



# 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. This column is sponsored by Television Broadcast Technology, Inc.

## 25 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The April 1983 *Journal* published in "1982 Progress Report—Television:" "The eighties continue to show an ever-increasing advancement in television technology. In 1982, manufacturers concentrated on the enhancement of existing equipment, introducing improved models or new systems, which expanded and advanced current technology. High definition television and digital television did not make the noteworthy strides they have made in previous years, but development continues at a steady pace. Resulting from the development of HDTV and digital TV, equipment introduced during 1982 showed quality improvement in all areas of the industry. 1982 saw major changes in the size and weight of equipment. Computer-based equipment for control, setup, and operation continues to be of ever-increasing importance to the industry...A Working Group was formed by SMPTE under the Videotape Recording and Reproduction Technology Committee to address the newly introduced 1/2-in. camera/recorder systems. The Working Group was charged with working out, if possible, a compatible format, highly desired by the users, for the 1/2-in. system. After many meetings of the Working Group, it was concluded that this could not be achieved."

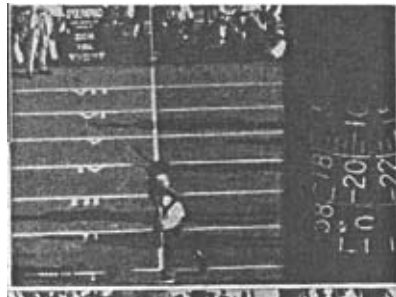
## 50 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The April 1958 *Journal* published in "News and Reports:" "The Academy Awards presented on March 26 were especially meaningful this year for the Society, even though the Academy television show time ran out just before Bette Davis presented an Oscar to Barton Kreuzer, SMPTE President, honoring SMPTE for **The Society's Forty-Two Years of Service to the Industry**. Lorand Wargo, H. M. Little and H. L. Baumbach, authors in the February 1958 *Journal*, were represented in the television show by Mr. Wargo's appearance to receive an Oscar for **development of an automatic printer light selector**."

## 75 Years Ago in the *Journal*

The April 1933 *Journal* reported in "A New Way of Splitting Seconds" by C. H. Fetter: "In timing races by the usual method employing a manually operated stop-watch, errors are liable to arise independently of the accuracy of the timepiece. In order to eliminate this cause of error, a system of timing races has been devised employing a motion picture camera, with which are photographed a very accurately adjusted chronometer at both the beginning and the end of the race, and the contestants themselves at the finish line. This system has been applied successfully at recent important athletic meets held in the U.S.; particularly the Xth Olympiad held at Los Angeles in 1932...the ordinary method employed of timing a race has been by means of a stop-watch. Until several years ago stop-watches giving time to a precision of one-fifth second were used, but more recently tenth-second stop-watches have been universally employed. In track work, for example, the competitors are started by the firing of a gun. The timers are usually located near the finish line of the race in order to time the finish properly. The timer operates a stop-watch at the flash of the gun...The system that

was developed consists primarily of a 200-cycle tuning-fork generator which drives a synchronous motor at a speed of ten revolutions per second. The motor shaft is connected to a clock mechanism by means of a magnetic clutch so arranged that the clock dials, which are normally reset to zero and are stationary, are set in motion when the starter's pistol is fired...it was decided to use a standard 16-mm. camera, which takes 128 pictures per second...it was decided to use three rotating dials and fixed hair-line in order to obtain the time on the film...The inner dial rotates at one revolution per second and has one hundred divisions on it."



The finish line of the 200-meter race at the Xth Olympiad.

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\*\* SMPTE PDA Now Events are live, interactive webcasts, taking place the second Thursday of the month.