



# SMPTE ALMANAC

By Michael Dolan

*In this column we provide interesting historical briefs from Journal articles of days past. The purpose of this column is primarily entertainment, but we hope it will also stimulate your thinking and reflection on the Society's history, how far we have come in the industry, and (sometimes) how some things never change. This is not meant to be an authoritative reference, and no attempt is made to correct any past errors or omissions of the Journal. We simply hope you enjoy the material.*

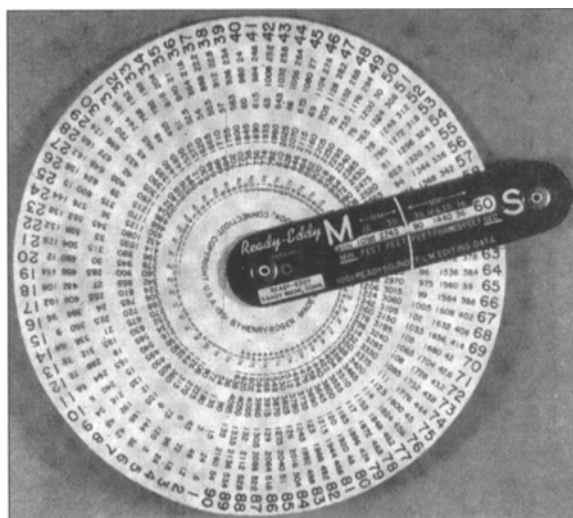
## 25 Years Ago in the Journal

The November 1976 *Journal* reported, in an article on *Optics of Reflective Videodisc Players* by Leonard J. Laub: "The commercial motivation for storage of 30 minutes of high-quality video on 30-cm-diameter discs has pressed the technology of surface scanning beyond the practical limits of stylus use. Replacement of the stylus by a focused spot of light gives increased resolution, freedom from wear, and the possibility of excellent protection against handling and environmental effects. It also requires the use of servomechanisms to register the light spot with the track both transversely (radial tracking) and longitudinally (focusing), and these in turn require optical error detectors....It is possible to record two-dimensional images and then scan them back to produce one-dimensional electrical signals that are comprehensible to the television set; this has been done in the EVR system of CBS with images written directly on film and in both the Holotape system of RCA and a recent disc system shown by Hitachi in which Fourier holograms are reconstructed to yield images."

## 50 Years Ago in the Journal

The November 1951 *Journal* reported on a new product: "**Ready-Eddy** is the name given a new computer for sound film editors by its inventor, Henry Roger of Sandy Hook, Conn. It provides, with a turn

of the wheel, correlated data regarding footage, projection time in seconds and minutes, number of frames per foot and per second, and equivalents of 16-mm and 35-mm film. One side of Ready-Eddy shows an "F" scale, representing feet, on the circumference of the disk, with four inner bands, two indicating seconds and number of frames for 35-mm film and the next two indicating the same for 16-mm film. The opposite side of the disk has two scales for time. On the periphery, "S" for seconds relates to the three adjoining bands indicating feet of 16-mm film, number of frames of both the 16-mm and 35-mm film (in this case the same for both) and feet of 35mm film. Scale "M" for minutes starts from the inside and is subdivided into half-minutes of projection time. The two adjacent bands indicate the equivalent footages of 16-mm and 35-mm film, for from 1 to 45-1/2 min.



The inventor expects Ready-Eddy to be handy for television as well as motion picture editors. It is pocket-size, made of plastic and costs \$2.00. A plastic carrying case is \$.50 extra."

## 75 Years Ago in the Journal

The October 1926 issue reported on *Progress in the Motion Picture Industry*: "Too often historical references are very incomplete due to a lack of appreciation, at the time the events occur, of their future value or significance. Motion pictures in the future will be of even greater value than were still photographs in the past and the request recently made to President Coolidge, that twenty vaults of the proposed two million dollar Archives Building be set aside for the storage of films of value to posterity, is worthy of special attention. The President expressed himself as being favorably impressed with the idea....A British producer is building a film city modeled after the American film center, Hollywood; it will be located on a forty-acre estate at Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. Two studios 300 by 200 feet and 40 feet high form the nucleus of the plant....Interest continues in television. English radio fans have had

the chance to "hear a man's face." Experimenting in this new field, a British engineer has been broadcasting his face on a 200-meter wave length which registers in ordinary receiving sets only as a continuous hum but when the television apparatus is hooked in, his face is thrown on a screen so that his listening audience may also see him. The British government has just issued the first two television licenses on record."