

On Sunday, March 17, 2019, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held at the Dunwoody North Driving Club clubhouse, featuring video projectors from Epson and two presentations on the current state of video displays (both flat panels and projectors). Our guest speakers were Al Davis and Epson representative Jeff Paiva.

John Morrison, president of the club, started the meeting by making some brief announcements. He thanked Al Davis and Jeff Paiva for being with us today. He also thanked Paul Tarver for setting up this meeting, Mark Chaffin for managing the meeting, Chuck for bringing his Oppo 105, Jim Petrone for setup, Sam Papadas for the audio system (Sam's preamp and amp and the club's speakers), and of course Dan Wittmayer (the refreshment guy). Other reminders were to watch the website and our new Facebook group which is now active. The club is sponsoring a headphone and personal audio "mini" show at the Dunwoody clubhouse on May 5. Lee Scoggins is working on an April meeting that will feature MQA (the latest high-resolution format).

Then it was on to the main programs of the day. Paul introduced Al Davis. Al spoke on the current state of flat panel displays. He told us that the displays in "big box" stores use custom feeds that give the display units very high quality signals, not your typical cable or satellite feeds, which do use compression in the signal path that ends up at your display. He spoke on how the pricing of flat panels grows (even at the same size) as the number of backlight "local dimming" sections increase in number, and whether the UHD sets have HDR10. The cheapest only have edge lighting, while the more expensive units use multiple "local dimming" sections to create a "blacker" display during dark scenes. He suggested that once you get a new display delivered, that you do at least basic calibration on it, either professionally or even yourself using calibration blu-rays (several are on the market). Be sure to check the backlight setting as it may well be too high (too bright) for an accurate picture. The best displays currently on the market are the OLED displays, which can become as "black" as the old plasma displays. Al offered club members a free consultation on setting up your new or existing home theater.

After a break, Jeff gave us some valuable information about video displays. He first described Epson as a "value" oriented projector company, usually with lower prices with the same quality or better than their competitors. Epson's HDR10 performance on their 5040/6040 projectors tracks quite well the "ideal" graph (he showed us a diagram). The newer models (5050 and 6060) will be released in the late spring. He then described a home theater like a car (the projector), tires (the screen), and the road (the room). All must be considered in putting your home theater together. Jeff recommended a minimum screen size of 120 inches diagonal to get that "life-size" look. However, choose the projector and screen size based on the room they will be put in, and the bigger screens require a brighter projector.

Jeff then presented us information about how a film is processed by the studios from the camera output through post-production to the end product (blu-ray), showing us a graph of what happens to the image as it goes through these processes. A full 4K 1.5 hour film requires 1.5 TB of data space, way more than a blu-ray can hold. These processes can either give you SDR quality or HDR (stands for High Dynamic Range) quality. He also showed us a fascinating graph that showed how close you had to be to the screen (or flat panel display) to see a difference between a 1080P (high-definition) picture and a UHD (ultra-high-definition) picture. You need to be closer than you think to actually see that difference!

While doing the presentations, some samples were shown using a UHD blu-ray player and the 6040 Epson projector, but this meeting was more about education than demos. Also, on display was the \$10K Epson laser projector (very large!) which was demo'd briefly.

The club again thanks Al and Jeff for being with us today and giving us a lot of valuable information and insight. Thanks to Tom Allen for assisting Dan with the refreshments, and special thanks to those members who came early to hang darkening paper on the windows of the clubhouse so that we could see the video presentations in a better "light" (no pun intended).

Thomas Horner
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta