

Awards voted by the Board this year. Class III Awards follow:

To *Richard H. Ranger* of Rangertone, Inc., for the development of a picture-synchronous recording and reproducing system using quarter-inch magnetic tape, without sprocket holes.

To *Ted Hirsch, Carl Hauge and Edward Reichard* of Consolidated Film Industries for an automatic scene counter for laboratory projection rooms, permitting the laboratory technician to identify each scene by number during the screening of a print for timing corrections.

To the *Technical Departments of Paramount Pictures Corp.*, for engineering and development of the Paramount lightweight horizontal-movement VistaVision camera.

To *Roy C. Stewart & Sons, to Dr. C. R. Daily and to the Transparency Department of Paramount Pictures Corp.*, for the engineering and development of the HiTrans and Para-HiTrans rear-projection screens. These new process screens provide a much higher light transmission and reflect far less front spill light than earlier types of screens. Uniform and reproducible characteristics are obtained by improved manufacturing techniques.

To the *Construction Department of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer* for a new hand-portable fog machine which operates from light, quickly replaceable Propane gas tanks. It is self-contained, has a large capacity and a wide range of output volume.

To *Daniel J. Bloomberg, John Pond, William Wade, and the Engineering and Camera Departments of Republic Studios* for the Naturama adaptation to the Mitchell camera. The Naturama precision adaptor provides Mitchell cameras with an anamorphic attachment lens and a single remote control unit which insures simultaneous focusing of the anamorphic lens with the regular Mitchell camera lens.

The Academy Board of Governors expressed its appreciation to each member of the Scientific or Technical Awards Committee and Subcommittees making the recommendations, for their cooperation and assistance in this year's consideration of the entries. The committees included:

John O. Aalberg, *Chairman*, Daniel J. Bloomberg, John W. Boyle, Daniel B. Cathcart, Charles R. Daily, R. H. Duval, Farciot Edouart, Ferdinand Eich, Glenn Farr, Feild Gray, Sol Halprin, William Hornback, G. Carleton Hunt, John P. Livadary, Louis Loeffler, William Mueller, Charles Rice, Gordon Sawyer, Sidney P. Solow, Clifford Stine, Jack Tait and Byron Vreeland.—R. H.

(We are indebted to *Dan H. Baer* of the Los Angeles Office of *Harshe-Rotman Inc.* for the basis for this report.)

## SPE + TD(PSA) = SPSE

A communication from *Edward S. Cobb*, 1201 Valley Ave. S.E., Washington 20, D.C., announces the consolidation of the Society of Photographic Engineers, Incorporated, P. O. Box 6077, Mid-City Station, Washington, D.C., and the Technical Division of the Photographic Society of America which has been under the editorial direction of Paul Arnold, APSA, 26 Hotchkiss St., South Binghamton, N.Y. The consolidation will create the Society of Photographic Scientists and Engineers.

Under the new masthead "Photographic Science and Engineering," the Society will continue to publish its technical journal. Each subscription will cover one volume consisting of four issues. Two issues of Volume 7 of "Photographic Engineering" remain to be published. These will be sent to all 1956 subscribers.

Subscriptions in 1957 will apply to the next volume. The journal is not issued quarterly and the first number of the next volume will be published about July, 1957. New subscribers will receive all four numbers of the volume, regardless of date of issue.

Back issues are now available at \$5.00 each for volumes 1 through 5, and at \$8.00 each for volumes 6 and 7. After present stock is exhausted, back numbers will not be reprinted.

## Biographical Note



**Mervin W. La Rue, Sr., Honored as SMPTE Pioneer in 1954 and by BPA in 1956**

[*Editor's Note: This biographical note was prepared by Mervin W. La Rue, Jr., at the Editor's request. The intimate details and informal anecdotes contribute to a delightful picture of a certain segment of motion-picture history. Mervin W. La Rue, Sr., who perhaps may still be described as "the young photographer," is now the president of the company, specializing in medical films, that bears his name.*]

Mervin W. La Rue, Sr., was born July 6, 1892, in Bound Brook, N.J., the eldest son of Adella Worthington and William B. La Rue. According to a family anecdote a Christmas gift of a box camera when he was a young boy was the turning point in his life, or at least a contributing cause to his choice of a career.

During summer vacations from high school he worked for the local photographer, but at the time must have felt this was not a very promising future, since many of his studies were directed toward a teaching career in manual training. During this period he won several prizes as a result of his skill in wood carving.

His career really began at the age of 20 when he joined the New York firm of Underwood and Underwood as assistant to a staff photographer. The assistant's duties

consisted mainly of carrying the photographer's luggage but the youthful assistant eventually convinced the management that he deserved a trial as a photographer on his own.

He left the studio the first morning with assignment sheets for about ten or twelve hours of work, and just out of apprenticeship he himself carried all the equipment and supplies needed for the day. All went well until he received a late evening assignment for a flash picture of elevator equipment in a sub-basement. It was well after working hours, all lights were out, and the basement was dark. Anxious to finish, he focussed the camera by candlelight, generously sprinkled flash powder into the open flash gun, and fired it off directly under a fire sprinkler head. Later, while firemen were pumping out the basement, he was back at the studio developing the plates in his shorts. The next day his appointment was confirmed, which he now describes as a brilliant form of discipline he has never completely understood.

Much of the work here was just what an adventurous young man must have wanted. One assignment was the photographic recording, for the Roebling Company, of the methods used in erecting the new steel building frameworks which were supplanting the older stone-on-stone building methods. This involved climbing around in empty air hundreds of feet over New York City, while carrying the bulky and heavy equipment needed for the job. It was in between assignments of this sort that he became acquainted in 1913 with the young lady who later became Mrs. La Rue, and who at that time was secretary to one of the company officers.

His immediate goal at that time was to become a motion-picture cameraman, and he obtained a job in the Pathé Studio after assuring them that he could "do anything with a camera."

He soon learned that this took in a little too much territory, and the next day Pathé started him out in the "salt mine" where he spent twelve hours a day winding film on wooden racks prior to processing. This was in 1915. From there he progressed to negative developing, printing machines, title photography, print-assembly, and then was selected to work with one of the first developing machines. This was a complicated arrangement of vertical pipes through which the processing solutions were circulated. Temperature control of the solutions was obtained by keeping one whole section of the machine in a meat refrigerator, a procedure also reported to help keep the tempers of the operators cooled down to a proper working temperature. A system of lights and buzzers on this nearly block-long monster warned of film breaks and buckles. Considerable speed and dexterity were required to clear trouble without stopping the machine, and the operators all wore track or tennis shoes so that they could get away to a fast start.

During this time there were opportunities to visit other departments, and possibly as a result of the interest he displayed in other operations, he was given the job of photographing a new trailer trade-mark for Pathé—the crowing rooster. A velvet-lined box with a glass face secured the rooster, and with the equipment ready to go all was well except that the rooster