

# Film-Tech

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# FILMNOTES



FOR REEL PEOPLE

News and Information for the Theatrical Motion Picture Industry from Eastman Kodak Company

## *ScreenCheck* Experience Expands



Disney's Richard Cook

Nordisk Film Biografer

*Kodak* Training Programs

Joe Peixoto

General Cinema Expands *ScreenCheck* Experience

# MAKE YOUR OPINION COUNT

By Sean Lohan  
Cinema Operations Manager  
U.S., Canada and LAR  
Professional Motion Imaging  
Eastman Kodak Company

Since I joined Kodak, after many years with AMC Theatres, I've been writing this column in *Film Notes for Reel People* to keep you, the people who work in the front lines of cinema exhibition, apprised of what we're doing in relation to motion picture exhibition.

This magazine is published by the Cinema Operations group, which is part of Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging division. We have had an eventful year. The *Kodak ScreenCheck* Experience was successfully launched in the U.S. and Europe and has arrived in Australia. Screens have been certified and the public is responding favorably. We also have initiated training seminars for projectionists that are proving to be popular.

Kodak, in conjunction with Golden Ring Entertainment, has also operated the Kinomir Theatre in the center of Moscow since 1996. This cinema has consistently drawn large and enthusiastic audiences. Many times, it has been among the most successful single screens in the release of important films. Our experiences at Kinomir have taught us a lot about the expectations of both exhibitors and moviegoers, which we are translating into products and services.

Cover photo: Joerg Agin, Senior Vice President of Eastman Kodak Company, President Kodak Entertainment Imaging and Bill Doeren, President and CEO of General Cinema at the launch of the *ScreenCheck* Experience at General Cinema Theatres in the Boston area. More than 100 screens have been certified in LA, Seattle and Boston.

*Film Notes* has been published since 1977. Initially, the magazine concentrated on providing useful technical information for projectionists and local exhibitors. The articles provided specific nuts-and-bolts information designed to help project high-quality images on screens. Around a year ago, we broadened the editorial scope to include interviews with thought and technology leaders in many sectors of the industry. Our focus has been on providing useful practical information, as well as stimulating an on-going dialogue about the future of the cinema.

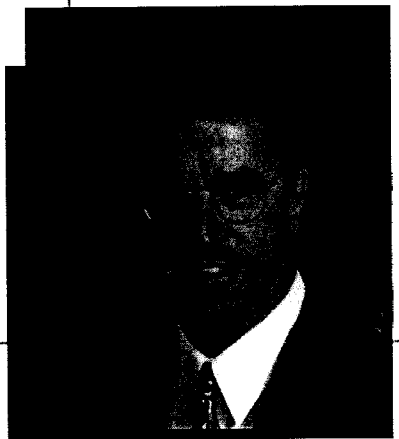
I am encouraged by the many e-mail messages, faxes and phone calls that I have received from our readers. The purpose of this commentary is to urge additional readers to offer suggestions and opinions about our editorial content. Are we providing useful information? You be the judge. Please take a few moments from your busy schedule and let us know how we can do a better job for you.

“Are we providing useful information? You be the judge.”

Would you like us to publish interviews with mainstream and independent distributors sharing plans and thoughts about the future? Are there people you would like to hear from? Are you interested in reading interviews with managers of chains and individual cinemas? What are the issues that you would like to see them address?

Are you interested in what leading edge and independent filmmakers have to say about the future? What are the issues that you would like to see them address?

Would you like more news about the latest projection hardware and accessories available from different



manufacturers, and other new products, such as Kodak's new polyester-based print films? Do you want articles that provide guidelines as well as tips for projectionists and managers? Are you interested in reading articles about successful local, regional and chain promotions by exhibitors?

How will other technology and social trends affect the future of the cinema? Will the Internet and e-commerce affect traffic or even the future of malls? How are IMAX® and other large format screens doing in multiplexes and megaplexes? The future of television is rapidly evolving with the availability of movies-on-demand displayed on large, flat panel screens becoming the mainstream. Will that affect the future of the cinema?

How can an independent exhibitor survive when a megaplex chain with stadium seating comes into its neighborhood? Let us know which of these topics are of primary, secondary or little interest. Are there other issues you would like to see us tackle? Your opinion counts. You can reach me in various ways.

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# SCREENCHECK EXPERIENCE TRAINING PROGRAM A HIT WITH MANAGERS

An important facet of Kodak's *ScreenCheck* Experience is the training program which is overseen in the United States by Jim Ferguson.

"When theatres receive the *Kodak Screencheck* Experience certification," Ferguson explains, "that's only part of the equation. One of the key factors in ensuring great presentations in the future is the training that we provide employees as part of the program. The course is designed to provide hands-on experience for theatre employees."

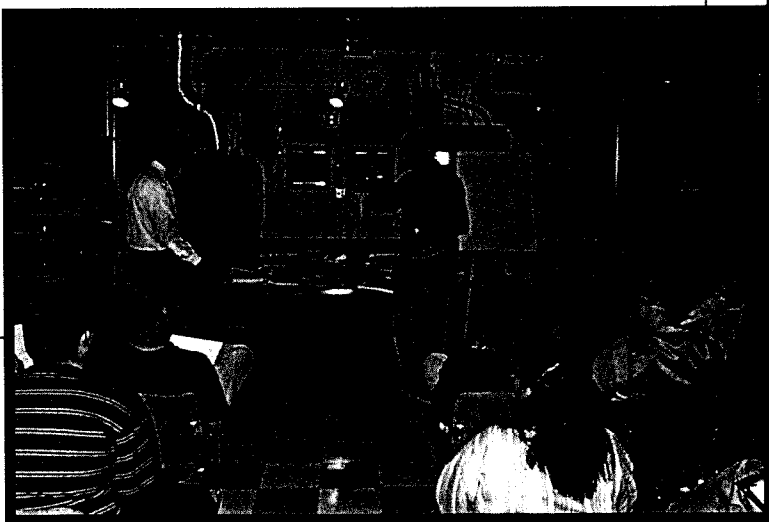
The intensive three-day course is tailored for both experienced projectionists as well as managers who have limited time in the booth. Day one of the training program is a general overview of how film is processed in the lab and packaged for theatres, as well as the basics of threading, splicing and operating the projector.

"We feel that it is important for projectionists and managers to appreciate the care that goes into providing them with great film prints," says Ferguson.

During the second and third days, participants are walked through the process of building up and tearing down prints. It takes place in a typical projection booth. Participants are confronted with real-life situations where they have to trouble-shoot simulated picture and audio problems. The situations become more intense during the third day. The training is practical rather than theoretical.

"It isn't a lecture," says Ferguson. "We invent real problems for them to solve, and we are there to coach them on how to get the information they need. Our goal goes beyond teaching and refining skills. We are showing them how to succeed."

The first three-day training program was exclusively for employees of the General Cinema theatres in Los Angeles, which are the first theatres to



be *ScreenCheck* Experience certified.

"It was a great program," says Colleen Kelley, a manager at the Hollywood Galaxy.

"I think it teaches a lot to managers, even those who don't actually work the booth. It's great for them to be able to communicate with technicians and to actually have done these things."

She adds, "The course was more thorough than I expected. It covered more technical material—the whole electrical system, the Xenon bulb and lamp house, the audio—they break it down so it's all really useful. It very systematically goes over what can go wrong with the sound or picture; what are the best procedures for repairing a film, and what to look out for if a print has a large number of splices."

"I've had a lot of experience in the booth but I still got a lot out of the program," says Jennifer Anderson, manager of the Glendale General Cinema theatre. "We are taught to run the booth but never taught what makes the booth run. Learning about the guts of the projector was very informative. Even if you've worked in a booth for a while, as I have, I think you can get a lot out of this."

Caesar Corleto, manager of the Fallbrook 10, concurs.

"Before this training I hadn't had any experience in the projection booth.

The three-day program was intensive and I learned a lot. Obviously, I've got more to learn, but I'm so much more com-

fortable with the projection booth than I was before."

"Even if I never do any troubleshooting," he adds, "it sure helps knowing that I can recognize the cause of problems, so we don't waste time when finding solutions. This course made it abundantly clear how important it is for theatre managers to have a level of comfort with the projection equipment in the booth."

For information about the training program, contact Jim Ferguson at 310/204-7144 or by E-mail: [ferguson@kodak.com](mailto:ferguson@kodak.com).

**The average moviegoer arrives at the theatre nine minutes before the film begins.**

# JOSEPH PEIXOTO EXPLORES GROWING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

According to Joseph Peixoto, the world is filled with unexplored markets. Peixoto is president and CEO of United Cinema International (UCI) and the 1999 Cinema Expo International Exhibitor of the Year.

UCI is a joint venture between Universal Studios (Seagram) and Paramount Pictures (Viacom); but exhibits films from all the studios. The company operates 725 screens at 88 theatres in 12 countries in Europe, Asia and South America. To hear Peixoto tell it, there are plenty of untapped and underdeveloped markets for top-quality movies.

Peixoto was born in Portugal. His family moved to the U.S. when he was seven. His first film industry job was as an usher. He worked at the Mann National Theatre in Westwood while attending UCLA. He worked in sales for several distributors including United Artists and the DeLaurentis Entertainment Group before he became head film buyer for Mann Theatres' L.A. and Dallas regions. Peixoto has also held positions at Metropolitan Theatres and the Paramount Pictures theatrical exhibition group. He was president of Famous Players Inc. in Canada prior to joining UCI in 1997.

"Having worked for both the distribution and exhibition sides of the film business has definitely provided me with a broader perspective," says Peixoto. "I have a better understanding of the needs of each side. When you're familiar with the goals of the people you're doing business with, it makes it easier to communicate what your objectives are and conduct business that is mutually beneficial."

UCI serves audiences in 12 coun-

tries and continues to account for an increasing share of the boxoffice.

"As the cinema market continues to grow overseas, the international share of boxoffice receipts will continue to rise," he predicts. "There are numerous markets with a strong consumer base that have yet to be fully developed. I see an ongoing trend towards the international growth of state-of-the-art multiplexes. They offer an entertainment experience like no other. UCI is committed to being the world's leading exhibitor as well as staying on the cutting edge

of cinema technology. It's my job to work with the UCI team to ensure we accomplish our goals."

He points out that the old model of an internationally successful film—little talk and lots of action—is changing. Peixoto says there is broadening interest in a large palette of motion pictures.

"As the world becomes a smaller place, films and television shows previously thought of as culturally specific will cross over," he says. "No one can deny the international appeal of stars like Julia Roberts, Cameron Diaz and Hugh Grant who aren't specifically identified with the action thriller genre. The bottom line is a good film is a good film and it will find its audience regardless of the cultural and/or language borders. A shining example of that is last year's *Life is Beautiful*."

One positive trend in the markets served by UCI is the popularity of modern multiplexes. Peixoto believes

that moviegoers are selecting multiplexes which offer a choice of content as well as high-quality presentations.

Peixoto has an eye on the evolution of digital projection technology, and an open mind about the future possibility of electronic cinema. However, he feels there are still many unanswered questions about electronic delivery systems and projection.



JOSEPH PEIXOTO

"Although everyone acknowledges that progress has been made in digital technology, the comparison is to film and digital cinema has a long way to go," Peixoto says. "UCI is monitoring the developments, however, costs, standards, encryption, delivery

and control are among the problems yet to be solved. When these questions are answered, and we're certain that the quality of the digital cinema experience satisfies the expectations of our audience, UCI will move forward with this technology."

Peixoto finds it noteworthy that despite the increasing quality and accessibility of television and home entertainment, the boxoffice is growing around the world.

"Staying at home and going out are entirely different entertainment experiences," he explains. "This is true regardless of whether watching a movie is part of that experience. Consumers who choose to view a movie at home are doing so because that is where they want to be. People who are going out are doing so because they want to be entertained outside of the home. I don't see any advances in home theatre technology changing that fact." ❧

# NORDISK FILM BIOGRAFER IS FIRST SCREENCHECK EXPERIENCE CIRCUIT IN EUROPE

**N**ordisk Film Biografer, the largest circuit in Denmark, announced plans to participate in the *Kodak ScreenCheck Experience* program. The circuit operates 80 screens throughout Denmark's major cities, including The Imperial, a 1,102-seat single screen cinema in Copenhagen. Nordisk Film Biografer opened one of the first multiplexes in Europe in 1976. The 17-screen cinema still operates successfully in Copenhagen.

"I have for several years tried to convince the film distributors and THX® that it would be a good idea to introduce TAPS® into Europe," says Nordisk Vice President of Logistics Steen Larsen. "But I have had no luck. I believe that no matter how good an

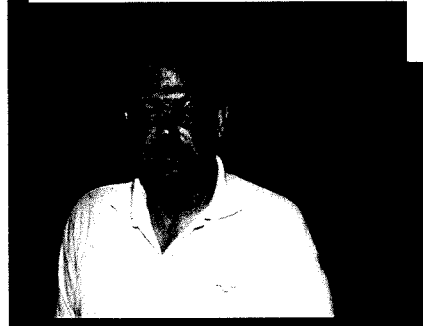
film content.

"If a film is presented poorly, the audience instinctively knows something is missing even if they aren't exactly sure what it is," he says. "We are the last link in a chain which brings films to the public. It is our responsibility to make certain that the efforts put in by so many people: the director, cinematographer, lab and distributor are faithfully represented on our screens. It is important to give audiences the best possible experience."

Larsen notes that competition for leisure time and dollars is heightening. New multiplexes and megaplexes with big screens, stadium seating and digital sound are proving to be popular. There is also more competition from other

the projection booth," says Denis Kelly, manager of Cinema Operations for Kodak in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Kodak also offers a training



Steen Larsen

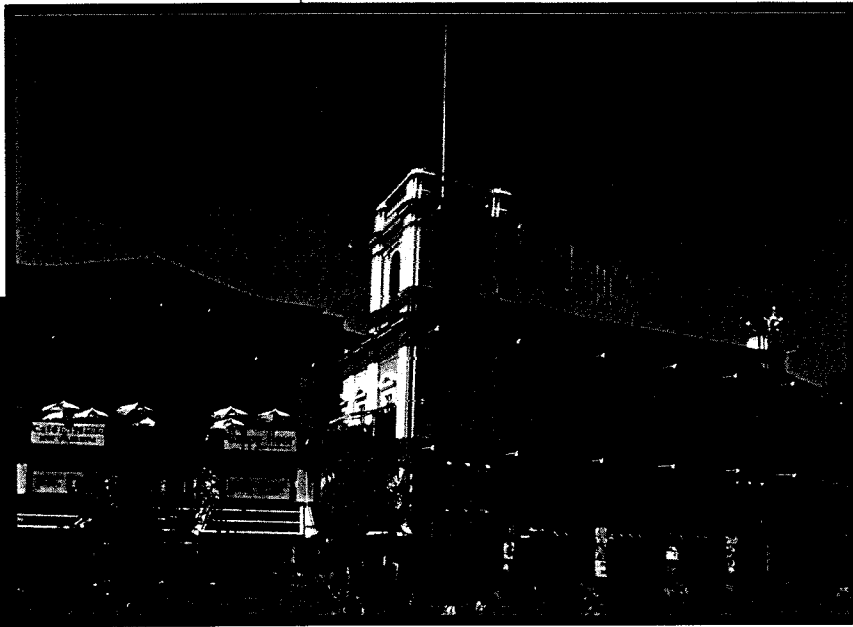
program for projectionists. Once screens are certified, exhibitors are provided with a trailer and promotional materials for the lobby, which leverage the Kodak trademark and *ScreenCheck Experience* logo.

"I believe that co-branding with the right partners is important for cinemas," Larsen says. "For picture quality, I find it difficult to think of any partner better than Kodak."

Larsen believes that motion picture exhibition has a bright future in Denmark, in part, because of the evolution of television technology.

"Not long ago in this country, only a few people had access to more than two or three TV channels," he says. "Everybody saw the same shows, and that gave them something in common to talk about at school and at work. Today, there are more than 30 channels to choose from. The latest movie is now the common cultural reference that people discuss. I think this represents a great opportunity for us to make the cinema a special part of their lives."

42% of moviegoers are high school graduates.  
39% are college graduates.



internal quality control scheme you might have, it is always prudent to have 'a second look' from time to time and being unable to convince THX® I saw Kodak's *ScreenCheck Experience* as a perfect solution to the 'problem.'"

Larsen believes the *ScreenCheck Experience* program will enhance the moviegoers' experience regardless of the

leisure attractions.

Kodak technicians work with Nordisk managers to evaluate projection quality on qualified screens. If necessary, they will recommend ways to improve projection quality.

"Very often, we can make noticeable improvement in projection quality just by making small adjustments in

# DISNEY'S RICHARD COOK FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE



**D**uring the Golden Age of Hollywood, most movies had happy endings that sent audiences home with smiles on their faces. Richard W. Cook's career at the Walt Disney Company has that kind of storybook quality.

Cook is a native of Bakersfield, Calif. He was mainly interested in playing baseball when he enrolled at the University of Southern California. He worked on the monorail and steam train rides at



Richard Cook

Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. during summer vacations.

"I've always loved movies, but I didn't have the slightest inkling that the film industry would become my life's work," he says. Cook landed a job handling arrangements for school graduation parties at Disneyland. That was pure serendipity. He couldn't have picked a better time to join the company. Walt Disney World had just opened in Florida and EPCOT was on the horizon. There was a new travel company and Cook was cast in various sales and marketing roles.

In 1976, he joined a group at the studio that evaluated markets for new media, including videocassettes. They also envisioned a Disney Channel on cable television and the possibilities for

pay-for-view TV.

Cook joined the theatrical wing of Disney 20 years ago, and in 1982 he was named president of Buena Vista Pictures Distribution. He predicted that the popularity of the VCR and cable movie channels would prove to be a boon for the cinema industry, because people who saw films on TV screens would become moviegoers. In 1998, Cook was named chairman, Walt Disney Motion Picture Group. Following are excerpts of a conversation about the present condition of the cinema and his outlook for the future:

**Q:** What is your analysis of the 1999 boxoffice, so far?

**A:** This has been a very good year even in mature markets like the United States. It's not just because more kids and teens are going to see more movies. The audience spans the entire breadth of demographics. More adults of all ages are seeing more movies more often. That's because there are more movies being made for them, and also because cinemas are more comfortable and they have improved presentation quality. Movies are also the most affordable entertainment most people can find outside of their homes.

**Q:** That raises an interesting question. The movie-going experience at home is dramatically improving. At least 20 percent of U.S. households now own big screen television sets. The DVD marketplace is gathering momentum. Satellite, digital and cable television are delivering a much wider choice of classic and new movies to homes, and many of them very close to their release dates in the cinema. Do you think these trends will eventually cut into the cinema audience?

**A:** I believe there is good evidence that as more people see more good movies at home, it whets their

appetites for experiencing more good movies in cinemas. It's not just big special effects movies with mega-budgets. Look at how audiences responded to *Runaway Bride*. It was the biggest opening weekend ever for a romantic comedy. Julia Roberts and Richard Gere brought many of those people to the cinema, because they liked their

**“...the next generation is growing up with a huge appetite for movies.”**

previous films. That's my definition of a star. I also give a big share of the credit to exhibitors who have invested in building multiplexes with stadium seating, digital sound, big screens and modern projection.

**Q:** Is the growth of the global boxoffice outside of the United States affecting the types of motion pictures that are being made today?

**A:** It probably is in a subtle way. The growth of the international marketplace is phenomenal. The boxoffice is continuing to increase in the United States, but it is growing even faster in other parts of the world. That pattern isn't going to change in the foreseeable future. Producers are certainly aware of the size and importance of the global market when they plan movies.

**Q:** Some people observe that the current generation of children is playing computer games and surfing the Internet instead of forming a movie-going habit. Are there enough movies for kids and families?

**A:** I don't foresee a shortage of family oriented or children's movies. There are a number of producers, including Disney, making films

aimed at children and the entire family. Disney movies are also very popular in rentals and sales at home video stores, so I think the next generation is growing up with a huge appetite for movies. I believe the prospects for the future of this industry look increasingly better.

Q: Not too many years ago, you championed 70 mm prints as a distribution format. Do you still think large format prints have a future?

A: There was a time when 70 mm prints were the only way to get six tracks of great optical sound into theatres. Now, with the advent of digital sound, we can get great stereo audio quality with 35 mm print films. There was also a time when a 70 mm print was the only way to get superior image quality on screens. The improvements in film technology have been substantial. We can now project brilliant images with amazingly subtle details on screens with the new Kodak 35 mm print films. There may be times in the future when a producer or studio decides 70 mm prints will add an extra dimension to special projects. We will release *Fantasia 2000* in both IMAX and 35 mm print formats.

Q: Do you have an opinion about the *ScreenCheck* Experience, Kodak's initiative for working with exhibitors to certify image and audio quality on screens?

A: I think it's great. Anything that enhances the movie-going experience is good for the industry. I think most people who work in this industry at any level either begin with a passion for film or they develop it. I have no doubt about that. But, it requires vigilance to consistently project great images and sound.

Q: What is your prognosis for the future of electronic cinema?

A: I think it is coming, and it will be a part of our future. I don't think

anyone can say today exactly when this will happen or what part it will play, because there are still questions to be answered, and there will undoubtedly be other technological breakthroughs which will influence our ability to improve the presentation of movies.

Q: Is there a growing connection



*Runaway Bride*

between theme parks and other leisure-based entertainment and motion pictures? I am thinking about characters in movies who play roles in theme parks, or when a movie becomes a ride or a computer game.

A: There are real opportunities to bring certain movie themes and characters into our everyday lives. It makes the characters and the stories they are telling much more compelling. We are leveraging movie themes and characters in our theme parks and stores. I think you will see much more of this type of activity as time goes on.

Q: You sound confident about the future of this industry.

A: People all over the world share a craving for entertainment and communal experiences. Movies are a sociological and cultural phenomenon. They touch us on an emotional level, and when a filmmaker succeeds, there is nothing comparable to that communal experience. I think the future has never

looked brighter.

Q: What's the most important lesson you have learned?

A: I've learned important lessons from every job, including the time I worked on the steam train and monorail. In some ways that was my favorite job, because I was

working directly with the public, and my mission was seeing they had fun. One important lesson I've learned is that we can't allow ourselves to become complacent.

Q: What do you think of today's story-tellers?

A: Today's filmmakers have the benefit of retrospect. They have learned from two to three generations of filmmakers who have perfected the craft. There are terrific schools providing a critical mass of talented filmmakers today. This is a generalization, but I think the quality of filmmaking is going to get better and better. ✎

**72% of moviegoers combine dining out with going to the movies.**



# PYTLAK'S PRACTICAL PROJECTION POINTERS: PLATTER PATTEN

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Platters — you either love ‘em or hate ‘em. Once the film is carefully “made up” or spliced on the platter, little attention is needed. When things go wrong, all hell breaks loose. Simple problems like an out-of-frame splice are easy to understand, find, and fix. The sources of dirt buildup or print scratches are harder to pinpoint, but usually have a well-defined cause.

Other problems like “brain wrap”, “static cling”, and “platter fling” are more elusive, and strike when least expected. The industry has recently converted to the use of print films with a polyester base. It is more durable with high tensile strength which makes it resist tearing. These features have virtually eliminated perforation damage and film breaks. But, it is more prone to causing static charges if the film jams or fails to feed properly, and the tensile strength can be a liability.

## Static Problems

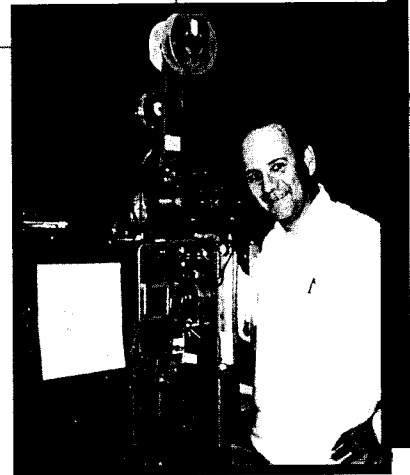
The first wide-scale reports of “static cling” were in the Winter of 1995, with the release of *The American President*. Static caused laps of film feeding from the inside of the feed roll on the platter to stick together. This either caused a film jam as extra laps were pulled into the “brain” or the platter speed to gyrate wildly, sometimes throwing the film off the platter (“platter fling”). Most of those problems did not happen to involve Kodak film, however we saw it as an industry problem. Our recommendations include maintaining 50 to 60

percent relative humidity in the booth, treating non-conductive platter surfaces and rollers with topical anti-stats like Static Guard spray, and properly grounding equipment. Platter manufacturers subsequently modified designs to include more conductive surfaces and more of a “twist” as the film leaves the feed roll and tension-sensing fail-safes.

Those measures helped but didn't resolve all of the issues. Static attracts dirt. It can also cause annoying shocks. Unprocessed color print stock was protected by a very conductive carbon “rem-jet” layer that prevented static buildup and marking during high-speed printing in film laboratories. The opaque black rem-jet was removed during processing, leaving the processed prints with essentially no conductivity to dissipate static charge. Kodak and other film manufacturers independently were developing polyester print films with transparent conductive anti-static backside coatings that would stay on the film to provide static protection, even after processing. These “process-surviving anti-stats” successfully controlled static in film labs. They also reduced dirt attraction in theatres, but we realized something more was needed to control the subtle “static cling” that can occur between film laps on platters.

## Kodak Helps Reduce “Static Cling”

Kodak refined the formulation of its proprietary anti-static backing technology when the company developed its new generation of Kodak Vision color print films in 1998. We also developed an anti-static process additive that labs can add to the final wash in the print film process. Kodak began providing this additive to film laboratories around the world in early 1999.



It provides the same benefits with all print films.

Since these two steps were taken, reported incidents of “static cling” have decreased substantially.

## “Platter Fling”

“Platter Fling” is generally caused by gyrations in speed due to static cling or the film roll getting off-center and causing the platter to speed up and throw the roll. It usually happens on the last reel, a few minutes before the end of the movie, when there is little film left on the platter. The solution is to restrain the outside of the feed roll, so it stays centered on the platter. At least six suction-cup platter clips or adhesive film retainers (e.g., Teco “Stick-A-Poo”) should be used, evenly spaced around the roll. Another tactic is to use a restraining ring around the roll — a plastic “Hula Hoop” serves well for smaller features, or a ring can be made out of a section of heavy duty garden hose or flexible plastic pipe. Never tape the end of the film (it may jam), and don't simply tuck the film end under the roll (it will make it more likely to slide). It's always a good idea to add extra tail leader, if only to keep the last few frames of picture from dragging on the floor as the platter runs out.

## Winding Problems

Sometimes the print does not wind evenly on the platter. The roll may cone or dish away from the platter surface, or it may take on the shape of a polygon, rather than a perfect circle (aptly called "spoking"). These effects are often due to excessive film curl or improper winding tension. At very low humidity the film's gelatin emulsion loses enough moisture to the dry air to temporarily shrink, causing the film to cup-in toward the emulsion. When excessive, this "positive curl" can prevent the film from winding evenly, and can even cause scratches when the image area of the curled film comes in contact with the center of undercut rollers and guide bars.

Ideally, film should lie nearly flat, with only a slight amount of positive curl. This usually is achieved by maintaining the recommended relative humidity of 50 to 60 percent RH. A simple guide is to observe a short clip of film that has acclimated to the projection room—it should lie nearly flat, with only a very small amount of positive curl. If the film curls in toward the emulsion by more than a few millimeters, raise the relative humidity, but not over 60 percent, as excessive moisture can make the gelatin emulsion soft and sticky.

Uneven winding and "spoking" are also affected by winding tension, and how the film is guided onto the take-up roll. Use just enough tension to wind a tight roll, and be sure guide rollers are positioned properly, so the film winds evenly, without riding up on itself, or rubbing flat on the platter.

## Winding Orientation

Winding orientation (emulsion-in or emulsion-out?) can affect winding quality, "static cling" propensity, and focus performance. Film with a slight amount of positive curl bends easier in towards the emulsion, so it may be

more likely have an extra lap pull in due to static cling when it is wound emulsion-in toward the "brain" of the platter (soundtrack side down). Film that is essentially flat, or even has some negative curl (high moisture content) may be more prone to pull in if it is wound base-in (soundtrack side up). If "static cling" is a problem, changing the winding orientation may help. For optimum focus performance (reduced focus flutter), emulsion-in winding orientation is specified by SMPTE Recommended Practice RP39, but this applies mostly to situations where the roll has a much smaller diameter than on a platter, where "core set" is less of an issue. When winding film on cores or reels, the film should be wound emulsion-in, but on a platter, use the orientation that gives the best winding and pay-out.

## Platter Scratches

A common source of print scratches from platter operation is when the film is not guided properly onto the take-up roll. If the film is guided too low onto the platter as it winds, the image area may rub against the surface of the platter as it rotates. Rough spots or burrs on the platter surface can scratch the image, causing a characteristic horizontal or slightly diagonal scratch. This can be avoided by carefully positioning the guide rollers of the make-up table and the platter column, and periodically checking the platter surface and rollers for burrs and rough spots.

If guide rollers are mispositioned, scratches can be caused by the film riding onto the flange of the rollers. This is important with gimbaled rollers that guide the film into the projector, and back to the platter. Always double-check to make certain that the film is riding "true" on the rollers.

Longitudinal scratches can sometimes be caused if the film pulls-in on

undercut rollers or guide bars. Excessive curl (very dry conditions) or excessive tension are possible reasons. These problems are minimized by keeping the relative humidity between 50 and 60 percent, and keeping rollers free of burrs and rough spots.

## Dirt Buildup

Because they eliminate the need for rewinding, and reduce film handling, platters generally help reduce dirt buildup on the print. Most dirt is picked up on the head and tail of the print, where the film may drag on the dirty floor during threading or run-out. The extra handling around splices may also introduce dirt, especially if the film is not handled properly. Always keep the print (even leader) off the floor and from contact with any surface during splicing, make-up, or threading. Handle film by the edges only, ideally using lint-free film-handlers gloves. Use high-quality splicing tape and trim splices carefully to avoid sticky areas around splices that can attract dirt, and even cause the film to stick together and jam.

On-line film cleaners should be used to remove any buildup of loose dirt from the print each time it is shown. Particle Transfer Roller (PTR) film cleaners are especially effective and economical. PTR film cleaning rollers are made of soft polyurethane that has a slightly sticky surface that removes dirt from the print without scratching. The PTR film cleaning rollers can easily be washed to remove any dirt buildup, and reused again and again. FPC, a Kodak subsidiary, sells PTR film cleaning rollers.

Prints made on Kodak Vision color print film should stay much cleaner because of the anti-static backing, but a clean booth and proper film handling are still recommended.

**As always, your questions and comments are welcome.** ✎

## SCREENCHECK EXPERIENCE TAKES HOLD IN EUROPE

We are well on the road to rolling out the *ScreenCheck* Experience in Europe," says Denis Kelly, manager of Cinema Operations for Kodak in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. "We have already announced our first installations at Nordisk Film Biografer, Denmark and more will follow in the U.K. and other Western European countries during the coming months."

Kelly comments on some differences between the U.S. and European markets. The multiplex and megaplex concept is well established in the U.S., however it is just beginning to take hold in some European countries. He says that while multiplex theatres have already established positive trends in territories such as the U.K. and Belgium, other countries including Germany, Italy, Spain and the Nordic countries are to varying degrees just beginning to benefit from circuits investing in new multi-screen theatres. The potential in Eastern and Central Europe is enormous, especially in countries like Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary.

"It is the same story in every coun-

try," says Kelly. "When an exhibitor builds a multiplex, and offers the public a choice of films in a good environment on high-quality screens, more people go to the movies. The boxoffice is growing in Western Europe after many years of decline and there is still ample room for growth."

Kelly notes that modern multiplexes are heightening the expectations of movie fans. He says that once they experience a great presentation with bright images on a big screen, augmented by stereo digital sound, they will not settle for less.

"The exhibitors I meet are enthusiastic about our *ScreenCheck* Experience program because they see it as an opportunity to educate the public and motivate their own staffs. "Their managers and projectionists are responding enthusiastically to our certification program because they take pride in their work, and they want to

please the public."

Kelly says that he expects to have four multiplexes with 38 screens, certified in the U.K. by early Fall.

Glenn Seaton has been appointed *ScreenCheck* Experience manager in Europe, reporting to Kelly.

Seaton came to Kodak from United Cinemas International (UCI) where he was responsible for conducting training seminars that prepared new projectionists for probationary periods with the circuit. He also trained employees at a new UCI cinema in Sapporo, Japan in 1998.

Seaton sees his new role at Kodak as a logical extension of the work he did at UCI. He believes the timing is right for bringing the *Kodak ScreenCheck* Experience to Europe. Exhibitors are looking for ways to differentiate themselves.

"I am convinced that theatres will benefit by making a commitment to quality. It is a way to distinguish yourself and provide an added value for discerning consumers," he says.



Denis Kelly

## SCREENCHECK EXPERIENCE COMES TO AUSTRALIA

The *Kodak ScreenCheck* Experience is now available in Australia. This was the coming attraction that Kodak Cinema Operations General Manager Bob Mayson promised participants during a presentation at the Australia Movie Conference at Queensland.

The screen certification is designed to help moviegoers identify auditoriums where they can experience

motion pictures as they are meant to be seen. Mayson explained that Kodak will also offer a training program for projectionists in Australia to augment the *ScreenCheck* Experience program.

"The reaction from exhibitors in Australia is very enthusiastic," says Richard Krohn, Kodak's Director of Marketing for the Professional Motion Imaging division in the Asia Pacific, Greater China & Japan regions. "Movie

attendance is growing. New multiplexes and megaplexes are being built. There are some 1,200 screens presently, and that number is expected to be closer to 1,500 by the end of next year. Many older cinemas are being upgraded throughout the country. The Australian moviegoer is expecting more from the overall experience, and we are working with exhibitors to provide it."

# AUDIENCES SPEAK UP ABOUT THE SCREENCHECK EXPERIENCE

A couple of weeks after General Cinema President and CEO Bill Doeren announced his circuit intended to certify more than 100 screens in Los Angeles, Seattle and Boston through the *Kodak ScreenCheck Experience*, *Film Notes* spoke with a number of managers to see if there was any initial impact on audiences.

Bill Smith, general manager of the Sherman Oaks Cinemas in a Los Angeles suburb, says that people have been asking questions about *ScreenCheck Experience* since the day he posted one sheet in the lobby.

"They understand that we are improving the quality of presentation and they see that as a plus," he says. From the start, people have been asking which screens are certified for the *ScreenCheck Experience*."

Smith says he is convinced that movie fans care if there is a difference in how movies are presented on various screens.

Greg Lednicky, general manager of the Avco Cinema in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles agrees.

"The audience is glad we're doing it," he says. "I've been in the business 13 years and my experience is that half of the audience is completely oblivious. As long as there's some kind of a picture on the screen, nothing else matters to them. However, as more customers see the difference, more will care, which is great for those of us that put on a superior show."

Bob Buckmeyer, general manager of the General Cinema South Bay Gallery 16 observes, "As our audience becomes familiar with the *ScreenCheck Experience* program, they will associate it with a better overall experience. There won't be any flicker caused by a faulty bulb and we'll have the right

illumination evenly distributed, so there's not a hot spot in the middle of the screen that fades out on the sides."

"I'm in favor of anything that helps presentation," says Michael Miner, general manager of GCC's Beverly Connection in Hollywood. "A lot of theatres these days cut money in the projection booth. So, I think it's a great thing that General Cinema is going with the *ScreenCheck Experience* program. People appreciate what *ScreenCheck Experience* does even if they don't notice that it's there."

"I've worked at theatres in many different cities during the past 20

years, so I know that in some places audiences have never seen movies presented the way they should be," Smith says. "When the *ScreenCheck Experience* arrives in those cities, the public will notice the promotions and will see the difference in image quality. Moviegoers will realize, 'This is how movies are supposed to look,' and they will choose certified screens featuring the films they want to see." ❧

65% of moviegoers are light television viewers (2 hours or less).

## STANLEY H. DURWOOD REMEMBERED

This past summer our industry lost a true original. AMC Theatres founder Stanley H. Durwood was a true visionary.

He built the first multiplex. He took it to Europe with the Milton Keynes 10-plex in London. Even though the concept was slow going at first, he stuck with it long enough to see multiplexes growing throughout Europe and the rest of the world. During the 11 years I was at AMC

Theatres, he often talked about making the company a major international force. Now AMC is in Japan, Hong Kong and Portugal. His vision is becoming a reality.

On a more personal level, I saw Stan frequently when I was the general manager of the AMC Century 14 complex in Century City. He took a personal interest in its operation and

whenever he was in L.A., Stan would stop by the theatre.

You never knew what he was going to do. Sometimes he would talk to customers waiting for tickets and ask their opinions. Other times, he interacted with the staff. Occasionally, he sold tickets.

AMC is a big company, but it always felt like a family. Stan knew the number of people who saw movies at his theatres, and he knew how concessions were doing. He expected the same from his managers.

I certainly learned a lot from him and I know many other people did too.

Stan Durwood was, simply put, a great guy who made an important impact on our industry. He will be missed.

-Sean Lohan



Sean Lohan, Stanley Durwood (r)



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