



Barbara H. Lange

## The Responsibilities of Being an International Association

**F**rom the very beginning, the Society of Motion Picture Engineers was an international membership body. Though incorporated in the U.S. (specifically, in Washington, D.C.), the Society consisted of members from around the world. This internationalism should be evident as the nascent motion picture industry had areas of concentration in India and in parts of Europe at the same time as Hollywood was getting started. Though the standards may have been the main reason for the formation of the SMPE, I would convey that it is the membership that forms the heart and soul of the Society. The human connection and collaboration is the catalyst for technical advancements. It is the people who come together to share their knowledge, to debate the science and technology, and to form the standards that drive the industry forward.

Being an international organization can be difficult, as the cultures of the world naturally influence decisions. What works in Japan may not apply in the U.K. The culture of Brazil is different from the culture in Canada. The very nature of geographic diversity creates challenges for the organization. Just as there are cultural differences between

these countries and regions of the world, so it is within SMPTE. Some areas are more television centric, while others are more oriented to cinema; yet all rely on SMPTE to help make connections and learn about the latest technology. How do we address the needs of such a diverse membership with varying needs?

The Board is grappling with these questions. At the time of writing, in a few days, we will be meeting to talk through the vision of SMPTE over the coming three to five years. While that does not seem very long-term, it is a realistic timeframe to scope our plans. The overarching goal of the Board is to ensure a long-lasting Society that can grow for another 100 years. That's a difficult challenge, for sure, but one I am certain we can address.

As the industry goes through tumultuous change brought on by the rapid growth of an IT-oriented infrastructure that is simultaneously making the world into a global

village, SMPTE needs to address its challenges and plan accordingly. Being an international Society allows us to examine from a global

perspective; perhaps applying what we know from one sector to another, or not; whatever the case may be.

There is great responsibility in being an international body. By considering factors such as conforming to an internationally accepted standard for such things as dates and times, and ensuring we are inclusive of all people, we encourage the cross-pollination of technical knowledge around the world. That value is reflected in active Sections across the globe—Australia, Hong Kong, Italy, U.K., New York, Toronto, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and

Hollywood, to name a few. Each with its unique culture, yet together under a central SMPTE mission.

I am excited by the dawn of our next century and look forward to guiding a flourishing bountiful and international SMPTE!

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