

Section Meetings

Detroit December 2006

On December 12, Warner Johnston, chair of the IEEE Broadcast Technology Society New York Chapter, gave a distance presentation on closed captioning, CEA_708B standard, from New York, to an audience of 18 members and guests attending the Detroit Section meeting at the studios of WXYZ-TV in Southfield, MI.

Johnston's presentation focused primarily on CEA-708C, which is closed captioning for ATSC Television. He explained the purpose of the CEA and gave a brief history on the evolution of closed captioning since the early 1970s. Advanced Television Closed Captioning (ATVCC); Digital Television Closed Captioning (DTVCC); captioning methods, CC1 and CC2; transport technology behind providing the closed captioning services (including eXtended data service); and content advisory information were among the topics presented at this meeting. The distance presentation process worked quite well. Attendees were very interested in the subject and followed up with questions.

Warner Johnston has offered to provide closed captioning from New York to other technical groups via the same distance presentation process. If interested, please contact him directly at Warner.W.Johnston@abc.com.—*Louis Johnson IV, Section Manager*

Hollywood March 2007

Returning to the Linwood Dunn Theater after using other venues for the last two months due to Academy Award screenings, an enthusiastic audience of 90 members and guests attended the meeting.

Following a preshow reception sponsored by THX Best Practices Lab, Hollywood Section Manager Dick May interviewed the guest speaker Charles Tabesh, senior vice-president, programming, Turner Classic Movies in Atlanta, GA. Topics covered the volume of movies shown (about 2,000 per year), programming themes, and suppliers of the pictures. Video clips of samples of some of TCM's special in-house produced documentaries were shown. The Young Film Composers contest and personality interviews was also covered.

The meeting concluded with a Q & A session. The many new faces present showed that this subject has a different interest than the more technical presentations.—*Richard P. May, Past Chair*

Hong Kong October 2006, February 2007

The Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (HKIVE) Student Chapter signifies a closer tie between the industry



Student Chapter members take a photo with Oonagh Chan (far right), Hong Kong Jockey Club Manager of Broadcasting Services.

and the Institute. Students now have close and direct contact with professionals to expand their knowledge related to their respective fields. In order to provide opportunities for such linkage and encourage students of related fields to have exposure to the industry, the SMPTE Student Chapter held two periods of membership promotion in October 2006 and February 2007.

On October 25, Joyce Lam, chairperson of the SMPTE HKIVE Student Chapter, access to IVE Sha Tin and IVE Haking Wong campuses, presented the SMPTE HKIVE Student Chapter to students in three courses: Higher Diploma in Internet and Multimedia Engineering, Higher Diploma in Life Style Electronics, and Higher Diploma in Cinematography and Lighting (Level 1 and 2).

Again, on February 9-12, Lam visited the IVE Kwun Tong campus to introduce the structure of the SMPTE HKIVE Student Chapter to students of four courses, including Higher Diploma in Digital Film and TV, Higher Diploma in Digital Animation and Character Design, Four-Year Higher Diploma in Digital TV and Motion Picture Engineering, and Four-Year Higher Diploma in Cinematography and Lighting. After the presentation, Lam discussed her participation and activities in SMPTE; many students expressed interest in joining as committee members.—*Joyce Lam, Student Chair*

Hong Kong March 4, 2007

Ten members of the SMPTE HKIVE Student Chapter visited the broadcasting facilities of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Sha Tin racing course. Oonagh Chan, the club's manager of broadcasting services welcomed the group.

One of the major roles of the broadcasting services in the Hong Kong Jockey Club is television production and distribution for of the 78 horse races scheduled in 2007, on average two times a week. In addition, the broadcasting services also produces promotional clips for the club.

The visit started with a video show on a large video display screen at the parade ring, followed by a very interesting tour of the broadcasting facilities, which include television production equipment such as studio cameras, monitoring cameras, the central control unit operations, and the digital video server system.

A demonstration was given of the control and operation of the two big screens alongside the racing ring. The working principles behind the Jockey Tracking System and the destination camera were explained in detail and this captured the interest of most members. Chan also explained how the microwave link is set-up for live camera coverage of the riverside morning gallop, as well as set-up of the AV system to support various functions of the club.

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The members enjoyed this visit, which broadened their knowledge of television production and distribution.—Joyce Lam, Student Chair

Hong Kong March 21, 2007

The SMPTE HKIVE student chapter members were invited to take part in two seminars during Filmart 2007, a festival to promote Hong Kong as the regional hub for distribution and production of film, television programs, cross-media, and entertainment-related products in Asia.

The first seminar was held in the morning on March 21. Percy Fung, Digital Magic Limited, gave a presentation on the digital filmmaking workflow, including the 35mm film output process. He discussed the digital kinescope transfer of video to 35mm film, using contents originating from the HD camera



Attendees at the morning seminar by Digital Magic Limited.

SR, HD camera, DVCproHD, XD camera, and HVX/P2. Fung also shared the current digital filmmaking technology service updates on the digital intermediate process with the film master from 35mm, Super 35mm, Super 16mm, and digital cinema DCDM/DCP screening with the HD camera SR 4:4:4 and the Sony 4K projector.

The second seminar, which was held in the afternoon, was hosted by Salon Films Group. Tony Ngai, marketing manager of Salon Films, shared updates on the Genesis HD camera, which has been used in recent major Hollywood feature films. He also demonstrated the use of the cable camera system. Henry Chung, Hong Kong Society of Cinematographers, then shared his experience on Stereoscopic 3-D in HD format. He provided a live demonstration of 3-D in a HD format movie projection on large-screen.

After the seminars, members visited the Filmart exhibition. The members also visited the Hong Kong Music Fair.—Joyce Lam, Student Chair

Ohio March 2007

On March 15, guest speaker John Owen, Sprint/Nextel, led an open forum discussion for a combined meeting with the local chapter 52 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers, covering the historic past 60 years of television broadcasting in the U.S. It consisted of a nostalgic retrospective overview of some of the technological advancements introduced along the way such as: (1) AT&T long lines network transmission service—cable, radio repeater, fiber optic, etc. (2) The transition from black-and-white to color video. (3) The development

of videotape recording. (4) Satellite delivery services. (5) Stereo audio formats. (6) The digital revolution including HDTV, high-density nontape storage, etc. (7) Post 911 emergency preparedness considerations.

The meeting closed with a lively Q & A session for the 16 members and guests in attendance.—*Gene L. Batey, Secretary/Treasurer*

Pasadena City College March 2007

Phil Browne, former lighting director for "Entertainment Tonight's," "The Insider" was the guest speaker at the Pasadena meeting. Browne's career spans 30 years in the industry, and his credits include many well-known television programs and specials.

Browne, who has focused his career in lighting and is passionate about his craft, began his career in television after graduating from the State University of New York at Geneseo with a double major in theater and television. After graduation, he headed west in pursuit of breaking into Hollywood, but soon found that sending out hundreds of resumes yielded no results. He then tried a different approach and headed to studios, pretending to be an executive from New York. "After they gave me a studio tour I'd ask them, so...where's the human resources office?" recalled Browne humorously.

As Browne established himself, he joined KTLA channel 5, Los Angeles' first television station, where he worked for

eight years on many shows and specials, including the Rose Parade telecast from Pasadena, CA. When KTLA was sold by Gene Autry to Tribune, Browne remained on the lot for an additional eight years as a freelancer. He later joined Turner network and worked there for eight years on sitcoms, pilots, and commercials. Browne's credits include lighting director, lighting designer, and director of photography on shows such as "Entertainment Tonight," "Wheel of Fortune,"



Attendees at the Pasadena meeting in March.

"People's Court," "Soul Train," "The Hollywood Christmas Parade," "The Leeza Show," "The Richard Simmons Show," "The Arsenio Hall Show," "\$100,000 Name That Tune," "Sha Na Na," "That's Incredible," and many more.

Browne's position as lighting director for "The Insider," at Paramount Studios was cut short in the beginning of 2007, after three seasons, because the show was over budget. Browne explained that executives decided to close the Los Angeles set to cut costs. "I was planning to stay there till 2010," said Browne, "but that's showbiz." Now "The Insider" is solely based out of New York. "You always move up and down in the industry. That's why you're always good to everyone." Keeping a good network system helped him get his latest job as a dimmer board operator on a new show called "Carpoolers," also being shot at Paramount.

Browne also discussed many of the challenges he has encountered working on various sets and lighting situations. He presented his reel to attendees and discussed his role as lighting director for day-to-day activities on the set, including special projects for "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Insider." Browne concluded his speech by reminding students that "it's better to be an hour early than a minute late."—*Horacio Jimenez, Secretary*

Washington, D.C. February 2007

With the recognition that cathode-ray displays are rapidly disappearing, the D.C. Section met again in the auditorium of the National Geographic Society for a primer on video displays and a look at some current alternatives for professional reference monitoring. Guest speaker Peter Putman, ROAM Consulting, provided an excellent technical presentation on the relative merits of various monitor technologies (CRT, LCD, plasma, etc.). The lecture included descriptions of the internal workings, comparisons of strengths and weaknesses in areas such as black level and colorimetry, and many of Putman's own measurements from monitors in his lab. Test signals and their proper use to evaluate displays were also discussed, and suggestions for test material were given.

Available for observation were several displays, all fed from a Sony HDCam-SR deck, with HD and SD outputs, via Evertz distribution equipment. National Geographic kindly provided the VTR and their (now unattainable) Sony 32 in. HD CRT monitor. Also on hand were 23 in. and 24 in. LCD displays from Panasonic, TV Logic, and Cinetal. Many thanks to these manufacturers for the generous loans of

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equipment and assistance from their personnel. In the end it was apparent that alternative technologies are making great strides in meeting the visual standard set by CRTs and overcoming their own inherent weaknesses.

Advances such as pulsed LED backlights, new gas formulations, and improved processing circuitry are making these displays viable as reference monitors—though scaling and de-interlacing will continue to be potential issues until all production is progressive HD. One notable insight, was the fact that CRTs do not have sufficient bandwidth to display 1080i HD without some detail loss. In this regard LCDs have an advantage.

Many thanks to the National Geographic Digital Media Group for their continued support of SMPTE programs and to Bob Bush at Evertz for providing refreshments.—*Eric Wenocur, Section Manager/Program Chair*



Peter Putman discusses test signals for display evaluation.

Washington, D.C.

March 2007

The D.C. Section met in the conference room at NAB headquarters for a presentation on "Cutting Edge COFDM Microwave Applications." The primary presenter, Daniel Shine, vice-president of business development at RF Central, gave an entertaining description of the systems, procedures, and techniques used for live coverage of the just-completed 2007 Tour of California bicycle race. Also on hand to answer technical questions was William (Bill) Hurlock, a senior RF engineer at Total RF, who had recently returned from the race.

Coverage for the bicycle race involved an elaborate system of motorcycle- and helicopter-mounted cameras and transmitters, circling plane-based repeaters, and extensive ground facilities for reception of the live signals and re-transmission for public distribution. Covering a 600-mile course over eight days, the entire RF operation was moved and re-deployed every day as the race made its way down the coast from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Total RF, a subsidiary of RF Central, provided the technical concept design, operation, and logistical support, and developed many of the special transmitters, tracking antennas, and other equipment needed for this unusual application. RF Central's CTO, Jim Malone, led the technical design and operational teams for the event.

Many thanks to Graham Jones and the NAB for providing facilities, and Norm Stein of RF Central for refreshments.—*Eric Wenocur, Section Manager/Program Chair*