

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 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

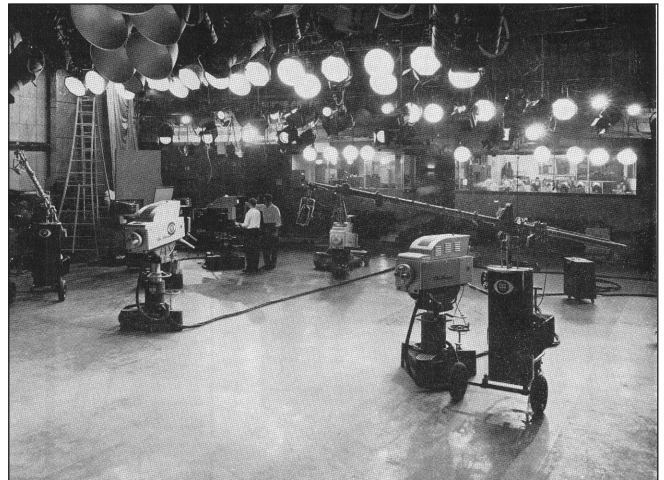
The September 1980 *Journal* reported in "Captioning for the Deaf—A PBS Progress Report" by Daniel R. Wells: "Captioning for the deaf has now reached the operational phase after more than seven years of development at the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). In December 1976, following two years of field testing, the FCC authorized the use of line 21 of the vertical blanking interval for the transmission of captioning data. Texas Instruments has developed customized integrated circuits for the captioning decoders. Sears, Roebuck & Co. is manufacturing the home decoders through Sanyo, which manufactures television sets for Sears. Sears is also marketing and servicing the home decoders. Programs will be captioned for public and commercial broadcasters by the National Captioning Institute. The decoders became commercially available in March 1980, and the captioning operation was ready at that time. Work continues on other technical developments related to captioning, such as universal time code for film, which will enable films, as well as videotapes, to be captioned....The technical system on which closed captioning is based was proposed by the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) in 1971 for the purpose of disseminating a precise time and frequency signal. The ABC Television Network suggested that the system be used for closed captioning, and ABC and NBS demonstrated this application at the National Conference on Television for the Hearing Impaired, sponsored by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in December 1971..."

50 Years Ago in the Journal

The October 1955 *Journal* reported in "CBS Television Color Studio 72" by Robert B. Monroe: "In the fall of 1954, CBS Television inaugurated color television program service from a new modern theater studio in New York City. This studio, known as CBS Television Studio 72, is one of the best equipped television studios in service today, being provided with facilities to originate television programs not only in color but in monochrome as well... CBS Television Studio 72 is located in Manhattan at Broadway and 81st St. It was originally designed and built as a vaudeville theater and, for that reason, was already equipped with many of the facilities necessary in a theater originating large-scale network television productions. As is well known, many theaters are readily adapted for use as television studios. Theaters usually have the advantage of being located in areas that are easily accessible to both

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the performers and the studio audience. In addition, theaters are already equipped with audience seats and other facilities to accommodate the studio audience, the audience being an important and essential part of many television programs. Furthermore, theaters that have served as vaudeville or legitimate theaters are equipped with dressing rooms as well as stage access doors adequate to accommodate the passage of large stage scenery and other stage properties."



The studio from the rear of the stage looking toward the control rooms. The color control room is on the right, the monochrome control room is on the left. The audience seating area can be seen between the stage and control rooms.

75 Years Ago in the Journal

The September 1930 *Journal* reported in "Sound-proofing and Acoustic Treatment of RKO Stages" by A. S. Ringel: "In the production of talking motion pictures, it is generally advisable to depart as little as possible from the technic that has proved so successful in making silent films. We are interested in obtaining moving "talkies" and not the "talkie stills," which were only too evident in some of the earlier efforts. This effect may be secured partly by the use of sound pickup devices, which permit an actor to move about the set at will, and partly by having stages and sets of a little or no reverberation....The problem on the RKO lot was first the conversion of some of the old "silent" stages, then the erection of newer ones in response to the requirements and demands of increased production. It was tacitly understood that the former were to be more or less experimental so far as size, sound-proofing, and acoustic treatment were concerned, and to be used as a guide in the design of later ones. Thus, some variations in soundproofing and acoustic treatment in initial construction were tolerated, and arrangements were made for shifting around part of the absorbing material to positions where it would be most effective.... The old stages were considered too large to be economical for sound picture production and it was decided to divide them into smaller sections."