

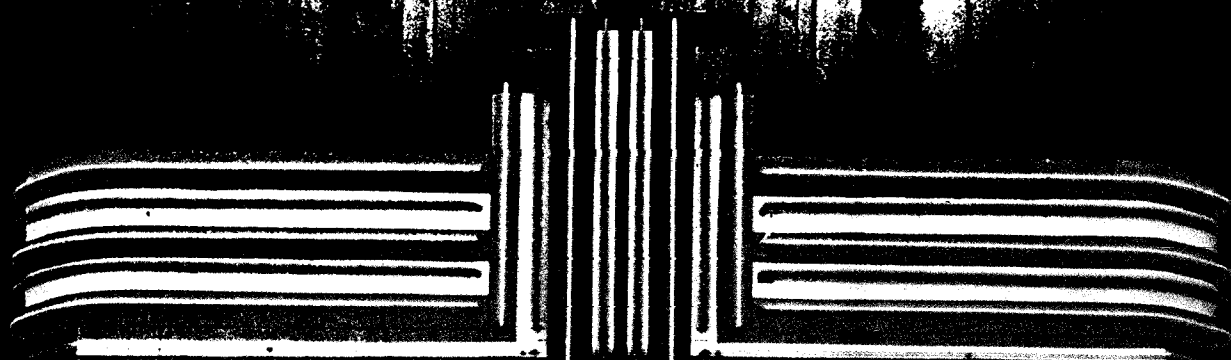
Film-Tech


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FILMNOTES 
FOR REEL PEOPLE

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

The Future of Cinema



Rob Hummel

Barry Reardon

Magic Johnson
Theaters

Premium Cinema
Success

NOW PLAYING

KODAK SCREENCHECK PROGRAM WELCOMED

Sean Lohan
Director of Business Development
Theatrical Distribution
Professional Motion Imaging
Eastman Kodak Company

Kodak announced plans to inaugurate a ScreenCheck Program in the spring issue of *Film Notes*. Our goal is to help exhibitors maximize the presentation of movies on their screens and to signify great presentations with a Kodak seal of approval.

We recently showed some of the industry's top distributors an entertaining trailer we have produced which is designed to bring movie audiences into the loop. It was received with applause and cheers. In fact, the enthusiastic responses from vendors, exhibitors, distributors and studios have exceeded our best expectations.

For those who have not yet heard about ScreenCheck, here are the basic facts: Kodak will certify motion picture theaters with a seal of approval based on their adherence to industry standards for the level and evenness of illumination on the screen. The brightness of the image projected on the screen can make a major impact on how the movie is perceived by the audience.

We have two goals for ScreenCheck: 1) raise the expectations of the audience; 2) let the audience know which screens satisfy their highest expectations for image quality. We have assembled a team, which will help exhibitors assess whether the image quality on their screens satisfies industry standards for projection. That team will also assist exhibitors who want to diagnose and resolve problems that get in the way of putting great images on their screens.

The Kodak seal of approval will signify that the audience can expect to see the film the way it was meant to be seen by

Cover photo: Kodak invests in the future with a high-tech, roll coating machine for manufacturing polyester base for motion print film.

its creators. That is a vital issue because today's filmmakers are pushing the art of visual story telling to the limit. The image quality on the screen is essential if they are going to see details in contrast and colors that are integral to the emotional content of the story.

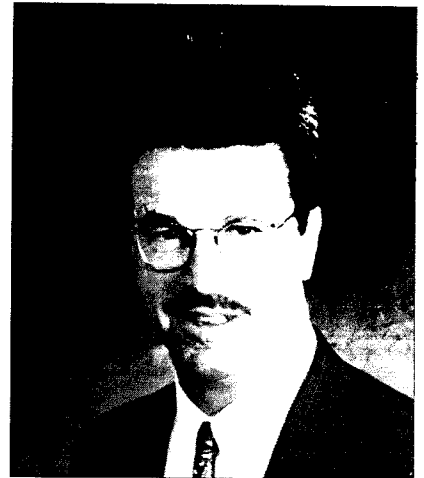
Our preliminary research informed us that many theaters are not projecting movies at the intended brightness and that some are masking film differently than the intended aspect ratio. As a former theater manager with AMC, I know that this is often not deliberate but the result of a lack of sufficient information to identify the problems or the resources to correct them.

"The Kodak seal of approval will signify that the audience can expect to see the film the way it was meant to be seen by its creators."

Most exhibitors want to give their customers the very best presentation possible. I think the enthusiasm with which ScreenCheck has been received is an indicator of this.

Moviegoers will complain about things that they know they can have a direct impact on. They'll tell you the movie is not loud enough or it's too loud; the auditorium is too cold or too hot; the popcorn is too salty. But for years people have watched poorly projected images and didn't think they could have a similar impact on that.

Under-illumination, which can cause a desaturation of color and a loss of important picture information, was just accepted. Incorrect screen type and masking yields a picture that audiences can identify as "not quite right" but in the



past, movie-goers acclimated themselves to the problems rather than demanding solutions because they didn't quite understand what was wrong.

When I was a manager, the picture was always good. If it wasn't, I'd hear about it. It was assumed it would be good. But people never said it was "too dark" or the screen was "unevenly lit." They just knew something wasn't right. Sometimes they just feel that the movie didn't live up to their expectations.

That is why identifying screens that satisfy high standards for image quality can make a significant impact on the public. It will enhance the movie-going experience.

Audiences have shown they will patronize screens that provide great sound, including Dolby, DTS and SDDS. Digital stereo sound and THX have raised their audio expectations. We believe the quality of the presentation of images is even more important and moviegoers will respond once they know what to expect.

For more information, call Sean Lohan at 213/468-4217 or e-mail: slohan@kodak.com



MAGIC JOHNSON THEATERS PROVIDE MORE THAN JUST ENTERTAINMENT

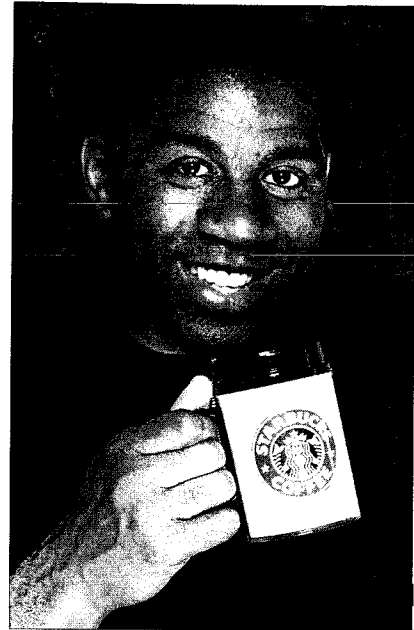
Magic Johnson Theaters are devoted to bringing top-quality motion picture experience to often under-served, minority-dominated urban regions. The current multiplex locations in Los Angeles, Atlanta and, most recently, Houston, provide state-of-the-art theatrical entertainment in areas where it was hard to find.

"We are focusing on large metropolitan areas with minority demographics in which the immediate trade zone has a population of 200,000 or more with no comparable cinemas," says Ken Lombard, President, Magic Johnson Theaters.

"We are, of course, looking to build theaters in areas where it makes sound business sense to do so," he says, elaborating that the company takes a careful look at the success of other businesses in

venture between Magic Johnson Development and Sony Retail Corporation (a division of Sony/Loews Theaters). All theaters provide the newest and finest in projection and sound. The lobbies are designed to provide a comfortable environment and are filled with amenities, including indoor boxoffices, hot and cold food, lounge areas and kiosks where patrons can access someone from the management team at any time or receive information on current and upcoming films.

The theaters are well staffed to provide fast service at the large concession stands, which offer a wide selection of everything from such traditional fare as candy and sodas to coffee, curly fries, pizza and buffalo wings. Chicken tenders and popcorn shrimp are also available at some locations. There is com-



In addition to movie theaters, Magic Johnson Enterprises is joining forces with many companies like Starbucks Coffee to bring products and services to under-served areas.

"We pride ourselves on customer service," Lombard says. "We want people to feel that this is a good place to bring their entire families."

The theaters also provide many jobs for what is often an under-employed community. Each Magic Johnson Theater complex provides approximately 100 much-needed jobs. We asked Lombard how the theory works in practice. Is it successful?

"Very much so," he responds. "Just watch us grow. We won't be satisfied until there are Magic Johnson Theaters throughout the country."



prospective regions before committing to investing in constructing new multiplexes. "There are areas in many cities that meet our requirements, where retailers have been reluctant to operate. There has been a huge outcry for more and better movie screens in these regions and Magic Johnson Theaters has heard it."

Magic Johnson Theaters is a joint

venture between Magic Johnson Development and Sony Retail Corporation (a division of Sony/Loews Theaters). All theaters provide the newest and finest in projection and sound. The lobbies are designed to provide a comfortable environment and are filled with amenities, including indoor boxoffices, hot and cold food, lounge areas and kiosks where patrons can access someone from the management team at any time or receive information on current and upcoming films.

All new buildings will have stadium seating in every auditorium, and there are plans to install stadium seating in existing cinemas.

Things you wouldn't know without the movies:

- A man will show no pain while taking the most ferocious beating but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.
- Cars that crash will almost always burst into flames.
- All bombs are fitted with electronic timing devices with large red readouts so you know exactly when they're going to go off.

ROB HUMMEL: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE CINEMA

Rob Hummel characterizes himself as a born film buff. His first industry job was with Technicolor Laboratories in 1979 as a liaison with cinematographers. Two years later, he went to work for Doug Trumbull's company while it was producing visual effects for *Blade Runner*. Hummel moved on to Walt Disney Studios, where he supervised visual effects postproduction for *Iron*. He returned to Technicolor in 1984, and began a four-year stint as director of production services for the film division as the primary liaison between the lab and cinematographers, directors and editors.

In 1988, Hummel returned to Disney, where he played a number of roles, including director of postproduction, line producer for *DuckTales: The Movie*, director, production operations for the theme park division, and vice president, animation technology. Hummel has spent the past several years overseeing technology for the DreamWorks SKG digital studio, which will bring its first animated feature, *The Prince of Egypt*, to the cinema later this year.

Hummel is one of a select group of around 100 associate members of the American Society of Cinematographers. Following are excerpts of a conversation:

Q: You have seen the industry go through a tremendous evolution during the past 20 years. Are you optimistic about the future of the cinema?

A: At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, I saw a spectacular HDTV display in a home theater environment. The source was a Digital Video Disk (DVD) player. The cost of that system is currently out of reach for most people, but in time that technology will become more affordable. When that happens, will I choose to watch movies at home instead of taking my family to the cinema? It used to be easier to answer that question. But

we are a social species, and because of that we will want to take our dates and families out of the house to movie theaters and enjoy the experience seeing films on big screens. That makes me optimistic.

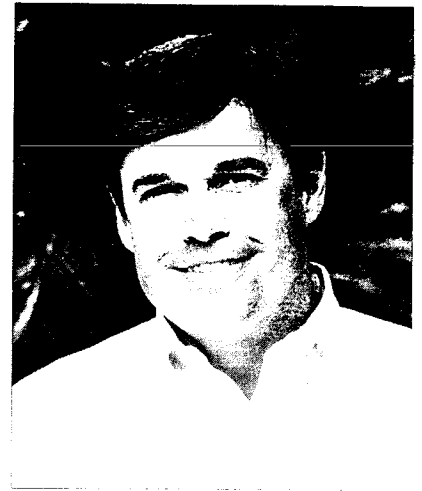
Q: Are you being literal when you say big screens?

A: Absolutely. There is a good reason why there is a defined trend toward building bigger cinemas with larger screens. I don't know if there are statistics, but there are plenty of anecdotes. A couple of years ago, *Independence Day* opened on five screens in one multiplex in Dallas. Two of them had 500 seats and big screens. Those screens sold out virtually every performance during the first two weeks. The smaller screens had empty seats. You can surmise that people waited in line to see the film on a big screen. We are in an age of sensory impact. I want movies to fill my field of view and put me right in the middle of that domain.

Q: A couple of years ago you conducted a film format seminar for the Technology Council of the Motion Picture-Television Industries. What was the objective and outcome of that project?

A: We wanted to see if people perceive a difference if you produce and present the same scenes in different formats. We had a top cinematographer shoot interior and exterior scenes in different formats, including 65 mm, anamorphic 35, Super 35 and 1.85. We leveled the playing field by eliminating as many variables as possible. There were four screenings for around 2,000 people in Los Angeles and London. All four audiences preferred prints made from the 65 mm negative, with anamorphic second, and Super 35 third. A number of people have said that test inspired them to shoot their next pictures in anamorphic format and that was rewarding.

Q: Do you believe the audience can tell the difference?



A: THX proved that a significant number of moviegoers will go out of their way to see movies in houses where they perceive the quality of sound is superior. The same reasoning applies to image quality. We can make big improvements with small investments. Earlier in my career I checked theaters all over the United States for Disney before test or premiere screenings. It wasn't unusual to find that with just an hour or two of maintenance, we could significantly improve the quality of the visual presentation.

Q: What are your thoughts about the choice of formats?

A: Around 20 to 30 years ago, the popular perception was that wide-screen formats were reserved for epic movies like *Star Wars* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. That was especially true if you produced movies in 65 mm format. But from the beginning, some films broke that paradigm, such as *The Hustler*, *The Graduate*, *Accidental Tourist*, *Manhattan* and *The Paper Chase*. Today, with the advances in film technology and lenses, the decision to produce movies in one of the wide-screen formats should solely be a creative choice by the filmmakers.

Q: Do you think it really makes a difference to the audience?

A: To get the right answer you need

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

ROB HUMMEL: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE CINEMA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to speak with great cinematographers like Stephen Burum, ASC, John Bailey, ASC, Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC and Owen Roizman, ASC to name just a few, and ask them why it is important for them to get the biggest and widest image on the screen at the other end of that darkened room. When they decide to produce a movie in a wide-screen format, they use that extra space on the frame to help the director pull the audience into the story.

Q: Can you give us some examples?

A: In *The Graduate*, close-ups of Dustin Hoffman's face are so tight that they cut off the top of his forehead and the bottom of his chin. That isolates him within this wider canvas to emphasize his loneliness. *Silverado* is an example of a Super 35 film where director Larry Kasdan and cinematographer John Bailey used maximum depth of field to help the audience feel the beauty and promise of the old Western frontier. They wanted everything in sharp focus. Whether the audience realized it or not, what was happening behind the characters was important sub-text. When the same creative team collaborated on *Accidental Tourist*, primarily an interior film, they chose the wide-screen anamorphic format. In this film, they isolated William Hurt, in part, by using a shallower depth of field. Everything behind him is out of focus, and the wider frame emphasizes his isolation. These are good examples of why it is so important to get images on the screen the way they are meant to be seen by the director and cinematographer.

Q: Is there a difference between anamorphic and Super 35, the two wide-screen formats, and should that matter to distributors and exhibitors?

A: The width-to-height aspect ratio (2.4:1) is the same, but the lenses used for photography and postproduction methods are different and that does influence the quality of the images on the screen.

Titanic was filmed in Super 35 format and no one is complaining about the quality of the prints, but I believe on a subconscious level that if you have an image on the screen which doesn't have any artifacts you have a better chance of pulling the audience deeper into the story. This isn't a new concept. When Doug Trumbull invented the Showscan format 25 years ago, he tracked how the audience responded to the same images recorded and projected in different formats. He actually recorded people's pulse rates. The point is that an emotional connection occurs when the audience's attention is fully absorbed by the images on the screen. Generally, you are going to get richer images when you produce wide-screen films in anamorphic format.

Q: What's your opinion about electronic projection? Is it inevitable?

A: In order to succeed, electronic projection will have to evolve to the point where it is as robust as film projectors without compromising image size or quality. It will also have to make economic sense.

Q: What do you mean by robust?

A: I mean you don't need to have an electronic engineer on call. What happens if you are running an electronic cinema in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and the images start drifting? You don't have that concern with film. The labs are turning out very consistent quality film prints, and I suspect it is only going to get better. If the exhibitor keeps the lens clean and gets a reasonable level of light output from the lamphouse, the audience is going to see a good representation of the original film.

Q: Why is there a perception that the electronic cinema is inevitable?

A: We grew up in the space age and believe technology will solve all our problems. The reality is that film is a more stable and much higher resolution medium

than electronic imaging is today. I can tell you that from the perspective of overseeing the building of one of the most advanced digital studios. We are resolving the technical problems that you should expect with any new technology because we've got some of the best people on the planet working with us. In terms of electronic cinemas, one of the questions that needs to be resolved is who is going to pay for obsolescence? Say you invest \$80,000 to set up a screen at an electronic cinema, and 18 months later it is obsolete. Who is responsible for replac-




The newest in film technology is loaded right into the projector.

ing equipment, the manufacturer or exhibitor? In comparison, new film technology is implemented by loading the newest film into the projector. That's a big challenge for the electronics industry.

Q: What's your advice for exhibitors?

A: Some people claim that electronic projection doesn't have to be as good as film. They say it just needs to be good enough to be accepted by the public. That's a guaranteed losing strategy. Movie fans like me might decide to stay home if the screen quality in the cinema is someone else's perception of what is good enough.

Q: Just about 20 years ago *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* motivated you to come to Hollywood in search of a career. Steven Spielberg directed it, and now you are helping DreamWorks produce its first animated movie. What's that feel like?

A: It feels like a dream come true. 

A LITTLE TRAINING FOR PROJECTIONISTS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Audiences frequently don't see movies the way they are meant to be seen. They miss subtle nuances because the projected image on the screen isn't bright enough to show important details that are recorded on the print film. Perhaps too much of the film isn't in perfect focus. Maybe they are distracted by dirt on the print or on the lens of the projector that shows up on the screen.

"The audience may not recognize that the images on the screen aren't sharply focused, or the print is dirty," says Jeff

images projected on the screen can be diagnosed and easily resolved.

Johnson ought to know. He was a projectionist and manager for the AMC circuit for seven years before starting a Denver-based cinema consulting company in 1996.

Today he teaches a seminar sponsored by Kodak, which is called "Film Handling for Reel People." The seminar includes a hands-on workshop designed to fill in the gaps in training that sometimes occur on the job. Johnson estimates that some 150 projectionists have attended his seminars since the

ics as how to properly maintain print film and projectors, including lamps and lamp houses, as well as film cleaning, storage and screen maintenance.

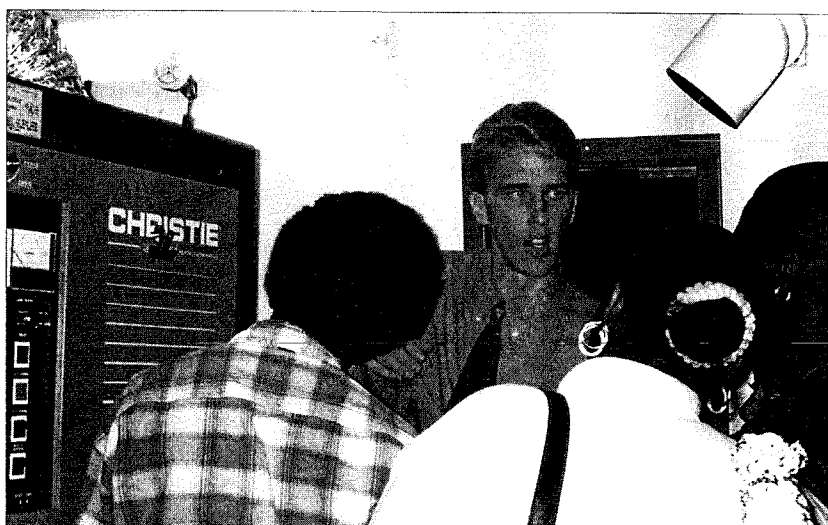
"Some people feel the screen is just a white surface at the front of an auditorium," says Johnson. "It's so much more. It can do good or bad things to the overall presentation. The type of screen—matte, pearl or perforated—and its relationship to the design of the auditorium is extremely important. A clean screen can go a long way toward improving image quality, and a screen that's been cleaned improperly can be permanently damaged."

Johnson dispenses helpful hints and dispels harmful myths about cleaning both polyester and acetate-based films. He demonstrates factors that reduce contrast and brightness on the screen and the importance of achieving proper light levels with an appropriately powered and focused lamp. He also demonstrates appropriate methods for cleaning the port glass that covers the projection booth's portholes.

Johnson says that he teaches projectionists to look for and anticipate unexpected problems. For instance, often distributors choose to print trailers on acetate-based stock though most features are on polyester-based stock. Since polyester film is less thick than acetate, refocusing is required when going from one to the other type of film stock.

Johnson customizes each seminar to the experience and responsibilities of the participants. He may spend time reviewing proper procedures for cleaning film if there is a need. He might deal with projector troubleshooting and maintenance in a hands-on workshop.

Cinemas today must be prepared to handle analog sound and three different digital sound systems, and Johnson observes that makes it difficult for theater managers to maximize the potential impact of the various audio tracks on the audience. Many times, the causes of technical problems aren't



Jeff Johnson teaches cinema projection techniques in the Kodak-sponsored seminar "Film Handling for Reel People."

Johnson, who specializes in teaching cinema projection techniques for Kodak, "but those things can be sufficiently distracting to keep them from being drawn into the movie. Maybe they are supposed to notice that something or someone is moving in the shadows, but they miss it because the screen is too dim. All they know is that the movie isn't as interesting as they had expected, and that's what they are likely to tell their friends when they ask whether they enjoyed the film."

Johnson says that a common cause of these types of problems is the inexperience and lack of proper training of many people who are responsible for overseeing projection. With a little training, he contends that many problems affecting the quality of

spring of 1997 when he started teaching it. Based on current bookings, he expects that by the end of this year some 300 projectionists will have participated in the seminars.

"There are some common misconceptions which are easily resolved," he says. "Many people think that film with a rugged polyester base is indestructible, and they act accordingly. Well, it is more rugged and durable than acetate-based print film, but that doesn't mean it can't be damaged and that it doesn't need to be cleaned."

Johnson says that his seminar is tailored to fit the needs of individual cinemas, including the experience and expertise of the people responsible for operating the projector. His presentation routinely covers such top-

A LITTLE TRAINING FOR PROJECTIONISTS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

easily recognized, diagnosed and cured.

"People select the cinema they go to for a lot of reasons," he says. "Primarily, they are drawn by the movie, the time it is shown, location and convenience. Is there ample parking? Is the theater neat and comfortable? Is the movie they want to see showing on the big screen? There are also more subliminal factors. Have they enjoyed their experiences at that cinema?"

We asked Johnson if audiences could really tell the difference between a well-presented and not-so-well presented show?

"Maybe they don't know that the pro-

"With a little training, many problems affecting the quality of images projected on the screen can be diagnosed and easily resolved."

jected image on the screen was too dim, the print was dirty or the sound wasn't all it

could be. But they know they've been to other houses where the experience is more rewarding. As the quality of digital television, laser discs and digital video disks gets better, you need to give people more of a reason to hire a babysitter and get out of the house. Movie tickers are a big investment for many people and they expect a return on that investment."

Johnson says he charges \$79 per person for a full day of training. That fee is standard anywhere in the world as long as travel costs don't exceed total fees. To schedule a seminar, call Jeff Johnson at 303-751-2649. ☞

NOTICE TO THE PROJECTIONIST

Recommendations for Polyester Base Film

More and more feature films are on polyester base, much like the leader used for projection. Polyester base film is replacing triacetate base film that has been used for many years.

Although triacetate and polyester film are similar in many respects, there are some important differences. Polyester prints are, for example, slightly thinner than triacetate. This means the diameter of the roll may be smaller, the same amount of film may weigh less, or more film may be added to the reel.

You may notice differences, also, in the way the prints "feel" the way they wind up on platters or reels, run through the projector, go over the rollers, or focus on the screen. Those differences will affect the way you do your job.

USE TAPE SPLICES ONLY

The tape you use for triacetate prints is satisfactory for polyester prints. Polyester

prints cannot be assembled with splicing cement. Cement splices will not hold.

WATCH FOCUS

Because polyester prints are thinner, you may need to make a minor focus adjustment between triacetate lead-ins (trailers, snipes, etc.) and this feature presentation on polyester film.

DO NOT LUBRICATE THE PRINT

It is not necessary. The print should run smoothly and quietly without additional lubricants. Waxes or lubricants can cause damage to the print. Particle Transfer Rollers can be used to clean prints.

MAKE SURE THE EQUIPMENT IS ALIGNED

Misaligned equipment can cause base scratches and destroy the audiences enjoyment of the presentation. Equipment alignment is more critical with polyester base film.

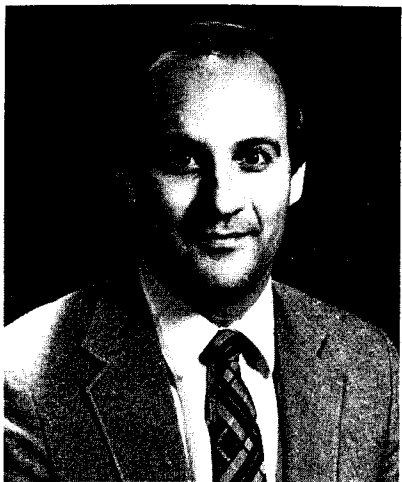
CONSIDER TENSION-SENSING FAIL-SAFE MECHANISMS

Because polyester prints will not break as easily as triacetate, excessive tension may build up if the equipment malfunctions or is misthread. We recommend contacting your service technician about using tension-sensing fail-safe mechanisms to stop the equipment and minimize damage in the event of a problem.

KEEP THE PROJECTION ROOM CLEAN AND AT PROPER HUMIDITY

Polyester films develop a somewhat higher electrostatic charge – and attract dirt – as they run through projectors. This is an increased problem when humidity is low. You can minimize problems by keeping the projection room at 50 to 60 percent relative humidity, and maintaining a clean projection area. The grounding of platter assemblies – and the installation of electrostatic eliminators on all equipment – provide additional protection. ☞

PYTLAK'S PRACTICAL PROJECTION POINTERS



John P. Pytlak
Senior Technical Associate
Worldwide Technical Services
Eastman Kodak Company

Help for Projector Dusting

Question: Some of my projectors are covered with white flakes and I have to clean them after every show. I also find a lot of buildup on my PTR film cleaners. Even with cleaning, the prints get quite dirty within a few weeks. Some other projectors never seem to have a dusting problem, except for a little purple-colored dust with brand new prints fresh from the lab. What causes this dusting?

Answer: The white "dust" you are seeing is likely small flakes of polyester scuffed from the backside of the film by the gate and intermittent shoe of the projector. If you look at the edges and perforation area of a print that has been through a "problem" projector a few times, it is likely that you will see scratches and abrasions, especially on the back side. Prints from the projectors that aren't dusting will show much less abrasion, even after hundreds of runs.

The intermittent shoe is the most likely area of the projector for back-side scuffing to occur. Any surface roughness here will be especially damaging. New projectors "out of the box" are often worse than projectors that have had the gate and shoe surfaces burnished by use.

Check with a magnifying glass to see if there is any obvious problem with the film-contacting parts of the gate and shoe, such as a nick or burr, or a hardened buildup of emulsion. Remove any buildup with your fingernail or a non-metallic tool that won't nick or damage the metal surface. Misalignment of the gate and intermittent sprocket can cause the projector to damage the perforations or scuff the edge of the film, so carefully check the alignment.

Dusting is becoming more of a problem as very few laboratories routinely edge-wax release prints anymore. For optimum performance, Kodak has specified edge-waxing for 35 mm prints since the 1920's. Proper lubrication reduces surface abrasion of the film, improves steadiness, and reduces perforation wear by reducing the tension required to pull the film through the gate. Unfortunately, previous methods applied the wax using a solvent that is now regulated as being environmentally harmful. Labs have phased out edge-waxing, finding that Kodak color print film generally has acceptable performance because of the lubricants put into the raw stock. Optimum performance, including resistance to severe projector abrasion, still requires levels of wax only obtainable by edge-waxing after processing.

Unfortunately, some methods of lubricating prints often cause additional problems. Never use oils, silicones, or spray materials like WD-40 to lubricate film. These materials often stay on the film as a sticky coating. Some materials can actually leach the oil-soluble color dyes from the film. Products sold specifically for cleaning and lubricating film will not harm the film, but are difficult to apply.

Kodak is working to develop methods of edge-waxing prints that don't require use of harmful or toxic solvents. One promising method is very simple. It involves the use of SC Johnson Paste Wax (800-558-5252), which is a mix of hard waxes with a fast-evaporating solvent

forming a soft paste-like material. We have found that a very small amount (no more than one level teaspoon) of the paste wax uniformly buffed along the side-walls of the print as it lies on the platter will penetrate into the edge and perforation area of the print. When the solvent evaporates, a thin clear layer of the solid hard wax is left on the surface of the print, in the areas where it is most needed to reduce friction and abrasion. Running the print through the projector spreads out the wax into a uniform coating. Although there is nothing in SC Johnson Paste Wax that will harm the film, care should be taken not to put too much on, as excess wax will build up in the projector, and could be visible on the screen or affect the reading of the soundtracks. Remember that it's easier to apply a very small amount of wax and add more if needed later. Another note of caution is that the added wax will make the film roll more slippery, requiring the use of platter clips to keep the roll from sliding on the platter surface.

Our tests show that proper edge-waxing will greatly reduce "dusting" and surface abrasion of prints. Edge-waxed prints should also run more quietly and smoothly through the projector, and perforation life will increase since the film will require less force to pull it through the gate.

By the way, a small amount of purple dust on the first few runs of a new print is normal. The dust is usually purple because the top imaging layer in the film is the magenta dye layer. Other than using PTR film cleaning rollers to clean the print during projection, no further action is usually needed, UNLESS there is obvious abrasion of the emulsion-side surface of the print.

As always, please write us if you have any film-related questions or comments. My e-mail address is jppytlak@kodak.com.

- The average movie goer spends about \$1.30 on concessions for each trip to the movies.
- The average movie goer in the U.S. sees 6 pictures a year.

A CONVERSATION WITH BARRY REARDON

Barry Reardon, president of distribution for Warner Bros. Pictures, is a graduate of Holy Cross University and attended graduate school at Trinity College. He spent the first eight years of his career in the financial sector of a multi-national corporation before joining Paramount Pictures in 1967. Reardon started in finance and segued into distribution and marketing. In 1975, he was named executive vice president in charge of film buying and marketing for General Cinema Corporation when it was the largest circuit in the world. That broadened his perspective and provided insights into the issues that affect exhibitors. Reardon joined Warner Bros. in 1978.

Q: What changes do you see in the industry today?

A: Dramatic changes are occurring with the design and construction of multiplexes and megaplexes with 15 to 30 screens. It's changing the industry rather quickly. It started in the U. S. and is now happening in other countries around the world. I think most new builds in the U. S. are megaplexes with stadium seating. Cities all over the world that only had five or six screens for two or three million people are finally getting modern movie complexes.

Q: How do you see this affecting the boxoffice?

A: For decades, the U. S. led the rest of the world with around 55 to 60 percent of the total boxoffice. The paradigm has shifted in part because dramatic changes in politics and the economies of different countries have opened the door for worldwide distribution of motion pictures. There has been a tremendous increase in screens in many Pacific Rim countries that now have modern entertainment complexes. There are similar trends in many European countries. The U. S. boxoffice is growing, but not as fast as the rest of the world. One important factor is that more good pictures are being made and not only in the U. S. Content drives this industry.

Q: With movies costing so much to produce and market, and with major titles now opening on 4,000 to 5,000 screens, do you think there's going to be room for distributing smaller budget films in the future?

A: Yes. *Driving Miss Daisy*, *The Crying Game* and *The Full Monty* are good examples of small films that were nurtured until word-of-mouth spread and gave them opportunities to succeed. *Shine* is also a great example. There will always be room for good, smaller movies.

Q: How is the marketing of movies changing?

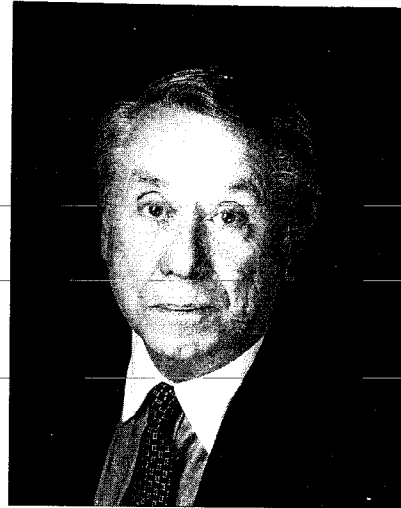
A: It is changing dramatically. The price of television advertising is so high that we need to find new ways to market our movies. We used to put a poster up in the theater and show a trailer and that was it. We're going way beyond that now with all sorts of innovative promotions.

Q: Can you cite an example?

A: On *Quest for Camelot* we did some different types of promotions with Kodak. We merchandised a Fun Pack that



contained a one-time-use camera, 3-D trading card and coloring book customized for this film. We sold these packages in Warner Bros. stores and used them in local promotions and radio shows. Many radio stations used these packages as prizes. Others had coloring contests. Cassette tapes featuring two songs from *Quest for Camelot* and voice excerpts were used as premium offerings by some 6,600 Eckerd Drug stores. These were pilot projects that proved you can use movie content as merchandise to help sell the film. I think every parent who bought the Fun Pack or played the music had to be seriously tempted to




take their kids to see the film.

Q: How is Warner Bros. celebrating its 75th anniversary?

A: We have a tremendous library of more than 4,000 pictures and are re-releasing many of the classics including *The Exorcist*, *Blade Runner*, *The Maltese Falcon* and *Casablanca*. We run a WarnerBros. "Festival of Classics" where we play 33 films over seven days in a theater. I believe there will be a huge market for these films. In a lot of cinemas, people clap when they see the names of favorite stars. They also recite famous lines with the actors and stand and cheer at particularly emotional moments. *The Wizard of Oz* is coming out on Christmas Day. We think it could be the seminal movie event of the holiday season. We are restoring the film. There's an all-new digital sound track and a three-and-a-half-minute dance sequence with the Scarecrow that has never been seen before. We are still making marketing plans.

Q: Are you optimistic about the future of the cinema?

A: The industry is really vibrant and strong. We are setting records at the boxoffice. Many new screens are being built in great environments in every part of the world. We are marketing movies in new and creative ways. I think it is a great time to be in this business whether you are a producer, distributor or exhibitor. 

KINOMIR DRAWS CROWDS IN MOSCOW

Kodak Kinomir has become the place to see movies in Moscow since the 570-seat cinema and entertainment complex opened on Pushkin Square in the heart of the city in October 1996. Kodak Kinomir (Kodak Cinema World) is managed by Golden Ring Entertainment (GRE), a U.S. company with strong ties to the cinema industry in Russia.

"Kinomir is consistently drawing large audiences," says Jack Teahan, global accounts manager and vice president for Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging division. "It has become the largest dollar grossing single screen in the world. *Titanic* netted \$700,000 in a 20-day run.

Teahan says that Kodak entered the exhibition marketplace in Moscow with GRE because the companies felt it was important to have a showcase cinema in

he says, however those concerns have melted away. The biggest problem now, he says, is accommodating all of the films that are

"In a relatively short time we have proved that if you provide the right setting and show first-class entertainment on a great screen, the audience will respond."

slated for Kinomir on a single screen.

"It turns out that the best defense against piracy is giving the audience an

movie-going experience that are only beginning to take off in the U.S. have already succeeded at Kinomir. The cinema sells tickets up to two weeks in advance with preferred seating available at premium prices. Muscovites can join the Kodak Elite Club, which gives them first access to tickets and advance information about upcoming films. They also have exclusive access to a special VIP section in the lobby.

Teahan credits GRE with doing a great job of managing the cinema. He says that the cinema is clean. Seats are comfortable, the screen is big (60-foot wide) and projection and audio quality are excellent. Amenities sold in the lobby include Western-style snacks and drinks; a cafe serves coffee and pastries and there is a cocktail lounge.

"It's a great place for dating or to bring your family," he says.

Kinomir has seven corporate sponsors who get signage and can run high-quality and entertaining cine commercials. Teahan says that innovation is encouraged.

"When *Men In Black* premiered at Kinomir, GRE staged a live performance with dancers dressed like Will Smith in the movie and music video," he says. "We also showed the video—which was very popular in Russia—prior to the film. The dancing and the video were both really well received. The audience loved them."

Teahan points out that Kinomir is the number two retailer for Coca-Cola in all of Russia following only McDonald's, and the country's top retailer of Nestlé's products. Both companies are Kinomir sponsors.

"In a relatively short time we have proved that if you provide the right setting and show first-class entertainment on a great screen, the audience will respond," he says.



the capital city of Russia. He notes that the film production and exhibition infrastructures were in disarray following the collapse of the communist government.

"There is a great tradition for cinema in Russia," says Teahan. "We believed people would respond to the opportunity to see top films in a great environment, and that would encourage distributors and provide a stimulus for the Russian film industry."

There was some reluctance by some distributors who were worried about piracy,

opportunity to see the film the way it is meant to be seen on a big screen with great sound," he says. There is a hunger for world-class entertainment."

Teahan notes the populace has been cut-off from most Western-style entertainment for some 50 years.

"*Alien Resurrection* was a fantastic hit," Teahan reports. "It was the fourth in a series of films for the Western world, but it was the first alien film seen in Russia."

Concepts designed to offer an enhanced, more pleasant and convenient

• Films produced by U.S. based firms accounted for 92 percent of the worldwide box office in 1996.

PRESERVING FILM IN TROPICAL CLIMES

Tropical climates such as those found in the Pacific Rim are fraught with exceptional challenges to anybody who wishes to store and maintain motion picture film for extended periods. Film hates humidity. Fungus is another concern, especially if the relative humidity is above 60 percent for long periods of time.

These problems can be avoided with more frequent inspecting and cleaning of film than is required in more temperate climates. The guideline is that any region that experiences 90 degrees F (32 degrees C) at 90 percent relative humidity for more than a few weeks each year should employ special precautions to protect films from humidity.

Automatic air conditioning can control both temperature and relative humidity. If the facility is also needed for some other purpose such as a print library, an economical

combination can frequently be worked out. This is not a do-it-yourself task. The services of an architect and an air-conditioning engineer are usually required. That involves some expense, but it is generally well worth the value of preserving irreplaceable films.

The next best method is to dehumidify a small room while keeping the temperature below 75 degrees F (24 degrees C). The room must be kept reasonably airtight to reduce the entrance of moist air. This can be accomplished by vapor sealing the walls by coating them with asphalt paint, aluminum paint or, better yet, paper-laminated aluminum foil. Weather-strip the doors and windows. Only then should you install an electric dehumidifying unit. To monitor performance, install a controlling humidistat that will turn off the machine when the relative humidity has been reduced to about 30 percent.

Remember that people working in the room, who may be inspecting or repairing film, need fresh air. Don't confuse dehumidifying units with window air conditioners. The latter do take some moisture out of the air due to condensation on the cooling coils, but they don't control relative humidity. (This is why basements are usually damp). If the climate is humid, a dehumidifier is necessary. A local heating and air conditioning supplier can suggest the proper equipment for these needs.

Rolls of film can be dried by means of activated silica gel. This must be done every time the films are used. Also remember that the edges of a roll of film dry first which could cause 35 mm film to buckle causing focus problems. ☞

CHICAGO AUDIENCES HAPPILY PAYING A PREMIUM FOR PREMIUM CINEMA

America's first luxury movie theater, General Cinema's Premium Cinema, offers Chicago-area moviegoers a unique, first-class movie experience. The Premium Cinema features valet parking, a bistro lounge, champagne, wine and beer, and a THX-certified auditorium with leather seats and tables for food.

"Couples are clamoring for a special night out at the movies," says Brian Callaghan, a spokesman for General Cinema. "We have had people reserve seats without even knowing what film would be playing. They've said friends or family will be visiting Chicago and they want them to experience this."

Callaghan reports that most evening and weekend shows are complete sellouts and even weekday matinees are doing good business. "We've had many guests here who



rarely go to the movies," he says. "They want the same tender loving care they can get from the airlines, at luxury hotels and in sporting arena sky boxes. Now they can find this same level of service at the movies. Even on a busy Saturday night, they just pull right up to the theater and walk in. There are no lines and guests can enjoy a meal, dessert or Starbucks cappuccino as part of the experience.

"Along with being luxurious, it's also

the convenience of one-stop shopping," adds Callaghan. "You're not sitting in a restaurant somewhere checking your watch because the movie's about to start. At the Premium Cinema, if you're still eating your meal or drinking your beverage when the show is about to begin, your waiter transfers the items to your own personal table inside the auditorium."

General Cinema says the most frequent responses to the Premium Cinema are, "Why didn't someone do this before?" and "When are we getting one?"

One woman also stopped by one afternoon between flights from Japan to Germany. She had four hours to kill and had heard about the Premium Cinema.

Based on this success, General Cinema is presently working on plans to expand the concept to 20 additional markets. ☞



Distributors representing Disney, Fox, Gramercy/Polygram, MGM/UA, Paramount, Sony Entertainment and Warner Bros. and representatives of Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging division stand next to the just completed 307 machine. The high-tech machine is producing high-quality polyester base used in making motion picture color print film and represents a \$200 million investment by Kodak to supply the needs of the industry with this tough, scratch-and-tear resistant product. The distributors spent a couple of days in Rochester, NY, touring Kodak's motion picture film manufacturing operations.

Front Row: Rick Hundorf, Warner Bros. (UK); Dave McCann, Disney; Jim Honore, Sony; Beverly Starr, Sony (UK); Ann Turner, Kodak (UK); Jane Armstrong, Disney; Ray Perry, Disney (UK).

Second Row: Pamela Tarrabe, Warner Bros.; Mike Gittinger, Kodak; Celia Velasco, Gramercy/Polygram; Phil Vogel, Kodak; Mike Jones, Sony.

Third Row: Paul Haggar, Paramount; Gary Gerlich, MGM/UA; Rick Griffith, Fox; Peter Milson, Kodak (UK).

Fourth Row: John Parsons-Smith, Kodak (UK); Jack Teahan, Kodak; Greg McRitchie, Universal; Brian Spruill, Kodak.

Fifth Row: Richard Aschman, Kodak; Phil Provenzal, Fox; Steve Southgate, Warner Bros. (UK).

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