

# SMPTE ALMANAC

By Michael Dolan

*In this column we provide interesting historical briefs from the 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 times past—how far we have come in the industry, as well as (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 April, 1976 issue reported on the NAB Convention held in March in Chicago...“The NAB generously provided the Society with booth space on the convention floor, on which the Society displayed its very attractive booth. This booth was constructed by CBS Television Network and donated to the Society...At the booth the Society employed a slide presentation depicting SMPTE’s test film program...The SMPTE displayed copies of its new book, *Television Newsgathering*...Of perhaps greater importance than SMPTE’s booth at the NAB exhibit was the session...entitled, “Digital Video for the Television Broadcaster,”...arranged by SMPTE Vice-President for Television Affairs, Joseph A. Flaherty. The purpose of the session was to present to broadcasters a simple description of what digital video is, how it works, and its impact on the future...Electronic newsgathering equipment dominated the exhibits with special emphasis on minicams...There were also solid-state transmitters, antennas, quadraphonic equipment, TV recorders, and audio control equipment...One of the interesting events at the NAB Convention was a luncheon commemorating the 20th anniversary of the development of the videotape recorder. The

moderator of the luncheon’s visual presentation was CBS newsman Douglas Edwards whose news program in 1956 was the first to utilize the VTR.”

## 50 Years Ago in the Journal

In the April, 1951 Journal article on “The Television Cameraman,” Rudy Bretz reported, “The requirements of the television medium and the unique design of television cameras have developed, in the best of television cameramen, operators of unusual skill. A broad picture of the abilities and backgrounds of present-day television cameramen is presented, and a general comparison is made between the television cameraman and the motion picture camera operator. The creative role of the cameraman and his relationship to the television director are explained in an outline of the stages of camera rehearsal.”

## 75 Years Ago in the Journal

In the May, 1926 *Journal* article, “The Handling of Motion Picture Film Under Various Climatic Conditions,” Robert J. Flaherty reported on “...my experiences in handling motion picture film under various climatic conditions; namely, those I encountered during the time I spent in the North making *Nanook of the North*’ and during the past two years making *Moana* in the South Seas. We shall not have proceeded very far with this paper before you will understand that my experiences are those of one who has had no technical training and whose entire experience has been gained outside the laboratories and studios of the motion picture industry...From the year 1910 to 1916, I carried on geological explorations in the eastern sub-Arctic...Transportation was the first problem...[which] involved a journey by canoe down to south-eastern Hudson Bay, making economy of weight and bulk imperative. For my projecting equipment I chose a Hallberg generating set and Hallberg’s suitcase type of projector, an outfit which Hallberg had designed for mule back transportation in the South American market.”

