

Section Meetings

Hollywood December 2005

About 40 members and their families attended the Section's annual holiday screening, which was held at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Pickford Center. This year's film was *National Velvet*, released by MGM in 1945.

Attendees were excited to see Elizabeth Taylor (at 12 years of age) win the British Grand National horse race. Taylor was trained to ride the horse by the uncle of Sieg Heep, one of the Hollywood Section Managers.

After the screening, attendees proceeded to the parking lot of the Pickford Center, where the Los Angeles Fire Department collected boxes of toys donated by SMPTE members. Approximately 160 toys were collected.

—Richard P. May, Past Chair

Hong Kong November 2005

The Hong Kong Section celebrated its eleventh anniversary by hosting a seminar on "Digital TV Broadcasting and HDTV—Dual Link to Digital Evolution," at the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education—Kwun Tong (IVE). Seven honorable speakers from around the world shared their experiences in the areas of system design, application, DTV transmission, and HDTV.

In the keynote speech, Du Bai Chuan, deputy chief engineer of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television of China, talked about the preparation for transition from analog to digital TV and the potential changes in the industry in China. Norio Sakamoto, executive technology officer of Panasonic China, gave an overview on the global situation on digital TV progress, especially on display, mobile, and portable reception.

As the fourth major player in DTV, China has developed new DTV systems. Guan Yun Feng, Institute of Wireless Communication of Jing Tung University of Shanghai, unveiled for the first time, the ADTB-T system to an overseas



Hollywood Section board members, including Chair Patricia Keighley and Secretary/ Treasurer Nancy Wilkerson, with L.A. firefighters.

audience. He explained the strength of the system and the satisfactory results of its trial use in various cities in China.

To further elaborate on the application of DTV, Simon Chan, director of sales, BTL Digital Communications of Hong Kong, discussed how he overcame all the hurdles and technical difficulties while implementing digital TV on commuter trains. In addition to an efficient tool for disseminating information to commuters, the DTV system was able to generate advertising revenue to sustain its operation on the public transportation system.

Roderick Snell, founder and research director, Snell and Wilcox, explored the added value that DTV could bring to customers. He remarked that because they are so involved in DTV technology, practitioners often forget the customers. No matter how advanced, practitioners must ensure the outcome is viable and enjoyed by customers.

Transmission is to deliver the content, therefore content production is the core of digital TV, and Katsumi Takahara, general manager, technology strategy department, Technologies Development Division, Sony Corp. B & P, focused on "High-Definition Content Creation and Workflow Innovation." He described the new workflow enabled by the MPEG-2-



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long GOP technology and MXF file format. It is a time-efficient solution for field-production and MXF would be a standard for file exchange between systems.

The last speaker, Percy Fung, Digital Magic Limited HK, illustrated the technique of digital mastering and color management by showing the outcome of merging various formats of source materials (film, digital, etc.) into a final product. The audience was impressed by his 35mm film excerpts showing that after precise

mastering and color managing, the different formats of source materials were hardly noticeable.

The highlight of the event was a live demonstration of DTV transmission from Temple Hill to the seminar venue. High-definition contents were played back from the server, transmitted, and received by an antenna set up at the venue, and shown on a 6-m screen, by means of a 2K digital projector and plasma TV screens. Attendees were amazed by the clarity and color rendition of the images.

At this age of transition, engineers from both the film and TV industries are concerned about the future trend and application of new technologies. They were eager to listen to field experiences in the implementation of digital TV in the Asia region, especially China.

After the seminar, attended by more than 400 members and guests, the Section hosted its annual dinner, and members exchanged views with the speakers. During the dinner, a ceremony was held for the SMPTE Hong Kong Section and IVE to sign a letter of intent. By signing the letter, both parties agree to work together to organize technical courses for television and film engineers in Hong Kong and China. This is the first step in supporting projects conducive to the healthy and long-term development of the film and TV industries.

—Raymond Lai, Secretary/Treasurer



KL Lam presented the Outstanding Service Award to Tony Ngai who missed the presentation in New York last November.

New York September 2005

On September 28, approximately 75 members gathered at Tamberelli Digital in Manhattan, for a series of presentations on "Advancements in Compact HD Camcorder Technology."

The program began with a presentation by Larry Thorpe, Canon, titled "HD Motion Imaging: Relating Picture Quality to Camcorder Digitization." This comprehensive treatise correlated lens quality, bit depth, coding, and their cumulative effects on human visual response. All of these parameters combine to influence the picture quality of an HD camcorder system. Juan Martinez, Sony Electronics, followed with a description of HDV format parameters, and Sony's newest HDV camcorder, the HVR-A1U, based on CMOS imaging technology. Edgar Shane, JVC, then presented on the GY-HD100U, JVC's latest HDV camcorder, describing its multiple scanning rates and 3-CCD imaging technology. Steve Mahrer, Panasonic Broadcast, followed with a presentation describing the difficulties encountered in designing compact HD camcorders. He also outlined some future technologies that will impinge on camcorder design, such as JPEG 2000, WM9, and H.264. Mahrer also described Panasonic's AG-HVX200 camcorder, which utilizes both tape and flash memory storage.

The Section wishes to thank Canon, Sony, JVC, and Panasonic for their shared sponsorship of this meeting.

—Nick Di Lello, Section Chair

New York December 2005

The Section meeting on December 14 was held at HBO's screening room at their corporate facility in Manhattan, with more than 75 attendees. Speakers from SeaChange International, the Automotive Networks Corp., and Anystream combined to present three unique points of view on the topic: "The Video-



(L-R) New York Section Program Manager Mike Strein, with speakers Fady Lamaa, Jim Barisano, and Tab Butler.

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on-Demand Opportunity: Challenges and Realities from Content Production to Network Delivery."

First, Tab Butler, SeaChange, discussed the business development plans of a typical VOD provider. He showed analysis of consumer trends when a wide variety of content is available, and compared it with what is typically available in rental and retail stores. This showed the potential market that VOD providers are looking to tap.

Next, Jim Barisano, Automotive Networks Corp., discussed his launch of a strictly VOD channel called WheelsTV, which caters to a growing audience of car enthusiasts. He showed some of the processes and challenges in his operation and how he uses both SeaChange and Anystream products in his facility.

Finally, Fady Lamaa, Anystream, spoke about how the content goes from a typical television or movie program to the many different types of media used in the variety of VOD installations currently operating. He explained how the metadata is created and travels along with the video content. Editing can be fairly simple and several automation options can enable a fairly smooth method of adapting the content.

The meeting was very successful in describing how typical linear programming gets transformed into programs made to order.

—Mike Strein, Program Manager, Television



Jan Andrews, speaker at the Washington, D.C., Section meeting, with John Keene (l) and Mike Starling (r), all of National Public Radio.

Washington, D.C. November 2005

The Section meeting on November 17 was held at the studios of National Public Radio (NPR) in Washington, D.C., with approximately 35 attendees. Jan Andrews, senior engineer at NPR, delivered a presentation titled "Tomorrow's Surround Radio, Today." Andrews provided useful background information on HD digital radio, based on IBOC (in-band, on-channel) technology now being introduced by many U.S. radio broadcasters. He then gave an update on the developmental work being done to bring surround-sound audio to HD radio. Several surround technology proponents are touting their systems, and HD radio developers have established signaling to support each format, with receiver manufacturers lining up to support various systems.

The presentation included surround-sound playback of some interesting original content recorded on location in various exotic locations for the National Geographic Radio Expeditions series. Andrews also described some of the activities of the newly established NPR laboratories, which have commissioned compatibility and assessment studies on surround audio in collaboration with several NPR member stations, the University of Denver, and AES chapters in Denver and Cincinnati.

In an extended Q & A session, SMPTE members took the opportunity to learn more about this new aspect of radio broadcasting. The meeting concluded with a tour of the NPR studio facilities and laboratory, conducted by Jan Andrews and his colleagues Mike Starling and John Keen. Many thanks to NPR for their hospitality.

—Graham Jones, Section Manager/Program Chair



SMPTE Engineering Vice-President Peter Symes with Washington, D.C., Section Secretary/Treasurer James Snyder (l) and Chairman Karl Kuhn (r).

Washington, D.C. December 2005

On December 15, SMPTE Engineering Vice-President Peter Symes braved the disruption of a winter storm warning to educate the Section about the standards-setting activities of SMPTE, with a presentation titled "Standards Development and the SMPTE Role—Policy, Procedure, Patents, and Procrastination."

Symes discussed the various types of standards bodies, their roles in image-related technology, and the different ways these bodies deal with business and technical issues. He explained how standards work is increasingly difficult because the pace of technology in today's world demands rapid development, yet the complexity of the standards means that true interoperability is very difficult to achieve. He also mentioned that standards are now big business, as intellectual property incorporated in standards can represent billions in royalties, and commented on how this also affects the standards process. Symes gave a useful summary of major work items within SMPTE, and how these may impact the industry.

While the winter weather reduced the audience to a handful of members and guests, those who attended appreciated the insights into the SMPTE standards process, and also welcomed the opportunity to discuss various aspects of SMPTE administration and policy for the Section, with a SMPTE national officer. The meeting took place at the headquarters of the National Association of Broadcasters, and thanks are extended to NAB for their hospitality and for providing refreshments.

—Graham Jones, Section Manager/Program Chair