



# CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

society of broadcast engineers  
pittsburgh chapter

January 2010

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*Our 2010 officers: Chairman, John Luff; Vice Chairman, John Humphrey; Secretary, Sean Ryan; Treasurer, Stephen Zelinko.*



Chairman's Corner

## Tuning our Strategy

John Luff  
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The New Year always brings hope for change and new possibilities.

This year for Chapter 20, I hope we can see some movement towards growth and fulfillment of the promise of membership in a strong and growing SBE. We have seen a general decline over many years, but with effort we can turn to a new page. That is what John Humphrey, Vice Chair, and I hope to map out with your assistance and active involvement.

Early in the January we will be gathering the old officers and new to talk over a discussion begun in November at Viewpoint during our meeting.

A general strategy is likely to be to have fewer meetings but to make them of a high quality, and work to bring new members and others to our meetings.

Part of the strategy is to engage with a list of SMPTE members in the region to expand the group. I have had conversations with the SMPTE Sections Vice President, and Ken Fuller, SMPTE President, about working to grow both organizations in our region.

Our group needs frankly more active members and, we want to engage the Entertainment Technology Center at CMU, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, SCTE and anyone else who can help us increase the quality of our meetings and breadth of attendance.

Stay tuned as we tune our strategy. If you have a desire to help, please contact me at john.luff@HDCConsulting.tv or (724.318.9240) at ANY time."



Next Meeting ...

## Change Is Coming

John Humphrey  
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If you missed the Christmas meeting at Willow Restaurant ... you missed a good time! The restaurant had us in a room that had a fireplace, its own bar and a long, bar-height center table that we all sat around. The informal talk and the hors d'oeuvres were really good. Most importantly, we saw some SBE members that had not been to a meeting in awhile.

It is those people who had not been to a meeting in a while that I talked to. I wanted to find out what would make the SBE more valuable for them. I suppose it will come as no surprise they feel the SBE and Chapter 20 has lost much of its value as a place to get the latest information that applies to their increasingly difficult jobs. They need help! They are not interested in reminiscing about the "glory days" of broadcasting by the "old timers" and listening to manufacturer's reps talking about the features and benefits of their product du-jour. I can say these things ... because I am one.

Like others, I lament the days when TV broadcasting was king. When broadcasting used RCA and Ampex "real, heavy-iron" equipment. When the money kept rolling in. When those in broadcast,

(See "Next Meeting" on page 3)

### ATTENTION:

This edition will be the last printed-and-mailed monthly SBE Chapter 20 Pittsburgh newsletter. Details on page 3.



## Last Meeting In with the New

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Since our Secretary was unable to attend the last meeting, I volunteered to write this month's article about the last meeting. In trying to choose a theme for my report, I find myself torn between "SBE Holiday Cheer" and "Ring in the New and Ring out the Old."

In fact it's fair to say the meeting was both. We met for two reasons on Wednesday, December 16, 2009 at Willow Restaurant in the North Hills. We found some great atmosphere, good food and good friends to take an evening to relax, celebrate the season, and look back on an extraordinary year of accomplishments, changes and failures. It was a great evening to reflect on what chapter members experienced through the end of full power analog TV broadcasting and share experiences and impressions.

But our other primary purpose for getting together was to elect a new Chapter Chairman and Vice Chairman as Paul Byers and I had reached the end of our two years of service as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. We both found the positions challenging and rewarding, but each of us appreciate that former officers John Luff and John Humphrey had agreed to accept nominations to these offices. I can state with complete honesty and gratitude my appreciation for the opportunity to serve the Chapter for the past two years, but I can also express equal gratitude and appreciation for both of our new officers willingness to take up the task for the next two years.

After a very brief nomination ceremony and vote, John Luff and John Humphrey were promptly elected and fairly leapt to the task. They walked all of us present through their shared vision for the future of the Chapter. We discussed the need to make quality of meeting material a much higher priority than quantities of meetings, the opportunity to perhaps combine meetings with local SMPTE and SCTE, and the need to come to terms with the challenges to continuing the traditional annual expo.

I think all at the meeting found reason to be supportive of both of our new officers' fresh efforts to help us reinvent our Chapter's mission to make the Chapter more useful and more vital to the benefit of local members. We welcome John and John in their new roles, and we will work with them to help the Chapter evolve to meet the changing needs of members.

## Musings of a Consultant

John Luff  
Television Technology Consultant  
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"So just after the DTV changeover is complete a new political/technical/economic argument is thrust into the marketplace, of course by those who hope to benefit. "Why do those greedy broadcasters have so much of the spectrum we need for wireless IP traffic?" Proposals I have seen have included arguments like, "85% of the market is not using antennas anyway..." or "Let them have less spectrum and use it for SD broadcasts in fewer bits," or "Why are they allowed to multicast at all!" Though the 85% thing is hard to fight with facts, the economic disruption and the scramble that would ensue to move content to new distribution channels would be a side show worth watching...from a distance. If you happen to make a living from the use of broadcast spectrum this is hard to believe! First you MUST convert to digital broadcast, and now we don't want you to do it at all? I somehow don't think this will happen, but it is really frightening. If it happened, you could kiss integrators and dealers goodbye when the marketplace shrinks dramatically and suddenly. Don't hold your breath. I expect to end my career long before towers become useless."

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*December's meeting and dinner at the Willows.*

## Next Meeting ...

Continued from Page 1

production and mobile had a special esprit de corps, we were the REAL users of television. That is when the Internet was just a bulletin board.

Unfortunately, nothing lasts. Change is inevitable. Today things are very, very different. The SBE and Chapter 20 need to respond to these changes in the industry. Now it's all about computers and IT technology. There are many users of video who know little about broadcasting. They think YouTube video is broadcasting on the Internet. They may be right. Maybe they are the broadcasters of tomorrow.

So, why am I on this rant? Change or die seems appropriate for SBE Chapter 20 at this point in time. The Expo is gone and won't come back as an equipment show again. Maybe it can come back as workshops or seminars. Vendor contributions to support the chapter are gone. Monthly meetings have shrunk to a handful over the last several years.

So, here is the new plan. Monthly meetings are gone starting in 2010. We will have good presentations at an SBE meeting on a roughly quarterly basis. We will get out sufficient notice of the major industry speakers coming to the Pittsburgh SBE. To do this, we are collaborating with our brothers at SMPTE. The presentation topics will cover a much wider range of issues than broadcast. We will meet and see new facilities and new locations, not the same old restaurants. Evening meetings are still the plan.

Stay tuned for an interesting new year of new programs and a new direction for the new Pittsburgh SBE!!!

# Last Print Edition

**ATTENTION:** This edition will be the last printed-and-mailed monthly SBE Chapter 20 Pittsburgh newsletter.

Please go to the new SBE 20 Yahoo Group and click on "Join this group" to continue to receive this monthly newsletter via the Web: The URL is: <http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/SBE20>.

In addition to receiving the monthly newsletter, you will receive updates on Chapter 20 meetings, presentations, seminars and workshops. Our intention is to reduce the number of meetings/presentations and greatly improve the value of these events to our members and nonmembers in an effort to serve a wider range of interests and topics.

The monthly meetings scheduled on the third Thursday of the month may be moved to new dates and locations. We anticipate continuing with early evening meetings and refreshments (not dinner) at the meetings.

Even if you have been receiving the e-mailed version, please sign up at the new SBE 20 Yahoo Group to join. To make sure you receive the new Yahoo Group postings and newsletters, check your spam and junk mail settings.

If you haven't already, you will need to set up a Yahoo username and password.





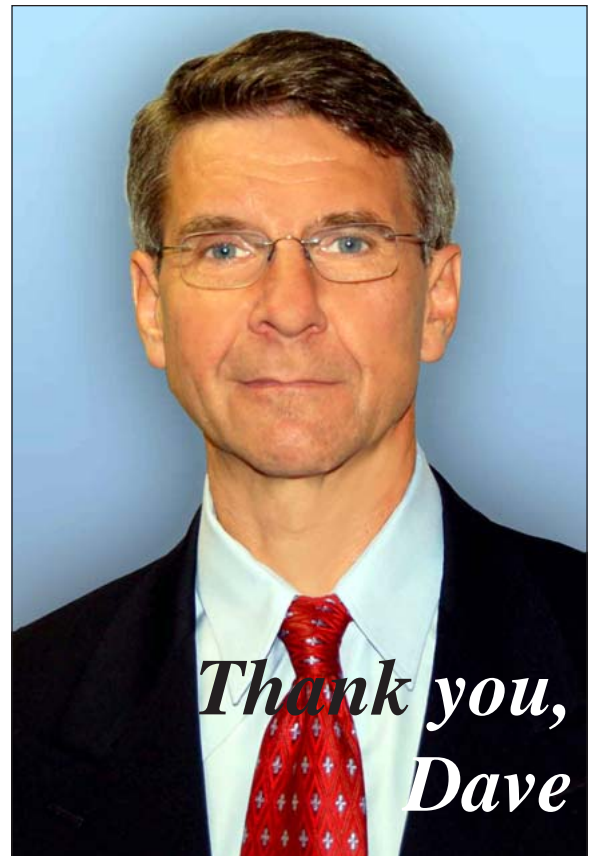
————— NOTICE —————

There is no Chapter 20 meeting in January.  
Upcoming meetings will be  
announced as they are scheduled.

In the future, newsletters will be  
distributed by email only. Sign up at  
<http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/SBE20> for  
newsletters and announcements.  
(Click on "Join this group.")



*Thank you,  
Paul*



*Thank you,  
Dave*