

Carl Bulger presided.

New Member: Stan Marshall

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Angel Majer is General Manager of Regal Cinemas Bowie Crossing Stadium 14 movie theaters located at 15200 Major Lansdale Blvd in Bowie. This theater complex just completed a transition begun two years ago to replace film projectors with digital projectors, requiring a capital investment of \$100,000 per projector for a total of \$1,400,000.



Angel Majer is holding a small spool of 35 mm film. Before they converted to digital projectors Regal Cinemas would receive large, heavy rolls of film in metal canisters. Each movie now comes on a computer hard disk in a plastic shipping container like the orange container on the table. Photo courtesy of Dennis Edgington.

Movies now arrive in digital form on hard drives, approximately the same size as the hard drive in a desk top computer. The movies are then downloaded to a server which is connected to the 14 digital projectors in the complex's 14 theaters.

New movies begin showing on Fridays. The hard drives for the movies no longer showing are shipped back to the distributor via Fed Ex or UPS and the copy in the server is erased. Ms.

Submitted by Barry Hammond

Majer or someone on her staff then programs the start times for each new movie. The 20-minute “Pre-show” consisting of advertisements and announcements is programmed to start 20 minutes before the show starts. But the show doesn’t really start at the published start time. 15-20 minutes of movie trailers precede the actual beginning of the movie.

Movie studios, producers, and distributors insert digital instructions for the projectors and the theater’s audio system dictating audio volumes, which speakers are activated (surround sound, stereo sound, bass (subwoofer)) and whether the movie is to be shown in 2D or 3D. The projectors can automatically change lenses to adapt to 3D projection, but the audience has to be wearing polarized eyeglasses.

The projectors rely on Xenon projector bulbs which cost \$1000, more or less, depending on a particular bulb’s power rating. Larger theaters require higher power bulbs. The projectors display a warning when a bulb’s life is nearly over so it can be replaced before it fails.

Maintenance is usually performed by Regal Cinemas corporate headquarters. In an emergency, the Bowie theaters can request online help. In the event of a power failure, an emergency generator will supply power for emergency lighting and exit signs but the projectors and server are down until external power is restored. If the server should fail, they would need to take the hard drive copy of each movie and connect it to the projector which was supposed to show that movie. This is one reason the theater does not ship the hard drive back to the distributor as soon as it is downloaded to the server.

Angel Majer lets distributors and corporate headquarters know what kinds of movies are most popular in Bowie and requests more of types and longer runs for them, but the contracts are negotiated at the corporate, distributor, movie studio, and producer levels.

Despite high ticket prices, Regal Cinemas derives very little profit from showing movies. Most of its profit comes from the refreshment concession!

“Stadium” in the theater complex’s name refers to the stepped incline of the seating, allowing a good view for everyone.

Ms. Angel Majer’s email address is GM1708@RegalCinemas.com.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Ted Tuck is at home recovering from the fusing of three neck vertebrae. His phone number is 301-262-4533.

PROBLEMS:

The Bulgers purchased a new 3D-capable HDTV. One capability that they lost was the ability to record movies as they watch them, even old movies such as Turner Movie Classics. Bob Davis, who gave a short talk in November on his new 3D HDTV, asked what kind of cabling the Bulgers are using. Carl replied that, as far as he knew, HDMI cables are required. Bob said, "That is probably right. Now, what kind of cables were you using with the old TV?" "Three component cabling", replied Carl. "That's analog; HDMI is digital. Digital Rights restrictions against copying of copyrighted material are easier applied to a digital system and a digital recorder."

Bob Davis has a new laptop with Windows 7 Professional 64-bit. Now AOL and Comcast cannot recognize his wife's IP address. A couple of the experts in the room surmised that the problem is probably in the keyboard.