

SMPTE's Spring Film Conference & Exhibit Welcomed by Hollywood's Film Community

General sessions, panel discussion, and film exhibits very popular...

When the Society held its First Annual Spring Film Conference and Exhibit at the Century Plaza Hotel, March 20 to 22, 1997, nearly 500 people from the Hollywood film community showed up to attend a balanced technical program that, over the course of three days, featured four sessions and a very popular day-long seminar. The seminar alone, appropriately entitled "The Nature of Film," was well worth the price of admission to this conference.

Though most of Hollywood's technical and artistic minds were focused on the Academy Awards, televised live on March 24, the quality of the conference attendees was nothing short of excellent. Attendees ranged from seasoned cinematographers to production and post-production craftsmen.

Keynote Address

Prior to the start of the Friday afternoon session, attendees were treated to "Motion Picture Technology: From the Past to the Future," the keynote address presented by industry pioneer Petro Vlahos. Prior to founding Ultimatte Corp. in 1976 and serving as its first president, Vlahos spent eight years as chief scientist at the Research Center of the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers. Earlier, he spent a number of years with Systems Development Corp. and fourteen years with the motion picture industry's Research Council.

A Life Fellow of the Society, Vlahos has received numerous awards

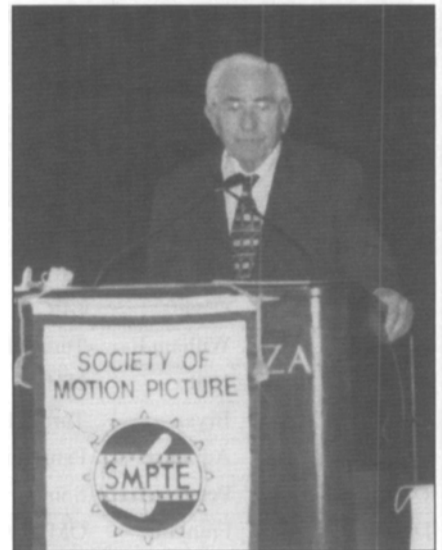
from SMPTE, including the 1987 Technicolor/Herbert T. Kalmus Award in recognition of his contributions to motion picture and television industries, most notably in the areas of front and rear projection, traveling matte systems, and an electronic compositing system for use in television and the 1990 Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal Award for his continuous contributions to the film/television interface in the area of image compositing technologies.

Exhibits

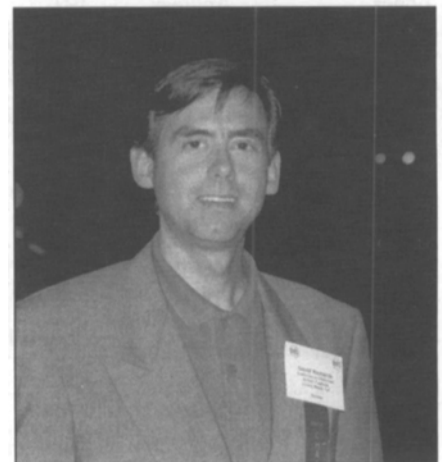
The exhibit floor held a small but focused assortment of companies and studios. Most of the exhibitors were pleased with the results generated by the exhibit.

"I liked the show's focus and the film orientation. The idea of being able to have a show that devotes itself to the motion picture industry is everything we're looking for from a commercial point of view," said Jonathan Banks, general manager for RTI/Lipsner-Smith, a Chicago-based manufacturer of film cleaning equipment. "We felt strongly that this would be a good show for us. It was not like NAB, where you get just a passing trade. The SMPTE exhibit was more to do with people who are interested in our products," he said.

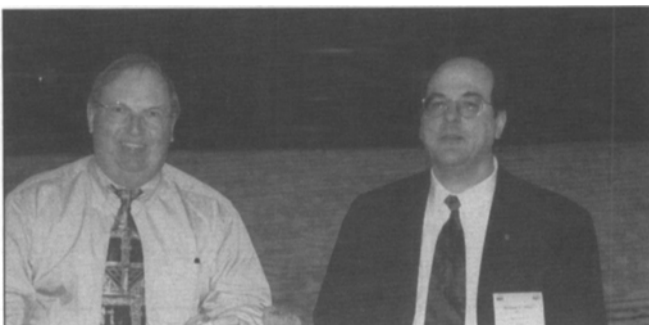
Joe Ortega, Paul Veneklasen and Associates, a Santa Monica-based acoustical consulting service and studio designer, felt the quality of the attendees was strong. "I was pleasantly



Petro Vlahos presents the keynote address Friday afternoon.



Program and General Arrangements Chair David Richards, Action Capture.



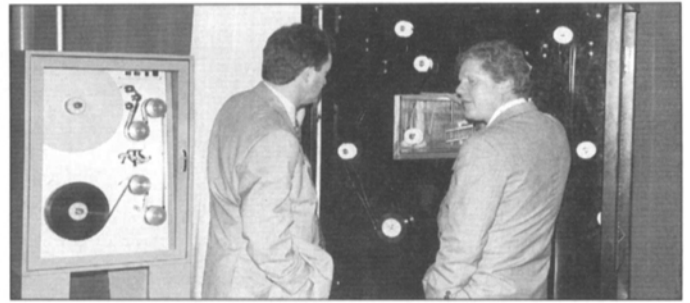
SMPTE President David George, left, with Engineering Vice-President Bill Miller.



"Post-Production" Session Chairs Paul Carey (left) and Jon Erland.



Martinsound booth.



CMP3 Technology booth.



Eastman Kodak Co. booth.



Cinema Products Corp. booth.



Paramount Pictures booth.



Paul S. Veneklasen & Associates booth.



From left to right, seminar presenters Alan Masson, Ken Fowler, SMPTE Secretary/Treasurer and Seminar Chair John Mason, Tim Knapp, John Pytlak, Greg Arnold, and Steve Powell.



SMPTE Executive Director Fred Motts with A/V Chair Gail Ringer.



From the "Production" session: (left to right) Session Chair Ed DiGiulio, Chris Mayhew, Bruce Berk, Denny Clairmont, and Session Chair John Hora.



Panel discussion during "Production" session: (left to right) Steven Goldblatt, Price Pethel, Allen Daviau, Chuck Comisky, Scott Frankel, Dean Cundey, and Robert Primes.



From the "Laboratory" session: (left to right) Peter Eaves, John Galt, Session Chair Paul Law, Alan Masson, Bob Heiber, Grover Crisp, Rick Utley, Michael Friend, Scott MacQueen, and Session Chair Frank Ricotta.



Current President David George, right, poses with former SMPTE President Robert Smith and his wife Edna.



"Post-Production" session participants, from left to right: John Galt, Session Chair Paul Carey, Lisa Little, Jeff DesCombes, Session Chair Jon Erland, Sharon Brazil, Bruce Richardson, Lou Izzo, and Lewis Merritt.



Participants in the "Distribution/Exhibition Session," from left to right: John Mason, Roger Hibbard, Glenn Berggren, Edward Neary, Session Chair Joan Allen, and Paul Goldberg.



Conference attendees and long-time SMPTE supporters, from left to right, Bill Hogan, Harry Howard, Don McCroskey, and Alan Hart.



The conference concluded with a poolside Wrap-Up Reception sponsored by Eastman Kodak.



Actor James Woods poses with SMPTE Director of Marketing John Izzo (left).



SMPTE Engineering Vice-President Bill Miller, second from left, poses with SMPTE Staff Engineer Mark Hyman (far left), Executive Director Fred Motts (second from right), and Director of Engineering Carl Girod.

surprised that a lot of people recognized who we were. We don't do a lot of trade shows, but it was nice to see that so many visitors to our booth were familiar with who we are and what we do," Ortega said.

Other exhibitors at SMPTE's First Annual Spring Film Conference included Eastman Kodak Co., Paramount Pictures, Philips BTS, MartinSound Inc., Chromatik Software, Cinema Products Corp., CMP3 Technology, Gepco International, Image Design Film Technologies, Inc., SMS Generators, IBC, ITEA, ASC, ACVL, and BKSTS.

Seminar

Almost 200 people attended "The Nature of Film," the all-day seminar held on the first day of the conference. Sponsored by Eastman Kodak and chaired by SMPTE Secretary/Treasurer John Mason from that company, the seminar offered presentations related to hybrid imaging, telecine transfers, film handling procedures, film naming and conventions, speed-grain sharpness, and a host of other useful topics for today's film technician. Of particular interest to delegates was a paper entitled "Theory of Color, Sensitometry, Tone Reproduction, How Film Works?" by Eastman Kodak's Ken Fowler.

"The seminar covered a full range of basic core film fundamentals, delivered to an enthusiastic and attentive audience of 200 imaging professionals from the fields of film, video, and computer imaging effects," said Mason. "The seminar was so well received that SMPTE is planning a possible 'road show.' A key component of image creation these days starts with a firm comfort level with 'The Nature of Film.'"

Technical Sessions

With its theme, "Film: Still the Master in a Digital World," the engineers and practitioners participating in the conference were shown a wide variety of technologies and their applications. Four comprehensive sessions — "Production," "Laboratory Issues," "Post-Production," and "Distribution/Exhibition" — were available.

"Production" was chaired by Edmund DiGiulio, Cinema Products Corp., and co-chaired by John Hora, ASC. Featured papers in this Friday morning program included "A Review of the

Fuji Super F-Series of Motion Picture Products" by Bruce Berk, Fuji Film. One of the key attractions at the session came during the morning panel discussion, "Cinematographers and Digital Artists: Friend or Foes?" facilitated by Robert Primes, consultant, and featuring such experts as Price Pethel, Digital Domain, and John Hora. The panel discussion focused on how the tools being used today are changing and impacting the way we look at production and design techniques. One of the benefits of these new techniques is associated with special effects; such technology can now allow the cinematographer to do a handheld documentary-type camera movement to create special effects without compromising a seamless photograph for the benefit of the special effect.

The Friday afternoon session, "Laboratory Issues," was chaired by Frank Ricotta, Technicolor, and co-chaired by Paul Law, Consolidated Film Industries. One of the popular papers, "A Panchromatic Sound Recording Film for Multi-Format Digital Tracks," which demonstrated the available clarity of Eastman's new soundtrack negative film was presented by Alan Masson, Eastman Kodak Co.

"Post-Production," held Saturday morning, was chaired by Paul Carey, Marketing Specialist, Inc., and Jon Erland, Composite Components. This session featured a paper entitled "Digital Enhancement of High Resolution Multi-Format Cinema Imagery," by Michael Osterlich and Lewis Merritt, Image Graphics. Another paper, "Truetime: An Alternative Approach to the Marriage of Film and Video," by Luke Freeman, Sony Electronics, also was very popular.

The Saturday afternoon session on "Distribution/Exhibition," chaired by Ioan Allen, Dolby Labs, was well-received. Allen co-presented a paper with Tom Scott, EdNet, entitled, "Are Movies Too Loud?" Scott Robinson, John Neary, and Del Hatch, also from Dolby, presented a compelling paper on "The Dolby CP500 — Optimal Approach to Signal Processing."

Social Events

Luncheons and Wrap-Up Reception

There were plenty of social activities at SMPTE's Film Conference and

Exhibit. The Century Plaza Hotel and Towers, located in the heart of Century City and minutes from the major Hollywood Studios, played host not only to the conference and exhibit, but also to a couple of entertaining SMPTE luncheons and a Wrap-Up Reception held poolside on Saturday evening. The reception was sponsored by Eastman Kodak Co., and over 200 conference attendees had the opportunity to socialize with old friends and meet new ones as they toasted what was hopefully only the first of many more film-related conferences and exhibits in Los Angeles.

Hollywood Galaxy Tour

Several attendees visited the Hollywood Galaxy Theater for a tour of the landmark facility, including a look at the Backlot, an exhibit of famous props and costumes. The group then moved to the bridge of the USS Enterprise, where they toured the set of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," and sat in the chairs of the famous Trekkies. A close inspection of the engineering console from the show revealed some unexpected inhabitants of the starship, including cats in the corridors and hamsters providing the motor power. These and several other inside jokes were too small for most people to recognize on TV.

The next attraction for SMPTE delegates in this area was the complete set from the "Cheers" TV series. The group tested the stools and observed where the cast had carved their names into the top of the bar after the last episode of the hit series. Conference attendees were also treated to a multimedia show featuring excerpts from many famous movies and TV shows.

The group was shown a VistaVision camera similar the one used to shoot the famous Alfred Hitchcock movie *Vertigo*. Also displayed at the theater was a rare lighting fixture complete with rotating lamps, which contained a small amount of sand used to clean the inside mechanism as the lamps rotated.

Film Conference Deemed a Success

By all accounts, the First Annual Spring Film Conference and Exhibit, one of several exciting SMPTE events planned for this year, was a rousing success.

— John Izzo
Director of Marketing