EDITING

Electronic editing is done by putting your master (original) tape on one deck and recording it onto a second deck in a desired sequence. (The edited tape is then assembled, copied, or second generation.) Simpler sequential editing is called "assembly." Inserting material in an edited is called an "insert." Editing is a function of more expensive machines as it requires more complex internal mechanisms. Assembly editing is the most rudimentary form and can be done whenever you have two tape decks. The results vary from clean cuts, if the system has an inherent editing function, to mild instability in systems where a dubbing (copying) function is made to serve as an editor. It is also possible to edit tape manually by actually slicing the tape. However, in electronic editing you preserve the original master and are spared manual labor. (Manual editing is done by chemically developing the top of the tape to find the synch marks and then cutting between them. The editing plays back as a wipe up from the top.)

Generally, the more sophisticated your editing set-up, the less you have to do on the scene. Crud edits mean that community groups can have a cheap, quick, self-contained set-up; and simi-
larly you can go practically anywhere there's an electrical outlet and not have to return to civilization if you don't want to. Thus, a general editing support system breaks down into three basic levels:

LEVEL ONE: This is the simplest and most flexible editing support system. (We have used Sony equipment here not as an endorsement, but because we know it best. Comparable models from other manufacturers would serve the same function.) Pure, basic editing.

At this level your actual Porta-Pak deck is used for playing back the master tape. It feeds into either another Porta-Pak deck (which is thus a complete field system) or the cheapest and most portable table deck.

In the Sony system, this would mean an AV6300 (Porta-Pak) feeding into another AV3000, or into an AV300, a table model which lists for $80.

Going from the Porta-Pak to Porta-Pak is essentially a copying system which would allow you to leave a copy-on-the-scene and take one with you after you have shot tape with two cameras. Using an AV3000 in place of a second Porta-Pak is both cheaper and frees up the portable for more shooting while people inside can watch what's been edited. Typically, Sony has no perception that people would want to edit from a Porta-Pak. They make no cables to do the job. It's quite simple to wire them up yourself however, for an investment under $10. Wiring diagrams are next to the pictures of the machines.

LEVEL TWO: At this level your Porta-Pak is not involved and a table deck is used to feed the master reel into a heavier table deck. (Of course you can use two of the cheapest table decks, but for only a few hundred dollars more you get a lot of added flexibility.)

The two possible decks shown here are the Sony AV5000 and the Sony AV8050. The AV8050 is a special editing deck which allows you to modulate incoming audio and video signals (other decks have so-called Automatic Gain Control which does the modulation automatically). While the edits you get are perfectly clean, there is a problem with the sound which lags a second or two. Thus, your sound kicks out or in before or after your video.

At this writing, the AV3500 is the latest of the Sony line. Previously, the AV400 allowed maximum control. Its features include slow-motion and still-framing, a manual video gain control, and color record and playback (see COLOR for state-of-the-art in portable color systems). The AV3500 does not have color. The AV500 lists for $995, while the AV3500 goes for $1,350. Unless you need color the AV3500 is by far and away the best thing to get.

LEVEL THREE: Here you use a half-inch table deck (actually any of the three mentioned) to feed into a one-inch machine. A good one-inch machine has perfect assembly edits and optional perfect insert edit. Most have two audio channels as well, along with controls over both audio and video modulation. One-inch machines are also upgradable to color with plug-in modular circuit boards.

The advantage of one-inch is you're practically assured a perfect master, especially if you run the incoming signal through a preamplifier (which essentially cleans the signal up and stabilizes the synch). The disadvantages are that one-inch is non-portable and much costlier. They range in price from $3,000 to $10,000. One-inch tape is also much more expensive than half-inch ($80 an hour versus $30) and there is no inter-system compatibility as in half-inch. Thus, with a one-inch master you've got to send in a one-inch machine of the same make.

As for experience, we've only used a Craig which worked well. However, Videofreex have their own one-inch IVC and say they get good results with it.

A SPECIAL EFFECTS GENERATOR: A special effects generator mixes camera signals and produces a composite image of either fades and dissolves (images superimposed) or wipes (one pushing the other off the screen). The Sony Seg-1 ($595) will mix two cameras at once but has inputs for four. Thus, you can have a four camera system with two being recorded at any one time.

Special effects systems will use the Porta-Pak cameras and feed into a Porta-Pak deck so if you've got a lot of indoor shooting they're a good investment and a whole different way to do video. The Sony also has a negative switch to reverse black-and-white in the image.

The Sony AV3000 has an internal control set-up that you can adjust or change. You can also add a color delay just by hooking up the microphone. Very freaky, mesmerizing effects.

Typically, Sony has no idea that anyone would want to do this. Thus, their old system decks (CV series) were very primitive because of the configuration of the controls, have been discontinued while the new series (AV series) is designed so the tape path is obstructed by the control lever when you try to feed from one deck to another. But CV decks are going very cheap so if you can get a couple (last we heard $250) you can do delays.