Letters to the Editor

Re: Production Procedure for American Standards

Dear Sir:

An editorial error has crept into the January 1965 issue of the *Journal* to present an impression which I think you will want to correct. The tutorial paper by A. J. Miller and A. C. Robertson, "Motion-Picture Film — Its Size and Dimensional Characteristics," pages 3–11, has on page 6, second column, a rank heresy in the statement: "The American Standards Association . . . is a voluntary association which produces standards . . . ."

The fact of the matter is that the ASA is barred by its Constitution (Section C 2.2) from formulating standards. Encouraging competent groups to develop American Standards but not itself preparing standards is a fundamental tenet in the operation of the ASA that is as jealously guarded as the "consensus principle."

The ASA gives national recognition to standards, such as those developed by the engineering committee of the SMPTE, when a national consensus in favor of such engineering society documents has been established. The ASA device for determining that, for motion pictures, such a national consensus exists is ASA Sectional Committee PH22, which is sponsored by the SMPTE.

Anyone "having a substantial interest" in American motion-picture standards can request membership on ASA PH22 with complete assurance that he will be admitted. Any member of PH22 who objects to any proposed standard for motion pictures has the opportunity and the obligation to state his opposition and may do his best to persuade the other members to his point of view. The ASA reviews the personnel for balance of interests and checks the balloting and the treatment accorded dissenting members to ascertain that a national consensus has been demonstrated before granting "American Standard" status to any proposal.

In view of the foregoing, it seems unwarrantable, and probably confusing to some readers to publish in the *Journal* the very questionable statement made in the same paragraph by these authors: "an American Standard merely describes what a customer has asked for." Certainly the engineering committee of the Society that drafts the proposals are not composed solely of customers. The film manufacturers, the projector manufacturers, the printer and developing machine manufacturers also are represented on the SMPTE film dimension engineering committees that draft proposed American Standards.

When a proposed American Standard is published in the *Journal* for comment and criticism it *does not* represent just what a customer has asked for. It represents an agreement by engineers representing many companies throughout the motion-picture industry (producers as well as consumers) that certain dimensions, tolerances, etc., are of sufficient validity and utility to be established as American Standards for voluntary acceptance by everyone in the industry.

When, after exposure to public comment in the *Journal*, such proposed American Standards are referred to ASA PH22 for approval, they go to a group so carefully balanced in personnel by ASA rules that no one group such as producers, consumers, or distributors, constitutes a majority of the membership.

I think these facts need to be brought to the attention of *Journal* readers who might be misled by the one error and the one highly questionable statement I refer to. The Miller and Robertson paper is otherwise so factual and informative that it deserves to be widely read and quoted, and I expect that it will be.

February 11, 1965

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Re: Nomenclature — Dispersion

Dear Sir:

I would like to enter a plea for the more rigorous use of the word "dispersion" in connection with spectrographic instruments. In the article by Plakun and Schupp (pp. 25–27, January 1965 *Journal*), Figure 3 shows a curve of dispersion vs. grooves per millimeter. As everybody knows, if you have *more* grooves per millimeter, you get a *higher* dispersion system. And yet the curve of Figure 3 shows, not a direct relationship, but a reciprocal one. How can this be? Because Angstroms per millimeter, as plotted, is not really the dispersion, but the reciprocal dispersion. Reference to a textbook confirms this "common-sense" approach. For example, Sawyer* (Section 6.7) gives $d1/d\lambda$ for linear dispersion, not $d\lambda/d1$.

February 10, 1965

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* *Experimental Spectroscopy*, by Ralph A. Sawyer, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1944 and 1951; Dover Publications, Inc., N. Y., 1963.