



Barbara H. Lange

Don't Worry, SMPTE Will Be OK

When I write my column for the *Journal*, I reflect on things around me, be it my personal space at the SMPTE home office or the broader global industry. It is no different today, and yet it is totally different, because I am still working from home—day 32—due to the global pandemic.

As I ponder what is different today, I realize that under normal circumstances, at this time, I would have been with my colleagues closing up shop at the annual National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show in Las Vegas, NV. We'd have been enjoying a final meal in town after what would have been a very busy time at the Future of Cinema Conference and the many meetings with the members and industry colleagues, talking about the latest in SMPTE offerings. As is the case for many of you, there was no NAB Show experience this year; instead, our work focused on other very important tasks.

This pandemic has caused so much economic turmoil across the globe, the impact of which will take years, perhaps even decades, to fully understand. Survival at these times is not at all a certainty. We've all heard the stories of how businesses

have shuttered because customers aren't buying their products. The disaster is hitting all industries. Restaurants and retail shops suffer, and so do the media and entertainment industry. Movie and television productions have stalled all around the world. Yet, news and live productions are booming.

But there may be a silver lining in this terrible time. If we look back at similar episodes in human history, these difficult times are not only periods of trouble they are also accompanied by great innovations. And that is where I spend a lot of time these days.

Back in February, before we learned about this new work-from-home lifestyle, the SMPTE Board met for its annual strategic planning exercises. We discussed how to grow SMPTE for the next generation of members and media industry, within a time frame of five years or so. Today, we are concerned about the dramatic shifts happening right before our eyes. I am worried about our future in the next few years! Still, the Board's work in February was timely, except that we find ourselves on a much faster time frame of consideration.

What will happen to SMPTE in this pandemic? With a 104-year

history, this organization has survived many episodes of turmoil and transition. This time too, I predict that SMPTE will emerge as a far stronger organization. I believe SMPTE to be the place where technology experts converge to solve industry problems through standards development. We will also continue to be a vast network of experts, developing media technology that advances the global industry and educates on those critical topics.

But, I also believe, that this economic crisis forces us to rethink how we deliver our value to the industry. How we deliver our membership and educational offerings, including live events, will have to evolve to serve an industry that will shift even more quickly and dramatically than we could imagine.

The SMPTE Board and I are committed to navigating SMPTE through these turbulent times to be an even better place than before. It won't always be easy, but thankfully, the Board has already been strategizing on crucial, new developments that are intended to keep us thriving in the future.

In the meanwhile, I wish you all good health, and I look forward to seeing most of you again.... in person!

