

Section Meetings

Atlanta December 2002

An all-day regional conference was held at Georgia Public Television in midtown Atlanta on December 7. The goal of "After Compliance...What's Next?" was to learn more about the many issues involved with handling the digital content and facility infrastructure after meeting the FCC ATSC transmission deadlines. With most attendees already understanding analog-to-digital conversion and transmission standards, we wanted to cover the many areas in between. Eighteen presenters from diverse disciplines gave 45-min presentations in two simultaneous program tracks with attendance balanced between the two. The Content Management/Software track touched on server design, workflow, editing, digital content management, and archiving. The Digital Infrastructure/Hardware track covered a number of areas that represent new sources of concern in the ATSC and digital environment.

At the conclusion of the program, a panel of presenters participated in a wrap-up discussion. Moderator Clyde Smith, Turner Entertainment Group, answered questions concerning delivery of digital content and the general state of the industry, which is changing very quickly with emerging technologies and in a time of economic challenge. With this in mind it is more important than ever to stay on top of the challenges and technological solutions through the educational and collaborative opportunities afforded by SMPTE and their local chapters with seminars such as this.—*David Siegler, Section Manager, and Ron Caird, Program Chair*

Chicago December 2002

The topic for the meeting was "Fiber Optic Distribution of Signals." The presenter, Eric Fankhauser, Evertz Microsystems, reviewed some fundamental principles for transmission of various signal types over fiber. He discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the two



Clyde Smith (first row) and other attendees at the regional conference held by the Atlanta Section in December.



Robb Wilson (c) conducts a tour of the new Detroit Lions NFL facility, a feature of the Detroit Section meeting in December.

primary transmission modes, outlined some of the elements that impact loss, and described how to calculate attenuation over both distance and wavelength. Fankhauser summarized with a reminder that fiber can be the ideal transmission medium for both baseband and compressed signals by adhering to a few principles that exploit available technologies and enabling products.

Following the presentation, members and guests were treated to a tour of the Tribune Media Center facilities. Unique among its many resources is the way all the corporate partners are linked to exchange and coprocess media elements. For example, the CLTV plant is connected by 7 and 13-GHz microwave paths with the Sears Tower, by DS3 with WGN's studios, and by fiber optic path networks connecting various telecom and media centers throughout Chicago.

Details of Fankhauser's fiber tutorial can be accessed at www.evertz.com.—*Scott Kieffer, Section Manager*

Detroit December 2002

A demonstration of handheld COFDM transmission technology and a behind-the-scenes look at Ford Field's new teleproduction facilities was attended by 29 members and guests of the Detroit Section on December 10. Andrew Larsen, Microwave Radio Communications, discussed the development of small-form-factor MPEG coding combined with COFDM transmission in a compact package that MRC offers as the "Reporter."

A camera equipped with the transmitter and a small omnidirectional antenna was carried around Ford Field, including behind the stands and through tunnels. Attendees observed little or no signal breakup at the receiver, also equipped with an omnidirectional antenna, perched high above the stands. They did note an improvement over conventional analog systems, which are affected by multipath and require the use of tracking directional antennas to achieve clean video.

Robb Wilson and his staff conducted a tour of Ford Field. The facility includes an all-digital 16 x 9 control room, which produces program material for the scoreboard video panels and hundreds of TV receivers in the stadium.

—*Frank Maynard, Membership Chair*

Hollywood December 2002

The Hollywood Section held its annual Family Holiday Screening on December 7 at Pacific's Cinerama Dome Theater in Hollywood. Thanks to the generosity of Pacific Theaters and Warner Bros. Domestic Distribution, *How the West was Won* was presented in its original 3-panel Cinerama format, with 7-channel stereo sound. Section members and guests filled about 500 theater seats.

The print shown was manufactured by Crest National Film Laboratory, with sound transfer from the original 7-channel master by Chace Audio. The 155-min film requires about 65,000 ft of film, and another 20,000 ft of magnetic 35mm audio film. The print was made from the 1962 original camera negative, which has been in storage at Warner Bros. Media Archives refrigerated vaults. The negative is in excellent condition, showing that by properly caring for this unique film, restoration becomes unnecessary.

The presentation began with the 5-min overture of Alfred Newman's score, and when the curtains opened it appeared that they would never stop, until the full 80-ft screen width was uncovered. Full technical information and the history of Cinerama can be found at (widescreenmuseum.com).

—Richard May, Section Chair



The 80-ft screen at the Cinerama Dome Theater in Hollywood, venue for the December meeting of the Hollywood Section.

Napa Valley College December 2002

Tony Cassano addressed the SMPTE 11 club on December 12, 2002. Since his 1997 graduation from the NVC Telecom program, Cassano has been working on the east coast as a broadcast engineer with National Mobile TV. When asked to describe a typical day, he told students that the job required many long hours and a lot of travel. On reaching his destination, he usually has a 7-hr setup using quick-swap troubleshooting to resolve component machine malfunctions. Most of the errors are resolved during slow-down periods when Cassano and other engineers have the time to go through each piece of equipment.

Cassano's NVC training prepared him to rise to industry challenges and sharpened his skills in utilizing tools such as AutoCAD and blackbook noting. He encouraged students to use their learning experiences to become familiar with the technical language needed to be a successful engineer.

—Faye Pilgrim, Secretary

New York December 2002

The D-5 Component Digital Video Library, a new SMPTE test material, was the topic at a combined technical and



(L-r) Instructor Gary Vann, guest speaker Anthony Cassano, and SMPTE 11 President Bobby Pond at the December meeting at Napa Valley College.



(L-r) Ed Schuller, Section Chair Bruce Lilly and New York Governor Jay Ballard at the December meeting of the New York Section.

social meeting on December 19 at Chez Susette Restaurant in midtown Manhattan. Test Materials Advisor Edgar Schuller, described the purpose of the tape, which, in simple terms, is to provide engineers with a means of feeding carefully selected uncompressed scenes into an electronic system and judge whether the quality that comes out is the same quality that went in. The scenes are derived from the well-known CCIR test tapes, documented in ITU-R BT 802

-1 and also from RAI (Radio Televisione Italiano) test tapes.

The original materials were natively in the D-1 format, but SMPTE is releasing the test tape in both standard definition D-5 format as well as the D-1 SD format. It is also available on computer hard drive. All materials are also available from SMPTE headquarters in 525/60 and 625/50 television systems versions. As a monitor displayed the 20 scenes on the 525/60 tape, the "attribute" for each scene was announced. In a practical application, such as in a broadcast center, the tape can be used for testing compression and high-quality processing applications. Attributes to be examined include transmission problems related to skin and color edges, vertical and horizontal resolution, rolling and crawling titles, fast and complex scenes, and many others.

—Edgar Schuller, Test Materials Advisor

Ohio December 2002

The combined meeting of the Ohio Section and the local SBE (Chapter 52) took place on December 12 at the WBNS-DT/WCMH-DT co-located transmission plants in Columbus, with over 40 members and guests in attendance. The program included a power point slide presentation recap of these recent installations: WBNS-DT added another section to their digital transmitter for more power on their digital Channel 21 signal, and mounted a new digital antenna higher up on their tower. The new WCMH-DT installation involved the addition of a totally new digital UHF transmitter, and a custom designed digital antenna configuration, also on the same tower rotunda as WBNS-DT.

The presentations were narrated by WBNS-TV/DT Chief Engineer John Owen, with additional advice and comments from WCMH-DT Asst. Chief Engineer Shaun Strom. They included a thorough review of what was involved in the launching of the new equipment and what was not. The new WCMH-DT UHF transmitter, for instance, also included a new state-of-the-art frequency filter, augmenting the digital Channel 14 signal. This was a necessary component add-on, due to possible interference to the adjacent frequencies that could have occurred without it. The meeting concluded with a tour of both transmission plants.

—Gene L. Batey, Secretary/Treasurer

Pasadena City College November 12, 2002

On Tuesday, November 12, 2002, 14 members of the PCC Student Chapter of SMPTE met with former PCC student Ruben Diaz, owner of Hero Grip and Lighting. Diaz explained how he entered the business through networking while attending PCC. A contact made during a PCC production led to the offer of a turnkey company, and Hero Grip and Lighting, now supplies lighting equipment for television and film. The fast-paced, energetic conversation continued with his experiences on motion picture sets. He went through a typical day on a set and described the responsibilities of each member of a lighting crew.

Diaz sidetracked his lecture many times to answer questions from the audience about renting equipment for student projects, studio lighting techniques, and management skills needed on a daily basis. Diaz's enthusiasm for his profession



Guest speaker Jerry Isenhower (r) is shown with Student Chair Eduardo Garcia at the meeting at Pasadena City College on November 26, 2002.

energized the audience, as he emphasized the point of making goals for your career. He was a perfect example of team player and demonstrated that the right attitude can make a person shine in the field. At the conclusion of the meeting, his final point was, "Don't worry about money...Do what you love first. Then the money will come."

—Eduardo Garcia, Student Chair

Pasadena City College November 26, 2002

On November 26, 2002, Jerry Isenhower, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., visited the campus of PCC to speak before 25 student members. He described his duties as a production manager overseeing over 200 projects a year and how he tailors his facilities to meet this heavy schedule. Using a power point presentation, Isenhower conducted a virtual tour of the studios designed by John Brooks, showing the editing bays used by his production teams, and continuing into the 10,000-tape library, where he emphasized the importance of archiving metadata, explaining how a \$150 tape master could equal the total cost of a production due to the value of the information it contains.

Isenhower was very interested in the growing pains PCC is experiencing, as his facility is also currently undergoing digital transformation, which is about 80% complete. He ended by advising the students that change is inevitable and in order to be successful they must embrace it.

—Eduardo Garcia, Student Chair

Rocky Mountain December 2002

Thirty-six members attended the meeting on December 17, which featured a discussion by David Wieskamp, Sony Storage Specialist, on the technology and merits of the e-VTR. A compelling demonstration was given of the machine's agility in playing back legacy Beta and Digi-Beta tapes, as well as conversion to MPEG file storage and transfer over IP networks. Wieskamp provided an explanation of the MXF file exchange format, metadata, and universal material IDs (UMIDs) and how they may be implemented with the e-VTR in production and news applications.

—Rome Chelsi, Section Chair