

News

SMPTE Executive Director Lynette Robinson was presented with the Photokina Gold Pin by Lord Mayor Norbert Burger during the official opening of Photokina—The World's Fair of Imaging Systems. The award was given in recognition of Robinson's continued valuable and promotive support of Photokina. The ceremonies took place on Tuesday, September 15, the day before the opening of the biannual event.



Lord Mayor Norbert Burger congratulating SMPTE Executive Director Lynette Robinson on her receipt of the Photokina Gold Pin.

The **SMPTE Napa Valley College Student Chapter** has announced its officers for 1992 through 1993. Andy McGuire is Chairman and Eddie Hernandez is Secretary-Treasurer. In early 1992, the Chapter held several meetings including acting as host of the San Francisco Section's May meeting. Many events are in the planning stages for the 1992 to 1993 school year, including a trip to Las Vegas for the 1993 National Association of Broadcasters Convention.

SMPTE Rocky Mountain Section Chairman John Switzer, Sony Business and Professional Group, was the recipient of Sony's Samurai Award for sales excellence. The award was presented to Switzer and other Samurai winners from the U.S. at a dinner held at the Four Seasons Resort in Nevis, British West Indies. The dinner was in conjunction with a week-long trip to the Caribbean, which was awarded to all Samurai winners from the U.S. Switzer is currently the account manager for broadcast, cable, and production in Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming.



Akio Morita, chairman of Sony Corp., was named an Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. The award, which recognizes Morita's contributions to British-Japanese relations, was presented to him at the British Embassy in Tokyo by Secretary of State for Wales David Hunt. Morita has played a major role in strengthening bilateral links by such investments as opening television manufacturing plants in Wales in 1973.



He also served as a regular participant in the U.K.-Japan 2000 Group to promote educational and cultural exchanges. Morita and fellow engineer Masaru Ibukya founded Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corp. in 1946, adopting the name Sony in 1958.

Howard Miller has been named vice-president and general manager of IDB Communications' Broadcast Services Unit, based in New York City. In his new position, Miller will oversee the unit's Program Booking Center and sales efforts to the radio and television industries, and assist with the unit's overall plans for the future. Miller joined the company in 1985 as director of network services. He later served as director of operations at the company's Los Angeles International Teleport before becoming general manager of IDB New York in 1988. Most recently Miller served as vice-president and general manager of East Coast operations.

George Hutchinson has been named executive vice-president of Consolidated Film Labs (CFI), it was announced by Jerry Virnig, president of CFI. Hutchinson, who has been with the company for 37 years, most recently held the position of senior vice-president, laboratory operations.

Pinnacle Systems, Inc., manufacturer and marketer of integrated video production systems, has relocated to a 24,000-sq.-ft. facility in Sunnyvale, Calif. The company was previously located in Santa Clara, Calif. The new address is 870 W. Maude Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086. The new telephone number is (408) 720-9669; the fax number is (408) 720-9674.

Book Review

Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film

By **Anthony Slide**, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1992. Hard cover, 192 pp.

Nontheatrical films have for 50 years been a significant element of the exploding global information and presentation communications media. Its impact has been much greater than inferred by another name used for it many years ago: substandard. So points out Anthony Slide in his latest writing, *Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film*.

Anyone interested in the 16mm film medium will find the book to be a fasci-

nating account. Slide did an impressive amount of research to come up with so much about people, companies, and organizations.

Nontheatrical film as of 1992, when this book was released, has had a venerable 69-year history. And its life is not yet over. In fact, something Slide did not bring out in his closing chapter, "The Waning Years," is that 16mm negative film for production is doing better than ever. For example, during the past two years Eastman Kodak has sold more 16mm negative film than in the history of the company. As a presentation system, however, 16mm print film has been

almost totally replaced by videotape.

I can appreciate the dilemma that Slide must have faced when he organized his thoughts for the layout. The first five chapters are subject oriented: "Origins," "Chicago — The Non-Theatrical Capital of the World," "The Eastman Kodak Connection," "Specialization," and "Film in Education and Religion." The book's last three chapters follow a chronological sequence: "The 1930s and 1940s," "Decades of Progress and Prosperity," and, finally, "The Waning Years."

The chapter on Chicago's dominance in the industry was one of the more interesting and informative for me. Competition between Chicago and Detroit is traced. In many ways New York could be a third candidate for recognition as the nontheatrical film capital.

Chapter four, "Specialization," spells

out the structure of the 16mm film world. While it covers all aspects of the industry, it concentrates on business and industry, medicine, and government use of the nontheatrical film.

"Film in Education and Religion" is the only chapter that carefully details its topic, the famous — or infamous depending upon your viewpoint — early historic film series, *Chronicles of America*. Slide begins, "One series of film is superior to any other production in the non-theatrical subgenres of business, educational, or religious subjects....It was the most ambitious non-theatrical production ever attempted, combining 'Hollywood' techniques with the highest of educational standards." *Chronicles of America*, based on the 50-volume series from Yale University Press, was envisioned to be a 100-reel project. It never did reach that goal; 49 reels of 15 topics were completed between 1923 and 1925.

If any fault is to be found with the book, it is that the first five chapters jump around from the early 1900s to the current time, depending on the subject. This proved confusing at times and caused me to go back from time to time to keep my thoughts straight. For such an ambitious topic, the 172 pages mean that the hundreds of subjects are treated in a terse

fashion. As I read, I found myself mentally filling in what I might have considered as essential information to make a vignette more interesting. I wonder why the book was only 172 pages.

A major omission is the Calvin Workshop, an annual event run by what many people felt was the number one 16mm production company of the day, the Calvin Co. of Kansas City, Mo. It should go down in history as one of the finest short courses of all time in any discipline. Some of their instructional films were classics. The workshop must have run for at least 15 years, drawing literally hundreds of people active in all aspects of production each year. Since the nontheatrical production industry never had a national convention, in some ways this workshop served that role. It certainly brought together people of note. Forest Calvin, Lloyd Thompson, Larry Sherwood, Bill Hedden, and Neal Keehn all deserve their place in history for a variety of significant contributions to the industry, which are too numerous to elaborate here.

Almost overlooked was the vital role film played in World War II training. When the German surrender was being signed by Germany's chief of staff, Field Marshall Von Keitel, he reputedly said,

"We had everything calculated perfectly except the speed with which the Allies were able to train their people for war. Our major miscalculation was in underestimating their quick and complete mastery of film education."

Sixteen million men and women each saw dozens of training films in all services. In addition civilians in the war effort were trained by film. It was after the war that thousands returning to peacetime positions put the 16mm film to effective use. I mark that period as the turning point that made film an industry.

If I had written the book, I would have devoted a chapter to the documentary film. Likewise, the single largest market for 16mm by a wide margin was the business and industrial use. That market used as much film as all the others put together. References to corporate use of 16mm are scattered throughout the book.

Before Video: A History of the Non-Theatrical Film ranks right up with Gloria Waldron's *The Information Film*, which was written in 1949 when 16mm film was approaching its zenith. *Before Video* was intriguing reading; I learned much from it. The book should be used in every cinema and television school in America and the world.

—Thomas W. Hope

Obituaries

Harry R. Lubcke

Harry R. Lubcke, a television pioneer and Life Fellow of the Society, died on December 24, 1991, in Los Angeles, Calif. Lubcke was one of the last of the surviving television pioneers who was present at the birth of television in the U.S. Born in Alameda, Calif., on August 25, 1905, he graduated from the



Harry R. Lubcke (1967)

University of California at Berkeley with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1929. Before his graduation, he went to work at the Crocker Research Laboratories for Philo T. Farnsworth. While with Farnsworth, he built, operated, and patented the first all-electric synchronizing, scanning, and blanking pulse generator. This gave Philo Farnsworth the first all-electric television system in the world.

On December 31, 1931, Lubcke joined up with Don Lee Broadcasting in Los Angeles to build and operate the first television station on the West Coast, W6XA0. With adequate financing from Thomas S. Lee, he operated this station until the late 1940s. He was a pioneer in many television programming techniques, such as remotes and studio operations. In 1940 he became a member of the first National Television Standards Committee (NTSC) that set the present-day American television standards. He held over 20 patents pertaining to television. In 1949 he was elected president of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences and helped

name the Emmy (for image orthicon) award. He was a life member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and a Life Fellow of the IEEE.

—Albert Abramson

Eldred B. "Mike" McGreal

Eldred B. "Mike" McGreal, a Life Fellow of the SMPTE, died on September 30, 1992, at the age of 87. McGreal joined the Society in 1953 as an Associate Member, while working as head of film operations, Hollywood, for Young & Rubicam. In 1957 he joined the staff of Metro Goldwyn Mayer.

Prior to joining the Society, he worked at Warner Bros. for 19 years, where he was instrumental in developing the sound blimp for Mitchell cameras. He later designed the production camera support trailer that contained all film, magazines, and lenses for camera equipment. He became president of Producers Service Corp. in 1962, where he spearheaded the design and development of the triple-head special-effects optical printer.

McGreal served several terms as SMPTE conference vice-president from 1967 to 1970. He also served the Society as registration chairman, hotel arrangements chairman, and local arrangements co-chairman at various technical conferences.