

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 February 1981 *Journal* published in "The Lighter Side of TV Engineering: The Hazards of Divination," quoting from W. O. McGeehan, *New York Herald Tribune*, January, 1925: "...Science seems to be working out the doom of professional sports. A dispatch from Washington says that Mr. C. Francis Jenkins (first President of the SMPTE) has perfected an apparatus by which persons may see moving objects miles away by radio. Dipping only casually into the future, one can see the time coming when thousands of these radio-cinemas, or whatever they want to call them, are dumped upon the market. Persons possessing these machines will be able to sit in their homes or offices and watch a World Series or heavyweight championship fight without having to contribute to the gate receipts. It sounds very ominous for the promoters of professional sports. Professional sports cannot exist without customers, but here is Mr. C. Francis Jenkins sitting in his laboratory calmly working out a scheme for the elimination of customers. Perhaps if he realized just what he was bringing about he would desist. Being a mere scientist he may or may not realize the apparatus upon which he is working threatens dire disaster. Mr. C. Francis Jenkins does not consider the number of sterling athletes who would be thrown out of work when this nefarious instrument is perfected. It means the unemployment of practically all of our professional athletes from Mr. Jack Dempsey and Mr. Babe Ruth down to the preliminary prize fighters and the semi-pro baseball players. The man Jenkins must be without a heart if he really grasps the full possibilities of what he is doing."

50 Years Ago in the Journal

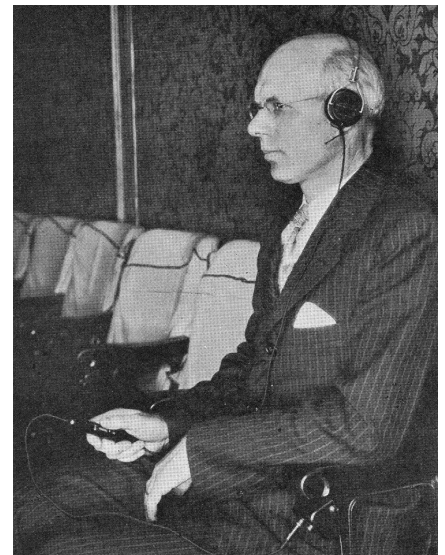
The February 1956 *Journal* reported in "International Standardization, Report on Second Meeting of ISO/TC 36—Cinematography" by Henry Kogel (SMPTE Staff Engineer, Technical Secretary, ISO/TC 36): "The first

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meeting of the International Standards Organization Technical Committee on Cinematography, ISO/TC 36, was held in New York City in June 1952. The accomplishments were appreciable, agreement having been reached to start the processing of 22 Draft ISO Proposals...The second meeting of ISO/TC 36 was held June 11-16, 1955 in Stockholm and if anything, this meeting was even more successful than the first...Ten nations, with a total of 48 delegates, participated in this meeting."

75 Years Ago in the Journal

The March 1931 *Journal* reported in "Aiding the Theater Patron Who is Hard of Hearing" by F. H. Graham: "During the early days of sound pictures when new converts were being added to the list of enthusiastic theater patrons, a small discordant note made its appearance. This arose from a minority, who,



Showing individual equipment for hard-of-hearing in operation.

knowingly or unknowingly, had defects in hearing which were sufficiently serious to prevent proper reception of this new form of entertainment. The various societies for the hard-of-hearing, by circularizing the producing companies and by means of publicity, sought to stem the tide which was eliminating the silent pictures, their only form of theater entertainment...The fact that the hard-of-hearing belong to a minority group compared with those of normal hearing should not obscure the importance of adding them to the list of theater patrons...The [deaf-set for Western Electric Sound Systems] attachment consists of a network which diverts a small amount of power from the sound-system amplifier, an amplifier which raises this power to a level high enough to supply the number of receivers required, a seat-jack unit containing two jacks for every two seats to be equipped, and a telephone set for each hard-of-hearing patron."