

# Section Meetings

## Atlanta August 2003

Nineteen professionals attended the meeting held at Turner Broadcasting on August 11 for a presentation from Mike Pecoraro, applications engineering interface manager at Leitch. The presentation, "Implementation of a Facilitywide Alarm, Monitoring, and Control System Using TCP/IP and SNMP," detailed how Leitch's Control Command System (CCS) can both monitor and control the parameters and settings of a complete system while integrating all Leitch products within a single network and managing them all with equal ease. CCS is an "efficiency solution" that reduces the workload of a highly trained staff, reduces troubleshooting time, increases operator efficiency, and, subsequently, increases business profitability.

The Pilot software provides a configuration control setting and parameters of individual devices in realtime. With full network monitoring, problems are quickly diagnosed, whether it consists of two racks in one room or multiple sites across the globe. The TCP/IP manages traffic and controls multiple devices simultaneously. The Co-Pilot is a configuration control tool only and cannot monitor alarms. It discovers and configures CCS-enabled devices on the network, upgrades card firmware, and sets basic network-related configurations.

Navigator software creates the layout that meets users' needs while utilizing effective graphical interfaces to control devices such as master control, quality control, simple routing/monitor wall, and more. Leitch's "whisper room" products include Pilot Lite, which controls four frames, and Local Motion, which runs animated logos.—  
*Zandra Clarke, Secretary/Treasurer*

## Hong Kong August 2003

"Introduction to Digital Television and MPEG Standards" was the topic of the meeting on August 9 and 10; the first of the educational series planned for 2003. Xu Meng-Xia, a renowned lecturer from Peking University, was invited to conduct the seminar, and the City University of Hong Kong supported the event by providing the venue and facilities.

During the two-day seminar, Xu emphasized the basic principles and concepts of digital television, MPEG compression techniques, and the associated audio coding.



*Attendees at the Hong Kong seminar in August.*

He also gave a brief introduction to the three digital terrestrial television broadcasting systems and their latest developments in various countries. In China, new standards are being formulated for the digital transmission of terrestrial and cable television, and HDTV is expected to become popular in the major cities during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. However, reforms are needed to promote digital television. Xu predicted that people receiving a few programs in analog form would have the incentive to buy digital receivers if they could receive more than 30 free-to-air channels with better picture quality. The poor might thus move at a faster pace in making the transition to digital television.

More than 70 members, guests, and students were in attendance and responses were enthusiastic.—  
*Raymond Lai, Secretary/Treasurer*

## New York September 2003

The first meeting of the Section's 2003-2004 season was held at All Mobile Video's Chelsea Studio on September 24 with over 75 attendees. The topic, "Tapeless Camcorders," focused on emerging and existing technologies that allow material to be acquired in the field without tape, thereby enabling immediate, nonlinear access to the content when editing. Five representatives from various manufacturers presented information on their products and gave solutions to change traditional, linear methods. Many also brought hardware to demonstrate the workflow processes they described.

Jerry Cohen, technology consultant for JVC, discussed JVC's new hard disk drive product, the DR-DV5000U, available for their DV5000 camera. The unit, developed in conjunction with Focus Enhancements, enables multiple hours of 1394A firewire recording with removable diskpacks. Phil Livingston, vice-president



Presenters at the New York Section meeting in September. (L-R) Jose Rosado, Phil Livingston, Jerry Cohen, Emelio Aleman, Toru Suzuki, and Program Manager Mike Strein.

and technical liaison, Panasonic, discussed Panasonic's new P2, ING line of products that record A/V onto RAM cartridges. This product was much hyped at NAB 2003, and working prototypes were shown at IBC 2003. Toru Suzuki, marketing manager for the optical products line at Sony, spoke about Sony's developing line of Blue Laser products, XDCAM. This long-anticipated product series is starting to show production prototypes. Emelio Aleman, Hitachi's product manager, discussed Hitachi's Red Laser dockable DVD-RAM camera system, which has been in production since 2002. Jose Rosado, product specialist for DNG at Ikegami, spoke about the EditCam II, the second generation of nonlinear recording technology developed in conjunction with Avid. Ikegami was the first company to develop a tapeless system.

Each representative also discussed the workflow and how material digitally acquired through nonlinear methods can influence the entire editing process. Each of these products provide an enabling technology that can change news acquisition. Considering the potentially competitive product lines, all presenters and presentations were honest, open, and very informative.—Mike Strein, Program Manager, Television

## Pasadena City College April 2003

On April 14 the Pasadena City College student chapter hosted a meeting with 28 members, consisting of students and faculty. The guest speaker, Robert Brown, a master control operator for KRCA Channel 62 in Los Angeles, CA, has worked with Fox Cable and Telemundo. Brown, a former PCC student, began taking courses in telecommunications after a life threaten-



Guest speaker Robert Brown addresses students at the PCC Section meeting in April.

ing construction accident. Upon discovering the world of television through PCC's courses, he developed further skills in lighting and camera operation.

Brown began by discussing the importance of his training at PCC. He noted that PCC's career-oriented television program gave him the skills and standards necessary for success in this competitive industry. His first major advice for members was the importance of networking. He stressed that this industry is about the next job and networking is the only way to assure job opportunities. Brown described several broadcast station scenarios and how to protect oneself in a hostile work environment. He advised students to be careful of internship locations and elaborated that the bottom line is money. If a company can keep you as a non-paid or low-paid intern, they will. There are internships, however, that do lead to paid fulltime positions, assuming one has performed well for a company.

Brown also emphasized the importance of keeping options open when looking for employment. If one is multifaceted in knowledge, the prospects are more diversified, more interesting, and more viable. He illustrated how his ability to operate a variety of equipment led him to more than just broadcast operation. He also stressed the importance of trying every aspect of production and operations. "You never know where you can make money."

The meeting was followed by a Q & A session.—Eduardo Garcia, Section Chair

## Pasadena City College September 2003

The new faculty advisor, Rebecca Gaddy, opened the meeting on September 23, with 30 people in attendance, including Gerald Finn, faculty advisor of the chapter for over 20 years. Finn has handed the reins to

Gaddy with enthusiasm and an offer of a helping hand for the coming year. Gaddy is a part-time instructor at Pasadena City College, bringing with her a strong knowledge of television and a 22-year career in print production of magazines and catalogs.

The annual election for student chairperson was conducted, and Ed Garcia was elected—uncontested—for a second term. This was followed by a discussion of the goals for this year's SMPTE meetings and of some outside activities. The chapter is currently in the process of recruiting members to create and maintain a student SMPTE chapter website, construct flats for our studio, and conduct two contests. This will be in addition to our regular bimonthly meetings.—*Ed Garcia, Section Chair*



Members review the Telly Media Server at the Rocky Mountain Section meeting in September.

## Rocky Mountain September 2003

Starz Encore Group hosted the meeting on September 10 with a presentation by Ken Fuhrman, president of Interact TV. Fuhrman discussed the Telly Media Server, which is engineered to serve the home entertainment market with powerful features designed specifically for the enjoyment of digital media. He described the rich feature set of the device that serves as a home entertainment server. The device provides an onscreen electronic program guide, a DVD recorder, onscreen media management capabilities to access media libraries, an internal disk recorder, and networking capabilities to move media between devices.—*Rome Chelsi, Section Chair*

## San Francisco September 2003

Twenty-two members and guests gathered at the Round Table Restaurant in Menlo Park, CA, on September 25 for a presentation titled “AAF, MXF, and the New Generation of Broadcast Technologies” by Ed McDermid, head of North American Marketing for BBC Technology. McDermid expanded on the topic of metadata interchange standards, which was first presented at the March 2003 Section meeting in a tutorial on the Material Exchange Format (MXF) by Lowell Moulton, Sony.

McDermid explained the overall functions of the Advanced Authoring Format (AAF) and how the AAF relates to the MXF. The AAF is a multimedia file format that enables content creators to easily exchange digital

media and metadata across platforms and between systems and applications. The AAF protocol is being used for film, broadcast, internet, archiving, and military applications, primarily for post-production. The AAF simplifies project management, saves time, and preserves valuable metadata that was often lost in the past when transferring media among applications.

While very beneficial to the content production and management process, the AAF is not the answer to all interchange issues. For example, it is not a solution for picture and sound format incompatibilities because it does not expose all metadata and is not streamable. The AAF Association provides a toolkit extension for the MXF, free of charge, although the AAF does not have an exclusive relationship with the MXF. For more information about the AAF, go to [www.aafassociation.org](http://www.aafassociation.org). The AAF Association includes a consortium of well-known companies using the AAF, which are listed on the website.

A lively Q & A session followed the presentation.—*Kellie McKeown, Section Manager*

## San Francisco October 2003

Microsoft ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)) hosted the Section meeting on October 23 at their Mountain View, CA, campus. Sixty-five people gathered for a presentation titled “Microsoft Windows Media 9 Series Technologies: Overview and Opportunities” by Regis Crinon, lead program manager for core media processing technologies at the company's Windows Digital Media Division. The presentation drew a different crowd from those who typically attend SMPTE San Francisco Section meet-

ings, with more than half of the attendees non-SMPTE members.

Crinon's presentation included an overview of Windows Media 9 technologies, details of their audio and video codecs, a discussion of the new opportunities provided by these technologies, and a focus on the VC-9 video codec that Microsoft recently submitted to SMPTE for standardization. In addition to his presentation, Crinon showed A/V material that had been processed by the Windows Media 9 codecs.

Media 9 Series technologies are designed to provide the building blocks of an end-to-end digital audio/video service infrastructure. Third parties can use these to develop their own solutions and applications across a variety of networks and devices. The Windows Media 9 audio discussion included the characteristics and capabilities of the audio, audio professional, audio lossless, audio voice, and encoder technologies. The Media 9 video discussion included video, video screen, and video image. The video codec is Microsoft's implementation of the MPEG-2 codec, with a claim of triple the efficiency of MPEG-2 with standard-definition (SD) quality at 1 to 1.5 Mbts/sec and high-definition (HD) quality up to 1080p at 5 to 8 Mbts/sec. The codec works by optimizing the MPEG-2 buffer size in relation to the bit rate of the transmission and works on today's personal computers.

Crinon identified companies using Windows Media 9 technologies, currently mostly in audio. He also discussed Microsoft's submission in September 2003 of their VC-9 video codec to the SMPTE C24 Committee for Standardization. Use of the codec does not require a Windows operating system. Licensing details have not yet been determined.

The speaker was peppered with questions during his presentation, which led to lively and informative discussions throughout the evening. There were a number of MPEG-4 H.264 proponents in the audience who took the opportunity to learn more about Microsoft's intentions of submitting their MPEG-2 codec for standardization.

Crinon has made significant contributions to the television broadcast industry with work at Tektronix in digital video coding and processing. He recently published a book titled "Data Broadcasting—Understanding the ATSC Data Broadcast Standard."—*Kellie McKeown, Section Manager*

## Toronto September 2003

The first Section meeting after the 2003 summer break took place on September 9 at Bell ExpressVu's Broadcast Center in Don Mills. ExpressVu has recently completed a major expansion that includes a new high-definition capable uplink facility for two satellites and a broadcast production center. Always popular are meetings showcasing new facilities, and this one was no exception, with over 100 members participating.

The first presentation was an overview by Terry Snazel of the business approach to high-definition television production and broadcasting. The second, by Robert Peter, was an overview of the facility, its design intent, and the logistics involved with constructing the broadcast center. On the facility tour, members visited the new Nimiq 2 satellite uplink facility, the high-definition post-production area, the high-definition origination control rooms, and the first high-definition production truck built in Canada.—*Peter Armstrong, Section Manager*

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# Hollywood Section Meeting Special Report

## October 2003

This historic first joint meeting of the Hollywood Section (HSMPTe) and the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Technology Committee was co-chaired by Hollywood Section Chair David Wiswell and ASC Technology Committee Chairman Curtis Clark. Many of the ASC Technology Committee sub-committee chairs reported on their group's areas of interest.

Clark confirmed that the ASC members believe they are the guardians of the image. The mystery, confusion, and complexity of the new technology available needs to be better understood to harness the tools of the emerging technology to capture even more powerful images. The cinematographers' participation throughout the whole process is critical in maintaining the role of guiding the image—the color palette and secondary color correction that is necessary to maintain consistency and reliability through the variety of distribution platforms. Parallel film and digital imagery is required as well as DVD and TV. All images are acquired from the same source and need to be consistent in their display. The image capture benchmark must continue to be raised and based on theatrical release not DVD. Clark stated that the ASC and HSMPTe have formed a shared alliance of common interests. Each group has its own rich history and focusing our shared objectives has the potential of influencing vendors, manufacturers, and service providers profoundly. This joint group represents the interests of the audience in maintaining the best possible images, and hopes to find more constructive ways to move forward together.

Steven Poster, ASC Technology Committee, vice-chair, related how the ASC felt a need to take a more active role in issues relating to new technology and to involve more associate members. Digital Cinema Initiatives (DCI) and ASC have produced test materials that will be available worldwide for all to use and assess digital projection, compression, and delivery systems. Narrated samples of these test materials were shown later in the meeting. Poster stated that only a healthy industry, with interoperability, would find end-to-end solutions for quality from the inception of the images to its final use—device and material independent.

Richard Crudo, ASC president, gave the background of how one unified set of test materials was needed as a continuation of the 1928 Mazda tests, which resulted in many of the equipment and lab standards that are still in use today.

Lou Levinson, ASC Technology Committee, digital intermediate chair, stated that the digital intermediate process needs to be transparent to the end viewer. He does not feel the industry is there yet.

Gary Demos, advanced imaging chair, discussed the need to retune when moving to other release mediums given the limitations of some equipment. He mentioned

that device-independent compression studies are needed.

Dave Stump, camera chair, discussed the new image capture technologies and the two revolutions that have resulted—the technology revolutions and the simultaneous revolution of our mastery of these technologies that has led to new creative tools. There has been considerable evaluation and interaction with many equipment manufacturers in the process.

Jerry Pierce, projection chair, represents what goes in the booth—evaluating images and imaging devices—to provide feedback and input to manufacturers to create better looking images and improve the state of the art. The fact that standard material for this evaluation didn't exist contributed to the test material's development and use of the ETC Digital Cinema Lab, a world-class facility, for comparative screenings.

The Standard Evaluation Material is a joint ASC collaborative effort that will be used to evaluate whether digital projection is ready for primetime—i.e., as good as Answer Print projection. One goal is six minutes of edited dailies to be scanned, recorded and cut theatrically with modern editing techniques. Kodak 5218 was used for the 35mm anamorphic, super 35mm, and 65mm image capture. Prints are expected to be made on standard Vision stock; the Answer Print may be Vision Premier.

Howard Lukk, director of technology for DCI, noted that 17 key points were delivered to the ASC to be worked into the script with the primary goal of getting the best possible film product. A 2.40:1 aspect ratio was chosen. One criterion for digital projection is that it must fill a minimum 47-ft screen such as the ETC Digital Cinema Lab. It is presumed that blended images are appropriate for special venue applications only. The Standard Evaluation Material is expected to be made available to any manufacturer in standard formats and particular manufacturers would pay fees to have the materials transferred to the medium of their choice for testing their equipment.

Steven Poster suggested that the psychological and physical impact of the new technology displays on the audience needs to be studied. He stated the need to confidently say that the new technology is not impacting the audience negatively and, in fact, may improve the experience, but independent testing is required.

Questions and comments were invited from the audience and some lively discussion ensued with further explanation on many points covered summarily in the speakers' opening remarks.

Wiswell concluded the meeting with the remark that we should all work together towards the "intent of the creator" and suggested that the HSMPTe and the ASC Technology Committee continue to meet on a regular basis.—*Patricia Keighley, Section Manager*