Section Meetings

New York—February 2008

More than 120 members and guests met at the Rehearsal Hall in the CBS Broadcast Center on West 57th Street in Manhattan for the February Section meeting. Section Chair Douglas Sheer began the meeting by asking all attendees to observe a moment of silence in memory of Ed Hobson, SMPTE Past President, who passed away on January 28.

Ed Schuller, Test Materials Advisor Emeritus, then introduced Mark Hyman, SMPTE Staff Engineer, who spoke on SMPTE Standards. Hyman discussed how standards, recommended practices, engineering guidelines, and registered documents differ, and how they are developed. He also discussed the different technology committees and the Joint SMPTE-EBU Task Force on Timing and Synchronization, and called for greater member involvement in these committees.

The main presentation of the evening was "One Year and Counting…(to the end of analog broadcasting)." The presenter Bob Ross, senior vice president of East Coast Operations for CBS gave an updated version of a presentation that he has given to the Philadelphia Section and other groups over the past year. Ross spoke about February 17, 2009, the date when all analog over-the-air broadcasting will cease and broadcasters are expected to broadcast digitally. He discussed the history behind the cutover date, beginning with the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2006, which mandated the cutover of broadcasting from analog to digital and the sale of the analog spectrum.

In an informative presentation punctuated with humor, Ross discussed all of the challenges facing broadcasters in their transition as the date rapidly approaches. He began by discussing the lack of capacity of the transmitter and antenna manufacturers to supply all of the stations that have yet to order their new digital equipment, and the lack of capable tower crews to install all the towers and antennas required. He discussed CBS' plans to eventually cease distributing the SD network signal and distribute only HD to owned-and-operated stations (O&Os) and affiliates, and all of the implications that arise, for example, closed captioning, backup paths, the integration of Dolby E, and audio metadata. Audio metadata has become an increasingly large issue over time, and Ross stressed

continued on page 14

Presenters at the NY Section meeting in February (L-R): SMPTE Staff Engineer Mark Hyman; Section Chair Douglas Sheer; Past Section Chair John Ferder; and Bob Ross, CBS.

Organic workflow

Broadcast Automation with a Human Touch

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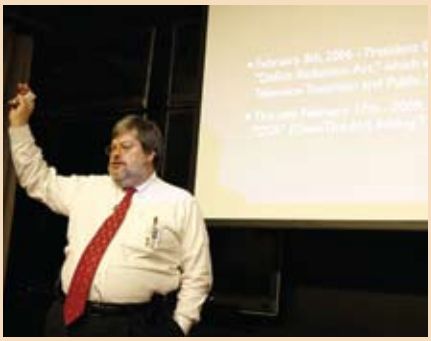

Bob Ross speaks to the NY Section regarding "One year and counting…(to the end of analog broadcasting)."

that broadcasters must be prepared to re-author their metadata, specifically in the areas of levels, dialnorm, and 5.1 versus 2.0 programming. Another looming audio issue is that of loudness control. Ross discussed how the CBS Engineering Laboratory has worked with ITU Specification BS-1770 for Loudness Measurement to reduce the loudness of programming and commercials without affecting the gain, mix, and dynamic range. Based on their findings, the laboratory will issue a report that CBS plans to use as a recommended practice for its O&Os and affiliates for loudness control.

Ross stated that, even after the cutover date, downconversion would still be necessary. To that end, CBS strives to make sure that all productions are 4 x 3 safe for downconversion to SD. Other issues discussed included secondary audio programming, downconversion strategies, branding, graphics, lower third crawls and inserts, downlinks, and signal quality. Ross urged all broadcasters to be diligent in maintaining signal quality. He stressed the need for stations to work with their multiple system operators to ensure that downconverted signals are center cut and audio metadata is correctly used in downmixing, and that closed captioning is properly converted from CEA708 to CEA608.

A very thorough Q & A session followed. Question topics from the audience included centralcasting, multicasting, the future of the analog spectrum, active format descriptors, satellite transponders, fiber backhauls, EAS and Amber Alert issues, and the need to continue generating an SD analog signal. The meeting was video-recorded and has been loaded onto the New York Section website for viewing.

The New York Section is grateful to Susan Sudano, Joy Sobolov, and William Leroy of CBS for their work and support in providing the facilities and refreshments for the meeting, and to Erik Soulliard of CBS for recording, editing, and preparing the meeting for viewing on the Section website.—*John Ferder, Past Chair*

Rochester—February 2008

The Section meeting on February 20, held at the Curtis Theatre at George Eastman House, included a very informative presentation by Merrick Distant, hybrid imaging scientist, Entertainment Imaging Division of Eastman Kodak Co. Distant discussed the new Kodak Vision3 500T Color Negative Film 5219/7219 for motion picture origination.

The Kodak Vision2 family of films was introduced in 2002 and quickly earned the reputation of producing excellent image quality for EI 500-speed film. Since Vision2's introduction, Kodak has worked on making a good product even better. Advances in silver halide imaging technology, and coupler chemistry have resulted in significant improvements for the new Vision3 capture film. The new imaging technologies in Vision3 film are both evolutionary and revolutionary:

Evolutionary—the new advanced developer and accelerator technology improves signal extraction and latent

(L-R) Speaker Merrick Distant, Kodak, with Paul Gilman (retired from Kodak) and David Long, RIT.

image keeping, while the new high-performance coupler technology improves process sensitivity.

Revolutionary—advanced dye layering technology (DLT) enables significant grain volume reduction, which results in reduced graininess or noise in areas of low exposure. The Vision3 film exhibits a 25 to 30% reduction in grain compared to the earlier Vision2 film. DLT enhances the ability to sample the shadows more aggressively. Sub-micron imaging sensor technology improves the signal-to-noise ratio in areas of high exposure and is the enabler for contrast management and image discrimination. The increased exposure latitude of 5219 film is also attributed to the use of sub-micron imaging sensors in the low-sensitivity layer of each color record. These sensors are capable of capturing detailed high-exposure information. The Vision3 film's technology provides more than two additional stops of exposure latitude, compared to the Vision2 product. The increased latitude expands the flexibility and utility of film as a capture medium.

Following the presentation of the technical details, two 35mm demo films were projected. One film featured side-by-side comparison of Vision2 film versus Vision3 film, and the second film demonstrated the Vision3 technology as applied to Super-16 origination. The films' images supported the claims, and the audience response was very positive. The speaker indicated that 5219 film was only the first member of the new Vision3 family of color negative films.—*Darryl Jones, Section Manager*

To Submit a Section Meeting Report

If you would like to submit a Section meeting report, please e-mail to Dianne Purrier, Managing Editor (dpurrier@smpte.org), and copy to Sally-Ann D'Amato, SMPTE Director of Operations (sdamato@smpte.org). Section Meeting report forms are available online at www.smpte.org under Section/Resources/.

Please provide a complete, yet informal description and pertinent details of the Section meeting or event, elaborating on topics, audience reaction, discussion period, etc. Limit your report to less than 500 words, if possible. Photos are welcomed (jpeg files at 300 dpi resolution at least 6 inches wide). Section reports have to be received at headquarters at least one month prior to publication, so please try to send your reports within five days after the meeting.