

## Small Gauge/Amateur Film Interest Group Meeting, 2004

Following introductions, outgoing chair Snowden Becker introduced incoming chairs Andrew Lampert (Anthology Film Archive) and Dwight Swanson (Human Studies Film Archive). It was proposed that the group adopt a system of having co-chairs serve two-year terms, but alternating so that each year there will be one new chair. Dwight will serve until 2005 and Andrew until 2006. Nominations for future chair positions will be solicited through the Smallgauge list. The new co-chairs thanked Snowden profusely for her tireless leadership of the group throughout its first three years, and her unending support for small gauge and amateur film in general.

SG/AF sponsored panels at the Minneapolis conference include sessions on home video preservation and a panel on Expanded Cinema which was preceded by a screening which included super 8 projections. Several other panels and meetings at the conference also touched on small gauge issues.

Home Movie Day, a project of both the SG/AF and Regional Audio Visual Archives Interest Groups, was once again a tremendous success in 2004, with more than 40 cities participating. Even greater international participation is being sought for 2005. A DVD of films shown at HMD events is currently in the production phase and should be available commercially by next year's Home Movie Day. Beginning in 2005, Home Movie Day will be sponsored and administered by the Center for Home Movies, an amateur film archive currently being created by the Home Movie Day founders.

Because of HMD's successful partnership effort, it was recommended that the group attempt additional collaborations with the Independent Media group in order to come up with panels or projects related to small gauge experimental film.

It was mentioned on behalf of Chad Hunter (not present) that the Alan Kattelle oral history project was ready for transcription. The goal is to have it available on the AMIA web site and possibly the MIC site.

An involved and substantive discussion about the role of digital video in small gauge preservation was launched. Andrew raised the issue that it is no longer feasible, in real world situations, to rely only on expensive film-to-film preservation for small gauge collections, many of which tend to be very large in scope. It was suggested that it is not enough to consider preservation to only mean film-to-film and video to be only for access copies. Instead, archivists will need to embrace the idea of digitization as preservation, or at least an intermediary step. In order for this to be feasible, standards and best practices will have to be adopted in regards to digital transfers or scanning of small gauge film such as has been done with standards for still imagery.

It was suggested that a good project for the group would be to produce several documents. First, the list of small gauge services originally produced for the Home Movie Day website should be expanded and annotated so that users could be informed of the type of equipment available at the transfers houses listed. This should also include descriptions of the various film transfer techniques available, and the relative costs of each, so that archivists and the general public could make informed decisions about the transfer process. Paul Eisloeffel mentioned how certain standards about digitization and transfer were already in place in the library and non-moving image archiving world and that these should be investigated and possibly modified as there is no need to reinvent the wheel. It was agreed that discussion needs to be continued via the small gauge list and that a few individuals should be nominated (or should volunteer) to take charge of this writing process.

The issue of preserving small gauge equipment was also touched upon.

Panels for next year's conference were briefly discussed. One idea was something that would discuss the problems of storage and outreach to the independent filmmaking community. The idea was to help people to archive for themselves with some simple and easy to follow guidelines.

Kodak's gradual abandonment of reversal and small gauge stocks was discussed as to how it would affect current filmmaking and future preservation. Although in 2004 Kodak did release a new Super 8 stock, it is a negative stock only, intended for telecine, not printing. Julia Nicoll of Colorlab noted that they had been having difficulty in obtaining the double perf 16mm stock they need for printing of silent films.

Lynne Kirste mentioned the problem she had discovered with pre-sprocketed splicing tape. The 3M-manufactured tape is unsatisfactory, and there was a general discussion about supplies, lack thereof and what can be done about it. One particular problem is that it falls off during cleaning. Participants were encouraged to speak up on the AMIA listserv when they encounter problems with the qualities of slicing tape and other such necessary supplies. The only way to handle this situation is as a group, and the problem of one archive is actually the problem of all archives when it comes to this particular matter. The high and rising price of these basic materials means that they must be up to archival standards. Note: a complete account from Lynne is in the following e-mail.

It was announced that one of the group's major projects for the following year would be the creation of a traveling film program of amateur films. This would be a showcase of films already preserved through the NFPF and other preservation grants. The SG/AF co-chairs have been in contact with

the NFPPF and will seek help from them in gaining access to the preservation negatives, so that the program can be presented on 16mm film. Donations of lab work will be sought and assistance from the archives will be required in order to put on as strong a program as possible. Ideally the film will be able to tour around the country and be accompanied by presentations about film preservation and amateur film history.