

Section Meetings

Atlanta

April 8, 1996

The 24 people who attended the April meeting were treated to a tour of "White Columns," home to WSB radio and WSB-TV. Newly elected Section Chair Mike Howey, WSB's director of engineering, described the history of the station and the evolution of its facilities. He also announced a recently signed agreement with Sony Systems Integration Division to build a completely digital facility on the WSB site. — Kathleen Wood (Secretary/Treasurer), Tektronix, Grass Valley Products

Atlanta

May 13, 1996

Twenty people were at the May meeting, held at the Cinevision Screening Room. Kathy Mazza, Eastman Kodak Co., gave a presentation on her company's newest film technology introduced at NAB. She described Kodak's Vision line of color negative films, calling it "the new golden age of film." She also used the 35mm facilities to show four short films illustrating the quality of the new stock. These films contained examples of difficult conditions and how a variety of stocks handle them. Mazza concluded with a demonstration of Super 16, with a 16mm master blown up to 35mm. — Kathleen Wood (Secretary/Treasurer), Tektronix, Grass Valley Products

Detroit

May 14, 1996

The May meeting was held at Producers Color Service in Southfield, Mich. Wallace Murray, Ameritech, described and demonstrated his company's switched component video services (SCVS), which allow a customer to send and receive full-bandwidth SMPTE 259M serial digital component video (D-1) over conventional fiber links with the capability to switch a feed to any other customer equipped in the same manner. SCVS employs 10-bit 4:2:2 $4f_{sc}$ user interfaces at each end and transports the signal uncompressed in the digital domain, ensuring artifact-free, lossless end-to-end transmission of video and audio signals. During the demonstration, a Quantel Harry produced high-resolution graphics that were displayed on a Sony BVM-20 monitor. The signal was then fed via the new technology from Producers Color to the Ameritech Southfield test center and back (a total distance of 8 mi) and displayed on an

identical monitor placed next to the first one. There was no apparent degradation in the received video signal. Jay Spencer, Producers Color Service, explained that while there had been many instances of remote editing of feature film productions, the lack of high bandwidth had required high compression ratios. The new service, which will be available in the fall, opens the possibility of transporting motion picture film without physical movement. — Frank Maynard (Manager), WKBD-TV

Hollywood

May 15, 1996

"Visual Effects — Digital and Otherwise" was the subject of the May meeting, held at the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage. Jonathan Erland, Composite Components Co., began the meeting with a review of the compositing techniques that have been used throughout history, including matte paintings and hanging miniatures pioneered by Norman Dawn; Shuftan mirror shots; front and rear projection; and traveling mattes (bluescreen, greenscreen, etc.). He showed examples from a new production, *West of Kashmir*, as well as from *Never Say Never Again*, 2010, and some television commercials.

Peter Donen, Eidetic Productions, Inc., then stressed the importance of using technology appropriately. Although there are cases that call for digital techniques, many effects are still best accomplished using photochemical or other, more traditional means. He showed a segment from "Flight of the Navigator" of a space ship flying out of a hangar and into space. In this clip, the whole gamut of effects tools was represented, including miniatures, mirrors, rear projection, optical printing, and digital methods which were just being introduced at the time of this production. The importance of adequate planning was illustrated with a clip from *Steal Big, Steal Little*, in which actor Andy Garcia portrays twins.

Richard Patterson, Illusion Arts, showed an impressive reel using state-of-the-art "greenscreen" optical technology. The example showed actors photographed on soundstages and then composited into famous locations in Europe. In an example inside a cathedral, the live action was composited seamlessly onto a background that was originally a still photograph. Phil Feiner, Pacific Title, showed a clip of the credit sequence from a new film entitled *Bogus* and discussed his work recreating the effects for the reissue of *Star Wars*.

The lively panel discussion that fol-

SECTION CALENDAR

Nordic

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- Monday, September 30, 1996:
"Is THX State of the Art"
Royal Cinema, Malmö, Sweden.

To publicize your Section events, please send announcements to SMPTE Headquarters, 595 W. Hartsdale Ave., White Plains, NY 10607, tel: (914) 761-1100, fax: (914) 761-1100. Information must be received by the 15th of the second month preceding issue date (e.g., June 15th for August issue).

lowed examined how film producers often don't understand the effects process, giving insufficient material to the effects artist and adding time and cost as a result. In addition, many people calling themselves visual effects supervisors only have experience in the digital world and are not aware of simpler and less expensive ways of obtaining the same results. An interesting observation was made that GPS technology now allows camera positions to be recorded within centimeters. Assuming all this data can be saved and managed, it has the potential of being extremely useful in effects work. — David Richards (Arrangements Chair), Action Capture

New York

May 8, 1996

About 100 members and guests were at the May meeting, held at the Museum of Television and Radio. Mark Schubin, consultant, presented his yearly review of the NAB convention, which took place in Las Vegas in April. He noted that there were many choices offered on the exhibit floor; he counted 16 computer operating systems, 8 computer buses, 10 video file formats, 21 data interconnection systems, 17 digital videotape formats, 18 data tape recording formats, many video compression schemes, and much more.

Schubin stated that he was very impressed by a 750-line progressive scan camera from Polaroid and a tiny camera from Toshiba. He explained a new tech-

nique for converting 625-line/25 frames/sec film-oriented imagery to video without standards conversion or speed change, and he also explained some new concepts in video compression and digital transmission. According to Schubin, this was the second year that Play's Trinity video processing system was exhibited with much fanfare at the show, and it was the second year that it has not been delivered. He showed the 100-member audience a thick magazine he picked up at the show entirely devoted to the Trinity system, which he noted was amazing since there are no Trinity users as yet.

Schubin then discussed a novel use for HDTV equipment in NEC's FishClub, a monitor with a thin water-filled cell in front of it within which aerators blow bubbles. When HDTV pictures of fish are shown on the monitor, it bears a close visual relationship to an aquarium.

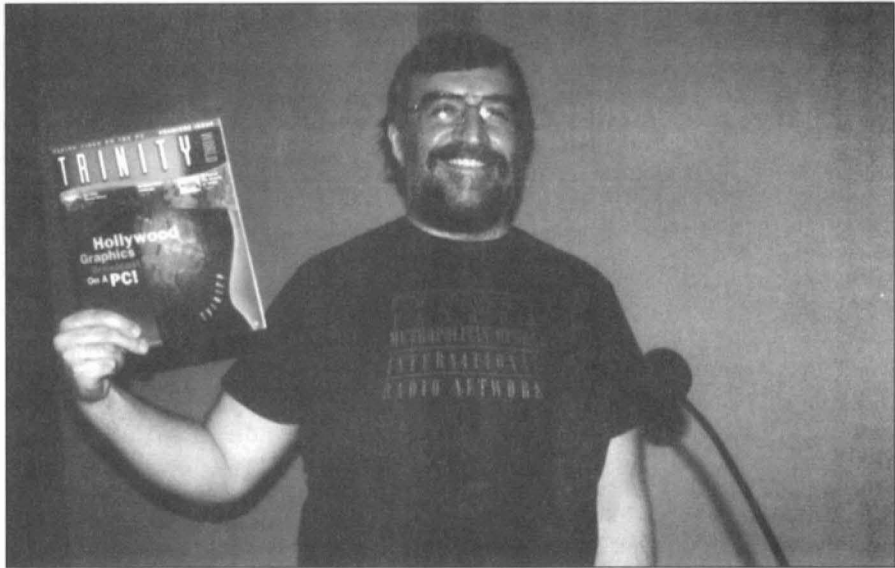
The meeting concluded with a question-and-answer period. — Mark Schubin (Manager), consultant

Pasadena City College March 26, 1996

The guest speaker, Gay Iris Parker, provided the audience with a chronological history of her work experience, starting her career at the Los Angeles PBS affiliate, KCET. The skills she developed at KCET helped her to get a position at Black Entertainment Television in Burbank. This experience allowed her to eventually settle into freelance work. Freelancing, she said, has proven to be most rewarding, allowing her to collaborate with such individuals as director Spike Lee, among others. Elaborating further, she said successful scriptwriting must captivate the audience with a human element. She added that structure, storytelling, and character development are crucial. Emphasizing networking and good communication skills, Parker's career advice to the students ended on a philosophical note. She assured the film and television neophytes that "each step makes you better prepared for the next step forward." The meeting was adjourned once Parker received a certificate of appreciation. — Darren McLachlan, Associate Chair

Pasadena City College April 23, 1996

Keith Kintner, KLCS-TV (Los Angeles), spoke to the 14-member audience about NAB '96. In his opening remarks, he said that if he could summarize the conference in just one word it would be "digital," adding that digital television is more of a "revolution than an evolution." His discussion focused on the latest video for-



Mark Schubin gives his annual NAB review at the New York meeting in May.

mat, DVCPRO. Using Panasonic equipment, NBC will cover the upcoming 1996 Olympics in Atlanta; this will be the first time that the entire event will be covered in digital format. He also mentioned a breakthrough in set design that impressed him: the El Set, or electronic set, is now being used more frequently in the business. This set allows 3-D, color correct sets to be created using a blue or green background. He finished with a discussion of the advantages and limitations of advanced television (ATV) as currently proposed. The meeting ended with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Kintner. — Darren McLachlan, Associate Chair

Pasadena City College April 30, 1996

Leith Speights, Radius Corp., provided the 21-member audience with a first-hand opportunity to see a display of an Apple Macintosh, Radius nonlinear editing system; for most of the attendants, it was an introduction to nonlinear editing. Speights explained that before he joined the Radius group, he had no prior video experience. Today, he is on an evangelical mission to tell "the whole world" about Quicktime and digital video. He speculated that within a year, Radius users will be able to provide broadcasters and videographers with SMPTE-quality video. He believes the strength of nonlinear editing lies in providing total control over a project and stressed the importance of getting your message across with video. He stated that, at this time, nonlinear editing would not replace traditional tools, but that it could become a tool to help producers, directors, and broadcast designers be more effective. Speights then showed examples

of award-winning videos that have been edited using Radius equipment. The meeting concluded with a presentation of a certificate of appreciation to Speights and a showing of the perpetual plaque, which now holds John E. Lopez's name for his work this school year as chairperson. — Darren McLachlan, Associate Chair

Toronto May 14, 1996

Convergence, nonlinear video editing, and video's networked future were lively topics as 120 members gathered at Ryerson's Rogers Communications Centre in May. The meeting also provided a wrap-up of the 1996 National Association of Broadcasters Convention.

Jeff Simpson, Avid Technology, started the evening by talking about the variety of systems and software that now make up the Avid family. The company now makes use of three computer platforms — SGI, Macintosh, and Windows NT — for the various nonlinear editing packages it offers. The SGI platform allows for non-compressed editing at D-1 quality in real time. Avid showed its new Power Macintosh version, which uses 2:1 compression. Also, Media Composer Express was introduced, with versions available for the Mac and Windows NT platforms. AVID is in the process of moving away from its proprietary network standard, opting toward TCP/IP, 100 Base T, ATM and Fibre Channel networking standards.

Jeff Moore, Acura Technologies, spoke on behalf of Scitex and Philips, discussing how the marriage of Abekas ASIC capabilities and the ImMIX Video Cube nonlinear technology had led to the development of the Sphere line of nonlinear editing. ImMIX technology no longer

uses wavelet compression but instead has migrated to JPEG-based Quicktime Native File Format. Quicktime is a codec-based technology, which means it does not have to be compressed for editing, and Quicktime 2.5 (available this summer) will include support for SMPTE time code. Sphere's networking will allow for distributed storage between computers on the network.

Tom Ray, Sony, talked about his company's role as a "Total Solutions" supplier, offering a nonlinear system from acquisition to editing, storage, distribution, and transmission. Ray focused on two principal areas: Betacam SX and DVCAM. Betacam SX is a new digital tape format that records 8-bit, 10:1 compressed video using MPEG 2 4:2:2 Profile@ML compression at a data rate of 18 Mbits/sec. The Betacam SX format can record up to three hours on a large Betacam SP tape, provides full 4:2:2 chroma resolution, and has four digital audio channels. In the nonlinear editing

field, Sony announced the DLE-100 and DLE-110 Live Event editors for sports and news applications and a series of news editors such as the DNE-50 Portable Editor, DNE-300, and the network capable DNE-1000 news editing workstations. DVCAM is Sony's industrial system, encompassing digital acquisition, nonlinear editing, and high-speed networked digital transfer. DVCAM uses 5:1 DCT-based DV compression and is compatible with the consumer based DV tape format.

Doug Wynn, Tektronix, opened his presentation by talking about Grass Valley, Profile Professional Disk Recorder, Lightworks Editing Systems, and Netstations. He made a comparison of the costs of various storage media from RAM, to hard disk, to tape, and felt that the low cost (per megabit) of tape would ensure its future use, especially as an archiving medium. He elaborated on Tektronix's plans to bring multicassette data products to market. He went on to

discuss the developments in Fibre Channel and its adoption as an ANSI standard. — Brad Fortner (Promotions Advisor), Rogers Communications Centre, Ryerson Polytechnic University; Eric Heidendahl (Manager), Sony of Canada, Ltd.; and Michael Martin (Manager), Comlink Systems, Inc.

Washington, D.C. May 16, 1996

The May meeting was held at Roland House in Arlington, Va., where attendees heard David Tasker, Snell & Wilcox, give a detailed presentation about how and why his company developed motion compensation correction for its high-end standards converters. He demonstrated its effectiveness for a variety of program material. After a question-and-answer period, the 24 participants toured of the Roland House component digital post-production facilities. — Bruce Miller (Manager), PBS

News

Kees A. Schouhamer Immink, an active SMPTE member and member of the Board of Editors, was elected by royal decree to life membership in the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Immink received M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Eindhoven University of Technology and joined the Philips Research Laboratories, Eindhoven, in 1968, where he currently holds the position of research fellow. He has contributed to the design and development of a variety of digital consumer-type audio and video recorders such as the compact disc, compact disc video, R-DAT, DCC, and DVD. Immink holds 30 U.S. patents and has written numerous papers and books in the field of optical and magnetic recorders. His accomplishments have been recognized with the SMPTE Poniatoff Gold Medal for Technical Excellence, the AES Silver Medal, the IEE Sir J. J. Thomson Medal, and the IEEE Masaru Ibuka Consumer Electronics Award. He is the chairman of the IEEE Benelux Chapter on Consumer Electronics, and governor of the AES and

the IEEE Information Theory Society.

The Royal Academy, founded in 1808, serves as the advisory body of the Dutch government in all fields of science and focuses on the furtherance of science and technology and their use for the general welfare and management of institutes of fundamental research. Members and for-

eign associates of the Royal Academy are elected in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. It currently has 200 members.

Steve Maggioncalda has been named director of engineering at Radium, a new

SMPTE Personnel Available Via e-mail

E-mail accounts have been set up at Society Headquarters so you can reach SMPTE staff members more easily. Please note the following:

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