

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Editor's Note: *It seems appropriate, at the close of our 25th Anniversary Year, to publish for the present membership some significant documentation of the Society's beginnings. Here then, a series of letters which appeared in 1948 in what is now known as "Audio" magazine, and which played their part in generating interest in forming such a professional body as the Audio Engineering Society.*

Audio Association?

Sir:

After receiving the first few issues of your new magazine, I must say that I believe you are serving a much neglected field in a highly adequate manner.

Now that the audio engineer has been dignified by a specialized publication which will tend to draw the members of the field together, is it not time for him to have an organization of his own?

I have in mind an association similar in function and purpose to the I.R.E. and S.M.P.T.E. in their respective fields.

I will be glad to correspond with anyone interested in this matter.

*Frank E. Sherry, Jr.
705½ W. San Antonio Street
Victoria, Texas*

What do our readers think?—Ed.

Audio Engineering Society

Sir:

In the last issue, Mr. Frank E. Sherry, Jr. suggested that audio engineering had grown to the point where it needed a professional society of its own.

A group of us, long active in broadcasting and recording, feel the same way he does. Audio engineering will be unhampered only when it has a society devoted exclusively to its needs—controlled by, and run only to benefit, the audio engineer.

We have been discussing this matter for several months and are preparing to hold an organization meeting.

Will those interested in such a society please write the undersigned, giving the following information:

Name
Mailing Address
Company
Title or nature of work

We will notify you of the meeting date.

*C. J. LeBel
307 Riverside Drive
New York 25, New York*

Audio Society Activities

Sir:

A letter from C. J. LeBel (published in the January issue of this magazine) explained that a group of audio

engineers were giving serious consideration to the formation of a professional organization for the advancement of the science and art of audio engineering. Your readers will be interested to know that this proposed Audio Engineering Society is organized. Discussions among a group of well-known audio engineers have already been held, and this group has appointed C. J. LeBel to be acting chairman and Norman C. Pickering to be acting secretary to bring the aims of this new organization to interested engineers and technicians. Those who have not been reached directly are invited to write the Acting Secretary for further information.

The formal organization meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17th, at 8:00 p.m., at the RCA Victor studios at 155 E. 24th Street, New York City, at which organizational details will be settled and temporary officers elected. The Society has been fortunate in obtaining Dr. Harry F. Olson of RCA as the speaker at the first technical meeting, to be held Thursday, March 11th at 8:00 p.m., at 155 E. 24th St., New York City. Dr. Olson will discuss some specific problems associated with high quality sound reproduction and present an interesting demonstration.

The need for an Audio Engineering Society has long been felt. It is certain to succeed in its aims if firmly supported by audio engineers and technicians. It will furnish a medium for presentation of new ideas in audio, discussion of which will unify thinking along these lines.

*Norman C. Pickering
Oceanside, New York*

Comments on the AES

Sir:

In a recent letter to the Editor, Mr. Frank E. Sherry has suggested the formation of some sort of an Audio Engineering Society. I wish to enter a strong dissent to this proposal, as I believe it will not further the advancement of this field.

The principal reason for this view may be seen from a consideration of the large number of technical groups now extant, each for a narrow field. Nevertheless, this has resulted in duplication of effort, competition for speakers and papers, and a multiplicity of meetings which put a considerable drain on the time of the practicing engineer who must overlook no new developments. A partial solution has been the formation of Technical Societies Councils, as in Chicago and other cities, with a monthly list of meetings made available. I feel that our efforts must be directed toward consolidation and centralization rather than division of energies. A unified group can easily foster sub-groups for specific purposes, and yet retain the advantages of a parent-body, which is able, by virtue of its prestige and size, to present with great effectiveness the viewpoint of its members to other groups, be they engineering, civic or legislative.

Since audio engineering has become a large enough field to merit representation, I wish to propose that those interested consider the Acoustical Society of America.

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This group is not purely scientific and academic, but has a diversified membership which includes audio engineers, musicians, broadcast engineers, and sound technicians as well as professors (who are in the minority). The Society has recently broadened its membership requirements to include all those interested in acoustics, with more classes of membership; moreover, it has provided for the establishment of regional sections whose primary interest is simply to be the advancement of acoustics. I wish to urge that those interested in audio engineering consider affiliation with the national Society as a valuable means of avoiding adding to the present profusion of specialized groups and at the same time retaining the advantages of national representation. Of course, the particular program undertaken by any such regional group will depend on the desires of its members, the national Society merely offering direction and advice with rather loose control.

In closing, it may be mentioned that a Chicago Section of the Acoustical Society of America is in the process of formation.

*Vincent Salmon, Physicist
6220 So. Moody Avenue
Chicago, Ill.*

Sir:

I want to thank you for aiding in the formation of an Audio Engineering Society.

Because of a letter which was written by Frank E. Sherry, Jr. of Victoria, Texas, and appearing in your December issue, I was put in touch with C. J. LeBel and Norman Pickering, both of New York City, and formers of the Society. It is with a deep satisfaction to learn that at last something will be done about nationally recognizing the Audio Engineer in his own right. I still have on hand Issue No. 1 of the original Sound magazine issued prior to the war—July, 1941, to be exact.

I am looking forward to the first meeting of the Society with as much hope and anticipation as a kid does the night before Christmas. Thank you again for any aid you might give the group in its initial phases. Thank you also, tho in advance, for the next 12 issues, which I know will be just as jam-packed with information as the last issues.

*Jack Hartley
88 Diamond Bridge Avenue
Hawthorne, N.J.*

Dear Editor:

In the December 1947 issue, Mr. F. E. Sherry, Jr. raises the question as to whether the time has come for the audio engineer to form an association of his own. I think not.

It is true that the existing national organizations have not, to date, recognized the existence of audio engineers nor have they given them a voice, as a group, in the affairs of their societies. However, insofar as the Institute of Radio Engineers is concerned, considerable progress has been made towards correcting this situation. For example, as announced in some detail in the January 1948 issue of the Proc. I.R.E., a Committee on Professional Groups has been formed (pg. 105) with the view towards the establishment of groups "within the Institute membership to promote meetings in specialized fields" (pg. 106). In addition, other group activities, such as

promoting papers in their field, are contemplated. One of the groups specifically mentioned is "audio."

Of equal importance is the establishment by the I.R.E. of an Audio and Video Technical Committee. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Institute, these fields are being recognized in their own right and not as an adjunct of another branch of the science.

From an industry viewpoint, audio engineering is also beginning to receive the recognition that is its due. For example, the Radio Manufacturers Association has several active committees on audio facilities covering broadcasting, sound reinforcement and home receiver applications. Also, the American Standards Association has committees concerned with various phases of standardization work in the audio field.

It seems to me that the audio and video engineer can best further progress in his chosen field by taking an active and constructive part in the affairs of existing organizations. I cannot see the need, at this time, of an association of audio engineers any more than I believe there should be an Institute of Sonar Engineers, or of Radar Engineers, or Frequency Allocation Engineers, to name but a few.

*Howard A. Chinn
Chief Audio Engineer
Columbia Broadcasting System
New York City*

Sir:

Through Audio Engineering I have learned of activities in New York to bring together those who are interested mainly in the audio field. Mr. C. J. LeBel has suggested that it might be possible to determine the extent of interest along these lines in the Philadelphia area, if a letter similar to his were published in Audio Engineering.

I will be glad to act as a clearing house to receive the names of those in the Philadelphia Area who would care to look into the matter if they will send a post card to me at the address below. Information of any activities will be sent to all sending in their name, address and field of audio engineering.

*William P. West
522 Arbutus St.
Philadelphia 19, Pa.*

From the Audio Engineering Society

We have been flooded with mail from all over the country, and it appears certain that local sections will be formed in a number of cities. In order to help audio engineers get together, we would be happy to act as a clearing house for such operations.

In response to interest already shown, we especially solicit response from the following large centers: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.

When writing, please send the following information: Name, mailing address, company, title or nature of work.

Letters should be addressed to the Acting Secretary:
Norman G. Pickering
Acting Secretary
Audio Engineering Society
Oceanside, New York