

Section Meetings

Chapman University March 18, 2002

With twelve members in attendance, Chapman University, in Orange, CA, opened its first SMPTE Student Chapter meeting. We were really excited to have John Mason and Alan Masson, Eastman Kodak Co., and Gerald Finn, Professor at Pasadena City College, join us. These three prestigious men traveled to Chapman University to share their knowledge of SMPTE, on a one-to-one basis with the students.

John Mason explained that SMPTE was founded amid chaos occurring in the industry, to set order and create standards so things connect, work, harmonize. He went on to clarify that "SMPTE is not just a bunch of technical people, but it is also for producers, executives, and administrators...it is oriented toward the creative community as well as the technical."

Alan Masson began with a brief history of how he got involved with SMPTE. He welcomed the students and asked how the Hollywood Chapter



Chapman University inaugurated a SMPTE Student Chapter on March 18, 2002. The first meeting was attended by 12 student members.

can be of help to us. In an attempt to motivate students to join SMPTE, he explained two important benefits of membership: training and contacts. Masson's final words of advice were "the more you put into something, the more you get out of it."

Gerald Finn asked: "Okay, now we have one (SMPTE Chapter), what do we do with it?" He encouraged students to cross union lines when inviting guest speakers to campus; presenting a kaleidoscope of talents would encourage attendance at meetings. He told us to think "quality not quantity;" a few people at a meeting interested in learning about different fields in the industry is far better than having many uninterested students fill up a room. The audience was motivated by Finn's stories of how graduates got jobs through guest speakers they had

met. He ended with the advice: "Don't be afraid to go up to a member and introduce yourself."

Our first student chapter meeting went well and we look forward to our next!—Serena Hongphairoch, Founder

Montreal/Quebec March 20, 2002

The topic for the meeting, held at ETS College, was Surveillance and Remote Control for Centralized Distribution Network Broadcasting. Guest speaker Michel Proulx, Miranda Technologies, addressed the associated technical and operational challenges. Even if a heavily centralized or a distributed model is used to link multiple stations, there is a need for a complete management and monitoring infrastructure. Integrated monitoring and control become critical to the ability to run, monitor, and maintain a group of geographically distributed facilities.

There has been a lot of discussion on the use of SNMP and other generic system management tools for this purpose, but in general, they provide neither a well-adapted context nor the equipment necessary for such a system.

Proulx's presentation discussed the role of standardized TCP-IP networking and the use of streaming video as a monitoring tool. Having defined the requirements of remote monitoring, he then illustrated how Miranda is addressing the need for a TV-specific solution with its iControl System Management and Kaleido Virtual Monitor wall systems.—Daniel Bienvenue



Gerald Finn (left), Alan Masson (center), and John Mason (right) with students at the Chapman University meeting in March.



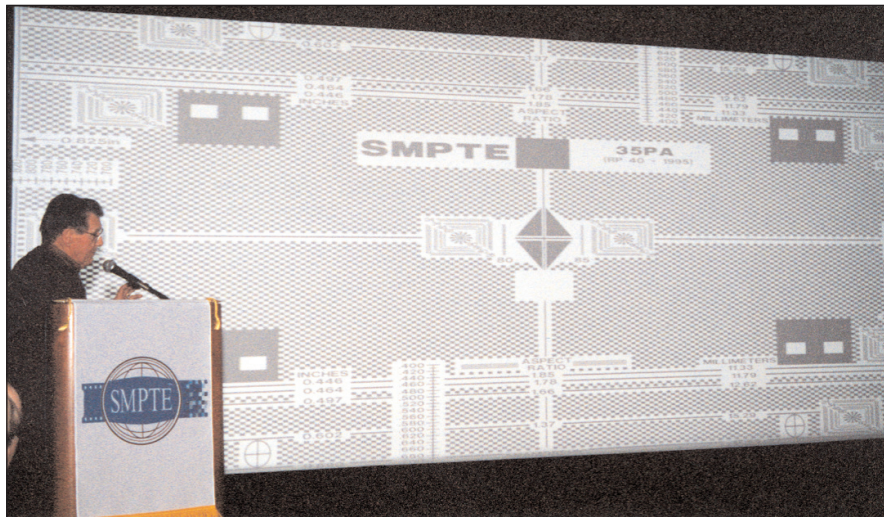
John Pytlak, Eastman Kodak Co., was the featured speaker for the evening at the New York Section meeting.

New York March 20, 2002

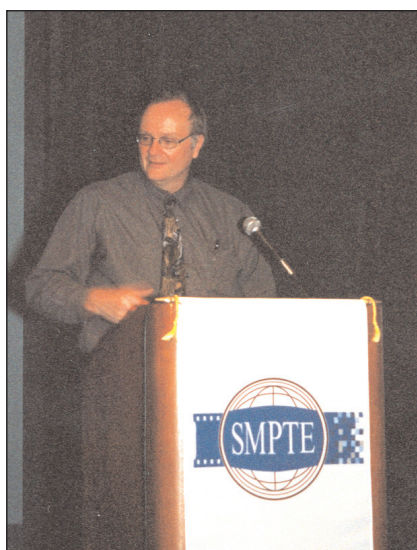
It was a little bit of “Film History” combined with “How to improve Film Presentation in the Future” at the March meeting. Prior to beginning the program, Ed Schuller projected some of the new RP40 film and explained how to use it to evaluate film projection.

John Pytlak, Eastman Kodak Co., was the featured speaker for the evening. He began by presenting his paper “Scope 1.5X—Squeezing Even Higher Quality from 35mm Prints.” Practical testing has demonstrated that IscoVision (Scope 1.5X anamorphic) can deliver 1.5 times more light to a projection screen than is possible with the current 1.85 flat format. In this day and age of stadium seating and screens that are 25 ft high and larger, it is very difficult to get the recommended 16 fL of light on the screens. Typical 1.85 flat projection only delivers 11 fL. Without changing anything but the lens and the gate, IscoVision will provide 16 to 18 fL, producing a much brighter, aesthetically pleasing picture.

Pytlak’s second presentation was a trip down “Format Lane.” Using public domain materials gathered from the internet, he reviewed the multitude of formats that have blessed the motion



Ed Schuller explains the SMPTE test film at the New York Section meeting in March.



Rich Carlson, Program Chair, introduces speakers at the New York Section Meeting.

picture industry over the years. One of the first motion picture formats was 55mm paper prints in 1888. In 1895 the Lumiere Brothers were the first to project 35mm film. Thomas Edison and his assistant W.K.L. Dickson began experimenting with 35mm film for their Kinetoscope process in 1895, and it seems that 35mm soon became the first unofficial industry standard.

Kodak folklore says that George Eastman asked Edison, “how wide do you want the film?” Edison spread his thumb and forefinger and responded, “about this wide.” The truth however is that the 35mm film width was the result of Kodak slitting their normal 2 3/4 in. film down the middle. In the years since, there has been a multitude of formats. During the silent movie

era, the projected format was 1.33 to 1.00 and the camera image was 4 perfs high and extended from perf-to-perf (similar to Super 35 today). Sound required a new format and “classic films” were shown in 1.37 to 1.00.

In the early years, people tried a variety of formats intended to either enhance or economize the projection process. There were several widescreen formats, a 2-perf format, and multiple projection systems. Following the introduction of television in the late 1940s, the industry searched for ways to bring the movie-going public back to the theaters and there was renewed interest in widescreen formats. The result was Cinerama, VistaVision, CinemaScope, Todd-AO, Super Technirama, Ultra Panavision, etc. Major studio films were produced in each of these formats but only CinemaScope remains popular today. Pytlak’s review of all these formats and films was not only nostalgic, but a reminder of how truly versatile film is and has been in the industry.—Rich Carlson, Film Program Chair

Pasadena City College February 12, 2002

Guest speaker Justin D. Robertson was introduced to 22 students in attendance. Robertson, a script supervisor in reality television, has worked on television productions including variety, game, police, and news shows.

Robertson received his education at Pasadena City College, where he enrolled in numerous still photography classes, hoping to pursue his dream of becoming a director of photography. The classes sparked his interest in studio lighting and camera composition of moving images. He began taking television production courses, where Professor Finn and Ms. Staub nurtured him with the knowledge and confidence to pursue an internship at Sony on "The Donny and Marie Show." He continued to work on the show after his internship had expired to prove he was dedicated. On the last day of production, he passed out his resumé to everyone, especially the producers.

As a script supervisor, he manages the scripts, run-downs, timing sheets, Chyron lists, and contributes ideas to keep the show within its allotted time. On production days, he is in the booth with the director and technical director keeping track of important details of problems within the show, to be fixed later.

Robertson encouraged students to intern on a major show, for exposure to the vast opportunities available in television production. The more you learn and ask questions the greater chance of promotion. The entertainment industry doesn't require you to have a degree or certificates; it demands punctuality and commitment.—Kassa Zakadi, Chairperson

Pasadena City College February 26, 2002

Guest speaker, Terrence Oo works in the operations department at E!Entertainment, where he routes the feeds for live and tape delayed transmissions.

Oo attended Pasadena City College. Enrolled in several telecommunication courses, he enjoyed the television production operations and wanted to pursue a career as a technical director. During his second semester, he received a job offer from E!Entertainment.

He explained that his interview was very intense, several supervisors interviewed him simultaneously. They



Kassa Zakadi (l) and guest speaker John Cager at the Pasadena City College meeting on March 12.

asked him about tape operations and the test equipment he was familiar with. There were questions about IRE levels, horizontal and vertical blanking intervals, and on what line does active video start? He was hired as an NTSC VHS tape dub operator, responsible for operating 16 Beta and 32 VHS decks. Eventually his duties included PAL tape dubs.

Oo continued to accept more responsibility and was promoted into the operations department. "Operations is challenging, you have to be prepared for the unexpected," he said. He explained how he utilizes patch bays to route feeds to the up-links and down-links to provide a path for live and tape-delayed transmission of programs. The waveform monitor and vectorscope are used extensively to check and maintain proper levels.

Oo encouraged students to learn as much as they can about the waveform monitor, vector scope, patch bays, and VTRs. Pasadena City College provides the fundamental knowledge necessary to work in the entertainment industry. He stressed honesty in an interview; express your willingness to learn whatever it takes to get the job, and if you don't know something, say so.—Kassa Zakadi, Chairperson

Pasadena City College March 12, 2002

The 17 students in attendance were informed about the SMPTE Lou Wolf Memorial Scholarship, the Pasadena City College SMPTE Scholarship, and the ShowBiz Expo registration. Guest speaker John Cager, director of client services and outreach for Street Lights, showed a promotional video that explained how the program prepares minorities for entry-level positions in the film and television industry. Street Lights provides 240 hours of free training that will enable attendees to work on feature films, television sitcoms, and commercials. The project is funded by a Federal Training Grant and commercial producers such as Sony, Universal Studios, and Dream Works.

Street Lights helps with finding employment and maintains a progress report performance on each production. This provides feedback for the graduate to fine-tune his/her skills for future employment and promotion. Cager encouraged graduates to collect call sheets and maintain relationships with the crew; another way of obtaining employment.

Cager explained that a person might

be a production assistant for approximately three years before being promoted. Attendance, discipline, and performance on a production will determine opportunities for promotion. "Remember that you are as good as your last job!" he ended.—Kassa Zakadi, Chairperson.

Rochester March 19, 2002

A score of attendees visited WXXI-TV to hear "Collaborative Workflow in the News Editing Environment," a presentation by Joe Torelli, Avid Technology, Inc., sponsored by CERTEC, Inc. Torelli, a veteran news editor, honed his craft in 76 countries with "NBC News" before acquiring the titles Chief Editor, Broadcast and Broadcast Account Manager at Avid's New York City office.

The first implementation of an on-air NewsCutter system occurred in 1993, with deployment of the shared-storage MediaServer following in 1995 at KHNL, Honolulu. Since then, the goals of collaborative workflow have included editing while recording, simultaneous access to all material, ability to repurpose material for different newscasts, and finding any clip across the system. Avid Unity for News is now eclipsing MediaServer, allowing up to 50 connected NewsCutters and up to 500 hours of storage. Torelli remarked that in 1995, original system costs for 48 hours of storage among 10 ATM connected clients in four racks topped \$1.2M, not including an editing system. Today, an equivalent Unity LANshare Ethernet system in a 3.5 in. tall box costs \$40,000 with RAID and \$35,000 without. This third generation, ten-simultaneous client product has the ability to screen material on a browser and make shot lists, all with DV25 over Ethernet in a portable, 2RU rack.

The meeting concluded with a demonstration of a notebook-based capture, storyboard, and preview setup over 100 Base-T, resulting in "almost automatic" editing and script integration—John P. Weiksnar, Section Manager/Membership Chair

San Francisco March 28, 2002

Over 40 people attended the meeting held at the Round Table Restaurant in Menlo Park, CA. Preceding the evening's presentation SMPTE Editorial VP Edward Hobson commented on the *SMPTE Journal*, and SF Managers John Goodell and Gary Youngs talked about local membership, the SF website, and future meeting plans. SF Manager Joel Wang encouraged nonmembers in attendance to join the Section.

SMPTE Western Region Governor Peter Ludé, iBlast, Inc., [www.iblast.com/] spoke on the subject, "DTV "Datacasting"—Hey, It's Working." Some analysts believe that telephone companies and cablecasters are fumbling the ball in their rollout of DSL and cable-modem broadband internet connections to U.S. homes, delaying by years the 75% or greater penetration rate many broadband content providers need to be profitable. (VHS home video enjoys a 95% rate. DVD video has already reached 20% after only four years. Analog cable and digital satellite are in almost 85% of U.S. homes.) Consumers and content providers would welcome a way around the telco/cable bottleneck. Satellite-based services, such as Hughes's DirecPC [sic] offer limited "high-speed" connectivity alternatives.

There's yet another high-speed connective mode that gives consumers access to digit-heavy content: data piggybacked on digital television (DTV) transmissions. After some initial delays, terrestrial data broadcasting is now a reality.

Data broadcasting allows the surplus digital capacity of DTV stations to beam content—including encoded music, video programming, games, e-books, and web files—directly to users' PCs and other internet home appliances. Even while broadcasting high-definition programming full time, every DTV station has the capacity to transmit an additional 50 to 100 Gbytes of data each day. Standard-definition DTV broadcasts

Calendar

Siggraph 2002, San Antonio TX. Info: 401 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611; tel: (312) 321-6830; fax: (312) 321-6876; website: www.siggraph.org. July 21-25, 2002.

IBC2002, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Info: IBC, Aldwych House, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4EL, U.K.; tel: +44 20 7611 7500; e-mail: show@ibc.org; website: www.ibc.org. September 12-17, 2002.

Photokina, Cologne, Germany. Info: KolnMesse GmbH, Messeplatz 1, D1-50679 Koln, Germany; website: koelnmesse.de. September 25-30, 2002.

SMPTE 144th Technical Conference and Exhibition, Pasadena Convention Center, Pasadena, CA. Info: SMPTE, 595 West Hartsdale Ave., White Plains, NY 10607; tel: 914-761-1100; website: www.smpte.org. October 23-26, 2002.

naturally allow more additional data to be carried than HDTV does. Recent improvements in DTV receivers, 8-VSB demodulation technology, home antennas, and software applications allow the creation of a wireless data broadcast infrastructure. Within the last few months, the first thousand end-users have subscribed to various datacasting services across the country, with strong growth projected in the next several years.

Ludé provided some background on the development of ATSC standards and various competing datacasting technologies, as well as an update on the state of the art of the entire datacasting industry. Data broadcasting could prove to be the "killer app" in the nation's conversion to terrestrial DTV, not traditional free-television programming broadcast digitally.—Peter Hammar, Secretary