

AV ARCHIVES BULLETIN

Official Bi-Annual Newsletter of the Southeast Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA)

SEAPAVAA 7: A reality check for archives



Principal speaker for the SEAPAVAA 7 was Dr. Khekkeo Soyxaygna, Laos Acting Minister for Information and Culture. Seated (l-r): SEAPAVAA EC members Bunchao Phichit, Belina Capul, Ray Edmondson.

by Ray Edmondson

Behind the acronym SEAPAVAA or the South East Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association lies an interesting - some would even say unlikely - grouping of around 30 member archives in the region fanning out to Australia and New Zealand. These are joined by another 30-odd organizations and individuals from around the globe who identify with the mission of saving and protecting the audiovisual heritage of Australasia, the ASEAN countries, and the Pacific Island states.

Established in 1996, SEAPAVAA is young and energetic. It has recently

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Lindner Prize for research in AV archiving

SEAPAVAA's first endowment comes from member Jim Lindner who generously donated US\$10,000 as seed money for prize intended to encourage research in the field of av archiving.

To be known as the James A. Lindner Prize, the award will be presented by the SEAPAVAA Council once every two years to an individual in recognition of the completion of a research project in film restoration and preservation.

The prize winner will be announced and presented during the annual SEAPAVAA conference. The award consists of a certificate and a cash award to be determined by the SEAPAVAA Council.

SEAPAVAA immediate past president Ray Edmondson will chair the new Prize Committee which will administer the project. ■

Film Preservation Handbook now online

The on-line resource entitled "Film Preservation Handbook" is now available on the ScreenSound Australia website. To find the resource, surf the ScreenSound Australia website (www.screensound.gov.au) and access the Preservation section where the link to the handbook is located.

This resource covers the basic and more advanced information needed to manage a motion picture film collection.

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GEH's reel emergency project

The George Eastman House (GEH) is offering assistance to archives from developing countries to preserve films that are in danger of decomposition or those which lack optimum archival facilities.

GEH will shoulder the cost of preservation/copying of one reel of 35mm from the SEAPAVAA region every year.

Selection will be based on the following criteria: national importance, state of reel emergency in terms of storage conditions, and technical feasibility of preservation work. The preserved material will then be returned to the requesting archive for conservation purposes and/or public access.

George Eastman House is a non-profit institution acknowledged as a primary source of information for those in search of data on the history and art of the still and moving photographic images.

To those interested, please contact Caroline Yeager at film@geh.org or Christian Dimitriu at info@fiatnet.org. ■



project completed soon

by **Jane D. Johnson**

The Moving Image Collections (MIC, pronounced 'mike'), an international union catalog and portal for discovery of moving image resources for education and research, is fast nearing completion.

Said project is expected to facilitate collaborative cataloging, preservation, programming, and digitization activities. In addition to its union catalog, MIC will include an international directory of moving image repositories, a cataloging utility, and an education and outreach space.

MIC is a joint project of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and

the Library of Congress. It has received major funding from the National Science Foundation and is a participant in the National Science Digital Library.

Alpha implementer sites, all with significant moving image collections in analog and digital format, include the Library of Congress, Cable News Network (CNN), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, National Geographic Television, National Library of Medicine, Northeast Historic Film, Oregon Health and Sciences University, Pacific Film Archive, the Peabody Collection at the University of Georgia Libraries, the Prelinger Collection at the Internet Archive, ResearchChannel, the Smithsonian Institution, and Wisconsin Center for Film and Video Research.

The MIC project recognizes that factors such as available resources, political environment, and climatic conditions have a far-reaching impact on the process of archiving, and vary

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ARCHIVES IN DISTRESS

At the recent conference of AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists), held in Boston, USA from 19 to 23 November, participants had an opportunity to be briefed on the work of audiovisual archives operating under non-standard or stressful situations. The session was co-chaired by AMIA President Sam Kula and SEAPAVAA's immediate past president Ray Edmondson. Speakers were Lim Ky, Deputy Director of the National Archives of Cambodia; Annella Mendoza, formerly president of SOFIA and SEAPAVAA treasurer and now working for Vision TV in Toronto, Canada; and Jose Enrique Llufrío of the Cuban Institute for Cinematographic Arts and Industry.

Annella Mendoza focused the attention of the conferees on the situation in the Philippines. Her country, according to Ms. Mendoza, does not have a national audiovisual archive and the task of archiving is distributed among several institutions, the practitioners being linked voluntarily through SOFIA, the Society of Film Archivists.

Lim Ky used photographs of decaying film collections stored in uncontrolled environments to illustrate the situation in Cambodia. The country still struggles to free itself from heritage destruction which marked the Pol Pot era of the 1970s. There is a plan to develop a Film and Sound Archive as a branch of the National Archives of Cambodia.

A national and international survey will be conducted to locate surviving materials, and pinpoint the necessary legal instruments to support a proper

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13th Annual AMIA conference in Vancouver

The 13th annual Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) conference will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia from 18-22 November 2003. The conference venue is the Hotel Vancouver.

This activity is expected to draw approximately 600 delegates from around the world. The conference will consist of a diverse range of sessions, workshops, screenings, technical symposia, and special events.

The conference is open to all, regardless of membership. To join this year's AMIA conference or for

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Preservation of av heritage in the Pacific Region

by **Matthew Davies**

*Operations Manager, Preservation and Technical Services
ScreenSound Australia*

Audiovisual records of the Pacific region's history, culture, and heritage date back to at least 1899, when Henry Mobsby took footages of Kanaka laborers cutting cane in Queensland with his Lumiere camera. But it was from the 1920s onward that the use of film for recording both ethnographic studies, what we would now call "home movies", became popular.

The early films recorded a vanishing life and landscape and documented the impact of increasing European influence on indigenous cultures. Islanders' involvement in the Great War and in World War II was covered in newsreels and travelogues chronicled the development of tourism.

Since the end of World War II, we have seen developments in technology and the growing awareness of the importance of recorded images and sound as a heritage resource. As the technology became more accessible, it has become a vital tool for indigenous people to record and preserve their culture.

Growing interest in preserving the intangible cultural heritage of song, dance, ceremony, and customs in the form of film, audio, and video recordings has resulted in quite large collections of materials being recorded or acquired by cultural centers, archives, libraries, and government agencies around the region. Increasing awareness of the fragile nature of these audiovisual records has placed their preservation as a top priority in the

agenda of relevant national and regional organizations.

The strategies for preserving audiovisual records are based on passive preservation in controlled storage conditions designed to slow down deterioration and active preservation by copying obsolete or deteriorated recordings and transforming them into new materials or injecting new formats.

Provision and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure - conditioned vaults, conservation and copying facilities and the ongoing development of skilled staff is seen as a challenge in rich highly developed countries. Climate, resource restrictions, distance, and

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SEAPAVAA cancels 8th Confab

SEAPAVAA's 8th Annual Conference and General Assembly, originally scheduled on 19-27 May 2003 in Brunei Darussalam has been cancelled.

After the previous announcement of the conference postponement, SEAPAVAA's Executive Council decided to cancel the event citing the SARS scare and the international travel constraints faced by conference delegates as the major reasons. The original plan was for the conference to be held sometime in August. However, they found it not feasible.

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SEAPAVAA welcomes new members

SEAPAVAA welcomed three new associate institutional members to its field as ratified during the 7th General Assembly in Vientiane, Laos on 11-12 May 2002. These were the Society of Filipino Archivists, Kantana Group, and the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

The Society of Filipino Archivists (SFA), Inc., represented by its president, Yolanda C. Granda, is an organization of professional archivists, records managers/personnel, and librarians in the Philippines. Through SFA's programs and projects, the society aims, among others, to promote and advance archives administration; disseminate professional knowledge and techniques through national and

international sharing; establish and maintain communication and cooperation among archivists, the archive users, and the institutions where they work.

The Kantana Group Co. Ltd. is the postproduction house in Thailand. Kantana has been producing programs for television broadcast for the past 50 years. The Information Resources Department, Kantana's arm that will be interacting directly with SEAPAVAA, is like a library. Their collection includes beta tapes, videotapes, miniDV, and other formats of programs. Kantana's present concern is in digital technology, its eyes trained on achieving its goal of becoming the leader in entertainment.

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Changes in Australia

— Parliament redefines the archive

Ray Edmondson

The date 30 June 2003 is historic for Australia's founding SEAPAVAA member, ushering a year of controversy.

On 28 June 2002 the national daily, *The Australian*, printed a story written by film writer, Lynden Barber, describing the 'comedy of errors' which continues to hurt the Sydney post-production studio, Screensound Pty Ltd

(www.screensound.com.au) after the *National Film and Sound Archive* (NFSA) changed its name to *ScreenSound Australia* in June 1999 — and adopted an almost identical web address (www.screensound.gov.au).

The Sydney studio continues to receive the Archive's emails, correspondence, and films. The question of identity has since raised confusion.

Barber's interest was sparked by a reference to this conflict in my case study

on the NFSA's name change. He sought out the head of Screensound Pty Ltd, Peter Pagac, and published his story. It brought no official reaction until two months later when Pagac formally complained to the Federal Arts Minister. He proposed that the NFSA revert to its original name to douse the confusion. The matter, however, remains unresolved.

Created in 1984 by Cabinet decision, when its component parts were separated from the National Library of Australia, the NFSA had become a large institution with a current budget of US\$14 million.

Its intended defining legislation, however, was never passed. It remained merely a 'program' within a large government bureaucracy, without autonomy or legal personality of its own. This made a descriptive and self-defining public identity critically important. The 1999 name change revealed the Archive's

vulnerability and invited doubts about its character and even its survival.

Documents recently made public under *Freedom of Information* have cast light on the internal processes behind the name change. These include the final report of the 'branding' consultants, Keystone, and a heavily censored copy of a KPMG audit of the process, the existence of which had not been revealed to Parliament. Even though names, dollar amounts, and other materials have been deleted, it was clear that there was irregularity in the process and that the auditor was unable to locate key documents.

On 20 November 2002 the Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee of the Australian Senate which scrutinizes cultural institutions and media-related government authorities, raised some 33 questions

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ETHICS OF PRESERVATION VS. ETHICS OF PRESENTATION

by P.K. NAIR

Man and machine

The invention of the camera towards the end of the 19th century made it possible to record a series of successive pictures on cellulose film. This camera also has the capacity to run this series of pictures at such a speed as to create the illusion of movement.

A similar machine - the motion picture projector - made it possible to project the recorded images at the same speed on a white screen and reproduce the experience.

Between the initial recording and the final presentation, the film passes through several hands and other machines. Human hands and machines are likely to err, and as a result, the final presen-

tation may not satisfactorily evoke the original "feel" or experience during the recording.

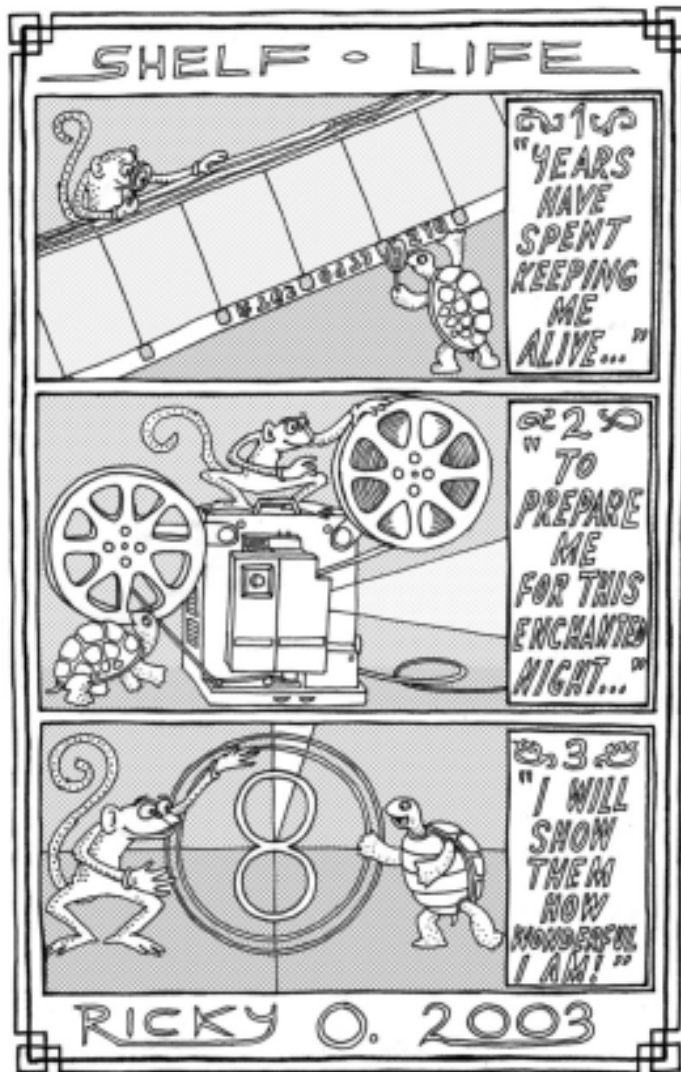
The difference between the original and the reproduction

A film begins as a concept in the creative mind of the storyteller. The storyteller, or as some would prefer to call him, the writer, puts the story on paper. The product, commonly referred to as the script, passes through the hands of the director, the actors who will portray the characters of the story, and the creative crew, for a healthy round of discussion that aims to gather creative inputs that would help improve the story and the manner by which it will be presented. Because of the numerous and widely

varied points of view, and the richness of creative and artistic inputs, the resulting material may differ a little - if not greatly - from the author's original work. One may very well describe the resulting material as a mere "reproduction" of the original piece.

The same can be said of the series of images recorded on cellulose film. When the product is played, the effect may be described as something that approximates the original, but it can never quite match it frame by frame. The discrepancy tends to increase with the passage of time - depending on how the product is preserved and maintained, the quality of the machines used for maintaining it and the expertise of the hands that handle it.

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From the President

Our goal: Quality service for our members

For the next three years, SEAPAVAA, under its newly elected council, intends to work hard in pursuit of the gains it has reaped for the past six years.

With the solid foundation SEAPAVAA has built since it was established, as well as the regional and international recognition it has gained as a professional network, SEAPAVAA is now ready to focus its full attention to the provision of quality service for its members particularly in the areas of collection, preservation, and access of audio-visual heritage.

The range of av-archiving needs in the region is as wide and varied as its membership. We may probably classify our membership base in terms

of needs such as those who have av collections but do not have the adequate organizational structure, facilities, nor the legal mandate to carry out the work professionally; members who may have the mandate but have yet to build their collection; those who have established archives but in search of more efficient ways of carrying out the work in the face of challenges posed by limited resources, environmental imperatives, and technological changes; and members who are functioning as stand alone AV archives equipped with adequate staff, expertise, and facilities.

To address the perceived av-archiving needs, SEAPAVAA has embarked on a three-year strategic plan that includes expansion of its membership base and development of a member service program that will provide training, education, information resources, research and advice, and communication skills to members.

The following services are also included under the same plan: development of data base, manuals, directories and templates for legal mandates, and other concerns; assistance in film search, exchange of collection, and sharing of resources in the region.

SEAPAVAA may not have the resources to carry out all of these activities. But the new Council is determined to strengthen its existing network of alliances that it has built over the years (i.e. ASEAN, UNESCO, and the other international professional associations such as IASA) and develop new ones. This should be a major strategy of the program.

ASEAN which has strong ties with countries like the United States or the European Union as dialogue partners could probably provide assistance in seeking surrogate/duplicate copies of av materials that are kept by former colonizers and build member archives' collections. UNESCO, through the Memory of the World, could help draw attention to the importance of the archives' collection and the need to preserve and make them accessible.

SEAPAVAA membership in the CCAA provides the rare opportunity to get to know and work together with the other professional organizations on areas that are of mutual interests to their members. A joint conference with FIAF will be held in April next year in Hanoi, Vietnam and will explore the theme of "No Time, No Money: Moving Image Preservation in Emergency Conditions." Discussions are ongoing with regards to the proposed joint conference with the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA).

We note that some of the alliances are not within the region. But linking with them will undoubtedly be for the benefit of SEAPAVAA. Hence, ties with the concerned countries must be strengthened. All these can be used as reference points in developing further SEAPAVAA's membership base and services.

The Council is beefing up the Secretariat's capability to deliver the programs effectively. A full time administrator has been hired to coordinate the effort. The committees tasked to implement the programs will soon be restructured.

The challenge for the new council is to expand SEAPAVAA's membership base and mobilize cooperation and sharing of resources among the members.

In all these plans and undertakings, SEAPAVAA would need the active participation of all its members, not just a handful few.

We are counting on everyone's full involvement in and commitment to SEAPAVAA! ■

MALAYSIA

P. Ramlee – The magic lives on

by Dr. Samsiah Muhamad

*Head, Acquisition and Processing Division
National Archives of Malaysia*

In Malaysia, Teuku Zakaria Teuku Nyak Puteh, popularly known as P. Ramlee, is a name that is synonymous with the Malay film industry which had its beginning in the 1950's. P. Ramlee movies and songs continue to live on in the hearts of thousands of his fans, although he is no longer in their midst. His artistic output has influenced the world of art, music, and the local film industry to this very day.

Sunday, 29 June 2003 marked the 30th year of artist P. Ramlee's death. While the man may have gone, the legend lives on. There is probably no artist, living or dead, who matches up to the multi-talents of the late P. Ramlee. He was the director, actor and comedian, scriptwriter, composer, lyricist, musician and singer. At the time of his death on 29 May 1973, he was 45. P. Ramlee had acted in about 60 films, directed 37 movies, and composed some

250 songs. He left behind a cultural heritage for generations of Malaysians to treasure.

The fact that the National Archives of Malaysia (NAM) serves as custodian of the nation's heritage has led to the public clamor for the acquisition and preservation of materials produced by P. Ramlee. There are over 3,000 items on P. Ramlee in the collection of the NAM. These include audiovisual materials – films, videos, VCD, gramophone discs, etc.

In recognition of P. Ramlee's contribution to Malaysian film and music heritage, the National Archives of Malaysia holds a yearly P. Ramlee month. This is from 29 May to 29 June. Among its main objectives is to encourage the public, especially his fans, to donate Ramlee's works to the NAM. The materials will be preserved and made available for research. ■

NEW ZEALAND

A new home for the New Zealand Film Archive

by Monika Ahuriri

*Publicist
New Zealand Film Archive*

Since 1998, the New Zealand Film Archive was well aware that it has outgrown its current home. Four years have passed and the pressure to build a new home continues.

Its film and video collection has grown from 15,000 in 1992 to 85,000 to date and the success of the Archive's public programs, restricted by the size and the accessibility of its exhibition space, also adds to the pressure to move on.

The Board of Trustees decided it was time to act. The Archive's long-standing accommodation problems have now been solved with the purchase of a new home in Central Wellington.

The six-storey building, Te Anakura Whitiwhia, was built in 1970 and is located a block away from the heart of Wellington's cinema and entertainment district. Chief Executive Frank Stark found it ideal for the future needs of the Archive. Said Stark: "The building combines very high standards of construction and strength with large, uninterrupted floor spaces. It provides safe storage for the collections and is considered a great site for developing and presenting our new public programmes."



The Te Anakura Whitiwhia Bldg. in Central Wellington, the new home of the New Zealand Film Archive.

All normal operational activity has been suspended and the staff at the Film Archive have adopted the classic jeans and tees look as their time and energy are dedicated to the arduous task of sorting, packing, and general house cleaning.

Moving over 50,000 film and video titles and a huge documentation collection, which together amount to more than a million separate objects, is exhausting and draining on the Archive's resources. Nonetheless, programs like school screenings, Te Hokinga Mai (Marae

screening tour) and the Traveling Film Show will be maintained throughout the relocation process.

When the development at the new premises is completed by the end of 2003, Te Anakura Whitiwhia will offer more than 75 percent extra vault space for up to 40 staff and a 110-seat cinema along with exhibition and viewing spaces and expanded research and library service.

The New Zealand Film Archive is confident it now has the necessary base to carry on its work for at least the next 40 years. ■

PHILIPPINES

CCP launches Dream Theater

The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and Dream Broadcasting System (DBS) jointly launched the CCP Dream Theater and CCP@ Dream Channel at the CCP Little Theater lobby on 26 February 2003.

The Center's Tanghalang Manuel Conde (audio-visual room), which was renovated for the launching, is intended to serve as a venue for receiving and showing of films for broadcasting via digital direct-to-home (DTH) satellite technology.

The CCP Dream Theater is a flagship project of Dream Theaters, Inc. and Philippine Multi-Media Systems, Inc. (PMSI). It is expected to provide affordable, technologically-advanced broadcasting system in the Philippines. It will eventually have a 70-150 seat capacity that will enable it to simultaneously show current movies from Metro Manila to key provincial cities and municipalities all over the country. The films to be provided by major local producers and foreign distributors in the country will



be converted into digital format prior to the broadcast to ensure high quality sound and video.

The DBS, its partner agency for this undertaking, is a company that offers digital DTH television entertainment via satellite. Utilizing state-of-the-art wireless communication, DTH also facilitates telecast of domestic and international TV channels with a digitally clear video and CD quality sound.

The CCP @ Dream Channel is the first art channel in the Philippines that will telecast "Art Films and Videos" and performances through the "pay per view" (PPV) channels of DTH. Selections will include internationally-recognized masterpieces known for their quality, intent and format.

This Dream Project enables the CCP to broaden its participation in the arts with the end in view of promoting the arts as an industry through the distribution of art films. ■

SINGAPORE

Treasures from the NAS

by France Goh

Archives Officer

National Archives of Singapore

Established in 1968, the National Archives of Singapore (NAS), is the official custodian of public archives and records which showcase the rich history of Singapore. The diversity, richness, and historical development of this young nation, its people, and its institutions are captured in the collection of manuscripts, photographs, films, sound recordings, maps, building plans, prints, and government files, and preserved for posterity at the NAS.

Public (government) records make up the bulk of NAS' collections. This is because one of its main functions is to facilitate the effective management of such records and to determine and preserve those with archival value.

Apart from public records, the NAS has also over 1.5 million photographs acquired from government and private sources as well as overseas sources. The photographs, which date back to the late 19th century onwards, document varied aspects of Singapore's history and society. Of notable interest are the



Map of Singapore circa 1830 showing Telok Ayer and the South Bridge road area.

collections from The Singapore Press Holdings and The Japanese Association. Documents acquired from private organizations and overseas institutions, some 130,000 building plans and maps provide insights into the rich social and cultural heritage of Singapore.

Another important NAS collection is its 1940 audio-visual collection which consists of over 60,000 hours of motion picture films, videotapes, and sound recordings of various formats. These moving image and sound recordings of national and historical significance were acquired from public

offices, broadcasting stations, educational institutions, private organizations, individuals, and overseas archives.

At the Archives Reference Library, users can listen to oral history interviews contained in over 10,000 hours of recordings. These interviews, based on themes like the Pioneers of Singapore and the Vanishing Trades, reflect the social, political, and economic fiber of Singapore. ■

SEAPAVAA cancels ... fr page 3

Feedbacks from other sectors pointed out that postponing the conference to a later date this calendar year would run in conflict with other professional commitments, religious practices, and funding allocation.

Radio TV Brunei, the conference host, gave its full support to the Council's recommendation. RTB felt that "it is in the best interest of all concerned that such decision must be made".

SEAPAVAA apologizes for any inconvenience caused by this decision and hopes to see its members and other colleagues in Hanoi, Vietnam next year for the SEAPAVAA-FIAF Joint Conference. ■

Film preservation... fr page 1

The other topics included so far are vinegar syndrome, film repair, storage, and cleaning options. Since this is a live resource, suggestions are actively sought on information that could be added. If there is a topic you would like included please contact either: mick.newnham@screensound.gov.au or carey.garvie@screensound.gov.au A CD-ROM version of the handbook, the production of which was sponsored by Kodak, will be forwarded to all SEAPAVAA members very soon. ■

In memoriam... fr page 12

right things were done and that his concerns during the week were genuine.

Steve Clark, the current manager of the lab, remembers Tom. "He had an incredible awareness, the most incredible eye for detail I have ever come across and enormous generosity of spirit in sharing his knowledge". As awesome as Tom may have seemed to staff working with him at the time, the legacy of knowledge and experience that Tom left behind with them is one of the greatest assets of ScreenSound Australia and something that can never be forgotten. After Tom's consultancy ended, he remained a close friend of ScreenSound Australia, frequently visiting just to see "how things were going". ■

MIC project... fr page 2

considerably across the globe. Contributions from the international community, and particularly from archivists in Southeast Asia and the Pacific are welcome.

The Archive Directory is scheduled to go online this summer, and this will include entries from SEAPAVAA members in the earliest stages. By September, 2004, the number of institutions contributing to the union catalog is expected to increase and to include SEAPAVAA members.

The MIC Project website <http://gondolin.rutgers.edu/MIC/> updates visitors to new developments and documents past, current, and future work on the project. As the actual MIC portal is developed, it will be available for ongoing review and will be accessible from the MIC project website.

For more information, please contact Jane Johnson (jdj@ucla.edu). ■

SEAPAVAA welcomes... fr page 3

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) is a non-profit professional association established to advance the field of moving image archiving by fostering cooperation among individuals and organizations concerned with the collection, preservation, exhibition, and use of moving image materials. Represented by managing director, Janice Simpson, AMIA and SEAPAVAA agreed to a membership exchange wherein each of the association becomes a member of the other. AMIA is the largest non-profit professional association of moving image archivists in the world with a membership of over 500.

To date, SEAPAVAA has 28 full-institutional members, 12 associate institutional members, 24 associate individual members, and one lifetime member. ■

Archives in distress... fr page 2

archives structure for the country. However, all these plans entail funding and financial assistance.

Cuba has a well developed national film archive, but the problem of inadequate resources is putting the collection at risk since the Archive can no longer afford to pay for the electricity to keep its storage vaults operating at the required temperature and humidity. Its stock of nitrate films was destroyed some years back on orders of the fire authorities which is contrary to best archival practice and although the Archive has acetate copies of some of the films, they are not of the same quality.

During the session, a film clip from Afghanistan, which left a lasting impression, was shown. Under the Taliban regime the country's main film production unit, Afghan Film, was ordered to destroy all its films and turn over its building to be transformed into a museum of the jihad.

There was a public burning of films. But those were prints because the staff hid the negatives behind a false wall. A film crew from the Cinematheque Francaise, Paris, was present when the false wall was opened, yielding the hidden negatives.

Afghan Film, however, still needs funds for proper storage and preservation of the heritage. ■

Ethics... *fr page 4*

Some films do get worn out. They suffer discoloration and the images may fade. Likewise, repeated projection and the constant handling by different hands through different equipment contribute to the wear and tear of the film.

Alterations by habit

Until recently, films made in India came in several 1,000 feet rolls. A full length film usually comes in installments of four to five rolls. For the whole film to be viewed, each roll must be played out to the end, then replaced until all four rolls are played. The task requires attention and patience.

As a result, projection machine operators developed the habit of removing the end of each reel and attaching the four separate reels so that the whole film would run continuously with minimum attention. However, in the process of cutting and attaching, some frames are unintentionally deleted. These projection machine operators also have to mark reel change with their own insignia. They could not care less if lab punch marks exist. They can not seem to reconcile themselves to any other mark except those of their own making and designs. This practice further reduces the quality of the images being projected, as their marks would likewise be seen over the images, reminiscent of a McLaren shot.

Alterations with time

Color is another film factor that is constantly subject to change. A well-made colored film in the 1960's will likely show signs of fading and dullness after so many years. Martin Scorsese campaigned against color fading when fresh prints showed signs of degeneration within months after its first release.

Film archivists face the challenge of keeping films intact in its original shape, shade, and form for years and at the same time making sure of its quality presentation every time it is shown.

Films come to the archivist from widely different sources and in all sorts of condition for restoration and regeneration.

Restoration and regeneration

Film restoration work requires the availability of at least the basic information about the film, if not a complete copy of the film itself. Restoration can only be undertaken if the restorer has access to these requirements.

Film maker Dada Saheb Phalke who made *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913 is acknowledged as the father of Indian films. We were able to get hold of some rare footages (mostly nitrate positive) from the Phalke family when we started collecting materials for our archive. The footages contained bits from a later Phalke film, *Kaliya Mardan* (1917), along with some handwritten notes about shot numbers and the descriptions. We sought the help of Phalke's eldest son who had vivid memories of his father's films. With

his guidance, we were able to assemble the footages in a logical order, removing the spoilt portions and saving practically the whole of the original six-reels. The resulting work was presented at the Phalke Centenary celebration held in Bombay in 1970. It was shown with live music accompaniment, and was widely applauded by critics and film historians. The film

had the same response at the NFT Festival of India in London in 1982 and at the Silent Film Festival in Avignon in June of 1985.

A well known producer-director, who specialized in stunt films in the thirties and forties, offered to deposit to the Archive whatever old

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Preservation of audiovisual heritage... *fr page 3*

limited access to communications infrastructure such as the Internet etc. contribute to the very challenging preservation scenario faced by Pacific nations.

"Sharing and Developing Skills in Dealing with Preservation of Audiovisual Materials" was the theme of a workshop held December 2001, hosted by the Vanuatu Cultural Center in Port Vila. This workshop was the culmination of efforts by a number of individuals and organizations over the last three years. An initial scoping study of Pacific AV Archives was undertaken by Mark Nizette in 1998, the results of which were instrumental in obtaining funding for a pilot project at the Vanuatu Cultural Center that involved copying some of the at-risk collection materials and holding a workshop for similar organizations around the Pacific.

Among the objectives of the workshop were to undertake an evaluation of the condition of the material from the collections of Vanuatu Cultural Center and Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation that may be representative of other materials throughout the region; determine the range of treatments necessary for the cleaning and conservation of the material prior to copying; assess the labor and skills resources necessary for the conservation and copying stages; assess the capital resources necessary for the developed processes; recommend standard techniques in copying AV material taking into consideration the materials, skills, needs, and resources of the institutions within the region and begin the training of the trainers at the VKS.

ScreenSound provided two trainers for the workshop, Joe Kelly and Matthew Davies. Costs for the trainers were shared between ScreenSound and PIMA. Jacob Kapere and Ambong Thompson from the audiovisual unit at Vanuatu Cultural Center were the local resource persons.

Total workshop attendance was 17 persons, consisting of practitioners from museums and cultural centers in eight countries (Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Caledonia, Palau, Australia) plus representatives of the regional organizations PIMA (Pacific Islands Museums Association) and PIBA (Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association) and one participant from Vanuatu Television and Broadcasting Company. A number of interested observers, including visiting researchers, attended some sessions.

As a whole, the workshop was a great success, eliciting positive feedbacks from the participants. All objectives of the workshop were met. There were a number of recommendations submitted. These included:

- Identify resource requirements for Vanuatu Cultural Center as a basis for funding proposals to potential donors and sponsors.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between Vanuatu Cultural Center and other organizations represented at the workshop.
- Identify a wide range of possible sources of funding to be approached to support archiving activities.
- Recognize the need to develop disaster management plans for the institutions represented at the workshop.
- Improve the storage and management of collections at Vanuatu Cultural Centre and VBTC.

Among the future activities proposed during the workshop were:

- Train broadcasters in archiving through PIBA (the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association).
- Convene workshops by PIMA, with due consideration to issues relating to access and interpretation of collection materials.
- Conduct of practical workshop at ScreenSound Australia. ■

SEAPAVAA 7... *fr page 1*

been accredited by UNESCO as a NGO (non-government organization). It holds the distinction of being the only regional association that sits on the CCAA (Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations), the global peak body of the AV archiving profession. Among other things, it has an active training and support program, a committee system, mechanisms for information gathering, research and advocacy, publications, and a select union catalogue of members' holdings. Members share information, resources, ideas - as well as the difficulties of archiving in a tropical climate destructive of film, magnetic tape, and other carriers.

The major event in the SEAPAVAA calendar, and the window into its activities, is its week-long annual conference. It is the valued time when members meet face to face to learn, share, and encourage. It moves around the region. It was in Laos last year (May 13 to 17) hosted by the Lao National Film Archive and Video Center. About 100 delegates gathered in Vientiane at the Lane Xang Hotel, on the banks of the fabled Mekong River. They came from all 10 ASEAN countries as well as from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Cook Islands, USA, Canada, Britain, and Croatia.

The conference symposium explored the theme "Mapping tomorrow: A Reality Check for Archives," with the delegates making institutional visits to the Lao National Television and Radio, National Museum and National Library, as well as to the host archive. One particular point of interest was the Archive of Traditional Music, housed within the National Library, which is building an audio and video collection documenting Lao's rich cultural heritage of music and dance.

With the exception of the gathering held jointly with IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives) in Singapore in 2000, the annual activity was the largest SEAPAVAA conference to date. FIAT (International Federation of Television Archives) was represented by the head of its Training

Commission, Branko Bubenik, IASA by its President, Crispin Jewitt, and AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) by JoAnn Watson, representing President Sam Kula. Sam's keynote address, delivered by JoAnn, was a reflection on the rapidly changing international landscape of our profession.

A feature of the symposium was a segment on 'dreams and visions'. Several archives were asked to visualize the "ideal" archival situation in their country, if they could be freed from present budgetary and other constraints. The visions they presented were the highlight of the conference. There was a logical conclusion drawn from this: no matter what the present situation, it is crucial to have a vision of what might be in the best of all possible worlds. It puts present realities and specific future goals in perspective. And it was realized that sometimes dreams do come true.

SEAPAVAA elects a new eight-member executive council every three years, and the third year coincided with this conference. A new set of members who will serve the association until 2005 was elected led by current President Belina Capul from the Philippines. Ms. Capul succeeded founding President Ray Edmondson of Australia.

The conference was highlighted by the announcement of SEAPAVAA's first endowment. Jim Lindner of Media Matters and founder of the New York-based video restoration laboratory, Vidipax, donated US\$10,000 to be used as a capital base for a permanent biennial prize for technical innovation and research in film restoration and preservation. The first prize is expected to be awarded in 2004. The implementation of the prize scheme will be undertaken by a special committee of the executive council.

It was noted that SEAPAVAA had grown to a point where a permanent secretariat is needed. With the assistance of a sponsorship commitment to support the salary of a full time administrator, the secretariat will hold office within the premises of the Philippine Information Agency in Manila. Meantime, a review of

the committee structures is presently being undertaken to ensure that the Association has organized itself effectively.

In the latter part of 2001, SEAPAVAA held its first workshop in the Pacific. Funded by UNESCO, the workshop was held in Suva, Fiji, attracting participants from 13 countries. The presence of two delegates from the Pacific - from Fiji and Cook Islands - brought to the attention of the delegates the primary needs of the small Pacific countries. A follow through on these needs will be addressed by the incoming Council.

A new three-year plan was approved. The plan calls for a more outgoing approach to the generation of sponsorship and provision of assistance in the establishment of appropriate archival structures in countries.

Included in the plan is the production of a manual for young archives with emphasis on more active membership recruitment and extensive training activities. In May 2004, the annual conferences of SEAPAVAA and FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives) will be held jointly and will be hosted by the Vietnam Film Institute in Hanoi.

The formal opening and closing ceremonies of the conference held in Laos were presided by senior dignitaries from the Cultural Ministry of the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic. The social occasions introduced visitors to Lao music and dance.

13th Annual AMIA... *fr page 2*

more information, please search this web-site www.amianet.org. or contact the AMIA Office at (323) 463-1500. The Vancouver 2003 program and registration information will be available on the specified web and mailed to AMIA members August 2003.

Next year's AMIA conference will be held in Minneapolis, MN. Hyatt Regency, 9-13 November. ■

Changes... fr page 4

about the name change and related matters.

The move elicited responses, though not necessarily satisfying enough. Follow up questions were raised in the Committee on 28 May 2003, demanding for the provision to Parliament of an uncensored copy of the KPMG report.

Meanwhile, on 11 December 2002, the Government announced a review of statutory authorities and cultural institutions including *ScreenSound Australia*, but declined to reveal its terms of reference. This resulted to one significant outcome — the announcement that on 13 May (in the context of the Federal Budget) *ScreenSound Australia* would be ‘integrated’ with an existing statutory authority with the Australian Film Commission (AFC) effective 1 July. The following morning, *ScreenSound* director Ron Brent announced he is leaving the Archive to assume the post of Deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman, effective 30 May.

On 19 May, a new advocacy group, the Archive Forum, was launched, releasing a press statement, foundation statement, and initial discussion paper. The following day, the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc. released a press statement and a lengthy newsletter. At a glance it seemed both groups welcomed the AFC/Archive merger mainly calling for the reinstatement of the Archive’s original name. These statements were rejoinders of those already issued by the Minister and Shadow Minister, the AFC, and the Archive.

The *Australian Film Commission Amendment Bill 2003* was fast-tracked through the House of Representatives and the Senate in nine days (18 to 26 June). In extensive debates, the motivation, secrecy, and logic behind the bill was questioned.

Many concerns about the future of the Archive were put on record, along with government reassurances. Greens MP Michael Organ (himself a professional archivist) noted that *ScreenSound Pty Ltd* was in the process of seeking a Federal Court injunction against the government’s use of their trade name. The Minister declared that the issue on the Archive’s name was a matter for the AFC Board to review in the course of stakeholder consultation.

Attention now turns to what the AFC’s stewardship of the Archive will entail. The amended Act extends the AFC’s powers into the archival realm and gives it authority “to develop, maintain and preserve a national collection” and to exhibit and make available its contents. There is no reference to the Archive by name, or as an administrative or institutional entity. The legislation answers some concerns raised by the constituency in various papers, letters, and articles prepared without public consultation and rushed its passage into law.

As it is, the AFC’s Board will have considerable discretion in determining the future of the Archive. Concerns expressed to date focus on the different character and culture of the AFC (a funding and marketing agency) and the Archive (a national collecting institution) and whether this will actually result in ‘synergies’ as the government claims. The AFC is Sydney-based and relatively small — about 70 staff — while the Archive is based in Canberra and has a staff of over 210.

Meanwhile, it is “business as usual”. The AFC has announced a period of consultation with the Archive’s stakeholders. The present CEO of the AFC, Kim Dalton, will head the expanded body. Sabina Wynn, head of Industry and Cultural Development at the AFC, acknowledges concerns that the new Director of the Archive (who will report to Dalton) be someone with appropriate archival and curatorial expertise. “That’s been a message the AFC has heard loud and clear”, she says. “We know this person has to represent Australia internationally in archiving circles.”

She adds a general comment. “The next six months will not only be about bringing the organizations together, it will be about consulting and communicating with the film industry, the screen culture sector, and all those concerned about the future of the Archive. We want to set up a process through which we can consult with concerned people, open up lines to communication.”

This is welcome news to the advocacy groups who are seriously pursuing their concerns. Among these are the need for a fleshed-out charter for the Archive, deepening of its intellectual ambience, stakeholder consultation and relationships, identity, and the professional development of staff. ■

Ethics... fr page 9

material he had. But he wanted some raw stock to be supplied to him for the purpose of correcting the negatives under his personal supervision. It was later found out that he actually edited the film, transferred the sound optically to improve its original quality, and put some titles to explain the historical importance of the film.

Both activities performed can be referred to as restoration and regeneration work. But while the first case was an attempt to restore the film to its original with minimum technical intrusion, the second was clearly a conscious effort to improve the original work by resorting to the use of modern technology. The subject producer explained he did it because he wanted to make his film more presentable and acceptable to modern audiences.

Although he had good intentions — tampering with the original work, raised certain moral and ethical issues. Since he is the copyright holder and owner of the film, he was well within his legal rights to do as he pleased. However, the fact remains that the product had been tampered, thereby, making it a different material compared to the original. Morally, he should not have done so, or at least not until obtaining permission from the Archive to get a duplicate negative of the original. As a result, his original work is forever lost in the memory of the public, because of his own doings.

The sanctity of the “original”

Satjit Ray’s *Paher Panchali* was filmed using different cameras and recording instruments over a period of three years. This gave the film an uneven “feel” in terms of cinematography and sound. Despite some imperfections, it was recognized as a great world classic and considered as an eloquent testimony to the film maker’s struggle. The film, in itself, made a historical record.

An archivist with a keen sense of perfection might decide to correct the technical flaws, and might do so at his own initiative. In so doing, he erases a part of the film’s history as well. This should be a common concern.

Cutting off portions from the original negatives, after the film’s premier release to make it more acceptable to a wider audience, is a common practice among Indian filmmakers. This usually leads to court cases, artists suing producers when they realize that their songs and dances have been removed from the film. In the end, the authenticity of the original material becomes questionable.

The ethics of film preservation requires that archivists take care of the materials deposited to the archives in such a way that any future presentation will remain true to the original release. Any conscious effort of tampering with the original is both dangerous and ethically wrong.

Reconstruction, to favor modern sensibilities, may be justified so long as it will not sacrifice the original material. ■

In Memoriam

TOM NURSE 1923-2002

by **Mick Newnham**
ScreenSound - Australia

We were all saddened to learn of the passing of Tom Nurse in September 2002. Tom Nurse was an icon in the Australian film industry and everyone involved in the industry has a story to tell about Tom. Indeed, any history of the Australian film industry would require more than a passing mention of Tom to be complete.



forget!"

Tom first became involved in the motion picture film industry in England in 1938. In 1949 Tom and his wife Molly immigrated to Australia. He spent the next few decades working with many of the local film laboratories such as Automatic Laboratories, Supreme Films, and Colorfilm, and with overseas laboratories such as the Philippine Information Agency, until his retirement in 1987.

The former deputy director of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, Ray Edmondson, recalls his first contact with Tom in the early 1970s. "I sent Tom three nitrate reels to copy. That was the first contact the Archive had with him, and I remember feeling slightly terrified, as a young archivist, faced with that gimlet eye and the obviously immense technical knowledge behind it (even though I was a customer!) The returned work was magnificent: I was really struck by the quality of the 16mm screening prints which are still in the Archive's collection today". Supreme Films subsequently merged with Colorfilm with Tom joining the new enterprise.

However, before leaving the Supreme Films, adds Ray Edmondson, "It is worthy to note that Supreme Labs did the negative processing and rushes on Stanley Kramer's *On the Beach* in the 1950s - an enormous compliment to an Australian laboratory in those days of 'cultural cringe' when we thought almost everything that was sophisticated had to be done overseas. Tom also processed

large amounts of bi-pak color (Solarchome et al) - an extremely difficult business - using machinery lashed up from old rain gutters in which film was floated along the meniscus of orange and blue dye bath. Truly a magnificent sight of ingenuity that I will never

During his career, Tom became very much involved in the preservation of Australia's film heritage. Tom's involvement continued through his time with Colorfilm, when the fledgling national film archive obtained funds to copy the remnant sections of the *Story of the Kelly Gang*, a 1906 feature film. Over the subsequent years, there was more contact as money to duplicate other important films became available. In 1986, Tom became the consultant adviser to the development of the, then, National Film and Sound Archive's own film laboratory. I first met Tom in 1989 when I became the supervisor of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia black and white film laboratory.

Anyone who knew Tom Nurse will tell you he is an awesome combination of knowledge and discipline on how things should be done properly. He was a challenging person to work with. Every month, Tom would visit the laboratory for a week training staff, willingly sharing his prodigious knowledge, building and fine tuning equipment (sometimes from no more than a few pieces of scrap!) and, most importantly, making sure standards were not compromised.

Those were times of awe and exhilaration in the face of such a commanding figure. When something went wrong watch out! However, when things were done well then Tom's approval was an unforgettable reward. Ultimately, no matter how the week had gone, it was always obvious that Tom's primary concern was that the

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