

695 QUARTERLY

FALL 2010
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF IATSE LOCAL 695



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**Cover: A sound channel in the field for
Metropolitan Studios, circa 1930.**

Photo courtesy of HollywoodPhotographs.com

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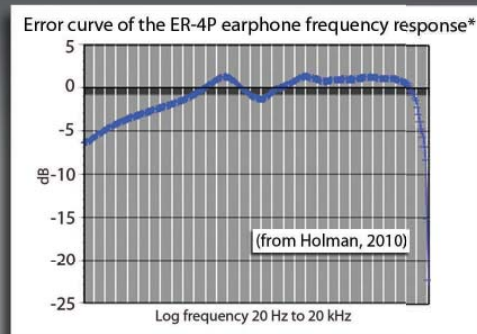
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Tomlinson Holman, CAS Quarterly Spring 2010



*compared to the ear canal response measured on a
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From the Editors



The accomplishments of the founding members of Local 695 are even more remarkable when we consider the context of the time and place. The West in general, and California in particular, were hardly hospitable places to grow a labor movement. Labor-organizing efforts in the Coeur d'Alene mines boiled over into open warfare and the assassination, in 1905, of Idaho Governor Steunenberg. The situation in Los Angeles was no more propitious; in 1910, anarchists affiliated with the labor movement detonated a bomb in the Los Angeles Times building and killed 18 people working there. *Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis, never a friend of labor, became an even more active opponent after that event. The subsequent arrest and guilty pleas from two men who held office with the Iron Workers Union set the labor movement in the West back on its heels.

The financial situation was no better. The Dow Jones Industrial average peaked in September 1929 at 381.17. It crashed in October and the country wouldn't again see market values above 380 until 1954, when Eisenhower was President. In 1930, the year Local 695 was chartered, the market opened at 245 and closed out the year at 165. Unemployment nationwide in 1930 was 8.7% and climbed during the Great Depression to a high of about 25% in 1933. A rate of unemployment under 10% in 1930 seems low at first glance, but these were times when most of the population of the country worked on family farms.

This was flinty soil to grow a new union local and grim times to be risking a job by promoting organized labor, but it was in precisely this environment that our founding members managed to establish a new alliance. Today, we all continue to be beneficiaries of their determination. This issue is dedicated to them in solidarity and appreciation.

Fraternally,
David Waelder, Eric Pierce and Richard Lightstone

695 QUARTERLY

I.A.T.S.E. Local 695
Production Sound Technicians,
Television Engineers,
Video Assist Technicians and
Studio Projectionists

Certified & Chartered September 15, 1930
A California Nonprofit Labor Corporation
Incorporated July 31, 1951, State of California
Affiliated with the A.F.L.-C.I.O.,
California State Federation of Labor,
and L.A. Central Labor Council

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Service Pins

Four members received service pins at the September 25 General Membership meeting. Brothers William C. Harrington, Y-7A – 25 years, Orie “Rusty” Amodeo, Y-7A– 30 years, and David A. Bernard, Y-8 – 30 years, and Brother Norman S. Markowitz, Projectionist – 40 years.

If you are eligible for a service pin, marked in five-year increments, please notify Elizabeth Alvarez, liz@695.com.

Faces Behind the Lens

IATSE Local 80 invites all IATSE members to participate in the worker photo campaign: “Faces Behind the Lens,” a traveling gallery of professionally photographed black-and-white portraits of film and television workers affected by runaway production.

California’s film incentives program is set to expire next year. With 44 other states providing incentives, it’s important for California to extend its program in order to stay competitive. It’s too easy for legislators to not see the real picture in large, abstract unemployment numbers, but the “Faces Behind the Lens” exhibit personalizes the message to them that it’s the film workers who are getting left behind if these programs aren’t renewed.

According to Local 80 Business Representative Thom Davis, the Local 695 Board of Directors was the first to support and endorse the “Faces Behind the Lens” project. Check the Local 80 website for portrait schedules at www.iatselocal80.org, and once the project is completed, you will get a disk with your portrait to keep.



Special Representative Scott Bernard presenting Norman S. Markowitz with his service pin.

Special Representative Scott Bernard presenting William C. Harrington, Orie “Rusty” Amodeo, and David A. Bernard with their service pins.



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FIGHTER

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Actors Fund

As part of a grievance settlement retaining Local 695's jurisdiction in off-camera recording, the producers of *Gigantic* made a \$5,000 donation in the name of IATSE Local 695 to The Actors Fund.

The Actors Fund is a nationwide human services organization that helps all professionals in performing arts and entertainment. The Fund is a safety net, providing programs and services for those who are in need, crisis or transition. It assists performers as well as those who work behind the scenes. Its broad spectrum of programs includes comprehensive social services, health services, supportive and affordable housing, employment and training services, and skilled nursing and assisted living care.

Please consider The Actors Fund for your holiday charitable donations.

The Actors Fund,
for everyone
in entertainment.

In Memoriam

DAVID J. BERES
Boom Operator

Sept. 16, 1963 – Nov. 14, 2010

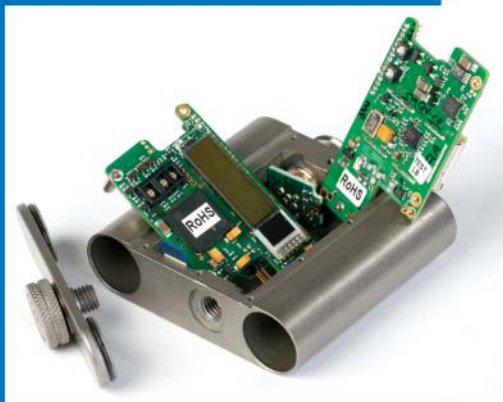
ROBERT L. FORSHIER
Maintenance Engineer
Feb. 13, 1961 – Jan. 19, 2010

DEAN GILMORE
Mixer
May 28, 1926 – Nov. 9, 2010

WILLIS C. HAWLEY
Boom Operator
April 21, 1923 – Oct. 3, 2010

DANA B. WOOD
Engineer
Dec. 24, 1938 – Sept. 5, 2010

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EDUCATION & TRAINING

by LAURENCE B. ABRAMS



December Training Update

CSATTF Training Grant

As the current year comes to a close, we want to extend our thanks to the folks at Contract Services, and especially, Ingrid Lohne, Angel Barajas and Kimberly Kemp, for the continued and committed support they offer to Local 695's education and training programs. We've just submitted our CSATTF training grant proposal for the year starting February 2011, and we're hopeful that, pending approval, we'll be able to continue to offer and expand upon this training. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements on the website and via email.

Cable Clinics: Construction & Field Repair

One of this year's most successful new training programs has been **Cable Clinics: Construction & Field Repair**. These comprehensive hands-on sessions teach critical skills essential for the proper construction and maintenance of cables and connectors used for audio, video and digital data processing. With a very small class size and a fully equipped workstation for each trainee, these sessions provide extremely personalized training that is valuable for experienced cable makers as well as those with less experience, providing the opportunity to learn new skills and improve on old ones. We've conducted 15 Cable Clinics this year and expect to offer more during the coming months. Watch the Local 695 website

and your email (if you have a valid email address registered on the site) to see when the next Cable Clinic is scheduled.

Fisher Boom: One-on-One Intensive

Local 695's **Fisher Boom: One-on-One Intensive** training sessions are still available on an appointment-only basis. Not available anywhere else, this unique training opportunity is strongly recommend not just for Boom Operators and Utility Sound Technicians, but also for Production Sound Mixers. Hands-on training demonstrates how this tool can help solve on-set audio problems while at the same time mitigate health and safety risks associated with exceptionally long shooting takes. See www.695.com/mbr/edu-fbt.php for complete details.

VTC Computer Software Training

Don't forget about the software training that Local 695 provides all members through VTC. More than 900 self-paced tutorials are available for you to access 24 hours a day, including Pro Tools, Final Cut Pro, After Effects, Photoshop, Logic Pro, Flash, Soundbooth, Audition, Digital Performer, Bias Peak, Cubase, Sound Forge, Lightwave 3D, Premiere, Director, Vegas and many more. You'll also have access to free training for many diverse subjects, such as database programming, website design, CAD, networking, animation,

operating systems, game design and lots more. These tutorials generally cost about \$100 each, but Local 695 makes them free to members. Enrollment details and a complete list of all available courses can be found at www.695.com/mbr/edu-vtc.html.

Email Communications

The most up-to-the-minute and efficient way for you to stay informed about all upcoming education and training event details is through email announcements and through the Local 695 website at www.695.com.

- **If you're not yet registered:**
We encourage you to do it now at www.695.com
- **If you are registered:**
Verify that you're opted in for email with a correct email address at www.695.com/mbr/cp-toc.php
- **And...**
Make sure your spam filters aren't trapping mail from info@695.com

"It's technically masterful, as only a film by visionary director Martin Scorsese can be, and an almost unbearable sense of tension simmers and occasionally erupts."

Claudia Puig, USA TODAY

"Exquisitely crafted."

Lou Lumenick, NEW YORK POST

Best Sound Mixing

Sound Mixer

Petur Hliddal

Re-recording Mixer

Tom Fleischman

Best Sound Editing

Supervising Sound Editors

Philip Stockton

Eugene Gearty

Best Picture of the Year

SHUTTER ISLAND

PHOENIX
PICTURES

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Antenna Tests:

Evaluating the High Gain Antennas

by David Waelder

Continuing our tests of antenna performance, we measured the range of directional high gain designs to quantify the advantage they offer over simple whips.

We employed the same testing procedures used in the report published in the spring 2010 issue of the *Quarterly*. The transmitter was a Lectrosonics SMQV mounted on a pole and held at waist height a few inches away from the body of the walker. This permits us to separate the performance of the radio from the body mass of the person wearing the transmitter. This does yield distances a bit longer than what would be achieved if the transmitter were attached to a belt but it eliminates a significant variable from the testing. In previous tests we recorded distances, using ordinary whip antennas on the receivers, of about 500 feet with a transmitter on the belt and about 600 or 650 feet with the transmitter held away from the body. So our testing procedure produces results about 20% or 25% greater than one would expect in production experience.

The receiver was a Lectrosonics 411a. We used the same RG-8X hook up cables for all the antennas. All testing was done with unobstructed line of sight between the transmitter and receiver. If any civilians wandered into the test area, we suspended testing until they cleared. Using a Stanley measuring wheel, we recorded how far someone could walk before the signal was subject to hit and dropouts. Although the numbers logged are very precise, the exact limit of range is always a judgment call. We tended to disregard a single hit or dropout and kept walking until the signal became vulnerable to frequent dropouts. There was some variation with each test walk so we repeated most tests on different days to minimize anomalies.

Our first round of tests in the spring issue established to our satisfaction that mixing antennas was not a good practice. When the Lectro receiver switches between antennas, it doesn't sample the result before making the switch. Rather, it will switch over to the alternate input and then evaluate whether that offers improvement or degradation of the signal. If one antenna has more gain than the other, it is just a matter of time and luck before sampling the weaker antenna yields a hit or dropout. With mismatched antennas, there is a large area toward the end of the range where the signal

is good much of the time but unreliable. With matching antennas, one had stable performance until the end of the useful range. For the tests this time, we worked with two identical antennas at all times.

In one way, results with the high gain antennas are just what one would expect. Each of them provides better range and freedom from hits and dropouts than what was available from the 1/4-wavelength whips. And the very expensive Sennheiser A 5000 CP antenna with "circular polarization" produced some of the best results of the test.

But a careful assessment of the data provides no satisfactory conclusion. Performance of the log period antennas and the super-premium Sennheiser helical was only marginally better than the results with an ordinary SNA600 dipole. In fact, the dipole holds both first and second place in the absolutely longest test runs. And the cheapo Ramsey Log Periodic did about as well as any of the others.

Also, the performance improvement over whips, while consistent, was less than what we expected. The ordinary whips reliably delivered between 500 and 600 feet of operating range. While the high gain designs would occasionally produce distances of 700 or 800 feet, they didn't consistently deliver much above about 650 feet. Range with the better antennas tended to be 10% or 20% better than whips but no design doubled range or provided dramatic improvement.

The directional log periodics and helical designs do offer an advantage over the SNA600 dipole that is not apparent in our testing. In a crowded RF environment, such as one might find downtown, the directional antennas will tend to exclude unwanted signals coming in from the sides.

We took all the antennas to Location Sound to be evaluated on Victor Solis's test bench using a spectrum analyzer. That system transmits a signal using an internal generator. We set it to a Block 21 frequency to be consistent with our walking tests. By connecting a receiving antenna to the analyzer we were able to measure how much the signal was attenuated by the process of transmission. The strength of the received signal was displayed on the scope of the analyzer. Knowing the strength of the outgoing signal, one merely subtracted the one from the other to yield the amount of signal attenuation produced by the transmission and reception process. So, transmitting at -10 dB out and receiving a signal

at -50 dB, one would have a loss of 40 dB. An antenna with 40 dB of loss has, effectively, 10 dB of gain relative to an antenna with 50 dB of signal loss.

Our measurements of the various antennas were:

SNA600 = 50 dB loss
Lectro ALP700A LPDA = 43 dB loss
PSC Log Periodic (sharkfin) = 47 dB loss
Sennheiser A 5000 CP (helical) = 45 dB loss
Ramsey Log Periodic (sharkfin) = 45 dB loss

The SNA600, a simple dipole, yields between 3 dB and 5 dB less signal than the higher gain log period and circular polarity designs. This is to be expected.

Since in this measurement lower numbers (less loss) = more gain, the absolute winner is the Lectro ALP antenna with only 43 dB of loss. (But the scope isn't marked off in single dB increments so one shouldn't read too much into a 2 dB advantage.)

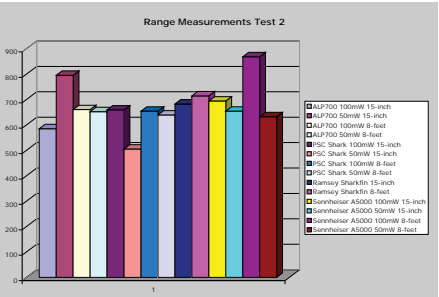
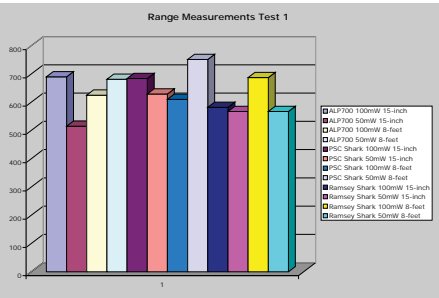
All of the tested antennas produced signals of approximately the same strength and all produced more signal than a simple whip. This is consistent with field measurements where "high gain" antennas produced the best range but no single design yielded performance that was consistently much better than the others.

We went back and repeated the bench tests at greater range. Using 100 feet of RG8 cable, we set up the antennas at a considerable distance from the transmitting analyzer to minimize any possibility of signals bouncing around the test area and contaminating results. The measured signals were considerably weaker with the distance but the results confirmed the earlier impressions. All of the antennas produced very similar signal levels. The Lectro ALP700A was again the winner but its advantage of only 1 dB was within the range of testing error.

Although they provided consistently good results, the Sennheiser helical antennas were a disappointment. With a MSRP of \$1,076.66 and a street price of about \$800, we expected them to blow away the competition. Not so. In fairness, they did yield the best results of the day but their advantage was not compelling. And the best range we managed with them was matched by ordinary SNA600 dipoles in our previous round of testing. But they did perform consistently well and they look spacey. That's not to be dismissed in a field where appearances are important.

The Ramsey printed circuit board antennas, at \$39.95 each, are the value buy. They're not as well made as the professional units, they don't have any integral mounting hardware and the edges and corners are sharp. They don't have a "pro" look but actual performance seems more directly related to the basic design used than to how well it is fabricated.

The ALP700 is no longer available. The PSC sharkfin, or one of the competing units from Lectrosonics, offers a good balance of performance, professional appearance and reasonable economy.



ANTENNA TEST RESULTS

	TRANSMITTER	SETTING	RECEIVER ANTENNAS	ANTENNA SPACING	DISTANCE IN FEET
FIRST PASS	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	15-inches	690
		50 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	15-inches	515
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	8-feet	625
		50 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	8-feet	681
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	PSC Sharkfin	15-inches	684
		50 mW	PSC Sharkfin	15-inches	629
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	PSC Sharkfin	8-feet	610
		50 mW	PSC Sharkfin	8-feet	751
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	15-inches	582
		50 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	15-inches	567
SECOND PASS	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	8-feet	687
		50 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	8-feet	567
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	15-inches	585
		50 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	15-inches	795
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	8-feet	660
		50 mW	Lectro ALP700A LPDA	8-feet	652
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	PSC Sharkfin	15-inches	659
		50 mW	PSC Sharkfin	15-inches	505
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	PSC Sharkfin	8-feet	654
		50 mW	PSC Sharkfin	8-feet	639
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	15-inches	682
		50 mW	Ramsey Sharkfin	8-feet	714
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Sennheiser A 5000 CP	15-inches	694
		50 mW	Sennheiser A 5000 CP	15-inches	654
	Lectro SMQV	100 mW	Sennheiser A 5000 CP	8-feet	868
		50 mW	Sennheiser A 5000 CP	8-feet	632

Just before going to press, I was able to source a pair of PWS helical antennas and ran some new tests with them and also with a pair of PSC sharkfins as a control. With the antennas eight feet high and spaced eight feet apart, we achieved 687 feet of good signal with the PSC antennas (our best pass with the PSC) and 675 feet with the PWS helicals. The 12-foot difference is within the normal variation from test walk to test walk; this was essentially a dead tie. Again, the helicals performed very well but no better than anything else.

We set up a portable spectrum analyzer and made some measurements. At Mike Paul's suggestion, we checked signal strength at a measured distance of 500 feet to be certain that we were seeing antenna performance with a signal attenuated by distance. Simple signal strength results were consistent with our previous measurements; there was no difference between the helicals and the sharkfins. Measuring off-axis signal strength, we found that the sharkfins attenuated the signal by 10 dB at 90 degrees off axis. Directionality of the PWS helicals was somewhat better with 15 dB of attenuation at 90 degrees off axis. This might be an advantage in a crowded RF environment although the benefit seems slight.

Effective radio transmission and reception, particularly at the low power levels used in our work, is truly a black art. So many uncontrolled variables factor into performance that every conclusion must be hedged. Even so, there are some lessons to be learned:

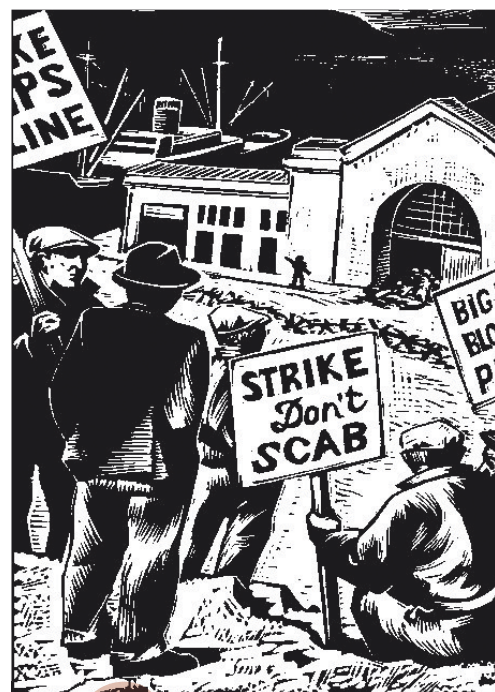
- High gain antennas do provide additional range over simple whips.
- No one design, at least in our tests, offers conspicuous advantage over another.
- Diversity antennas perform better when widely spaced although the advantage is not necessarily consistent.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for assistance from Location Sound Corporation, and Rental Department employees Robert Noone and Robert Anzalone, for the loan of Lectrosonics and Sennheiser antennas. I particularly appreciate Victor Solis making his test bench and metering equipment available. Ron Meyer provided a PSC antenna for testing. And special thanks go to my good friend, Scott Harris, who not only provided all the grip and distance measuring equipment but also walked the radios in the tests. Richard Lightstone and Sen. Mike Michaels provided advice but conclusions are mine alone.

During the time that Local 695 was formed in 1930, motion picture production crews and the IATSE Locals that represented them fought hard to protect their jobs and improve their working conditions. Today, with much of the attention reflecting the national debate over health insurance, the men and women of the IATSE stand together with the same commitment and resolve they showed 80 years ago. Now as before, the union worker in America asks for a safe workplace and an opportunity to provide security for their family.

THAT WAS THEN...



& This Is Now!



Here is a prime example. Now shooting its 11th season, NBC's hit prime-time show, *The Biggest Loser*, has been in the top 20 every year since it went on the air. The production company had long-since signed contracts for all of their directors (DGA) and for all of their actors (AFTRA) ... but the crew members of this successful show worked 10 seasons without a contract and without any benefits for health insurance and pension.

That's why they asked for representation from the IATSE. And when the producers refused to recognize the IATSE as the crew's representative, the brave and determined crew ... 100% of them ... walked off the job and formed a picket line where they were quickly joined by IATSE representatives and crew members from every Local in Hollywood. The voice of the striking workers grew considerably louder with the endorsement of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, which represents 350 unions and more than 800,000 workers, and the California Labor Federation, which represents 1,200 unions and more than 2.1 million workers statewide.



Some of the most poignant words heard on the picket line come from the crew members who felt they had no choice but to leave the job in order to stand up for what they believed in. "The biggest thing is for them to hear our voice ... that's what I want to have happen. I want everyone to hear what we're saying. It's the hardest thing I've ever done, to stand here on the outside after having worked here for so many years, but I have to be here ... for my kids and for my family, I have to be here."

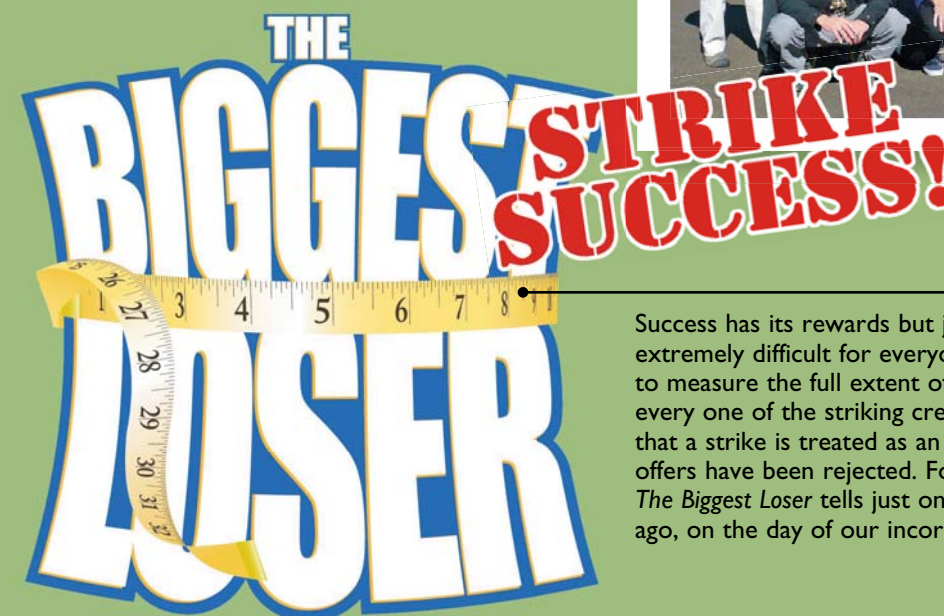


Pressure increased as the strike wore on. Here, on a dark and damp Friday morning that ended the first week of picketing, IATSE President Matt Loeb is seen joining the striking crew members on the side of the road outside *The Biggest Loser* shooting location. Later that morning, President Loeb and members of the striking crew entered into a 17-hour meeting with *The Biggest Loser* producers. Failing to reach an agreement, those talks continued through the weekend.

IATSE Vice President Michael Miller joined the striking crew as they surrounded the gym where *The Biggest Loser* shoots weight-loss contestants who vie for the \$250,000 prize. Concerned about meeting network deadlines, the producers turned their backs on the original crew and made an attempt to continue production with a hastily assembled and very inexperienced replacement crew but reports from the set described a few mostly unproductive and depressing shooting days.



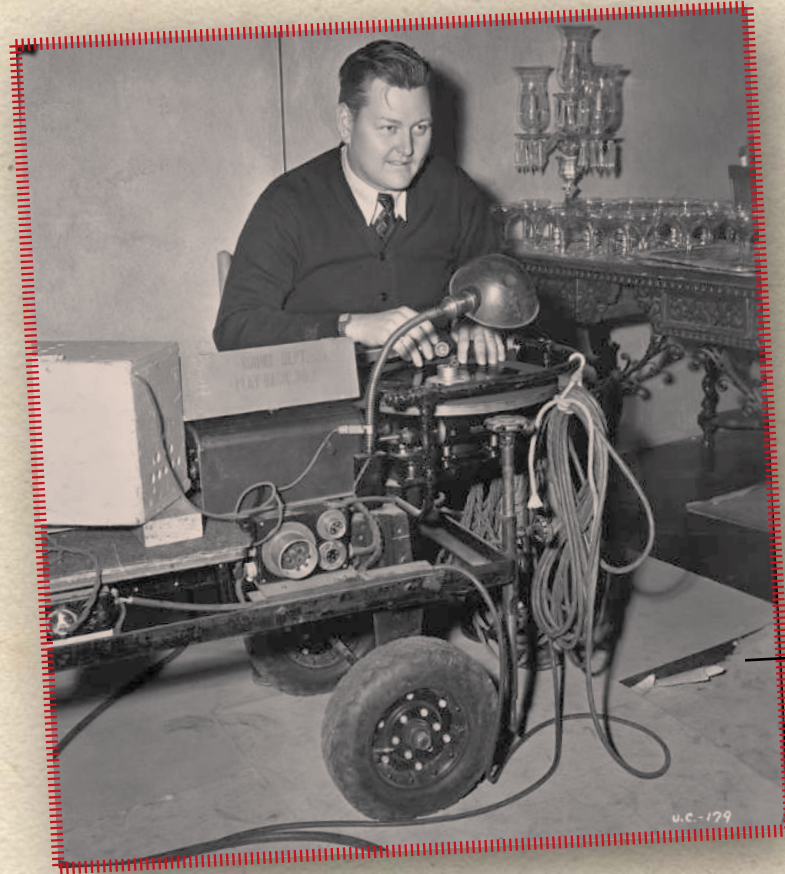
Just past midnight on Sunday night, a tentative contract was announced and a few hours later, ratified unanimously by the striking crew. All crew members got their jobs back with full health and pension benefits retroactive the date of the walkout.



Success has its rewards but job actions such as this one are extremely difficult for everyone concerned and it's not possible to measure the full extent of the sacrifices made by each and every one of the striking crew members. It is for that reason that a strike is treated as an absolute last resort when reasonable offers have been rejected. For Local 695, this job action against *The Biggest Loser* tells just one piece of a story that began 80 years ago, on the day of our incorporation, September 15, 1930.

Beginnings of Local 695

by Scott D. Smith, CAS



Playback operator at Universal Studios ca. 1930, cueing up a wax disk for on-set playback. (Photo courtesy of Universal Studios)

Author's note:

As current members continue in their struggle for recognition during an equally challenging period, it is instructive to look at the battles fought by our membership 80 years ago. While most members were gainfully employed when accepted for membership into the Local, this did not necessarily mean that they would remain so, especially as the effects of the Depression dragged on. Given the terrible conditions following the crash of the stock market in 1929, even those lucky enough to be working often found themselves struggling to make ends meet. Union organizing during in the 1930s entailed considerable risk. No doubt, many men

lost their homes, family (and sometimes their lives) in their efforts to organize our craft.

By no means is this article all-encompassing. To cover the entire history of Local 695 would literally require a book. Likewise, although I have made every effort to corroborate the information presented in this piece, it is inevitable that there will be some errors. Any corrections and clarifications are most welcome. Finally, any opinions stated herein are strictly mine, and do not necessarily reflect those of the IATSE or the Officers of Local 695, and should not be construed as such.



Group of men outside the office of IATSE Local 37 on Cahuenga Boulevard, ca. 1935. Local 37 was the Hollywood Studio Mechanics "Superlocal," which was the umbrella for a number of crafts before they were split into smaller Locals. (Photo courtesy of Gregory Paul Williams, photo by Cliff Wesselmann)

In the Beginning

The year was 1930. On a mild Saturday evening in mid-September, a small group of sound technicians convened at a meeting hall in Los Angeles (most likely the headquarters of IATSE Studio Mechanics Local 37). Their goal was simple; their task was not: to gain recognition for a craft that only three years earlier did not even exist. These would be the pioneers of sound recording for motion pictures...

Hollywood in the '30s

To understand the events that led to the formation of Local 695, one must look at larger picture of both the film industry and the country during early 1930s. On the day of the first recorded "Special Meeting of Sound Men" (as it was referred to in the meeting minutes of September 13, 1930), the country was still reeling from the effects of the Great Depression (the cause of which eerily mimics our current economic situation). The Dow stood at 241.17 (down from a high of 381.17 just one year previously) and stock prices for manufacturing, commodities and virtually every other industry in the U.S. were still on the decline.

Although only 70% of the country's population had electricity, the growth of radio broadcasting was on the rise, with almost half of the country owning at least one receiver. This led in turn to the popularity of such comedians as Jack Benny and Fred Allen, and made newscasters of the era (such as Walter Winchell) household names. Although accurate unemployment figures for this period are hard to come by, it has been estimated that by 1932, nearly 28% of the population was without any income.

Against this grim backdrop, a small number of businesses would continue to thrive, seemingly unaffected by the general malaise hanging over the rest of the country. Out in Hollywood,

Technicolor and Fox Film Corporation both recorded stunning amounts of income during a period most other industries were experiencing mind-numbing losses and complete failure.

For example, on June 14 of 1930, Fox reported earnings of \$5.7M for the quarter ending April 26, compared with \$3.9M for the same period in 1929. Two days later, they announced plans to invest an additional \$5 million in their "Movietone City" operations in Westwood, billed as "the largest talking picture studio in the world." This would include adding 36 new buildings to the existing facilities, for a total of 75 permanent buildings in place by the beginning of the year. Clearly, Fox executives were bullish, perhaps too much so.

Likewise, on the same day, Technicolor announced they would be forced to stop accepting new contracts for film processing. With their facilities in both Hollywood and Boston operating 24-hour shifts and employing at least 1,100 technicians, they had already outstripped the 700% additional capacity added during the past year. Clearly, this was a great time to be in the film processing business!

These two bright spots would appear to counter the trend of most of the industry however. As overall theater attendance declined, studios and theater owners (frequently one and the same), scrambled for ways to improve their audience numbers. They lowered ticket prices, offered matinees and midnight screenings and added cartoons and "B" movie fare, as well as contests for door prizes. Despite all these efforts, many theaters still failed.

Projectionists in New York were forced to take a 25% pay cut over two years. Paramount discontinued showing its films in RKO theaters. William Fox, the head of MGM's parent company, was forced out as president of Fox and was eventually sued by the managers of Fox Film and Fox Theater chain for stock manipulation. Clearly, this was not a business for the faint of heart.

Still, the film business was far from being completely down and out. According to the International Trade Organization (ITO), overall capital investment in the film industry stood at \$4 billion. In the U.S. alone, the industry had a workforce of approximately 225,000, not including about 30,000 extras and several thousand actors. Predictably, the number of people employed both in front of and behind the camera provided a fertile ground for various individuals and organizations who would seek to control the new medium of sound motion pictures.

Hollywood Unions and the Coming of Sound

In retrospect, it is difficult to comprehend the wrenching changes that took place in the space of just three short years subsequent to the release of *The Jazz Singer*. After being hailed as a revolution by many, the arrival of sound would irreversibly change the landscape of the film industry overnight.

Musicians were the first to be affected. Represented by the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), their ranks were drastically reduced nationwide as theaters eliminated piano players and organists, as well as the full orchestras that would frequently accompany screenings of films in major metropolitan movie houses. Although the wholesale elimination of musical accompaniment nationwide was compensated for somewhat by the introduction of film scoring for movie soundtracks, the number of musicians employed in Hollywood was a tiny fraction of those who had previously been employed on a daily basis in the theaters. Most of the players working outside of Hollywood and New York would eventually be forced to seek other employment.

Likewise, stage performers, who already suffered from chronic insecurity, saw their jobs disappear along with those of the musicians. The only group to benefit from the advent of sound in theaters was the projectionists, who demanded (and frequently were granted) additional staff for the handling of the Vitaphone discs. They also argued that they deserved higher pay for dealing with the tasks related to keeping the discs in sync with the picture, and controlling the volume level during performance.

The installation and maintenance of sound equipment for theaters created new jobs. Predictably, this led a series of jurisdictional disputes among projectionists, electricians and IATSE stage employees. For example, at the premiere of the movie *Lilac Time* in October of 1928 at the Central Theater in New York, theater management resorted to using orchestral accompaniment rather than sort out a dispute among various unions claiming jurisdiction over sound reproduction.

A similar scenario would play out on the production side of movie business, which, even without the introduction of sound, was already contending with variety of different groups seeking to organize studio labor.

Despite the achievements made during the late 1920s with the introduction of sound, working conditions during this time period were still abysmal. It was not unusual for crews to work a seven-day week, with long hours (sound familiar?). Frequently, it was only because the actors could no longer function that a halt would be called to shooting. Although some unions had been able to negotiate somewhat improved salaries for their members, labor was, for the most part, still at a disadvantage when it came to dealing with the studios and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Film Sound Recording: The Early Years

With the Great Depression continuing to stifle growth over most of the country, technicians engaged in the new craft of film sound recording demonstrated considerable resolve in their efforts to gain recognition for their craft, as well as improve wages and working conditions. Although their labor and ingenuity had created record profits in the years immediately following the debut of *The Jazz Singer*, they nevertheless struggled for recognition from both producers and their peers.

A Sound Recording Truck



1—Recording panel. 2—Start and control console. 3—Film recorder. 4—110 D.C. to 220 A.C. three phase converter. 5—150 watt dry D.C. 6—Synchronizing motor. 7—Storage battery compartment 110 D.C. 8—Gain set. 9—Oscillator motor. 10—wall dry D.C. 11—27 "8" Amplifier. 12—Charging control panel. 13—Synchronizing control. 14—Film recorder magazine. 15—Microphone cabinet. 16—Mixer panel. 17—Camera motor extension. Courtesy of Helmer W. Bergman, Technical sound Expert, Metropolitan Studios.

Metropolitan Studios sound truck ca. 1929. This truck, equipped with a Western Electric optical sound recording system, was typical of those in use at many studios in the early 1930s. Note the fire extinguisher at the rear—a handy thing to have when working with nitrate base film. No wireless mikes here!! (Photo courtesy of International Photographer)

Early sound recording techniques employed for production would frequently earn soundmen the wrath of the camera department and other crew members (including directors). However, given the staggering box-office receipts many talkies generated, crew members and producers alike were forced to accept the intrusion of the technology onto the set. It was no surprise, then, that the men who helped create so much wealth for studio owners would expect some recognition and decent compensation in return for their work.

Since jobs related to sound recording for motion pictures did not even exist until 1927, the men recruited into the craft came from a variety of related backgrounds from all across the country. Some had worked in broadcast operations, others had been trained in radio operations during WWI. There was also a significant amount of influence from the telephone field, especially due to Western Electric's early involvement in sound recording. Individuals employed in sound equipment manufacturing frequently left for the higher pay offered by Hollywood studios.

However, despite the impressive technical knowledge exhibited by many early sound crews, the fact was that sound recording for the medium of film was still in its infancy, and would prove to be a tough taskmaster for those who made the choice to enter this newly created field. Not the least of what early crews had to deal with was the fact that equipment was bulky, typically involving the use of a dedicated sound truck for location work. Cables were heavy and equipment had significant power requirements. Even working on the stage, however, could be a challenge. Early microphone and amplifier design virtually negated being able to obtain decent sound pickup if the talent was not within close pickup range.

Many actors and actresses who had come out of the silent era were completely flummoxed by the added requirements of doing both dialog and acting, leading to the cancellation of their contracts by studios that now saw them as expendable. This, of course, did nothing to endear the sound engineers to those who worked in front of the camera. Frequently, they were deemed to be the enemy, part of an "evil cabal" who were out to destroy the art of the motion picture. Eighty years later, some sound crews would say that little has changed!

The fact that very few members of the production crew (as well as the producers themselves!) understood how sound worked was cause for further hostility on the set. Because early sound techniques imposed tough limitations on production, members of the sound crew were quickly deemed to be overly demanding and the cause of production slowdowns. Unit managers, always eager to point the finger at someone when things would go wrong, found an easy target with the sound crew.

Already having to contend with the constraints of a bulky and unforgiving medium, early sound engineers were not especially in the frame of mind to deal with the additional grief of recalcitrant actors, crew members who derided them at every turn and studio bosses who frequently considered them "excess baggage," simply a price to be paid in order to keep pace at the box office.

Given the state of the business and the increasing number of men (there were no women employed in sound during those years) entering the field, it was felt by many this was a propitious moment to organize their craft. While studio heads had established the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in May of 1927, this was largely a ploy by Louis B. Mayer and others to control labor union negotiations, doing nothing to improve the plight of sound technicians. Despite receiving training from Academy sponsored classes, sound engineers were still lumped into IATSE Local 37.

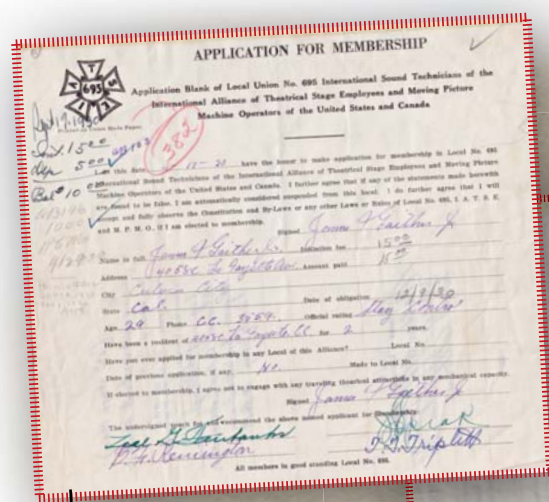


Production still from Von Stroheim's RKO production "Lost Squadron". Note member of sound crew in lower left corner. Very likely, this was for picture purposes, with the real sound crew located off-set somewhere. (Photo courtesy of International Photographer. Photo: Fred Henderson)

This "super local," which served as the umbrella local for a variety of crafts, was beginning to make both producers and the International Union nervous. Despite these factors, it was ultimately the decision of sound technicians, bound together by the unique and crucially important technological contributions they brought to the industry, to seek a charter of their own.

Studio Operations

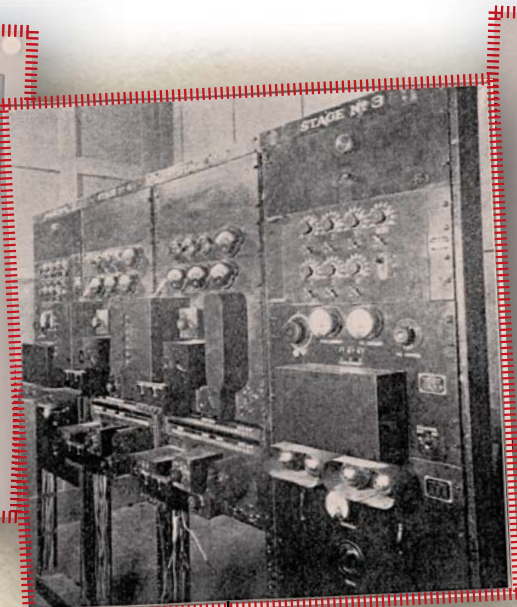
At the end of 1928, there were 16 sound channels operating in Hollywood (the term "sound channel" usually implied at least one recorder and input mixer). By the end of 1929, the number had grown to at least 116! By the mid-1930s, every major Hollywood studio (as well as most minors), had sound recording operations of some sort. These early efforts were no small feat—Fox alone dumped \$10 million into their newly constructed sound facilities in Westwood, which opened in October of 1928. This plant, built in a record four months, employed 1,500 men working in three shifts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Similar efforts were undertaken at Warner Bros., RKO, Universal, MGM, Columbia, Pathe and others. The speed these various facilities were constructed helps to highlight the extremely competitive nature of the film business during this period. Although studio accountants were horrified at the costs, any studio that could not keep pace with the advent of sound would quickly find their box-office receipts reduced to virtually zero. There was much at stake for the studios during this transition period, and literally, every day counted.



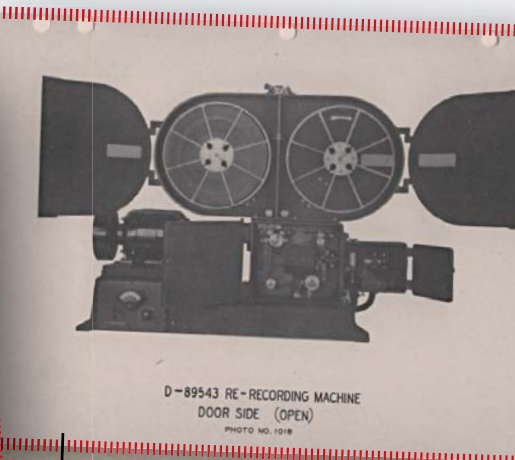
Local 695 application from 1930. Note the experience as wax recorder, along with three years' architectural drafting experience at MGM. (695 Archives)



Typical portable monitor booth as used on stage. (From Western Electric/ERPI Manual ca. 1930)



Typical central amplifier room as used at Fox in 1930. (From 1930 Academy Technical Digest article by E.H. Hansen, head of Fox Movietone Division)



Typical Western Electric optical recorder used in re-recording operations in the 1930s. (From Western Electric/ERPI Manual ca. 1930)



Optical Recordist at Universal Studios ca. 1930. (Photo courtesy of Universal Studios)

Formation of Local 695

Undoubtedly, many lengthy private conversations had taken place among those employed at various studio sound operations from the period 1927 to 1930. Many of these men were also involved in training organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Technical Committee, and were probably in frequent contact.

During a four-hour-long “Special Meeting of Sound Men” (all of whom were members of Local 37), which took place on September 13, 1930; acting Chairman Harold V. Smith alluded to “a review of events of the past few months,” indicating that prior discussions had certainly taken place. As it will be seen however, once the blueprint for action had been laid out, these members of the Sound Committee wasted no time establishing their new Local.

Following the first recorded “Special Meeting” on Saturday the 13th (which ended at midnight); a second “Joint Meeting” was called the very next day (Sunday) at 10:20 a.m., chaired by D.H. Lilly. Clearly, things were moving very quickly!

It was at that meeting that they drew up the Charter application to the IATSE. They also discussed requirements for those members who wished to transfer into the new Local from Local 37 (695 did not yet have a Local number designated to it). A set of temporary officers for the new Local were duly nominated and approved by those present, as officers needed to be in place at the ratification of the new Charter. The initial Charter application was duly signed by the thirteen of the members of the Sound Committee present, with eight additional members (for a total of 21) signing at a later meeting.

It is interesting to note that Stagehands Local 33 had loaned \$500 to aid the Sound Committee in their quest to establish a Local. In addition, Local 37 had donated \$1,000 outright to aid in the effort. The actual Charter application fee to the International cost \$100 at that time.

After some discussion, it was moved that the new Local should print and distribute cards to the various studio sound personnel, announcing a meeting to take place the coming Wednesday evening. It was also noted that members transferring from Local 37 would need to make a new application to the Sound Local and pay a \$5 transfer fee.

On Wednesday of that same week, another Special Meeting was called to order with eighty paid members present. The minutes of Sunday's meeting were read and discussed. A telegram from IATSE General Secretary-Treasurer Fred J. Dempsey was read, authorizing Charter #695. It was also moved that eight additional Committee members were to be added to the thirteen other names on the Charter.

It is interesting to note a vote taken during this meeting to establish a nine-member Examining Board, which would draw up an examination for all new applicants.

Local 695—The First Sound Local

Another 12 days would elapse from the Wednesday meeting, until the actual installation of the Charter, on Monday, September 29. This would turn into a very long day for those involved, comprising three consecutive meetings lasting until 1:15 the next morning!

Of these, the “Special Meeting for the Installation of the Charter” called by Brother L.C.G. Blix at 9:10 p.m. is certainly of some note. Brother Blix read a telegram from IATSE Vice President Cleve Beck, authorizing the installation of the Charter of Local 695. It was noted that Cleve Beck was in Sacramento dealing with strike trouble and was unable to attend personally.

At the invitation of Brother Blix, a number of representatives from sister Locals were also present. These included Brother Roy Klaffki (Cameramen's Local), Brother J.W. Gillette (American Federation of Musicians), Brothers Eckerson and Sands (Projectionists Local), Brother Carl Kountz (Film Technicians), Brother Alvin Wykoff (President of the Cameramen's Local), and Brother William Scott (Business Representative of Local 33).

The remarks offered by some of these men during the meeting indicate the tenor of the times. William Scott gave a word of warning to “keep plans quiet” and to be cognizant “of the plans of the M&M which you will encounter.” He goes on to say that “members should get behind their officers and support them, and not go behind their backs and chisel.” He further states that members should “keep their business to themselves and not argue unionism or union business on the lots or other places of employment.” These remarks and others help to highlight just how tenuous the situation was on the studio lots when it came to organizing. Studio management made every effort to discourage organizing and would go to great lengths to dissuade individuals from engaging in union activities.

The remarks given by J.W. Gillette of the American Federation of Musicians, who spoke at length on the conditions of the day, were perhaps the most telling sign of the times. After congratulating the members on their new Charter, he went on to state that “conditions generally were bad and that there were 9 million men out of work in the United States, regardless of all the propaganda by the Los Angeles Times-Chamber of Commerce and others to the contrary.” He said that “the situation is critical and breadlines are being filled to greater length every day.” It is “up to the unions who can and must remedy the conditions peacefully.” Stated “every man who is working now should take stock of himself and see what he is doing for the Brother who is out of work.” Spoke on “the control of machines which are so rapidly replacing man power” and “believed organized labor must overcome the situation.” Said that “if a question is not answered within the next two years, one-half of the men sitting in this room will be replaced by machines.” Said that “out of a membership of 4,000 in the Musicians, 2,000 were out of work and he had personally aided men financially whose feet were actually on the ground, that they might take bread home to a hungry family.” Spoke of “the close affiliation of organized labor through the American Federation of Labor and the American Legion, the greatest political power

in the country today and one that can bring about the results for economic betterment of the country.” In closing, asked that “the Brothers seriously consider the machine problem” and wished them the greatest success in the world.

Following additional remarks by others present, it was moved that the temporary officers who had previously been voted on be placed in office for a term of one year. These were as follows:

Charles O'Loughlin - President
William Lindsey Jr. - Vice President
Dean Daily - Financial Secretary
W.C. Smith - Recording Secretary
Harold V. Smith - Business Representative

After some discussion, it was moved that the 21 original members of the Sound Committee should function as members of the Executive Board until such time as the Constitution and By-Laws were drawn up. These were:

Charles O'Loughlin (Pathé)	Walter C. Smith (James Cruze Prod.)
William Lindsay Jr. (Fox)	Karl Zint (M-G-M)
Thomas Lambert (Wesley Ford)	William Hedgcock (Universal)
Dean Daily (Columbia/Tiffany)	Jesse Moulin (Universal)
Al Blodgett (Columbia)	Neil Jack (Trem Carr Pictures)
Bruce Peirsall (Sol Lesser/Columbia)	Zeal Fairbanks (M-G-M)
Franklin Hansen (Paramount)	Arthur Blinn (Sennett)
Harry D. Mills (Paramount)	M. McCarroll
Martin M. Paggi (Paramount)	Willard W. Starr (Fox)
Bernard Freericks (Fox)	M. Utterback (Metropolitan)
	Ben Winkler (Pathé)

Following this, nominations were added to those names already appointed for the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, as well as for the Wage Scale and Working Rules Committee.

Immediately following this meeting, an Executive Board meeting was called to order at 11:00 p.m. During this meeting, the subject of initiation fees and salary for the Business Agent were discussed. It moved that the initiation fee be set at \$15 until October 31, at which time it would be advanced to \$50. It was also moved that the Business Agent be offered a one-year contract at a salary of \$75 per week, plus expenses, with the option to renew for a second year. After some discussion, the Business Agent stated he would like time to consider the offer, and would give his thoughts at the next Executive Board meeting.

Further motions were made and approved regarding decisions on office space, as well as the setting of future meeting dates for the first Thursday of each month. At 1:15 a.m., the last meeting of the day was adjourned. No doubt, everyone was happy to get some sleep before reporting for work in a few hours!

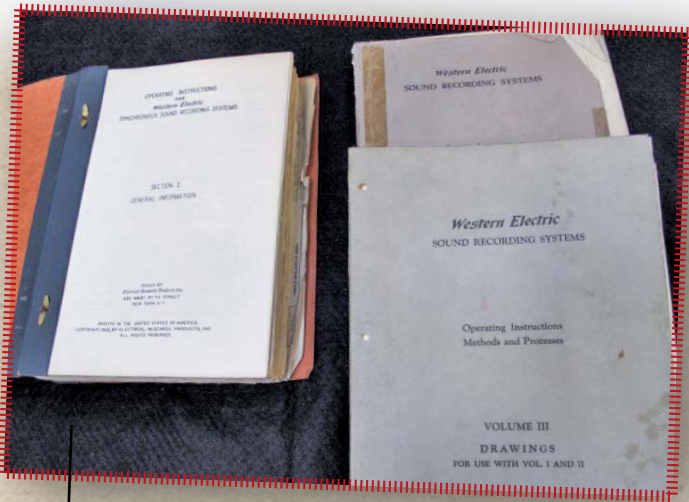
The Challenges of the '30s

Once the Charter was in place, the newly established Local wasted no time in moving forward. Three Executive Board meetings were held in October of that year, mostly to approve transactions pertaining to the establishment of the business office. Space was rented at 1605 N. Cahuenga, and Business Agent Harold V. Smith was given a two-year contract at a salary of \$100 a week. A typist/office assistant was also hired at a salary of \$25 a week. The first five membership cards were issued to the officers of the Local, with the next group of numbers going to the Executive Board members and then to the 21 members who signed the Charter. By the end of November, it would appear that the office operations were up and running.

Things were far from peaceful, however. There were still a significant number of qualified sound engineers out of work in the Hollywood District, and tensions were rife. One of the first issues to come up at the November 1930 Executive Board meeting was related to the jurisdiction over Sound Grips and Cable Men who were still under Local 37. It is also interesting to note that members who were designated as First Recordists would be required to have worked on three pictures, as well as having six months of production experience prior to September 15, 1930. It was also moved and accepted that any man who accepted another man's position for less money be fined \$100.

Despite rather poor employment conditions during 1930, in January of 1931, the Local added additional office space and joined the Federation of Motion Picture Studio Crafts. Further rules regarding member initiations, transfers and withdrawals were added.

Jurisdictional issues continued to arise in 1931 over the operation of sound "dummies" (the optical reproducers used in dubbing). Due in large part to these issues, at the February 20, 1931 Executive Board meeting, a motion was made that the Local should claim jurisdiction over "everything pertaining to sound since the advent of sound in the making of motion pictures in the industry." Clearly,



Light reading; a typical assortment of manuals for the operation and maintenance of Western Electric film sound recording equipment from 1930. The manual for the first sound channels comprised about 600 pages! (Authors Collection)

battle lines were being drawn, especially in regards to IBEW Local 40, which apparently still maintained jurisdiction over installation and initial testing of sound systems.

By April of 1931, the Local had approximately 625 members, most of whom found employment at the various studios (a figure which would indicate that nearly two-thirds of those working in Hollywood sound operations were now members of the Local). However, there was some concern voiced that membership to the Local be curtailed, given the general employment problems of the time. A further jurisdictional issue arose in regards to the loading of film magazines for the optical sound recorders. While it would appear that Local 695 tried to maintain control over loading of magazines for sound recording operations, it is unclear if this was achieved at all studios.

Crew Compositions and Working Conditions

As sound recording was still a relatively new craft, actual job titles and responsibilities were still in a state of flux. The architecture and operations at various studios varied greatly. Some employed central machine room and amplifier operations, while others used independent sound channels. Crew size and positions varied, especially when location work was involved. Many studios interchanged crews assigned to dubbing and production, as it was deemed that many of the positions (such as that of Recordist) were similar. Crews were also moved from picture to picture as needed, which made for some challenging transitions.

A typical production unit in 1930 consisted of a *First Recordist*, who basically functioned as the mixer, an *Assistant (or Second) Recordist* would be assigned to operate the recorder, either in a truck or in a central machine room. Additional *Second Sound Recordists* were assigned to the stage, in charge of communications with *First Recordist*, and also included the boom operators and cable men.

Depending on how production was carried out, there might also be a *film loader* assigned to the sound crew. There were also crew members known as "*sound grips*," who were typically responsible for the hanging of microphones under the direction of the *Stage Recordist*. With the later advent of perambulator microphone booms, they were designated as "*boom pushers*."

JOB CLASSIFICATIONS—THE WHY'S OF THE Y'S

In the early years of the Local, many job descriptions were somewhat fluid, more indicative of the level of experience, as opposed to a defined task. Typical job descriptions in the early 1930s were: 1st Soundmen, 2nd Soundmen, 3rd Soundmen, 4th Soundmen, Sound Film Loaders, Sound Public Address Operators, Newsreel Soundman, etc.

Typically, 1st Soundmen would be assigned duties as a Recordist, Mixer, or Transmission Engineer. 2nd Soundmen were usually Stage Men or Mike Boom Operators, 3rd Soundmen were Service or Maintenance. The 4th Soundmen usually served as cablemen and utility.

By 1939, these classifications had been codified into a more defined set of job descriptions, as outlined below.

Y-1 Music Mixer – Mixer for scoring, pre-scoring and post-scoring music as assigned. (Music only)

Y-2 Re-recording Mixer – Mixer responsible the re-recording assigned to him. (Re-recording only, not including music)

Y-3 Unit Mixer – Mixer assigned to the recording on a production unit. Production only. (Now referred to as the Production Mixer)

Y-4 Operative Supervisor and/or Engineer – Engineer in the Sound Department assigned to operate and be responsible for sound systems and other electronic equipment, and those operative functions, requiring the service of a fully qualified transmission engineer. This engineer may advise in the proper operation of equipment by men performing work in a lower "Y" classification, provided that he does not replace a man in the lower classification.

Y-5 Amplifier Room Operator – Soundman in a centrally operated plant assigned to the operation and maintenance of proper condition of sound equipment in and associated with the main amplifier room.

Y-6 Technical Testing Engineer and/or Gang Boss – Soundman assigned to precise technical testing and adjustment of sound channels and amplifiers and of such items as light valves, galvanometers, microphones and other similar optical-electrical, mechanical and/or audio frequency equipment; and/or is in charge of setting up, testing and

maintaining sound equipment. Includes maintenance, testing, repairs, shop work, installation, supervision of installation, maintenance of projection equipment, and work on all other types of electronic devices, providing there is no replacing of other "Y" classification men.

Y-7 Service Recorder and/or Location Engineer – Soundman assigned to service, operate and maintain sound channels and associated equipment. Includes all recording equipment, such as dolly and portable equipment, stationary channels on stages, sets and locations.

Y-8 Microphone Boom Operator – Soundman assigned to operate a microphone boom and associated equipment, also handle cables and associated equipment includes fishpoles, stands, boom extensions. Also portable booms, microphone accessories. Does not include public address or playback equipment.

Y-9 Recording Machine Operator – Soundman assigned to set up, test, and operate recording machines. Operation within central recording plan only. Direct supervision with limited responsibilities. No dolly channels. No playback equipment. No stationary channels on stages.

Y-10 Journeyman Soundman – Soundman assigned to operating service and running repairs of all sound equipment. Routine central position includes shop work, generators, batteries, installation. Assists Y-4 man in handling heavy equipment repair and maintenance of all motor, power and transmission cables.

Along the way, these classifications have changed somewhat, reflecting changes in technology and job descriptions. For those who have never worked in a traditional studio setting, some of these job descriptions will be completely foreign. It is remarkable to note however, that very little has changed over the years when it comes to most of the basic job categories.

As noted in the Work Classifications as defined by the National Labor Relations Board in September of 1939, Local 695 was responsible for **all** sound-related work. Per the NLRB document: "This certification by its terms includes all 'Y' classifications and the installation, construction, operation, maintenance, and repair of all sound equipment, including television equipment." (Emphasis mine.)

Y-11 Cableman – Soundman assigned in the handling and connecting of cables and sound equipment. May also handle second mike in emergencies when given emergency permission by the Union, and offered minimum guarantee the Y-8 daily rate and/or a new Y-8 guarantee is given. "Emergency" defined as one scene until replaced by a Y-8 man from department or Union, whichever procedure takes the least time.

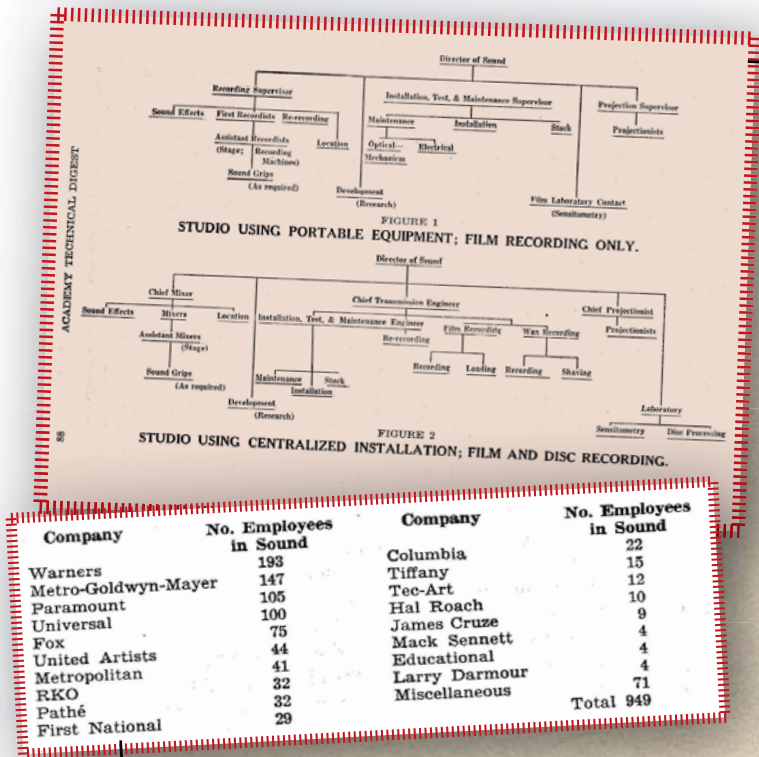
Y-12 Playback Operator – Soundman assigned to set up and operate playback equipment. No servicing or maintenance of equipment.

Y-13 Public Address Operator – Soundman assigned to connect and operate public address equipment. No servicing or maintenance of equipment.

Y-14 Dubbing Machine Operator – Soundman assigned to operate dubbers (or other reproducing) machines.

Y-15 Film Loader – Soundman assigned to load, unload, break down and patch sound raw stock. (Our jurisdiction agreement with the cameramen provides sound film shall be handled by soundmen.)

In later years, additional categories would be added, and some categories (such as Unit Mixer) were re-classified. However, most basic job descriptions have remained the same. In later years, when members engaged in re-recording operations were moved to Local 700, many of the classifications related to these operations were dropped.



Studio sound department employment as of January 8, 1930.
(Variety magazine, January 8, 1930)

If onset playback was called for, a *Playback Operator* would be hired. Similarly, if a PA system was required for set operations, a *PA Operator* would be assigned for setup and operation.

Every studio had their own sound maintenance shop and personnel as well, which typically were separate from production units. However, a unit working on location might employ an additional crew member to handle maintenance during location shooting.

A *Chief Transmission Engineer* would typically oversee all plant operations, with essentially the same responsibilities as those of today's Chief Engineer.

In studio operations, a Recording Supervisor was also employed, who was responsible for overseeing the recording activities on one or more pictures.

The Decline Continues

With the effects of the Depression still at work, July of 1931 brought further salary cuts and changes in working conditions at various studios. How to deal with the situation was a growing concern to the Local. The Local drafted a letter to its members notifying them that they should not work more than fifteen consecutive hours and should not return to work without a period of eight hours' rest.

On July 23, 1931, the first strike action took place, related to conditions at the Pathé studios. This was due to the studio forcing a 695 member to work below the minimum salary scale established for the position of First Soundman. Complicating matters, it was apparent that members of Local 37 did not honor the strike action, causing further tensions with the I.A. At R-K-O pictures, a strike action was called in relation to the working day and hours, which were being cut to six-hour days in response to the slowdown in production.

Typical organizational chart for film sound department.
(From 1930 *Academy Technical Digest* article by Carl Dreher, Director of Sound at R-K-O Studios)

At this point, despite the growing membership in the Local, there was still no independent agreement of any kind with the studios. This meant that the Local had no way to enforce wages or working conditions at studio facilities. The only real "enforceable" agreement at this time was the Hollywood Studio Basic Agreement, a simple two-page document signed in late 1926 by nine production companies and five unions.

One year later, conditions were no better. Salary cuts continued at various studios but the Local had very little to bargain with. Finally, in July of 1932, the Local was able to sign a contract with one of the smaller independents (Like Ltd.) This contract called for a wage scale of \$225 per week for a three-man sound crew, working on a seven-day basis without overtime. While the deal could hardly be termed a victory, it did help gain recognition for 695 during extremely difficult times.

By 1933, with the country still mired in a deep depression, the studios were beginning to feel the pinch. Many of them (Fox in particular) had over-leveraged their positions with the acquisition of theater properties during the real estate boom of the 1920s, and with box-office receipts in rapid decline, now found themselves saddled with mortgage payments they could not meet. When newly elected President Roosevelt instituted a Bank Holiday on March 8, the studios suffered a further hit to their cash flow.

Desperate to find some way to stay solvent, in March of 1933, the five major studios announced an eight-week salary cut of 50%, applied to all workers earning \$50 a week or more, regardless of talent, skill or position. The minimum income was set at \$37.50 a week. The reaction from both labor and above-the-line talent (mostly AMPAS members) was swift. Although it was reported that a significant number of actors and directors, as well as some other crafts, were willing to go along with the cuts, the majority of the IATSE membership was adamantly opposed. So began the strike of 1933, one which cost Local 695 (and the rest of the Hollywood IATSE locals) dearly.

To be continued...

Acknowledgments

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the help I received while researching and producing this article. Special thanks to Jim Osburn and Elizabeth Alvarez of 695 for providing background materials and stories. To Dino "Scan Man" Everett, who assisted in locating and scanning a number of early documents from the USC archives. Special mention also to Gregory Paul Williams, whose well-researched book, The Story of Hollywood, helped to provide the backdrop for the era. I highly recommend it to all those who have an interest in the history of Hollywood and the film business.

Posthumous thanks must also be given to recording secretaries during this era, without whose efforts we would know virtually nothing about the formation of the Local. Finally, as always, many thanks to David Waelder for making it appear that I actually know how to write!

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The following article is from the March 1953 issue of *International Sound Technician* shown above.

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1—The first Warner Bros. sound picture made on location: "THE SONG OF THE WEST," April, 1929. Note: 4 disc sound trucks.



4—Early disc location recording equipment.

SOUND—Then and Now at Warner Bros.

By William A. Mueller
Director of Sound—Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.

The accompanying series of pictures are presented to show the development of sound equipment at Warner Bros. Studios over a period of twenty-odd years—developments which have effected large economies in the production of motion pictures and a great improvement in the quality of recorded sound.

Picture No. 1 shows the first sound unit on location using disc recording equipment, a great achievement in its day. The picture was "SONG OF THE WEST," shot in April, 1929, at Lone Pine, California. Four trucks were required to house the sound equipment and the sound crew consisted of 17 men.

These were the early pioneering days of sound when Warner Bros. were deep in the introduction and development of a new medium of entertainment. It will be difficult for some of the newcomers in this industry to appreciate the tremendous effort and labor that went into this historic first in sound recording; and to point this out, I am showing in Picture No. 2 the camera booth that was used at this time to house the cameras, since this was long prior to the development of the present camera blimp. The camera photographed through a plate glass window in the booth which served as an elevated platform for the microphone man. The microphone was the condenser type with the pre-amplifier attached. The megaphone provided protection for the sensitive diaphragm against the wind.

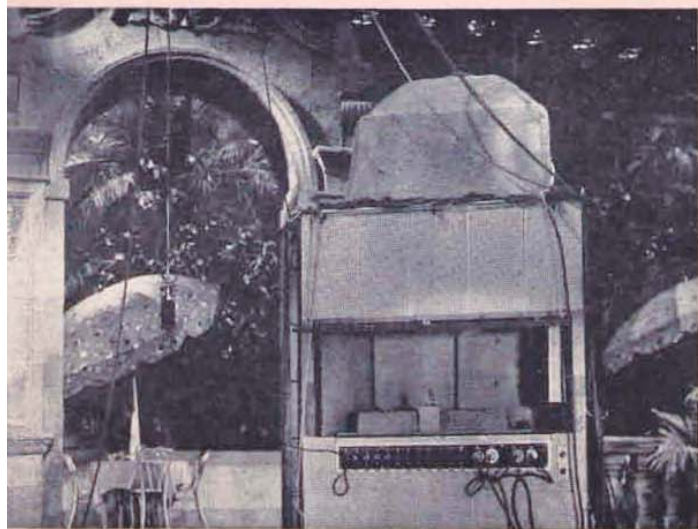
In the early days of sound, it was necessary to house the mixer in a booth similar to the camera booth, as shown in Picture No. 3, which shows the mixing booth with the huge theater type speaker serving as the ceiling and directing the sound down over the "mixer" within. It was set up for the first production of "THE DESERT SONG," starring John Boles. These mixing booths also had to be transported to location, which added to the complexity and difficulty of making early sound pictures on location.

In addition to the heavy and cumbersome equipment required, the extreme hazard of recording on wax discs in the heat and dust storms of the desert presented well nigh unsurmountable problems in themselves. Location disc recording was an historic achievement and did much to give added freedom and scope to the infant talking pictures.

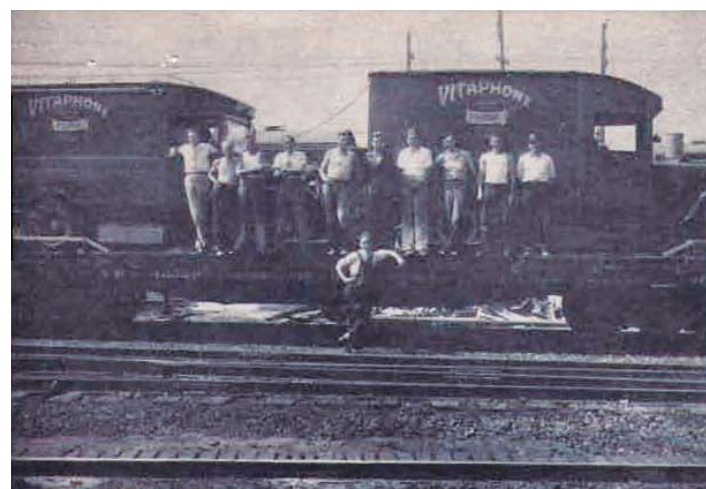
Many improvements were incorporated in the latter wax disc location equipment which resulted in smaller, lighter trucks that were useable in inaccessible places which



2—Camera booth used to house camera for early sound pix.



3—Sound mixing booth as used on "THE DESERT SONG"—1928.



5—First location film recording equipment—1930

were more interesting pictorially. This is shown in Picture No. 4, in which two of the previous large trucks have been eliminated and the sound equipment installed in the remaining two trucks. You will notice, however, that the sound crew is still 17 men.

The introduction of film recording was a tremendous step forward in making location recording more practical, and Picture No. 5 shows the first Warner Bros. film sound trucks used in 1930 at Jacumba, California, on the picture "STEEL HIGHWAY." You will see that we have two large trucks but only 11 men. The old disc recording truck had to be carefully leveled and even the personnel could not move during a take. A travelling shot, as shown, on a railroad train was an impossibility with the disc equipment and film recording made such shots possible, again adding scope and variety to our pictures.

Film recording was also a tremendous boon to the Sound Department, as it was no longer necessary to keep the wax discs at a certain temperature and to protect them from dust and dirt in the minutest quantities. It also greatly simplified the editorial problem and the re-recording problem, and made it possible for other studios to enter the talking picture field. Warner Bros. Sound Department pioneering resulted in many improvements in the sound film recording equipment which, in 1936, resulted in all of the location sound equipment being contained in one modern, streamlined truck as shown in Picture No. 6.

This equipment, continuously improved, was used in making countless numbers of pictures until 1950, when magnetic recording was introduced to the motion picture industry and, in Picture No. 7, you see the latest magnetic portable recording equipment, as developed by Warner Bros., and used on our pictures for more than a year. The complete recording channel consists of the mixing panel and the recording machine.

This equipment was used on a Marine Corps "Weasel" very successfully on the "DESERT SONG" location at Yuma, Arizona, as shown in Picture No. 8. The "Weasel" is carrying the portable magnetic channel as well as "Walkie-Talkie" short wave radio and portable public address and playback equipment. Warner Bros. are using an innovation pioneered by the Sound Department which is the use of short wave radio in the production of talking pictures. The horsemen in this picture were equipped with miniature radio receivers and received instructions and cues from the director directly by radio. This equipment is used very successfully in a similar way for directing vehicles, boats, airplanes, wagon teams, etc., and saves countless hours in the making of a picture.

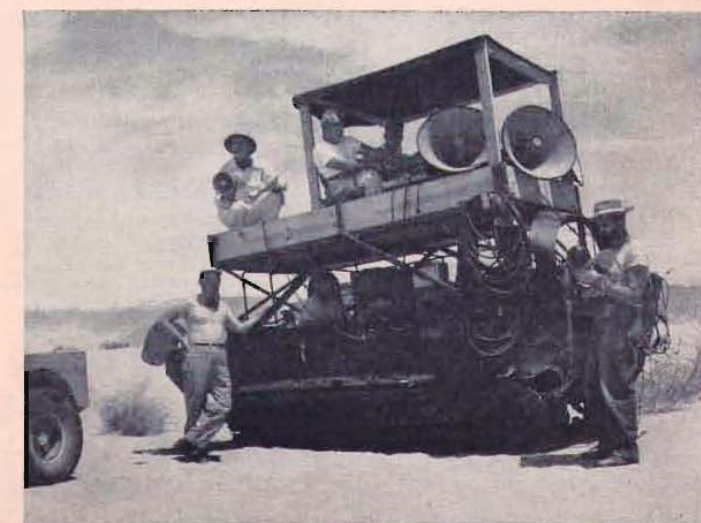
(Continued on Page 18)



6—Modern film recording truck, built in 1936. Fred Arndt is shown at the mixing panel.



7—Present Warner Bros. magnetic portable channel. Stanley Jones, mixer; Ross Owen, recorder; Ory Hudson, microphone boomman, and Buddy Thompson, cableman, shown.



8—Portable magnetic channel used on "weasel" on "DESERT SONG" location, Yuma, California, May, 1952. Clifford Call, John Jensen, All Riggs, and Ross Owen shown from left to right.



SOUND—THEN AND NOW

(Continued from Page 13)

Similar equipment was operated most satisfactorily on the "SPRINGFIELD RIFLE" location at an elevation of 9500 ft. and has entirely eliminated the old difficulty of turning over color cameras in sub-freezing temperatures. Duplicate equipment was used in the tropical Fiji Islands for the picture "HIS MAJESTY O'KEEFE."

Warner Bros. magnetic recording equipment runs at one-half of former sound speed (now 45 feet per minute) and uses film one-half normal width (17½ mm) thereby requiring only one-fourth of the total amount of (35 mm) film formerly used.

This new equipment with its lighter and stronger power supply drives several Technicolor cameras; runs over or under speed and has every electronic facility for recording sound of the highest quality under most adverse conditions. Sound crew requirements of today are four men instead of the original 17 men used in 1929. Much greater portability and efficiency of operation;—lighter, movable microphones of much greater sensitivity, more compact high fidelity amplifiers and monitoring equipment;—foolproof design are all factors contributing to the great economies accomplished through the ingenuity of the engineers and technicians of our industry. Of added interest is the fact that 80% of our Sound Department personnel have been employed at Warner Bros. for twenty years or more and have, through their experience and ingenuity contributed greatly to these developments. Just compare the Sound—Then and Now both cost and quality. We are proud of the record.

Portable, battery powered digital snake

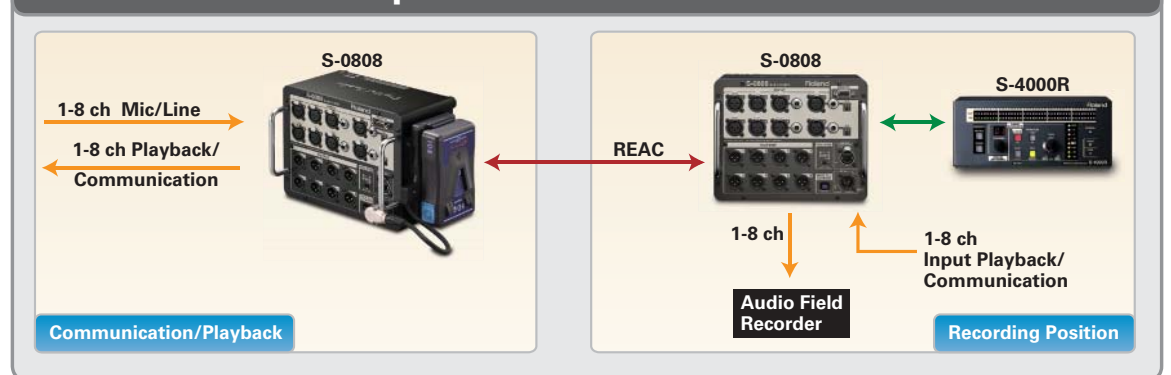
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