



SECTION MEETINGS

Hollywood February 2009

The Hollywood Section meeting on February 17, titled, *Remembering Analog Television*, was held at the Motion Picture Academy's Linwood Dunn Theater. More than 75 people attended from both SMPTE and the Society of Television Engineers (STE), who co-sponsored the event, which began with a pre-show reception, sponsored by Film Technology Co.

Several early 1950s television sets that have been rebuilt by Ralph Sargent, Life Member of SMPTE and president of Film Technology, were on display. Sargent had additionally created a comprehensive poster panel display of the early history of analog television.

The program started with an excerpt from a 1939 Warner Bros. Mechanix Illustrated short subject, *Radio Finds Its Eyes*, which gave a quick overview of what audiences could expect in the future of television, 1930s to 1940s style.

Chris Bone, president of STE, introduced the speakers. First, John Silva shared his experiences in the first days of television at station KTLA, including anecdotes from directing the Lawrence Welk Show.

James Mendrala discussed how he adjusted the color phase at his television station while on the telephone with a viewer as she watched her color television, because the station at that time did not have a vectorscope to make the necessary settings.

Jim Smith, formerly of NBC, discussed the development of the network, and his tenure in engineering and operations. He also spoke of some of the experiences of another ex-NBC engineer, Craig Curtis, who started at NBC in 1946.

Finally, Don McCroskey, formerly with ABC Television, gave a comprehensive rundown of the evolution of television stations in Los Angeles, which included some history of the building in which the meeting was being held. It was the first building in Los Angeles specifically constructed as a television studio.

The presentations were followed by a Q & A session, which included a panel of all the speakers.

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Poster panel display of the early history of analog television.

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The meeting concluded with the 1934 film short, *What, No Men?* using a new 35mm print made by YCM Laboratories from the original 3-strip Technicolor negatives.—Richard P. May, Past Chair; Ralph Sargent, Past Manager; Paul Chapman, Chair



Ralph Sargent stands next to television display at the Hollywood Section meeting.

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New England January 2009

Suffolk University Law School in Boston opened its doors to more than 50 attendees at the January Section meeting. The session was a great opportunity to learn about the latest in streaming technologies and participate in discussions and technological presentations.

The host, HB Communications, teamed up with three leading technology manufacturers, Telestream, Optibase, and Accordent, to present how streaming media technologies are being used today to address a wide range of applications.

SMPTE New England manager and meeting coordinator Joe Mendonca stated that streaming media has grown from being a selective and specialized technology to becoming both a mainstream and a widely used process to address many video-related applications within broadcast facilities, production environments, educational institutions, corporations, medical facilities, and government. He also stated that Telestream, Optibase, and Accordent are manufacturers of some of the best solutions for streaming media production, streaming media encoding and delivery, and streaming media web and mobile communications, which are some of the same technologies being used by many organizations across the world to meet the high demand for digital video programming.

Telestream focused on network-based encoding and transcoding solutions for Macintosh and personal computers. David Ahearn demonstrated how the company's technologies are being used within production environments, such as Final Cut and Avid. He provided an in-depth discussion and demonstration on the workflow for Episode Engine, Final Cut Pro, and Final Cut Server production environments.

Arthur Rabinovitz of Optibase, demonstrated how the company's technology is being used to address many video-over-IP applications within broadcast facilities such as NBC, production environments, educational institutions, corporations, and government. Rabinovitz also demonstrated the company's EzTV system and its new Flash encoder and server units.



Clockwise from the top left: Tim Sheehan, Accordent Technologies; Joe Mendonca, HB Communications; Dave Ahearn, Telestream; and Arthur Rabinovitz, Optibase.

Tim Sheehan of Accordent Technologies, focused on web-based rich media solutions by demonstrating how the company's products are being used to enhance communications, education, and training to both web and mobile audiences. Sheehan focused on how today's corporations and educational institutions are using rich media to extend the reach of classrooms, meeting rooms, and conferences to wide audiences on their desktops or mobile devices.—Kevin Lessard, Section Chair

Washington, D.C. January 2009

The push to prepare for the February digital television broadcasting transition may have taken the spotlight off white space device (WSD) concerns for many, but this was not the case at the Section meeting held on January 22.

WSD issues received special attention, with the presentations of four guest speakers before a large crowd assembled in the boardroom at NAB Headquarters. The official meeting topic was *DTV Transition: White Spaces and Other Issues*, but very little was said about the transition itself.

Washington, D.C., Section Manager James Snyder, who also serves as broadcast television frequency coordinator for the D.C. area, led the evening's program with a review of his spectrum usage experiences from the presidential inauguration event that had happened only two days before. He noted that almost every spare television channel—

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including the entire spectrum above 700 MHz that will be deleted from television broadcast purposes after the cessation of analog broadcasting—was used by broadcasters for wireless microphones and other radio frequency communication devices. He said that from his perspective as a frequency coordinator in a large market, the concept of white space is “pretty much a fallacy.”

Snyder contended that interference to legitimate broadcast spectrum users will only be made worse by the introduction of countless unlicensed consumer devices intended to operate on unused television channels.

To balance Snyder’s remarks, Alan Stillwell, Deputy Chief of the Federal Communications Commission’s Office of Engineering and Technology, was invited to speak about WSD implementation. He also fielded questions from the audience.

Stillwell stated that the spectrum picture may not be as bleak as described, but tele-



James Snyder

vision “white space” in major markets would be limited because of widespread use by broadcasters, wireless microphone owners, and public safety radios.

Stillwell addressed some of the fears and misconceptions about WSDs and described



Alan Stillwell

protective measures that are required to be included into their design. These include geo-sensing technology and database access for ascertaining “forbidden” channels in a particular broadcast market location.

Another speaker was Bruce Franca, Vice President of Policy and Technology for the Association for Maximum Service Television (MSTV), an organization that has been very outspoken against the adoption of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules allowing the use of WSDs.

Franca remarked on “what the FCC got right and what they got wrong” in connection with the testing leading up to the adoption of the current policy on WSD implementation. He credited the organization with its decision to not base WSD operation solely on local sensing to determine “open” frequencies and also for the need to protect cable headends and LPTV/television translator operations. However, he was critical of the decision to permit portable WSDs to operate with 40 mW of power on channels directly adjacent to those in use by broadcasters.

Franca noted that there was a big difference in analog and digital television interference, with analog television reception being able to endure about 8 dB of extraneous signals before a viewer notices anything. He said that in some cases interference can increase by 20 to 30 dB before the picture becomes unwatchable. According to Franca, digital television reception on most sets can go from a perfect picture and sound to no pic-

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Bruce Franca

ture and sound with the addition of a single dB of interfering signal. He also stated that some DTV receivers evaluated can lose picture and sound with interference measuring only a tenth of a dB.



Tim Cornish

Franca concluded that off-air television delivery was definitely at risk and FCC decisions were not entirely based on engineering data, stating that computer and software companies were making the decisions and “it was all about new technology getting access to broadcast spectrum.”

The last speaker was Tim Cornish, a manufacturer’s representative for Shure Wireless Microphones. He stated that many wireless microphones were unlicensed and described challenges in meeting customers’ specific requirements for wireless systems. One of the problems facing the industry is getting users to vacate the spectrum above 700 MHz, which was formerly occupied by UHF television broadcasters but has now become the property of telecom users. Cornish said that this was a major effort and that increasing use of wireless microphone systems and an “increasingly hostile RF environment” has exacerbated this problem. He stated that in lieu of a “hard and fast” mandate from the FCC stating that 700-MHz region devices must not be used, Shure has been politely discouraging its customers from using them. Cornish fielded wireless microphone-related questions from the audience. —James O’Neal, Section Manager

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