

# MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE VICE-PRESIDENT

THOMAS M. JORDAN

## Duties of the Conference Vice-President

The Conference Vice-President is responsible for all arrangements and details of the Society's technical conferences and exhibitions, other than those relating to the program of technical papers. The responsibilities include appointing a General Arrangements Chair for each event who is responsible for the detailed on-site arrangements. Together, the Conference Vice-President and the General Arrangements Chair appoint chairs and members of sub-committees and ad hoc committees that are needed to handle various phases of the arrangements. The Conference Vice-President maintains a close liaison with the Editorial Vice-President and the Society's Meeting Planner to ensure that all facilities required for the technical sessions are provided.

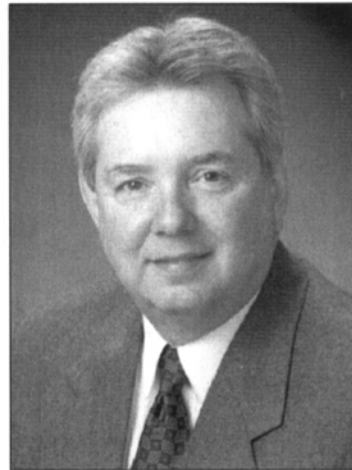
The Conference Vice-President is also responsible for the preparation of an annual budget for the ensuing year's conferences and ensuring that expenditures are held in conformity with that budget.

## Annual Conferences

SMPTE holds two national conferences each year: the Advanced Motion Imaging Conference and the Fall Technical Conference. The AMI Conference generally occurs in February unless there is a conflict with another major industry event. The site of this conference moves around to afford access to attendees in as many geographically diverse locations as possible. One criterion used in the selection of venues for this conference is the presence of a local SMPTE section. This allows use of talented members from the local section to assist with the many details involved in the production of a high-quality technical conference and saves the Society a substantial amount of money.

The Fall Technical Conference alternates between New York City and Pasadena, CA. New York has long been the East Coast site because it is a hub of film and television activity and technology. This conference is always well attended, drawing technicians, engineers, and executives from all parts of the U.S., Canada, and beyond. A recent change for the New York conference was its return to a hotel venue rather than a convention center, after the cessation of World Media Expo. Driving the move to a hotel was the need to serve the membership with a high-quality conference while maintaining an expense level consistent with the attendance. The 1997 New York conference was held in the Marriott Marquis, which will be the site of the upcoming 1999 Conference on November 19-22.

Pasadena, on the other hand, is a new site, first used in the fall of 1998. Pasadena was chosen because of its proximity to the Hollywood film and television community and to satisfy the criteria of cost, easy access and parking, quality exhibit and conference space, and availability of reasonably priced hotel accommodations. It was generally agreed that all objectives were met at the 1998 conference, so plans have been firmed up to return to Pasadena for future conferences in 2000 and 2002.



## The Conference Planning Process

Conference dates and venues are selected and contracts are negotiated two to three years in advance. This ensures availability of the desired sites and locks in the costs. During the date selection process, every effort is made to avoid conflicts with other industry conferences and media events. Probably the single biggest challenge to a successful conference, other than a good date and location, is the cost and complexity of the audio-video presentation systems. Because of the need for cutting-edge-quality large screen video projection, film projection, and theater-quality sound, much time and effort are expended in selecting and managing the

provider of these services. Bids are solicited from qualified A-V companies and the selection is based on a balance of cost and capability. The conference A-V Chairperson is involved in selecting vendors and is responsible for supervision of the A-V operation during the conference. To help manage costs, SMPTE aggressively seeks loans of key pieces of A-V equipment from vendors able to provide this type of support in exchange for the "free press" provided at the event. Liberal use is made of volunteers from the local section to provide A-V assistance during setup, operation, and tear down and with other on-site tasks.

Vital to the success of all conferences is Headquarters meeting planner, Ilisha Stier. She ensures that all details surrounding facility arrangements, conference mailings, exhibit space, A-V bid responses, sub-committee chair appointments, conference registration, and dozens of other essential tasks are executed completely and on time.

## The Future of SMPTE Conferences

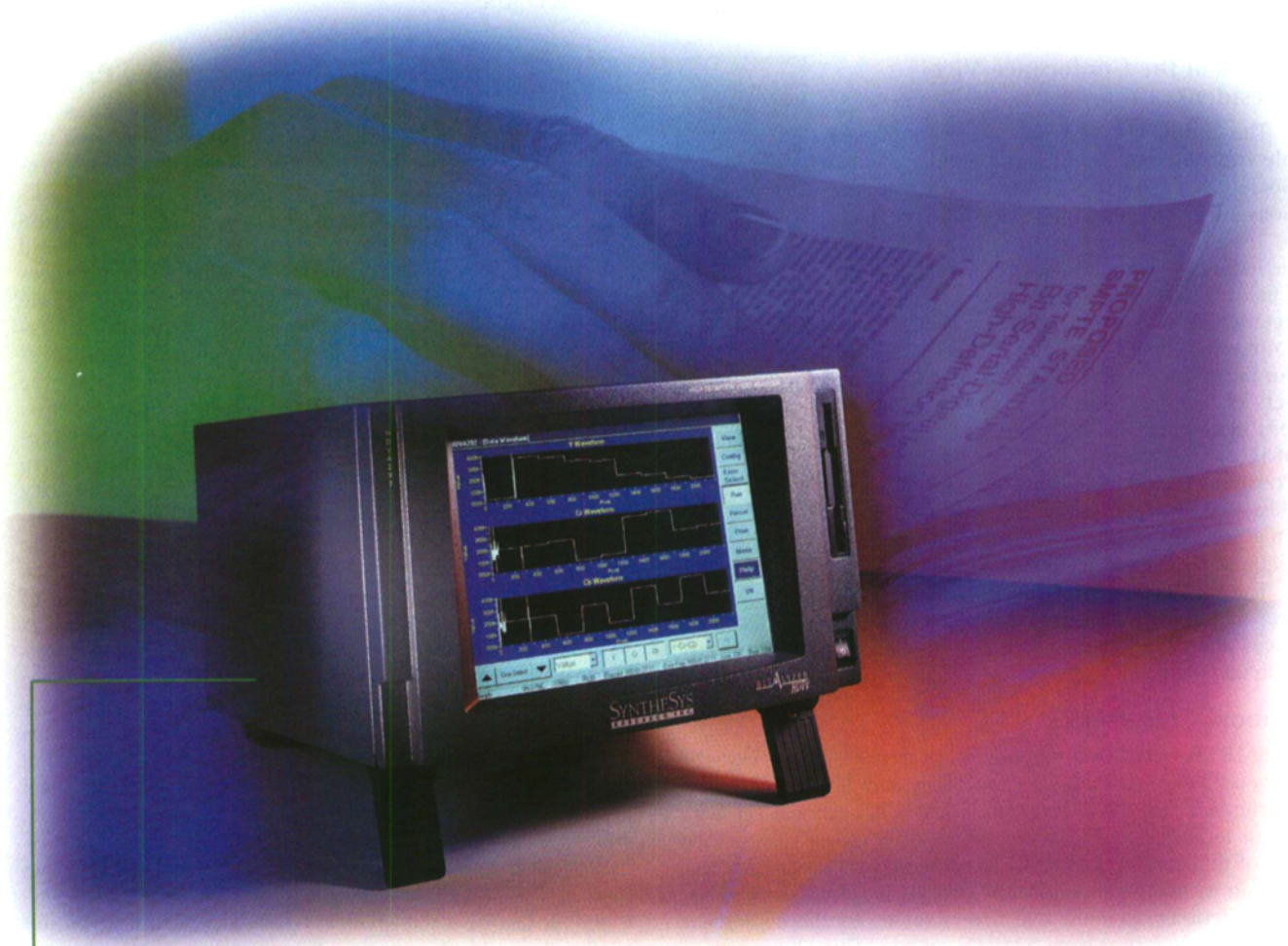
The Fall Conference in New York is essentially complete from the arrangement perspective. This year, for the first time, the conference featured *on-line* registration at the SMPTE website. Plans are to expand the use of the Internet to provide even more conference services in the future. Suggestions for new on-line or other services are welcome and should be submitted to [istier@smpte.org](mailto:istier@smpte.org).

Arrangements for the Advanced Motion Imaging Conference, set for February in San Francisco, are well under way. The site is the elegant Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill, overlooking the city and the Bay. Look for conference details in the *Journal* and on the website.

It remains the goal of SMPTE conferences to provide the most industry-relevant topics from engineers and scientists working at the heart of emerging technologies. As Conference Vice-President, my goal is to ensure that this crucial material is presented in a professional environment and with a quality consistent with the state of the art.

—Thomas M. Jordan

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**MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE VICE-PRESIDENT**

Thomas M. Jordan ..... 745

**141ST SMPTE TECHNICAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION**

New York City, November 19-22, 1999 .....	748
Conference Sponsors .....	748
Welcome Letter from Conference Vice-President .....	748
At Your Service .....	748
Conference Schedule Overview .....	750
General Information .....	754
Hotel Floor Plan .....	758
Papers Program .....	760
Honors and Awards .....	767
Exhibit Floor Plan .....	776
List of Exhibitors .....	777

34th Advanced Motion Imaging Conference  
San Francisco, CA, February 3-5, 2000 ..... 789

NEWS & NOTES ..... 793

**TECHNICAL PAPERS**

Adding Hyperlinks to Digital Television <i>V. M. Bove, Jr., J. Dakss, S. Agamanolis, and E. Chalom</i> .....	795
Time-varying Image Quality: Modeling the Relation Between Instantaneous and Overall Quality <i>Roelof Hamberg and Huib de Ridder</i> .....	802

**APPLICATIONS/PRACTICES PAPER**

Optimization of DTV Signals Within a Transmission Plant  
*Brett Jenkins and Ray Kiesel* ..... 812

**SMPTE NEWS AND DEPARTMENTS**

Section Meetings .....	818
News .....	820
Obituaries .....	821
Calendar .....	821
New Products .....	822
Professional Services .....	823
Engineering News .....	824
Classified .....	825
Application for Membership .....	836
Membership Renewal .....	837
Sustaining Member List .....	838

**STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**

SMPTE Standards ..... 826

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