

POLYMERS, LAMINATIONS AND COATINGS CONFERENCE HEADS WEST—AGAIN

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FLEXIBLE PACKAGING AND OTHER TOPICS | HIGHLIGHT SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

THE TAPPI 1998 POLYMERS, LAMINATIONS AND Coatings Conference, held August 30 to September 3, 1998, attracted 587 registrants to the Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, CA. Cosponsored by the California Film Extruders & Converters Association, the

conference enhanced its usual base of technical presentations on film extrusion and extrusion coating with sessions devoted to various aspects of packaging and converting. With 26 sessions featuring 117 papers and four panel discussions, James R. DeGaravilla of duPont Packaging & Industrial Polymers assembled a program that appealed to many people in all facets of the flexible packaging converting industry.

Attendees who were new to the industry or who were first-time attendees at a Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference comprised 24% of the registrants. The 89 registrants or 15% who attended the conference from countries other than the United States attested to the global attraction of the program. Countries represented included Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Packaging is obviously an international concern!

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

The first conference event was a presentation by Cheryl Reimold of PERC Communications, a featured columnist for *TAPPI JOURNAL*. Entitled "Sharpening your presentation skills," the half-day session was free for all conference attendees and their spouses. Noting that the

"fear of public speaking outranks the fear of death," Reimold presented techniques designed to eliminate the butterflies-in-the-stomach or worse sensations that plague most public speakers. Her hints were applicable not only to formal technical presentations but also at meetings of employers, community organizations, etc. The information given by Reimold on preparation, delivery, and visual aids all had direct application for



1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division officers (from left to right) John V. Benham, Division Chair; Jeffrey J. Siegel, First Vice Chair; John Perdikoulis, Secretary; and Gary D. Jerdee, Second Vice Chair

her audience in everyday situations.

Participants in the Reimold course had the opportunity to practice their newfound skills. Everyone was enthusiastic and excited about the information learned, and they will undoubtedly be better public speakers as a result. TAPPI plans to offer this course at future conferences of the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division and other divisions. The course offers information that everyone will need at some time in their business and personal life.



John V. Benham (left), retiring Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division Chair receives recognition for an excellent job from Dale R. Dill, TAPPI President



George Ealer (right) receives the Division Technical Award and Samuel Zweig Prize from Rober Isbister



Tom Butler (right) receives the Leadership and Service Award and Andreas Ahlbrandt Prize from David Markgraf

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The technical sessions on film extrusion were Film Extrusion Primer Panel Discussion, New Materials, Additives Training Camp, Blown Film Resin Processing, SPE ANTEC Technical Exchange, Blown Film Resin Properties, Your Quest for the Right Additive, and Film Additives. Papers in these sessions provided practical information on fillers, minerals, pigments, antiblock agents, stabilizers, slip agents, colorants, and other processing aids. Presentations on polymers featured a new medium density enhanced polyethylene by Staci DeKunder and Tracey Campbell of The Dow Chemical Co., a new high performance LLDPE for blown film applications by Harry Mavridis of Equistar Chemicals, and a high strength linear low density polyethylene for solving food packaging problems.

A session on advances in extrusion coating equipment covered three-dimensional layout visualization by Walter Cornell of Up and Running and installation methods for extrusion coating equipment by Louis Piffer of Egan Davis-Standard. Warren Durling of Reynolds Metals Co. chaired the session on Extrusion Coating Materials. It featured a paper entitled "Extrusion coating polyester in flexible packaging" by Bruce W. Foster of Eastman Chemical Company, a paper entitled "Meeting the demands of tomorrow—the bimodal PE for extrusion coating" by Erkki Laiho of Borealis Polymers Oy, and a paper entitled "The effect of coextrusion on the hot tack performance of a common ionomer resin" by J.D. Vansant of DuPont Co.

The two volume proceedings of the TAPPI 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference are available from TAPPI PRESS. These books have 1305 pages that contain the complete presentations of all the technical papers presented at the meeting.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The panel discussions featured at the TAPPI 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference were popular events because they offered the attendees the opportunity to ask questions and seek solutions to their problems.

For the panel on Auditing Your Coating/Laminating Line: Finding and Correcting Limits in Productivity, each panel member first gave a brief presentation. Larry Jopko of Morton International noted that the times to audit are before a line is built, before expanding new or current materials, when using new adhesives and coatings, and before any trouble begins. Matthew Jones of Praxair Surface Technologies told the audience that "the gravure roll is critical for success." He said to "pay special attention to this component."

"Smart drives" that communicate not only internally but also externally were the topic of remarks by Gerald Nelson of MagneTek. David Markgraf of Enercon Industries Corp. said users of corona treaters need to record system information to include a serial number for better communication with suppliers, perform a visual inspection, and run operational checks.

During the question and answer session for this panel, an audience member inquired about the number one problem in coating. The panel felt it was tension control. Other questions covered how to coat light weight substrates without wrinkles and improving line speed with an existing corona treating unit.

The Extrusion Coating Roundtable moderated by Clifford J. Maxwell of Mica Corporation featured panelists whose combined experience in the flexible packaging converting industry totaled more than 250 years. Many questions directed to the experts concerned specific adhesion problems. The experts thought one problem



Gary Jardee (above) with keynote speaker Steven Gary, of the FBI. Technical program chairman James R. DeGaravilla (below) with Mike Molter, TAPPI technical operations administrator



involving spotty adhesion to a paperboard could be due to a variation in starch levels. They felt another problem with changes in adhesion of a polymer to foil with time could relate to development of crystallinity of the polymer on aging.

At the Suppliers and End Users of High Barrier Packaging Panel Discussion, Larry Allison of Boston Advisory & Development Group gave some marketing information and predicted that the United States will be the world's red meat supplier. Michael Troedel of MAS Technologies Inc. gave an end user's point of view, and Whitney Erickson of Allied Signal, Inc. spoke on trends in pharmaceutical packaging. She noted that unit-dose packaging that is growing significantly at 7%-10% per year. An audience question sparking considerable discussion covered the differences between short-term vs. long-term barrier requirements.

The other panel discussion was a Film Extrusion Primer moderated by John Perdikoulis of Compuplast. The panelists were Jeff Wooster of Dow Chemical, Bob Moeller of Black Clawson, Rick Knittel of Rick Knittel & Associates, and George Ealer of Union Carbide.

NEW TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

A highlight for many registrants was the New Technology Showcase organized by Laurie Beth Tyldesley of Black Clawson Co. Each of the 12 participants gave a five-minute presentation to introduce their new item to the entire audience at the conference assembled en masse in the hotel ballroom:

- David Markgraf of Enercon Industries Corp. talked about an improved ozone generator for extrusion coating enhancement,
- Roger Tambay of Eastman Chemical Co. presented new packaging films with high strength and clarity,
- Normal Pierce of Industrial Technologies Inc. offered a material inspection system for gels, specks, voids, etc., in films, paper, and other substrates,
- John Perdikoulis of Compuplast discussed analytical tools to design film extrusion equipment.

Other speakers were Lou Piffer and Alex McGregor of Egan Davis-Standard, who spoke about a new internal deckle die. Jeff Bott of Testing Machines Inc. spoke about horizontal plane friction testing. Hart Benoit of Cloeren described advances in extrusion dies, including internal deckle and edge bead reduction dies and fixed insert internal deckle dies. Steve Deline of Eastman Chemical Co. presented information about new LLDPE extrusion coating technology.

The remaining participants in the New Technology Showcase included Dean Ward of Brampton Engineering who talked about internal bubble cooling for eliminating blocking at the primary nip. James Stobie of Macro Engineering and Technology spoke on extrusion of PVDC resin for high barrier applications, and Rick Whiteman of NDC Infrared Engineering discussed gauge systems for coating weight measurement and control in extrusion coaters.

Following all the presentations, the audience adjourned to adjoining rooms where each presenter and representatives from other companies had table-top exhibits to offer information on the products available from their organizations. Refreshments and the informal setting made this one of many excellent opportunities for networking at the conference.

AWARDS LUNCHEON

The awards presented at the TAPPI 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference honored various division members who had made significant contributions to the division or the industries it serves. George Ealer of Union Carbide Corporation received the Division Technical Award and Sam Zweig Prize from Roger Isbister of Morton International Corp., the sponsor of the prize.

Tom Butler of Dow chemical received the Leadership and Service Award and the Andreas Ahlbrandt Prize from Dave Markgraf of Enercon Industries, the sponsor of the prize. Al Soutar of duPont received a Certificate of Outstanding Merit for his many years of service to the division. The winner of the TAPPI 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division Ralph A. Klucken Scholarship was Christopher Bell, a junior at Kentucky's University of Louisville who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering.

Certificates of Appreciation to Outgoing Chairs went to John Benham of Equistar Chemicals retiring as Division Chair, Louis Piffer of Egan David Standard retiring as International Committee Chair, Jim Cooper of Dow Chemical USA retiring as Extrusion Coating Committee Chair, Paul German of Exxon Chemical Co. retiring as Film Extrusion Committee Chair, and Paul Jackson of Equistar Chemicals retiring as High Barrier Packaging Committee Chair.

Barry Morris and John Vansant of duPont Packaging and Industrial Polymers received the 1997 Best Paper Award for their presentation entitled "The Influence of Sealant Modulus on the Bending Stiffness of Multilayer Films." Honorable mention awards for best paper went to Egbert Kuijk, P.P.Tas, and Peter Neuteboom of DSM for "Rheological Model for the Prediction of Polyethylene Blown Film" and James Krohn of Equistar Chemicals and Richard Tate and Donnie Jordy of Lyondell Petrochemical for "Factors Affecting the Permeability of PE Films."

Amy Scheeser of Equistar Chemicals received the TAPPI 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Al Davis Best Session Developer Award. Certificates of Recognition went to Ginger Cushing of Mica Corporation and Bill Bode for their efforts as short course chairs. Jim de Garavilla of duPont Packaging and Industrial Polymers received a Certificate of Recognition for his efforts on the 1998 technical program, and Tom Bezigian received one for his work on the new extrusion coating manual.

Steven Gray from the Federal Bureau of Investigation gave the keynote address at the luncheon. Gray is a supervisor and senior regional agent at the Palo Alto, CA, office of the FBI and has been with the organization for 28 years. He discussed "Intellectual property rights and economic espionage."

OTHER EVENTS

Besides the Awards Luncheon, all the conference attendees gathered at the PLC Pub for an hour of drinks, snacks, networking opportunities, and the chance to greet old and new friends. Spouses and guests of confer-



Gary Jerdee, Division Second Vice Chairman (second from right), presented the 1998 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Ralph A. Klucken Scholarship to Christopher Bell (holding award) while his proud parents watched

ence registrants had continental breakfasts each morning to meet new friends, see old acquaintances, and make plans for the day.

At the scheduled meetings of the Midwestern Packaging and Converting Committee, Marketing Committee, Flexible and Health Care Packaging Committee, Extrusion Coating Committee, Film Extrusion Committee, and High Barrier Packaging Committee, all conference attendees had opportunities to participate in the work of the groups and exchange views with colleagues on problems of professional interest. Many committees used the meetings to plan future short course offerings and other activities.

NEXT CONFERENCE

Plans are already well under way for the TAPPI 1999 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference. The meeting will be August 22-26, 1999, at the Omni Hotel in Atlanta, GA. The Technical Program Chair for the meeting will be Bruce Foster of Eastman Chemical Co. Anyone wishing to present a paper at this meeting should contact him by telephone at +1 903 237-5143 or e-mail at brucef@eastman.com. Additional information will be available for the TAPPI 1999 Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Conference from TAPPI's toll-free service line at 800-332-8686 (United States) or 800-446-9431 (Canada) or the TAPPI web page on the Internet at <http://www.tappi.org>. **TJ**

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