference, attendance was high, and the success of this event was all the more outstanding in view of the existing war effort and the fact that so many of the Society's technical members were contributing to this effort.

A number of presentations at the conference described the applications and uses of motion pictures in the U.S. Navy and Army forces. Much interest was devoted to a paper on "Audio Visual Aids to Naval Training" presented by William Exton, Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve, and a paper on the "Motion-Picture Camera in the Army Air Forces" by Guy J. Newhard, Wright Field.

The 52nd Semi-Annual Conference was held in the fall of 1942 in New



Actor Walter Abel (left) discussing the events of the industry with SMPTE President Loren L. Ryder during the 64th Semi-Annual Convention.

York. The technical sessions included seven presentations that dealt with the uses and applications of motion pictures in the prosecution of war and a number of other papers on industrial applications of motion pictures in the war industries. The armed forces were well represented on the program. In fact, a session was held at the Photographic Center of the U.S. Army Signal Corps at Astoria, Long Island. Attendance at the conference was way above expectations.

The 53rd Semi-Annual Conference of 1943 also met in New York. Despite the secrecy of wartime developments, various governmental departments were represented in 40 presentations, and 20 papers were read by members of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, the National Archives, and the Library of Congress. During an evening session, attendees were treated to an interesting compilation of Nazi propaganda films as a demonstration of the powerful uses for which motion pictures can be used.

Because of the wartime paper preservation program, there are limited *Journal* reports on the activities of the 54th, 55th, 56th, and 57th SMPE Conferences, held from 1943 to 1944. It is known that the conferences were strictly technical, focusing only on the applications of motion pictures to war needs, and because of food rationing,

it was decided to dispense with all social functions until the end of the war. Out-of-town attendance at these events was not promoted, in cooperation with governmental regulations on transportation and hotel accommodations.

At the 59th Semi-Annual Conference held in the spring of 1945, conference activities resumed as normal. Over 400 registrants attended the event and all prewar social functions continued.

As the 1940s came to a close, the semiannual meetings showed a large and growing interest in technical presentations on television. The 62nd Semi-Annual Conference, held in the spring of 1947, offered a session and a demonstration of large-screen television, which attracted an audience of 450 people. The 65th Semi-Annual Conference held in 1949, attracted record attendance due to a special forum on the use of films in television. In the fall of 1949, at the 66th Semi-Annual Conference, SMPE President Earl Sponable announced the recommendation of a name change to SMPTE.

The 1950s

The 68th Semi-Annual Conference was held October 16 to 20, 1950, at the Lake Placid Club in New York. It was the first meeting in many years to be

held away from a large city, and it was designed to rekindle the comradeship that had characterized earlier conventions. It was felt that this was necessary since increased membership, and the opportunity to "do a little business" between sessions, had depersonalized the semiannual conventions. The conference included sufficient free time between sessions to make and renew friendships and to view the equipment display in the lobby. However, it was later realized that the remote location made it impractical for those who wanted to attend for only one or two days or who wished to be on hand only to hear specific papers.

In the spring of 1951, the conference moved to larger meeting facilities in the Hotel Statler in New York, because of increased attendance. Approximately 659 registrants came to hear a record number of 60 papers presented in 12 technical sessions.

A heavier-than-usual program was offered at the 70th conference, held in Hollywood, as 600 attendants heard 65 presentations during 12 sessions. The close technical ties between motion pictures and television were clearly apparent throughout the convention, and it was at this conference that the first David Sarnoff Gold Medal Award was presented for technical contributions to television.

As part of the 72nd Semi-Annual Convention, held in the fall of 1952, the SMPTE held the first International Symposium on High-Speed Photography. The two-day, seven-session event attracted an audience of over 200 people, many from overseas.

The 73rd Semi-Annual Convention indicated a renewed interest in motion pictures as a result of several new developments. According to the opening address by SMPTE President Herbert Barnett, not since the advent of sound had greater interest in motion pictures been evident. This was bought about through 3-D films, wide-screen projection, and stereophonic sound. A special session on CinemaScope was held at Twentieth Century-Fox, and sessions on widescreen and 3-D processes were offered at Universal Studios. The conference was attended by a rousing 1333 people, the largest registration ever.

The 75th Semi-Annual Conference was held at the Hotel Statler in Washington, D.C., May 3 to 7, 1954. To celebrate the 75th conference, a spe-



Suzanne Charles was crowned Miss SMPTE by President John G. Frayne at the 79th conference held in New York.

cial Pioneers Dinner was held, which honored 26 members who had joined the Society in 1924 or earlier.

The convention returned to Lake Placid in the fall of 1955. The program offered several roundtable discussions in an attempt to evaluate some of the industry trends in studio and lab practices, projection and viewing aspects, high-speed photography applications, and television practice. Fewer papers were presented to permit more time for discussion. Also, for the first time, the convention offered a small session on educational television with the purpose of acquainting members with the activities of this rapidly growing field.

The 1956 Spring Conference, held in New York, had a welcome increased attendance from outside the U.S. Registrants came from Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Holland, Japan, Switzerland, and Venezuela. In addition to the equipment exhibit, a display of historical technical equipments was featured.

The 1957 Fall Conference, which

began on a Friday night, was the first conference to be held over a weekend. It was also the first time that a press conference was held as part of the event. The President, Engineering Vice-President, and Program Chairman met with representatives of the trade and daily press and discussed the details of the conference program.

The 1960s

The Society made an impressive entrance into the 1960s with its 87th conference, held in the spring. The program featured 80 papers and attracted an audience of 1100 attendees, the largest in seven years. For the first time the registration area, technical sessions, and exhibit facilities were concentrated in one area of the hotel, which helped to make the event more successful than usual. The technical sessions emphasized the dawning space age and the important role motion pictures would play in reporting the findings of space-probing instruments.

The theme of the 1961 Spring Con-

ference, "International Achievements in Motion Pictures and Television," drew a greater number of overseas registrants than usual. Representatives from Italy, Sweden, England, Japan, France, Czechoslovakia, the Union of South Africa, and the USSR were in attendance. The conference attracted four times as many people as were expected, and a near disaster occurred when 350 people showed up for a buffet dinner that was planned for 75 people.

The 1965 Spring Conference attracted a record attendance of 2700 registrants and offered the largest papers program yet, with 130 papers in 20 sessions. A special session, Aerospace Photography, was graced by the presence of Captain William A. Anders, an astronaut from NASA. Also, during the papers presentations comedian Jerry Lewis, who had recently joined the Society, delivered a quasi-technical speech. This conference was the first to make available preprints of technical papers.

The 1965 Fall Conference, held in Montreal, was described as the most well-balanced, best-attended, and most internationally oriented conference to date. Television received the greatest emphasis ever, as the subject

of more than 40% of the technical presentations. Approximately 23% of the papers came from outside of the U.S. The conference program was bilingual, both English and French, and over 3000 people came to hear the 113 conference papers.

In 1966, the Society celebrated its 100th conference in Los Angeles. An important adjunct of the celebration was a historic equipment display. A President's Luncheon was also held honoring Hollywood's top film technicians and SMPTE charter members, and silver-dollar-size souvenir medallions were given away to all attendees.

The decade closed with a bang as over 3500 people attended the 1969 Fall Conference, which was held in Los Angeles. It was at this event that a new program format was introduced: The first three days featured sessions on a wide variety of subjects, including laboratory practices, instrumentation and high-speed photography, and theater presentation and projection. The final two days of the conference program centered on only one topic, Super 8 film production, which was addressed in a symposium that covered the problems, advantages, and techniques of Super 8. This program format continued until the 114th con-

ference, which was held in the fall of 1973.

The 1970s

At the 107th conference, held in Chicago in 1970, the final two days covered film production for television, and attendance was very high. Instead of preprints, a booklet of synopses was distributed to conference registrants, which has now become a conference standard.

The 111th conference, held in New York in 1972, was the most successful in recent years. The conference theme, "The New Filmmaker," attracted a total registration of 3500 people, many of them students from as far away as California. Over 50 student members joined the Society during the six-day event.

In 1973, at the 114th conference, the two-day symposium format was discontinued. Instead, many new topics were discussed, such as electronic journalism and digital techniques in television.

The following year, at the 115th conference in Los Angeles, Executive Vice-President Ken Mason gave the opening presentation for President Bryon Roudabush, who was ill. In his address, Mason noted that there was a



Jerry Lewis delivered a quasi-technical speech entitled "New Techniques in Motion-Picture Production" at the 97th conference, held in 1965 in Los Angeles.

growing demand for one conference a year because of the cost, for both members and exhibitors, in attending two conference a year. That summer, at a Board of Governors meeting, it was resolved to hold one major conference a year, in the fall, beginning in 1975.

The first SMPTE Annual Technical Conference, held in Los Angeles, was the largest and most successful conference in the Society's history. Over 1200 people registered, and the 110 papers had an international flavor, since some authors traveled from Japan, France, England, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Canada. Mini-conferences were held during the evening for the benefit of working and student members. In addition, a production seminar and equipment demonstration was held at Twentieth Century-Fox.

Over 180 papers were presented at the 120th conference in New York City. At times during the 13 sessions, attendance exceeded seating. A session on digital television was the highlight of the conference program.

The decade closed with the 121st conference, with the theme "Our International Society." It attracted al-

most 10,000 registrants, with over 200 coming from outside the U.S.

The 1980s

Records were broken at the 123rd conference held in Los Angeles. Attendance was over 10,000 and 150 papers were presented on the theme, "Techniques and Technology for the 1980s." Because of the size of the crowd, technical sessions were held in Theaters I and II of the Century Plaza Hotel. That year, President Charles Anderson announced that because of the rapid innovations in the film and television industry and because of the need for additional exhibit space the convention would move to larger quarters, the Los Angeles Convention Center, for the 125th conference.

The move to a convention center was a good one. In 1983, 13,000 people attended the 125th conference, a new record, and 111 papers were presented in 18 sessions.

In 1984, the conference was held in New York at the Hilton and Sheraton Centre hotels. It was the most successful conference in New York history, with attendance of 12,500 and a program of 111 papers, 11 of which came from other countries. In fact, it was

the first year that a paper was presented from the People's Republic of China.

The conference returned to the Los Angeles Convention Center in 1985, and it was a smash. Over 15,600 people attended, and 130 papers were presented. Comparative demonstrations of HDTV systems and improved NTSC systems were featured, as well as a demonstration of analog and digital components. Also, the world's first all-digital production was aired.

In 1986, the 128th conference took place at the new Jacob Javits Convention Center. It was the first time in New York City that all meetings, demonstrations, and sessions took place under one roof. There was also a new conference format as the meeting opened over the weekend. The event attracted a new attendance record, 16,500 people.

The following year, at the Los Angeles Convention Center, over 17,000 people attended. Because of the size of the crowd, all sessions were concurrent to prevent overflow. A highlight was a continuous screening of HDTV material, jointly sponsored by the SMPTE and the MPTEJ.

The conference closed the decade



During the Get-Together Luncheon at the 109th conference, actor Gregory Peck made a heartfelt plea for attendance at the 50th anniversary gala of the Motion Picture and Television Relief Fund.

by making history. At the 131st conference the first transmission of a live all-digital HDTV signal was sent by satellite from Japan to the Los Angeles Convention Center. Conference attendees were able to view a live presentation given by Tsuguyoshi Itoh, NTV Corp., EIZO Center, which aired from Japan. The transmission included colorful film clips and theatrical releases. In addition, a record number of 179 papers were presented during 23 concurrent sessions, and a special all-day tutorial on digital technology was held.

The 1990s

Since this decade has just begun, the SMPTE has much to look forward to. The Society continues to keep pace with new technologies and to offer innovative forums for the exchange of information. A serious and attentive audience of 12,000 came to the 131st Conference held in New York, to hear 130 papers on the theme "Film and Television — One World?" A variety of topics were covered, including digital television processing, film presentation technology, advanced technology, and high-definition electronic production standards.

This year at the 133rd conference, to be held in Los Angeles, an all-day seminar and three hands-on workshops will complement the traditional papers presentations. "Advanced Motion Imaging — Enhancing the Universal Language," will be the theme of the conference, and approximately 150 papers are expected to be presented, covering such topics as computer imaging, high-resolution films, fiber optics, digital sound, and electronic editing. The event will also cater to students as well as professionals with a Student Fair that will showcase the technical aspects of motion pictures and television.

The SMPTE is ready for what the 1990s and beyond will bring. All developments and challenges will be met with the same solid educational program that the Society has been devoted to since 1916.

The Equipment Exhibit

Demonstrations

Initially, the idea of holding equipment exhibits as part of the conferences was rejected because the Society wanted to avoid pure commercialism. However, as part of the



MPAA President Jack Valenti (left) and actor Darren McGavin at the 109th conference.

1923 Spring Convention, held in Atlantic City, there was a symposium on motion-picture projectors for home and educational use. Manufacturers were invited to present short technical descriptions of their products, accompanied by a demonstration if they so desired.

Presentations by manufacturers continued to be a solid part of the conference program. In 1926, conference attendees were given the first demonstration of sound reproduction in motion pictures when Dr. DeForest showed the Phono-Film. During 1927 and 1928, conference attendees saw demonstrations of the Vitaphone, Movietone, and Photophone.

New Apparatus Exhibit

It was at the 1931 Spring Convention in Hollywood, that the equipment exhibit began to take shape. At that event, arrangements were made for a New Apparatus Exhibit. The display consisted of motion-picture apparatuses that had been developed or improved within the past 12 months. In keeping with the spirit of education only, no pamphlets, advertisements, or promotional literature was allowed in the exhibit area. The exhibit space, which was available at no charge, housed 24 participating manufacturers.

The New Apparatus Exhibit became a regular feature at the conferences. In fact, a Committee on Exhibition was formed at the Board of Governors Meeting in Washington, D.C. In 1932, at the fall convention in New York, the Society began charging exhibitors in accordance with the amount of space they occupied.

At the 1935 Spring Convention held in Hollywood, the exhibit name was changed to Studio Practice and Equipment Exhibit. In addition to the usual commercial equipment, all studios were urged to participate by exhibiting any particular equipment or devices that they had constructed to solve their individual problems, conform to their particular operating conditions, achieve economies in production, facilitate their work, or improve their production. There was no charge to participate in this exhibit, and the large turnout indicated the members' appreciation of this conference feature. To complement the exhibit, an Apparatus Symposium was held, where some of the equipment on display was detailed.

The name of the exhibit was changed back to New Apparatus Exhibit for the 1935 Fall Conference and the 1936 Spring Conference, and manufacturers continued to demonstrate new products at no charge.

However, because of limited space at the conference hotels, symposiums were held instead of exhibits from the 1936 Fall Conference to the 1937 Fall Conference. At the 1938 Spring Conference, the New Apparatus Exhibit made its reappearance.

Equipment and Services Exhibit

The Equipment and Services Exhibit made its debut at the 77th Semi-Annual Conference held at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, April 18 to 22, 1955. Although exhibitors were charged for their booth space, interest was great. Approximately two dozen manufacturers of motion-picture and television equipment participated.

As demand for space grew, so did the equipment exhibit. In 1956, nearly half of the allotted exhibit space had been reserved six months before the 79th Semi-Annual Conference was held in New York, April 29 to May 4. By December, 26 of 32 booths were reserved. At the following conference, exhibit space had to be expanded to 43 booths to accommodate the number of interested manufacturers.

During the 81st Semi-Annual Conference, held in the spring of 1957, the Society made its commitment to a permanent exhibit display. A meeting took place between the exhibitors and the Society's officers to discuss the future developments of the exhibit and to ensure that they serve the best interest of the industry at large. It was then that a permanent committee of exhibitors was constituted to work with Society officials to establish a general policy with regard to future exhibits.

The Exhibitor Committee worked to make the 83rd Semi-Annual Conference, held in the spring of 1957, a success. An extensive exhibit was planned, and for the first time a directory of exhibitors was created, which proved to be invaluable.

The 1961 Spring Conference had the largest exhibit to date, with a display of 54 booths. There were 400 people, in addition to the 900 conference registrants, who visited the exhibit area. That record was broken the following year when 73 booths constituted the exhibit area. The number of participating exhibitors continued to grow year after year as more and more companies became interested in the Society's conventions.

To create competition among the exhibitors, an award for Best Display

was created for the 1962 Spring Conference in Los Angeles. This competition continued until 1973.

Of note, it was not until the 1964 Fall Conference that the Society exhibited at a booth of its own. As expected, it was met with great enthusiasm and has continued to be a vital part of the SMPTE conferences.

At the 1969 Fall Conference in Los Angeles, original plans for the equipment display called for 85 booths. Demand, however, was so great that space was added for seven additional booths. They were reserved quickly, and interested exhibitors still had to be turned away because of lack of space.

The 111th conference held the most successful equipment exhibit. While total attendance at the conference was approximately 3500, it was estimated that registrants for the exhibit totaled 2000, nearly double the number of conference attendees.

Annual Equipment Exhibit

Because of the cost of holding two conferences a year, it was decided to reduce the conferences to one a year, beginning in the fall of 1975. That conference, the 117th, held in Los Angeles, was the most successful yet. An all-time high of 166 booths were visited by over 1200 people. In fact, all booth space was sold out well before the show.

The following year, at the 118th conference, in New York, the technical sessions were attended by 1000 people, while the exhibit area was visited by 5000. In 1977, 135 exhibiting companies in 166 booths were visited by the 1325 technical registrants and over 4000 who came for just the exhibit. The exhibit grew to 211 booths in 1978 and was attended by over 7000 people.

The equipment exhibit size and attendance rapidly broke previous records. In 1979, the exhibit grew by 50%, with 167 exhibitors occupying 331 booths. The 122nd conference exceeded other conferences held in New York, with 149 exhibiting companies, 311 booths, and 8000 attendees.

Four-hundred exhibitors participated in the 123rd conference, and 10,000 people attended. At that conference, SMPTE President Charles Anderson announced that the conference and exhibit would move out of hotels and into the Los Angeles Convention Center for the 125th confer-

ence in 1983. To accommodate the 400 booths at the 124th conference, the exhibit area was set up on the entire second floor of the New York Hilton, taking up 31,572 sq. ft.

In spite of the increased exhibit area at the convention center, 175,000 sq. ft., exhibit space sold out quickly for the 125th conference. Over 600 booths from 258 companies occupied the exhibit area.

The following year the conference and exhibit returned to its traditional accommodations at the New York Hilton and Sheraton Centre hotels. There were 50,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space, and 479 booths made up the display area. The 127th conference returned to the Los Angeles Convention Center in 1985, and the equipment display was a highlight. Breaking all previous records, there were 717 booths in 105,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space. Included were two outdoor exhibits.

The 128th conference was held at the new Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York, and previous records were again broken. Attendance exceeded 16,500 and there were 805 booths, displaying the products and services of 260 companies.

The exhibit returned to the Los Angeles Convention Center in 1987, and space had to be added to accommodate exhibitor demand. However, there was still a waiting list by the time the show took place. Nearly 800 booths took up 79,575 sq. ft. of exhibit space. The exhibit area at the 1989 conference, also in Los Angeles, expanded to 80,000 sq. ft. and accommodated 800 booths of 258 companies.

It was reported at the 1988 conference in New York that the SMPTE emerged as the primary showcase for the introduction of new video equipment. In fact, the exhibit was sold out several months before the conference. A large crowd was attracted to the display of products by more than 200 manufacturers from around the world. Manufacturers are now introducing products on a half-year basis, showing them both at SMPTE and NAB conferences. The 1989 conference was held in Los Angeles, and the equipment exhibit was composed of 258 companies who occupied over 80,000 sq. ft. of floor space. In spite of the earthquake that had recently hit northern California, it attracted a good audience.

The 132nd conference returned to

the Jacob Javits Convention Center, and exhibitors were pleased with the location and the attendance. It was noted that the people who were there were serious decision-makers, not browsers. Several new features were added to the exhibit, including a New Products Introduction room for manufacturers wishing to announce a new device. This new addition was so successful that it will be included at the 133rd conference in Los Angeles this year.

Since the equipment exhibit began, the SMPTE has been committed to making it a vital part of its conference program. In an effort to better serve exhibiting companies, the SMPTE announced that it will extend the hours of the equipment exhibit for the 133rd conference. The Exhibitor Advisory Committee was recently expanded to consist of a full range of companies in both the motion-picture and television industries. At present, nearly 200 companies have already reserved space for the upcoming 133rd Conference and Equipment Exhibit.

Highlights of Social Events

The Society believes in mixing pleasure with business. Social functions have always been a prominent part of the SMPTE conferences. Many of them were graced by renowned tech-

nical experts or savvy political leaders. However, to name them all would make a too extensive list. But, it would be remiss not to mention some of the international celebrities who have entertained at SMPTE social functions.

The Hollywood Section has a reputation for outdoing itself during the Society's conferences. At the 1928 Spring Convention's banquet in Hollywood, members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) presented speeches honoring the SMPE. Douglas Fairbanks was the host at the event, which included presentations by such highly regarded people as Louis B. Mayer and Cecil B. DeMille.

Comedian Bob Hope acted as master of ceremonies at the 1939 Semi-Annual Banquet. Present at the speakers table were such famous figures as Pat O'Brien, Edward G. Robinson, and Rudy Vallee.

At the 1940 Fall Convention in Hollywood, Frank Capra, vice-president of the AMPAS, was the guest speaker at the Get-Together Luncheon. Well-known guests at the speaker's table included James Cagney, Rudy Vallee, and Walt Disney, who received the 1940 SMPE Progress Medal. The luncheon concluded with a number of songs performed by Mary Martin.

Art Linkletter provided entertain-

ment at the Get-Together Luncheon during the 87th conference, held in Los Angeles in the spring of 1960.

At the 1968 Spring Conference at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, a recording-breaking audience of over 700 people came to hear Gregory Peck's presentation at the Get-Together Luncheon.

At the Get-Together Luncheon at the 109th conference, actor Darren McGavin gave a few witty remarks. He was followed by Gregory Peck, who made a heartfelt plea for attendance at the 50th anniversary gala of the Motion Picture and Television Relief Fund. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association, was the main speaker.

During the 1970s, news anchor Harry Reasoner and undersea explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau both spoke at the luncheons. Attendance for Cousteau's presentation soared past all previous records.

At the 132nd conference in Los Angeles, Karl Malden, a well-known actor and president of the National Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was the guest speaker.

Of special note, Gregory Peck will make a return appearance at the 133rd conference in Los Angeles to address the Society's Honors and Awards Luncheon.

The Annual SMPTE Television Conference — A History

By Carol King

The Annual SMPTE Television Conference, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, is a glowing example of the strength of SMPTE membership. It shows how the SMPTE sections and their thirst for education, their desire to keep current with new technologies, and their efforts to provide a forum for the exchange of information resulted in the

creation of an innovative learning opportunity. This article provides a brief history of how the television conference developed into the illustrious educational event it is today.

The Early Years

The SMPTE Winter Television Conference began as a joint two-day conference, "Color Television Broadcasting," put on by the Detroit, Chicago, Rochester, and Toronto Sections of the SMPTE, in cooperation with the University of Michigan Extension Service. It took place in Detroit in January 1967, and despite extremely

heavy snow and foul weather, over 400 people attended the event.

Although attendance was below expectations, and 3 of the 21 authors were unable to make it due to the weather, the conference was deemed a success. The large turnout was gratifying and considerable interest was shown during the sessions. Two panel discussions of videotape and live color cameras were extremely valuable to the audience and spurred lively discussions. Many people requested copies of the papers, and it was decided to hold another such meeting again soon.

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