SECTION MEETINGS

Hong Kong June 2008

P.H. Cheung, technical advisor of the Hong Section and Joyce Lam, Chair of the SMPTE Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) Student Chapter, attended Broadcast Asia 2008 on June 17 to 20 to support the operation of the SMPTE booth and attend social events on behalf of the Section.

The SMPTE booth provided opportunity to present the activities of the Section to the public and recruit members. The event also included a series of technical seminars for Section members and the IVE Student Chapter.

Australia Section Chair Ward Hansford, who was in attendance at the conference, visited the SMPTE booth and received a briefing on the Section's activities and was introduced to committee members of the Section.

The exhibition also included a dinner on the fourth day that was held for organizers of the event. P.H. Cheung and Joyce Lam were among 30 academians and professionals from the motion picture and television industries who were in attendance. Participants took the opportunity to discuss and share opinions with the speakers and other industry peers. Most expressed keen interest in participation of the next Broadcast Asia.—Joyce Lam, Student Chair

SMPTE IVE Student Chapter Chair Joyce Lam stands in the SMPTE Booth at Broadcast Asia 2008.

Some of the group visiting the Malkames Camera Museum. Host, Karl Malkames (left), Edgar Schuller, Brian McKernan, behind the Akeley "pancake" camera, Richard Marcus, Mark Schubin, Susan Weber.

New York July 2008

Karl Malkames, ASC (American Society of Cinematographers), was the host for a field trip to his Camera Museum on July 19. This program, advertised in New York' Section's "Page 2 newsletter," was limited to a small group of SMPTE members only, in particular those interested in historic motion picture cameras. The field trip began with a luncheon at a local restaurant in Scarsdale, NY, where attendees entertained each other with short biographies of their experiences in the motion picture and television industry. Former SMPTE Executive Director Lynette Robinson was also in attendance at the event.

The museum tour began on the lowest level in the building of the theater, where the projection booth is equipped with two 35mm Simplex proctors having both optical and magnetic sound playback heads as well as 16mm projectors. The 20-seat screening room is complete with velvet proscenium drapes, lighting dimmers, and a stereo sound system. The films *The Evolution of the Motion Picture Projector*, and *The Evolution of the Motion Picture Camera* were a useful introduction to the intricacies of the equipment that was later seen in the museum.

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In this unique building, which is built into the side of a cliff, the entrance is on the third level, the theater is on the first level, and the museum is on the fifth level. When the group climbed to the top level they found a collection of 35mm cameras that was not only unique but had been designed by pioneers of the industry and had been used to record some notable historical events. Following are description of some of the cameras on display. All are designed for 35mm film, except as noted. Malkames commented on the history of each of the cameras.

The first camera viewed was a "Pancake" Akeley that Bob Donahue, Sr. took to the South Pole in 1928 for the Admiral Robert F. Byrd Expedition. The pancake design by Karl Akeley was unique because the shutter surrounds the entire inner mechanism. It was mounted on a gyro tripod, also designed by Akeley.

Another Akeley camera was used by James Seeley of Hearst's News of the Day newsreel company on May 6, 1937, to record the horrible Hindenburg dirigible disaster in Lakewood, New Jersey.

A 1919 Bell and Howell studio camera won its operator one of the first Academy awards for photography for the 1929 film "Trader Horn."

A 1904 Bioscope was used for the famous Burton Holmes Travelogues, popular in the 1920s through the '40s.

In 1901, C. Francis Jenkins, a founder of SMPTE, built his Chronomatograph, with a 100-ft film capacity. It was unique in that a single crank of the camera was designed to expose only 6 frames, whereas the "standard" at that time and since is 8 frames per crank. Thus two cranks resulted in 16 frames, or one foot of 35mm film. The crank on film projectors was geared to project 16 frames per turn.

In 1898, the Colt Criterioscope was carried up San Juan Hill by Albert E. Smith of the Vitagraph Company to follow Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Thereafter it was used as a projector.

One of the oldest cameras is the 1893 60mm Demeny camera, originally owned by Leon Gaumont in Paris. It was used by Burton Holmes' initial motion picture venture to photograph Queen Victoria in 1893. The mechanism could also serve as a printer and projector.

The Lumiere Cinematograph of 1895, the most famous of all historic cameras, was used as a projector on June 29th, 1896 in Keith's Union Square Theater in New York City. It could also serve as a printer. The machine eventually carried its name around the world, giving us the word "Cinema."

A Sigmund Lubin camera of 1903, along with a Lubin tripod, was taken to San Francisco in 1907 to shoot scenes of the earthquake's aftermath.

Pathe's earliest camera, ca. 1896, was used by Frank Kirby for the first film made at the Edison Studio in the Bronx, NY.

Pathe's 1910 studio camera, #832, was given by William (Billy) Bitzer, Biograph's head cameraman, to Don Malkames, Karl's father. It was used to film D.W. Griffith's landmark film, "Birth of a Nation."

A 1908 British Prestwich camera was uniquely suited to cold-weather performance. In 1910, this type was taken by cameraman Herbert Ponting on the ill-fated second expedition of Robert Scott to the South Pole.

An 1898 Mutograph camera was designed and constructed by Marvin & Casler of the American Mutoscope and Biograph Co. The design, in which the film was perforated during exposure in the camera, was intended to circumvent Thomas Edison's motion picture patents.

The mechanisms of many early cameras were encased in wood. Other devices, too numerous to list, included a Zoetrope, a suitcase projector used in the 1928 Byrd Antarctic expedition, and a Mutoscope penny arcade flip card viewer. Most of the machines have been restored to operating condition by Karl Malkames.

The Malkames Motion Picture Library contains thousands of books, catalogs, manuals, and periodicals related to motion pictures. A complete machine shop on level one has been used to restore equipment, manufacture parts, and solve specialized photographic problems in the camera and film industry. His clients, numbering over 75, have included the Library of Congress and the U. S. Navy.

Perhaps the most unusual machine is the Biograph contact step printer. It has been used by Malkames to convert the historic Biograph films of the early part of the 20th century. The process involves contact printing in which the negative film image passes an illuminated aperture and simultaneously creates a latent image on the positive raw stock with which it is in contact. What makes the process difficult is that the Biograph film, where the film was perforated during exposure in the camera, did not have consistent linear spacing of the two perforations per frame. Malkames had restored this historic machine by, among other things, fabricating spring-operated pull-down and registration pins. These pins simultaneously engaged the negative Biograph random-perforated film and the positive Kodak Standard

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perforated raw motion picture film stock. Thus, the historic Biograph movies were recreated frame by frame. Malkames has made these conversions for the Museum of Modern Art, the American Film Institute, and the George Eastman House. 1999 was the 100th anniversary of this, the only photographic machine that has been in continuous use for more than 100 years. Even today, it is ready to convert any more Biograph films that may be discovered in some film vault. The field trip ended with a Q & A session, and we thanked Malkames for his hospitality.—Edgar A. Schuller, Chairman, Archival Papers and Historical Committee

Washington, D.C. June 2008

Members met at the offices of the Smithsonian Institution (SI) Archives for a presentation on preservation and migration of videotape content. The SI Archives was a particularly appropriate venue because they had just purchased a SAMMA Solo migration workstation from SAMMA Systems. The company's vice president of product development, Bland McCartha, was in town for the presentation.

Bland McCartha of SAMMA Systems and Sarah Stauderman of the SI Archives.

McCartha gave a general explanation of the philosophy behind digital migration and some statistics on the challenges of migrating large archives. The underlying concept is that conventional tape formats (both analog and digital) have a limited lifespan in terms of media degradation and access to playback equipment. The current view of many archivists is that the long-term solution to preserving valuable content is to migrate from tape to digital files. By removing the need for special equipment and large climate-adjusted libraries, the file-based material can be handled in the same way as the huge volume of data in other industries (banking, insurance, etc.) rather than specifically as "video" data.

SAMMA Systems founder, Jim Lindner, developed a particular philosophy for making this migration feasible when faced with the immense time requirements needed to individually check tapes for degradation, capture the content, QC the files, deal with metadata associated with each tape, and also produce "proxy" files for viewing. SAMMA's large-scale systems include robotics, which automatically performs all of the above functions with little operator intervention. The smaller-scale Solo provides the same capture and data management functions without the robotics.

After an enlightening (and sobering) presentation about an issue that affects virtually everyone at the meeting, attendees viewed demos of the SAMMA Solo and toured the SI Archives media preservation laboratory.—Eric Wenocur, Section Manager and Program Chair