



CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

society of broadcast engineers
pittsburgh chapter

February 2004

Volume 12 Number 2

Last Meeting

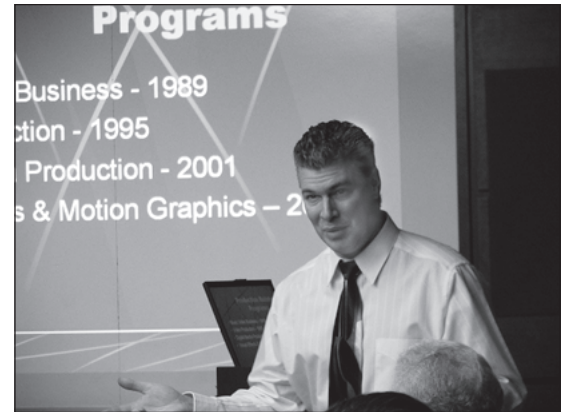
Twenty six members and friends attended our January meeting on the 15th at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh on Blvd. of the Allies in Pittsburgh. The first order of business was eating.

After a short business meeting, Doug Heaps, Academic Department Director for Video and Digital Media Production, presented a complete overview of the degrees offered at the Institute with an emphasis on production related programs. AIP offers 1 year Diploma programs, 2 year Associate of Science and 4 year Bachelor of Science degrees in various areas of study.

Some examples of classes within the Video Production Curriculum; Video I - Video II; Lighting I - Lighting II; Intro To Audio; Scriptwriting; Editing Theory - Advanced Editing; Desktop Video.

He listed some of the skills acquired by the students including camera operations and shooting skills; location and studio lighting; editing - both linear and non Linear, cuts only, and A/B roll; digital audio recording and editing. He discussed equipment competencies, showing lists of production equipment and software the students know how to use.

After the presentation we went for a tour of the entire building. We saw audio and video production studios, computer rooms where



Doug gave an overview of the different AIP programs.

nonlinear editing is done, photo labs, etc. There were many students in the classrooms and labs while we were touring.

We had a great evening of getting to know the AIP students better. There is even interest among the students in starting a student SBE chapter.

Do we really need 24 bit audio and surround sound?



Where's the music?

Cyrus Anderson
Cyrus Sound
CySound@aol.com
<http://www.cyrussound.com>

In case you haven't heard, the buzzword in audio circles is 24 bit resolution and higher and higher sampling rates.

The proposed DVD-A (audio) and Sony's SACD formats use 96 kHz sampling rates, yielding a top frequency of 48kHz, according to the Nyquist theorem. Digidesign brags about ProTools 192 kHz sample rate with even higher response. All this while many listeners seek their music on the Internet, via mp3, or the newer AAC codec (better) from Dolby Labs, integrated into Apple's iTunes and QuickTime.

In spite of the new "legal" download sites, now many music business analysts say the CD, as we know it, may become extinct as users turn to the Internet to download their favorites, and the "one hit wonder" may now be just that in the pop music field. Either we fill

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Next Meeting

Time: Thursday, February 19
12:00 P.M.

Program:

Passive RF Systems

Ed Murlatt

Technical Broadcast Consultants, Inc.

Place: Gaetano's Restaurant

1617 Banksville Rd.

Use the Rt. 19 South (Banksville Rd)

exit when coming out of town.

Use the Greentree exit when coming in.

Lunch Fee \$7

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Chairman's Corner

Is It Too Early?

Bob Jordan, CPBE
bjordan@wpxi.com

It's only February, and that pesky Punxsutawney porker has inflicted another 6 weeks of this sludge on us, but already my concerns turn toward our annual regional convention. For more than 30 years SBE Chapter 20 has been putting together a regional convention. In fact, ours was one of the first. Most of you know it as an opportunity to see new products up close and personal; to bone up on technology; to hear presentations by learned professionals; and perhaps just to hobnob with your fellow wizards. And the benefits to the organization and the profession continue throughout the year with new membership, greater industry and community awareness, increased monthly attendance, and professional networking.

But for a few, putting on this show is a lot of work. And I dare say lately it's been too much for too few. At first glance it might not seem like that much, but the jobs that need to be done for a successful show include program/speaker planning, booth sales, sponsor solicitation, floor plans, publicity, promotional mailings, advanced and on site registration, badges, handouts, signage, mailing list updates, and I've probably forgotten a few. We used to have to do our own power distribution too, but we've actually been able to lighten the load a bit by finding a facility that does that for us.

We need more people to step up to the plate and help with this. Kim did a great job last year, but it's really just too much for one person. I'd like to see two people as co-chairs, and perhaps a committee of about 5 people. An alternative might be to use a paid facilitator to do it all, but I fear we wouldn't be able to continue to make the show free to all who wish to attend, and we can't put additional financial load on our exhibitors without losing some of them as well.

So, while you're waiting for that rascally rodent to stick his head out again so you can let him see what he thinks of your 12 gauge, how 'bout giving some thought to what you can do to help with this year's regional convention. By the time I put my snow shovel away I'd like to have a couple of people to serve as co-chairs, and perhaps a committee of about 5 volunteers. The more helpers, the less each has to do. If you can help, or have some suggestions, send me an e-mail at bjordan@wpxi.com, or give me a call/leave a message at 412-237-1174. Thanks in advance.

Where's the Music?

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those big hard drives with more bits, or more downloads.

Somehow there is a real gap here.

Don't get me wrong, today's better compressed formats sound pretty good, but they are still nowhere near the fidelity of a "good old" 16 bit 44.1 kHz CD. The CD as we know it is about the last format everyone agreed upon, which is why it soon replaced vinyl records. Some "holdouts" still criticize the CD in comparison to vinyl, as a high-end tonearm and cartridge could reproduce better frequency response from records than the 44.1 kHz CD sample rate, but exactly when did we humans start hearing above 20kHz anyway? Maybe the dog will like it, though.

Personally, after a life in studios and music, on "both sides of the board," at some point the difference is so incremental that it doesn't matter. Yes, I know that 16 bit audio can't get to a real 100 dB dynamic range, and the human ear can hear 120dB, but at some point the point is— it just doesn't matter. On higher end equipment some difference can be heard, but the difference IS very incremental — so just when did we decide that 16 bit CD's sounded bad?

There are many bad CD's, just like there were bad records, but mostly because of over-compression and/or over equalization, or just poor recording technique, as any engineer who knows today's production tools knows. There are also still old recordings that can't be duplicated today for sound quality, because the performance was real and the engineers knew how to use their microphones.

Surround sound is the industry's reinvention of "quad" from the 70's. Dolby 5.1 is certainly a much better way to hear a movie, on a properly installed system. It can enhance some types of music as well, if set up correctly, and recording tricks can add some

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Society of Broadcast Engineers
Chapter 20
P.O. Box 16312
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Web page <http://www.broadcast.net/~sbe20>

Chapter 20 Officers

Chairman Bob Jordan	412-237-1174
Vice Chair Blake Richert	412-824-3930
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Passaro Receives CMMA Lifetime Achievement Award

Wheaton, IL – Robert J. Passaro, Corporate Video Consultant, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, received the James R. Mund Lifetime Achievement Award at the Communications Media Management Association (CMMA) National Conference on November 5, 2003. This award is CMMA's highest honor and is given infrequently. The award recognizes ongoing service, guidance and leadership by an individual to CMMA and to the field of communications media in general. The award is named after the late James R. Mund, who managed A/V operations for the Tennessee Valley Authority and GTE and who was a long-time member and past President of the association.

Bob Passaro has been a member of CMMA for more than twenty-five years. He served as President-Elect from 1983 to 1985 and President from 1985 to 1987. He chaired national conferences in 1984 and 1997, and currently serves in a newly created role representing the Associate Membership of CMMA. In addition to his active role in CMMA, Passaro held leadership positions in the International Television Association (now Media Communications Association-International/MCA-I).

He joined ITVA in 1971, started the first local chapter in Southwestern Pennsylvania and rose to serve as International Vice President, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of that organization. Passaro is one of two people to have been elected president of both ITVA and CMMA. Having received the MCA-I Chuck Webb Award for Excellence in 1999, Passaro has now become the only person to

receive lifetime achievement awards from these two leading media communications associations. In presenting the James R. Mund award, CMMA President Frank DeLuca, Vice President, Multimedia Communications, Aon Talent Solutions Consulting said: "Bob has guided and counseled countless colleagues in our profession and has been a teaching professional during his entire career. He taught in the film program at a Community College in Pittsburgh, at the Winona Institute in Chicago and was on the teaching staff at the Sony Institute." DeLuca also noted that: "For twenty-three years, Bob led one of the most renowned in-house, non-broadcast corporate media departments in the world. Under his leadership and guidance, almost every employee he mentored has risen to greater status in the communications/media profession." Passaro is also currently an Associate Member of the Society of Broadcast Engineers (SBE).

The Communications Media Management Association, founded in 1946, is a professional organization of people with management responsibilities for the creation, utilization and distribution of communications media in corporations, non-profits, educational institutions and government agencies.

Where's the Music?

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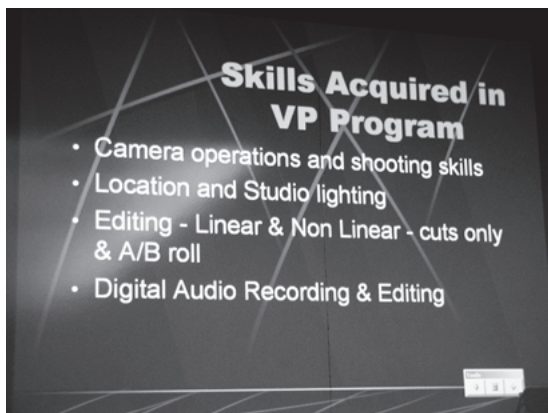
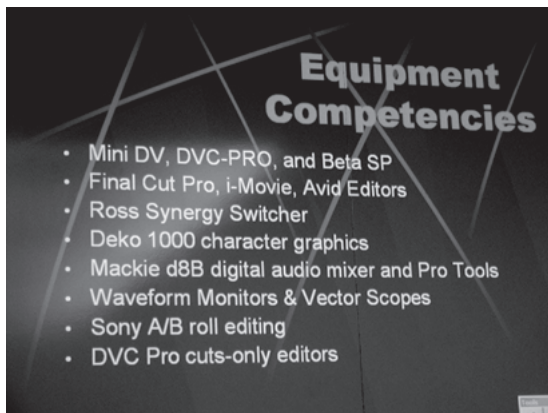
interest to mediocre music. But there's the problem again; how many consumers read a manual, or hire trained consultants to set up their acoustic space? Many listeners don't know how to set up 2 speakers, let alone 6. Oh, and the wiring... I have to contend that at some point technology for technology's sake just starts to get in the way.

Marketers are driving the industry today, not engineers. New possible formats are always there, but the CD was a winner for good audio, with universal acceptance. If so many are listening to compressed mp3's, why is the 16 bit CD not good enough anymore? Do we need to hear that diminished audio quality on 6 speakers instead of 2? The answer is no, but it sure sells hardware. Add to this the threat to the music business of illegal downloads.

So where's the music in all this?



The first order of business at our January meeting.



Broken IOT



WPCB DT50 recently ended up with a broken IOT when water dripped into the transmitter from a leak in the cooling system.

Next Meeting



Ed Murlatt tuning Cornerstone TeleVision's passive RF system last year.

Next Meeting –

Ed Murlatt, Passive RF Systems Specialist, Technical Broadcast Consultants, Inc. will talk about passive RF systems (transmission lines, antennas, filters, etc.), maintenance, monitoring and protection. He will touch on the various system sweeps and what they can and can't tell you about your system. I'll be comfortable with Q&A related to general RF topics as well.

Ed is a member of SBE, and Sam Garfield, the CEO of Technical Broadcast Consultants, Inc. is the present SBE VP.

Thanks to Joe Senay for the following:

Ever wonder –

Why the sun lightens our hair, but darkens our skin?

Why you don't ever see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?

Why "abbreviated" is such a long word?

Why doctors call what they do "practice"?

Why lemon juice is made with artificial flavor, while dish washing liquid is made with real lemons?