

Calendar

SMPTE Activities

COLOGNE, GERMANY — SMPTE European Imaging Conference on Imaging Media, Cologne Fairgrounds, *September 19-21, 1996.*

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. — 138th SMPTE Technical Conference and World Media Expo, Los Angeles Convention Center, *October 8-12, 1996.*

NEW YORK, N.Y. — 31st SMPTE Advanced Motion Imaging Conference, Crowne Plaza, *February 6-8, 1997.*

For more information on these and other SMPTE activities contact SMPTE Headquarters:

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August

Eurographics '96, Futuroscope Poitiers, Poitiers, France. Info: Conference Secretariat, Eurographics '96, INRIA Rocquencourt/Relations Extérieures, B.P. 105-78153, Le Chesnay Cedex, France. *August 26-30, 1996.*

September

IBC96, RAI Exhibition and Congress Centre, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Info: Sarah Campbell, IBC Office, Savoy Place, London, WC2R OBL. *September 12-16, 1996.*

The 1996 Rocky Mountain Film and Video Expo, John Q. Hammons Convention Center, Denver, Colo. Info: Mark Cramer, ExpoMasters, 7632 E. Costilla Ave., Englewood, CO 80112. *September 18-19, 1996.*

Photokina '96, Cologne Fairgrounds, Cologne, Germany. Info: KölnMesse, Messe-und Ausstellungs, Ges.m.b.h. Köln, Messeplatz 1, D-50679 Köln, Germany. *September 18-23, 1996.*

November

The 4th IS&T Color Imaging Conference, The Radisson Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz. Info: IS&T, 7003 Kilworth Ln., Springfield, VA 22151. *November 19-22, 1996.*

June 1997

Montreux International Television Symposium and Technical Exhibition, Rue du Théâtre, Montreux, Switzerland. Info: P.O. Box 1451, Rue du Théâtre 5, 1820 Montreux, Switzerland. *June 12-17, 1997.*

Obituary

William A. Palmer, a veteran filmmaker, inventor, and audio recording pioneer, died on June 6, 1996, at his home in Menlo Park, Calif., at the age of 85. The president of W. A. Palmer Films, Belmont, Calif., Palmer joined the Society in 1936 and was elevated to the level of Fellow in 1963; he became a Life Fellow in 1982. He was also a fellow of the Audio Engineering Society.

Palmer was one of the first filmmakers in California to use optical sound on film for commercial and educational productions, developing in 1933 his own design for a 16mm sound-on-film camera. In 1934, he received an exclusive contract from the Columbia Steel Company to make a film documentary on the construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Since the 16mm black-and-white film would need synchronized sound, Palmer built his own light valve, as well as the necessary amplifiers.

He founded W. A. Palmer & Co. in San Francisco in 1936 (later renamed W. A. Palmer Films, Inc.) to produce industrial 16mm films, a business over which he actively presided until his death. During the past 60 years, Palmer and his company produced hundreds of 16mm industrial films for commercial and educational clients, and provided film production and film laboratory services for local and national filmmakers. In the pre-videotape



William A. Palmer (1972)

era, the company also recorded television shows on film (kinescopes) for San Francisco Bay Area TV stations.

Palmer was among the first in the country to use 16mm film for commercial productions. During World War II, his unique 16mm technology enabled him to produce color sound films made aboard aircraft carriers at sea that greatly reduced the training time required for U.S. Navy pilots and their crews.

In 1946, Palmer worked with Jack Mullin to build an American version of the German "Magnetophon," a high-fidelity audio magnetic tape recorder. Singer

Bing Crosby used the Mullin-Palmer tape machines to record and edit his "Philco Radio Time" show. Meanwhile, Palmer and Mullin helped Ampex Corp., Redwood City, Calif., to perfect that company's pioneering commercial version of the German tape machine, the Ampex Model 200, introduced in 1948. The work of Palmer, Mullin, and Ampex led to an immediate acceptance of tape as the standard American recording medium for radio, film sound tracks, and records. These first audio machines also helped spawn magnetic data recording for instrumentation and computers.

In the 1950s, before the successful introduction of videotape recording, Palmer developed the Palmer Television Film Recorder, a unique system for recording the television image on 16mm film. This modified "kinescope" process was used around the world even after the introduction of videotape. The 3:2 pull-down system used a "blending" shutter device that eliminated the characteristic "shutter bar" that plagued kine recordings.

In the postwar years, Palmer developed and patented an automatic cueing system for sound slide films, known as the 30-50 Disc System, an early "multimedia" device. The unit quickly became a standard in the A/V industry.

— Peter Hammar, Hammar Communications