

Section Meetings

Hollywood April 16, 2002

Following up a successful evening from May 2001, "...and Also Selected Short Subjects," we presented another film program arranged by Section Secretary/Treasurer Richard May entitled "...and Also Selected Short Subjects 2." The meeting was held at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage and attracted 125 attendees.

The program consisted of eight live-action and animated Academy Award-winning shorts, ranging from 1935's *How to Sleep* to last year's *For the Birds*. Also included were *That Mothers Might Live* (1938), *Quicker 'n a Wink* (1940), *Of Pups and Puzzles* (1941), *The House I Live In* (1946), *Tweety Pie* (1947), and *Cat Concerto* (1946).

Not an award winner, but of interest because of photographic history, was the 1934 Warner Bros. two-reeler *Service with a Smile*. This was one of the first live-action subjects photographed in the then very new 3-strip Technicolor process. A print that had just been completed the previous day, made from the original camera negatives by CFI Lab, was seen.

The entire program was shown with 35mm film.—Richard P. May, Secretary/Treasurer

Nashville April 18, 2002

The April meeting, attended by 31 people, was held at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, in the John Bragg Mass Communications Facility. It began with a tour of the video facilities led by Bob Spiers, chairman of MTSU's department of electronic media communication. This was followed by a tour of the audio facilities by Doug Mitchel, associate



Hollywood Secretary/Treasurer Dick May preparing the show for the April section meeting.

professor of the university's department of recording industry.

Mitchell, who is also the sponsor of the MTSU Student Chapter of SMPTE, gave an overview of the 21 courses of study, involving over 1500 students, in which audio classes are taught. Two students, Aaron Flannary and Roman Steele, then conducted an audio-for-video demonstration on a Studen D950 digital console.—Buddy Gailey, Secretary/Treasurer

New York April 24, 2002

The April meeting was held at Raw Space in New York City. The theme was "New Display Technologies" and included presentations and demonstrations of two new progressive, consumer-oriented display methodologies. Daniel Gisser, director of strategic marketing, Kodak Display Products group, gave an in-depth presentation of the history and process behind organic light emitting diode (OLED) technology. Of particular interest were the examples of a passive and an active matrix display of OLED that he brought with him—a cellular telephone and a portable DVD player.

Both were extremely bright and offered tremendous viewing angles, horizontally and vertically.

Next, Michael Pashley, department head of projection display systems, Philips Research, described liquid crystal on silicon (LCoS) technology, formerly called reflective LCD. He explained the advantages and efficiencies the process provides for HDTV displays and described the techniques used in the manufacture of the device and the optical light path used in the projection portion. This type of process has the potential to result in high-quality, less-expensive, large-screen HDTV displays. Following the presentation, a prototype 44-in. HDTV display was shown, with content provided by ABC. Philips Electronics hopes to bring this product to market in the near future.

Both presentations spawned very lively Q and A sessions. More than 70 people attended the meeting.—Mike Strein, Program Manager-Television

San Francisco April 27, 2002

The uncertain future of television broadcasting in the U.S. was

addressed at a meeting titled “20-20 Hindsight and a Crystal Ball: The Past, Present, and Future of the Television Industry.” Forty attendees had the opportunity to examine how we got here, where we are, and what to expect. Young people especially need a “crystal ball” to make the right early career choices in a rapidly changing business.

The SMPTE Student Chapter 11 at Napa Valley College hosted the meeting at the Telecommunications Technology Training Center on campus. President-elect Bobby Pond opened the session and introduced the morning’s speakers: San Francisco Manager John Hartwell, San Francisco Chairman Roy Trumbull, and Birney Dayton, Miranda/NVision, all nationally known industry veterans.

Hartwell, who organized the meeting, began with a summary of the history of seminal television inventions and practices, from the birth of commercial monochrome TV in the U.S. in the late 1940s to the present day. His talk set the stage for the leading question: Where is television going in the foreseeable future?

Trumbull continued with a look at the present condition of terrestrial broadcasting, aka “over-the-air” and “on-air.” In his presentation DTV Build-Out—The Prospects and a Plan, Trumbull observed that the FCC has shown little interest in, or understanding of, local broadcast interests. He said 75% of broadcasters are small entities with annual revenues of less than \$10 million, whose situation has been made worse by the recent advertising recession. Trumbull quipped, “Broadcasters are like dairy farmers who are good at milking their cows, but who, so far, haven’t come up with new ideas about how to get the same amount of milk from a shrinking herd.”

Broadcasters have no guarantee that cable system operators will ever be required to carry on-air DTV signals, the so-called “must-carry” rule applied to digital. Up to 85% of TV households in most parts of the U.S. subscribe to either cable or satellite; view-

ers have little or no interest in receiving over-the-air terrestrial broadcast signals. Even in New York City, the number one Nielsen market, Trumbull pointed out a startling lack of public awareness about the loss of on-air services when the World Trade Center collapsed on September 11, 2001, knocking out most of the area’s transmitters. Most stations had wired links to cable headends and continued to reach 85% of their New York area audience without interruption.

Trumbull noted that, while the FCC limits TV combinations to 35% of the national market, cable is consolidating without such restrictions. Since cable companies won’t be required to embrace the ATSC 8-VSB transmission standard, consumers will be left with no choice but to buy additional equipment just to continue getting their “free” broadcast service. He said the old broadcast business models will not work for digital video.

Birney Dayton, introduced by Hartwell as the man with the most accurate crystal ball into the future of TV technology, advocated strong support for the survival of broadcasters in DTV and datacasting. Dayton questioned the idea that interactive TV and new forms of content distribution are threats to the future of broadcasting, pointing out that people have been experimenting with ITV for 20 years, albeit with limited success.

Dayton feels that broadcasters have a potential edge over cable and the telecoms because they can dedicate more reliable, broader bandwidth to the task, e.g., for datacasting. The life-cycle of a telecom plant is often about 40 years, he said. Given the phone companies’ need to amortize their current facilities, Dayton believes it is unlikely they will successfully supply broadband to the home in the foreseeable future.

The event ended with tours of the training facilities where it was pointed out that Director Gary Vann’s engineering education program has a nearly 100% job placement rate.—Faye Pilgrim and Mary Musick, Student Chapter 11; Peter Hammar, Secretary

Rochester April 16, 2002

A concentrated group of one dozen was privileged to hear Darryl Jones, Eastman Kodak Co., Entertainment Imaging, present “Enhanced Theatrical Experience” in Kodak’s Theater on the Ridge. Jones, who has operated everything from carbon arc projectors to digital cinema, shared his ample knowledge of projection and film format history on the way to describing the future of cinematic image quality.

“The bigger the negative, the better,” was the quote that opened the presentation, leading to the assertion that theaters—and, to a degree, printing—are the weak links in motion picture imaging.

Digital intermediate steps have helped printing in recent years. Projection, though, stands to benefit from initiatives like Kodak’s ScreenCheck, which sends a team to handle projection training, cinema evaluation, and cinema operations. Among other cinema analytical tools that address luminance, contrast ratio, and steadiness, Jones discussed illumination. SMPTE recommends 12 to 22 fL at the center of the screen with 16 fL as the target and 20% fall-off from center to corner—most theaters are lucky to reach 6 to 8 fL, Jones remarked.

After a comprehensive review of widescreen formats and lenses from the 1950s to present, Jones showed a video analysis of Kodak’s “quicker” intermittent Geneva mechanism.* The star-shaped device achieves full pulldown in only 60° of rotation, thanks to special machining of its contours, allowing an 18% increase in lamp exposure and a smaller shutter. This augmented efficiency was evident in a demonstration that closed the event. Inside the theater, Jones projected 70mm trailers from a Quickermittent-equipped projector using a lamp rated at only 2.4 kW instead of 7 kW.—John P. Weiksnar, Section Manager/Membership Chair

*An article describing the Quickermittent Geneva mechanism appeared in the November 2001 issue of the *SMPTE Journal*.—ed.