

sets out to do. Best of all, it's entertaining. I hope Po-Chun continues to work in this medium and set himself new goals each time out." Po-Chun is a student at RIT.—Vincent T. Slavín, Section Chair

## Sacramento September 13, 2000

The September meeting was held in the studio at KCRA-TV in Sacramento. Larry Eastteam gave an illustrated talk on the conversion of KCRA to simulcast, NTSC, and digital transmission. He explained how the conversion of the transmitter tower was implemented while a standby transmitter continued with the existing transmission schedule.

Eastteam discussed the equipment currently being used for conversion to digital and some of the problems encountered in getting on the air. He also explained the current program schedule, which includes live transmission of the "Tonight Show" in high-definition. Eastteam briefly discussed the problem of funding the cost of conversion to digital, which prevents the use of resources in implementing HD production.

The meeting concluded with a tour of the facility, showing the HDTV equipment used for up-conversion and the master control area with a 16 x 9 display of the up-converted signal and analog transmission for Channels 3 and 58.—Mike Betts, Secretary/Treasurer

## Washington, DC August 17, 2000

Approximately 60 members and guests attended the meeting hosted by Atlantic Video in Washington. Amid all the debate over DTV transmission standards, 8VSB vs. COFDM vs. ISDB/BST-OFDM, one truly promising and greatly desired development has emerged: a universal video production format bridging the multitude of digital and analog transmission standards. The presentation gave participants an opportunity to experience 24 frame/sec high-definition video personally.

The key word in videography the last few years has been convergence: this format certainly falls in the category, uniting film and video professionals, as well as "new media" artisans, looking to stream material across the internet. For a century, chemical-based motion picture film was the universal acquisition medium. Then, the development of electronic video post-production offered speed, economy, and a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) creative environment. Programs edited for worldwide distribution required multiple film-to-video transfers and duplicate editing sessions for each transmission format. Now 24p changes all of that!

Steve Wynn, Sony Broadcast and Professional Group, gave a clear and concise overview of the format's past, future, and present manifestation in his company's CineAlta line of equipment. He explained Sony's use of a segmented frame with existing signal transports, enabling equipment to switch between interlace and progressive modes. The system scans the entire image progressively and then separates the signal into odd and even lines, similar to fields, but temporally coincidental.

Wynn's overview was very interesting, but the novel appeal of the evening was the demonstration, viewing 24p natively and then seeing it transcoded to other formats in realtime. Those who have watched PAL or SECAM 50-Hz signals are familiar with the slight flicker especially visible in brighter or high-contrast scenes. This effect is evident when displaying 24 frames/sec on a 48-Hz refreshing display, although most of the time, it is not that disturbing. Monitors are being developed that will refresh 72 times/sec, making native viewing of 24p flickerless.

It was also interesting to see identical images converted to and displayed in center-cut 4:3 aspect ratio, NTSC standard definition, and both 16:9 HD 1080i and 720p. Images shot with Sony electronic 24p cinematography system, equipped with prime, film-like lenses, were exhibited. The difficult-

to-describe, but much sought after, film look was achieved and the material appeared to have originated on film.

After Wynn's presentation, Sony's Nick DiLello showed film-originated material, transferred to 24p video, followed by a comparison between film and electronic imaging. In most instances, the film-originated image appeared slightly more pleasing, but the difference was minimal. When converting to SDTV and HD 1080i, the standard 3:2 pull-down method (traditionally used to transfer film) was used for transferring 24p video, giving the film-feel as well.

Filmmakers (such as George Lucas) are adapting this technology to their needs; however, additional, super high-definition formats might develop as needed. D-cinema, the electronic digital distribution and exhibition of theatrical motion pictures, saving print costs and heading off piracy, has also been mentioned as an outlet for

television stations and production houses by producing local commercials and segments for movie theaters. Although not demonstrated, DiLello said that converting to PAL or 1080 25 frames/sec is just as easy. He also stated that 24 flicker and 72-Hz refresh display was being updated to enable 24 frame/sec material in a flickerless environment.

According to Wynn, Sony has joined SMPTE and others in developing ways of placing metadata on recording media so that reframing for 4:3 could be more versatile than simply center-cut. He also stated that while direct transmission of 24 frames/sec was permitted and possible, there was little interest by broadcasters, especially since compression encoders returned to the original frame rate anyway.

After the meeting, Atlantic Video offered a tour of its studio.—Jim Suthard, Section Manager

## Obituaries

**Murray Stevenson**, a Life Fellow, has passed away at age 95. Stevenson was the founding member of the Australia Section in 1976 and the original chief engineer of Sydney Commercial Television Station, Channel 7, in the mid-1950s. He designed and built the station and laid the foundation for good engineering practice in the Australian television industry.

**Michael D. Patten**, a SMPTE member, has passed away at the age of 53. As the co-founder, chief technology officer, and chairman of Graham-Patten Systems, he was the architect and principal design engineer for the company's ESAM and D/ESAM edit suite audio mixers. In 1991, Patten won television's highest honor, a Technical Emmy Award, for a GPS product: the first digital audio mixing board made for television.

A leading figure in Nevada County's video industry, the British-born engineer moved from the U.K. in 1975 to work for Grass Valley Group. While

at GVG, he did pioneering work in television digital special effects and played a key role in developing video switcher equipment that was "the standard in the industry" for about 10 years.

Patten was an active participant in the working groups of both the SMPTE and AES organizations. He had been a member of the Society for over 20 years.

**Franklin J. Miller**, a member of the Society, is dead at age 57. Miller's career in designing audio equipment for broadcast spanned over 20 years. He had been a SMPTE member for over 15 years.

SMPTE has also learned of the death of **H. Theodore Harding**, at age 87, and of **Tom Weaver**, director of post-production at ABC Inc. in California.

