SMPTE ALMANAC

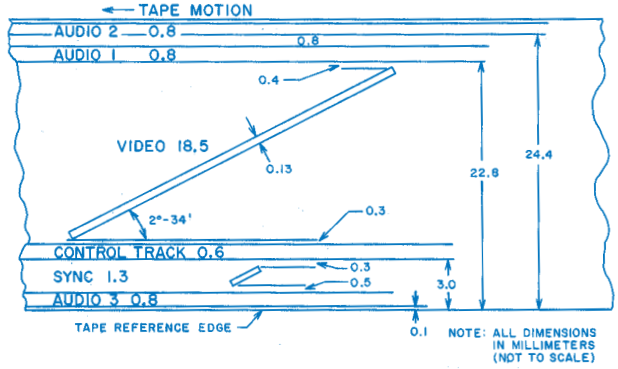
By Michael Dolan

Sponsored by Television Broadcast Technology

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 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. This column is sponsored by Television Broadcast Technology.

25 Years Ago in the Journal

The November 1978 *Journal* reported in "SMPTE Type C Helical-Scan Recording Format" by David K. Fibush: "About two years ago there was little prospect that a 1-in helical-scan videotape recorded on one manufacturer's machine could ever be played back on another manufacturer's VTR…In an amazingly short period of time, SMPTE committees have reached agreement on a proposed tape recording format for high-quality 1-in helical-scan videotape recorders. Starting in January 1977 with a "white paper" submitted to the SMPTE by ABC and CBS, and ending with approval by the SMPTE Standards Committee, the basic format documents for 525-line NTSC systems have been completed in less than one calendar year…Due to the electromechanical nature of VTRs, it is necessary to specify certain tape transport and video head scanning system parameters in order to guarantee good tape interchange."



Record locations and dimensions for Type C format videotape. Drawing is not to scale; linear dimensions are in millimeters; and values are nominal, to nearest 0.1mm.

50 Years Ago in the Journal

The December 1953 *Journal* reported in "Improved Color Films for Color Motion-Picture Production" by W. T. Hanson, Jr., and W. I. Kisner: "Negative and positive color films have been made available to the industry in recent years. Several systems are possible for the inclusion of special effects when using material of this type, but the preferred system appears to be that using black-and-white separation positives and a color internegative. Four materials are described which can be used in a system of this type or which can be used in conjunction with existing commercial color motion-picture production processes. Three of these materials represent improvement over earlier products of a similar type which were used in the last few years for a number of motion-picture productions….In selecting a system for producing color motion pictures, it is well recognized, as in black-and-white work, that it is necessary to employ intermediate steps between the original camera film and the final release print film in order to incorporate the various effects so essential to a finished production….In 1950, the Eastman Kodak Company provided the industry with a color negative material (…Type 5247) and a color print material (…Type 5381)….In 1951, Eastman Panchromatic Separation Film, Type 5216, and Eastman Color Internegative Film, Type 5243, were introduced."

75 Years Ago in the Journal

The September 1928 *Journal* reported in "The Transmission of Movies by Radio" by C. Francis Jenkins: "The Jenkins Laboratories, station W3XK, is broadcasting movies by radio every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening at 8 o'clock, Eastern Standard Time, on 46.72 meters (6420 K.C.); 48 lines per picture, and 15 pictures per second. We are simultaneously broadcasting on 186 meters for Washington and nearby radio receivers; for a 6420 kilocycle wave, while very good for distance, is not so good for local reception because of a too frequent recurrence of double images dues to a sky-reflected wave. Our pictures are being regularly received in territories represented by Chicago, Akron, Bethlehem, Harrisburg, Boston, Bridgeport, Long Island, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and like distant places. Silhouettes only are being sent out at present because the narrow width of the broadcast band legally permissible to use does not compass the frequency involved in the transmission of theatre film. We have, however, recently received from the Federal Radio Commission a 100 kilocycle band, lying between 4900 and 5000 K.C., which width does permit the use of regular motion picture film."