

Section Meetings

Hollywood, March 26, 1991 — Over 200 people attended a meeting held at Apogee, Inc., to view a presentation on optical and blue-screen compositing. John Ehrland, Apogee, Inc., gave some insight into blue-screen and other film effects. He then provided a brief history of Apogee, which is the offspring of Industrial Light and Magic, and gave a viewing of the company's demo reel.

Paul Vlahos, Ultimatte Corp., gave a talk on his company's System-6 HD, an image compositing system for HDTV. He also showed *One Day*, a film that showcases Ultimatte's compositing capabilities. John Galt, Sony High-Definition Facilities, closed the meeting with a discussion on Ultimatte, film compositing for animated features, and System-6 HD. — Ron Little (Secretary/Treasurer), Consolidated Film Industries.

Hollywood, April 24, 1991 — The meeting was held in the IMAX Theatre at the California Museum of Science and Industry. William Shaw, a founder of the IMAX Systems Corp., discussed the future technology of IMAX with insights into IMAX 3-D systems.

David Keighley, Keighley Production Ltd., gave a presentation on what is necessary on a day-to-day basis to assure that IMAX continually puts forth the highest quality product. His company is a subsidiary of the IMAX Systems Corp. and is responsible for the post-production and quality assurance of IMAX films.

Following the presentations, the 350 members and guests saw a screening of *Blue Planet*, featuring footage shot by shuttle astronauts investigating the earth's origin and future. Film clips from a forthcoming IMAX movie were also shown.

The meeting, which was presented in conjunction with Consolidated Film Industries (CFI), was moderated by SMPTE Editorial Director, Motion Pictures, John Baptista, CFI. — Ron Little (Secretary/Treasurer), CFI.

Houston, April 24, 1991 — The meeting, which focused on D-3 videotape technology, was held at Bill Young Productions. William Bakonyi, Panasonic Broadcast Systems Co., explained the 6-track, 1-field, 14-bit recording technology used in the compact digital videotape format. The signal is recorded on ½-in. metal tape at more than twice the density of other digital formats. This allows for 205 min of recording time on the largest of the three different sizes of cassettes. The

recording specifications include a 6-MHz bandwidth, a 54-dB SNR, and an audio response on the four digital tracks from 20 Hz to 20 KHz with a dynamic range of 100 dB. The entire system includes digital field and studio cameras, camcorders, editing combinations, and a planned digital cart machine.

Following the technical explanation, the 60 members and guests were able to operate the AJ-D350 studio recorder. Also, the studios and the video and audio editing suites of Bill Young Productions were opened for tours and examinations. — Robert Musburger (Secretary/Treasurer), University of Houston.

Montreal/Quebec, March 27, 1991

— The meeting, which was held at the National Film Board of Canada, featured comprehensive explanations of the characteristics of Eastman Kodak Co.'s recently introduced line of EXR motion-picture films. Michael Golitzinsky, Kodak Canada, projected a series of side-by-side comparisons of different film stock and the effects of over- and underexposure on the various scenes depicted. Loreto Leombruni, also of Kodak Canada, gave an overview of the trade experiments using particle transfer rollers (PTR) in film cleaning. The reaction of the audience was very positive, especially by those involved in film-to-tape transfers, and a very good discussion evolved. — Paul Bellerose (Chairman), National Film Board of Canada.

New York, April 9, 1991 — Approximately 100 members and guests heard four presentations on film and video preservation and restoration at a meeting held at the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium of

the United Nations. Arnold Schieman, Restoration House Film Group, Inc., opened the meeting with a discussion of a process known as "redimension," which restores and rejuvenates shrunken and brittle film toward its original length and image quality. Treatment of the film involves the use of chemicals rather than water, which causes the film to become flexible. Slides and film clips of his work were shown.

John E. Allen, John E. Allen, Inc., reviewed and showed examples of preservation and restoration projects involving aged acetate and nitrate motion-picture film materials. He said that films should not be stored in unfriendly environments and that hand repair of aged film is very tedious and time consuming.

Preservation of videotape was discussed by Sam Suratt, an archivist at CBS News. Currently videotape is preserved by constantly transferring clips to the next generation of video standards. CBS News has dailies in storage of 78,000,000 ft of 16mm film, 35,000 ft of 2-in. tape, and 700,000 videocassettes. Documentary film storage totals 300,000,000 ft. He noted that it would take over 100 years to transfer the total to videotape, and added that there is a dilemma because standards change every five to ten years. Storage space is near capacity and material is discarded on a regular basis. He showed a restoration of videotape from the era of John F. Kennedy's assassination and funeral.

Peter Hollander, P&W International, described the efforts to recover and restore the 1957 to 1977 videotapes of the Pablo Casals Festival. Hollander, who is the coordinator of the project, showed a split-screen demonstration illustrating the dramatic improvements in the restoration tapes. Georges Leclere, U.N. Department of Public Information, concluded the meeting with a presentation and videotape on the U.N. television network. — John Erwin (Program Chairman), Eastman Kodak Co.



From left: William Bakonyi and Doug Robertson, Panasonic Broadcast Systems Co., and Section Chairman Marty Kirkland at the Houston Section's April meeting.

Pacific Northwest, March 15, 1991

— The March meeting was held at the offices of Skypix, the nation's first direct-broadcast satellite system, which is scheduled to begin home reception this summer. The 35 members and guests were shown a demonstration that aired from the company's uplink distribution center in Oxford, Conn. The system presently operates with 80 channels of compressed digital video but will increase to 150 channels by 1993. By the mid-1990s the system will peak at approximately 250 channels. The demonstration featured eight channels on one of the ten transponders currently in service. Interactive two-way communications between the reception point in Kent, Wash., and the Oxford uplink center illustrated the system's live-broadcast capabilities.

Programming will include first-run movies, early releases, live events, and a selection of motion pictures on a pay-per-view basis. The viewer will make a selection from a home screen and that information will be transmitted via a telephone to the uplink center. Since there are a high number of channels available, feature movies will start every 5 to 30 min.

The system incorporates digital video and audio, originated on a disk-based system, in compressed format utilizing technology jointly pioneered by Compression Labs, Sony, and Skypix development engineers. A total of eight video channels of 480-line resolution each are compressed onto one satellite transponder. High-quality digital Dolby sound enhances the visual quality, which is ghost free and does not exhibit motion artifacts found in other compression schemes.

Reception will be on a Ku-band downlink antenna that is 24 to 36 in. in diameter. The pay-per-view encryption scheme and decoder features a sophisticated security system that permits recording the signal for future use at a premium price, or straight viewing at a cost that is less than renting a videotape. If an attempt is made to record an unauthorized version of a feature, the VCR's servo system is continuously disrupted by the random vertical signals created in the encryption process. Copy stamp is incorporated into the signal on a random line-per-field basis to make identification of the source decoder possible in the event of pirated or duplicated distribution of the recorded signal. The copy stamp places a signature into the video image that includes the decoder number and the date. This stamp can be recovered from the suspected videotape, decoded, and then a signal sent via the satellite uplink to the decoder would shut off the source decoder, rendering future operation useless. — Karl Paulsen (Chairman), Digital Post and Graphics.

Rochester, April 9, 1991 — "A Cinematographer's Perspective," was the theme of the April meeting, which was attended by over 70 people. Jon Fauer, a director and cameraman, discussed his involvement with the film industry. He showed samples of his work and pointed out the important items in each. His work has spanned everything from commercials to feature films. He said that when shooting feature films, continuity is the most critical thing to strive for. In commercials, the crucial thing is to pay attention to detail.

He discussed the tools of the trade, such as the importance of selecting the correct film, cameras, and lights. He also described the path one must travel to become a director. This provided a good sense of perspective for those inclined toward directing. A question-and-answer session followed his presentation. — Paul Kanerva (Secretary/Treasurer), Eastman Kodak Co.

Soviet Union, March 21, 1991 — At a meeting held at the All-Union Cinema & Photo Research Institute (NIKFI), an audience of 25 people heard a report from Maria Goldovskaya, a leading director of photography for documentary films. She has a reputation as a sophisticated specialist who has experience in bringing methods to her work that are generally related to the shooting and editing of motion pictures and video films.

She began her presentation with an analysis of the complicated relationship between those employed in the creative end of the industry and those in the engineering/technical end. She stressed that there is a need for the technical cameraman to receive more thorough training in order to make use of the improved and updated engineering equipment that is now available. She emphasized that a cameraman must allow new developments to influence his work when shooting and editing, especially since these developments will result in reduced editing time. She added that the implementation of television facilities for shooting and editing films allowed her to get a better insight to the cameraman's activities.

At the close of her presentation there was a lengthy question-and-answer session. A large part of the audience pointed out the importance of implementing computer-imaging technology into the creative process. — Eleonora L. Vinogradova (Chairman), NIKFI.

Toronto, April 2, 1991 — Murray Wilson, Technical Services Inc., gave a tutorial on the philosophy, design, and operation of a digital post-production workstation using internal 4:2:2:4 CCIR 601 processing. The somewhat uncon-

ventional architecture integrates routing, multilevel mix/effect production switching, and digital effects within one product, and allows use between several workstation locations. The product has been designed to accommodate synchronized inputs and outputs in either component, composite, RGB, or Y/C standards. He stressed that in today's hybrid multistandard post-production environment, a product such as this will easily bridge the interconnection and transcoding gap found in many facilities.

During the second half of the meeting an informative overview of nonlinear editing system developments was given by John Schwann of Editing Machines Corp. He pointed out that there is a definite move away from traditional linear editing styles, especially for episodic long-form program production, and noted that the use of nonlinear editing saves time and expands creativity. Due to recent developments, laptop computers now have the same creative editing power as large nonlinear desktop systems, and both can be used in locations other than an hourly rated off-line edit bay.

The meeting closed with a demonstration of the EMC² digital editor given by Section Manager Peter Bartlett, Applied Electronics, and it was followed by a question-and-answer session. — Ed Holmes (Manager), Global Television Network.

Washington, D.C., March 21, 1991

— William Headline, vice-president and chief of CNN's Washington, D.C., news bureau, gave a presentation on how the aspects of newsgathering have changed over the past 20 years. He recounted his early newsgathering experiences as being highly detailed and logistical, and said he worked with large, bulky, and often temperamental equipment. He then discussed his recent coordination of personnel and equipment for operation within the borders of hostile countries, a feat unparalleled to any other in past wars. He concluded his talk with his impressions on the challenges of obtaining acceptable news coverage in light of the hostilities in the Persian Gulf area and arrangements with the military.

The meeting ended with a lengthy question-and-answer session. The topics fielded by Headline ranged from equipment reliability in harsh environments to judgements made to ensure that field reports accurately depict the unfolding events and their consequences. Over 90 people attended the meeting, which was sponsored by the Education Committee of the Washington, D.C., Section and held in conjunction with the School of Communications at American University. — Raymond C. Benedict (Secretary/Treasurer), Westinghouse Communication Services, Inc.