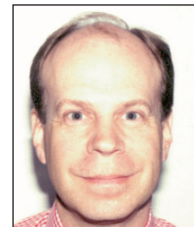


Section Meetings

Why SMPTE New England Meetings are Worthwhile—*John Gates, Chairperson*



I am writing this the morning after the March 2001 SMPTE New England meeting, a field trip out west, about 30 miles from Boston, at Wolf Coach in Auburn, MA. While some people think that civilization is pretty scarce between Route 495 and New York City, this meeting was definitely worth the trip.

To set the stage a bit, this was a real nuts and bolts meeting, not a theoretical subject with a panel of well-known speakers. This meeting dealt with test and measurement issues, the specific equipment and procedures for HDTV. It was well planned and supported by Wolf Coach, an organization that deals with these issues every day as the builder of mobile production trucks of all shapes/sizes/missions. Section Manager Emeric Feldmar and Wolf Coach Executive VP Richard Wolf gathered a highly qualified group of vendor engineers who shared their expertise during both the meeting and the informal sessions before

and after. Members and guests toured the Wolf Coach facility where they saw technology in action.

Frankly, when we planned this meeting several months ago, we “knew” that, as important as this topic is, we were not likely to get a great turnout for such a “technical” meeting, especially during March in New England. Boy, were we wrong about that. Now, we did do our homework: we actively reached out to our brothers and sisters in the SBE; our friends in the production and post-production community; and to groups like IBEW Local 1228, the broadcast engineers and production people at television stations across our region. Bob Lamm, our web site maven and newsletter editor, made sure the meeting was well promoted through those channels. Our Section Managers reached out to their colleagues and employees to encourage attendance. It all worked.

SMPTE members and guests came from as far

away as Burlington, VT, and Waterville, ME. Marty Faubell, Hearst-Argyle Television, cemented his position as our most frequently attending SMPTE member from outside New England. Vendors came from across the eastern seaboard and one fellow even made it all the way from England. Eastern Region Governor Mark Everett traveled from Pennsylvania to speak to our members.

But, apart from the large number of people attending (over 80) and the great distances they traveled, there is one, somewhat intangible, but very important, value to a SMPTE meeting, which was very obvious to all last night. The informal contact and information sharing that goes on at a SMPTE NE Section meeting has real value to everyone. Over and above the useful information shared during our “formal” meetings, there is a real (and I hate to use this word) synergy that happens when SMPTE members and

guests meet one-on-one. Like-minded people from diverse work places have a lot to learn from one another, and, from where I stand, they share it freely at SMPTE NE meetings and enjoy doing it.

Stop for just one minute and think. You know how busy, straight out, you feel at work every day. You know the stress that comes with your job. You know the feeling that you might never, ever “catch-up.” Well, I see relief on the faces of those who attend our meetings. The chance to interact and share information and fellowship and yes, a bit of stress and frustration too. I see people at ease with each other. I see joy.

There you have it. It's really quite simple. Come to a SMPTE NE Section meeting and improve both your professional and personal life. Who could ask for anything more? See you at a SMPTE meeting soon.

Hollywood

March 20, 2001

The March meeting, “Collaborative Digital Connectivity Tools and Services,” hosted by Sony Studios on Stage 11, home of “The Wheel of Fortune,” addressed the fortunes of two up-and-coming providers of high-speed fiber networks, Media.net and JCI Corp., targeted at the production/post-production industry. The event, attended by over 160 members of the Hollywood section, demonstrated applications of high-quality MPEG digi-

tal dailies to the desktop, digital file transfer to workstations and edit systems, as well as collaborative editing and teleconferencing.

Steven Rich, Media.net, along with Billy Redner, co-producer of “Family Law,” presented the case for digitized Avid files sent over a high-speed fiber network connection, by highlighting the dramatic time savings and enhanced quality derived over past methods. In addition, Rich demonstrated an application that delivered DVD-quality digital dailies to producer's desktops, high-

lighting how annotations and notes can be attached to content as it is viewed, as well as how the content itself can be sorted in scene and take order.

John Marshall, JCI Corp., in an impressive live network demonstration, called on participants over his network based in Los Angeles, New York, and Toronto, simulating how creative collaboration could take place over a digital network. The demonstration featured independent teleconferencing connectivity from the three cities, as well as a simultaneous sep-

arate feed of very high quality material being fed live from a Discreet Logic Flame from the facility Mr. X in Toronto.

Following the presentations, the enthusiastic audience engaged in discussions and a Q & A session, elaborating on issues such as network security, audio capabilities, and additional applications. Clearly this was a topic of great interest to the Hollywood Section and one that certainly will have wider application throughout the technical community as large scale, robust, high-speed net-



Section Manager Steven Garfinkel (l) with new film, Ben Bloodwell, with new camera at the New York Section meeting in February.

works continue to be built specifically for the production and broadcast industries.—Leon Silverman, Manager

New York February 14, 2001

The meeting was held at New York University's Tisch School Teaching Stage. This venue seemed appropriate for the introduction of Aaton's small full-featured super 16mm camera. Ben Bloodwell, Abel CineTech, demonstrated the palm-sized machine, which comes fully equipped with time code, a crystal-sync motor, built-in intervalometer, and incident light meter.

Section Manager Steve Garfinkel, Eastman Kodak Co., presented the line of motion picture negative films created specifically for the new camera. These film products differ from conventional camera films in that the light-sensitive emulsion is wound on the outside of the roll, eliminating unnecessary twists in loading the camera. Kodak also designed a new Daylight Spool, which eliminates light leakage, yet runs silently within the camera.

Attendees at the meeting included a significant percentage of film students. NYU's Inga Khavkina and Professor Yuri Denysenko

helped coordinate the facilities.—Steven B. Garfinkel, Manager

New York March 14, 2001

The meeting was held at AMC Empire 25 Theatres' premier digital-equipped Theatre 13 and was entitled "Electronic Cinema: A Theatre Perspective." The facility features a Christie digital projector employing Texas Instruments' DLP technology and a QuVIS Qubit digital disk recorder for playback of the feature presentations.

Approximately 300 people attended this meeting, by far the most popular of the season. The program began with the display of four clips through the system in 720P HD format. They were intended to show the capabilities and flexibility of the digital cinema system.

The first clip, produced by and starring John Dowdell, Tape House Digital, provided the background for some of the technologies involved in the film conversion process; it included a video tour of a projection booth. Clips were then shown of *Golden Bowl*, a Merchant/Ivory production shot in film, and *Session 9*, a USA Films and Good Machine production shot in 1080/24P, followed by a collage



(l-r) George Scheckel, Mike Strein, John Dowdell, and Bob Burrichter at the New York meeting in March.

of ABC HD material shot in 720P HD.

George Scheckel, QuVIS, discussed the digital cinema process and the potential for this medium. Bob Burrichter, AMC Empire 25 Theatres, spoke about the evolution of the theatre and its prospects for the future. Next, clips from two of the most popular features of recent release were shown: Disney/Pixar's *Toy Story 2* and LucasFilm's *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. These were specifically produced for electronic cinema and were a visual treat for the audience, as many SMPTE members and guests had not yet seen a digital cinema production.

A very lively Q & A session followed the program.—Mike Strein, Program Manager, Television

Ohio February 8, 2001

The meeting, a combined effort with local Chapter 52 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers (SBE), took place at Industrial Video Corp. in Columbus, OH. Approximately 40 members and guests from both societies were in attendance to hear a very interesting presentation themed "Fiber Optic Basics 101," by Scott Morrison, Heartland Media Group.

Morrison began his presentation by outlining the theory and principles behind using light waves as a high-quality and low-distortion digital transmission method. He pointed out that light is located in the electromagnetic spectrum along with one of the more conventional methods of transmission, such as radio waves. He then stated that fiber-optic cable is basically a conduit for this light, which has been digitized.

Morrison affirmed that the fiber-optic transmission method offers users the added features of being able to send the data in packets. These digital data packets can each contain separate signals traveling in different directions, all at the same time and within the same packet. This feature amazed several of the members.

The next part of the program detailed the current and future uses of fiber optic cable in the society, which include digital video and audio television and radio broadcast plant infrastructures, digital voice and databroadcast signal transmission lines, and new high-end digital home theaters.

The meeting concluded with a very interesting Q & A session.—Gene L. Batey, Secretary/Treasurer



John Dowdell with his HD camera in Times Square as photographed off the 45 ft high AMC Empire 25 Theatre. Dowdell was a participant in the New York Section meeting in March.



Guest speaker Jon Vogl addresses students at the PCC Chapter meeting in February.

Ohio March 8, 2001

This was a special joint meeting with the local Chapter 52 of the SBE, in the Central Ohio area. Guest speaker Dave Coopey, Synergistic Technologies, conducted an informational group tour of the newly completed digital plant for the Sinclair Broadcast Group's two stations in the Columbus OH market, WSYX-TV/DT and WTTE-TV/DT. This was one of the first public showings of the stations' new all-digital facilities including the studios and master control room. Later this year both affiliates (ABC and FOX) will begin 720p over-the-air digital passthrough broadcasts. This was the first step in making this a reality through the completed conversion of all of the engineering infrastructure to digital.

The tour concluded with a lively Q & A session pertaining to some of the problems and solutions encountered in such an undertaking.—Gene L. Batey, Secretary/Treasurer

Pasadena City College February 13, 2001

The 52 chapter members in attendance were inspired by guest speaker, Jon Vogl, a DVD mixer at Fox Studios

Post-Production Services. After graduating early from John Muir High School, Vogl enrolled at Pasadena City College with an interest in electronic music courses and enriching his keyboard skills. He soon learned how to compose, mix, and edit audio tracks.

Vogl's first opportunity came as an entry-level librarian in the music/sound library of a union post-production house. He often stayed after his shift was over to learn how to use the equipment that would enable him to perform sound recordings and transfers. After several months he was allowed to join the union and was soon offered an audio mixing position. Two years later he got the opportunity to do sound work with Fox Studios.

His background in video, telecine, color correction, and audio were instrumental in his advancement within the company. After five years, Fox gave him several opportunities as a substitute ADR and Foley mixer for sound effects. When Fox Studios started its DVD department, Vogl was selected as a DVD mixer with the primary responsibility of movie soundtrack.

Vogl credits a positive attitude, preparation, and hard work for his opportunities and growth. He encouraged students to learn ProTools and the

AVID nonlinear systems because they have become the industry standards. He suggested that students participate in internship programs and remember that their first job might not be what they want but it will get them where they want to be with the right attitude.—Kassa Zakadi, Chairperson

Rochester January 16, 2001

For one marathon day in Las Vegas, director of engineering Kent Hatfield, WXXI TV 21, attended CEA's 2001 International CES—the world's largest annual technology trade show. He brought his observations to the Section meeting with his PDA serving as a teleprompter for notes on particular products that caught his attention.

The concept of the Personal Video Recorder as an established product category appeared in Ultimate TV from Microsoft. This is the disk-based, intelligent front-end system that combines digital video recording, live television controls, interactive TV, internet access, and DirectTV programming in one box. Storage in the 30-h range offers S/N somewhat better than VHS, probably using MPEG-4 or a variant.

Sencore Electronics pushed popular adoption of DTV one step closer with a

line of servers for displays in consumer markets. One example of this shift away from analog was to show HD pictures on an HD display in a point-of-sale situation using the HDTV995 ATSC signal source.

The Samsung product line stood out among DTV sets and receivers. Displays on hand included plasma and fLCD, the latter with less contrast than plasma but at 1/3 to 1/4 the price. The company looked effective in its effort to bring Tantus LCD optical system technology to consumers—a 50-in 720P, 68-dB S/N image was possible using a modest 100-W lamp reflected off the 3-LCD engine.

Hatfield commented on a range of other products, from automotive video displays to household appliance networking to professional DV, and even the comical demand for D-cells in new portable devices. But he ended on a more serious note, that neither the 8-VSB standard nor COFDM works flawlessly, therefore no matter what volume of consumer electronics exists, "...we haven't struck gold yet as television broadcasters." Whether the solution is "must carry" for cable or a good outdoor antenna, DTV delivery has issues remaining.—John P. Weiksner, Section Manager/Membership Chair

Rochester February 20, 2001

A compact audience assembled for a program with an expansive title: Monitoring and Managing Multiple Incoming and Outbound Feeds with Intelligent Control. CER-TEC, Inc., facilitated the event that featured Joe LoGrasso, Miranda Technologies, who presented from the studio floor of WROC-TV. LoGrasso explained the background of operationally critical station feeds that are prone to change several times daily, noting that traditional quality control is error prone and results in complaints from master control. A more novel approach is the Kaleido-QC Integrated Monitoring and Control System, allowing single user interface control of up to 14 sources of live analog or digital video and audio levels via touch screen input or workstation. The system works with a router to replace an entire suite of dedicated controls and monitors with one PC-based unit.

The remainder of the program included overviews of other Miranda

products for audio/video conversion and processing. Attendees learned about solutions for audio A-to-D, tracking delay adjustment, watermarking, multiplexing and processing on the audio side, as well as proc amp, frame sync, adaptive TBC and decoding, deinterlace and scaling, and scan conversion on the video side. The trend toward intelligent control was apparent in the RCP-100 remote control panel and iControl software, application server controllable via ethernet or IP/Web access.—John P. Weiksnar, Section Manager/Membership Chair

Sacramento February 20, 2001

DTV modulation was the topic of the Sacramento meeting held at ADC Corp.'s NVision facility in Grass Valley, CA. Thirty-two people were in attendance to hear Peter Symes, manager, advanced technology, Grass Valley Group.

We hear a great deal these days about digital modulation standards and the disputes surrounding the choice of a standard for digital television in the U.S.

It seems that this issue will not go away. Despite recent comparative tests by a joint MSTV/NAB task force, and another Report and Order by the FCC affirming the choice of 8 VSB, there is still argument about the merits of the different technologies and the business models they support. Symes reviewed the 8-VSB method in the context of 2-4- and 16-VSB capabilities. He then covered the theory behind the ODFM systems, commenting on the coding and number of carriers and the benefits/penalties of them. A lengthy discussion on the merits of both systems ended the meeting.—William Carlquist, Section Chair

Toronto January 9, 2001

The Global Television Studio in Don Mills, Ontario, served as host to over 200 SMPTE members for the Section's annual satellite meeting. The televised event focused on the production, distribution, and display of high-definition television. The meeting, hosted by SMPTE Past President David George and Toronto Section member, featured a panel of experts including Tony Uyttendaele, ABC; René Villeneuve, National Film Board of Canada; Adam Kunzman, Texas Instruments; Charles Poynton, Poynton Vector; Scott McDonald, Panavision Canada; and Ken Davies, Davies, Villaneuva & Associates.

Together they presented topics that included papers on the electronic production of motion pictures for television, cinematic release, production in the studio, and information on storage and program exchange in the HDTV arena. The meeting was made available

throughout North America via satellite as a contribution from Fifth Dimension Television (5DTV). The Toronto Section has made the broadcast available via streaming media on its website. It can be found in the websites library at <http://www.smpte.org/sections/yyz/library.htm>.—Brad Fortner, Advisor

Toronto February 13, 2001

Over 150 attended the joint SMPTE/Siggraph meeting on Post-Production for HDTV held at the Rogers Communications Centre, Ryerson University. Arranged by Joe Sunday, Majortech; Adele Newton, Siggraph Toronto Chapter; and Brad Fortner, Ryerson University, the program featured four speakers and a demonstration of AVID's new nonlinear HDTV editing technology.

Calvin Judges, Sony of Canada, presented a paper on the technical considerations relating to the design and installation of a 1080p/24 linear production suite. The next speaker, Glyn Evans, Stonehenge Inc., focused on the need for HDTV and provided some insight from a producer's perspective. He explained why many of his clients are choosing HD format for acquisition and mastering.

Maurice Patel presented a paper on Avid's viewpoint on nonlinear HD systems, directly referring to HD workflow and Avid's HD digital studio product. A demonstration of the technology followed.

The Toronto Section has made the presentations of Calvin Judges and Glyn Evans available via RealMedia on the website under the library link.—Brad Fortner, Advisor



Joe LoGrasso in front of the Kaleido-QC at the Rochester Section meeting in February.