Section Meetings

Chicago

November 10, 1998

The November meeting, held at Post Effects, attracted 40 guests from both SMPTE and SBE Chicago chapters. Jim Lindner, VidiPax, was the featured speaker and began his presentation with a discussion of the vast amount of videotape and audiotape being recorded, pointing out that most is of little broad-based value. However, some of what is recorded today will have cultural significance for perhaps the next couple of hundred years. In light of these statements, Lindner further discussed the factors affecting the useful life (ten years is a good general rule to follow) of a specific audio or videotape: temperature, humidity, usage, and quality threshold.

Lindner's company employs several different processes to restore old tape depending on the particular problem. More importantly, he also consults with several companies concerning a strategy for maintaining an archive of valuable audio and videotape libraries. Lindner answered several questions following the formal presentation.—Steve Robinson (Secretary-Treasurer), Serial Scene

Detroit

October 13,1998

When both host and speaker for the October meeting were forced to cancel due to a last minute production schedule change, former Detroit Section Manager Wallace Murray stepped in and rescued the evening.

The meeting was held at the Ameritech Northwest Office Center Customer Presentation Center. The topic was scheduled to be lighting for wide screen television, and the audience of 15 members and guests were treated to a mock demonstration of how lighting fixtures can be easily modified for the wide screen using cardboard, gaffer's tape, and brute force.

After that entertaining introduction, the program centered around Fiber Optic Distribution of Digital Television Signals, courtesy of Ameritech. Murray explained and demonstrated the Ameritech Serial Component Video Service. He discussed the problems, due to the many transmission standards and carriers, related to fiber-optic distribution of digital television signals. The discussion turned to Detroit's DTV status with two stations currently on the air.

In a follow-up to the September meeting on DTV plans for the Detroit television stations, Len Eden, from the consulting firm of John F.X. Browne and Associates, updated the attendees on some of the plans for field testing in Detroit. The meeting concluded with an informal Q. and A. session.—Helge Blucher (Secretary/Treasurer), WTVS

Detroit

November 10, 1998

With high-definition television under way, serial digital routing is becoming the available and affordable "patch" to get on the air with HDTV programming. Rick Cannon, Leitch Inc., explained the process to an audience of 25 members and guests during the November meeting at the Wayne RESA education center auditorium.

Cannon began with a review of the advantages of serial digital routing, including a closer look at issues such as reclocking and clean switch routers. He explained the importance of synchronization with video in AES audio routing systems and described various synchronization methods, including "quiet switching."

The next part of the presentation was dedicated to HD routing and switching, including handling of SMPTE-292M (1.5 Gbits/sec). Many facility set-up scenarios from HDTV pass-through to multichannel SDTV were shown and discussed in detail. The program concluded with a look at the convergence of networking and broadcasting and what the future holds for routers as we know them today. A Q. and A. session followed the presentation.—Helge Blucher (Secretary/Treasurer), WTVS

Wallace Murray demonstrates how the addition of some commonly found material can be used to modify gel holders.

Hollywood

October 14, 1998

In 1927, J. B. Priestley, an English journalist and author, wrote "prophecy is obviously a futile proceeding, except insofar as it makes our descendants laugh." That vintage advice didn't deter John Brooks, chairman of the Hollywood Section, from assembling an all-star panel of technology strategists at CBS Studio, Stage 33, in West Los Angeles on October 14. The topic was The Future of the Industry: In a Changing Technological Landscape, What's Next for Hollywood?

The meeting was organized by Milt Shefter and John Mason. The panel included moderator Bob Lambert, senior vice-

SMPTE SECTION CALENDAR

Rocky Mountain

For further information contact Section Chair Fred Baumgartner, TCI, tel: (303) 486-3946, fax: (303) 486-3891, e-mail: baumgartner.fred@tcinc.com

Dates for future meetings

January 20, 1999: Back-up Power Systems

Toronto

For further information contact Promotions Adviser Brad Fortner, Rogers Communications Center, Ryerson Polytechnic University, tel: (416) 237-0625, fax: (416) 979-5203, e-mail: bfortner@acs.ryerson.ca

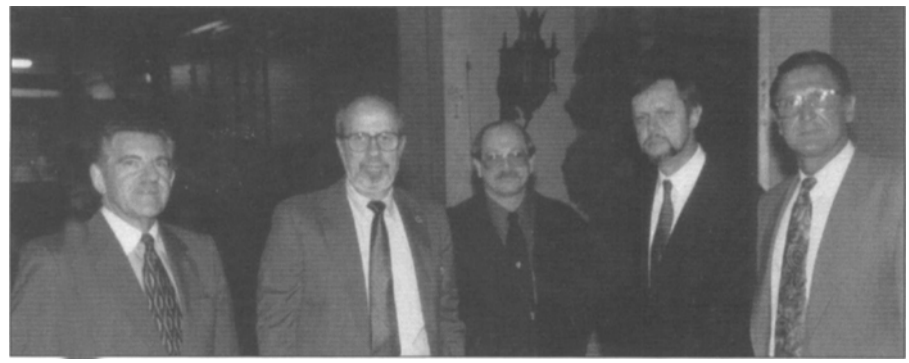
Dates for future meetings

January 12, 1999: Satellite Meeting

president, new technology and new media development, the Walt Disney Co.; Emory Cohen, president and CEO, Laser Pacific Media; Chris Cookson, executive vice-president, technical operations, Warner Bros.; Rob Hummel, Dreamworks SKG; Michael Moradzadeh, director, strategic planning and architecture, Home Products Group, Intel; and Steve Schifrin, vice- president, program production services, CBS Television.

Electronic cinema (EC) and digital television (DTV) dominated the discussion. Cookson set the tone when Lambert asked him how soon electronic cinema would grace 50% of screens? "The answer to all questions like that is ten years," he replied. Members of the panel were impressed with the advances in EC image quality. If image quality was the only factor, Cookson said, there could be a fair number of EC screens within three to five years, but he added that he has yet to see a convincing business case.

Panel members rejected conventional wisdom that dramatically reduced print film costs will fuel the EC revolution. They said film prints will still be needed for tens of thousands of other screens around the world, and Cookson pointed out that no one is claiming electronic projection will enhance the movie-going experience. Hummel asked why exhibitors would invest in replacing an elegant technology that works? Questions were also raised about the potential high cost of rapid obsolescence during the early days of EC, spiraling maintenance overhead for exhibitors, downtime, and a lack of universal standards—a task defined for SMPTE.



Program co-chairs Milt Shefter and George Benkowsky (l) and John Mason (r) are joined by new member Duane Dahlberg (c) and Section Chair John Brooks at the Hollywood meeting on October 14.

DTV also inspired a lively discussion. Moradzadeh made a compelling case for delivering digital programming over the Internet and described intriguing possibilities for interactive TV, such as cooking shows with recipes that can be downloaded. As television sets become more intelligent, he predicted, content will become more interactive.

There was agreement that the types of content produced on film today will continue to be produced on film for ten years, and that HDTV will eventually come into play for sporting events and game shows. Cohen predicted that content will be stored in 1080P 24-frame digital format. Other panelists felt that cut negative is a safer bet at least until the future of DTV comes into sharper focus. Time ran out before the questions did.

Panelists at the Hollywood meeting on October 14: (l-r) John Mason; Bob Lambert, moderator; Steve Schifrin; Michael Moradzadeh; Rob Hujmer; Chris Cookson; and Emory Cohen.

A packed house at CBS Stage 33, Hollywood, October 14.

New York

October 20, 1998

Approximately 75 broadcast and production professionals turned up at NBC to hear Jon Pannaman, Quantel, and Daniel Collin, Discreet Logic, talk about HDTV production, especially as it relates to workstation technology.

Pannaman framed the situation by discussing many of the dilemmas faced by today's industry. What formats are available? Where is the audience? How is the creative process affected? Can there be a smooth path to HDTV? The conclusion is that production will have to handle all possible formats, without compromising the tools and production models now enjoyed by a mature 601 industry. He also stated that the facility owners now have to choose between the "cliff" approach (total and immediate conversion to HD) and the "slope" approach (layering technologies, perhaps use of upconversion.)

Collin followed on the program with a description of current Discreet Logic workstation technology and discussed how it will be applicable to the coming HDTV production era. He showed some useful graphs depicting bandwith and data rates for SD and HD production.

Following the lectures, a brief Q. and A. session was held, which included the infamous JP from Discreet Logic. A videotape of the meeting was made and will be available on request from the New York Section.—Bill Topazio (Secretary-Treasurer), Manhattan Transfer/Edit

Ohio Section

November 5, 1998

The October and November meetings were combined and held on November 5 at the WBNS digital HDTV transmitter plant in Columbus—WBNS-DT are the call letters for the new digital broadcasting plant. The host and principal speaker for the evening was John Owen, chief engineer, WBNS-TV/DT. Owen presented four very impressive HDTV-taped playback demonstrations

of digital HDTV segments from several CBS/WBNS-DT-produced HDTV programs. The programs were exhibited on three 16 x 9 digital HDTV monitors, two were direct view and one was a gas plasma.

The first segment of the program was a music video montage of clips from the Ohio State vs. West Virginia College football game, broadcast on WBNS-DT and CBS on September 5. This was the first network digital HDTV broadcast. The WBNS-DT engineering staff actually set up and assisted in the engineering of that historic broadcasting event.

Another HDTV segment was a series of video clips showing the step by step development of their new digital TV transmission plant, from the digital antenna being raised up the tower, to the final resting position of the new digital transmitter in a former second floor storage area of their transmitter building.

Another example of the wonders of digital HDTV, was a playback of the space shuttle Discovery rocket liftoff from the Kennedy Space Center on October 29, originally broadcast on CBS and WBNS-DT's new digital channel assignment, Channel 21. WBNS-DT was also instrumental in augmenting that broadcast for CBS. All of these segments, while unique enough as presented in HDTV video, were even more so, with the addition of Dolby Digital Six Channel audio.

Chief Owen stressed to the meeting attendees that everyday, both he and his engineering staff, have been learning something about digital HDTV broadcasting that they didn't know just the day before. "Whether it is a new type of cable or connector or how a digital signal is measured, etc.," he stated, "we are the first to plow the fields of digital HDTV in the Columbus market. Everyday something new is uncovered!"

WBNS-DT is the pioneer digital HDTV station in the country offering the full Dolby Digital AC-3 Six Channel audio to the public. Owen stated that Dolby Labs greatly supported the station's efforts to be the pioneer in digital audio with its broadcast of the first network digital HDTV program, (the Ohio State vs. West Virginia football game) resulting in the broadcast of both of the new FCC-mandated video and audio digital signals.

The second speaker of the evening was Robert A. Brooks, Proctor and Gamble Co., in Cincinnati. He began his presentation by commending the WBNS staff for constructing such a futuristic digital HDTV plant, which he and P&G feel is also an opportunity to achieve an innovation in the art of television marketing, never before possible since the dawn of television broadcasting itself. He went on to state that in addition to the wider picture of the crystal clear dishes washed in their product Cascade, for instance, a commercial broadcast in digital HDTV could also contain a feature called interactive television.

He gave this example of the possibilities of future broadcast digital HDTV advertising interactively: Suppose that Proctor and Gamble wanted to broadcast a national ad that would appeal both to the areas of the country where their product Tide sold better as a liquid, and, simultaneously, run it in the areas of the country where it sold better as a powder. Broadcasting the ad nationally to digital HDTV televisions, which may have had either the owners' area codes or zip codes programmed into them, as an example, they could send the closing scene of the ad showing Tide as a box of powder in the geographical area of the country where it sold best in that form. In the area where it sold better as a liquid, a plastic bottle of liquid Tide would appear in the closing scene of the ad, but both would be running simultaneously on the national television network.

He speculated on one way that the delay in HDTV receivers could be improved, in terms of cost and availability to the public. It has been reported by some broadcasting and financial circles in the Far East, that a firm based in The Republic of Korea, striving to improve their economy, will be offering a digital HDTV receiver, with a tuner, for approximately $3,500 at the beginning of next year.

He further speculated that, at first, neither the digital HDTV broadcaster nor its early sponsors would be seeing much turnaround of profit until more receivers are available to consumers in some quantity. When that happens, a marketing strategy aimed at a specific portion of the television audience could be developed, and the appropriate rate structures for the new medium could be more accurately set and applied.

A lively Q. and A. session followed the speakers' presentations. The questions ranged from the cost of a typical digital HDTV plant conversion to a prediction of when other stations in the Columbus market would be converting to full HDTV. The majority of the meeting attendees were especially impressed with the high performance of digital HDTV broadcasting's ability to show the shuttle launch in such vivid detail, along with the wider aspect ratio and the superior Dolby Digital Audio.—Gene L. Batey, (Secretary/Treasurer), Ohio State University

Pasadena City College Student Chapter

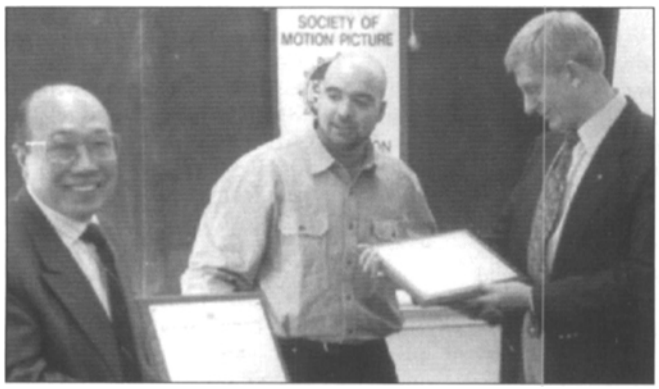
October 13, 1998

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 by student chairperson Brian Klepek. After announcements of the upcoming Hollywood section meeting and the Fall SMPTE Conference, the guest for the day, Mark Broadwater, was introduced. Broadwater provided a brief history of his work in electronic cinematography and other related technologies. He explained the importance of having a working resume and passed around a copy of his as an example; it showed extensive work for Fox News, CNN, HBO, and many others.

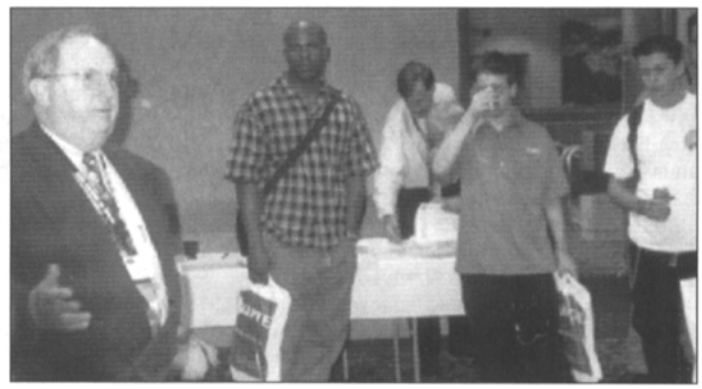
Broadwater explained how robotic camera mounts enabled today's camera operators to get shots that were previously unobtainable. Using new technology, a cameraperson can now use a sophisticated joystick to control a camera head that can give pan and tilt in 360°, as well as zoom and focus. He explained how he had used this for different shots in the Winter Olympics in Japan and the Ecco Challenge in Australia, among other sporting applications. To illustrate his presentation, he passed around literature on the Power Pod and Pea Pod systems.

Broadwater's work has led to many memorable experiences, including a chance to interview and work on a documentary for the king of Thailand. A special achievement was receiving an Emmy award for his work on the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Helicopter Rescue Crew, in which he documented brush fires and captured the drama of real life rescues. In one instance he was lowered from the helicopter in a safety harness over a white

Guest speaker Mark Broadwater at the October 13 meeting of the Pasadena City College Student Chapter.



The Pasadena City College Student Chapter presented an informative program on October 27 featuring Fung Lam (l) and David Corley (r). In the center is Brian Klepek, student chairperson.



SMPTE President David George addresses students at a fair at Pasadena City College on October 27.

Students at the Pasadena student fair on October 27.

water mountain stream.

The meeting concluded with a Q. and A. period. There were 35 people in attendance.—Brian Klepek, Chairperson

Pasadena City College Student Chapter

October 27, 1998

Fung Lam, retired vice-president of Sony, and David F.E. Corley, president of D.S.C Laboratories in Ontario, were the guest speakers at the October Student Chapter meeting at Pasadena City College; there were 39 attendees.

Lam spoke about how Canada's television system works. Until just recently there was no license to receive signals from the U.S. satellite market; however, changes have been implemented in this area of broadcasting. The structure of Canada's television networks are similar in some ways to ours, for instance, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., which is equivalent to our Public Broadcasting Service, is the largest in the region. The CBC focuses on educational programming and is government owned. With 75 stations across Canada and a budget based on 40% of Canadian taxes, with respect to educational funding, CBC is the leader of this broadcasting environment. Lam mentioned some privately owned networks, such as Global Television, CTV, CHUMS, Can West, and Atlantic Television, that have their own regional and national audiences.

The next discussion was on direct-to-home satellite services, which provide U.S. and Canadian programming with about 100 channel selections, including Express Vu, Star TV, and LOOK with transmission via satellite to home dish and decoder combos. Cable companies provide specialty channels as do direct-to-home services. The 34 channels include some that are familiar in the U.S., such as A&E, Bravo, Discovery Channel, Family Channel, and History Channel. Multilingual programming is provided in 27 different languages for the vast diversity of cultures within the Canadian population.

In closing, Lam encouraged students to ask questions. The subject of education and business was touched on briefly and Lam shared with the students what he called the triangle philosophy: the customer comes first at the top; then profit for the company; and finally employee management. He added that this philosophy is a fundamental key to his success at Sony. Someone asked how they might approach getting a job like his? He replied "Carve your name on your work with pride."

David Corley explained the differences in the film industries in the U.S. and Canadian markets. He said that compared in size with Hollywood and New York, Toronto's film presence was no. 3 in the world and Vancouver is no. 4. Most productions are done in English and French, resulting in a lot of film being processed—over 5 million feet per day at just one lab.

Another topic of discussion was Canada's technological contributions to film. These include the first RGB additive printer and the first computer-controlled animation techniques. Imax technology is also renowned around the world with its Canadian origin well defined. Imax cameras have shot from the top of Mount Everest and in outer space from the satellite information on the Mars-Venus fly-over mission. Corley concluded his discussion with some historical and geographical data about exports, climate, culture, language, and population.—Brian Klepek, Chairperson

Rochester

September 15, 1998

The 21st Annual Student Film and Video Festival for New York State Students was held at the Carlson Auditorium, Rochester Institute of Technology. Seventy-eight people attended.

Entries in the competition came from the Rochester Institute of Technology; Ithaca College; SUNY Fredonia; SUNY Binghamton; Columbia University; and Irondequoit High School. All were submitted on videotape and judged by eight professionals from both SMPTE and RAVA (Rochester Audiovisual Association) a joint sponsor of the event.

We were honored with 11 winners this year, all of which were screened at the Festival in their entirety. Winning entries were produced in a variety of medias, including five on 16mm film (one of which was a mixed film and Hi-8 video entry), two created with hand drawn animations, scanned into computer, and colored for video output; two created in computer animation with video output; one produced in S-VHS, and one in VHS.

Categories included Fiction, Nonfiction, Experimental, and Animation. The top Festival award "Best of the Show" was presented to Chistopher Foley and Matthew Cameron (RIT) for their film *Didymus*. The feature film was shot on 16mm, edited on the Avid, and finished on S-VHS. Foley and Cameron were able to edit it to the 30-min maximum running time without loss of story line or continuity. A fictional period

piece, set during the civil war, Didymus, an immigrant farmer must make a difficult choice between his twin sons. The story unfolds leading the viewer to believable conclusions, covering patriotism, family loyality, and love. This story-telling produced an exceptional and overwhelming experience for the viewer.

In the Fiction category, First Place (Film) was awarded to Sam Sloves and Anissa Bouziane (Columbia University) for *Close Call*. Second Place (Video): Steve LaTart and Chad Atkins (Ironde-quoit High School) for *Dream On*.

In the Non-Fiction category, First Place (Film) was awarded to Amotz Zakai (RIT) for *A Camera, Two Lights and A Button*.

In the Experimental category, First Place (Film) was awarded to Rodrigo Bellott (Ithaca College) for *Forlorn*. Honorable Mention (Film): Marc Dworkin (SUNY Binghamton) for *The Artfilm: Chickenhand-puppets for Filippe*. Honorable Mention (Video): Kevin Dillon and Eric Watson (SUNY Fredonia) for *Channel Zero*.

In the Animation category, First Place (Computer Animation) was awarded to Curt Markham (RIT) for *Yobbo*. Second Place (Computer Animation): Glenn Ehlers (RIT) for *A Spring Day*. Honorable Mention (Computer Animation): Daniel Pejril (RIT) for *Open House*.

Honorable Mention (Hand Drawn) was awarded to Sarah Donahue (RIT) for *Up and Away with The Meeps*.

Gloria Read, a special guest from the Eastman Kodak Co. awarded four $1,000 Film Production Grants. These awards were presented to Christopher Foley and Matthew Cameron for *Didymus*, Sam Sloves and Anissa Bouziane for *Close Call*, Amotz Zakai for *A Camera, Two Lights And A Button*, Rodrigo Bellott for *Forlorn*.

SMPTE section officers and managers, and the RAVA chairman thanked Vince and Kathy Slavin for the effort that they put into this annual Festival. The judges were also thanked for their time and critical review.—Arthur J. Cosgrove (Section Chairman), Eastman Kodak. Co.,

Sacramento

October 21, 1998

The October 21st meeting of the Sacramento Section, titled The Technology and Enjoyment of HDTV, was attended by about 40 people at the Tektronix-Grass Valley Products facility.

The technical session began with an overview of SMPTE specifications relating to HDTV. It continued with a presentation and discussion of system designs, characteristics of the reference signals, the impact of multiple video formats and the challenges of designing switchers at HDTV data rates. It concluded with a discussion of the design of HDTV production and master control switchers including the use of field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs) to implement video processing and the design techniques needed to receive, route, and transmit the 1.485 Gbit/sec signals. An informal discussion and a demonstration of the Grass Valley 110HD production switcher followed the presentation.

In addition to the technical session, a separate viewing room was available where SMPTE members and their guests could see and hear HDTV on a large monitor.—William Carlquist (Secretary/ Treasurer), Tektronix

News

SMPTE to Give Seminar at NAB99

Following last year's success, SMPTE will present an all-day seminar at NAB99 on April 1-7, 1999, at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Co-chaired by Richard Hess, vice-president, National Teleconsultants, and Graham Jones, manager, DTV Systems Engineering at Harris Corp., the topic will deal with issues of control and automation of new technologies in broadcasting.

The age of digital television is here and with it new technologies, systems, and equipment. Digital inbound and outbound program streams, encoders and multiplexers, multichannel audio, metadata, datacasting, and multicasting, in addition to video servers, VTRs, switchers, traffic, and newsroom systems, are all elements of this new age. The ability to manage and control these elements is critical to the operation of network distribution and station broadcasting. The seminar will take an in-depth look at how these new developments will be managed.

For registration information, call 1-800-342-2460, or you may register online at www.nab.org/ conventions/.

UCLA Extension announces a personalized, five-day program of study for professionals in engineering, science, and other technologies. The 57th Technical Management Program, to be held March 28 to April 2, 1999, addresses the newest trends and paradigms in today's turbulent business world and provides managers with a repertoire of methods to solve problems, plan strategies, and motivate colleagues.

The four-course format allows participants to shape a curriculum from more than 20 different offerings each day. The list of courses being offered includes New

Notice concerning trial publication and public comment on SMPTE Standards, Recommended Practices and Engineering Guidelines

SMPTE Standards, Recommended Practices and Engineering Guidelines are now published on the SMPTE World Wide Web site at <http://www.smpte.org/stds/> for trial publication and public review.

These proposal documents will continue to be published in the *SMPTE Journal* for information-only purposes.

This change is in accordance with the SMPTE Administrative Practices:

During the trial publication period of six weeks following the posting of the proposed document on the Society's World Wide Web site, the Society invites comment on the proposed document from the readership. Comments are submitted by the Director of Engineering to the Chair of the responsible Technology Committee with copies to the Chair of the Standards Committee and the appropriate Engineering Director. If, in their opinion, the comments require any technical change, the project is returned to the Technology Committee for further consideration.

If the comments are considered by the appropriate chairs and Engineering Director to be exclusively editorial, the Director of Engineering, in consultation with the Technology Committee Chair, makes the necessary editorial revisions. Commenters shall be promptly notified of the disposition of their comments and the justification for the actions by the Technology Committee Chair.

C.V. Girod, P.E., Director of Engineering