



## M E S S A G E

### from the Executive Vice-President

#### GAVIN SCHUTZ

I am writing this message the week after NAB. By now we all have had a chance to reflect on the themes and products introduced at the largest broadcasting show in the world. While going through my bag of stuff I noticed a particularly relevant handout from one of our Gold Sustaining Members. Miranda Technologies acquired NVision (also a Sustaining Member) only days before the show, and handed out a small book titled, "Television in Transition." While this is particularly apropos for them, I could not help but reflect on the fact that it is equally applicable to our industry in general. In fact, it has been the core tag line for every one of the 25 years that I have been associated with the motion picture and television industry. It is the fundamental nature of our industry to always be in transition.

There were no amazing technological breakthroughs at this NAB. In general, the overall theme was directed toward a consolidation of technologies, with particular emphasis on a disciplined but inevitable convergence of the networked production, post production, and distribution environments. *Transition* is an understatement! Technology barriers that have been evident for ages are being broken down in favor of an interoperable environment that is network centric, format independent, and content agnostic.

Over the next few years, there will be a decreasing emphasis on tape formats and image structure in favor of an operating environment, based on packetized content, distributed in the form of file wrappers that are agnostic to the distribution media. The file won't care what is inside: video or audio essence, metadata. It won't care about resolution, image structure, or format. Transport and delivery of content between production facilities will be via high-speed networks. One interesting point is that the future is being unfurled in almost exactly the way the Task Force Report predicted. (This report was a joint effort of the SMPTE and EBU. It was completed in July 1998 and is available on the SMPTE website.)

With all this change, what role can SMPTE play in assisting members—both sustaining and individual—to prepare for the networked future that in many ways is almost upon us?

First, SMPTE can provide a forum for enlightened discussion of all aspects of new and emerging technologies. Section meetings provide members with an opportunity to get hands-on, practical knowledge of new emerging products from manufacturers. They also provide the unique opportunity to allow practitioners of all forms of the art—engineering, operations, and creative—to interact and spend time evaluating various aspects of the craft.

Second, SMPTE provides a formal framework for the introduction and ratification of new Standards. The importance of Standards is well known and has been discussed in these messages before; however because of the nature of the converging technologies, I believe that formal Standards will become even more important over the next several years. The Standards process is a core competency of our Society, and I encourage all members to attend at least one of the engineering committee sessions. Details of the meeting schedules can be found at [http://www.smpte.org/engineering\\_committees/](http://www.smpte.org/engineering_committees/).

Third, SMPTE provides a raft of educational services to members. This range of services includes books ([http://www.smpte.org/smpte\\_store/books/](http://www.smpte.org/smpte_store/books/)), conferences—replete with full-day tutorials on specific high-profile subjects such as Digital Cinema, Compression, and Encryption, (<http://www.smpte.org/conferences/>), as well as the *Journal*. There is even a message board where members and interested parties can help each other ([http://www.smpte.org/message\\_boards/](http://www.smpte.org/message_boards/)).

In short, there are many ways that our Society can assist you with professional development focused on providing the necessary tools for the new and emerging technologies. If you have any questions or views on how we can provide even better services, please do not hesitate to contact me ([schutz@libertylivewire.com](mailto:schutz@libertylivewire.com)), our Executive Director Fred Motts ([fmotts@smpte.org](mailto:fmotts@smpte.org)), or any one of the Officers or Board Members. See you in Pasadena in October!