

SMPTE Ottawa, Montreal/Quebec, Rochester, and Toronto Sections Mini-Conference

As the Festival of Spring was launched in Ottawa, so was the annual Mini-Conference of the Ottawa, Montreal/Quebec, Rochester, and Toronto Sections of the SMPTE, held May 12 to 14 at the Skyline Hotel. The weekend was deemed to have been a great success, from the opening reception on Friday night through the technical papers on Saturday and Sunday, and touched off by the luncheon and banquet on Saturday.

Conference Committee

Under the guidance of Conference Chairman Stephen Romain, the committee consisted of the following: Austin Reeve (Program), Tim Cathcart-Black (Finance), Ross Mutton (Registration/Publicity), Ivan Barclay (Hotel), Joseph Fletcher (Audio Visual), Tom Glynn (Sponsorship), and Gail Mutton (Spouses Program). Liaison between the conference committee and the four sections was provided by John Howard (Ottawa Section), Glenn Kennel (Rochester Section), Peter Laidlaw (Toronto Section), and Claude Tresidder (Montreal/Quebec Section).

Conference Activities

The conference got under way with a welcoming reception sponsored by Kodak of Canada, providing an opportunity for guests to settle into the hotel and renew acquaintances. Several SMPTE officers were in attendance, as the Sections and Engineering Training Seminar had just preceded the Mini-Conference.

The conference was opened with an address by Stephen Romain, Conference Chairman, followed by a few words from Austin Reeve, Program Chairman. The room was packed with 216 registrants, while 32 spouses headed out for a day of activities. The theme of this year's conference was "Innovations '89: Challenge and Choice," examining the challenges of competing formats and media, and the choices of technology. Program Chairman Austin Reeve assembled a comprehensive set of papers dealing with this topic.

Maurice L. French, President of the Society, spoke briefly to the dele-



The Mini-Conference Committee. (L-R): Gail Mutton, Spouses Program; Joseph Fletcher, Audio-visual; Tim Cathcart-Black, Finance; Austin Reeve, Program; Ross Mutton, Registration; Ivan Barclay, Hotel Arrangements; Stephen Romain, Conference Chairman. Joseph Fletcher and Tom Glynn were not present.

gates during the Saturday luncheon, welcoming them on behalf of the Society to the Mini-Conference and relating some of the history of the annual event. The guest speaker at the luncheon was Mike Duffy, editor-in-chief of "Sunday Edition," produced by CJOH-TV in Ottawa. Duffy reminisced about his early broadcasting days in Prince Edward Island, of meeting Charles Kuralt, and told many humorous stories arising from his broadcast journalism experience. He also challenged the audience to take an active interest in what is going on in today's world and not to adopt a laissez-faire attitude toward political events.

Saturday night was devoted to relaxation and entertainment, as delegates attended a banquet with refreshments courtesy of Ampex of Canada, followed by dancing to the music of the Cadillacs.

The well-attended Spouses Program started off with coffee and tea first thing in the morning, along with prizes from several generous sponsors. The group then departed for an exclusive tour of the grounds of the residence of the Governor General of Canada. They then proceeded to a

private lunch at Alexander's on the Island, in the middle of the Ottawa River. Following lunch, the group toured the National Gallery of Canada, where they viewed works by both Canadian and European masters.

The conference was a tremendous success, not only because of the long hours and dedicated work of the committee and volunteers, but also because of the generous support of the sponsors.

Technical Program

The opening session on Saturday, May 13, was chaired by Fred Lemmin and Claude Tresidder. The opening film, *Festival of Spring*, a Canadian Tulip Festival Assoc. production, was followed by the welcoming address of Conference Chairman Stephen Romain and Program Chairman Austin Reeve.

Saturday Morning Papers

- "The HDTV Scene — A Canadian Viewpoint," by David Garforth, co-chairman of the Canadian Advanced Broadcast Systems Committee (CABSC). Garforth stressed that the CABSC addresses the medium and long-term technological develop-

ment which will impact on Canadian broadcasting systems and related services, to provide input and guidance into research and development, regulation, and policy to ensure orderly introduction of these new services, and he also dealt with the strategic and technical issues in both production and transmission.

- "Selecting Appropriate HDTV Production Standards for North America: Making the Puzzle Pieces Fit," by Merrill Weiss, NBC, Inc., New York, N.Y. Weiss began by briefly outlining NBC's participation in the development of an advanced compatible television system and in studying appropriate HDTV production systems, bearing in mind the system or systems proposed could be expected to last for the next 40 years. He stated that SMPTE Standard 240 M will not be a single worldwide standard, as the ACTV Systems Committee has withdrawn its support and is exploring alternatives. In making a number of proposals, Weiss stated that NBC recognizes that a single worldwide standard is unlikely and is trying to identify as much as possible that which may come in place of a world standard.

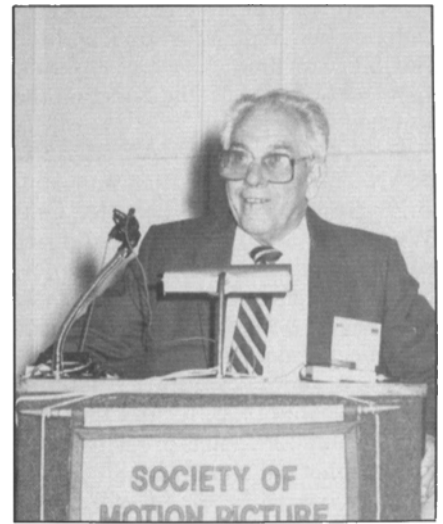
- "Future Technologies, Bridging the Gap — A Manufacturing Viewpoint," by Christian Tremblay, Central Dynamics Ltd., Montreal, Que. Tremblay discussed five key issues: film versus video, digital versus analog, serial versus parallel, digital, co-ax versus fiber, and advanced television.

- "Broadcast Systems Design for the CBC," by Fred Fox, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Toronto, Ont. The Broadcast Centre Development project, located on 9.3 acres in downtown Toronto, is one of the largest mixed-use developments in North America. It combines the CBC Broadcast Centre with commercial office, retail, residential, and hotel space, and a one-acre park. Construction began in October 1988 and is scheduled for completion in 1992. Technical installation will commence at the end of 1990 and will be phased in over five years for final completion in 1995.

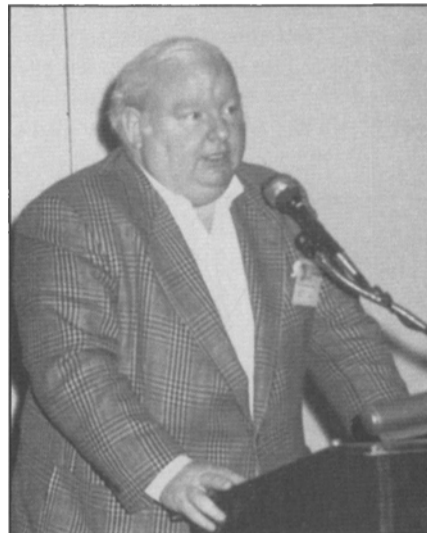
- "AT-Based Computer Graphics in a Broadcast Environment," by Dan Forgues, Adcom Electronics, Ottawa, Ont. Forgues began by claiming that broadcasters are taking more interest in PC-based computer graphics. Forgues complemented his paper with a



Conference Chairman Stephen Romain opening Mini-Conference.



Program Chairman Austin Reeve delivering remarks at opening session.



Guest speaker Mike Duffy addressing guests at luncheon.



SMPTE President Maurice L. French addressing the delegates.

videotape showing a wide range of computer graphic possibilities available today and concluded his talk by saying that changes in speed, image quality improvements, and changes to software have brought the PC into a new environment, at which broadcasters are beginning to look at very seriously.

Saturday Afternoon Papers

The afternoon session was chaired by Rene Villeneuve, Montreal/Quebec Section, and Glenn Kennel, Rochester Section. The opening film, *Canada's National Treasure*, produced by the National Capital Commission, was followed by the first paper of the afternoon.

- "The Future of Film in the Era of HDTV," by Gary Borton, Eastman

Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y. The author began by stating that the motion picture must provide imaging system with the following basic activities: production, post-production, distribution, and image display. Borton is confident that film will remain the medium of choice for theatrical production and display. He suggested a hybrid system for producers: shoot on film, edit on video, and complete the operation by making a direct negative transfer.

- "The New EXR Family of Eastman Color Negative Films," by Charles Hagmaier, Jr., Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y. The author stated that the new extended range of films is just the beginning of a new series of films for the motion-picture industry, offering improved image

structure, greater underexposure latitude, higher color saturation, and the flexibility to intercut several different films without noticeable effect on the finished product.

- "A Convertible IMAX/OMNIMAX Theatre," by Walter Winchell, Imax Systems Corp., Toronto, Ont. Winchell started by giving a brief background of the Imax and Omnimax systems, including film format and theater design. The Imax format is projected onto a slightly cylindrically-curved rectangular screen, while the Omnimax format uses the same 70mm film and is projected onto a hemispherical dome with 80% of its surface covered by the image, allowing the viewer to enjoy a field of view of 180° horizontal and 120° vertical. The dome is tilted downwards approximately 36° to provide a suitable look-down angle. Winchell then continued by outlining the design details and actual specifications of this unique theater. A single projector is used, and the conversion between the



Head table at Saturday luncheon: (L-R) Claude Tressidder, Montreal/Quebec Liaison; Grant Dearnaley, Canadian Governor; Ivan Barclay, Hotel Arrangements Chairman; Stephen Romain, Conference Chairman; Austin Reeve, Program Chairman; Mike Duffy, Luncheon Speaker; Maurice L. French, SMPTE President; Gordon Ballantyne, Canadian Governor; Peter Laidlaw, Toronto Liaison.

theaters takes place with the members of the audience in their seats.

- "Some Common Problems with BTSC Monitoring," by George Douglas, Tektronix Canada, Inc. Toronto, Ont. This paper discussed the problems of measuring peak modulation of BTSC stereo generators and

the effect of high short-duration peaks causing difficulties in the setting of program levels. Also discussed was the problem of identical carrier phase modulation of the visual carrier causing measurement problems in a BTSC stereo system.

- "How About DAT," by Harris Kirshenbaum, Matsushita Electric of Canada, Toronto, Ont. Kirshenbaum opened his talk by stating that DAT is a spinoff from 1/2-in. and 8mm video recorders, and that the technology has been around since 1986. However, because of copyright violations, DAT has been withdrawn from the consumer market and is being used only in the professional market. Kirshenbaum believes the newly developed DAT machines will lead the way, bringing all the convenience of video editing to high-end audio editing and will offer super sound quality, 2-hr recording capability, high-speed search, and no deterioration in dubbing.



Opening Session Chairman Fred Lemmin (L) and Co-Chairman Claude Tressidder.



Session Chairman Rene Villeneuve (R) and Co-Chairman Glenn Kennel.

Sunday Papers

Sunday, May 14th, the program opened with the film *Winterlude*, produced by the National Capital Commission. The Session Chairmen were Ed Blasko, Rochester Section, and Peter Laidlaw, Toronto Section. The following papers were presented:

- "An Operational View to Automation — YTV Style," by Harvey Rogers, YTV Canada Ltd., Toronto, Ont. This paper described the operational factors in the design and execution of a specialty program service, delivered by satellite and distributed by cable systems. The paper was augmented by videotape, explaining the approach taken by YTV in the origination and delivery of programs including a 3-hr delay system to the

Western transponder. Rogers outlined the difficulties in obtaining off-the-shelf equipment to control the automation sequences demanded by YTV's operation.

- "The MARC II System: A Modular Multiple Robotic Automatic Record/Play System," by Harris Kirshenbaum and Fred Nanos, Matsushita Electric of Canada, Toronto, Ont. Kirshenbaum opened by stating that the cost of broadcast operations has mandated a new approach, using automation techniques to control rising costs. He then described Panasonic's method of automated videotape playback and library systems. The Marc II main equipment consists of a linear 100-cassette library, five MII VTRs or players, and an XY robot with two z-axis manipulators.

- "SID — Library Management System Automatic Program — Segment Handling," by John Howells, Sony of Canada, Toronto, Ont. Howells presented a review of the automated video-segment presentation system and followed with an overview of Sony's operating philosophy in their library management systems. On multisegments there is a segment-identification code (SID) for automatic identification of a segment location on multiple segment tapes. Sony recommends that short segments, individual spots, commercials, promos, etc., be handled on a single cassette-per-system basis.

- "The Values of Database Management in an Automated Video Cassette Recording/Player System," by Bill Carpenter, Ampex Corp., Redwood City, Calif. Carpenter briefly described the ACR-225 system, which includes an automated cassette player and recorder, has comprehensive list management, and is a team



Claude Tressidder (R) thanking speaker Merrill Weiss.

player which fits today's environment. He then demonstrated the menu structure of the ACR-225 by running the actual control program on a laptop MS DOS computer and projecting its output on a screen by means of a special overhead projector interface.

- "Automated Camera Positioning Systems," by Gordon Ballantyne, Applied Electronics, Toronto, Ont. Ballantyne began his paper with a brief historical review of automated positioning systems in Britain, Australia, the U.S., and Canada. Ballantyne concluded by showing a videotape of Vinten's Microswift system, an arrangement which not only controls up to eight cameras but with the addition of hardware modules allows the operator from a single control panel to control VTRs, switchers, and character generators.

- "The Brain™: A Multi-Axis, Location/Studio, Camera/Subject Robotic Motion Control System," by Michael Azerad, National Film Board of Canada, Montreal, Que. Robotic motion control of cameras is useful for dangerous and difficult

camera operations as well as complex dolly movements. The author described the technical challenge as one of controlling camera motion, subject motion, memorization of motion paths, and the ability to repeat, store, and modify motion paths. Azerad concluded his paper with a film showing the operation of the system, employing lenses of different focal lengths and demonstrating pan, tilt, and dolly movements.

- "The NBC Camera Robotics System," by Kenneth Bronfin, NBC, Inc., New York, N.Y. Bronfin described the NBC Camera Robotics System, which has been in use for almost a year, 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is based on a floor rail tracking system and provides XY movement. The operator, from a single control panel, controls up to six cameras including XY positioning, pan and tilt, plus black level and iris. As in other systems, safety is taken very seriously, and there is a "guard zone" around each camera to prevent accidents. However, there is an override which enables cameras to be within 6 in. of each other. Bronfin completed his paper by looking into the future, briefly describing systems with greater flexibility.

Conclusion

Many thanks to the organizing committee for presenting a truly successful Mini-Conference for 1989 in Ottawa. Delegates enjoyed a wide variety of papers on the challenges of competing formats and media, and the choices of technology and distribution systems. David George invited all to attend the next Mini-Conference, which will be held April 27-29, 1990, at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto.



Austin Reeve (R) thanking speaker Gordon Ballantyne.