

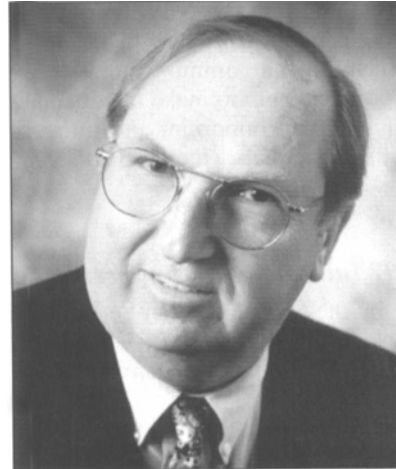
SMPTE AROUND THE WORLD

I have recently returned from Tokyo where, at the gracious invitation of the Motion Picture and Television Engineering Society of Japan (MPTESJ), I was able to participate in the celebration of their 50th Anniversary, marking half a century of service to their industry and their members. Representatives of several other organizations were also in attendance, including the Chinese SMPTE (CSMPTE), and all took part in the official ceremony.

At the event, I had the opportunity to meet several SMPTE members, many of whom were also members of one or more of the local industry organizations, and all of whom were pleased to see that a SMPTE representative was in attendance. Meeting these distant members face-to-face reminded me, once again, of the international nature of our Society, and of its far-flung constituency. In recent years I have had the opportunity to meet with many individual members in many distant parts of the world including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Jordan and other parts of Arabia and the Middle East, and from Thailand and Eastern Europe, as well as from the more "westernized" world of the U.K., Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, South America, Australia and Japan.

Overall SMPTE has some 2,000 members who live and work outside of North America. The region I was visiting, Region 8, has over 500 members, about 150 of whom reside in Japan. Our most rapid growth is in the international arena and our overseas membership now constitutes about 21% of our members. Several of these members are individuals, either alone or part of a small and scattered group in a particular region or country. They share with us a common interest in the film and television arts and sciences and face similar challenges. But they have little opportunity to participate much beyond the warm feeling that their interests are likely aggregated with those of the rest of us, as well as regularly receiving industry and technical news via the *Journal*, and even that arrives in what is often a foreign and diffi-

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cult language. They may never have had the opportunity to attend a section meeting, anywhere, and may not find it possible to raise the necessary funding to attend a far-away SMPTE conference and thus meet other members. Some, I know from direct experience, personally sacrifice much just to come up with an annual membership fee, in hard currency, to sustain the notion of an ongoing association with their peers and maintain the flow of technical information.

How different it is in places where SMPTE is active and opportunities abound to participate fully as members of the Society in local Section activities, conferences, and even in standards setting. Yet the question arises, who values membership most? Often, I would suggest, it may be those members who are least served.

When next you have an opportunity to meet a member from a distant and under-served region, please try to keep in mind the common interests that you both share and, if possible, help to make that member experience the reality of being an important and integral part of the larger body of professionals which is SMPTE.

— David L. George