



TECHNICAL COLUMNS

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY SCTE!

By RON HRANAC

Can you believe that the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers is 40 years old? The Society's official 40th birthday was June 22 of this year, and various anniversary-related activities have been happening throughout 2009. As well, a number of events are planned during this month's Cable-Tec Expo.

A few years ago I put together a timeline of SCTE's history, based on interviews with several Charter Members, Society leaders, and research of early copies of Interval, annual membership directories, and other documents. Since this month's issue of CT coincides with Expo, I thought you enjoy a look at some of these highlights.

1969 — Society of Cable Television Engineers created; first meeting held in the San Francisco Hilton Hotel on June 22, 1969 during the National Cable Television Association (NCTA, now called National Cable & Telecommunications Association) convention. First SCTE President: Ron Cotten.

1970 — First attempt at establishing local chapter program; chairmen of regional chapters had been selected at Society's first meeting in 1969.

1974 — First Member of the Year: Steve Dourdoufis. LRC Electronics became first Sustaining Member.

1975 — First issue of Interval published in March.

1976 — First Annual Conference on CATV Reliability held in Philadelphia, PA. The event was co-sponsored by SCTE and the Broadcast, Cable, and Consumer Electronics Society of IEEE.

1977 — Opening of first full-time headquarters office and hiring of paid staff. Judith Baer was the Society's first full-time chief executive staff officer: Executive Director (later elevated to Executive Vice President). 1980 Interval Annual Membership Issue states that Judith Baer has been "Chief Executive Staff Officer for SCTE since 1977." Some individuals with whom I spoke thought that she had been involved in some sort of role — perhaps on a consulting basis — with the Society since around 1973.

1978 — First female SCTE officer, Judith Scharf, elected Secretary. November 1978 Interval is SCTE's first Annual Membership Issue (later changed to standalone Membership Directory and Yearbook).

1979 — First time two persons receive Member of the Year award: Ken Gunter and Ralph Haimowitz. 138 members elevated to Senior Member in April. Interface 1979 "Decisions for the 80's," held November 7 & 8 in Monterey, California, was Society's first conference devoted to fiber optic technology. SCTE started accepting Visa and MasterCard cards for payment of membership dues, publications and conference registration.

1980s



1980 — Newly instituted President's Award presented to Southern CATV Association. Fall Conference on Emerging Technologies, "Teletext and Viewdata" was the first SCTE conference to officially use the name "Conference on Emerging Technologies."

1981 — Initial requirements for SCTE Voluntary Professional Cable Television Engineer Designation Program were defined. The use of "Professional Cable Television Engineer" terminology ran into problems with state licensing boards for professional engineers, so the program had to be refined and renamed. This effort established the framework for the Broadband Communications Technician/Engineer (BCT/E) program.

1982 — After struggling for several years, the chapter and meeting group program was revamped and officially got underway. First chapter under the new structure was the Appalachian Mid-Atlantic Chapter.

1983 — Sally Kinsman became the first female elected to the Board of Directors (Region 2 Director). First Cable-Tec Expo held in Dallas, Texas.

1984 — Steve Cox hired as interim Executive Vice President (May). Bill Riker hired as SCTE's full-time Executive Vice President (October). Communications Technology magazine named SCTE's official trade journal, a distinction it would hold through 2008. Satellite Tele-Seminar Program introduced.

1985 — Technical Tuition Assistance Program authorized by the Board of Directors, initially funded by matching donations from Rex Porter and National Cable Television Institute. BCT/E program officially introduced at Cable-Tec Expo '85; the first exam was Category IV "Distribution Systems."

1986 — First Technical Tuition Assistance Program recipient: Ruben Gonzalez of Group W Cable. Sally Kinsman was the first female Member of the Year.

1987 — Fiber Optics Seminar coordinated by the Florida Chapter was the predecessor to today's annual Conference on Emerging Technologies. SCTE acquired its first owned headquarters office space at 669 Exton Commons, Exton, PA. First person certified in BCT/E program: Ron Hranac (certified at BCT level). First BCE certified candidate: Les Read.

1988 — First Hall of Fame inductee: Cliff Paul. President's Award program resurrected, becomes an annual award; first recipient: Andy Devereaux (this award is now called the Chairman's Award).

1989 — Field Operations Award program started. Installer Certification Program introduced.

1990s

1990 — First Vendors' Day-type event held in Atlanta, Georgia (December 4), featuring technical seminars in the morning and vendors' tabletop exhibits in the afternoon. Sponsored by SCTE's Chattahoochee Chapter. Steve Allen organized "Vendors' Appreciation Day" the following year in California, serving as a successful model for Vendors' Day events that are now held in several locations around the country each year.

1991 — First Fellow Member: Ron Hranac.

1992 — Board of Directors changed Executive Vice President title to President; former position of President changed to Chairman of the Board. First Chairman of the Board: Ron Hranac. Fiber Optics Seminar changed to Fiber Optics Plus.

1993 — Fiber Optics Plus was renamed the annual Conference on Emerging Technologies. First Polaris Award recipient: Tom Staniec.

1994 — SCTE-List, an Internet e-mail reflector catering to the cable industry's technical community, was created by the University of Wisconsin's Dave Devereaux-Weber. First meeting of the Loyal Order of the 704 at Cable-Tec Expo '94.

1995 — ANSI recognized SCTE as a Standards Development Organization for the broadband industry (August 7, 1995). Groundbreaking ceremony for new SCTE headquarters building at 140 Philips Road, Exton, PA. First Women in Technology award recipient: Pam Arment. SCTE changed its name from Society of Cable Television Engineers to Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers.

1996 — New SCTE headquarters opened in February. First Milton Jerrold Shapp Scholarship recipient: Joshua Butters. F Port (Female Outdoor) Physical Dimensions became SCTE's first ANSI standard; DVS 031, Digital Video Transmissions Standard for Cable Television became SCTE's first ITU international standard.

1998 — John Clark hired as SCTE President (title later changed to President/CEO).

2000s

2000 — First Chapter Leadership Conference. Circle of Eagles formed, combining Charter Members, past Presidents and Chairmen, and Hall of Fame inductees.

2001 — First Broadband Knowledge Summit held in Denver, Colorado (co-presented by SCTE and National Cable Television Institute). International Ambassador program created. First Innovation in Deployment of Emerging Applications (IDEA) award recipient: Randy Goehler of Cox Communications. First Star of Integrity award recipient: David Pangrac.

2002 — Operación Español program introduced in August.

Since I originally put this timeline together, SCTE has continued to add new and innovative programs and services, many taking advantage of on-line technology.

2004 saw the introduction of SCTE InfoScope, SCTE Career Center, and SCTE Live Learning, and later came SCTE MemberLINK, Custom Job Connect, and various electronic newsletters.

Continuing its tradition of supporting professional development, the Board of Directors established the SCTE Foundation in 2005. Several new awards provide recognition opportunities: IP Innovator, Excellence in Standards, Young Engineer of the Year, Chapter of the Year, and Chapter Member of the Year. And earlier this year, industry veteran Mark Dzuban was hired as SCTE President/CEO.

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