

Message from the Sections Vice-President

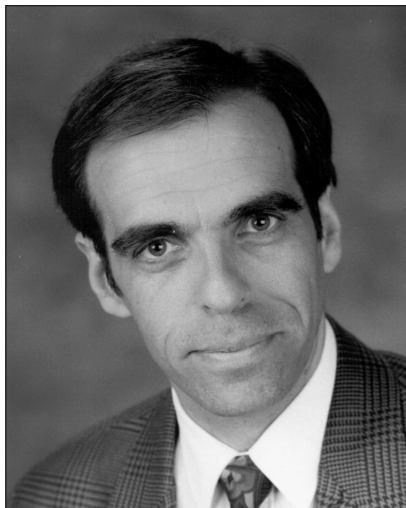
René Villeneuve

Our Society was initially founded in 1916, to meet the needs of a yet unorganized motion picture industry. It has grown to become a well-respected and recognized body that has much influence in many segments of today's imaging industry. Having achieved this enviable status early on, it became apparent that standards setting and engineering work depended on input and knowledge coming from a wide range of individuals working in the motion imaging industry and associated fields.

It also became evident that informing and educating them was an important component of the Society's mandate. To further this and ensure that we reached all stakeholders, forming a network of locally organized chapters throughout the U.S. was a natural first step for the newly emerging SMPE. In the last 40 years, SMPTE has extended its scope to areas that reach beyond motion pictures and television; it has established a permanent presence in many countries abroad; and Section meetings and other locally initiated activities have certainly become one of the most important ways of furthering the Society's goals and achieving its objectives.

Although companies and organizations have contributed to the activities of the Society and consequently benefited from its work, individual members are its primary constituents. SMPTE exists to serve its membership. Aside from a small group of individuals who staff the Headquarters to ensure continuity and look after its administration, the management and the running of the Society is overseen by a board of elected members who donate their time and energy freely. This is also true at the local Section level where dedicated men and women, who believe in SMPTE, generously give their time and devote considerable effort and resources toward organizing and managing activities for the benefit of their industry colleagues and fellow members.

According to recent surveys, the benefits of being a SMPTE member are generally well recognized and understood by most. What does not appear to be fully appreciated, however, is the role each one of us can play as a member. Joining SMPTE is an easy process; certainly easier than it used to be many years ago when one needed an endorsement and there were different classes of membership. Today, any individual working in the field of motion imaging, by simply paying reasonable (compared to many other engineering societies) annual dues, may become a full-fledged member. SMPTE imposes little on its members. Instead, it relies on the willingness and the ability of each member to share and



exchange ideas and knowledge that will benefit and help our industry grow and prosper for the benefit of all.

I am constantly astonished at the great number of members who have been with the SMPTE for 15, 20, 30 years, and more. I interpret their sustained support and continued participation as a measure of the Society's ability to meet their needs and expectations throughout those years. One should feel pride in being part of the same organization as those veterans of the Society, whatever their contribution or status in the industry.

Association with industry pioneers, innovators, and leaders is a privilege that comes with SMPTE membership.

In recent years, our membership has remained fairly constant. However, as the average age of our members increases, we should expect a decrease in membership over the next 10 to 15 years unless we appeal to the younger generations within our industry to join the ranks of the SMPTE.

There have been regular attempts at recruiting new members at national Conferences or at the Section level. Some were more successful than others, but history demonstrates that the most efficient way of attracting new members is through personal and individual contacts. Nothing beats a one-on-one approach, and the ideal moment for such an encounter is at local Section meetings. In my 23 years as a SMPTE member, I can safely estimate that anywhere from 15 to 25 percent of most regular attendees at Section meetings are not active members. They are generally interested colleagues or co-workers who value the opportunity to partake in Section activities but have not felt compelled to join. Here is an ideal opportunity to solicit new members.

Although open invitations and messages are regularly voiced at Section meetings, they are not necessarily effective in convincing these regular guests to make that ultimate commitment. Many of us feel ill equipped to deal with the daunting task of recruiting new members, and I am quite familiar with the arguments potential members invoke when resisting such solicitations. Ask yourself: What made **you** join the SMPTE; What makes **you** want to remain a member? Answering these questions should help provide truly convincing arguments.

I wish that each of you could identify what makes you believe in this Society and I hope that you have an opportunity to express those beliefs to convince the person sitting next to you at the next SMPTE event you attend. This is where **YOU** come in! Be a member!...contribute to your Society by convincing a colleague to join!

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