

ASTRONOMY ON THE WEB

January 1997

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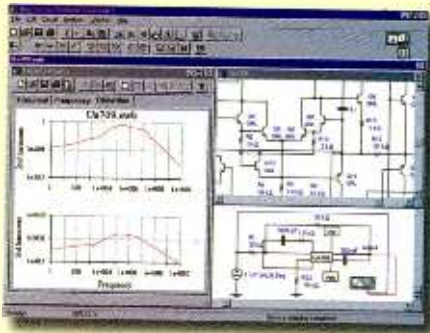
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ANALOG ENGINE	SPICE 3F5, 32-BIT
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VIRTUAL INSTRUMENTS	YES
ON-SCREEN GRAPHS	YES
ANALOG COMPONENTS	OVER 100
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DEVICE MODELS	OVER 4,000
MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE	30-DAY
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Powerful Analyses

DC OPERATING POINT	YES
AC FREQUENCY	YES
TRANSIENT	YES
FOURIER	YES
NOISE	YES
DISTORTION	YES

30-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE
VERSION 5.0 FOR WINDOWS 95/NT/3.1.

FEATURES OF ELECTRONICS WORKBENCH VERSION 5

WHAT'S NEW

Now 10 times faster. Handles 3 times larger circuits. More and better device models. New thermal modeling. New on-screen graphs. New analyses (Noise, Noise and Distortion). 25 new components including vacuum tubes, arbitrary sources, 50 new ICs. Improved accuracy. Improved schematic editor with zoom and growing pages. Improved printing. Improved fonts. Improved libraries. Redesigned word generation and logic analyzer.

GENERAL

Integrated Tool: Fully integrated schematic editing, SPICE simulation and waveform generation and analysis. Supports modifications to the circuit during simulation. Circuit analysis through virtual test instruments or 6 analysis listed below.

Simulation Engine: Interactive 32 bit SPICE 3F5 enhanced with nonvolatile digital and mixed analog/digital support. Automatic insertion of signal translation interface. Supports multiple reuse of hierarchical blocks. GMIN stepping for better convergence. No parser limit on circuit size or complexity.

Schematic Capture: Click-and-drag interface; hierarchical workspace; automatic wire routing with autoconnect; automatic reference designator; schematic size; components for quick and simple analysis; six overlays for on-screen graphs and more (described below).

Documentation: All design information, including simulation parameters, setup and test files for all models stored in a single design file to support standardized SPICE simulation with other simulators or to reuse existing design elements. Imports manufacturers' models and netslist into reusable Electronics Workbench components. Exports to standard PCB layout packages such as ORCAD, Protel and Origin.

ANALYSES

DC Operating Point: Calculates DC operating point and reports voltage at each node.

Transient: Circuit voltages and currents versus time; arbitrary number of nodes. Specify start and stop times.

AC Frequency Sweep: Small signal gain and phase over range of AC frequencies at any number of nodes. Specify ranges, type (frequency active or linear) and resolution (number of steps) of frequency sweep.

Fourier: Magnitude and phase of DC and Fourier spectral components of transient response. Specify fundamental frequency and an unlimited number of harmonics.

Noise: Resistor and semiconductor noise contribution reported as RMS sum. Specify device of interest, output and reference nodes, and range, type and resolution of frequency sweep.

Distortion: Small signal steady-state harmonic and intermodulation products over a range of frequencies. Specify any number of nodes and sweep range, type and resolution. Optionally evaluate devices on an individual basis.

VIRTUAL TEST INSTRUMENTS

Digital: Models for ICs, Gates and Flip-Flops in HC, CMOS, ECL, and BiCMOS. Includes 4008, 4011, 4012, 4013, 4014, 4015, 4016, 4017, 4018, 4019, 4020, 4021, 4022, 4023, 4024, 4025, 4026, 4027, 4028, 4029, 4030, 4031, 4032, 4033, 4034, 4035, 4036, 4037, 4038, 4039, 4040, 4041, 4042, 4043, 4044, 4045, 4046, 4047, 4048, 4049, 4050, 4051, 4052, 4053, 4054, 4055, 4056, 4057, 4058, 4059, 4060, 4061, 4062, 4063, 4064, 4065, 4066, 4067, 4068, 4069, 4070, 4071, 4072, 4073, 4074, 4075, 4076, 4077, 4078, 4079, 4080, 4081, 4082, 4083, 4084, 4085, 4086, 4087, 4088, 4089, 4090, 4091, 4092, 4093, 4094, 4095, 4096, 4097, 4098, 4099, 4100, 4101, 4102, 4103, 4104, 4105, 4106, 4107, 4108, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4115, 4116, 4117, 4118, 4119, 4120, 4121, 4122, 4123, 4124, 4125, 4126, 4127, 4128, 4129, 4130, 4131, 4132, 4133, 4134, 4135, 4136, 4137, 4138, 4139, 4140, 4141, 4142, 4143, 4144, 4145, 4146, 4147, 4148, 4149, 4150, 4151, 4152, 4153, 4154, 4155, 4156, 4157, 4158, 4159, 4160, 4161, 4162, 4163, 4164, 4165, 4166, 4167, 4168, 4169, 4170, 4171, 4172, 4173, 4174, 4175, 4176, 4177, 4178, 4179, 4180, 4181, 4182, 4183, 4184, 4185, 4186, 4187, 4188, 4189, 4190, 4191, 4192, 4193, 4194, 4195, 4196, 4197, 4198, 4199, 4200, 4201, 4202, 4203, 4204, 4205, 4206, 4207, 4208, 4209, 4210, 4211, 4212, 4213, 4214, 4215, 4216, 4217, 4218, 4219, 4220, 4221, 4222, 4223, 4224, 4225, 4226, 4227, 4228, 4229, 4230, 4231, 4232, 4233, 4234, 4235, 4236, 4237, 4238, 4239, 4240, 4241, 4242, 4243, 4244, 4245, 4246, 4247, 4248, 4249, 4250, 4251, 4252, 4253, 4254, 4255, 4256, 4257, 4258, 4259, 4260, 4261, 4262, 4263, 4264, 4265, 4266, 4267, 4268, 4269, 4270, 4271, 4272, 4273, 4274, 4275, 4276, 4277, 4278, 4279, 4280, 4281, 4282, 4283, 4284, 4285, 4286, 4287, 4288, 4289, 4290, 4291, 4292, 4293, 4294, 4295, 4296, 4297, 4298, 4299, 4300, 4301, 4302, 4303, 4304, 4305, 4306, 4307, 4308, 4309, 4310, 4311, 4312, 4313, 4314, 4315, 4316, 4317, 4318, 4319, 4320, 4321, 4322, 4323, 4324, 4325, 4326, 4327, 4328, 4329, 4330, 4331, 4332, 4333, 4334, 4335, 4336, 4337, 4338, 4339, 4340, 4341, 4342, 4343, 4344, 4345, 4346, 4347, 4348, 4349, 4350, 4351, 4352, 4353, 4354, 4355, 4356, 4357, 4358, 4359, 4360, 4361, 4362, 4363, 4364, 4365, 4366, 4367, 4368, 4369, 4370, 4371, 4372, 4373, 4374, 4375, 4376, 4377, 4378, 4379, 4380, 4381, 4382, 4383, 4384, 4385, 4386, 4387, 4388, 4389, 4390, 4391, 4392, 4393, 4394, 4395, 4396, 4397, 4398, 4399, 4400, 4401, 4402, 4403, 4404, 4405, 4406, 4407, 4408, 4409, 4410, 4411, 4412, 4413, 4414, 4415, 4416, 4417, 4418, 4419, 4420, 4421, 4422, 4423, 4424, 4425, 4426, 4427, 4428, 4429, 4430, 4431, 4432, 4433, 4434, 4435, 4436, 4437, 4438, 4439, 4440, 4441, 4442, 4443, 4444, 4445, 4446, 4447, 4448, 4449, 4450, 4451, 4452, 4453, 4454, 4455, 4456, 4457, 4458, 4459, 4460, 4461, 4462, 4463, 4464, 4465, 4466, 4467, 4468, 4469, 4470, 4471, 4472, 4473, 4474, 4475, 4476, 4477, 4478, 4479, 4480, 4481, 4482, 4483, 4484, 4485, 4486, 4487, 4488, 4489, 4490, 4491, 4492, 4493, 4494, 4495, 4496, 4497, 4498, 4499, 4500, 4501, 4502, 4503, 4504, 4505, 4506, 4507, 4508, 4509, 4510, 4511, 4512, 4513, 4514, 4515, 4516, 4517, 4518, 4519, 4520, 4521, 4522, 4523, 4524, 4525, 4526, 4527, 4528, 4529, 4530, 4531, 4532, 4533, 4534, 4535, 4536, 4537, 4538, 4539, 4540, 4541, 4542, 4543, 4544, 4545, 4546, 4547, 4548, 4549, 4550, 4551, 4552, 4553, 4554, 4555, 4556, 4557, 4558, 4559, 4560, 4561, 4562, 4563, 4564, 4565, 4566, 4567, 4568, 4569, 4570, 4571, 4572, 4573, 4574, 4575, 4576, 4577, 4578, 4579, 4580, 4581, 4582, 4583, 4584, 4585, 4586, 4587, 4588, 4589, 4590, 4591, 4592, 4593, 4594, 4595, 4596, 4597, 4598, 4599, 4600, 4601, 4602, 4603, 4604, 4605, 4606, 4607, 4608, 4609, 4610, 4611, 4612, 4613, 4614, 4615, 4616, 4617, 4618, 4619, 4620, 4621, 4622, 4623, 4624, 4625, 4626, 4627, 4628, 4629, 4630, 4631, 4632, 4633, 4634, 4635, 4636, 4637, 4638, 4639, 4640, 4641, 4642, 4643, 4644, 4645, 4646, 4647, 4648, 4649, 4650, 4651, 4652, 4653, 4654, 4655, 4656, 4657, 4658, 4659, 4660, 4661, 4662, 4663, 4664, 4665, 4666, 4667, 4668, 4669, 4670, 4671, 4672, 4673, 4674, 4675, 4676, 4677, 4678, 4679, 4680, 4681, 4682, 4683, 4684, 4685, 4686, 4687, 4688, 4689, 4690, 4691, 4692, 4693, 4694, 4695, 4696, 4697, 4698, 4699, 4700, 4701, 4702, 4703, 4704, 4705, 4706, 4707, 4708, 4709, 4710, 4711, 4712, 4713, 4714, 4715, 4716, 4717, 4718, 4719, 4720, 4721, 4722, 4723, 4724, 4725, 4726, 4727, 4728, 4729, 4730, 4731, 4732, 4733, 4734, 4735, 4736, 4737, 4738, 4739, 4740, 4741, 4742, 4743, 4744, 4745, 4746, 4747, 4748, 4749, 4750, 4751, 4752, 4753, 4754, 4755, 4756, 4757, 4758, 4759, 4760, 4761, 4762, 4763, 4764, 4765, 4766, 4767, 4768, 4769, 4770, 4771, 4772, 4773, 4774, 4775, 4776, 4777, 4778, 4779, 4780, 4781, 4782, 4783, 4784, 4785, 4786, 4787, 4788, 4789, 4790, 4791, 4792, 4793, 4794, 4795, 4796, 4797, 4798, 4799, 4800, 4801, 4802, 4803, 4804, 4805, 4806, 4807, 4808, 4809, 4810, 4811, 4812, 4813, 4814, 4815, 4816, 4817, 4818, 4819, 4820, 4821, 4822, 4823, 4824, 4825, 4826, 4827, 4828, 4829, 4830, 4831, 4832, 4833, 4834, 4835, 4836, 4837, 4838, 4839, 4840, 4841, 4842, 4843, 4844, 4845, 4846, 4847, 4848, 4849, 4850, 4851, 4852, 4853, 4854, 4855, 4856, 4857, 4858, 4859, 4860, 4861, 4862, 4863, 4864, 4865, 4866, 4867, 4868, 4869, 4870, 4871, 4872, 4873, 4874, 4875, 4876, 4877, 4878, 4879, 4880, 4881, 4882, 4883, 4884, 4885, 4886, 4887, 4888, 4889, 4890, 4891, 4892, 4893, 4894, 4895, 4896, 4897, 4898, 4899, 4900, 4901, 4902, 4903, 4904, 4905, 4906, 4907, 4908, 4909, 4910, 4911, 4912, 4913, 4914, 4915, 4916, 4917, 4918, 4919, 4920, 4921, 4922, 4923, 4924, 4925, 4926, 4927, 4928, 4929, 4930, 4931, 4932, 4933, 4934, 4935, 4936, 4937, 4938, 4939, 4940, 4941, 4942, 4943, 4944, 4945, 4946, 4947, 4948, 4949, 4950, 4951, 4952, 4953, 4954, 4955, 4956, 4957, 4958, 4959, 4960, 4961, 4962, 4963, 4964, 4965, 4966, 4967, 4968, 4969, 4970, 4971, 4972, 4973, 4974, 4975, 4976, 4977, 4978, 4979, 4980, 4981, 4982, 4983, 4984, 4985, 4986, 4987, 4988, 4989, 4990, 4991, 4992, 4993, 4994, 4995, 4996, 4997, 4998, 4999, 5000.

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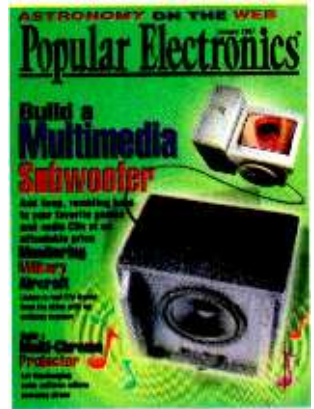
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COVER STORY

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Page 37

CONSTRUCTION

41 Build a Multi-Chrome Projector

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Page 41

48 Build a Temperature Adapter

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FEATURES

45 Monitoring Military Aircraft

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Page 45

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PRODUCT REVIEWS

23 Gizmo

RadioShack DX-394 Receiver, Goldstar Model F-191 Wall-Hanging Audio System, Cobra Model RDL/712SW Radar Detector, MindDrive Thought-Driven Software, and much more

COLUMNS

12 Multimedia Watch

Speakers that Roar, and More—*Marc Spiwak*

16 Net Watch

Astronomy on the Web—*Dan Karagiannis*

20 DX Listening

Winter DXing—*Don Jensen*

58 Think Tank

Semiconductors and a Look Back—*John Yacono*

61 Ham Radio

High-Band Antennas—*Joseph J. Carr*

64 Antique Radio

Antique Radio on the Web—*Marc Ellis*

66 Computer Bits

Coming Trends—*Jeff Holtzman*

68 Circuit Circus

Electronic Sensors—*Charles D. Rakes*

75 Scanner Scene

Area 51 Listening—*Marc Saxon*

DEPARTMENTS

4 Editorial

6 Letters

10 New Products

54 Annual Index

76 Electronics Library

77 Popular Electronics Market Center

110 Advertiser's Index

110A Free Information Card

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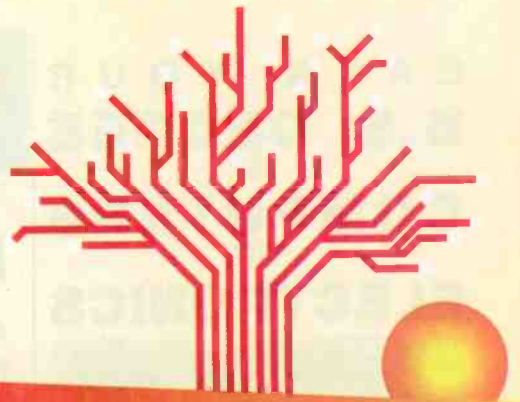
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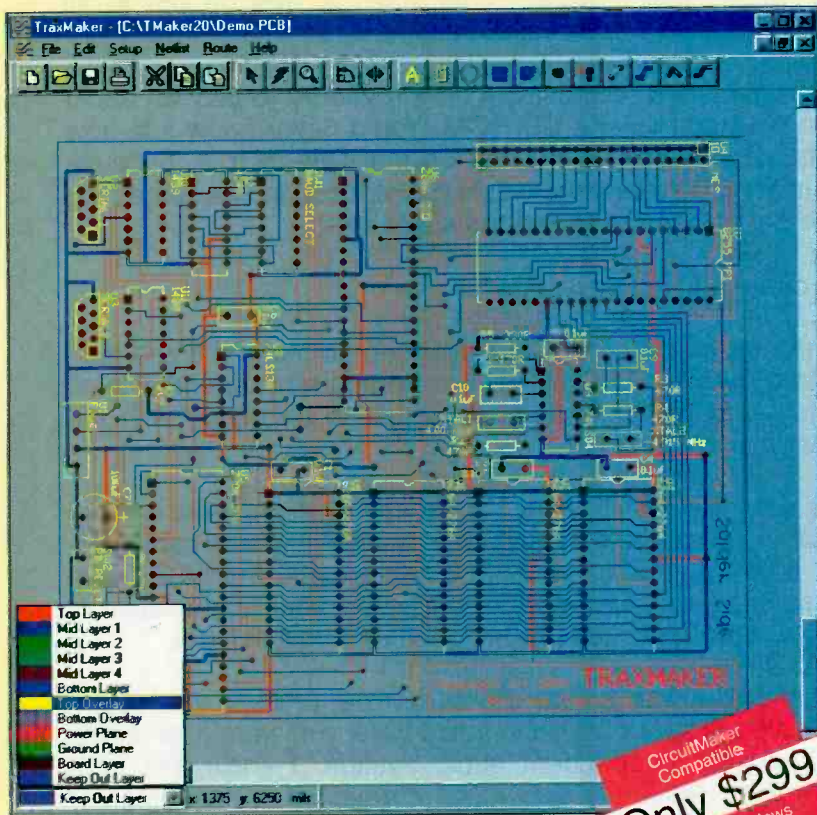
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TraxMaker is a Printed Circuit Board (PCB) layout program that supports multiple layers along with full auto placement of components and autorouting of tracks. TraxMaker makes good design practice easy, according to user definable “Design Rules”. It has a familiar, easy to learn Windows interface. TraxMaker is a truly cost effective package which is sure to handle your most demanding PCB design tasks. TraxMaker can be used as a standalone product or with compatible schematic capture products. When used in conjunction with CircuitMaker, TraxMaker completes a powerful beginning to end circuit design system.



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Product literature and a free functional TraxMaker demo are available on the Internet at <http://www.microcode.com>, on CompuServe (GO MICROCODE) and on America Online by doing a file search for TraxMaker

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EDITORIAL

Bass Notes

Ask just about any audiophile and he or she will tell you what's most often missing from a poor-quality audio system—bass. When that booming quality is there, it only enhances a listening experience. But when there's very little bottom end to be heard, any serious listener will have a problem.

Now if you've ever used a standard, multimedia computer you should be able to appreciate that not only is there very little bass present, there's often *no* bottom end to the sound at all! Try playing a jet-fighter simulation game using standard multimedia speakers and you'll see what I mean. Often the explosions in such a game sound like little more than the white noise found on the dial between radio stations, and do not at all increase a player's "adrenaline rush."

Even worse is the sound you'll hear if you try to play an audio CD on your computer's CD-ROM. You'd never know just how rich the digital audio contained on that little disc is, because most multimedia speakers would make it sound like something played out of a pocket-sized transistor radio.

What can a computer-user do?

Well, the easiest thing to do would be to go out and buy a multimedia subwoofer. But unless you're prepared to spend at least a couple-hundred dollars, don't expect to be happy with the results you get.

That's why this month, **Popular Electronics** presents a more affordable, do-it-yourself approach to solving the computer-audio problem. For under \$80 you can build the Multimedia Subwoofer—a unit that will really increase your appreciation of just how much bass does to enhance an audio system.

With the Subwoofer, sound effects will roar to life in your room, and music will sound so good you'd think you were listening to a high-quality, independent audio system. I know this from experience—I have the Subwoofer connected to my computer and I'm listening to a favorite CD of mine as I write this! The story begins on page 37.


Dan Karagiannis
Editor

How to make your car invisible to radar and laser...legally!

Rocky Mountain Radar introduces a device guaranteed to make your car electronically "invisible" to speed traps—if you get a ticket while using the product, the manufacturer will pay your fine!



■ **The Phazer will "jam" both radar and laser guns, preventing police from measuring your speed.**

If your heart doesn't skip a beat when you drive past a speed trap—even if you aren't speeding—don't bother reading this. I can't tell you how many times that has happened to me. Driving down the interstate with my cruise control set at eight miles over the limit, I catch a glimpse of a police car parked on the side of the road. My heart skips a

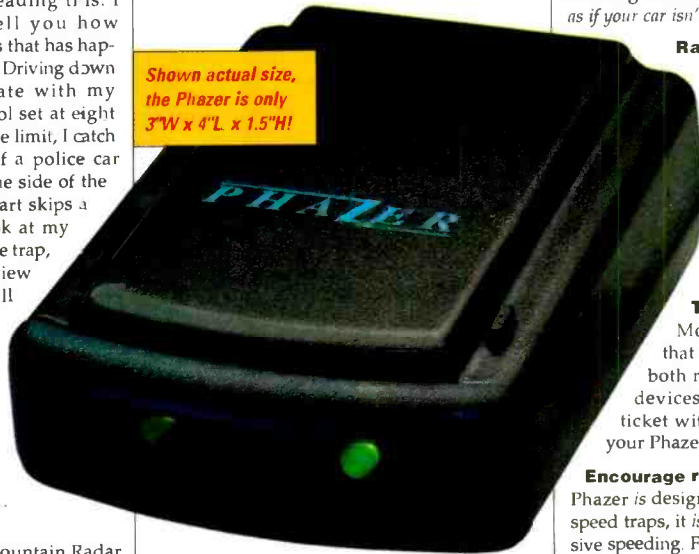
beat and for some reason I look at my speedometer. After I've passed the trap, my eyes stay glued to my rear view mirror, praying the officer will pass me up for a "bigger fish."

It seems that as speed-detection technology has gotten more and more advanced, speeding tickets have become virtually unavoidable. And although devices exist that enable motorists to detect these speed traps, they are outlawed in many states... including mine.

The solution. Today, Rocky Mountain Radar offers drivers like me a perfect solution—the Phazer. Combining a passive radar scrambler with an active laser scrambler, the Phazer makes your automobile electronically "invisible" to police speed-detecting equipment.

The radar component works by mixing an X, K or Ka radar signal with an FM "chirp" and bouncing it back at the squad car by way of a

waveguide antenna, effectively confusing the computer inside the radar gun. The laser component transmits an infrared beam that has the same effect on laser Lidar units.



Perfectly legal. Some radar devices have been outlawed because they *transmit* scrambling radar beams back to the waiting law enforcement vehicle. The Phazer, however, *reflects* a portion of the signal plus an added FM signal back to the police car. This, in effect, gives the waiting radar unit an electronic "lobotomy." Best of all, unless you are a resident of Minnesota, Oklahoma or Washington, D.C., using the Phazer is completely within your legal rights.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAR DISAPPEAR

Radar and laser scramblers are devices that foil speed traps by making vehicles electronically "invisible" to police radar. Radar scramblers mix a portion of the radar signal with background clutter and reflect it back to the squad car. This technique, pioneered by Rocky Mountain Radar, creates an unreadable signal that confuses the computer inside the radar gun.

The laser scrambler in the Phazer works in a similar manner. It transmits a special infrared beam with information designed to scramble the laser signal. The result? Readouts on police radar and laser guns remain blank. As far as the police officer is concerned, your vehicle is not even on the road.



■ **The Phazer makes your car invisible to police radar and lasers or the manufacturer will pay your speeding ticket!**

How it scrambles radar.

Police radar takes five to 10 measurements of a vehicle's speed in about one second. The Phazer sends one signal that tells the radar the car is going 15 m.p.h. and another signal that the car is going 312 m.p.h. Because police radar can't verify the speed, it displays no speed at all. *To the radar gun, your car isn't even on the road.*

Works with laser, too! The Phazer also protects your vehicle from Lidar guns that use the change in distance over time to detect a vehicle's speed. The Phazer uses light-emitting diodes (LEDs) to fire invisible infrared pulses through the windshield. Laser guns interpret those pulses as a false indication of the car's distance, blocking measurement of your speed. *Again, it's as if your car isn't even on the road.*

Range up to three miles.

The Phazer begins to scramble both radar and laser signals as far as three miles away from the speed trap. Its range of effectiveness extends to almost 100 feet away from the police car, at which point you should be able to make visual contact and reduce your speed accordingly.

Ticket rebate program. Rocky Mountain Radar is so confident that the Phazer will protect you from both radar and laser speed-detection devices that if you do get a speeding ticket within the first year while using your Phazer, they will pay your fine!

Encourage responsible driving. While the Phazer is designed to help you (and me) avoid speed traps, it is *not* intended to condone excessive speeding. For that reason, the manufacturer will only pay tickets where the speed limit was not exceeded by more than 30%, or 15 miles per hour, whichever is less.

Risk-free.

Thanks to the ticket rebate program, speed traps don't make my heart skip a beat anymore.

Try it. Your car will be invisible to police radar and laser, or the manufacturer will pay your fine! It's backed by our risk-free trial and three-year manufacturer's warranty. If you're not satisfied, return it within 90 days for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.



■ **The Phazer is a completely legal way to protect yourself from speed traps (except in OK, MN and Washington DC).**

The Phazer \$199 \$14 S&H

Please mention promotional code 1901-PL-6678.

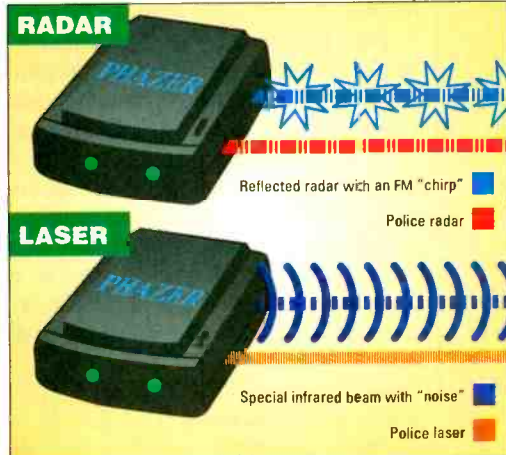
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LETTERS

Metered Words

DIGITAL PANEL METER CORRECTION

I'd like to point out some minor additions and corrections to my article, "Using Digital Panel Meters," which appeared in the October 1996 issue of **Popular Electronics**.

The article states, "One-half- and one-tenth-percent resistors are manufactured, but are very expensive and difficult to find in small quantities." They are still expensive, but Mouser Electronics now sells one-tenth-percent resistors in single quantities. Holsworthy 0.1% resistors are listed in its current catalog at \$1.08 each, in the same standard sizes as one-percent resistors.

When the article was written, I had never used the prototype Automobile Voltage Monitor in hot weather. I have found that if the DPM module used in the prototype is exposed to the summer sun in a closed car, the entire LCD readout turns dark. It returns to normal when the heat is reduced. I do not know if this would occur with other DPM models. It has happened several times, and there is no apparent damage.

There are two minor corrections. In the first, on page 39, the description of the 6929-ME DPM module says, "the input impedance is less than 100 megohms." That should be "greater than 100 megohms." This is important when a high-resistance voltage divider is used, as in Fig. 7.

For the second correction, on page 79 the stock numbers for low-current LEDs from Digi-Key Corp. should be HLMP-4700QT-ND for red and HLMP-471QT-ND for yellow.

Sorry about any inconvenience these errors might have caused.

—Bill Stiles

THINK TANK ADDITION

I just received in the mail today my November 1996 issue of **Popular Electronics**. It looks great.

However, I'd like to add something to my "Remote Tel-Bell Ringer" circuit, which is Fig. 5 in the *Think Tank* col-

umn of that issue (see pages 66 to 67 of the November issue for the circuit's description). Finding parts for a project isn't always the easiest thing in the world, so I thought I'd add some RadioShack part numbers for the components in the circuit.

For MOV1, you can use a RadioShack #276-568 varistor. The MOC3010 optoisolator (IC2) is available as part number 276-134. For neon lamps NE1 and NE2 you can use NE-2-type units.

Also, bridge rectifier BR1 can be obtained from RadioShack as number 276-1161. Finally, capacitor C1, the 1- μ F, 200-volt unpolarized unit is available as part number 272-1055.

Of course equivalent parts are available from other sources, but these just happen to be the parts I used. I hope this helps.

Thanks for publishing my work in *Think Tank*.

—Craig Kendrick Sellen

Thanks for contributing, Craig. We always appreciate it when circuit designers offer advice on locating the parts used in their circuits.

I should also add, to all our readers out there, that if we ever run a project with a hard-to-find part, and you happen to come across another source for it besides the ones we list, feel free to send it in to Letters.

—Editor

HAVES & NEEDS

I need a circuit for Control-L or LANC. Do you know where or how I can obtain a circuit for the LANC Control-L for computer control of a camcorder or VCR. In particular, I need the VCR circuit, showing the schematic and connections, as well as an explanation of how it works. I would greatly appreciate any help.

WILLIAM CONLON

P. O. Box 364

Litchfield, IL 62056

I have a Hickok CRO 5000A oscilloscope and am looking for a replacement for its CRT. The CRT is a four-inch Brimar SE4D with the following specifications: an approximate length of 13.25 inches; unblanking DC; accelerating potential, 3.8 kilovolts; usable viewing area of 4.8 × 8 cm; phosphor, P.31. Some of the CRTs were manufactured in England by Thorn Radio Valves and Tube Ltd. in 1972. I wrote to the company twice, and did not receive a reply.

IVAN ZACHEV

4859 Elmwood Street

Muskegon, MI 49441

I have a question about a plug-in cartridge for a Commodore computer. I found a bunch of cartridges at a local hamfest, and one of them appears to be incorrectly marked. I opened it up and found inside a chip marked: "Ham tex C-64, board markings, assembly 325181-01, Fab 326182; a/w 326177 rev A."

Also printed on the case cover is "SYS 32768." When entered, the program seems to run, but I have no idea where to hook up inputs or outputs or what might be needed to isolate it from the transceiver. Any help with this, or any documentation that might be related, would be much appreciated.

By the way, I'm running this on a Commodore SX-64, and it would be great for using when I'm camping or anywhere outdoors.

DANNY J. GADUT

8943 Cypress Avenue

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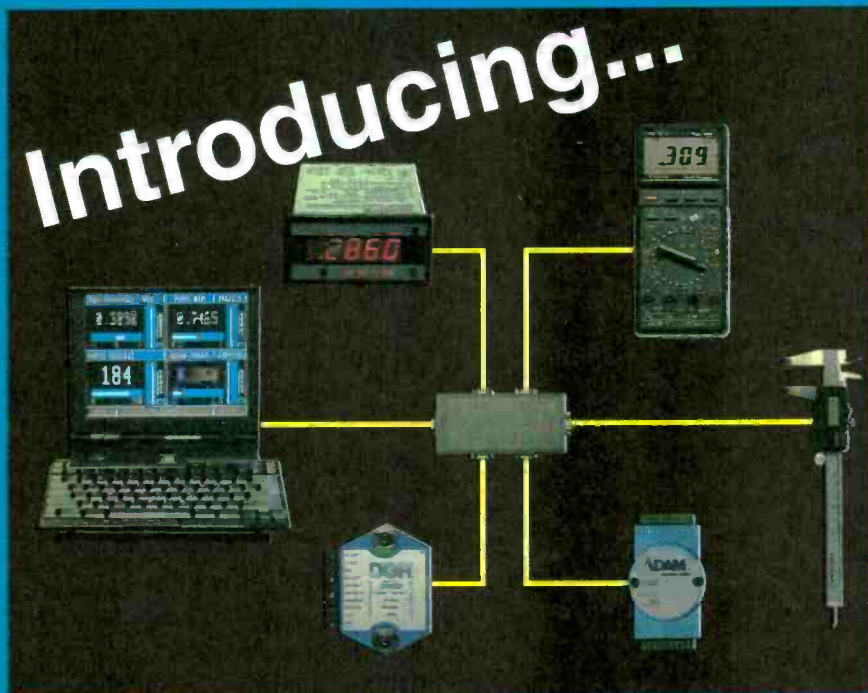
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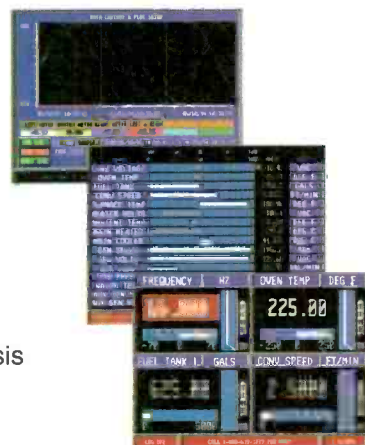
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At the heart of the fax/modem is DSVD technology, which multiplexes voice and data for simultaneous transmission over a single phone line. The DocuPal automatically regulates the stream so that data transmitting at 28.8 kbps drops to 14.4 kbps when voice is added. The auto-mode and dynamic rate renegotiation ensure the fastest available speeds, even when connecting with slower modems.

The DocuPal fax/modem also offers a full-featured phone and digital answering machine with remote message retrieval. A full-duplex microphone, which can be attached to the monitor, placed on a desk, or clipped to a lapel, assures the user of hands-free communication. The fax/modem automatically routes incoming calls to the proper function.

DocuPal comes with ArchShare proprietary software, which provides support for simultaneous communication between up to eight workstations, including full-featured whiteboard

editing. Sound Blaster-compatible audio/MIDI functions support music, voice-over, and 3D effects. With CD-quality audio, DocuPal can transform a PC into a full-scale mixing board with simultaneous playback of multiple WAV files.

The DocuPal DSVD fax/modem has a suggested retail price of \$439; an optional headset, with volume control, costs \$25. For more information, contact Archtek America Corporation, 18549 Gale Avenue, City of Industry, CA 91748; Tel. 888-272-4835; Fax: 818-912-9700; Web: <http://www.archtek.com.tw>.

CIRCLE 80 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

FIELD-SERVICE KIT

Fieldpiece Instruments' HS26K15 Fieldpack is a multifunctional, heavy-duty instrument kit designed to meet the needs of field-service technicians. It features the HS26 top-of-the-line "stick"-style digital multimeter, which offers the 12 most popular ranges for use in the field. In addition to volts, ohms, and continuity, it performs capacitance tests and has a "hold" button. For measuring motor start current, it also has a max-hold function, which holds the highest reading.



The briefcase-style kit comes equipped with an array of test accessories, including a complete set of test leads, short and long probe tips, an alligator clip, and a full line of accessory heads; a clamp for measuring AC current, and dual-temperature, relative-humidity, and micro-amp heads. The accessory heads slip easily onto the top of the DMM to expand its test capability to meet almost any test condition. For remote access or hard-to-reach

spots, an accessory head can be placed where it needs to be, attached by test leads to the meter in the technician's hand.

The AC current clamp converts AC current to AC millivolts, allows the meter to display readings to 0.1-amp resolution, and reads up to 300 amps AC. It also features built-in capacitance testing. The dual-temperature accessory head, which is accurate enough for HVACR applications, converts temperature to DC millivolts. It measures two temperature sources simultaneously for comparison and features calibration pots for ice-bucket calibration in the field for accuracy up to $\pm 1^\circ\text{F}$. The relative-humidity head converts relative humidity percentage (RH%) to DC millivolts and displays RH% at 0.1% RH resolution. The micro-amp accessory head converts μA DC to DC millivolts. It measures current in a heater's flame safety diode circuit to determine if gas is lit, providing HVACR technicians with an added margin of safety.

The rugged case features clear-view pockets that hold and protect the instruments while allowing easy access, even when the case is hanging from the user's shoulder. Zippered back pockets and kangaroo pockets can be used to carry paperwork and other miscellaneous tools.

The HS26K15 Fieldpack costs \$449. For more information, contact Fieldpiece Instruments, 231 East Imperial Highway, Suite 250, Fullerton, CA 92635; Tel. 714-992-1239; Fax: 714-992-6541.

CIRCLE 81 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

ADJUSTABLE-DISPLAY MULTIMETER

Extech's Model 380206 multimeter features a display that tilts up to provide a wide viewing angle. The multimeter measures DC voltage up to 1000 volts with an accuracy of $\pm 0.5\%$; AC voltage up to 750 volts; AC and DC current, resistance, capacitance; and temperature in Fahrenheit or Celsius. It can be used to perform diode and transistor tests, and audible continuity is also featured. Readings appear in

Does your scale measure your weight and body fat accurately?

Tanita develops world's first integrated medical scale and body-fat analyzer.

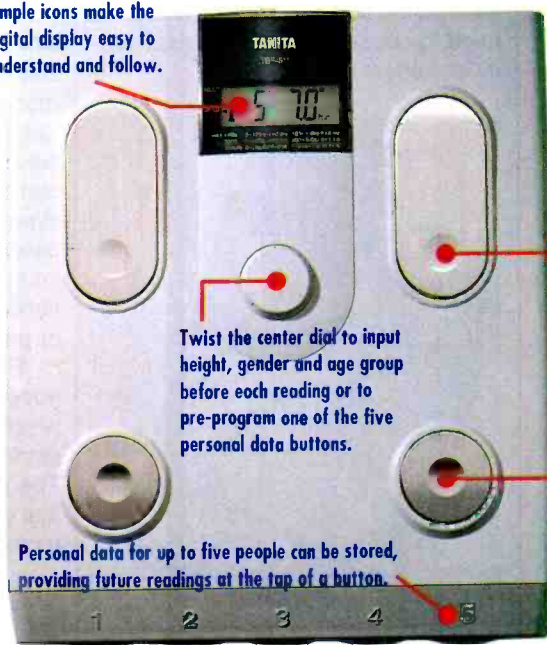
by J. Emerson Brown

Fat! Everyone hates it. Everyone has it, but some people have more than others. Fat cells, which burn very slowly, are nature's way of sustaining us during periods when food is scarce. But times have changed—we're pretty well fed these days. It shows around my waist, and it probably shows around yours, too. No wonder health professionals recommend that men maintain an ideal level of no more than 23% body fat and women a level of 27%.

What is body fat? Regardless of where fat is on your body or what it feels like, it's unhealthy. It should be kept in check. Now I can check both my weight and body fat in the privacy of my own bathroom with Tanita's Body Fat Analyzer/Scale.

The invisible enemy! Unlike weight, body fat can't always be detected by the naked eye, and it certainly can't be measured on an ordinary scale. A person may have a slender appearance and relatively low weight, yet believe it or not, still have an unsafe percentage of fat. Unfortunately, with age, this situation often grows worse. There's a lot you can learn from knowing body fat. In fact, it's one of the best ways to monitor a person's health at any age. Carrying too much fat makes people prime candidates for fat-triggered condi-

Simple icons make the digital display easy to understand and follow.



Twist the center dial to input height, gender and age group before each reading or to pre-program one of the five personal data buttons.

Personal data for up to five people can be stored, providing future readings at the top of a button.

The patented "foot-pad" design sends a low, safe electrical current through the body to measure its composition.



HEALTHY BODY FAT RANGE

	Under 30 yrs. old	Over 30 yrs. old
Males	14%-20%	17%-23%
Females	17%-24%	20%-27%

weight-loss program becomes more effective when you know if you're losing pounds from fat or muscle. As for me, monitoring my body-fat percentage with the TBF-511 is now my regular routine (as it should be for anyone who is health-conscious or dieting) to make sure I'm losing, not gaining, fat. It gives me the facts I need to make the right decisions about diet and exercise.

Expert Evaluation. "We have thoroughly evaluated Tanita's new BIA method and find the diagnostics of the analyzers strongly correlate with estimates made with both the DEXA and underwater testing methods. Our results suggest that it is a unique and valid method for measuring total body fat by weight and percentage and offers the advantage of increased speed and ease of measurement." Dr. Steven B. Heymsfield, Associate Director, Obesity Research Center, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, New York.

Risk-free. The TBF-511 Fat Analyzer/Scale comes with our 90-day risk-free trial and a one-year manufacturer's limited warranty. Try it, and if you're not completely satisfied, return it for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.

* Do not use if you have a pacemaker.

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What's your body fat percentage?

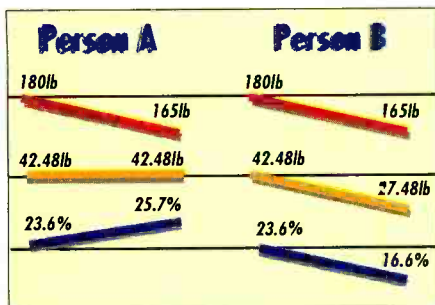
Monitoring body fat should be a regular routine for anyone who is dieting or trying to reach goals in fitness programs.

tions such as heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, digestive diseases and even some forms of cancer.

Simple to use. Weight and body fat readings are simultaneous and immediate, and the body fat correlation with the results of underwater weighing. To use the TBF-511, simply enter your sex, age and height into the monitor, step on the platform, and results appear in about 30 seconds. And, by storing your personal data, you can make future readings even easier.

How the TBF-511 works. Tanita has re-invented BIA (bioelectrical impedance analysis). Long recognized as one of the most accurate methods of analyzing lean and fat body mass, BIA is based on height, weight and the speed at which an electrical current passes through the body. Tanita's BIA method is a process that guarantees accuracy, convenience and speed. A patented "foot-pad" electrode sends a low, safe current through your body and your weight plus body fat are calculated automatically.

The TBF-511 gives you control. This dual purpose device gives you a more complete picture of the shape you're in by accurately measuring your body's fat and lean mass. Your



● Body Weight ● Body Fat Weight ● Body Fat %

Person A and B were the same height and weight and had the same percentage of body fat when they started to diet. Each lost a total of 15 pounds over the same period of time. Person A's diet consisted of simply cutting calories. He lost weight, but his percentage of body fat increased—he is actually "fatter." Person B's diet combined cutting calories with a program of exercise. In addition to the 15 pound weight loss, his body fat has dropped to 16.6%.

the 0.98-inch, 3-1/2-digit adjustable display. Accessories include test leads, a 9-volt battery, and a rugged, drop-proof case.

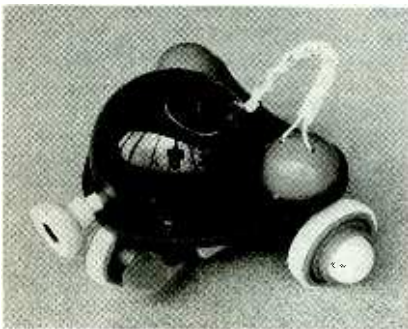


The Model 380206 adjustable-display multimeter costs \$99. For additional information, contact Extech Instruments Corporation, 335 Bear Hill Road, Waltham, MA 02154; Tel. 617-890-7440; Fax: 617-898-7864.

CIRCLE 82 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

ROBOT KIT

OWI's *Hyper Peppy* robot kit is aimed at young hobbyists. It is easy for children to assemble, either alone or with their parents' help. Once assembled, the robot reacts to touch and loud sounds by changing direction. It is powered by two "AA" batteries.



Last year, the *Hyper Peppy* kit was selected by the Institute for Childhood Resources as one of their Top Ten Creative Products and 100 Best Children's Products. Among the criteria used in the selection process were safety, age appropriateness, lasting play value, durability, good transition from home to school, educational value, and "just plain fun."

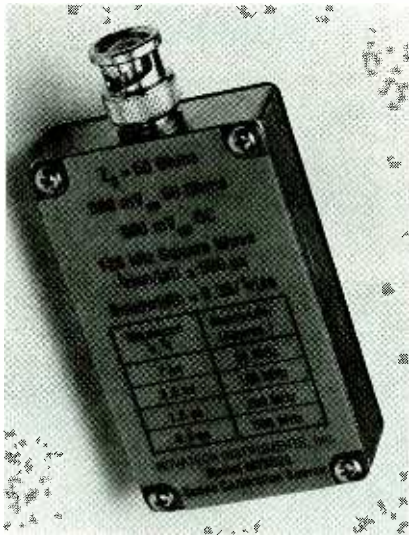
The *Hyper Peppy* robot kit (Model MV-969) costs \$24.95. For additional

information, contact OWI Inc., 1160 Mahalo Place, Compton, CA 90220-5443; Tel. 310-638-4732; Fax: 310-638-8347.

CIRCLE 83 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

SCOPE CALIBRATION SOURCE

Novatech's Model MTS529 scope calibration source generates a crystal-controlled, 25-kHz square wave that has a fast rise time and calibrated amplitude. The front-panel decal contains all the information most users will need to check their oscilloscopes easily and effectively.



The palm-sized, battery-operated device can be used to test the horizontal timebase, the vertical amplifier, and the bandwidth of oscilloscopes. The period of the generated square wave has a time accuracy of 0.05% and is used to test the horizontal time base. The square wave rise time is less than 500 picoseconds, which allows the MTS529 to be used to test oscilloscope bandwidths beyond 500 MHz. The MTS529's amplitude accuracy is 5%, and can be used to verify the vertical amplifier of the oscilloscope.

The MTS529 scope calibration source costs \$169 in single-unit quantities and \$85 each in 1000-piece quantities. For additional information, contact Novatech Instruments, Inc., 1530 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 303, Seattle, WA 98102; Tel. 206-322-1562; Fax: 206-328-6904; Web: <http://www.eskimo.com/~ntsales>.

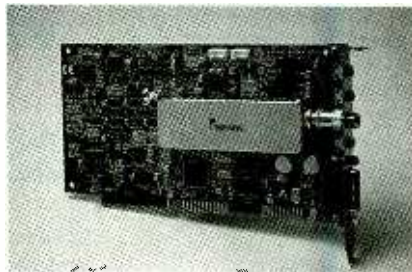
CIRCLE 84 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

PC FM-RADIO CARD

If you like to listen to music while you work, but routinely tie up your CD-ROM drive with business applications, check out one of three *FM Radio Cards* for IBM-compatible PCs from *Paradise Multimedia Products*, a product group of Philips Electronics. They allow you to listen to your favorite tunes—or ball games, news programs, or talk radio—while you work at your computer.

At the heart of each card is the Philips-designed FM tuner module, which supports the Radio Broadcast Data System, or RBDS. The RBDS module allows your PC to receive FM radio programs, along with any channel, station, or programming information that is sent out along with the radio signal. The FM radio cards automatically scan and store FM radio station information so that you can select stations based on frequency, music type, or programming style.

The entry-level card features the easy-to-use Smart Radio™ interface, which looks like a radio console and stores up to 100 stations in memory. The software includes a built-in alarm that can be used to turn on the radio at a preset time.



The Sound and Radio Card adds SoundBlaster Pro capability. The 16-bit sound card is Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 compatible, supports General MIDI and the Windows Sound System, and meets MPC 3 requirements. Digital recording and playback is supported in 8- and 16-bit resolutions in either stereo or mono at up to 44.1-kHz sampling rates.

To that list of features, the top-of-the-line Wavetable, Sound & Radio Card also adds wavetable synthesis with 1-MB ROM of sound samples, 128 voices, and a drum kit.

Prices for the RBDS-compatible FM radio cards range from \$59 to \$139.

continued on page 72

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MULTIMEDIA WATCH

Speakers that Roar, and More

BY MARC SPIWAK
TECHNICAL EDITOR
WINDOWS MAGAZINE

I recently hooked up one of the best pair of multimedia speakers I've ever heard for a home computer or home entertainment system. The ACS500, from Altec Lansing, is one of the most adaptable multimedia speaker systems around. The system consists of two satellite speakers and a subwoofer. Each of the two satellites puts out 22.5 watts, and the subwoofer can belt out 40 watts of low-frequency energy, for sound you can really feel.

Within each satellite speaker, which towers nearly as high as a 20-inch monitor, are four drivers: two 3-inch midrange, one 2.5-inch full range, and one 1/2-inch dome tweeter. The satellites respond to frequencies from 32 Hz to 20 kHz. The subwoofer contains a 6.5-inch long-throw woofer that grunts at signals from 35 to 250 Hz.

What's really neat, though, is how the satellite drivers are used. In addition to all the fancy drivers, the system includes Dolby Pro-Logic circuitry that can really enhance any sound output, but most effectively sound that's been Dolby encoded for surround sound. That's why the ACS500 is also the perfect set of speakers for a home entertainment system. And two separate inputs allow you to connect the system to both your computer and something else—more than likely your VCR right now. But with computers now being able to play Video CD movies using software MPEG decoding, who knows how long it will be before we all want surround sound on our computers. (Actually DVD will deliver all that, but it's hard to say exactly when.) The Dolby system even has a built-in signal generator so that you can properly adjust the volume of the audio channels.

The bottom half of each satellite speaker forms the traditional pair of multimedia speakers, with a 3-inch midrange and tweeter in each. The top half of each satellite houses two drivers. The 3-inch midrange driver on top is aimed outward providing surround-sound output, while the 2.5-inch full-range driver is aimed inward providing center-channel sound. In addition to



Altec Lansing's ACS500 multimedia speaker system consists of two 22.5-watt satellite speakers and a 40-watt subwoofer. Dolby Pro-Logic circuitry is built in.

the two separate inputs, line-level outputs for all signals are available on the rear panel of one of the speakers. That way you can use the Dolby decoding that the system provides for external

speakers you want to position away from your computer.

The guys at Altec Lansing have definitely done their homework on the ACS500, because the system really sounds great. I have no trouble recommending it to anyone wanting a high-end multimedia speaker system. You, however, might have trouble parting with the money for these speakers—the system has a \$450 list price. But, hey, top-of-the-line stuff always costs more. And it's usually worth it.

A NEW MOUSE

Microsoft has combined a wheel and a mouse in a new kind of pointing device, the Microsoft IntelliMouse. The IntelliMouse looks and feels just like the Microsoft Mouse 2.0, except that there's a wheel positioned between the two familiar buttons. Depending on the application, the wheel will let you scroll and zoom. Of course, the only applications right now are for Microsoft's software. The IntelliMouse provides support for Windows 95 Explorer, Office 97, and Internet Explorer 3.0.

Rotating the wheel scrolls up or down. You can also press down on the wheel like a third button to activate var-



Down in the Dumps features the Blubs, thumb-sized extraterrestrials who crash land in a smelly dump on planet Earth.

Fifteen years of microelectronic research makes conventional antennas a thing of the past!

This little box uses your home's electrical wiring to give non-subscribers, cable subscribers and satellite users better TV reception!

by David Evans



Technology corner

1. Why don't conventional antennas work as well as the Spectrum?

Bandwidth of TV Signal

1 2 3 4 5 6



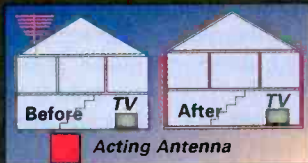
When TV signals are tuned at the TV channel's center frequency, optimum tuning has been achieved.

Other antennas can't offer center frequency tuning like the Spectrum Antenna can. They only offer such tuning up to the edge of the center frequency. As a result your TV picture remains snowy.

Spectrum system
Precision tuning

Other systems
Non-precision tuning

2. How does Spectrum use a home's electrical wiring as an antenna?



Believe it or not, the Spectrum Antenna simply "activates" the giant antenna that already exists in your home. Essentially, it uses all of the wiring throughout your home's walls and ceilings to make an antenna as large as your house for unbelievably clear reception of local broadcasting.

3. Spectrum antenna features

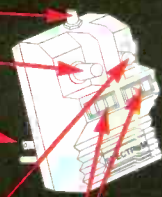
Parallel 75 ohm resistance
For minimum loss of signal

Signal search control
For selecting multiple antenna configurations

Polarized three-prong plug
For optimum signal grounding to eliminate noise and static

Resonant fine tuner control
For dialing in crisp, clear TV stereo reception, eliminates ghosting

Dual AC outlets with built-in surge protection
For plugging in additional TV/stereo equipment guarding against damage and electrical surges



Until recently, the only convenient way to guarantee great TV reception was to have cable installed or place an antenna on top of your TV. But who wants to pay a monthly cable fee just to get clear reception, or have rabbit-ear antennas that just don't work on all stations? Some people just aren't interested in subscribing to cable. Or they may live in an area where they can't get cable and TV-top antennas aren't powerful enough. And what about those people who have cable or satellite systems but still can't get certain local stations in clearly?

Now, thanks to fifteen years of microelectronics research, a new device has been developed that is so advanced, it actually makes conventional antennas a thing of the past. It's called the Spectrum Universal Antenna/Tuner.

Advanced technology.

Just imagine watching TV and seeing a picture so clear that you'd almost swear you were there live. Just plug the Spectrum Antenna into a standard AC outlet and plug your TV into the Spectrum. You can remove the unsightly clutter of traditional TV-top devices gathering more dust than television signals. Get ready for great reception. Your TV will suddenly display a sharp, focused picture thanks to its advanced design "Signal Search" and "Fine Tuner" controls.

Uses your home's electrical wiring. The Spectrum Antenna is a highly sophisticated electronic device that connects into a standard wall outlet. The outlet interfaces the Spectrum Antenna with the huge antenna that is your home wiring network. It takes the electrical wiring in your house or apartment and turns it into a multi-tunable, giant TV reception station which will improve your TV's overall tuning capability. The results are incredible. Just think how much power runs through your home's AC wiring system—all that power will be used to receive your local broadcasting signals.

How it works. Broadcast TV signals are sent out from the local broadcast station (ABC, CBS, NBC, etc.). They interface with your home's AC power line system, a huge aerial antenna network of wiring as large as your home itself. When the Spectrum Antenna interfaces with the AC line, the signal is sent to its signal

processing circuit. It then processes and separates the signal into 12 of the best antenna configurations. These specially processed signals route themselves into 12 separate circuits. The Spectrum Antenna includes a 12-position rotary tapping switch, the "Signal Switch" control, which gathers twelve of the best antenna configurations.

The "Signal Search" offers varying antenna configurations for the user to select from the best signals of all those being sent. The signal then passes through the Spectrum Antenna's special "Fine Tuner" circuit for producing crisp, clear reception.

Risk-free offer. The Spectrum Universal Antenna/Tuner comes with our exclusive 90-day risk-free home trial and a 90-day manufacturer's warranty. Try it, and if you're

not satisfied, return it for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.

Limited time offer! We realize that most people have more than one TV in their home. We are offering a special discount on additional Spectrum Antennas so you get great reception on all your TVs!

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ious functions. For example, AutoScroll automatically scrolls through a document at whatever speed you set. Bundled IntelliPoint software lets you customize the mouse functions. I'm comfortable with my old Microsoft mouse, and I usually stick with things that I'm comfortable with. However, people who are always looking for a new pointing device that will let them work faster will want to check out this unusual new mouse. IntelliMouse sells for about \$85.

NEW STUFF

If you fantasize about being an investigator, you might be interested in Activision's new game, *The Pandora Directive*. You get to be Tex Murphy, searching for a missing person in April, 2043. That person happens to be an ex-military individual, and he knows exactly what happened with the rumored UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico, back in 1947. But it's easy to get yourself in trouble when the government's biggest secret is loose. All live characters, famous actors, different levels, multiple endings, and more, turn your computer into a Hollywood novel.

I'm not much of a hockey fan, or a sports fan in general, for that matter. However, from what I can tell from a beta version of Virgin Interactive's new *NHL Powerplay '96*, hockey fans will

really like this game. The graphics are fairly realistic, and the fluid action is fantastic. Once you get used to the animated graphics you'll feel like you're participating in live hockey on TV rather than playing a game. All the realism of professional hockey is here, including the choice to play in season games, playoffs, and so on.

I received a pre-alpha release of *Down in the Dumps* from Philips Media, and it looks interesting—the final version should be on sale by the time you read this for \$59.95. The Blubs are thumb-sized extraterrestrials who crash into a bunch of thugs in outer space. Both ships then crash land in a smelly dump on planet Earth. The Blubs have to find missing parts of their ship and repair the damage, but the thugs will do anything to prevent that. Your job is to help the Blubs out in any way you can. Really cool graphics bring this unusual game to life.

Three new games from LucasArts this month, *Mortimer and the Riddles of the Medallion*, *Afterlife*, and *Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures*. Combining action, discovery, and one of LucasArts' best gaming engines, *Mortimer* is an action game designed for kids ages 5 to 11. The game is based on the Rebel Assault engine, so the action is similar although it takes you to very different worlds.

Afterlife is the ultimate simulation

game where players build and maintain heaven and hell. Souls must be kept happy in order for development to proceed without complications. Definitely an unusual game.

Indiana Jones and his Desktop Adventures lets you join Indy in literally billions of unique and varied mini adventure games. The games are highly suited for people who don't have the time required to play some of today's involved computer games. But each new Indy adventure, loaded with new characters, puzzles, and treasures, can be solved in about an hour. Set in Mexico in the 1930s, each game is rich with ancient Indian treasures that you and Indy must save for the world to enjoy.

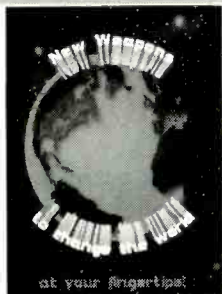
Chronicles of the Sword from Psygnosis is set in the year 420 AD, the era of Arthur, Merlin, Lancelot, and Morgana. You play Gawain, who is called upon to help defeat Morgana's lust for power and her attempt to overthrow Arthur's reign. There are hundreds of locations to explore and plenty of puzzles to solve along your journey from Camelot to the evil Morgana's Lyonesse castle. Magic and mortality surround you throughout the game.

If you're interested in learning how to play the guitar, then you might be interested in the *eMedia Guitar Method* CD-ROM, from eMedia. The title makes good use of a computer's multimedia capabilities. There are 60 lessons to teach you everything, starting with the basics like stringing a guitar. There are over 30 videos and more than 3 hours of audio, with an option for male or female vocals. A built-in recorder lets you record your own playing and compare it to the instructor's. An automatic tuning feature helps you tune your guitar visually by playing into your PC's microphone, and an electronic metronome helps keep tempo. This one will cost you around \$59.95. ■



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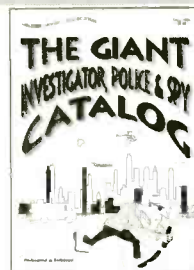
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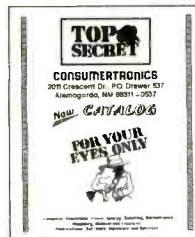
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NET WATCH

Astronomy on the Web

BY DAN KARAGIANNIS

Winter brings with it the crispest night-time skies. Step outside on any clear evening, look up, and you'll notice that, as your foggy breath disappears in the increasing darkness, you'll become aware of an increasing number of stars.

Some of you who read this have access to a telescope, which means those stellar objects in the heavens will look even better. Of course, a tele-

scope capable of gathering a lot of light, and as a result capable of resolving faint objects, can be quite expensive. So how do you see what treasures the night-time sky really has to offer?

Well, for starters, get in out of the cold. Make some hot chocolate, have a seat, and dial into your Internet account. Because, as you'll see, there's plenty of stargazing to be done on the World-Wide Web.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

The Astronomy Picture of the Day site is probably the best place to begin if you're looking for stellar objects in

cyberspace. As its name implies, the site contains a new deep-space photograph each day. You'll find views of star clusters, nebulae, planets, etc. Best of all, they were not all taken in similar fashion. Some of the shots contain views of the universe from an X-ray point of view, etc. But no matter how they were taken or processed, the resulting images are all extremely crisp.



This view of the Horsehead Nebula is only one of the many stellar delights available at the Astronomy Picture of the Day site.

Each image is accompanied by a detailed description from a professional astronomer. That way you'll know more than just the name of the object you're looking at, but also its distance from Earth, how it was probably formed, its location in the sky, and so on.

Another useful feature of the site is its extensive archive. Pictures from days past are available, making a wealth of the night sky's most important and fascinating objects easily accessible on any day. Each photo's description is also automatically loaded with the image.

Just one note before we move on.

This is an obvious site to bookmark, considering it's updated daily.

A ROBOTIC TELESCOPE

Looking at images stored in servers in cyberspace can be really interesting. However, sometimes you might want to experience the thrill of choosing an object, and pointing a telescope its way. If you feel that way, this next site is for you.

The University of Bradford Robotic Telescope is a totally autonomous, 46-cm telescope located high on the moors in West Yorkshire, England. This amazing observation device "decides" on its own when the conditions are clear enough to photograph the sky. But guess what? You get to decide what it photographs!

The University is kind enough to let anyone on the Internet register for viewing rights. You'll then be notified by e-mail that your password and registration went through. In that same message you'll also receive detailed instructions for how to place your observation request.

Basically, you'll be allowed to "ask" the telescope to look at any object in the northern night-time sky. Your request will be automatically scheduled and carried out by the telescope as time allows. When the object has been viewed, you'll be notified that it's ready to download.

Of course, just about any request you make will be of an object that is available somewhere on the Net. However, it's more fun to have your own personal view of the heavens.

And don't forget: things are always happening in the universe. This spring, for example, Comet Hale-Bopp is supposed to make an impressive appearance in the northern skies. It's safe to expect that this robotic telescope will be working overtime around then!

OUR OWN BACKYARD

So far, we've been talking a lot about distant, stellar objects. But don't forget that there are a lot of neat things to see right in the vicinity of this planet.



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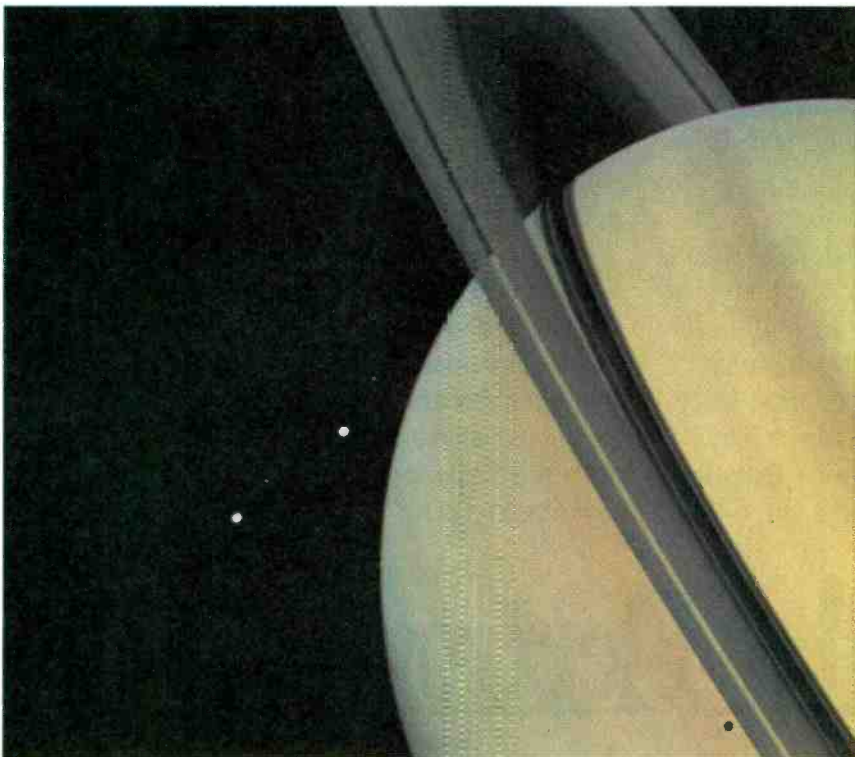
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This image of Comet Hyakutake was taken by the Bradford Robotic Telescope, April 4, 1996, during the dark hour of the Lunar Eclipse. Comet Hale-Bopp this spring should be a popular target for the telescope.

In other words, within our solar system. The Views of the Solar System site quite nicely fills the need for an organized collection of images and information about the Sun, planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and meteoroids found within our own cosmic backyard.

If I had to choose one word to describe this site it would be: "immense." This hot spot contains over 220 HTML pages of information, 950 high-resolution images and animations, and 880 megabytes of data! If you can't find it here, it's probably not relevant to what circles our Sun.



Here's a view of Saturn and two of its moons, Tethys (above) and Dione, that was photographed by Voyager 1 in 1980. This and other planetary images are available from the Views of the Solar System site.

The site is designed like a tour. You can "travel" through space by simply clicking on a planet, or other object. Choose from the following links: Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Asteroids, Comets, and Meteoroids & Meteorites.

Clicking on an object takes you to a page containing information and images. While on each object's page, you can link to pages about its moons (if it's a planet) and other resources. Every bit of information is clearly explained on the pages (there are even links to a Glossary page that explains any unusual terms that are used in the text).

The History of Space Exploration contains information about rocket history, early astronauts, space missions, spacecraft and detailed chronology tables of space exploration. Check that link out if you would like to know more about what our predecessors have done to get closer to our planetary neighbors.

HOT SITES

Astronomy Picture of the Day

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astro-pix.html>

Bradford Robotic Telescope

<http://www.telescope.org/rti>

Views of the Solar System

<http://128.165.1.1/solarsys>

There's also a Table of Contents page with links to all of the various pages within Views Of The Solar System. That's useful if you'd like to jump straight to a topic of interest without following a series of links to get there.

Finally, a People link takes you to a fully indexed list of famous individuals in astronomy. I thought it was a nice touch to give an insight to those responsible for our knowledge of the solar system and the universe.

Well, that's it for this month. Until next time, I hope you enjoy the views of space on cyberspace. And while you're online, don't forget to visit our Web site at <http://www.gernsback.com>. Feel free to e-mail me at peeditor@gernsback.com or send snail-mail to **Net Watch, Popular Electronics**, 500 Bi-County Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735. ■

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DX LISTENING

Winter DXing

BY DON JENSEN

This is the time of year when short-wave DX is at its best. The static levels are low, and the long hours of winter darkness mean improved signals on the lower SW frequencies.

But for those of us living in the northern tier of states, winter means frigid temperatures, blustery snow storms, and icy roads. It's a time when social contacts with our friends seem all the more important.

That's why, ten years ago, a couple of veteran shortwave enthusiasts launched *Winterfest*, a mid-season weekend get-together for radio listeners. Bob Brown, a Pennsylvanian who then headed one of the major SW listener clubs, and Harold Cones, a college professor and longtime DXer, first kicked around the idea. They were joined by a third listener, Kris Field, to form what they laughingly call, "The Gang of Three."

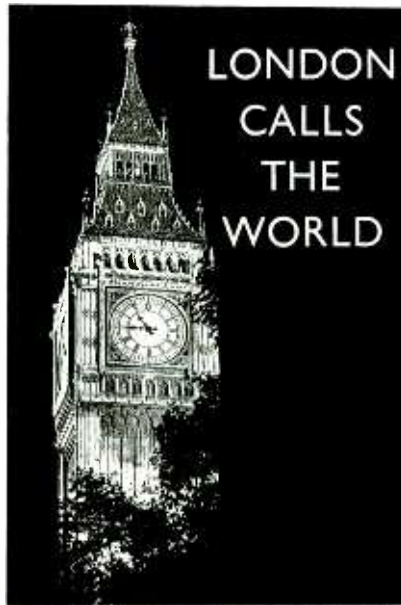
Plans for that first gathering advanced smoothly. Others heard about the winter retreat and announced their intention to attend as well. There were 40 radio-listener hobbyists who turned up at the Fiesta Motor Inn in Willow Grove, PA, that snowy weekend a decade ago.

They had so much fun that they vowed to do it again. And they did, leaving behind the Fiesta's infamous "beautiful pink and purple Pancho Villa Room," recalls Cones, for a more comfortable Holiday Inn at Kulpville, PA, not far from Philadelphia. The DXer event has continued there every winter for 10 years.

This year, *Winterfest* is scheduled for March 14-16, 1997. Cones says that any and all listeners out there are invited to join the several hundred already expected to attend the tenth-anniversary gathering.

Last year, more than 250 attended—listeners of all stripes, shortwave fans,

AM medium-wave listeners, scanner enthusiasts, beginners in the hobby, and longtime veteran tuners. Usually at least a few well known names in the SW broadcasting arena turn up. Jonathan Marks of Radio Netherlands and former Radio Canada International



The Knights of Daventry, the transmitters at the BBC's longtime broadcasting center, aired London's SW programming to the world for many decades.

host Ian MacFarland are semi-regulars.

At first, *Winterfest* was just a place where a handful of SW types could relax and talk DXing for a couple of cold winter days and nights, sharing pizza and beer. Over the years, though, it took on a more organized character. Now there are programs, seminars, and forums on a wide range of topics of interest to listening hobbyists. The chip-in-and-buy pizza of the past has been replaced by a Saturday night banquet.

There are prizes to win, including shortwave receivers. Cones says there's something for everyone to enjoy, regardless of his or her experience in the hobby or particular listening interest. A special tenth-anniversary yearbook is planned. There are always receivers to tune and new equipment to view. Regulars say that Father John's

DXers' prayer guarantees a good weekend of tuning.

Though *Winterfest* formally runs from Friday to Sunday, some early arrivals show up on Thursday, while others who can't arrange the time off limit themselves to Saturday and Sunday. For full details, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *Winterfest*, P.O. Box 591, Colmar, PA 18915. But time is short, so if you're interested, write soon!

"The 'Fest has grown to become a major international radio event," Cones commented. "But in spite of its growth, it still retains the atmosphere of a family reunion...and the original intent, to get together to 'just talk radio' has not changed over the past decade."

It should be fun!

KNIGHTS OF DAVENTRY

I recall a phrase from a bit of verse I ran across in an old radio magazine from the 1930s. It was "The Knights of Daventry," a poetic allusion to the British Broadcasting Corporation's shortwave transmitters in the early days when Great Britain had an Empire and the BBC had its Empire Service (a forerunner to the familiar World Service).

The pioneer broadcaster's transmitters and antennas were located in the little Northamptonshire town of Daventry. Then, after 69 years of broadcasting to the world, the Daventry facility was closed down in 1992, its duties assumed by newer BBC transmitting sites elsewhere in England, at Skelton in Cumbria, Wooferton in Shropshire, and Rampersham in Dorset.

Only the huge concrete blocks that had anchored some of the 31 transmitting antennas (which once stood on Daventry's Borough Hill) remain. They're now protected by the British heritage organization as part of a historical site.

According to Dan L. Smith, writing in the Radio Topics column of *Contact*, the monthly publication of the World DX Club, part of the site later was taken over by the local authorities as a recre-

CREDITS: Brian Alexander, PA; Richard Hankison, KS; Bob Hill, MA; Dan McCarthy, GA; David Sharp, FL; North American SW Association, 45 Wildflower Road, Levittown, PA 19057; World DX Club, c/o Richard D'Angelo, 2216 Burkey Drive, Wyomissing, PA 19610.

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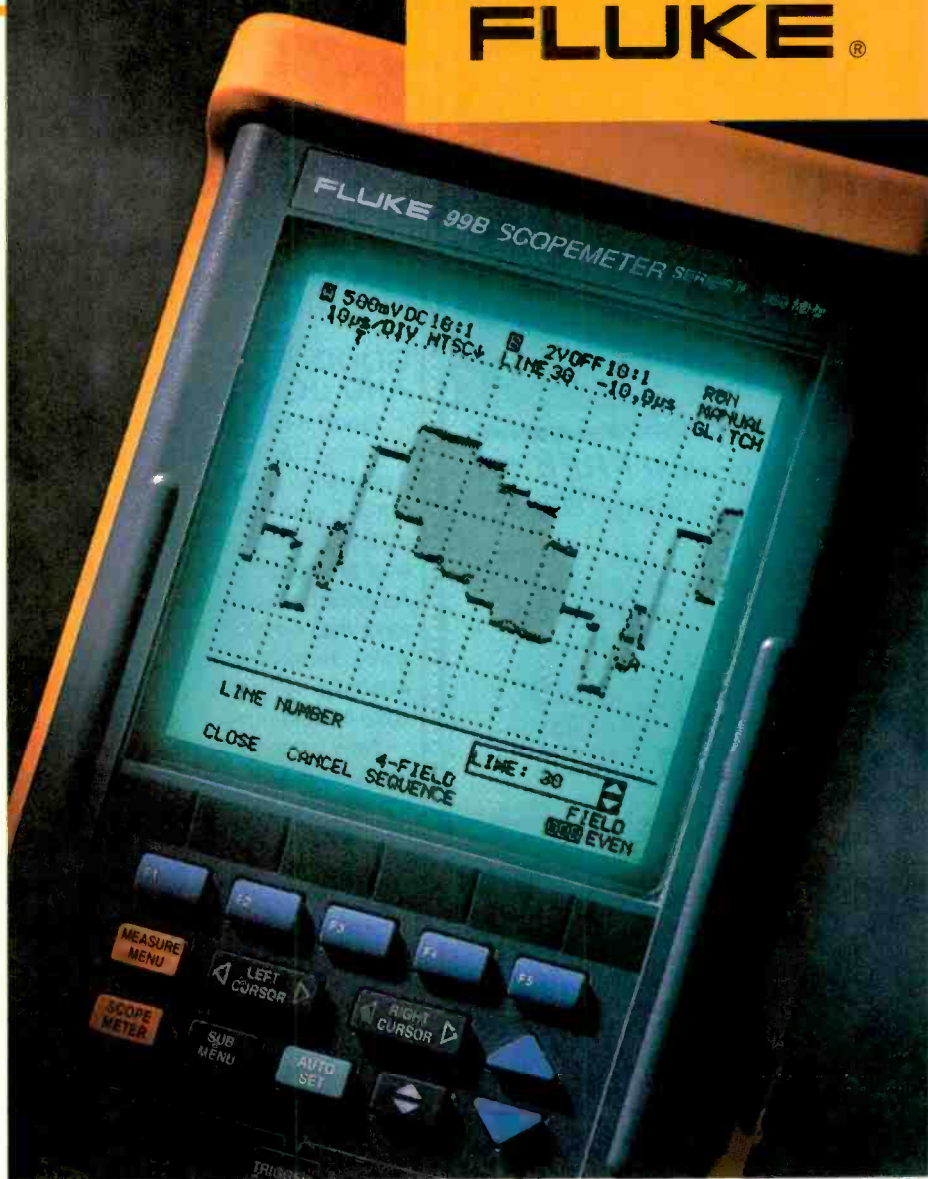
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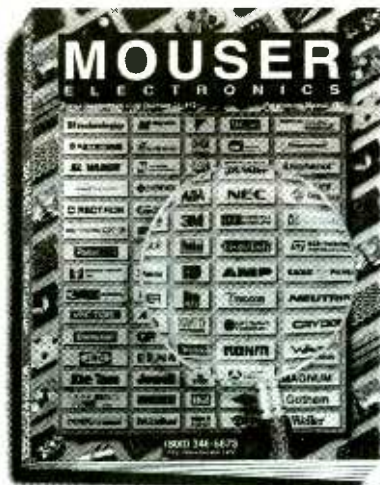
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ational area. Daventry's one-time BBC Club, a centuries-old, three-story building that served as a recreation center for Auntie Beeb's broadcasting engineers, is about to be converted into tourist-information and governmental offices.

Still in the planning stage, though, is a proposed \$53 million theme park and interactive science center on some 67 acres of the old broadcasting site. Could this be a Daventry Disneyland?

GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY NEWS

Good news! From several sources, including David Clark of the Ontario DX Association, I've heard that the call to arms I sounded last month about a possibly endangered Radio Australia was premature and unnecessary. The Australian Broadcasting Commission says that it has not lost faith in short-wave broadcasting and that Radio Australia will continue operations in spite of continuing funding pressures.

Now some bad news, as reported by Hans Johnson's Cumbre DX and others. Despite indications to the contrary by station staffers, CKFX, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, reputedly the world's lowest powered SW station at a puny 10-watt output, is off the air for good. The difficult-to-hear station on 6,080 kHz was a terrific bit of DX for those listeners who, over the years, were lucky enough to catch its signals.

An investment of \$1000 for a replacement transmitter was turned down by station management. The station, which went on the air decades ago, originally was intended to reach listeners in the more remote parts of British Columbia. Increasingly, AM and FM signals are reaching this audience.

And finally, some ugly news. The world of SWling has always had a few hoaxers who concoct stories of rare and fabulous DX shortwave stations supposedly on the air. Decades ago, reports circulated among SW listeners about a Radio Nibi Nibi, said to be a rare Pacific outlet on a remote island of the same name. Its tuning signal, someone claimed, was the "sound of (falling) coconuts!"

Of course, some took these claims seriously and were furious when the hoax was finally exposed. Nibi Nibi has remained a legend among old-timer SWLs.

Now we have a neo-Nibi Nibi report

circulating via some Internet postings. Supposedly, Radio Kiribati, the short-wave outlet of the tiny Pacific island nation of the same name, had set up a SW relay transmitter in Macedonia, formerly part of the now-fragmented Yugoslavia. These programs, it was claimed, were directed to the Kiribati troops in the UN peacekeeping force in the Balkan country.

Suspicious SWLs soon confirmed that there were no such programs and no such relay station. In fact, not only are there no Kiribati troops with UN forces in Macedonia, there isn't even a Kiribati army.

"A good joke, though," comments Al Quaglieri in his Listener's Notebook column in *The Journal* of the North American Shortwave Association.

DOWN THE DIAL

Looking for some SW targets to tune? Try these:

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC—6,235 kHz. Radio Quisqueya in Puerto Plata can be heard afternoons and evenings until signoff about 0420 UTC. Programming features mostly Latin popular music and ballads, with periodic Spanish and English identifications.

GUYANA—5,950 kHz. Guyana Broadcasting Corporation is back on short-wave with new 5-kilowatt transmitters and refurbished antennas. Programming from this station on the northeastern coast of South America is mostly in English. It is scheduled on this frequency from 0900 to 2100 UTC, and on 3,290 kHz from 2200 to 0900 UTC.

IVORY COAST—7,215 kHz. Radio Cote d'Ivoire is a French-speaking West African shortwave station that also returned to the air after a long period of silence. This was logged during the afternoon hours until sign off about 2400 UTC. Also look for it after 0600 UTC.

MOLDOVA—7,520 kHz. Radio Moldova International, which broadcasts from a corner of what was once the USSR, is heard signing on in English at 0330 UTC with a newscast and commentary.

SUDAN—7,200 kHz. Republic of Sudan Radio has been heard with Arabic programming, signing on at 0251 UTC with a xylophone interval signal and anthem. After a brief Islamic religious segment, the program continued with a news broadcast. It also operates on a parallel frequency of 9,024 kHz.

GIZMO®

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DX-394 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVER. From: RadioShack, 700 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, TX 76102; Tel. 800-THE SHACK. Price: \$299.95.

As the world changes, so does world-band or shortwave radio. Gone are the days when Radio Habana Cuba would broadcast a program called the *Voice of Viet Nam*. Gone are the propaganda broadcasts of the Cold War. Gone, for the most part, is the intentional jamming of foreign broadcasts.

Shortwave broadcasting remains an efficient way of reaching a mass audience, and most countries remain intent on promoting their culture through the broadcasts. That's not universally true, of course. Radio Canada International has seen its funding shrink continuously, reducing the capabilities and the stature of one of the best programmers present on the shortwave dial.

That's not to say that shortwave radio has lost its edge. In fact, it occurred to us recently while listening to an essay on international treaties and Islamic nations—followed by a rendition of the 1970's hit "Hotel California"—on Radio Kuwait, that if you're not familiar with shortwave listening, you're missing out on some pretty interesting stuff.

So how do you get into the action? There are many receivers available for both beginners and experienced shortwave listeners, and many decisions to be made before buying. One of the first decisions to be made is whether you want a portable unit or a desktop receiver.

In many respects—especially with mid-priced receivers—the issue is not one of quality, but one of user preference. We've used miniature receivers in the past that had excellent performance, and were ideal for traveling, but were not a pleasure to operate at home.

When we're sitting at home, looking forward to a lengthy session of listening or



DXing, we prefer a tabletop receiver like *RadioShack's DX-394*.

The DX-394 is a general-coverage communications receiver with a frequency coverage from 150 kHz to 30 MHz. It measures about 3½ × 9 × 8 inches and weighs in under 4½ pounds. Two flip-down feet raise the front of the receiver up to a comfortable reading angle. As its name implies, the unit is perfect for a desktop.

The receiver is powered from the AC line through a fixed power cord, but a rear-panel jack allows it to be powered by 13.8-volts at 450 milliamperes for mobile operation via a car's power system. Other rear-panel features are a phone plug for an external speaker, an RCA phono jack for audio line-level output, an SO-239 jack for 50-ohm antennas, and an RCA phono jack for high-impedance antennas. A 20-dB attenuator for the 50-ohm antenna input can be called on with a rear-panel slide switch mounted on the rear panel.

For our tests, we found that the included

2-foot telescoping whip antenna—which mounts to the receiver through a hole in the top panel—was sufficient for most general listening to international shortwave broadcasts. And that's exactly what the DX-394 is designed for, at least if its front-panel features can be taken as any indication.

The front-panel controls are separated into three main groupings. The **POWER** button is located in the top right corner, in a grouping with nine other buttons for dimming the display, setting the clock and timers, changing the tuner step size, storing frequencies in memory, turning the noise blanker on, and locking (disabling) the tuning knob and other buttons so they can't be accidentally operated.

Below that grouping is a 20-button tuning keypad, right next to the large, central tuning knob.

To the left of the tuning knob are four other rotary controls and switches for setting the volume, the RF gain, receiving mode (AM, LSB, USB, CW1, CW2), and

fine tuning.

The top left of the receiver holds the lighted LCD readout. Its main function is as a tuning display, but it also indicates a host of other settings, signal strength (by a LCD S meter), clock, and more.

Tuning can be accomplished in several ways. The BAND button switches between long-wave (150–510 kHz), medium-wave (510–1730 kHz) and shortwave (1.73–30 MHz) coverage. When tuning shortwave frequencies, the METER button makes it easy to select one of the international shortwave bands. When pressed, the band indicator flashes on the display. While it is flashing, a press of one of the keys on the numeric pad will bring you immediately to either the 120-, 90-, 75-, 60-, 49-, 41-, 31-, 25-, 21-, 19-, 16-, 13-, or 11-meter band. (The band indicators are on the front panel above the numeric keys). When this method is used to tune to a band, the main rotary tuning control can be used to tune only throughout the band—when you tune above the top band edge, the receiver beeps, and the tuner wraps around to the bottom edge. It is also possible to set any two frequencies in memory to limit your tuning range. When either limit is passed, the tuning frequency wraps around to the other limit.

The FREQUENCY button allows you to directly enter a frequency of your choice, say, 11,730 kHz. If you tune that way, and then use the rotary tuning control, you can tune without regard to band edges. So when you get to the top of the 25-meter band, you can just keep on going to try to find out-of-band broadcasters.

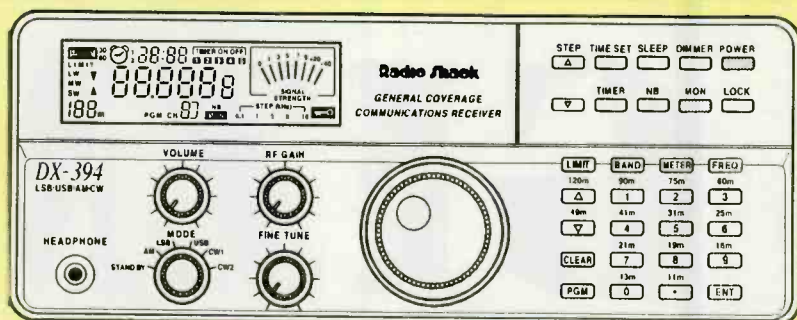
To make that tuning method faster, the tuning control is speed sensitive—the faster you turn it, the larger the tuning steps. The tuning step can also be chosen manually with the two STEP buttons. Possible step sizes are 0.1, 1, 5, and 10 kHz. A FINE TUNE rotary control always tunes in 0.1-kHz steps.

The receiver recognizes the ham (amateur-radio) bands, also—at least in regard to tuning steps. If you set the tuning step to, for example, 0.1 kHz inside of a ham band, the tuning step will automatically be set to 0.1 within each and every one of the ham bands.

The tuning step in the medium-wave (AM broadcast) band is 10 kHz by default. It can be set to 9 kHz for use outside North America.

The DX-394 also features 160 memories—in 16 banks of 10 memories apiece—to facilitate easy tuning. There is also a

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The front panel of the DX-394 is uncluttered and easy to use, thanks to controls that are grouped logically for operation.



The front-panel LCD provides a very readable display of receiver functions, and includes a liquid-crystal S meter.

search tuning capability, but no memory scanning.

Available modes are AM, single sideband (lower sideband, or LSB, and upper sideband, or USB), and CW (continuous wave) for Morse code reception. Reception filters are not user-selectable, but are fixed to the mode. Two CW modes or filters are available.

The 160 memories retain only the frequency, not the mode. The memories are segmented into 16 ranges. Ten frequencies can be stored in each of the 13 broadcast bands (120–11 meters), plus 10 each in the long-wave, medium-wave, and shortwave bands. Storing memories is quick and easy—just press the METER button and the selected band. Then just dial the frequency, press the program (PGM) button, a memory-channel button, and the enter (ENT) key.

Recalling a memory is a simple matter of pressing the BAND (toggling to LW, MW or SW) or METER button, then a button 1 through 0 (corresponding to memories 1 through 10).

Five timers are available, as is a 30- or 60-minute sleep timer. Unfortunately, there is no way to control an external tape recorder. It seems a little strange to include five timers—a healthy number that would provide a convenient way to record multiple programs—without including a control output. We suppose that a voice-operated (VOX) recorder could be used with the timer outputs, but that wouldn't be our preferred method.

The DX-394 is a very sensitive receiver and performs well when compared to other receivers in its price class—and even some more expensive ones. In strong signal

areas—such as our location in metropolitan New York, a long wire antenna seemed to be a little bit of overkill. Although the receiver wasn't prone to overload, we noticed more adjacent-channel interference with strong shortwave signals when a long-wire antenna was used, unless we switched the rear-panel attenuator on.

While the DX-394 is a fine shortwave receiver, it isn't cut out for other radio hobby uses. For example, it has no digital RTTY (radio teletype) or fax modes. Of course, external decoders can still be used to receive and decode RTTY and fax, but the filter bandwidths are, in most cases, too wide for good results.

The DX-394 also lacks features that can be found on more expensive receivers: passband tuning, AM synchronous modes, tone control, bandwidth and AGC (automatic gain control) selections, and computer control.

RadioShack's DX-394 provides good performance and is a reasonably good value for the shortwave listener who is looking for an entry-level tabletop receiver. However, experienced listeners and DXers who are continually searching for the difficult, hard-to-hear stations won't be happy with it. Radio amateurs, and those seeking utility signals, will also be disappointed with the unit.

No receiver can be everything to everyone, of course, and it's probably good that the DX-394 doesn't try to be. The features that we'd like to see in a tabletop receiver would probably boost the cost of the DX-394 out of the range of many of the entry-level listeners who the radio is designed to attract.

Just Hangin' Around

GOLDSTAR MODEL F-191 WALL-HANGING AUDIO SYSTEM. From LG Electronics U.S.A., Inc., 1000 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632; Tel. 201-816-2000; Manufacturers suggested retail price: \$599.

For the past couple of decades, home audio systems have been shrinking. Gone are the '70s, when we all had at least one wall devoted to components, tower speakers, and milk crates full of albums. Today—unless you're an avowed audiophile—it's quite unlikely that your stereo is actually the focal point of your living room.

In these days of microelectronics, mini systems have become increasingly popular. They're small, yet many of them sound big—and they take up less shelf space than your old LP collection once did.

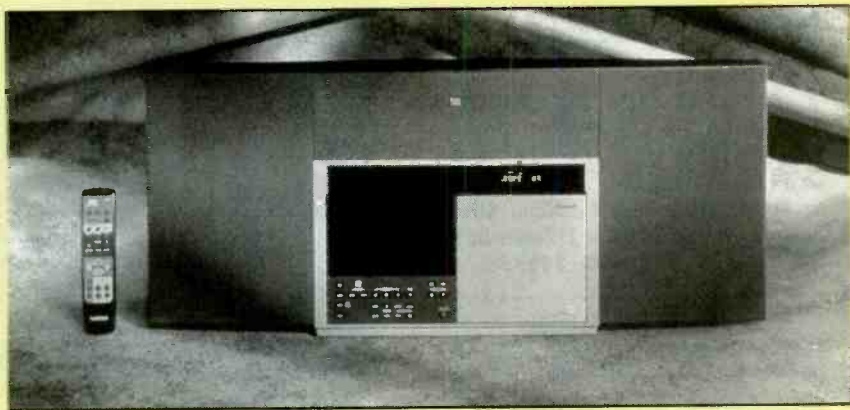
But what do you do when all your shelf space is spoken for? After all, your CD collection demands some space, as do your books and magazines, videotapes, software, and perhaps some photographs or knick-knacks. What if you're in a dormitory room or studio apartment where you have precious little shelf space to begin with.

Perhaps your minimalist decorating scheme simply doesn't call for any sort of shelving. What about music then? You could put the stereo in another room and install remote in-wall speakers in the living room. A simpler solution would be to mount the *Goldstar Model F-191 Wall-Hanging Audio System* on any wall in the room.

The F-191 comes with a bracket and all of the necessary hardware for affixing the stereo system to any wall in your home. Of course, if space allows, the audio system can be more traditionally placed on a shelf or table.

The F-191's crisp, modern European styling is at home in any contemporary setting. Its look is unique. The one-piece unit measures just under 31 inches wide, 13 inches high, and less than 5 inches deep. The AM/FM radio, CD player, and cassette deck are located in the lower center. They are flanked by two-way speakers covered in the user's choice of grille cloths—black ("dark gray"), bright red, and fashionable hunter green panels are included. Hidden behind a matching grille cloth, the system's electronics are housed above the radio, CD player, and cassette deck, forming a visual "bridge" between the speakers.

The control panel has a clean, spare look. The silver-toned cover of the CD



compartment accounts for half of it; the black cassette deck covers another third. A slim panel that stretches above those is home to, from left to right, the standby indicator, the function display, the remote sensor, and a smaller display that indicates tape or cassette mode. All controls are located in the bottom right sector of the front panel.

In all, there are 23 buttons squeezed into a $2\frac{1}{3} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ -inch control panel. We could discern no particular logic to their placement. They weren't grouped by component; frequently used buttons were placed along side those that we rarely touched; and the PLAY, PAUSE, STOP, FAST-FORWARD, and REWIND buttons were scattered among two rows.

The controls were particularly difficult to use in low-light situations. Although the power button is located somewhat apart from the others, in the lower left corner, when we tried to use the system in a darkened room before we were familiar with it, we kept trying to use the lighted standby indicator to turn it on. We also kept hitting the MEMORY SCAN buttons instead of the TUNE UP/DOWN buttons. When we wanted to play a CD, we had to turn on the lights.

Fortunately, the remote control is quite a bit better designed. The round POWER button sits alone above the others, which are separated into distinct groupings for selecting the function and controlling the tuner, CD player, and tape deck. Oval-shaped VOLUME CONTROL, MUTE, and EQ buttons form another set.

The remote control also offers automatic function selection. If you're listening to a CD, for instance, and want to switch quickly to the radio to catch the weather report, you can just hit one of the radio memory preset keys, and the system goes into tuner mode. The same automatic switching principle applies when you press either of the cassette PLAYBACK buttons, or the PLAY/PAUSE or RANDOM CD-control buttons.

Up to 30 station presets can be stored into the AM/FM tuner's memory. AM and

FM stations are not separated into different banks.

FM reception was good. Even with the supplied "T" pole antenna, we were able to capture all of our favorites—even the out-of-area low-power college and community stations. Weak FM signals can be improved by pressing the STEREO/RIF (radio interference filter) button, which simply switches the receiver to mono mode.

AM reception was quite a bit better than what we usually find in consumer-grade receivers. We applaud Goldstar for taking the broadcast band seriously. We were using the F-191 during the last few weeks of the 1996 baseball season. Our favorites, the Yankees, were just a few games ahead of the Orioles in the race for the Eastern Division title, and every game counted. ESPN wasn't carrying the White Sox-Orioles game. Rather than watch the sports ticker on CNN Headline News or wait for the half-hourly updates on an all-news station, we tuned in WMVP from Chicago, and listened to the whole game. A couple of nights later, we listened to a game being played in Detroit. Talk about hearing "away" games!

Impressed by the ease with which we tuned in out-of-town sports, we tried some informal DXing—something that normally frustrates us with most consumer gear. However, we picked up AM stations from as far away as Des Moines, Iowa, using only the loop antenna provided with the F-191. You should be pleased with how easily you'll pick up "exotic catches" from the airwaves.

Moving from the tuner to the CD player is just a matter of pressing the CD OPEN/CLOSE button, which causes the CD compartment lid to swing up like a garage door. Discs are placed on a spindle, label-side out. The door shuts automatically when you press PLAY, or you can close it deliberately using the CD OPEN/CLOSE button.

CD play options include repeat playback of a track, random playback of all

(Continued on page 28)

Street Smarts

MODEL RDL712SW SUPERWIDE 4 RADAR/LASER COMPLETE DETECTION SYSTEM WITH DIGITAL DATA DISPLAY. From Cobra Electronics Corporation, 6500 West Cortland Street, Chicago, IL 60635; Tel. 312-889-8870; Fax: 312-794-1930. Price: \$199.95.

"Never has there been a product with more potential to save lives and avoid accidents with less cost and trouble," says Bill Lewis, Chief of Police of Cape Charles, Virginia. "[It's] the best highway safety improvement I've seen in years."

Care to guess what product he thinks so highly of? A louder siren? Brighter warning lights? A much more powerful radar gun?

If you went with the radar gun, you'd be close. Chief Lewis was, in fact, talking about a "smart" radar detection system called *Safety Alert*, that uses radar detectors to warn drivers of road hazards. Developed by *Cobra Electronics Corporation*, the *Safety Alert* system uses special transmitters, mounted in police cars and emergency vehicles, to warn drivers of potentially dangerous fast-moving vehicles or stationary problems such as construction sites. Smart radar detectors use LEDs, LCD readouts, and audio signals to alert drivers to the type of hazard to expect.

Chief Lewis was speaking from personal experience. A few hours before dawn one rainy summer morning, he responded to a report of an accident. Due to highway flooding and poor visibility, two cars had skidded off the highway and were blocking the passing lane. Lewis positioned his cruiser, lights flashing, in front of the cars, and lit flares to warn on-coming traffic. Despite those precautions, several passing cars came close to hitting the police car. After about a half hour, a tractor trailer approached, creeping along at about 5 miles per hour. When the driver reached Chief Lewis, he told the officer that he was driving so cautiously because his radar detector had warned him of trouble ahead, and he offered his help at the accident site. Lewis had the truck driver block traffic until the accident could be cleared safely from the road.

Chief Lewis could have given that truck driver a ticket—radar detectors are illegal in Virginia. That doesn't stop drivers traveling through the state—and some Virginians, from using them, however. In the interest of public safety, Lewis felt that the *Safety Alert* system deserved a test. And, from his point of view, it passed with flying colors.

Lewis didn't even have to turn on the transmitter on that stormy night. The *Safety*



Alert device was connected to his lightbar; when the lights were flashing, the transmitter powered up automatically, and made contact with the trucker's radar detector. "By alerting just one driver, it made my job safer and it helped the people behind the truck avoid accidents ... maybe even saved some lives. In my opinion, the risk of additional accidents on that rainy morning was great, and the signal transmitter reduced that risk."

HOW SAFETY ALERT WORKS

The *Safety Alert* is a two-part system, consisting of a transmitter and a receiver. Developed by Cobra, and built by Alpha Industries, Inc. (a commercial wireless-semiconductor, integrated-circuit, and ceramic-component manufacturer in radio, microwave, and millimeter-wave frequencies), the transmitter is intended primarily for installation in police cars and emergency vehicles. Connected to the vehicle's lightbar, it begins transmitting as soon as the lights are turned on. The transmitter stops sending its signal when the emergency lights are turned off. It can also be used in public-utility and road-construction vehicles—or even on stationary construction barriers—all of which usually rely on their flashing yellow lights to warn drivers of construction sites.

The FCC-approved *Safety Alert* transmitter sends out K-band signals that can be picked up by any radar detector within a ¾-mile range. If the signal is intercepted by one of the approximately 20,000,000 radar detectors currently in use, the detector will respond as it would to any K-band radar gun, in most instances, by sounding a warning beep and flashing an LED. The

driver won't know whatever he's about to encounter a high-speed police chase, an ambulance making haste toward the hospital, or road construction around the next bend. But, to avoid getting a speeding ticket, he will most likely respond by moving out of the left-hand lane and slowing to within a few miles of the speed limit. Driving slower, and being on the lookout for a speed trap, gives him a double advantage. First, driving at a slower speed gives him a longer response time when the hazard comes into his field of vision. Second, he is more alert to what is happening around him. As an added bonus, other nearby drivers are likely to slow down when they see one car doing so, figuring that the driver might have a radar detector and be aware of a police car up ahead.

If the radar detector on the receiving end is Cobra's *Model RDL-712SW*, however, the driver will know in advance just what to expect. The radar detector is equipped with an LCD readout on which two different types of *Safety Alert* messages might be displayed. When the police car or emergency vehicle is hurtling down the road, it sends an "Emergency Vehicle" warning. When it reaches its destination—the accident that Chief Lewis responded to, for instance—it transmits a "Road Hazard" message. A third signal will be used to warn drivers of approaching trains; the *RDL-712SW* is already programmed for the train signal.

Of course, the radar detector can warn drivers of road hazards only when *Safety Alert* signals are being transmitted. As we go to press, *Safety Alert* transmitters are in use in various locales in more than 30 states. That's not to say that entire states,

or even cities, are covered. For instance, there are 50 transmitters currently in use in Portland, Oregon; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Columbus, Ohio. That's not enough to blanket the metropolitan areas with Safety Alert signals; local police departments and emergency agencies will determine the areas most in need of such a warning system.

USING THE RDL-712SW

Why buy a Safety Alert radar detector if the system isn't in use in your area? First, more and more localities are adopting the system all the time. Second, the RDL-712SW offers everything else you'd ever want in a radar detector. It detects all speed-monitoring devices now being used—X, K, Ka Superwide, and Laser guns—and adds a few features not found on the standard radar detector. The alphanumeric display that shows Safety Alert messages also keeps you posted as to what type of monitoring device is being used, and provides other status reports. And special circuitry reduces false alarms and reduces the chance of the unit being located by a radar-detector detector.

Let's take it for a test drive.

The radar detector can be mounted on the windshield using the included suction-cup bracket. A bracket-release button makes it easy to remove the detector if you want to use it in another vehicle, or drive through a state where detectors are illegal. For dashboard mounting, self-stick Velcro-type material is also included. It's important to make sure that the lens located on the rear panel has a clear "view" of the road to sense laser guns.

The RDL-712SW is a bit larger than most, but at approximately 3 × 5 × 1 inches, it's still quite compact. Its most distinguishing feature is its 2 × 1/2-inch, two-line × 16-character, backlit display, which dominates the front panel. Next to it are MUTE and DIM buttons. Along the left

side are jacks for a cigarette-lighter plug and an external speaker, the POWER/VOLUME thumb-wheel control, and HIGHWAY/CITY slide switch.

As soon as the RDL-712-SW is powered up, it performs a "power-up self test," or POST, of its internal laser optics and signal-scanning computer. As part of the POST, a test pattern sequence—laser, K-band, Ka-band, and X-band, is displayed as audio tones sound, to let the user know which tones are associated with each band. After a successful test, the detector goes into standby mode, and the LCD is blank unless you have selected city mode, in which case it reads "city."

When a signal is detected, the display will let you know if it is K-band, X-band, Ka-band, or Laser. If two sources on two different bands are detected simultaneously, the one with the highest priority will be displayed. The order of priority is: Laser, Ka-band, K-band, and X-band. Accompanying the text warning is a tone that gradually increases in volume.

The MUTE button can be used to silence the detector as soon as the warning tones start. "Mute" will appear on the display. The audio resets four seconds after the signal disappears, so that it is ready to warn you the next time a signal is detected. By pressing and holding the MUTE button for two seconds, automute mode is activated, and the volume of the alert is automatically reduced to its minimal level after four seconds. "Automute" appears on the display. To disable the feature, the MUTE button is pressed and held again.

The RDL-712SW also provides "Instant-on" warnings. When a police officer isn't just monitoring the traffic flow, but turns on his radar gun when he spots your car, the detector sounds a full-strength audible warning, rather than the gradual build-up of sound. It lets you know that immediate action is required.

Finally, the radar detector provides

Safety Alert warnings on its LCD: "Emergency Vehicle" or "Road Hazard" is displayed, depending on the situation.

Radar detector false alerts can be extremely annoying when you're driving. To filter them out, the RDL-712SW uses, according to Cobra, "the same advanced technology that the military uses to distinguish enemy aircraft from friendly aircraft. The Digital Signal Processing circuitry continuously samples radar signals 50,000 times each second, looking for only true radar signals."

Two (out of three) types of false alerts are filtered out by special circuitry. When the RDL-712SW picks up a signal produced by either an out-of-band signal or a "noisy" radar detector, the LCD displays the following message: "Rejecting false signal."

First, "lockout" circuitry rejects out-of-band signals—harmonics of signals that are broadcast at frequencies outside the radar bands, yet create signals within the X, K, or Ka bandwidth. Second, Cobra's Stealth V-C-O technology rejects false alerts caused by "dirty" radar detectors. Every radar detector—like any radio receiver—has an internal oscillator, which is used for detection. It also leaks out of the detector, in effect, turning the radar detector into a radar transmitter. That's why the police's VG2 guns are able to detect radar detectors.

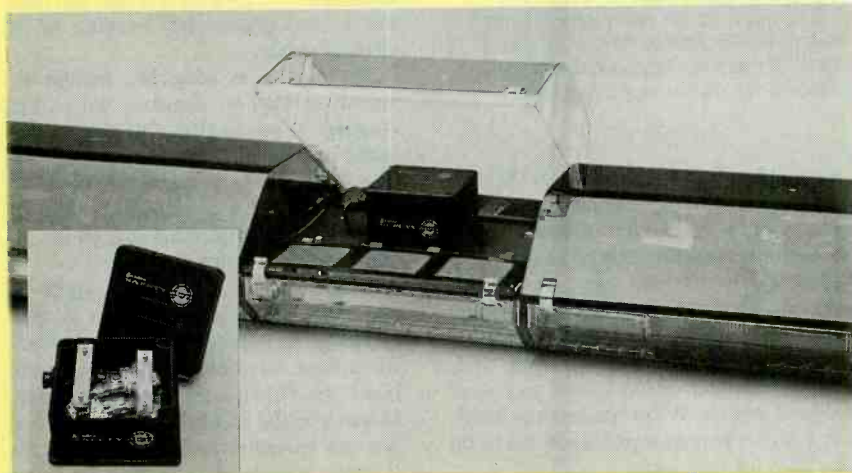
Stealth V-C-O technology not only reduces the number of false alerts caused by other drivers' radar detectors. It also reduces by 80%–90% the chance of your RDL-712SW being detected by a VG2 gun, commonly called a radar-detector detector.

The radar detector cannot reliably discern and reject in-band signals, however. In-band signals use the same frequency band (the X band) as some police radar guns. They are most often transmitted by the proximity detectors commonly used in shopping malls for automatic door openers, as well as some security systems and vehicle-avoidance systems.

When you're driving in heavily populated and commercial areas, in-band false alarms happen quite frequently. Switching the detector to the city mode helps a bit by reducing its X-band sensitivity. The sensitivity of the other three bands is not affected at all.

The RDL-712SW's LCD readout can also help you distinguish false alerts from the real thing. While the display's top line tells you what type of signal is being detected and whether the mute or automute modes are in effect, the bottom line depicts additional information, gleaned by the radar detector's Hypersweep Frequency Scanner, or HFS.

A "bar-graph" symbol appears in a different place on the display's bottom line,



The Safety Alert Transmitter (Inset) is shown installed in an emergency vehicle's lightbar.

THE SAFETY WARNING SYSTEM

Cobra's Safety Alert was the first "intelligent" radar system to be approved by the FCC and to hit the marketplace. But it isn't the only one available today.

In fact, Safety Alert faces some stiff competition from the Safety Warning System, or SWS. Although it is still awaiting final FCC approval as we go to press, it has the backing of some heavy hitters. Safety Warning System supporters include several radar-detector manufacturers (Bel-Tronics Ltd., Sanyo Tecnica USA Inc., Uniden America Corp., and Whistler Corp.) and the Radio Association Defending Airwave Rights, or RADAR, a group representing the interests of radar-detector owners and manufacturers. In addition, the U.S. government is funding research by the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), which developed the SWS transmitter.

Like the Safety Alert system, SWS transmitters send preprogrammed warning messages to specially equipped radar detectors, and send K-band alert signals to standard detectors. The Safety Warning System, however, sends more detailed messages than the three transmitted by Safety Alert.

There are 64 standard, preprogrammed SWS messages, in five categories. Fast/Slow-Moving Vehicles includes such messages "police in pursuit" and "oversize vehicle in transit." Under Travel Information/Convenience, drivers are told of upcoming rest areas, traffic jams, tolls, and inspection stations. Weather-Related Hazards include blowing dust or sand, high winds, heavy fog, and snow white out. Highway Construction or Maintenance advise of upcoming work zones, lane closings, and detours. Besides warning drivers of accidents, train crossings, and dangerous intersections, Highway Hazard Zone Advisories include everything from "deer/moose crossing" to "drawbridge up."

Two SWS messages can be combined to further clarify the situation. For instance, "pay toll ahead" might be followed by "expect 20 minute delay."

depending on which band (X, K, photo radar Ka or Stalker KA) is being used by the police. The symbol changes according to the strength of the signal being detected. The stronger the signals, the higher the peak; the weaker the signals, the lower the peak. Those extra visual clues can help you determine if there really is a police gun triggering the alert. Who knows? The feature could save you some wear and tear on your brakes!

Cobra gives the following example: When you drive to and from work each day, X-band signals are always picked up



The Model 1490 radar detector from Whistler is compatible with the Safety Warning System.

A transmitter left unattended, at a construction site, for example, can have its message changed remotely. The programmer could dial in a different warning during the hours when laborers were working at the site than at night, when only their equipment was at the scene. By adding weather sensors, transmitters could be programmed to send signals only when conditions such as heavy fog or high winds were detected. A transmitter that is equipped with speed-radar circuitry could send a message to any vehicle traveling above a pre-determined speed, and warn drivers that they are traveling too fast. That might be especially effective if another option is in place: a voice synthesizer to announce the message.

The Safety Warning System proponents are already actively demonstrating the system not to individual municipal police stations and emergency services, but directly to the people in charge at the state and federal levels. They have met with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission; The New York Thruway Commission; the Department of Transportation of Ohio, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Oklahoma; the Federal Highway Administration; and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. And two models of "smart" detectors, equipped with the Safety Warning System, are currently available under the Whistler brand.

It remains to be seen which smart radar system catches on in a big way. If either of them do, however, the biggest winners will be America's motorists.

near a local shopping center. After a while, you recognize the pattern (the bargraph appears to the left of center on the bottom line) and the strength of the signal generated by the non-speed-monitoring devices. One day, the bargraph symbol looks different—its peak is much higher. The probable cause? The police are "hiding" a speed trap among known sources of X-band signals. When you become familiar with the normal signals, you can be on the alert for such tricks.

Now, that's what we'd call a smart radar detector. ■

JUST HANGIN' AROUND

(Continued from page 25)

songs without repeating the same track, repeat play of the entire disc in random mode, and programmed play. Up to 20 CD tracks can be programmed in any order.

The F-191 also provides CD synchro recording to tape, allowing you to record automatically the entire disc, or programmed selections, to tape. To make those dubs sound better, the auto-reverse cassette deck is equipped with Dolby B-type noise reduction.

We tried programming a CD before using synchro recording to tape selected tracks. The process was simple—except that the disc had no track times printed on it or the liner notes (an unfortunate, but not uncommon, occurrence). While the F-191 ordinarily displays the remaining time on a disc, when in program mode, it shows the remaining track time. It's possible to program a disc, advance to each selected track in turn, and jot down on paper the remaining time before the song starts. Then you can add up all the times, determine how many songs will fit on each side of the tape, and, if necessary, rearrange the order of the programmed tracks—not the most convenient method of recording. If you don't mind a bit of blank time at the end of a tape, or a song ending in the middle (the F-191 will automatically record the song in its entirety on the other side when that happens), you can just wing it.

The Wall-Hanging System offers a 20-watt, multi-driving, four-channel amplifier. A press of the UBB ("Ultra Bass Booster") button maximizes the bass. A built-in equalizer provides four preset listening modes: flat, pop, rock, and classic. Repeatedly pressing the EQ button scrolls through the four equalizer options. The manual suggests that you choose flat to hear the recording as is, pop for less bass and less treble, rock for less bass and more treble, and classic for listening to orchestral music.

The manual is adequate, though obviously written by someone whose first language is not English ("If you wish to install on a wooden wall, unscrew only on it.") Perhaps it is fortunate that the F-191 doesn't offer any potentially confusing, super-advanced functions that would require extensive written backup.

It does, however, offer just about all you'd need from a basic stereo system, including an input jack for an auxiliary component. Its sleek, unusual design will make the F-191 a conversation piece. Mount it on the wall behind your sofa, and you can leisurely reach up and press the controls without even sitting up. How much more convenient than that can you get? ■

Mind Over Matter

MINDDRIVE THOUGHT-DRIVEN SOFTWARE. From The Other 90% Technologies, Inc., 2505 Kerner Blvd., San Rafael, CA 94901; Tel. 415-460-1010; Fax: 415-460-1919; e-mail: info@other90.com. Price: Hardware, \$139; Application titles, \$24.95 to \$39.95.

You're playing a simulated skiing game on your PC. As you maneuver your way down a tricky slalom course, you make your turns not with your joystick or mouse—but simply by *thinking* which way you want to go. Science fiction, right? Not anymore, thanks to the *MindDrive* from The Other 90%.

Actually, the concept of manipulating inanimate objects with your thoughts or emotions is nothing new. Beside those countless science fiction tales, remember mood rings? On the more practical side, how about lie detectors?

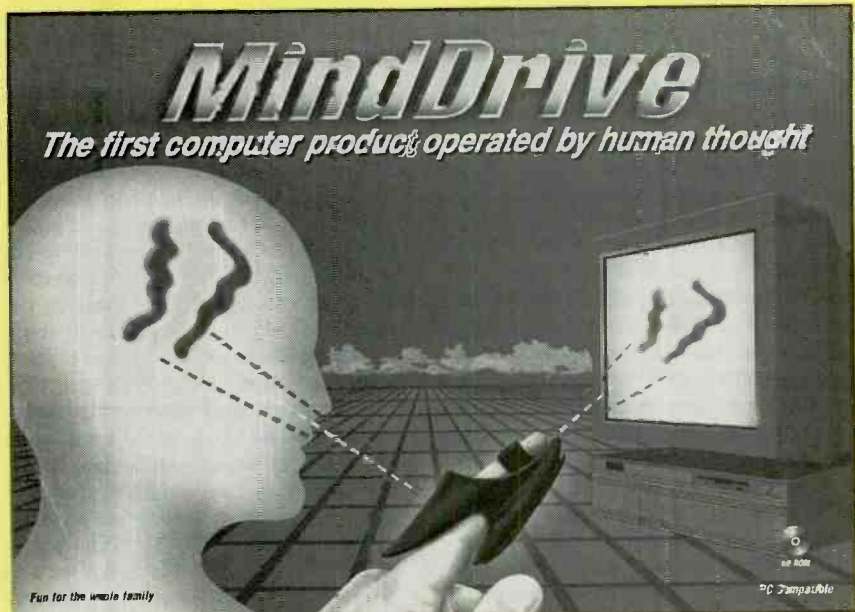
The concept behind polygraph tests is that telling a lie is stressful, and stress stimulates certain detectable biological changes. A polygraph works by charting such parameters as a subject's normal heart and respiration rates during a series of innocuous, non-threatening questions. Then, when the tougher questions are asked, an answer that is accompanied by any anomalies in the established patterns is considered to be a false statement.

Lie-detecting is viewed as an inexact science. That's why polygraph results are not accepted as evidence in a court of law.

That our thoughts and emotions produce measurable bio-electric signals is, however, an indisputable fact. Different bio-electric patterns are generated by various mental activities, such as analyzing, remembering, and relaxing. Creative brain functions cause different physical reactions than do analytic functions; positive and negative thoughts also register differently.

Traditional bio-feedback techniques measure the conductivity and electrical activity of the skin in an attempt to determine what is going on in a subject's brain. Bio-feedback measurements are known as galvanic skin response (GSR) and electrodermal reflex (EDR).

Those techniques work, but two problems keep them from being put to practical use, at least in terms of translating thoughts into signals that can be used to control devices or computers. First, there is a delay of 2½–3½ seconds between the time a thought occurs and the traditional measurement of the skin's reaction. Second, the human body does a good job of



keeping physiological parameters in balance. When thoughts or emotions trigger changes in heart rate, blood pulse volume, and temperature, the autonomic nervous system leaps into action, trying to pull them back to normal.

According to The Other 90%, its patented MindDrive technology overcomes those obstacles. It provides almost instantaneous measurements. And it is able to decipher the difference between physiological signal generated by a volitional thought (transmitted through the central nervous system) and a physiological signal that has been changed by the autonomic nervous system. The MindDrive supposedly filters out those changes triggered by the autonomic nervous system, leaving only those signals generated by cognitive/volitional thoughts.

The company says that the MindDrive sensor measures not just heart, temperature, and blood pressure, but also something called composite neuro activity, or CNA—a complex of intricate electrical signals. The MindDrive automatically and continuously analyzes five CNA signal components: Amplitude (the output and strength of signals); velocity (the speed at which the signals change); attenuation (the size of the changes); the “delta” or asymmetry of the CNA signals as compared to each other; and a combination of the phasic (rate of change) and tonic (absolute measurement) signals.

By studying the CNA signals in greater detail than has been possible previously, and combining the translated CNA signals with information from the heart and other biological indicators, the MindDrive can chart a variety of mental and emotional states. For example, anger causes the heart beat and blood pulse volume to rise, reduces temperature, and creates a distinct

CNA pattern. The MindDrive uses its catalog of charted states and a proprietary artificial-intelligence program not only to “read” a subject's thoughts and emotions, but also to help the subject create and replicate a variety of desired mental skills and emotional states.

It all sounds good on paper, doesn't it? But does it work? We were highly skeptical, even after a demonstration by a representative of The Other 90%. He asked us to jot down a number from one to ten on a piece of paper. While wearing the MindDrive sensor, we answered a series of questions he posed: “Is the number one? Two? Three? Four?” By reading the MindDrive's interpretations of our bio-electric signals, he properly guessed the right number each time.

Okay, that was sort of neat. But we remained dubious about how the device would function as a software interface, and even more so of the company's claims that “the MindDrive is able to help users develop and replicate optimal learning, thinking, and emotional skills and states.” But, hey, we're always willing to give a new Gizmo a try.

The MindDrive consists of a small sensor sleeve that fits onto any of the user's fingers, and an interface that plugs into a PC-compatible computer. Minimum system requirements are a 486 CPU, DOS 5.0, a double-speed CD-ROM drive, one available 9-pin serial port, and a SoundBlaster or compatible sound card.

The manual suggests wearing the sensor on any of the three middle fingers of your left hand (unless you're a southpaw), leaving your right hand free to use a mouse or arrow keys, if necessary. A Velcro strap is used to prevent the MindDrive from slipping off, and to keep the center of your fingertip resting lightly on the sensor. It

takes just a few seconds for the sensor to "read" you, and then you're ready to go.

We started with *MindSkier*, a CD-ROM game that allows you to shuss down the slopes using your mind to make you control your skis. You have a choice of four different courses, slalom, grand slalom, downhill, and a combination that includes one run on each of the courses. There are beginner and advanced levels of play.

In *MindSkier* as well as the other beta-version *MindDrive* games we sampled, the overall quality is adequate, but certainly nothing to write home about. Installation is pokey; graphics and sound are basic. The games work only with the *MindDrive* interface—you can't fall back on your trusty joystick. But, we reasoned, the technology itself is so new and exciting, why quibble over the small stuff?

We strapped on our sensor (it was *much* easier than gearing up for the real thing), and hit the slopes—and also hit the course markers, every patch of ice, the side of a ski jump, exposed rocks, and an innocent

group of spectators at the bottom of the hill. No matter how hard we concentrated, the game proceeded as if we weren't there. In fact, when we closed our eyes, said a prayer, and just went for it (sort of like our first real-life ski experience) we actually logged one of our all-time high scores.

Switching to beginner mode, we gave it another shot. Our performance improved, but not significantly. After a few hours of skiing every run available, changing our speed, and adjusting the sensitivity level, we were left wondering why the ski patrol hadn't arrived to pick up the pieces.

Next, we decided to go with a slower, safer sport—*MindBowling*. It wasn't quite as exciting as the downhill action, but we did manage to consistently improve our game with practice. Not only did we steadily raise our score (from 72 on our first try to 205 after an hour's play), but we also made sure that our imaginary opponent didn't break a 10.

Unfortunately, it wasn't our minds that were being honed with practice. We

learned, quite accidentally, that applying pressure to the sensor made the ball move to the left; reducing pressure moved it to the right. As directed, we'd strapped the sensor onto a finger on our left hand. It was just natural to lean right—and reduce pressure—when we wanted the ball to move that way, and lean left—and press down—when we wanted it to go left.

When we purposely put on the pressure, the results were pretty impressive. A heavy hand put our opponent's ball in the left gutter on almost every throw. And a bit of fingertip maneuvering gave us a strike or a spare in almost every frame. But we were using our hands to do it, not our minds.

Perhaps, we postulated, every game depends on the same (presumably) inadvertent pressure on the hand—like using a Ouija board and unwittingly moving the pointer to the letters that spell the answer you want to hear.

We decided to give skiing another try, to see if the technique could improve our times. It didn't.

When we practiced at the top of the course, the game seemed to respond to hand pressure in much the same way that *MindBowling* did. Once we started moving downhill, however, the results became exaggerated, sending us careening from one edge of the course to the next, but never where we wanted to go. Our scores actually got worse!

We were tempted to go back to *MindBowling* to try for a perfect game (and a perfect 0 score for our imaginary opponent). Instead, we moved on to *FIB*, a lie-detecting game with several variations.

FIB requires two players, the Examiner and the Responder. The Examiner asks a series of questions, called the "Comparative Question Technique." As in a standard polygraph test, the Responder's answers are judged true or false based on bio-electric readings. In this case, when the Responder tells a fib, the reading should shoot into the "red" zone.

Four *FIB* games are provided. "Mind-Reader" is a guessing game in which the Responder selects one of five items shown on screen. The examiner must then guess the secret item. In "Quiz Me," one question is repeated five times, with a fill-in-the-blank difference—for instance, "Your favorite pizza topping is _____." The Examiner asks the question five times, filling in "pepperoni," "anchovies," "peppers," "sausage," and "onions." The Responder answers yes or no to each; again, the Examiner must determine which responses are true. In "Cross Examination," the Examiner gets to ask ten questions to determine what item the Responder is thinking of, knowing beforehand the item's general category. Finally, there's "Free Form Fib," in which

(Continued on page 32)



Now Hear This

TOTAL RECALL DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER. From Sycom Technologies, P.O. Box 2600, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004; Tel. 610-660-5770. Price: \$199.

We love electronic gizmos—obviously. We wouldn't be writing this if we didn't have a special place in our hearts for them. But some electronic products—we hate to admit—have always struck us as being, well, a little silly.

Electronic memo recorders were one of those devices that we didn't quite get. We know that some people find them to be lifesavers, but most people—us included—could probably get by with just a pen and scrap of paper, or even tying a string around a finger as a reminder.

Recently, however, we had the opportunity to try out the Total Recall digital recorder from Sycom Technologies, and it changed our minds.

Everyone, of course, is different, and everyone has different needs. As writers and reporters, we can't work in a vacuum. We need to talk to a lot of people, and to remember what they say.

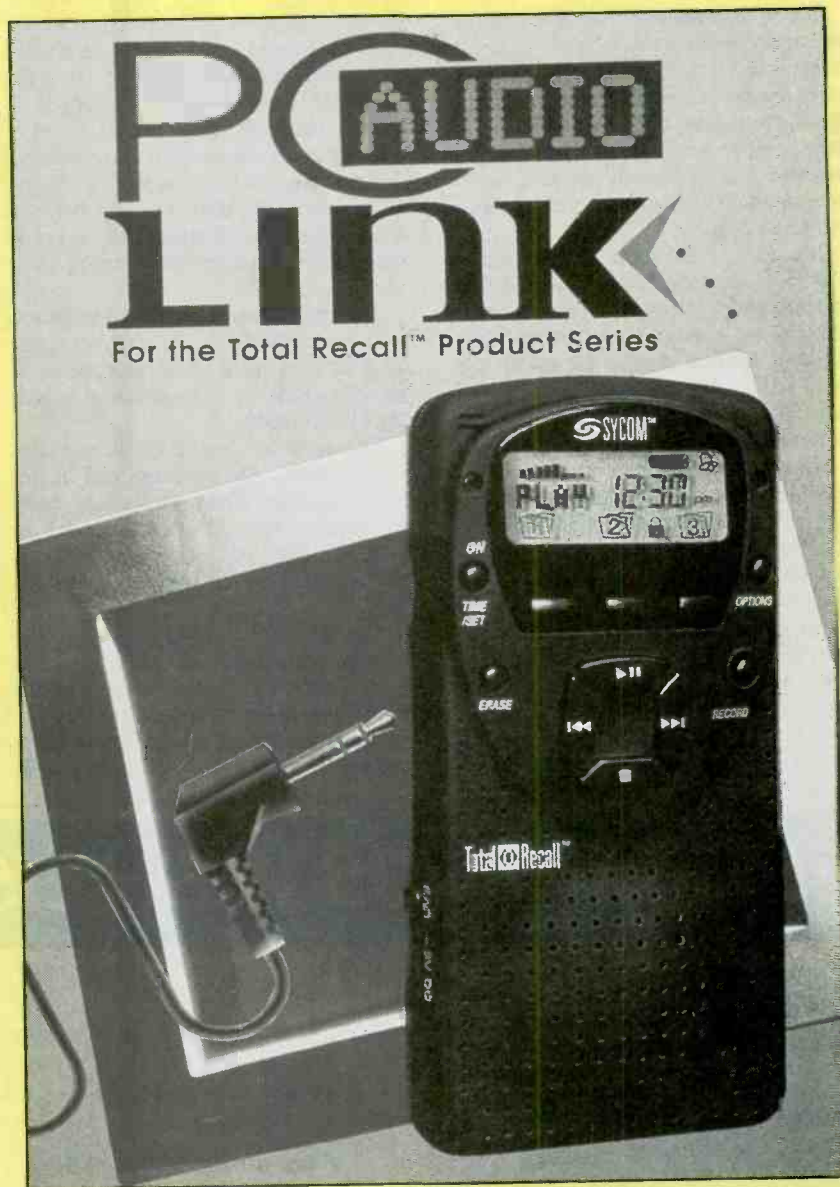
One of our main tools has been a small microcassette recorder, which travels with us in our briefcase as we head out to press conferences, product announcements, and interviews. It's been invaluable. We like to be accurate, but we can't write fast enough—or neatly enough—to quote speakers verbatim. The recorder lets us go back over a discussion at our leisure, and transcribe accurately.

Microcassette recorders aren't perfect. (Show us any product and we'll find *something* to complain about!) We seem to end up with lots of tiny cassettes strewn around the office with only cryptic notes indicating what they are. Just trying to find a ten-minute conversation that we had last week with a product manager for a new camcorder line could take three times longer than the actual conversation!

Sycom's Total Recall digital voice recorder isn't perfect, either. But it has proven itself to be far more useful than we expected it to be. We didn't use it to record such inane messages as "Don't forget to pick up milk on the way home." Instead, we used it as we would normally use our microcassette recorder, to record conversations and speeches.

The Total Recall is small, with its face measuring just 2¼ × 4½ inches. The unit is, for the most part, about ¼-inch thick, but it bulges to about an inch at the battery compartment.

At the top of the unit is a small but readable LCD. Below that are three buttons that select message "folders." Eight other buttons round out the unit's front-



panel controls. Four buttons, arranged in a square, are used to play and pause message replay, and to move back and forth between messages. Four other buttons are used to start recording, erase messages, select options, and turn the power on.

Recording a short message is simple: Just press and hold the RECORD button, and speak. A red LED lights to indicate that recording is in progress. Release the button, and recording stops. By default, the message is stored in folder 1 unless a different folder was selected before the recording is begun.

Longer messages can be stored by tapping the RECORD key. Tapping it a second time stops the recording.

Messages are time and date stamped when they're made—that's the only way that they're identified. So if you had a lunchtime conversation with a client on Tuesday, you'd be able to find it easily by

time and date. Other messages might be more difficult to locate if they were recorded at random times.

The total message time available on our recorder model, which was equipped with two megabytes of RAM, was 23 minutes. Sycom makes three other models, with recording capacities of 11, 35, and 47 minutes. For recording memos and conversations, the quality of the recordings were more than adequate. However, quality can be improved—at the expense of capacity—through the options menu. Three higher quality recording modes would reduce the overall capacity of our 23-minute model to 17, 14, or 12 minutes.

Twenty-three minutes was not quite long enough for us—we would prefer at least a half hour—like we can get on one side of a microcassette. But we managed by being a little more selective and by judicious use of the pause control.

One of the most important attributes of our microcassette recorder is the ability to create archives just by throwing the tape into a drawer. It's not always easy to find a specific recording, but we know that it's in there somewhere. What can you do with messages that are digitally recorded? Store them on your PC, of course, with Sycom's *PC Audio Link*.

The *PC Audio Link*, which costs \$59.95, is a reasonably simple application that runs under Microsoft Windows. Interestingly, the messages aren't transferred digitally. Instead, they're fed out to the PC's audio card through the earphone jack. The PC then re-digitizes the messages and stores them on its hard disk.

For all practical purposes, it would be possible to record messages onto a PC with any audio-recording software. The *Total Recall* software, however, has the advantage of making it easy to group messages in "folders."

One of the handy features provided by *Total Recall* for reviewing messages is a audio scan. In that mode, the recorder plays the first few seconds of each note in the selected folder. It's a convenient way to find a message when you can't remember

the time or date it was recorded. It's even more convenient if you identify each message when you begin to record it—then the feature becomes a kind of subject scan.

Even better, messages can be edited—you can insert comments into recordings, and partially delete sections of messages. (A counter on the display helps when partially deleting messages.) This makes it especially convenient for dictating messages.

The recorder can be password-protected to safeguard the privacy of your messages. Another convenient feature that conserves recording time is a voice-activated recording (VOX) mode.

The recorder features wake-up and voice alarms. Any message can be selected for either alarm. Conversely, every message can be used as a voice alarm, so you can program dozens or even hundreds of reminders to bug you throughout the day.

The *Total Recall* digital voice recorder is a sensible product that we've begun to carry with us at all times. Even though it'll never completely replace the microcassette recorder in our work, it sure gives it a run for the money. ■

MIND OVER MATTER

(Continued from page 30)

the Examiner uses the comparative questioning technique to ask the Responder anything. Recommended as a party game, it could be the computer version of "Truth or Dare"—supposedly with the added bonus of knowing what the truth was.

Once again, however, we didn't do very well. Our true and false responses were difficult to tell apart—some of each went into the red zone, others didn't.

Finally, we sampled *PinballMind*, another *MindDrive* game in which we should have been able to control the movements of the ball and activate the flippers using our brain power. The game seemed to have a mind of its own, however, and it was definitely overpowering ours.

After performing so poorly in all those games, we were quite glad to note that manual definitively states: "Thought signal strengths and intelligence are in no way connected." Phew! We were beginning to get concerned. We'd like to think that the problem lies not in our heads, but in the *MindDrive* and its software. ■

ELECTRONICS WISH LIST



Aiwa Front-Surround CD Boom Box

Front-Surround Boom Box

Aiwa America Inc.'s (800 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, NJ 07430) *Model CSD-ES60* CD boom box features a front-surround system that delivers full, room-filling sound. The front speakers are supplemented by a top-mounted pair, which, by virtue of their placement, provide a slightly delayed signal in a typical listening situation. The result is the open, spacious sound associated with true surround sound. A switch allows the surround speakers to be turned on and off. The boom box features a three-position preset equalizer, 20-track random programming, bass boost, an auto-reverse cassette deck, and a remote control. Price: \$170.



Panasonic AM/FM Headphones

"Shock Wave" AM/FM Headphones

AM/FM headphones are a popular musical source for fitness buffs. The *Model RF-SW150* "Shock Wave" headphones from Panasonic (Matsushita Consumer Electronic Company, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094) are built to stand up to jogging, roller-blading, biking, or rock-climbing. The water-resistant, bright yellow and black headphones are made of durable ABS plastic. To make sure they stay comfortably in place during any activity, the two-piece headband is adjustable. The AM/FM tuner has a built-in antenna. The tuner dial and volume and tuning controls are located on the right earpiece. Price: \$59.95.

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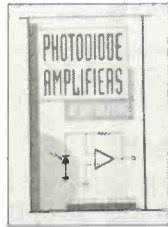
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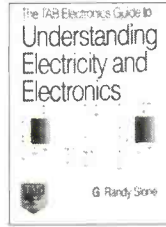
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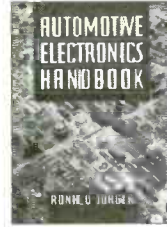
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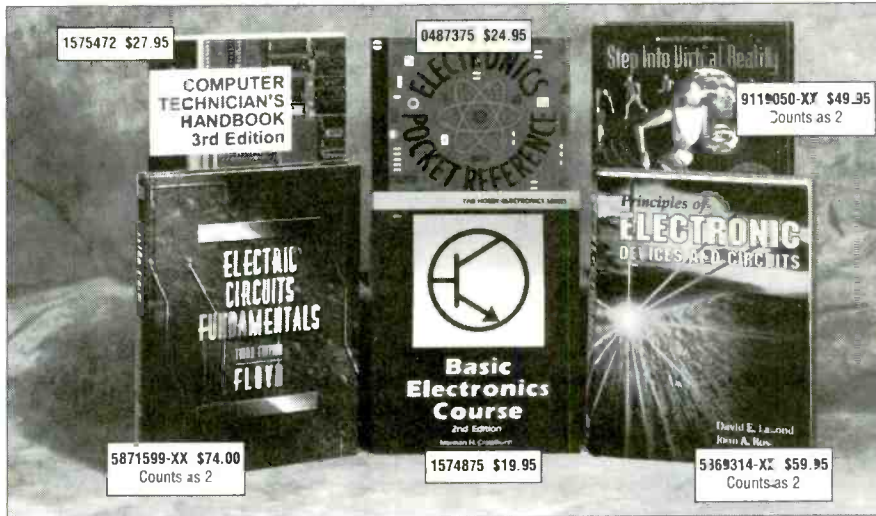
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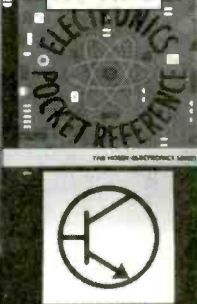
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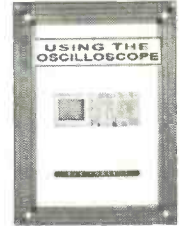
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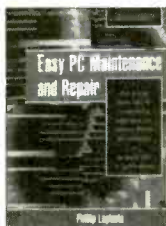
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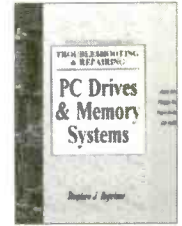
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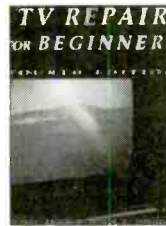
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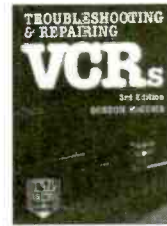
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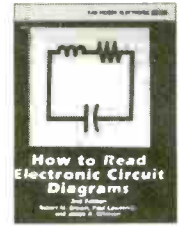
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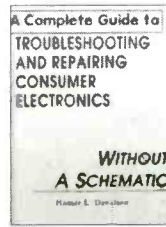
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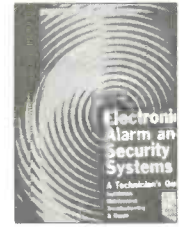
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BUILD A MULTIMEDIA SUBWOOFER

Add deep rumbling bass and excitement to your favorite computer games and music CDs.

BY RODRICK SEELY



As you probably know, faster computers and CD-ROM drives have paved the way for a huge selection of impressive multimedia software. Video games and interactive-audio and music-studio programs are incorporating more impressive music and sound effects than ever before.

As a result, better audio systems for computers are rapidly gaining popularity. Unfortunately, even moderate-to high-priced computer speakers cannot reproduce the deep bass or volume necessary to make audio music CDs and computer games sound really great. Although some computer-speaker manufacturers are now offering small subwoofer speakers, it can be difficult to find a good subwoofer without buying a whole set of speakers and software titles packaged together. Worst of all, good quality subwoofers can be very expensive.

The *Multimedia Subwoofer* described in this article provides deep, solid bass for your computer, and costs less than \$80 to build! The unit features a built-in, 12-dB-per-octave, active bandpass crossover, as well as a 20-watt power amplifier and 6-inch speaker. Two 3.5-mm phone jacks allow easy connection to virtually any sound card and multimedia speakers.

When the Subwoofer is installed with multimedia speakers, its volume relative to the satellite speakers is con-

trolled by a volume adjustment on the Subwoofer, while the volume of all the speakers together is controlled by the adjustment on the multimedia speaker. This allows the Subwoofer to be concealed under a computer table or desk and controlled remotely.

Circuit Description. Figure 1 shows a schematic diagram of the Subwoofer circuit. At the heart of the circuit is IC1, a TL072 dual JFET op-amp. Op-amp IC1-a forms a high-pass filter with capacitors C2 and C3 and resistors R2 and R3, while IC1-b forms a low-pass filter with C4, C5, R6, and R7. The cutoff frequency for this type of filter is calculated using the formula:

$$f = 1/(2\pi RC)$$

With the values shown, the high-pass filter cuts off at about 34 Hz, and the low-pass filter cuts off at about 150 Hz. The gain of the filter stages is set by resistors R4 and R5 for the high-pass, and R8 and R9 for the low-pass.

Jacks J1 and J2 are connected in parallel to allow the Subwoofer to be installed between the right and left satellite speakers. As mentioned, this installation lets you control the Subwoofer volume by the powered speaker. Resistor R15 and potentiometer R16 form an adjustable voltage divider to set the Subwoofer volume. This adjustment is provided to balance the system when it is initially installed.

The amplification for the Subwoofer is made simple by IC2, a 20-watt power-amplifier integrated circuit. Capacitors C6 and C7 provide input coupling. Two electrolytic capacitors are used in this configuration to save the cost of a single non-polar electrolytic capacitor. Gain is set by resistors R11 and R12.

This amplifier can draw idle current of up to 100 mA. As a result it gets **hot** even with no load, so it is very important to use a heatsink—the bigger the better (more on that later). Using a heatsink and silicone grease will be necessary even though the circuit does use internal thermal protection.

The power supply consists of a 36-volt, center-tapped transformer (T1), a bridge rectifier (BR1), and two filter capacitors (C10 and C11). The transformer and bridge should be rated for at least 1 ampere. The rectified and filtered output is about ± 25 volts. Note that the power supply for the op-amp is regulated to ± 15 volts by Zener-diodes D1 and D2, and resistors R13 and R14.

The Cabinet and Speaker. The cabinet for the Subwoofer is a bandpass-style speaker enclosure designed with the aid of computer software. This enclosure consists of a 10- x 10- x 5.75-inch (0.33 cubic feet) sealed compartment behind the speaker cone, and a smaller, 0.1-cubic-foot ported enclosure in front of the

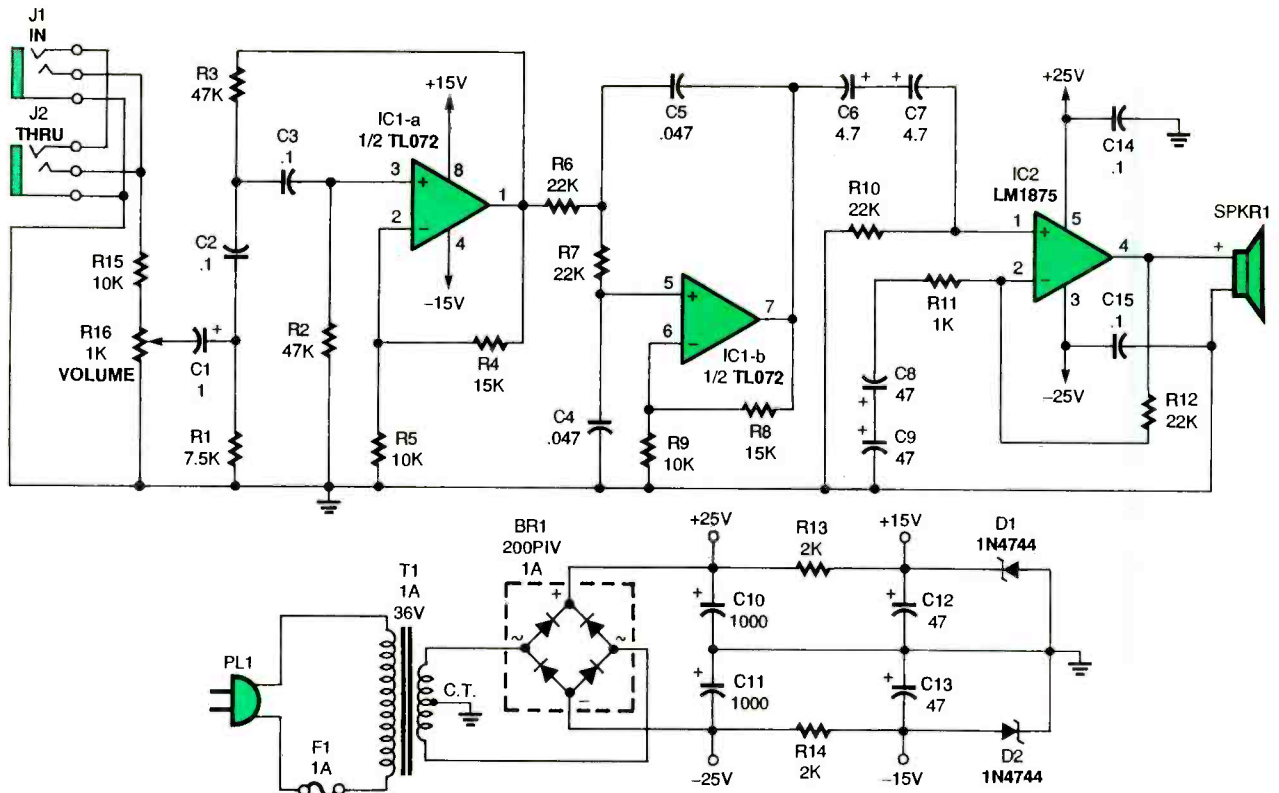


Fig. 1. Here's the schematic for the Multimedia Subwoofer. The circuit is greatly simplified by the use of an integrated 20-watt amplifier, IC2.

PARTS LIST FOR THE MULTIMEDIA SUBWOOFER

SEMICONDUCTORS

IC1—TL072 dual JFET operational amplifier, integrated circuit
 IC2—LM1875T 20-watt power amplifier, integrated circuit
 BR1—Full-wave bridge rectifier, 200-PIV, 1-ampere (DB103 or equivalent)
 D1, D2—1N4744 Zener diode, 15-volt, 1-watt

RESISTORS

(All fixed resistors are 1/4-watt, 5% units.)
 R1—7500-ohm
 R2, R3—47,000-ohm
 R4, R8—15,000-ohm
 R5, R9, R15—10,000-ohm
 R6, R7, R10, R12—22,000-ohm
 R11—1000-ohm
 R13, R14—2000-ohm
 R16—1000-ohm miniature potentiometer, horizontal PC-mount

CAPACITORS

C1—1-µF, 50-WVDC, electrolytic
 C2, C3, C14, C15—0.1-µF, Mylar or metalized polyester
 C4, C5—0.047-µF, Mylar or metalized polyester
 C6, C7—4.7-µF, 35-WVDC, electrolytic
 C8, C9, C12, C13—47-µF, 35-WVDC, electrolytic
 C10, C11—1000-µF, 35-WVDC, electrolytic

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

SPKR1—6-inch woofer (MCM Electronics Model 55-170 or equivalent)
 J1, J2—3.5-mm stereo phone jack, PC-mount
 T1—36-volt transformer, 1-ampere, center-tapped
 F1—1-ampere fuse, 250-volt
 PL1—AC plug, 2-terminal

Printed-circuit materials, AC line cord, strain-relief bushing, assembled speaker enclosure, aluminum chassis and heatsink, fuse holder, nylon spacers, wire, solder, hardware, etc.

Note: The following items are available from Lynn-Eren Electronics (17093 SW Lynnly Way, Sherwood, OR 97140; Tel. 503-625-2205; <http://www.teleport.com/~lynneren>): complete kit of parts including etched and drilled PC-board, aluminum chassis and heatsink, speaker, and assembled cabinet (unpainted)—\$79; assembled and tested Subwoofer unit—\$99; PC board only—\$20. Check, money order, VISA, and MasterCard are accepted. Add \$10 shipping and handling to orders that include cabinets or speakers. Assembled units are black.

speaker cone. The ported-front enclosure is achieved by facing the speaker downward, and holding it about two inches above the floor with rails on two sides. This technique simplifies assembly of the cabinet, and installation of the speaker cone.

The speaker used in the Subwoofer is a 6-inch MCM Electronics Model 55-1170. Of course, a similar woofer can be used.

Construction. For best results, the Subwoofer power supply, crossover,

and amplifier should be built on a double-sided, printed-circuit board. You can either etch your own from the templates provided in Figs. 2 (solder side) and 3 (component side), or order a board from the source mentioned in the Parts List.

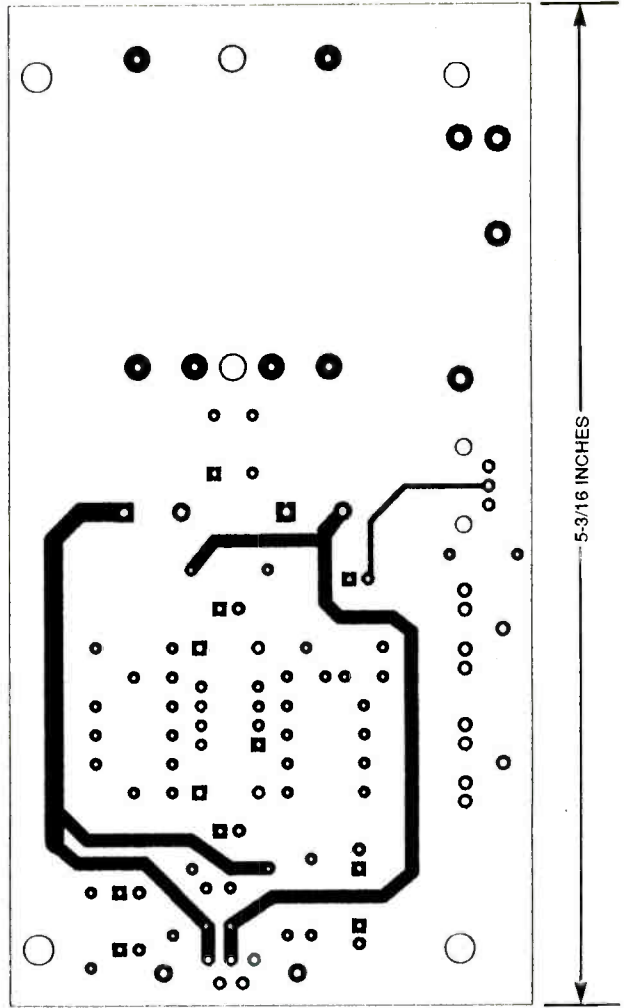
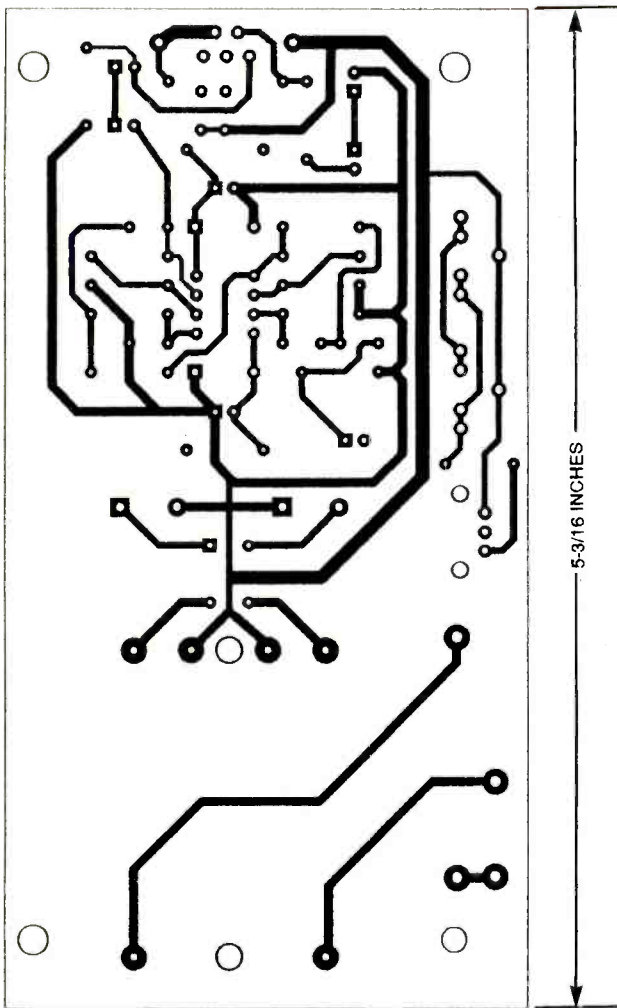


Fig. 2. This is a template of the component side of the Subwoofer PC board, shown full size.

Fig. 3. Here is the solder side of the double-sided PC board.

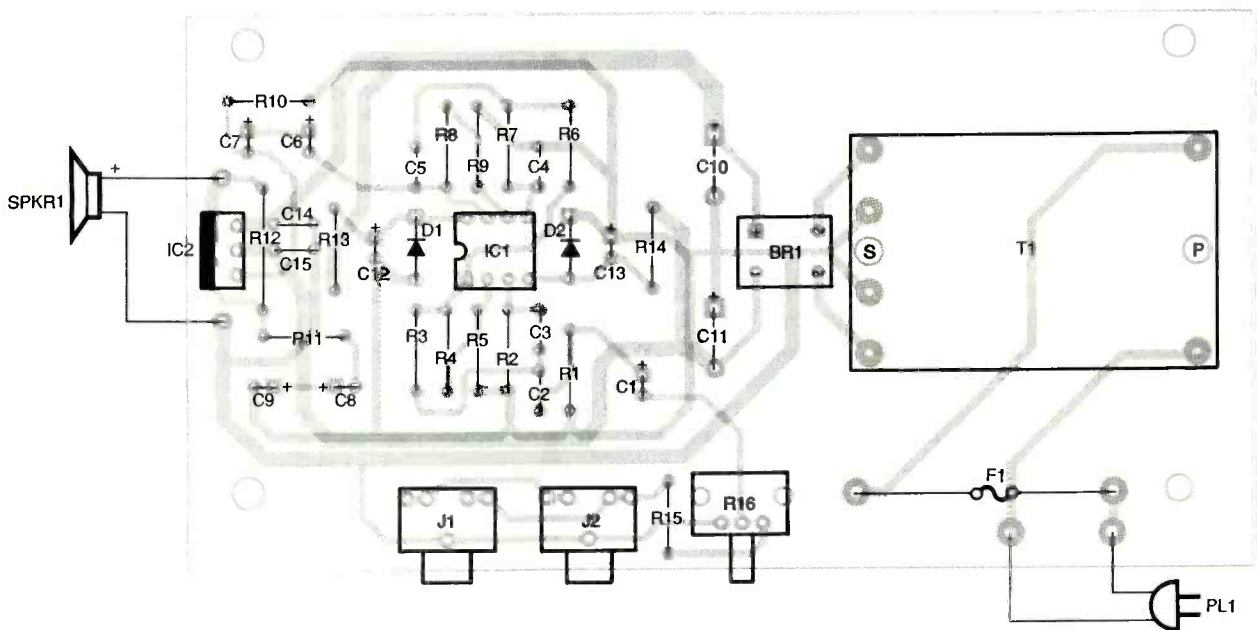


Fig. 4. Building the Subwoofer circuit on a PC board is recommended. Use this parts-placement diagram as a guide when doing so.

There are a couple of reasons why a PC board is recommended for the project. One reason is to prevent the noise and self-oscillation problems that can occur in audio projects using other building techniques. Also, using a PC board simplifies assembly, and usually gives you a better chance of having your project work on the first try!

Use the parts-placement diagram shown in Fig. 4 as a guide when assembling the circuit on the Subwoofer PC board. Begin by installing a socket for IC1. Mount all fixed resistors and capacitors, noting proper polarity for the electrolytics. Install the PC-mount jacks, potentiometer, and transformer next.

As you go along, be sure to solder on both sides of the circuit board wherever necessary. Install a fuse holder for F1. Then solder D1, D2, BR1, and IC2 to the board, making sure they are oriented properly. Attach speaker wires to the circuit board and speaker as shown in the parts-placement diagram. Then double-check component placement and soldering before connecting the AC line cord.

Note: If your line cord is already connected to an AC plug (PL1), do not connect it to the board at this time! You will instead need to pass it through the chassis first (more on that in a moment). To complete the assembly, insert IC1 into its socket.

The prototype circuit board was mounted in a three-sided aluminum chassis, measuring 5.5 × 3 × 1.5 inches. This chassis serves as a front panel and part of a heatsink. You can make a similar chassis from a 0.0625-inch-thick aluminum sheet. If you do so, you will need to drill holes that accommodate the PC-mount jacks and potentiometer, IC2's heatsink tab, the line cord, screws for mounting the chassis to the Subwoofer cabinet, and screws for mounting the board to the chassis (we'll cover, in turn, where each of those holes are). Of course, you can also order the chassis as part of the complete kit that is available from the source that's mentioned in the Parts List.

Once you have the aluminum chassis, mount the circuit board using spacers and screws to the 3- × 5.5-inch side of the chassis. The jacks, potentiometer, and line cord should

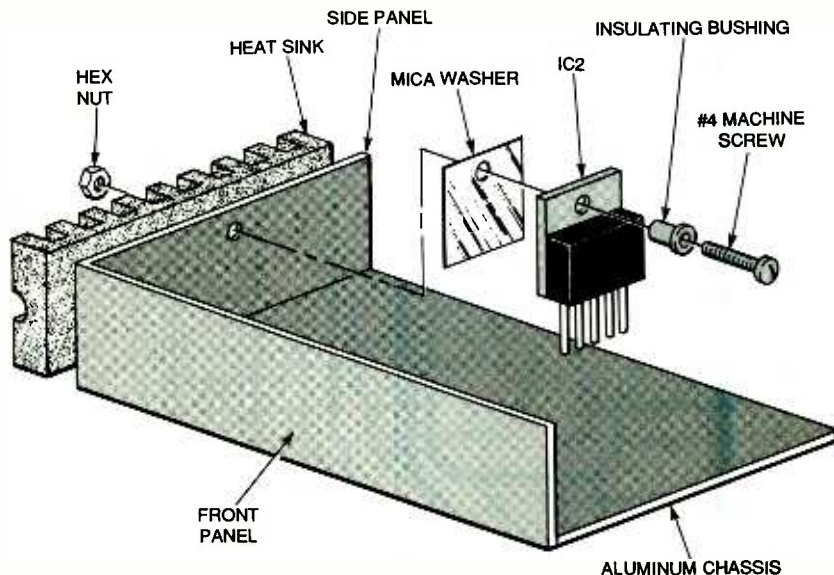


Fig. 5. It is important to electrically insulate IC2 from the chassis and heatsink.

then come out of openings in the 1.5- × 5.5-inch side. As noted earlier, you might need to pass the line cord through the chassis and connect it to the circuit board at this point.

Make sure that IC2's heatsink tab is flush with the remaining side of the chassis (the side measuring 1.5 × 3 inches). Mount the heatsink tab to the chassis and a separate heatsink as shown in Fig. 5. It is very important to electrically insulate IC2 from the metal heatsink using a mica washer and insulating bushing. To ensure good heat transfer, it is also a good idea to use silicone grease between IC2 and the heatsink.

Preliminary Testing. Before installing the circuit in the Subwoofer cabinet, it is a good idea to perform a few simple tests. Make sure that the line cord is installed properly, and component leads on the circuit board are trimmed so they do not touch the metal chassis.

The first step is to check the power supply. Verify that +25 and -25 volts are supplied to IC2 pins 5 and 3, respectively, and that IC1 has +15 and -15 volts on pins 8 and 4, respectively. Also make sure the DC voltage across the speaker is less than 0.1 volt. If there is too much DC voltage on the speaker, or if other voltages are not correct, disconnect the power and double-check the component placement.

Cabinet Assembly. If you are going to build your own Subwoofer cabinet,

instead of ordering one, make sure its inside dimensions are close to 10 × 10 × 5.75 inches. The prototype cabinet was built from ½-inch particle board, but any sturdy sheet stock such as plywood or even Plexiglas will work. The bottom panel should have a 5¾-inch hole for mounting the 6½-inch speaker, and a 3¾- × 1-inch rectangular cutout for the chassis. You can make rails to hold the Subwoofer above the floor out of particle board or 1- × 2-inch furring strips.

To ensure that your cabinet does not rattle and buzz while operating, every seam should be glued, nailed, and sealed with silicone caulking. Assemble the sides and bottom panel first, so that the seams can be easily sealed. The top panel should be fitted last; that way it can be accessed through the speaker cutout for sealing. Finally, the rails can be added to the bottom panel. After the glue and caulking have dried completely, you can then proceed to sand and paint the cabinet.

Mount the chassis assembly in the cabinet using the speaker cutout for access. The front panel (the one with access to the jacks and potentiometer, and with the line cord coming out of it) should be fastened tightly against the cutout in the box to prevent any unwanted rattling or buzzing noise. Use screws that go through the cabinet and the chassis front. Finally, mount the speaker using short wood screws.

(Continued on page 100)

BUILD A MULTI-CHROME PROJECTOR

Use it as a biofeedback stress reliever, or any time you need a light source of various colors.

BY SKIP CAMPISI

You see the illusion every time that you watch your color TV set: The mixing of the three primary colors (red, green, and blue) in the proper combinations can produce any color in the visible spectrum. Of course, mixing red light with green light, for example, does not actually produce light with a wavelength typical of yellow light; however, your eyes will interpret the result as yellow.

This effect occurs because we have three types of color sensitive "cones" in our eyes. One type is sensitive to low frequencies (red light), one type is sensitive to middle frequencies (green light), and one type is sensitive to high frequencies (blue light). By stimulating the three types of cones with these "additive" primary colors, we can also view the "subtractive" primary colors of yellow (red + green), magenta (red + blue), and cyan (green + blue). Also, by varying the intensities of each additive primary color, any color in the spectrum can be seen as long as they are "mixed" before the light enters the eye. White light results when all three additive primary colors are mixed in equal intensities.

Whether you have a technical application for multi-colored light, or would just like to enjoy the soothing effects that such light can have, the aforementioned characteristics of the human eye make it possible to build a multi-chromatic device using light sources of only three colors. The *Multi-Chrome Projector* described in this article is just such a device. It uti-

lizes a technique called rear projection to produce a continuously variable color display.

The Projector. Two assemblies make up the Multi-Chrome Projector. We'll call them the MCP tube and the MCP generator.

The MCP tube includes four LEDs (one red, one green, and two blue units) that are clustered together in a "diamond," or square pattern, at one end of the tube. These LEDs are aligned to illuminate a rear-projection screen located at the opposite end of the tube. The screen mixes the colors so a uniform light enters your eyes.

The LEDs in the Projector were selected for maximum screen intensity. All have a standard T-1 $\frac{3}{4}$ case size, and water-clear lenses. They have viewing angles of about 15° to 25° for proper coverage of the screen area.

The MCP generator includes digitally controlled LED current sources. Those sources are sequentially strobed to light the proper LED combinations to produce a full spectrum of color change in a repeating cycle of about 20 to 30 seconds. Properly adjusted, the unit will display color that continuously changes from red, to yellow, to green, to turquoise (cyan), to blue, to purple (magenta), and

back to red again, with every in-between shade appearing. The MCP tube is mounted on a gimbal on the generator for easy alignment with your angle of vision.

Circuit Description. The schematic for the Projector circuit is shown in Fig. 1. It's a hybrid analog/digital design that utilizes components selected for minimum current drain. A TLC555 CMOS timer, IC1, is configured as a ULF squarewave generator that has an adjustable time period of about 2 to 7 seconds. That output drives IC2, a CD4017 CMOS Johnson counter, which provides the six decoded output steps necessary to trigger the three additive and three subtractive primary color combinations.

A CD4025 CMOS triple 3-input NOR gate, IC3, gates the six outputs to the proper LED current sources, thereby maintaining the correct color-mixing sequence. Four MPSA64 PNP Darlington transistors (Q1-Q4) are configured as gated current sources, with capacitors C4-C7 providing long time constants that allow LED1-LED4 to ramp up and down in intensity. This allows the color changes to be continuous, rather than in six abrupt steps.

Power for the circuit is provided by a



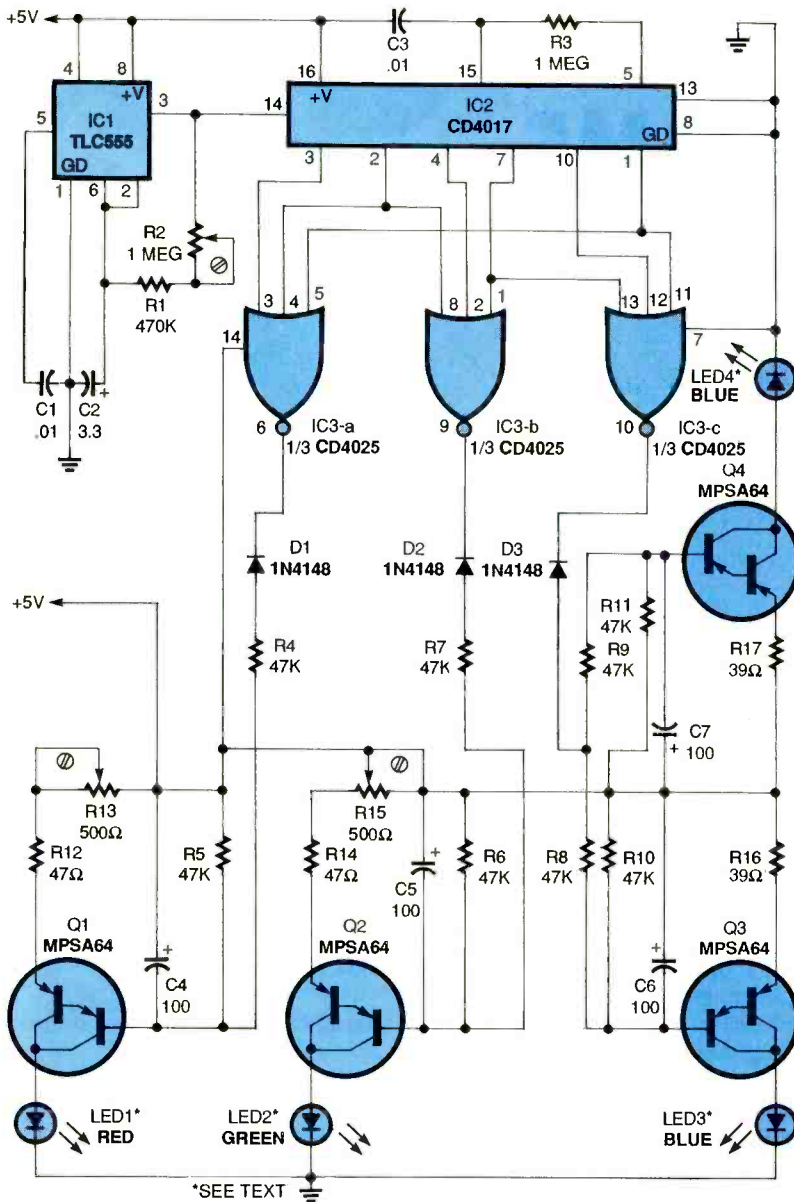


Fig. 1. Here's the schematic for the Multi-Chrome Projector. All the colors of the rainbow are created using combinations of LED1-LED4.

5-volt supply (see Fig. 2). Transformer T1 steps down the voltage from a wall outlet to 6.3-volts AC. That voltage is then rectified by BR1 and regulated by IC1, a 78L05. This circuit is optional, however, as any 5-volt, 100-mA supply will work.

Construction. Because the Projector is a very low frequency device, layout is not critical. Any project-building method that you prefer can be used with equally good results, as long as the circuit-board layout is neat.

Although the author's prototype consists of a separate optics tube and generator enclosure, you have the option of assembling the entire unit in

one cabinet. Simply follow similar dimensions for the spacing of the optical components as used in the prototype MCP tube (we'll get to that in a moment).

Before you begin, make sure you have the correct type of LEDs specified in the Parts List. You can get the four LEDs from Mouser Electronics (Tel. 800-346-6873), DC Electronics (Tel. 800-467-7736), JDR Microdevices (Tel. 800-538-5000), and Alltronics (Tel. 408-943-9773).

All of the components (except LED1-LED4) are mounted on a piece of perforated board, using point-to-point wiring. Keep the components shown in Fig. 1 on one side of the

PARTS LIST FOR THE MULTI-CHROME PROJECTOR

SEMICONDUCTORS

- IC1—TLC555 CMOS timer, integrated circuit
- IC2—CD4017 CMOS Johnson counter, integrated circuit
- IC3—CD4025 triple 3-input NOR gate, integrated circuit
- Q1-Q4—MPSA64 PNP Darlington transistor
- D1-D3—1N4148 switching diode
- LED1—Super-bright light-emitting diode, red, 100-mcd, water-clear lens, T-1 $\frac{1}{4}$ case (Mouser 509-EBR5304S, or equivalent)
- LED2—Super-bright light-emitting diode, green, 100-mcd, water-clear lens, T-1 $\frac{1}{4}$ case (Mouser 509-EPG5304S, or equivalent)
- LED3, LED4—Silicon-carbide light-emitting diode, blue, 16-mcd, water-clear lens, T-1 $\frac{1}{4}$ case (Mouser 5879-5318, or equivalent)

RESISTORS

(All fixed resistors are $\frac{1}{4}$ -watt, 5% units.)

- R1—470,000-ohm
- R2—1-megohm trimmer potentiometer, single-turn
- R3—1-megohm
- R4-R11—47,000-ohm
- R12, R14—47-ohm
- R13, R15—500-ohm trimmer potentiometer, single-turn
- R16, R17—39-ohm

CAPACITORS

- C1, C3—0.01- μ F, monolithic ceramic
- C2—3.3- μ F, 35-WVDC, solid tantalum electrolytic
- C4-C7—100- μ F, 16-WVDC, aluminum electrolytic

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

Perforated board, plastic enclosure, penny coin tubes (2), automotive-type hose clamp, microphone flange adapter, microphone holder, plastic enclosure, IC sockets, microscope slide or ground glass, emery paper, plastic cement, wire, solder, hardware, etc.

board, so that you can mount the power-supply components at a little distance. Begin by installing DIP sockets for IC1-IC3 of Fig. 1. Then wire the rest of the circuit from those points. Install the resistors and trimmer potentiometers first, then go on to add the capacitors, noting the polarity of the electrolytics. Solder the transistors and diodes to the board next, making sure they are oriented properly as well.

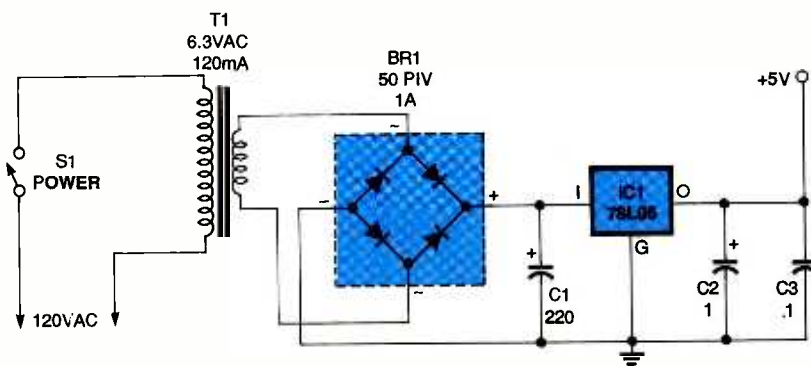


Fig. 2. This circuit will provide a 5-volt, 100-mA supply for the Projector circuit.

Mount the power transformer and other power-supply components at the other end of the board. Make sure the polarized components are also wired correctly. Solder an AC line cord and switch S1 to transformer T1. Note that this on-board power supply is only an option. However, if an external supply is used, capacitors C2 and C3 (shown in Fig. 2) will have to be included right on the Projector circuit board.

The author's prototype for the Projector was housed in a 1½- × 2½- × 4¾-inch plastic cabinet, with the power cord and power switch mounted at one end. The top cover was ventilated by punching ten, ⅛-inch-diameter holes in two columns. You can do the same, depending on the type of enclosure you use. You will have to run leads from the MCP tube into the case as well. Let's now get to building the tube.

Obviously, the "heart" of the Multi-Chrome Projector is the MCP tube. In the author's prototype, the tube was made from two penny coin tubes, which are available from your local coin dealer. These tubes are about 3-inches long and ¼-inch wide, and are used to hold a roll of pennies. They are made of transparent styrene and have a nylon, screw-on cap.

Attach a standard, automotive-type hose clamp about ⅙ inch from the closed end of one of the tubes. Make sure that the clamp is square with the end, then use a "razor" saw to cut off the end, using the clamp as a guide. File the end of the tube flush with the clamp. Remove the cap and relocate the clamp to the threaded end of the tube, and cut off ⅙ inch from that end, also. You will end up with an open tube with threads on one end.

The next step is to cut off some of the threaded end of the other tube. Place the clamp on the threaded end of that tube so that after you cut, about ⅙ inch of the threaded section will remain on the tube. Then discard the second tube and sand the cut end of the threads square. Using plastic cement, glue that threaded section to the open end of the first tube. You will then end up with an open tube having equal-length threaded sections on each end. Set it aside to dry completely.

Cut a scrap piece of 0.1-inch-grid perforated board (the type with copper foil pads) to a size of ⅝-inch square. You will now have a board containing six rows of six holes each. Lightly sand the four corners of the board so that it just lies flat when dropped into one of the nylon screw caps. Don't remove too much off the corners, as the board must be "captured" between the cap and the threaded end of the tube when as-

PARTS LIST FOR THE 5-VOLT POWER SUPPLY

CAPACITORS

- C1—220-µF, 16-WVDC, aluminum electrolytic
- C2—1-µF, 35-WVDC, solid tantalum electrolytic (see text)
- C3—0.1-µF, monolithic ceramic (see text)

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

- IC1—78L05 5-volt regulator, integrated circuit
- BR1—Full-wave bridge rectifier, 1-ampere, 50-PIV
- T1—6.3-VAC, 120-mA transformer
- S1—SPST toggle switch, 1-ampere
- AC line cord with plug, grommet, wire, solder, hardware, etc.

sembled. Drill a ⅛-inch hole dead center in the board, and install a 1½-inch-long #4-40 machine screw in this hole. Fasten the screw with a #4-40 nut. The screw will aid in aligning the LEDs.

Install LED1-LED4 as follows: Slip a ¾-inch length of spaghetti tubing onto the length of one of the blue LEDs. Then install its anode lead into one of the outside corner holes, with the cathode lead in the next inside hole on the diagonal towards the screw. Lean the LED against the screw; the spaghetti tubing will set the correct angle, and a small rubber band will clamp the LED in place. Solder both leads to the foil pads and remove the rubber band. Similarly, solder the second blue LED in the opposite corner.

In the same fashion, solder the red and green LEDs in the remaining adjacent corners of the board and remove the #4-40 screw and nut from the assembly. Connect all four of the LED cathodes together with a piece of bus wire. Using 26- or 28-gauge insulated hookup wire, cut 12-inch-long pieces of each of the following colors: black, red, and green. Then cut two 12-inch-long pieces of blue wire. Solder one end of the black wire to the common-cathode bus connection, and route the other end out through the ⅛-inch center hole through the back of the perforated board.

Solder the red wire to the anode lead of the red LED, and in a similar way, solder the remaining green wire and blue wires to their appropriate anode leads, routing them through the same hole as the black wire. Drill a ⅛-inch hole through the center of one of the nylon screw caps; route the five wires through this hole allowing the board to nest in the cap.

Slip the already prepared tube over the LED assembly. Screw on the cap, capturing the board at the threaded end of the tube. You can now look down the center of the open end of the tube to check the alignment of the four LEDs. They should all be pointing towards the center of the open tube end. If necessary, gently bend the LED leads to achieve alignment. When satisfied, secure the cap in place with small screws or glue.

Cut a piece of black construction paper to 1½ × 2½ inches and roll it

into a 1½-inch-long tube. Insert this paper into the open end of the MCP tube for a glare stop, letting it snap open to hug the plastic walls. Secure it with a small piece of tape. Punch a ½-inch-diameter hole, or using a hobby knife, cut a ½-inch square hole in the center of the remaining screw cap. Paint this cap flat black and set it aside to dry.

The "key" element of the MCP tube is the rear-projection screen. Many materials can be used, such as frosted glass or plastic, textured plastic, and even tracing paper! However, the brightest image is obtained using "ground" glass, which was used in the author's prototype. If you don't have access to any ground glass, you can make your own by following the directions in the following paragraphs. If you do have ground glass, do all the mentioned scribing on the smooth surface, only.

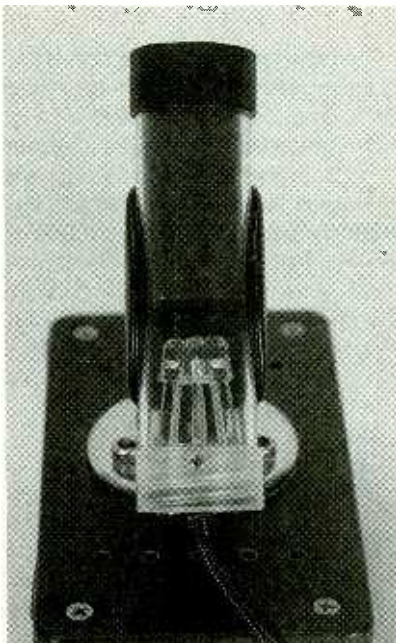
Obtain a piece of thin glass such as a standard 1- × 3- × 0.040-inch microscope slide. Using a metal straight edge as a guide, scribe a line parallel to the edge across the 1-inch width, exactly ⅝ inch from the edge, using a standard carbide-tipped scriber. (Note: Unless you are an expert, a standard glass cutter is useless on a small piece like this!) With the scribed line on top, lay the slide on top of a toothpick (or similar object) aligning the toothpick with the line. Place your thumbs on the slide, on each side of the line, and push down. The glass will snap and leave a neat, clean edge. Repeat this process to obtain a ⅝-inch square piece of glass.

Using a piece of 600-grit or finer emery paper laid on a flat surface, or a fine-grit whetstone, bevel the edges of the glass slightly to remove sharp edges. In a similar manner, round the corners slightly (as was done with the LED assembly) so that the glass will be able to fit within the remaining screw cap.

Now moisten the paper or stone with water or saliva and place the glass flat on the surface. Using your finger, push the glass around on the grit in a circular motion, adding water as needed for lubrication. Continue until you get an even, frosted-looking surface on the glass. Only one side needs to be ground. Wash off the glass and "tack" it in place in the black cap, using small dabs of silicone sea-

lant to align it with the ½-inch hole, if necessary. The smooth side of the glass should be facing outwards. Screw the assembly onto the other end of the MCP tube, and fix it in place with small screws or cement. The MCP tube is now ready for mounting.

An excellent mount can be assembled from standard microphone components. Install a ⅝-inch microphone flange adapter on the Projector cabinet. On that flange, install a



Here's a view of the tube assembly, showing how the four LEDs are mounted.

standard microphone holder, whose female threads will match the adapter. The MCP tube will then "snap" nicely into the holder, allowing you to pivot the tube up or down. Bring the leads into the cabinet through a grommet, and connect them to the circuit board, leaving some slack for tilt adjustment of the tube.

Setup. Adjust trimmer potentiometers R2, R13, and R15 to their mid positions, and apply power to the circuit. Looking at the screen, you'll see the red LED rise in intensity as the color-mixing process begins. Observe two or three complete cycles and then begin adjusting R13 and R15 to match the intensities of the red and green LEDs with that of the blue LEDs. The settings vary for different individuals and ambient-light conditions.

Once you are satisfied with the colors, begin adjusting R2, which controls the cycle time of the mixing. That setting should be made so that just as one LED fades out, the next should begin intensifying. Thus, there is no pause at any one color, or any overlap of colors. The prototype runs at about a 20-second cycle time. Close up the enclosure when you're satisfied with the settings.

Using the Projector. As you may have already surmised while setting up the unit, the display screen has a rather "hypnotic" effect on your eyes! This is caused by your brain's natural tendency to sense the repeating pattern of color change, and anticipate those changes. However, when properly adjusted, the unit's color change is continuous and never really pauses at one particular color, thus your brain never quite catches up with the sequence!

This can best be demonstrated in subdued lighting. Be seated in a relaxed position with the MCP tube angled towards you so that you are looking squarely at the screen and down the axis of the tube. This will provide the highest intensity image. You are now ready to turn on the power and concentrate your attention on the projector screen.

Let your mind follow the ever-changing color sequence. Shortly, your brain will begin anticipating these changes automatically. Relax and let it happen—you will be entering the alpha-wave state of meditation! This effect can actually provide some stress relief, just as when you pet your dog or cat, or other favorite companion. Your eyes may tend to go out of focus, and you may also find yourself becoming quite drowsy while concentrating your attention on the display screen.

Most people viewing the prototype in action simply could not take their eyes off of the display! It sort of "pulls" at your attention area, directing you to concentrate only on the display colors.

Of course, if you are not interested in biofeedback techniques, the Multi-Chrome Projector can still be used just as an extremely interesting and unique display device. Be the first on your block to own a multi-color, single-source light display! ■

MONITORING MILITARY AIRCRAFT



*Use an ordinary scanner and these listening tips
to follow the exciting transmissions of our nation's military pilots.*

BY LAURA QUARANTIELLO

His voice is strained, guttural, and groaning. He sounds like he's bench-pressing 400 pounds and his arms are about to give out. Only it's not 400 pounds, it's more like 1440. A force eight times that of gravity is crushing this naval aviator into his cockpit seat, flattening his eyeballs, and breaking blood vessels across his nose and cheeks as he pulls hard into a left break turn. His vision dims and he's on the ragged edge, trying to put his airplane's nose on a target that is four miles away—an F-16 adversary painted Saudi-blue.

Your scanner radio screams out his words: "Fox Two on the left hand F-16!" Suddenly, halfway through the sentence, all the strain leaves his voice in a rush. Though you can't see him, can't see his airplane, can only hear his voice over a speaker, you know he's unloaded the airplane, released the crushing g forces, and rolled back to straight and level flight.

"You're a kill. That left hand F-16 is a kill!" he exults, but the jubilation is over

as quickly as it began.

"Hawk, break right, break right!" It's his wingman's over-stressed voice, waking his partner up to the fact that the fight isn't finished. In fact, the fight isn't even real, but from the sounds and the wound-up taut voices, you'd never know it.

Call to Glory. Every working day in America, over every state, military aircraft take to the skies. Their missions are to train for war, and they do it from the cool of the early pre-dawn hours far into the drawing blackness of night. They work way beyond the usual nine-to-five day, and they can often be found trading simulated shots on a Sunday afternoon when the rest of us are enjoying a day off. From sod level to the high skies, our military aviators are active at the controls of everything from helicopters to fighter jets to air refueling tankers. They train and they wait for the call to duty.

Each year it seems that call comes, from places with names like Kuwait, Bosnia, and Iraq. Lonely outposts

where men and women are summoned to serve their country's interests. But the official missions we see these professionals fly overseas are backed by hundreds of hours spent in friendlier skies, learning tactics and rules designed to keep them alive when their real call to glory comes, and the ground under them suddenly isn't Kansas or California anymore.

A United States military aviator isn't born; he or she is made. They are taught, shaped, and honed in a peculiar kind of purgatory the military calls *training sorties*. Best of all, they have all those experiences close to home. That's where scanner enthusiasts come in.

A listener who knows where to tune can find a little bit of heaven from a scanner speaker. In fact, monitoring military aircraft can result in an experience more supercharged than a medic ambulance on a Code Three run.

Scanning for Aircraft. Military pilots practice their art in the secure en-



Two sure winners for scanner fans who want to monitor military aircraft are the Uniden Bearcat BC-200XLT (left) and Radio Shack PRO-43 (right).

vicinities of Military Operating Areas (MOAs), Warning Areas (Whiskeys), and Restricted Areas. You won't see these places by looking up into the sky, but you will see their outlines traced on aviation charts. These areas with invisible geographic boundaries keep high-speed, maneuvering military aircraft safely away from transiting civilian air traffic. Chances are better than good that you have a military operating area within fifty miles of your location. Here are some tips for finding military aircraft on the airwaves:

Your first target when searching for milair (military aircraft) communications should be *Air Route Traffic Control Centers* (ARTCCs). There are twenty Centers located throughout the United States, each divided into sectors for the positive control of aircraft, and overseen by military air-traffic controllers. Military aircraft moving to and from special-use airspace (such as military operating areas and warning areas) that serve as their private playgrounds keep in contact with Center controllers.

Each VHF Center frequency in the 118–137 MHz band is paired with a UHF frequency. The controller simulcasts on both frequencies, but the pilots in

military aircraft usually are only heard on the UHF side. Check a frequency book for a listing of Center sector frequencies near you, then tune in and listen. Follow the hand-offs from one frequency to another until you either lose reception of the aircraft because of distance, or it arrives at this operating area.

The second place to check for milair are the ground-control, tower, and approach/departure frequencies of military air bases or airports with Air National Guard units aboard. Here again you can follow the aircraft as it is handed off from frequency to frequency en route to its destination.

Another good bet for milair communications are warning, restricted-area, military-operating-area, or range-control frequencies. A good

frequency book will guide you to the proper frequencies, but as a general rule, look for Army and Marine Corps air units in the 30- to 50-, 136- to 144-, and 148- to 150.8-MHz ranges, and Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force units in the 225- to 400-MHz range.

Finally, if you're near a base or other military operating area with no book to guide you, try searching through the above bands. Yes, it's a large chunk of frequency space to check, but systematic listening of a small portion at a time should help. In fact, the only true way to find those unpublished air-to-air frequencies is by listening for them. Good areas of the spectrum to check for hot activity are 136–137, 138–144, 233–236, 300–308, and 310–312 MHz.

Military aircraft chat with air-traffic controllers while approaching and departing airports, and flying to and from operating areas. However, they also use tactical and air-to-air frequencies. These discrete channels are where the bulk of the interesting communications take place. Finding them is often a job, but once you do, you'll open a treasure trove of fascinating transmissions.

Generally, tactical frequencies are used to coordinate different flights of aircraft engaged in common maneuvers, or to connect aircraft working with ground or afloat units. Air-to-air frequencies connect pilots in the same flight of aircraft, and pilots from different flights working in tandem. Again, you never know what you'll find, you'll just have to go searching.

What You'll Hear. If a military service flies it, you can hear it. A scan through the band (see the "Military-Air Frequencies" box) might reveal a Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier working close air support for troops in contact on the ground. You'll hear the soldiers shouting for help so loudly over the radio that you would actually think they were in harm's way, and the only saving grace was on the stubby wings of a Harrier jump jet.

A little farther down the band you may find a gaggle of Navy jets dog-fighting, with pilots screaming "Fox Two" to indicate a heat-seeking, side-winder missile launch. Keep searching and you can come across Air Force F-15's and F-16's turning and burning, A-10 Warthog tank killers

MILITARY-AIR FREQUENCIES (kHz)

- 40.500—Army Search and Rescue/FM Emergency.
- 41.500—Army Control Towers.
- 126.200—Military Control Towers VHF.
- 130.650—Air Mobility Command (AMC) Primary.
- 134.100—Military GCA Radar.
- 140.100—FM Tactical.
- 236.600—Military Control Towers UHF.
- 239.800—PMSV Metro Weather.
- 241.000—Army National Guard.
- 242.200—US Air Force Air Combat Command (ACC).
- 243.000—Guard Emergency.
- 252.100—Air Force Air Refueling.
- 255.400—FAA Flight Service Stations.
- 255.400—USSTRATCOM Air to Air.
- 257.800—Military/Civilian Control Towers.
- 270.800—USSTRATCOM Air to Ground.
- 282.500—ACC.
- 283.700—ACC.
- 297.000—AMC.
- 304.800—USAF Hurricane Hunters.
- 305.600—ACC.
- 311.000—USSTRATCOM Primary.
- 340.200—USN Control Towers.
- 341.200—USSTRATCOM Air to Air.
- 342.500—PMSV Metro Weather.
- 343.000—ACC.
- 344.600—PMSV Metro Weather.
- 349.400—USAF Control Towers.
- 360.200—USN Control Towers.
- 372.200—Military Dispatchers.
- 375.200—PMSV Metro Weather.
- 375.700—USSTRATCOM Air Refueling Anchor.
- 376.200—ACC.
- 381.300—USSTRATCOM Command Post.
- 381.400—USSTRATCOM Air to Air.
- 387.900—ACC.
- 390.900—AMC.

MILAIR GLOSSARY

ACM—Air Combat Maneuvering.
AIC—Air Intercept Control.
ARTCC—Air Route Traffic Control Center.
ATC—Air Traffic Control.
BANDIT—Enemy aircraft.
BREAK—A hard turn left or right to disengage a pursuing enemy or missile.
BOGIE—Unidentified aircraft.
BOGIE DOPE—Request for position, altitude and speed of bogie.
BUG OUT—Leave the fight.
BUTTON #—Indicates preset radio frequency.
CIC—Combat Information Center (ship based).
DISCRETE—Private frequency for air-to-air communications not monitored by ATC.
FLIGHT JOINED—Indicates that wingmen have formed up with leader.
FOX 1—Voice call indicating launch of radar-guided missile.
FOX 2—Voice call indicating launch of heat-seeking missile.
FOX 3—Voice call indicating use of aircraft-mounted guns.
G—An expression of the force of gravity (i.e., "4 g's").
GREEN 'EM UP—Arm weapons.
HOT—Active.
INTERROGATIVE—Question follows.
IP—Initial point.
IR—Instrument route.
JOKER—Minimum fuel.
MERGE PLOT—Radar data plots have merged on controller's radar screen; usually indicates two aircraft in close proximity to each other (within visual range).
MILAIR—Military Aircraft.
MOA—Military Operating Area.
MODE 3—Radar transponder mode.
MOTHER—Aircraft carrier; also base ship for helicopters.
NOSES COLD—Radar off.
POSIT—Position.
PUSH—Proceed.
RTB—Return to Base.
SAY STATE—Request for an aircraft's fuel situation.
SHOOTER—Attacking aircraft.
SPLASH—Voice call indicating an enemy aircraft shot down.
SPLIT—Separation.
SQUAWK—Refers to radar transponder code that identifies aircraft on controller's radar display.
START YOUR MUSIC—Activate radar-jamming pods.
SWITCHES SAFE—Weapons secured.
TALLYHO—Target in sight.
TONE—Audio warning indicating missile lock ("good tone").
UNIFORM—UHF frequency.
VICTOR—VHF frequency.
WEAPONS FREE—Aircraft has been cleared to use weapons.
WEAPONS TIGHT—Aircraft has not been cleared to use weapons.
WINCHESTER—Out of ammunition.



With your scanner radio, you can hear helicopters like this AH-1 Cobra in training. Just tune in between 138-144 MHz.



Always up, always working! The only time you get to see an E-2 Hawkeye is at air shows; otherwise they are up as the eyes of a fleet, and home for AIC fighter controllers.

searching for prey down close to the hills and valleys, F-14's trapping aboard aircraft carriers, fighters calling refueling tankers on tactical frequencies and being vectored in by the tanker pilot for a drink, and around the corner, just a megahertz away, maybe helicopters removing "wounded" soldiers or transferring cargo to and from a ship located offshore.

In addition, you'll also be privy to military pilots chatting with each other on air-to-air frequencies. You may be treated to a running commentary on the scenery, the latest ready-room gossip, or an in-depth discussion of how to fly and fight a Har-

rier. Without a doubt, what you'll hear will entertain you, maybe give you a laugh, and possibly provide a heart-stopping moment when you wonder if what you're hearing could be real. From one minute to the next, one frequency to another, you never know what you will come across.

Bugging Out. It's true that military pilots speak in a language all their own. As a result, listeners often tune in air-to-air transmissions that are, for the most part, cryptic and hard to follow. More than any other factor, this failure to understand what's being said drives scanner listeners away from a fas-

(Continued on page 50)

BUILD A TEMPERATURE ADAPTER FOR YOUR DMM



Use this circuit and an ordinary DMM to measure temperature.

BY MARC SPIWAK

I'll bet there are plenty of times when you are working at your test bench and wish you knew what the temperature was. Whether it's the temperature inside an amplifier chassis, of a component, or in a room, you need something to measure how hot or cold it is. Of course a thermometer is always useful, but you don't always have one with you. Besides, glass thermometers are quite fragile, and they don't give you a digital readout like the multimeter you always have with you.

Some of today's multimeters can measure a lot more than just voltage and resistance. Fancy ones can measure capacitance, inductance, frequency, and so on. However, it is rare that a DMM can measure temperature. If it can, it probably requires a temperature probe of some sort. So if you are already able to measure temperature with your multimeter, chances are you have a rather high-end DMM. However, we're going to show you how to build a circuit that lets you measure temperature with any digital multimeter.

The *Temperature Adapter* described in this article is a simple add-on circuit that will show right on the display of your DMM how hot or cold something is. All you have to do is plug the unit into your meter's inputs. The only catch is that you must have a digital multimeter (DMM) with a fixed input impedance of at least 1 megohm. Analog meters will load

down the circuit and give inaccurate results.

The Adapter can be built practically for free if you have all the parts in your junk box. And that's quite possible considering that the most exotic component in the circuit is an LM1458 dual general-purpose op-amp. Or, if you prefer, the circuit can be purchased as a kit from the source mentioned in the Parts List.

The Basics. The Adapter add-on circuit allows your DMM to measure from -40 to $+300$ degrees Fahrenheit. It provides you with a digital readout, and its range is a lot greater than that of most glass thermometers. Because the temperature sensor (a modified transistor) can be located remotely and wired to the rest of the circuit, neither you nor your multimeter have to be exposed to the temperature extremes you're measuring. How hot is it under the hood of your car while the engine is running? It's easy enough to find out. And all you have to do is sit back in your air-conditioned car while monitoring the under-hood temperature on your DMM.

With a bit of thermal grease applied to it, the small body of the temperature-sensor transistor can be used to pinpoint temperature along a surface, from component to component, and so on. Just try doing that with a thermometer!

A transistor modified to behave as a single diode is used as the temperature sensor. The voltage drop across a diode junction is inversely propor-

tional to the temperature of the junction. Basically the Adapter circuit just amplifies and scales up that junction voltage to a DC voltage that your DMM can display, and one that directly corresponds to temperature, with an accuracy of 0.1 degree.

Glass thermometers can be very accurate, but everyone knows how fragile they are. However, the biggest disadvantage to a glass thermometer is that you must observe the thermometer's reading and then record it somewhere. This can lead to human errors in observation and recording that later get into calculations, thus throwing them off slightly. Spring-activated mechanical thermometers have analog needle displays, but accurate models are expensive and the moving parts can be quite delicate.

An electronic thermometer, on the other hand, usually has an indisputable digital temperature readout that can be misinterpreted only by recording the display readout improperly or by poor eyesight. Another advantage with an electronic thermometer is that detecting small temperature variations is easier than with most glass thermometers. A digital display, depending on accuracy, can indicate temperature to the nearest degree, or tenth of a degree in the Adapter circuit. Of course there are thermometers that are much more sensitive, depending on your budget. Also, because an electronic thermometer has no moving parts, it's better suited for harsh environments

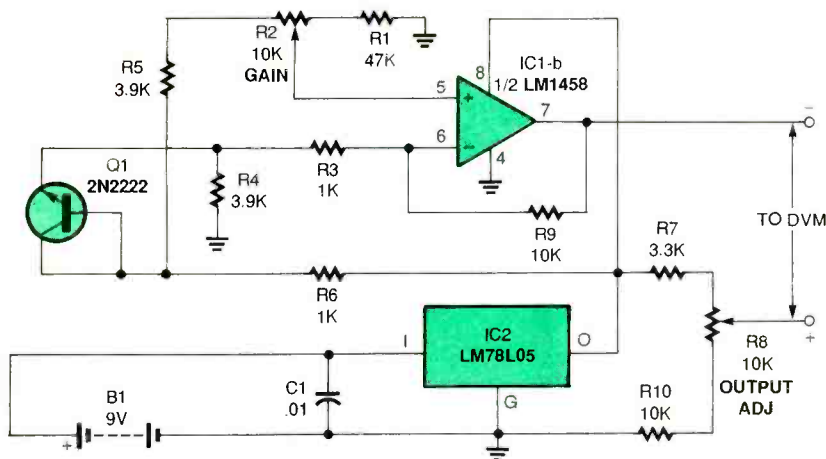


Fig. 1. Here's the schematic for the Temperature Adapter. The circuit allows your DMM to measure from -40 to $+300$ degrees Fahrenheit.

PARTS LIST FOR THE TEMPERATURE ADAPTER

SEMICONDUCTORS

- IC1—LM1458 dual general-purpose op-amp, integrated circuit
 IC2—LM78L05 (or LM7805) positive 5-volt regulator, integrated circuit
 Q1—2N2222 or similar NPN transistor

RESISTORS

(All fixed resistors are $\frac{1}{4}$ -watt, 5% units.)

- R1—47,000-ohm
 R2, R8—10,000-ohm, trimmer potentiometer
 R3, R6—1000-ohm
 R4, R5—3900-ohm
 R7—3300-ohm
 R9, R10—10,000-ohm

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

- C1—0.01- μ F, ceramic-disc capacitor
 B1—9-volt alkaline battery
 Printed-circuit materials, enclosure, 9-volt battery connector, banana plugs, thermometer (for calibration purposes), wire, solder, hardware, etc.

Note:

The following is available from Marlin P. Jones & Associates, Inc. (P.O. Box 12685, Lake Park, FL 33403-0685; Tel. 800-652-6733): kit for the Adapter, including everything except a battery, case, and connectors for your DMM—\$8.95 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling. Florida residents please add appropriate sales tax.

where moving parts might get gummed up or corroded.

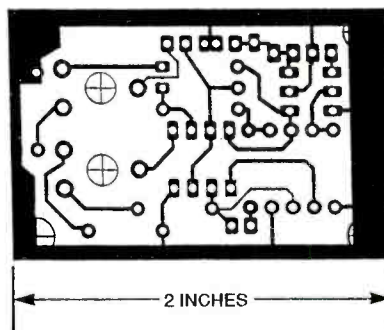


Fig. 2. You can use this foil pattern to etch your own PC board for the Adapter.

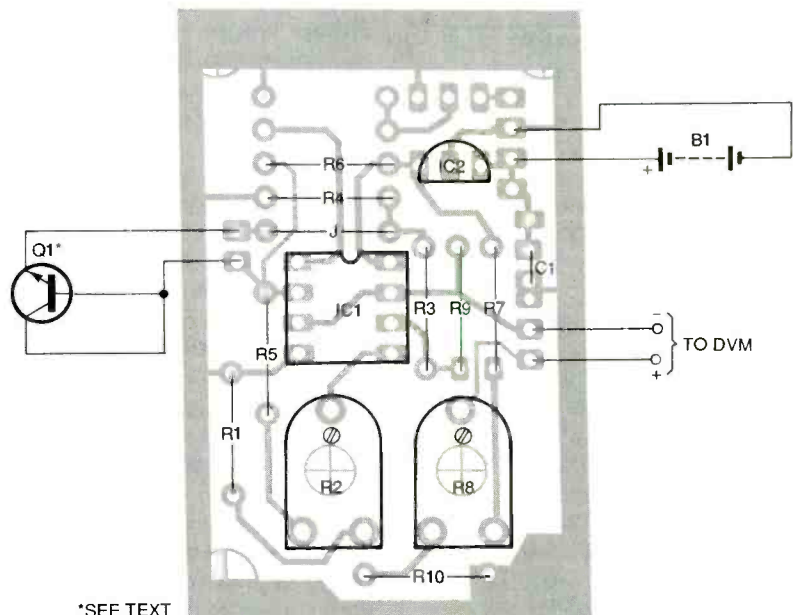


Fig. 3. If you're building the Adapter on a PC board, use this parts-placement diagram as a guide.

Circuit Description. A schematic for the Temperature Adapter is shown in Fig. 1. The circuit outputs 0.01 volt per degree Fahrenheit. That's the actual

voltage that's displayed on your DMM, within the aforementioned range of -40 to $+300$ degrees Fahrenheit. To determine temperature you ignore the decimal point in the display, and the temperature readout is to the tenth of a degree. For example, if the temperature in a room is 75.5 degrees, your DMM would read $+0.755$ volt.

The voltage input for op-amp IC1 is obtained from a transistor Q1 used as a diode in this application. The voltage drop across a silicon diode, while generally about 0.7 volt, depends more precisely on the temperature of the diode junction and the current that flows through it. A silicon diode has a negative temperature coefficient, meaning that as the temperature rises, the voltage drop falls, and vice-versa. The linear voltage drop is measured and used to indicate temperature. The reason the circuit uses an NPN transistor with its base shorted to its collector is because it will provide a more linear response over a wider temperature range than will a single diode.

The circuit is powered from a 9-volt battery, B1. LM78L05 (IC2) low-power regulator provides a fixed 5-volt

source for the circuit. That regulated supply is applied via R6 to the joined terminals of temperature-sensor transistor Q1. The voltage drop across Q1 is

detected and amplified by IC1, an LM1458 op-amp. The output of IC1 is then fed to the input terminals of a DMM. Potentiometer R2 controls the gain of the circuit, while potentiometer R8 adjusts the output reading.

Construction. The Adapter circuit is simple enough that you can use point-to-point wiring to build it. If you prefer, you can also make a PC board from the foil pattern shown in Fig. 2, or you can buy the kit that comes with one (see the Parts List for more information).

If you're building the circuit on a PC board, you can use the parts-placement diagram shown in Fig. 3 as a guide. Begin assembly by installing a socket for IC1; make sure it is oriented properly. Then go on to solder the resistors and capacitor to the board, followed by the wire jumper (J). Mount the two potentiometers next.

Solder a 9-volt battery connector to the board, paying attention to its polarity. The DVM connectors you attach should match whatever jacks are on your multimeter. We used banana jacks that plug right into a multimeter's sockets.

As mentioned before, the tempera-

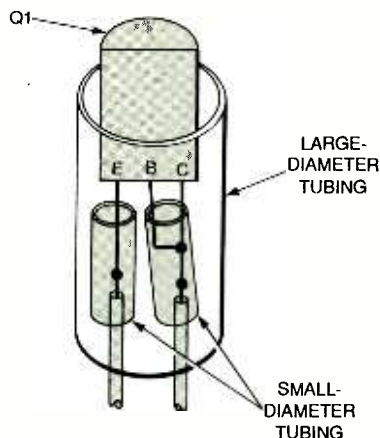


Fig. 4. Use heat-shrink tubing to make the temperature probe water-proof, and to keep shorts from occurring.

ture probe is simply a modified transistor. As shown in Fig. 4, short the base of Q1 to the collector with a drop of solder. Do that right near the transistor body. You will then have a two-lead transistor. Slip some thin heat-shrink tubing over those two leads, and solder each lead to an insulated wire. Then shrink the tubing; that will make sure the leads do not short together or to anything else. Place larger-diameter tubing over the entire assembly (as shown) to strengthen, protect, and

water-proof it. Connect the two wires to the board as shown in Fig. 3.

To complete assembly of the board, solder IC2 to the board, observing correct polarity, and insert IC1 into its socket. You can install the board in whatever case you like, or use it without one.

Calibration and Use. After carefully checking your work for bad solder shorts, connect a 9-volt battery to the connector. Put the positive lead of a voltmeter on pin 7 of IC1, and the negative lead on ground. Adjust R2 for a reading of 2.5 to 3 volts. Now connect the output of the Adapter circuit to a voltmeter set to the 2-volt DC scale. Adjust R8 so that the multimeter reads the same as a stabilized thermometer in the same vicinity as the temperature probe (ignore the decimal point).

With that done, your electronic thermometer setup should now be as precise as the calibration thermometer you used at the given temperature, and pretty accurate over its entire range. Now you'll always know the temperature at your test bench, or wherever else you decide to place the probe. ■

MONITORING AIRCRAFT

(Continued from page 47)

cinating and highly exciting facet of monitoring.

If you're feeling dazed and confused, don't tune out, try checking out our list of terminology in the "Milair Glossary" box. My book *AirWaves* (Tiare Publications), available from most radio-book dealers, will also help you sort out what's being talked about on air-traffic-control frequencies. Realize that most transmissions are, by necessity, quick and to the point. Things happen much too fast in the air for pilots to waste precious seconds by talking. Nearly everything is abbreviated, but as you'll find out, each word serves a distinct purpose.

How do you know when you've caught a military aircraft transmitting? Your first clue is the call sign. Delta, American, and United are as common as Cessna, Piper, and Learjet on the airwaves, but military call signs are a breed apart. Lion, Black

Sheep, Knight, Irish Mist, Starfire, Shooter—these names are the nomenclature of military air, and they serve to alert listeners to a good catch.

The call sign is more than just a name, however. With a little practice, you'll discover that the same name is often used to describe particular squadron aircraft. For instance, VMGR-352—an air refueling squadron flying KC-130's from MCAS El Toro, California—has the squadron name "Raider." This is also the squadron's over-the-air call sign. Anytime I hear an aircraft identifying itself as Raider followed by two or three numbers, I know I'm hearing a Marine Corps KC-130. Find out the squadron names of the units in your area and you'll have a jump on covering who's transmitting.

Understanding what you're hearing takes time. Don't become discouraged. Instead try taping a few minutes of communications so that you can play it back later and study what's being said. Write down words

or phrases that you don't understand and listen for other occasions in which they're used. If you're having trouble, drop me a letter care of this magazine, or e-mail me at 73733.1653@compuserve.com and I'll try to steer you right. Keep in mind that only time and patience will make seemingly cryptic communications become clear.

Remember that military air listening is nothing like police and fire chatter. The communications aren't non-stop and they don't clutter the band. This type of listening is a hunt, and the prize is an inside look at our finest airborne warriors at work. Each catch is like a nugget of gold gleaned from a hill of sand, a peek into a world where the smallest mistake can mean disaster, where living on the edge at Mach One is common. If you're looking for a challenge, a facet of listening barely touched by the common scanner listener, then look no further—this is it. Just one warning, however: monitoring military aircraft isn't only wild, it's downright addictive. ■

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Abbreviations: (AR)Antique Radio, (C)Construction, (CB)Computer Bits, (CC)Circuit Circus, (D)Department, (DX)DX Listening, (ED)Editorial, (G)Gizmo, (HOR)Hands-on Report, (HR)Ham Radio, (LET)Letters, (MW)Multimedia Watch, (NW)Net Watch, (PTR)Product Test Report, (SS)Scanner Scene, (TT)Think Tank

#	Sep 72	Oct 59	Nov 78	Dec 51		
3-D Video (Mallon)	Jul 37				Building a Loudspeaker Kit (Spiwak)(C)	Mar 46
50 Years of Belgian Shortwave (Jensen)(DX)	Apr 68				C	
1930's Ham Radio Revisited (Ellis)(AR)	Jul 60				C/Ku Tri-Pak Feedhorn/LNB,	Jul 28
1930's Ham Receiver, The: Construction Continues (Ellis)(AR)	Feb 63				California Amplifier (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 28
1995 Annual Index	Feb 58				Cable Tester, and More (Rakes)(CC)	Apr 65
1996 Winter Consumer Electronics Show (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	May 25				Cable Tester System (Rakes)(CC)	Apr 65
A						
A+ Certification Program Trainer, Heathkit (HOR)	Mar 32				California Amplifier C/Ku Tri-Pak Feedhorn: LNB (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 23
AC					Caller-ID Computer Interface (Weeder)(C)	Aug 45
Amplifier (Rakes)(CC)	Oct 68				CAMCORDER	
Power Controller for VCR (Yacono)(TT)	May 72				Canon	
Valve Control (Rakes)(CC)	Jul 69				ES2000 Hi8 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 3
Active High-Impedance Probe, Build An (Campisi)(C)	Nov 41				ES5000 Eye-Control (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 23
ACUPUNCTURE, ELECTRONIC					JVC GR-SV7 (Booth)(PTR)	Aug 3
Build A					Sanyo VM-PS12 8mm (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 7
Bio-Stimulator (Heil)(C) Jun 31,(LET)Aug 6,Nov 6					Canon	
Add Daytime Running Lights to Your Car (Caristi)(C) Jul 42,(LET)Nov 6					ES2000 Hi8 Camcorder (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 3
Adjustable Comparator (Rakes)(CC)	Oct 68				ES5000 Eye-Control Hi8 Camcorder (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 23
Advanced Water Detector (Yacono)(TT)	Feb 67				Capacitance Meter Adapter, Build A (Spiwak)(C)	Nov 47
Affordable Test Gear (Karagiannis)(ED)	Nov 4				Capacitance Meter, Auto-Ranging (Gotchall)(C) Jan 54,(LET)Mar 16,Jun 5	
Aiwa AD-S950U Audio Cassette Deck (Booth)(PTR)	Jun 10				Capacitor Comparator (Rakes)(CC)	Aug 12
Alarm Makeover (Yacono)(TT) Sep 66,(LET)Dec 6					Cartridges Inkjet Refill System (HOR)	Jun 14
All About					Cassette Deck, Aiwa AD-S950U (Booth)(PTR)	Jun 10
Logic Families (Bigelow)	Jan 43				CD Changer, Marantz CC45U (Booth)(PTR)	Jan 30
Reflector Antennas (Carr)	Sep 41				CD-R Drives (Spiwak)(MW)	Aug 20
Toroidal Transformers (Hansen)	May 53				Changes (Laron)	Aug 4
Alternate Touch Switches (Yacono)(TT)	Oct 64				Changes, Changes, and More Changes (Spiwak)(MW)	Jan 22
Alternating-Color Light String (Rakes)(CC)	Jan 65				Cheap High Voltage (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
Alternating Output Circuit (Yacono)(TT)	Dec 54				Cheapie Timer (Rakes)(CC)	Sep 57
Amazing Micro-Car, The (Siuru)	May 60				Check Out These New Channels (Saxon)(SS)	Nov 70
Amplified Noise Generator (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66				Checking Your Blood Pressure Via PC (Spiwak)(MW)	Dec 8
AMPLIFIER					Choosing the Right Scanner (Thurber)	Jun 42
Build A Single-Ended Hi-Fi Amplifier (Lisle)(C)	Feb 38				Shortwave Receiver (Thurber)	Apr 48
Build A Switching Amplifier (Burbon)(C) Apr 30,(LET)Jun 6,Sep 6					CIRCUIT CIRCUS (Rakes)(D) Jan 65, Feb 27, Mar 69 Apr 65, May 64, Jun 66, Jul 69 Aug 12, Sep 57, Oct 68, Nov 73, Dec 62	
And Another Winner (Yacono)	Jul 64				Cable Tester, and More	Apr 65
Anemometer (Yacono)(TT)	Feb 67				Circuits for Gardeners	Jul 69
And Another Winner (Yacono)	Jul 64				Crystal Sets	Nov 73
ANTENNAS					LED Light Strings	Jan 65
All About Reflector Antennas (Carr)	Sep 41				LED Sequencers, and More	Aug 12
Antenna-Pole Base					Let's Make Some Noise!	Feb 27
Paulin Qik-Base (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 32				More Crystal Sets	Dec 62
Antenna Topics (Carr)(HR)	Sep 63				More Diode Circuits	Jun 66,(LET)Dec 6
Antenna Topics, More on (Carr)(HR)	Jun 72				Op-Amp Applications	Oct 68
Antenna Switcher (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66				Rocket-Launcher Circuits	Mar 69
Build An Undercover Scanner					Simple Diode Circuits	May 54
Antenna (Somers)(C)	Aug 34				Timing is Everything	Sep 57
Folded Dipole, The (Carr)(HR)	Oct 74				Circuits for Gardeners (Rakes)(CC)	Jul 39
Installation in the Sky (Carr)	Jan 72				Circuits Revisited (Yacono)(TT)	May 72
Twin-Lead Antennas (Carr)(HR)	Aug 56				Clamping Circuits (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66,(LET)Dec 6
Annual Index 1995	Feb 58				Cleaning Up (Holtzman)(CB)	Jan 61
Another Winner! (Yacono)(TT)	Apr 62				Cleaning Up: Part Two (Holtzman)(CB)	Feb 55
Anti-Carjack Module, Build An (Caristi)(C)	Aug 29				CMOS	
Antique Radio (See also ANTIQUE RADIO)					Cascade Timer (Rakes)(CC)	Sep 57
Restoring a Vintage Radio (Robertson)	Feb 56,(LET)Jun 6				Interface Driver (Rakes)(CC)	Oct 68
ANTIQUE RADIO (Ellis)(D) Jan 59, Feb 63, Mar 63 Apr 26, May 61, Jun 26, Jul 60, Aug 61					Color-Blind Illusion, Build The (Duker)(C)	Dec 43
Back to the Star Roamer (Ellis)(AR)	Nov 78				Comfy Activity Center Keyboard (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 25
Baluns and Other Broadband Transformers (Carr)(HR)	Nov 75				Commercial Advance VCR, RCA VR678HF (Booth)(PTR)	Mar 34
Battery Tester (Rakes)(CC)	Apr 65				(Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 5
Battery Voltage Meter (Yacono)(TT)	Jan 62				Compaq Presario 9240 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 21
Becoming an Electronics Engineer (Williams)	Nov 44					
Bio-Stimulator, Build A (Heil)(C) Jun 31,(LET)Aug 6,Nov 6						
Block Diagrams and Readers' Requests (Yacono)(TT)	Dec 54					
Bridge Rectifier (Rakes)(CC)	May 64					
Bridge-Fed Light String (Rakes)(CC)	Jan 65					
Broadband RF Tester (Rakes)(CC)	Nov 73					
Brother International MFC-4500 Multi-Function Center (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 25					
BUILD A/ANTHE (SEE CONSTRUCTION)						

COMPUTER (See also COMPUTER BITS)

Axion CF-1754 Computer Monitor (Booth)(PTR) Apr 24
 Brother International MFC-4500
 Multi-Function Center (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Sep 25
 Build A Caller-ID
 Computer Interface (Weeder)(C) Aug 45
 Comly Activity Center
 Keyboard (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Nov 25
 Compaq Presario 9240 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Sep 21
 Microsoft Easyball Mouse
 for Children, (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Nov 27
 Packard Bell Platinum Pro
 Multimedia PC (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Sep 23
 PC Poller, Build the (Barbarelo)(C) May 38
 Personal Computer, The: Yesterday, Today,
 and Tomorrow (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Sep 19
 Psion Series 3A Pocket
 Computer (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Nov 28
 Socket Communications GPS Card (HOR) Aug 24
 SysQuest EZ135 Removable Hard Drive (HOR) Apr 22
 Toshiba Integrated Multimedia
 Monitor (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Sep 27

COMPUTER BITS (Holtzman)(D) Jan 61, Feb 65, Mar 65

Apr 10, May 70, Jun 60, Jul 67
 Aug 59, Sep 70, Oct 72, Nov 68, Dec 48
 Jan 61
 Cleaning Up Feb 65
 Cleaning Up: Part Two Jun 60
 Disk Partitions and Win95 Gems Aug 59
 H is for Hypertext Oct 72
 Help Tools Sep 70
 Help! Dec 48
 Hypertext Wrap-Up Apr 10
 Long Live the CMI Jul 67
 PC Cards Mar 65
 SCSI Switch, The May 70
 Sharing Win95 Nov 68
 Web Authoring Tools Nov 68

CONSTRUCTION

Add Daytime Running Lights
 to Your Car (Caristi) Jul 42, (LET) Nov 6

Build A

Bio-Stimulator (Heil) Jun 31, (LET) Aug 6, Nov 6
 Caller-ID Computer Interface (Weeder) Aug 45
 Capacitance Meter Adapter (Spiwak) Nov 47
 Delayed Sweep Adapter (Campisi) Oct 56
 Four-Mode Counter (Pepper) Mar 56
 High-Voltage Power Supply (Vollono) Jul 47
 Magnetic Ball Levitator (Cicon) May 48, (LET) Jul 6
 Mobile Robot (O'Connor) Sep 29
 Refrigerator-Door Alarm (Andrews) Jun 57
 Reverb and Surround-Effects
 Generator (Spiwak) Apr 38
 Single-Ended Hi-Fi Amplifier (Lisle) Feb 38
 Solid-State Nightlight (Poeth) Apr 44
 Solid-State Stroboscope
 (Campisi) Sep 51, (LET) Nov 6
 Surround-Sound Switchbox (Rowen) Nov 52
 Switching Amplifier
 (Burborn) Apr 30, (LET) Jun 6, Sep 6
 Telephone Transmitter (Spiwak) Jan 37
 Vacuum-Tube Transmitter (Lisle) Feb 31
 Versatile DTMF Tone Pad (Piller) Jun 54
 Versatile Power Supply (Spiwak) May 57
 Voice-Activated Tape Recorder
 Switch (Spiwak) Jan 35
 Voice-Stress Analyzer (Panosh) Mar 41
 Wireless DC Volt Probe (Campisi) Feb 33

Build An

Active High-Impedance Probe (Campisi) Nov 41
 Anti-Carjack Module (Caristi) Aug 29
 Auto-Ranging Capacitance Meter
 (Gotchall) Jan 54, (LET) Mar 16, Jun 6
 Inductance Meter Adapter (Spiwak) Nov 50
 LED Thermometer (Sheets & Graf) Jul 45
 Ultrasonic Motion Detector (Rels) Mar 52
 Undercover Scanner Antenna (Somers) Aug 34

Build The

Color-Blind Illusion (Duker) Dec 43
 Easyscope (Brown) Nov 33
 Goblin Greeter (Verner) Oct 31
 Guitar Track Jammer (Singmin) Jul 56, (LET) Oct 6
 Light Animator (Seely) Dec 32
 PC Poller (Barbarelo) May 38
 Smart Strip (Seely) Mar 59
 Unlock-Too (Friedman) Sep 39
 Building a Loudspeaker Kit (Spiwak) Mar 46

Design Your Own

Bass-Reflex Speakers (Hoffman) Apr 57
 Subwoofers (Hoffman) Jun 35
 Electro-Optical Shaft Encoder (Cope) Mar 61
 Contestant Lock-Out Improvements (Yacono)(TT) Sep 66
 Continuity Checker (Yacono)(TT) Oct 64
 Countdown Launcher (Rakes)(CC) Mar 69
 Counter, Four-Mode (Pepper)(C) Mar 56
 Crystal Sets (Rakes)(CC) Nov 73
 Current Difference Amplifier, Using the (Carr) Jul 49

D

DBS: The Changing Face
 of TV (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 9
 DC/AC Indicator (Rakes)(CC) May 64
 DC Volt Probe, Wireless (Campisi)(C) Feb 33
 Delayed Sweep Adapter (Yacono)(TT) Jun 62
 Delayed Sweep Adapter,
 Build A (Campisi)(C) Oct 56

Design Your Own

Bass-Reflex Speakers (Hoffman)(C) Apr 57
 Subwoofers (Hoffman)(C) Jun 35

Digital

Multimeter, Wavetek DM78A (HOR) Jan 28
 Music Express DBS
 Service (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 17, (LET) May 6
 Panel Meters, Using (Stiles) Oct 39
 Storage Scope, PC-Based (Brown)(C) Nov 33

Digital Video

Report From Las Vegas (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) May 25
 Diode-Matching Circuit (Rakes)(CC) May 64
 DirecTV DSS Programming
 Package (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 12
 Disaster Scanning (Saxon)(SS) Feb 74
 Dishing Up a Video Feast (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 12
 Disk Partitions and Win95 Gems (Holtzman)(CB) Jun 60
 DMX Satellite
 Radio (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 17, (LET) May 6
 DSS: One Year Later (Laron)(ED) Jan 3
 DSS Installation (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 15
 DTMF Tone Pad, Build A Versatile (Piller)(C) Jun 54

Dual

-Color Light String (Rakes)(CC) Jan 65
 -Light LED String (Rakes)(CC) Jan 65
 -Polarity Power Supply (Rakes)(CC) Apr 65
 -Timer (Rakes)(CC) Sep 57
 -Voltage Comparator (Rakes)(CC) Oct 68
 -Voltage Supply (Rakes)(CC) Oct 68

DX LISTENING (Jensen)(D) Jan 68, Feb 70, Mar 72

Apr 68, May 32, Jun 59, Jul 58
 Aug 68, Sep 61, Oct 61, Nov 81, Dec 58
 Apr 68
 Sep 61
 Dec 58
 May 32
 Jun 58
 Nov 81
 Aug 68
 Jun 59
 Jan 68
 Mar 72
 Oct 61
 Feb 70

50 Years of Belgian Shortwave

Exploring the Information Highway
 Far East Broadcasting Company
 Goodbye to the Happy Station
 It's Time Time!
 'Other' Time Standard, The---WWVH
 Radio Habana Cuba
 Radio Happy Isles
 Radio Korea International
 Radio Top of the World
 Slovak Radio on the Air
 Watch Your Intervals

E

Earth-Pruf II Satellite
 Combination Cable (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jul 34
 Easy Installation (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Jan 15
 Easyscope, Build The (Brown)(C) Nov 33
 Eavesdropper's Delight (Saxon)(SS) Dec 66

EDITORIAL (Laron/Karagiannis)(D) Jan 3, Feb 3

Mar 3, Apr 3, May 4, Jun 4
 Jul 4, Aug 4, Sep 4, Oct 4
 Nov 4, Dec 4
 Nov 4
 Aug 4
 Jan 3
 Apr 3
 Oct 4
 Dec 4
 Sep 4
 May 4
 Jul 4
 Feb 3
 Mar 3
 Jun 4
 Mar 61

Electronic

Building Security, High-Tech (Siuru) Dec 39
 Noise Maker (Rakes)(CC) Feb 27
 Search and Rescue (Siuru) Aug 50
 Stethoscope (Yacono)(TT) Apr 62
 Trombone (Rakes)(CC) Feb 27
 Weather Vane (Yacono)(TT) Feb 67

Electronics Engineer, Becoming An (Williams) Nov 44

ELECTRONICS LIBRARY(D) Jan 76, Feb 79
 Mar 78, May 76, Jun 8
 Jul 20, Aug 74, Sep 75
 Oct 76, Nov 61, Dec 68
 Entering the Computer Age (Saxon)(SS) Oct 63
 ES2000 Hi8 Camcorder,
 Canon (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Mar 8
 ES5000 Eye-Control Hi8 Camcorder,
 Canon (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Nov 23
 Expanded Timer (Rakes)(CC) Sep 57
 Experimenter's Lab, Fun With Electronics
 CD-ROM, Philips (HOR) Feb 22
 Experimenter's Valve (Rakes)(CC) Jul 69
 Exploring Outer Space (Spiwak)(MW) Oct 12
 Exploring the Information Highway (Jensen)(DX) Sep 61

F

Fake Car Alarm (Yacono)(TT) Jan 62
 Far East Broadcasting Company (Jensen)(DX) Dec 58
 Finding Electronics on the Web (Karagiannis)(NW) Sep 8
 Fine Tuner (Rakes)(CC) Nov 73
 Fire Bell Phone Ringer (Yacono)(TT) Nov 64

Flasher Start System (Yacono)(TT) May 72

Folded Dipole, The (Carr)(HR) Oct 74

For Audio Enthusiasts,
 And Everyone Else! (Laron)(ED) Apr 3

Four-Level Voltage Detector (Rakes)(CC) Oct 68

Four-Mode Counter, Build A (Pepper)(C) Mar 56

Frequency Probe (Yacono)(TT) Mar 66

Full-Length PC Movies (Spiwak) Jul 10

Fun With Electronics CD-ROM,
 Philips (HOR) Feb 22

Function Generators, Simple,
 Learning About (Johnson) Nov 57

G

GIZMO (Scaduto & O'Brian) Jan 9, Mar 5, May 19
 Jul 23, Sep 19, Nov 23

Brother International MFC-4500
 Multi-Function Center Sep 25

California Amplifier
 C-Ku Tri-Pak Feedhorn LNB Jul 28

Canon

ES2000 Hi8 Camcorder Mar 8

ES5000 Eye-Control Camcorder Nov 23

Comly Activity Center Keyboard Nov 25

Compaq Presario 9240 Sep 21

DBS: The Changing Face of TV Jan 9

Dishing Up a Video Feast Jan 12

Earth-Pruf II Satellite Combination Cable Jul 34

Easy Installation Jan 15

Gold Disk Video Director Suite V2.5 Mar 10

Microsoft Easyball Computer Mouse
 for Children Nov 27

Orbitron SX6 Satellite TV Antenna Jul 29

Oregon Scientific Personal Weather Station
 Alarm Clock Nov 30

Packard Bell Platinum Pro Multimedia PC Sep 23

Paulin Industries Qik-Base Antenna-Pole Base Jul 32

Personal Computer, The:
 Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow Sep 19

Psion Series 3A Pocket Computer Nov 28

RCA Commercial Advance VCR Mar 5

Report From Las Vegas May 25

Sanyo Model VM-PS12 8mm Camcorder Mar 7

Signals from the Sky May 19

Skylighter Dish Actuator,
 Venture Manufacturing Jul 34

Spaced-Out Music Jan 17

Toshiba Integrated Multimedia Monitor Sep 27

Uniden SQ590 Satellite IRD Jul 23

Goblin Greeter, Build The (Verner)(C) Oct 31

Gold Disk Video Director

Home V1.0 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Mar 10

Suite V2.5 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) Mar 10

Goodbye to the Happy Station (Jensen)(DX) May 32

GPS Card, Socket Communications (HOR) Aug 24

Great Software for Kids
 and WinHEC '96 (Spiwak)(MW) Sep 14

Guitar Track Jammer,
 Build The (Singmin)(C) Jul 56, (LET) Oct 6

H

H is for Hypertext (Holtzman)(CB) Aug 59

Halloween on the Web (Karagiannis)(NW) Oct 16

Halloween Treat, A (Karagiannis)(ED) Oct 4

HAM RADIO (Carr)(D) Jan 72, Feb 72, Mar 74
 Apr 70, May 68, Jun 72, Jul 62, Aug 56

Sep 63, Oct 74, Nov 75, Dec 60

Antenna Installation in the Sky Jan 72

Antenna Topics Sep 63

Baluns and Other Broadband Transformers Nov 75

Folded Dipole, The Oct 74

Making Noise About Noise May 68

More On Antenna Topics Jun 72

Old Friend Revisited, An Dec 60

Radio Potpourri Jul 62

Some Ham-Radio Accessories Feb 72

Television and Radio Interference Mar 74

Twin-Lead Antennas Aug 56

Variable Capacitors Apr 70

HANDS-ON REPORT(D) Jan 28, Feb 22, Mar 32
 Apr 22, Jun 14, Aug 24, Oct 8

CartridgeMate Inkjet Refill System Jun 14

Healthkit Individual Learning System
 for the A+ Certification Program Mar 32

Philips Fun With Electronics CD-ROM Feb 22

Socket Communications GPS Card Aug 24

SysQuest EZ135 Removable Hard Drive Apr 22

Total Recall Voice Recorder Oct 8

Wavetek DM78A DMM Jan 28

Hard Drive, Sysquest EZ135 Removable (HOR) Apr 22

Headlight Switcher (Yacono)(TT) May 72

Headphone Amplifier (Rakes)(CC) Dec 62

Healthkit Individual Learning System for the
 A+ Certification Program (HOR) Mar 32

Heavy-Metal Detector (Yacono)(TT) Jan 62

Help Tools (Holtzman)(CB) Oct 72

Help! (Holtzman)(CB) Sep 70

Here Come the Holidays (Karagiannis)(ED) Dec 4

High-Tech Electronic Building Security (Siuru) Dec 39

High-Voltage Power Supply, Build A (Vollono)(C) Jul 47

HISTORY

History of Radio Detectors (Ellis)(AR)	Aug 81
Remembering Radio Row (Thurber)	Jan 39,(LET)May 6
Hitachi VT-FX613A Hi-Fi VCR (Booth)(PTR)	Dec 16
Holiday Gift Guide (Scaduto & Scott)	Dec 23
Holiday Shopping Spots (Karagiannis)(NW)	Dec 12
Hypertext Wrap-Up (Holtzman)(CB)	Dec 48

I

ICOM ICR8500 Scanner/Communications Receiver (Saxon)(SS)	Dec 66
Impedance Matcher (Rakes)(CC)	Nov 73
Improved Ion Monitor (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
Improved RF Amplifier Receiver (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
Inductance Meter Adapter, Build An (Spiwak)(C)	Nov 50
Infrared Switch (Yacono)(TT)	Sep 66
Inkjet Refill System, CartridgeMate (HOR)	Jun 14
Internet Phone (Karagiannis)(NW)	Feb 20
It's Time Time! (Jensen)(DX)	Jul 58

J

Jose Wins Again (Yacono)(TT)	Oct 64
Junkbox Transistor Checker (Yacono)	Jul 64
JVC GR-SV7 Camcorder (Booth)(PTR)	Aug 8

K

Keyboard, Comfy Activity Center (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 25
Kick-Back Voltage Limiter (Rakes)(CC)	May 64

L

Large Coil (Rakes)(CC)	Nov 73
L/C Oscillator (Yacono)(TT)	Jun 62
Learning About Simple Function Generators (Johnson)	Nov 57

LED

Countdown Launcher (Rakes)(CC)	Mar 69
Flasher (Yacono)	Jul 64
Light Sequencer (Rakes)(CC)	Aug 12
Light Strings (Rakes)(CC)	Jan 65
Sequencers, and More (Rakes)(CC)	Aug 12
Thermometer, Build An (Sheets & Graf)(C)	Jul 45
Let's Make Some Noise! (Rakes)(CC)	Feb 27

LETTERS (D)

	Jan 4, Feb 4, Mar 16, Apr 4
	May 6, Jun 6, Jul 6, Aug 6
	Sep 6, Oct 6, Nov 6, Dec 6

Lie Detector Build A Voice-Stress Analyzer (Panosh)(C)	Mar 41
Light-Activated Switch (Yacono)(TT)	Oct 64
Light Animator, Build The (Seely)(C)	Dec 32
Light Flasher (Yacono)(TT)	Oct 64
Lightning Indicator (Yacono)(TT)	Apr 62
Lightning RF Receivers (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
Logic Families, All About (Bigelow)	Jan 43
Long Live the CMI (Holtzman)(CB)	Apr 10
Looking Back (Yacono)(TT)	Sep 66
Looks Like It's Mailbag Time! (Ellis)(AR)	Oct 59
Loudspeaker Kit, Building A (Spiwak)(C)	Mar 46

M

Magic Wand (Rakes)(CC)	Feb 27
Magnetic Ball Levitator, Build A (Cicon)(C)	May 48,(LET)Jul 6
Making Noise About Noise (Carr)(HR)	May 68
Mapping the U.S. (Karagiannis)(NW)	Aug 16
Marantz CC45U Five-CD Carousel Changer (Booth)(PTR)	Jan 30
Megohm Adapter (Yacono)(TT)	Mar 66
Meter Guard (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
Micro-Car, The Amazing (Siuru)	May 60
Microsoft Easyball Computer Mouse for Children (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 27
Milliohm Adapter (Yacono)(TT)	Mar 66
Mobile Robot, Build A (O'Connor)(C)	Sep 29
Moisture Monitor (Rakes)(CC)	Jul 69
Monitoring Mickey Mouse (Saxon)(SS)	Sep 59
Monitoring the U.S. Mail (Saxon)(SS)	Apr 72
Monitors, Cameras, and More (Spiwak)(MW)	Jun 20

More

Changes? (Karagiannis)(ED)	Sep 4
Crystal Sets (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 82
Diode Circuits (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
from Nick (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
On Antenna Topics (Carr)(HR)	Jun 72
on the 1930's Ham Receiver (Ellis)(AR)	Jan 59
Morse-Code Oscillator (Yacono)(TT)	Jul 64

Motion Detector, Ultrasonic (Reis)(C)	Mar 52
MPC3 Specification, The (Spiwak)(MW)	Apr 12
Multi-Function Center, Brother International MFC-4500 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 25

MULTIMEDIA WATCH (Spiwak)(D)

	Jan 22, Feb 12
	Mar 24, Apr 12, May 8, Jun 20
	Jul 10, Aug 20, Sep 14
	Oct 12, Nov 12, Dec 8
CD-R Drives	Aug 20
Changes, Changes, and More Changes	Jan 22
Checking Your Blood Pressure Via PC	Dec 8
Exploring Outer Space	Oct 12
Full-Length PC Movies	Jul 10
Monitors, Cameras, and More	Jun 20
MPC3 Specification, The	Apr 12
New Multimedia Software	May 8
Software for Windows 95	Mar 24
Spring COMDEX and PC Expo	Nov 12
Upgrading to Windows 95	Feb 12
WinHEC '96 and Great Software for Kids	Sep 14
Multi-String Light Circuit (Rakes)(CC)	Jan 65

N

National Semiconductor (Karagiannis)(NW)	Nov 20
NET WATCH (Karagiannis)(D)	Jan 24, Feb 20
	Mar 28, Apr 20, May 12, Jun 23
	Jul 14, Aug 16, Sep 8
	Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 12
April Online Hours	Apr 20
Finding Electronics on the Web	Sep 8
Halloween on the Web	Oct 16
Holiday Shopping Spots	Dec 12
Internet Phone	Feb 20
Mapping the U.S.	Aug 16
National Semiconductor	Nov 20
Shopping for Electronics	Mar 28
Two Large Sites	Jul 14
Virtual Reality on the Web	May 12
Voice E-Mail	Jun 23
Web Broadcasting	Jan 24
New Multimedia Software (Spiwak)(MW)	May 8

NEW PRODUCTS (D)

	Jan 6, Feb 8, Mar 20, Apr 6
	May 15, Jun 74, Jul 8, Aug 71
	Sep 12, Oct 28, Nov 8, Dec 21
New Restoration, A (Ellis)(AR)	Sep 72
Noise Generator (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
Not-So-Private Security Forces (Saxon)(SS)	May 66

O

Old Friend Revisited, An (Carr)(HR)	Dec 60
On the Campaign Trail (Saxon)(SS)	Aug 60
Op-Amp Applications (Rakes)(CC)	Oct 68
Orbitron SX6 Satellite TV Antenna (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 29
Oregon Scientific Personal Weather Station Alarm Clock (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 30
"Other" Time Standard, The—WWVH (Jensen)(DX)	Nov 81

P

Packard Bell Platinum Pro Multimedia PC (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 23
Panasonic CT-27SF31S 27-Inch Color TV (Booth)(PTR)	Feb 24
Parts Sources (Yacono)(TT)	Dec 54
Passive Cut-Off Switch (Yacono)(TT)	Jan 62
Paulin Industries Qik-Base Antenna-Pole Base (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 32
PC Cards (Holtzman)(CB)	Jul 67
PC Poller, Build the (Barbarellio)(C)	May 38
Penlight, Build A Solid-State (Poeth)(C)	Apr 44
Personal Computer, The: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 19
Personal Weather Station Alarm Clock, Oregon Scientific (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 30
Philips Fun With Electronics CD-ROM (HOR)	Feb 22
Platinum Pro Multimedia PC, Packard Bell (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Sep 23
Pocket Computer, Psion Series 3A (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 28
Portable for Newcomers, A (Saxon)(SS)	Jan 74

Power Supply

High-Voltage (Vollono)(C)	Jul 47
Versatile, Build A (Spiwak)(C)	May 57
Probe, Active High-Impedance (Campisi)(C)	Nov 41

PRODUCT TEST REPORT (Booth)(D)

	Jan 30
	Feb 24, Mar 34, Apr 24
	Jun 10, Aug 8, Oct 24, Dec 16
Aiwa AD-S950U Audio Cassette Deck	Jun 10
APC Back-UPS PRO 650 Uninterruptible Power Supply	Oct 24
Axion CF-1754 Computer Monitor	Apr 24
Hitachi VT-FX613A Hi-Fi VCR	Dec 16
JVC GR-SV7 Camcorder	Aug 8
Marantz CC45U Five-CD Carousel Changer	Jan 30
Panasonic CT-27SF31S 27-Inch Color TV	Feb 24
RCA VR678HF Hi-Fi VCR	Mar 34

Protective Circuits (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
Psion Series 3A Pocket Computer (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 28
Pyrometers for the Test Bench (Siuru)	Feb 41

R

RADIO (See also ANTIQUE RADIO, DX LISTENING, HAM RADIO, SCANNER SCENE)

Build A Vacuum-Tube Transmitter (Lisle)(C)	Feb 31
Versatile DTMF Tone Pad (Pliier)(C)	Jun 54
Digital Music Express DBS Service (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 17,(LET)May 6
Radio Amateurs (Thurber)	Oct 45
Radio Row, Remembering (Thurber)	Jan 39,(LET)May 6
Restoring a Vintage Radio (Robertson)	Feb 56,(LET)Jun 6
Super Surplus Sources (Thurber)	Feb 44,(LET)May 6
Radio Habana Cuba (Jensen)(DX)	Aug 68
Radio Happy Isles (Jensen)(DX)	Jun 59
Radio Korea International (Jensen)(DX)	Jan 68
Radio Potpourri (Carr)(HR)	Jul 62
Radio Top of the World (Jensen)(DX)	Mar 72
RadioShack PRO-27 Handheld Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Jan 74
PRO-50 Handheld Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Nov 70
PRO-60 Desktop Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Apr 72
PRO-2037 Desktop Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	May 66
PRO-2039 Desktop Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Sep 59
PRO-2040 Desktop Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Feb 74
PRO-2042 Desktop Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Mar 76
Rain Detector (Yacono)(TT)	Feb 67

RA

Commercial Advance VCR (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G) (Booth)(PTR)	Mar 5
Digital Satellite System (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 34
Jan 12	
Red Light, Green Light (Yacono)(TT)	Dec 54
Reflector Antennas, All About (Carr)	Sep 41
Refrigerator-Door Alarm (Andrews)(C)	Jun 57
Remember the NBS Set? (Ellis)(AR)	Mar 63
Remembering Radio Row (Thurber)	Jan 39,(LET)May 6
Remote Tel-Bell Ringer (Yacono)(TT)	Nov 64
Report From Las Vegas (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	May 25
Rescued by Radio! (Ellis)(AR)	Jun 26

Restoring a Vintage Radio (Robertson)	Feb 56,(LET)Jun 6
Reverb and Surround-Effects Generator, Build A (Spiwak)(C)	Apr 38

RF

Amplifier Receiver (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
Filter (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
Switcher (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
Robot, Mobile, Build A (O'Connor)(C)	Sep 29
Rocket Engine Igniter (Yacono)(TT)	Apr 62
Rocket-Launcher Circuits (Rakes)(CC)	Mar 69

S

Sanyo Model VM-PS12 8mm Camcorder (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 7
SATELLITE TV California Amplifier C/Ku Tri-Pak Feedhorn/LNB (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 28
DBS: The Changing Face of TV (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 9
Dishing Up a Video Feast (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 12
DSS: One Year Later (Laron)(ED)	Jan 3
Easy Installation (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 15
Paulin Industries Qik-Base Antenna-Pole Base (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 32
Satellite Combination Cable, Earth-Pruf II (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 34
IRD, Uniden SQ590 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 23
TV Antenna, Orbitron SX6 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 29
Signals from the Sky (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	May 19
Skylighter Dish Actuator, Venture Manufacturing (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 34

Scantail-Gold Software, Computer Aided Technologies (Saxon)(SS)	Oct 63
Scanner, Choosing the Right (Thurber)	Jun 42

SCANNER SCENE (Saxon)(D)

	Jan 74, Feb 74
	Mar 76, Apr 72, May 66, Jun 25
	Jul 72, Aug 66, Sep 59
	Oct 63, Nov 70, Dec 66
Check Out These New Channels	Nov 70
Disaster Scanning	Feb 74
Eavesdropper's Delight	Dec 66
Entering the Computer Age	Oct 63
Monitoring Mickey Mouse	Sep 59
Monitoring the U.S. Mail	Apr 72
Not-So-Private Security Forces	May 66
On the Campaign Trail	Aug 60
Portable for Newcomers, A	Jan 74
Scanning the Weather Bands	Mar 76

Solving Some Problems	Jun 25
U.S. Coast Guard Communications	Jul 72
Scanning the Weather Bands (Saxon)(SS)	Mar 76
SCSI Switch, The (Holtzman)(CB)	Mar 65
Search and Rescue, Electronic (Siuru)	Aug 50
SECURITY	
Build An	
Anti-Carjack Module (Caristi)(C)	Aug 29
Ultrasonic Motion Detector (Reis)(C)	May 52
High-Tech Electronic Building	
Security (Siuru)	Dec 39
Smarter Keys for Smarter Cars (Siuru)	Apr 42
Shaft Encoder, Electro-Optical (Cope)(C)	Mar 61
Sharing Win95 (Holtzman)(CB)	May 70
Shop Equipment (Yacono)(TT)	Mar 66
Shopping for Electronics (Karagiannis)(NW)	Mar 28
Shortwave Receiver, Choosing the Right (Thurber)	Apr 48
Signals from the Sky	
(Laron)(ED)	May 4
(Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	May 19
Simple	
555 Timer (Rakes)(CC)	Sep 57
Diode Circuits (Rakes)(CC)	May 64
Voltage References (Yacono)(TT)	Jun 62
Sinewave Converter (Yacono)(TT)	Jun 62
Single-Ended Hi-Fi Amplifier, Build A (Lisle)(C)	Feb 38
Sky Cops (Thurber)	Aug 38
Skylighter Dish Actuator, Venture Manufacturing (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 34
Slovak Radio on the Air (Jensen)(DX)	Oct 61
Small Coil (Rakes)(CC)	Nov 73
Smart Strip, Build The (Seely)(C)	Mar 59
Smarter Keys for Smarter Cars (Siuru)	Apr 42
Socket Communications GPS Card (HOR)	Aug 24
Software for Windows 95 (Spiwak)(MW)	Mar 24
Solid-State	
Regenerative Receiver (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
Stroboscope, Build A (Campisi)(C)	Sep 51,(LET)Nov 6
Tesla Coil (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
Solving Some Problems (Saxon)(SS)	Jun 25
Some Ham-Radio Accessories (Carr)(HR)	Feb 72
Sound-Effects and Reverb Generator, Build A (Spiwak)(C)	Apr 38
Sound-Level Limiter (Rakes)(CC)	May 64
Spaced-Out Music (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 17
Speaker Amplifier (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
Speakers, Bass-Reflex, Design Your Own (Hoffman)(C)	Apr 57
Spectrum Management (Thurber)	Aug 38
Spring COMDEX and PC Expo (Spiwak)(MW)	Nov 2
Steering Circuit (Rakes)(CC)	May 64
Stereo Amp (Yacono)(TT)	Jul 64
Stroboscope, Solid-State (Campisi)(C)	Sep 51,(LET)Nov 6
Subwoofers, Design Your Own (Hoffman)(C)	Jun 35
Surge Protector (Yacono)(TT)	May 72
Surplus Sources, Super (Thurber)	Feb 44,(LET)May 6
Surround-Sound Switchbox, Build A (Rowen)(C)	Nov 52
Switching Amplifier, Build A (Burbon)(C)	Apr 30,(LET)Jun 6,Sep 6
Symmetry Monitor (Rakes)(CC)	Jun 66
SyQuest EZ135 Removable Hard Drive (HOR)	Apr 22
T	
Tape Recorder Switch, Voice-Activated (Spiwak)(C)	Jan 35
Tapped Coil (Rakes)(CC)	Dec 62
TELEPHONE	
Build A	
Caller-ID Computer Interface (Weeder)(C)	Aug 45
Telephone Transmitter (Spiwak)(C)	Jan 37
Internet Phone (Karagiannis)(NW)	Feb 20
Telephone	
Circuits (Yacono)(TT)	Nov 64
In-Use Indicator (Yacono)(TT)	Nov 64
-in-Use Indicator (Rakes)(CC)	May 64
Ring Flasher (Yacono)(TT)	Nov 64
TELEVISION (See also SATELLITE TV, VIDEO)	
Panasonic CT-27SF31S 27-Inch Color TV (Booth)(PTR)	Feb 24
Television and Radio Interference (Carr)(HR)	Mar 74
TEST EQUIPMENT	
Build A	
Capacitance Meter Adapter (Spiwak)(C)	Nov 47
Delayed Sweep Adapter (Campisi)(C)	Oct 56
Four-Mode Counter (Pepper)(C)	Mar 56
Solid-State Stroboscope (Campisi)(C)	Sep 51,(LET)Nov 6
Wireless DC Volt Probe (Campisi)(C)	Feb 33
Build An	
Active High-Impedance Probe (Campisi)(C)	Nov 41
Auto-Ranging Capacitance Meter (Gotchall)(C)	Jan 54,(LET)Mar 16,Jun 6
Inductance Meter Adapter (Spiwak)(C)	Nov 50

Build The Easyscope (Brown)(C)	Nov 33
Learning About Simple Function Generators (Johnson)	Nov 57
Pyrometers for the Test Bench (Siuru)	Feb 41
Shop Equipment (Yacono)(TT)	Mar 66
Wavetek DM78A DMM (HOR)	Jan 28
Temperature Sensor (Rakes)(CC)	May 64
That's Entertainment (Laron)(ED)	Jul 4
Thermin-on-a-Chip (Yacono)(TT)	Aug 64
Thermometer, LED (Sheets & Graf)(C)	Jul 45
THINK TANK (Yacono)(D)	
Jan 62, Feb 67, Mar 66	
Apr 62, May 72, Jun 62	
Jul 64, Aug 64, Sep 66	
Oct 64, Nov 64, Dec 54	
Jul 64	
Apr 62,(LET)Jul 6	
Jan 62	
Dec 54	
May 72	
Oct 64	
Sep 66,(LET)Dec 6	
Aug 64	
Mar 66	
Nov 64	
Feb 67	
Jun 62	
Jul 64	
Feb 3	
Sep 57	
May 53	
Sep 27	
Oct 8	
Apr 65	
Oct 64	
Sep 45	
Jan 49	
Sep 45	
Jun 66	
Feb 31	
Apr 62	
Mar 3	
Apr 26	
Nov 73	
Nov 73	
Apr 62	
Feb 24	
Aug 56	
Jul 14	
U	
U.S. Coast Guard Communications (Saxon)(SS)	Jul 72
Ultrasonic Motion Detector, Build A (Reis)(C)	Mar 52
Undercover Scanner Antenna, Build An (Somers)(C)	Aug 34
Uniden	
BC-9000XLT Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Jul 72
BC60XLT Handheld Scanner (Saxon)(SS)	Aug 60
BCT-10 Integrated Scanner/Highway Information System (Saxon)(SS)	Jun 25
SQ590 Satellite IRD (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 23
Uninterruptible Power Supply, APC Back-UPS PRO 650 (Booth)(PTR)	Oct 24
Unlock-Too, Build The (Friedman)(C)	Sep 39
Up/Down Light Sequencer (Rakes)(CC)	Aug 12
Updating an Ancient Technique (Laron)(ED)	Jun 4
Upgrading to Windows 95 (Spiwak)(MW)	Feb 12
Using Digital Panel Meters (Stiles)	Oct 39
Using the Current Difference Amplifier (Carr)	Jul 49
USB DSS Programming (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jan 12
V	
Vacuum-Tube Transmitter, Build A (Lisle)(C)	Feb 31
Valve Control (Rakes)(CC)	Jul 69
Variable Capacitors (Carr)(HR)	Apr 70
VCR	
Hitachi VT-FX613A (Booth)(PTR)	Dec 16
RCA VR678HF Commercial Advance (Booth)(PTR)	Mar 34
(Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 5
Venture Manufacturing Skylighter Dish Actuator (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Jul 34
Versatile DTMF Tone Pad (LET)	Aug 6
Versatile Power Supply (May)(LET)	Jul 8
VIDEO (See also CAMCORDER, SATELLITE TV, TELEVISION, VCR)	
3-D Video (Mallon)	Jul 37

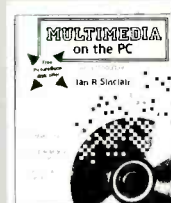
Gold Disk Video Director Home V1.0 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 10
Suite V2.5 (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Mar 10
Voice-Chip Encoder (Rakes)(CC)	Mar 69
Vintage Radio, Restoring A (Robertson)	Feb 56,(LET)Jun 6
Virtual Reality on the Web (Karagiannis)(NW)	May 12
Voice	
-Activated Tape Recorder Switch (Spiwak)(C)	Jan 35
E-Mail (Karagiannis)(NW)	Jun 23
Recorder, Total Recall (HOR)	Oct 8
-Stress Analyzer, Build A (Panosh)(C)	Mar 41
Voltage Window (Rakes)(CC)	Oct 68

W

Wailing Witch (Rakes)(CC)	Feb 27
Watch Your Intervals (Jensen)(DX)	Feb 70
Wavetek DM78A DMM (HOR)	Jan 28
We Hear from the Readers (Ellis)(AR)	May 61
WEATHER	
Oregon Scientific Personal Weather Station Alarm Clock (Scaduto & O'Brian)(G)	Nov 30
Weather Circuits (Yacono)(TT)	Feb 67
Web Authoring Tools (Holtzman)(CB)	Nov 68
Web Broadcasting (Karagiannis)(NW)	Jan 24
Wind Vane (Yacono)(TT)	Feb 67
Windows 95, Upgrading to (Spiwak)(MW)	Feb 12
WinHEC '96 and Great Software for Kids (Spiwak)(MW)	Sep 14
Wireless DC Volt Probe, Build A (Campisi)(C)	Feb 33
Workbench Circuits (Yacono)(TT)	Jun 62
WWVH—The "Other" Time Standard (Jensen)(DX)	Nov 81

Z

Zener-Diode Simulator (Yacono)(TT)	Mar 66
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Think Tank

Semiconductors and a Look Back

BY JOHN J. YACONO
TECHNICAL EDITOR
WINDOWS MAGAZINE

This month I'd like to start discussing components that boosted the electronics revolution like no other: semiconductors. Semiconductors have provided a light-weight, low-power, low-heat, small-scale, inexpensive solution to building circuits that have replaced tube technology in all but a few very specialized applications.

As their name implies, semiconductors aren't quite insulators or conductors. They can be made to conduct very well, but only under the right conditions.

get them flowing. When current does flow through such a material, it typically damages it.

Man-made semiconductors are based mainly on two materials: silicon and germanium. However, silicon is more popular because it's stable over a wider temperature range. They both have four outer electrons, which makes them "tetravalent" materials, and they're poor as either insulators or conductors. But these materials only form the base or substrate used in a semi-

material. The dopant is called a "charge donor" because it donates the characteristic charge to the material. The substrate is called the "charge acceptor."

The extra electrons in an n-type material are more easily coaxed to roam around than they would be in the unmodified substrate. Until next time, I'll leave you with a couple of intriguing questions: What materials would comprise a "p-type" semiconductor? If it doesn't have extra electrons, what would it have a surplus of? If a current flows through a p-type material, what would actually move? Now, let's turn to the letters.

MILLIOHM ADAPTER REVISITED

I have to comment on the "Milliohm Adapter" project shown in *Think Tank* in the March 1996 issue of **Popular Electronics**. Mr. Yacono neglected to mention a major source of error: inductance.

The 100-Hz chopper circuit shown to help measure low resistance (see Fig. 1) will yield inaccurate readings if there is any inductance in the circuit. You might even get a surprising shock if you tried to measure the primary winding resistance of an automotive ignition coil and got too close to the output wire.

The Milliohm Adapter should not be used on inductors, transformer windings, solenoids, electric motor windings, or even long pieces of wire over 15 feet. Usefulness of the circuit is restricted to measuring low-inductance items such as non-inductive resistors, heating elements (cold resistance), and contact resistance.

Chopper circuits were used for measuring resistance in some of the early digital multimeters in the '70s. They quickly gained a bad reputation because users could not trust the readings. To measure DC resistance and ignore any inductance or capacitance in a circuit, a DC current must be used and a DC voltage measured (or vice versa).

I have been reading your magazine

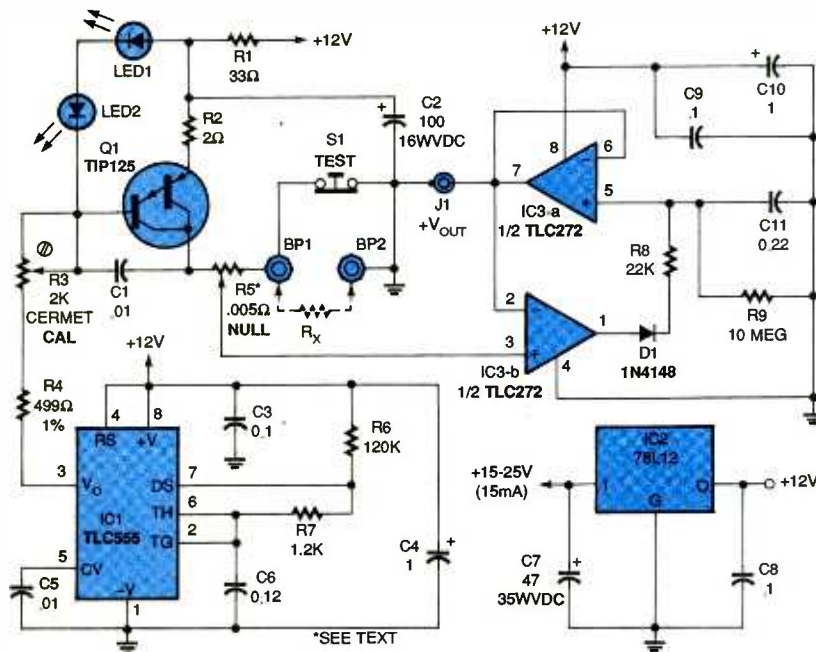


Fig. 1. Add this to your DMM to measure ultra-low resistance. But don't use it on reactive circuits.

What distinguishes them from insulators and conductors is their atomic structure.

A conductor typically has close to eight electrons in its outer or "valence" shell. Eight being the maximum number of electrons an atom can have in a shell, the electrons are only loosely held in place, so it takes only a little nudge to make them migrate through the material.

Insulators classically have less than four outer electrons. The atoms are covetous of their few outer electrons and it would take quite a jolt to

conductor material. Impurities called "dopants" are added to a substrate to alter its characteristics, transforming it into a semiconductor.

Common dopants have either five outer electrons (making it a "pentavalent" material) or three outer electrons (making it a "trivalent" material). When a substrate and dopant combine, they share their outer electrons. When a tetravalent substrate is doped with a pentavalent dopant, each pair of atoms has one more electron than it needs. A semiconductor with extra electrons is called an n-type ("n" for "negative")

for 30 years and I look forward to 30 more (at least).

—Ernie Worley, San Jose, CA

Absolutely right. High-frequency signals cannot be used to measure resistance in circuits containing reactive components. I took it for granted when presenting the circuit, but really should have pointed it out for our beginning experimenters.

Thanks for being such an avid PE reader.

SURGE OF INTEREST

Regarding "Surging Ahead," on page 73 of the May 1996 issue, you say that a failure of MOV2 (shown here in Fig. 2) would compromise the grounding system of the house wiring. I presume you refer to the MOV shorting on account of a surge.

I would like to say that in the unlikely event that a sufficient surge across the ground wire and neutral wire would, perhaps, cause a short, it would merely result in an additional path to ground and in no way be dangerous. The ground circuit, completed by conduit or a grounding conductor, is connected to the neutral in the distribution panel (breaker box) and therefore would merely provide two paths for any fault current.

The purpose for the grounding wire is to prevent a short in the device that is plugged in from causing the metal enclosure of that device, such as a drill, skill saw, router or whatever, from raising its voltage level above ground. That could cause a shock to the user.

This has been largely changed in recent years by making the tools double insulated and then using a two conductor cord.

—Dwight Eggleston, Hendersonville, NC

I half agree. Having the MOV short is not a danger by itself, but it does compromise the grounding system. According to the National Electrical Code, ground and neutral should only be connected together at the junction box. That way there's no return current flowing through the uninsulated ground wires, which is somewhat unsafe.

Also, the return current would raise the voltage of the ground points slightly. (If you check the outlets in your home, you'll probably be surprised to find there's a potential difference between the neutral and ground circuits caused by the return current and the resistance

along the neutral path.) Pulling up the ground circuit this way would also pull up grounded device cabinets, also unsafe.

Also, when a house is wired correctly, if a device shorts to ground the current must flow all the way back to the junction box before proceeding along the neutral lines through a building. That setup increases the likelihood of tripping a breaker before much damage is done.

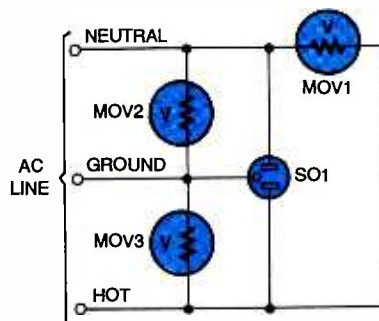


Fig. 2. If MOV2 shorts to ground, it could tie the neutral and ground lines, violating the National Electrical Code.

CORRECTED CORRECTIONS

I just read the *Think Tank* corrections (for April 1996), printed in the Letters section of the July 1996 **Popular Electronics**. While making these corrections to my copy of the April issue, I noticed another error in Fig. 2 of that month. Pin 7 of U7 (an LM384) is shown connected to ground through C5 (4.7 μ F). I don't have a data sheet for the LM384 but I looked up the replacement for it in the ECG, NTE, and SK Semiconductor Replacement Guides, and all three show pin 7 as ground. As printed there is no DC current path from U7 to ground. I wonder if C5 should be connected to pin 1, which is marked in the Replacement Guides as "bypass". Also, pins 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12 are shown as "ground (for heatsink)."

I also have a suggestion, which applies to both Figs. 2 and 3 from April. The parts count could be reduced by using 1458 dual op-amp ICs instead of the 741 single op-amp. Perhaps even better than the 1458 would be a low-noise dual op-amp such as the 4558 or NE5532. Both have the same pin connections as the 1458. The 4558 has probably been used more than any other IC by manufacturers of guitar amplifiers.

—Bill Stiles, Hillsboro, MO

I don't have the original art for the circuit, but I'll bet you're right on the money. Thanks for the correction and good tips on the ICs.

MORE POWER, SCOTTIE

It was interesting to see Mr. Billy R. Pogue's circuit for powering battery-type tubes such as the 01A (see Fig. 2, page 74, March 1993). I have found that the inrush current into a cold tube filament is so high (because the cold resistance is only one-tenth of the hot resistance) that voltage regulators such as he used conveniently self-protect and shut down! You can't get there from here.

What I finally ended up doing to power the six type-01A tubes in a gift Atwater-Kent Model 35 was to use a Zener diode to set the base potential of a hefty (2N5302) series-pass transistor to deliver a regulated 5.5-volts DC at 1.5 amps (see Fig. 3). There is no overload protection for the transistor, as the 2N5302 can handle it for the short warm-up period. Make sure to heatsink Q1.

I decided to also use more filtering than Mr. Pogue. I kept improving my filter until it was just as clean as storage-battery operation, and I ended up with almost 22,000- μ F ahead of the regulator and 42,500- μ F behind it. The critical element in getting rid of the last bit of hum was to split the filter after the bridge rectifier in half, and use a series 0.33-ohm resistor for RC filtering. Luckily, at the low voltages involved, the capacitors are not too big to chassis-mount!

One note of warning to the neophyte: Because these old sets used a rheostat in the filament circuit to control the gain of the set, the current drawn by the filaments is not constant. If you burn out a tube while using an unregulated power source for filament voltage, you will probably burn out additional tubes as the voltage soars. Some sets had either multiple rheostats, or ran some tubes at full voltage. What you have to look out for there is that as you turn down one tube filament (decreasing the current drawn by the set) the voltage on the other tubes will go up!

—Bill Thomas, Warner Robins, GA

I've shorted out supplies based on the 78xx family, and while they do shut down, they come back again immediately. So Mr. Pogue's circuit will probably work just fine.

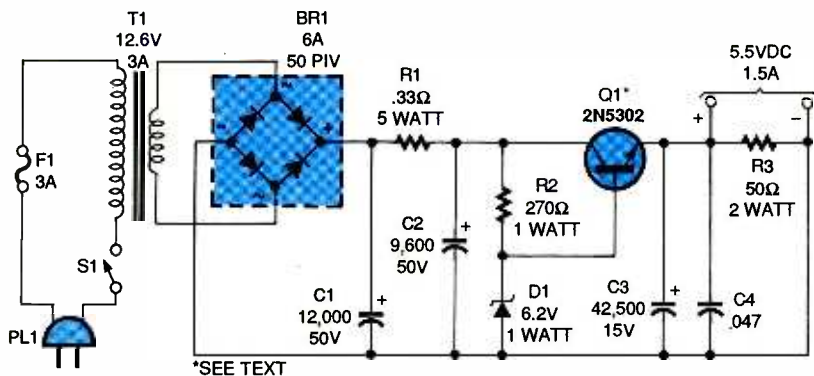


Fig. 3. This antique-radio power supply has filtering sufficient enough to make it as stable as a car battery.

That aside, your circuit is very nice and should work quite well. Thanks for the submission.

FET PROJECT

The JFET tester in the February 1993 issue (see Fig. 5, page 90 of that month) by C. Daykin will work, if you reverse diode D2 for P-channel FETs, although it appears to be designed as a go/no-go gauge for JFETs! A good tester every experimenter should have.

I enjoy experimenting with FETs, particularly power FETs, and needed a more comprehensive tester. I built one (see Fig. 4) primarily to select FETs for a motor-control circuit that must handle many amperes. The simple tester will test any FET, whether it is a JFET, CMOS, or enhanced-CMOS component. It requires only one power supply and a DPDT slide switch to test for either P-channel or N-channel. By measuring input voltages versus output voltages, graphs can be generated to check against a manufacturer's spec sheets.

The source diode in the schematic by C. Daykin will not provide enough reverse voltage to turn off most FETs. A check with spec sheets will show pinch-off voltages as high as 4 volts. I used 5.1 volt-Zeners in the source because this exceeds any pinch-off voltage, and, connected as shown, two Zeners provide bias for either N-channel or P-channel without operator selection.

In operation, either a P-channel or N-channel FET can be plugged in and tested by selecting the proper polarity with the power switch. With the control potentiometer (R2) at ground potential, the FET under test will conduct until the pinch-off voltage is reached. The

LED will not turn on at this point because of the low current. This pinch-off voltage can be read at the top of resistor R4 with a high-impedance voltmeter. Increasing the potentiometer will decrease the pinch-off voltage until the FET conducts and an LED turns on. The LEDs give a rough indication of conduction. A more accurate reading is obtained by monitoring the voltage drop across the drain resistor.

For a quick go/no-go FET check, the switch (S2) across the Zeners can be closed. The associated LED should light, and go out when the switch is opened. If not, the FET is bad or connected wrong, or the selector switch is set for the wrong-polarity FET.

Enhanced FETs do not conduct until there is a positive voltage on the gate for N-channel, or negative for P-channel, and the reverse bias provided by the Zeners is not desirable. The Zeners are effectively removed from the circuit by a switch to provide proper voltages

for enhancement tests. Some enhancement FETs, particularly power types, will start to turn on (reach threshold) at approximately 4 volts at the gate, but are not on completely until about 8 or 9 volts.

Power FETs of the enhancement type can conduct a lot of current and neither the Zeners or the LEDs will provide enough current-carrying capacity for power test. To determine if the FET is good or bad, a power test may not be necessary. However, to test for power ratings, a power resistor of the proper capacity must be connected between the drain and the power source where indicated, and an adequate heat sink provided for the FET. The LEDs must be switched out of the circuit. It is important to remember the FET will be in the linear mode during most of the test potentiometer's range, so a power test should be done as quickly as possible.

The 1-megohm resistor (R3) at the gate connection is protection for the potentiometer, should a unit under test short, and provides current limiting for the protection diodes in the gate of CMOS FETs. Resistor R4 (across the Zeners) provides just enough resistance to enable measuring pinch-off voltage and does not significantly affect the test. It also provides some static protection when testing CMOS transistors.

A 9-volt battery could be used to power the circuit, except in the case of power FETs. Twelve volts was chosen for the tester to compensate for the

continued on page 63

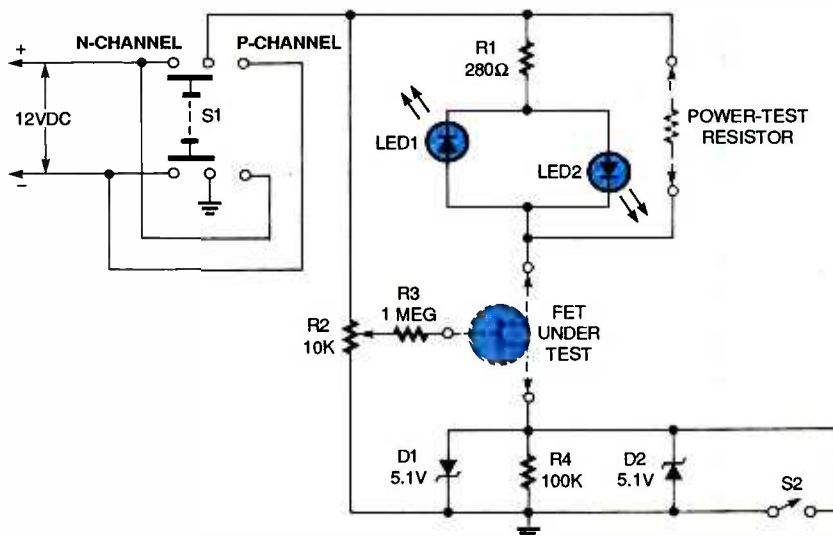


Fig. 4. This Tester is good for all kinds of FETs and even tests power output.

HAM Radio

High-Band Antennas

BY JOSEPH J. CARR, K4IPV

The VHF/UHF ham bands are under "attack and snatch," and they will be for quite some time in the future. Various commercial and personal radio services are expanding at an exponential rate, and that imposes tremendous pressure on the limited radio-spectrum space that is currently available to hams. There are only so many frequencies. Some modern communications modes are able to make more efficient use of the spectrum, but even they have a limit. And when the bands are filled to over capacity, someone has to lose. Guess who that might be: Hams.

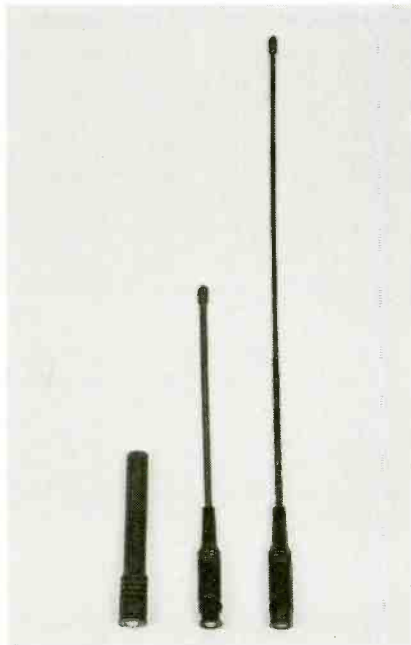


Fig. 1. These "rubber ducky" portable antennas are snappy add-ons to hand-held rigs.

The issue of spectrum-space assignment is determined by partly political and partly economic reasons. When a large company wants space, it may only have to "grease" the right political palms (make contributions to the right political campaigns), and they own a bevy of congressional representatives and senators. Some bands are protected for use by international treaty, but those are under review in 1997.

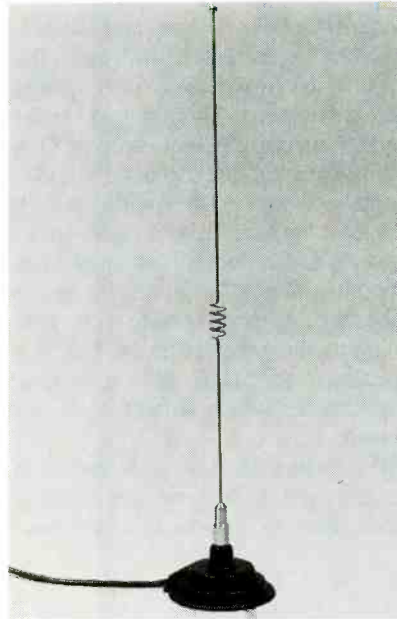


Fig. 2. Magnet-mount mobile antennas like this one grab the metal surface of your car's roof or trunk. Interconnecting coax-cable is usually long enough for most sedan models.

Several things can be done to offset the big bucks. First, monitor the situation and make sure that any political problems are answered with letters to congressional representatives (not all of them are bought), and to the Federal Communications Commission (1919 M Street NW, Washington, DC, 20036). One letter is one vote, so get all your buddies to write.

Another action you can take is to join and support the American Radio Relay League (225 Main Street, Newington, CT, 06111, or via e-mail at hq@arrl.org). You will hear a lot of grumbling about ARRL, but guess what? They are the only game in town that protects your valuable frequencies. If you don't like the way ARRL does some things, then join them and make your views known (after all, it's a membership organization and non-members have no standing to effect change).

The other thing you can do is to encourage the use of the VHF/UHF bands and use them yourself. After all, one of the principal arguments used in

favor of reassigning spectrum space is the lack-of-use argument. If a ham band is not being used to a high percentage of its capacity, then it's a likely target of commercial interests who want to take it, or part of it, for their own use. At one time, many (if not most) executives and engineers in commercial communications organizations were amateur-radio operators themselves, but that is no longer true. Today's big-buck bigwigs are super salesmen, not engineers and scientists. Dollars, not amateur radio, come first.

Keep in mind the no-code technician license. School children and senior groups are fertile ground for new hams and they will help get some increased activity on VHF/UHF bands.

So now, in order to do my part for VHF/UHF bands, I am going to discuss antennas for those bands in this month's and future columns.

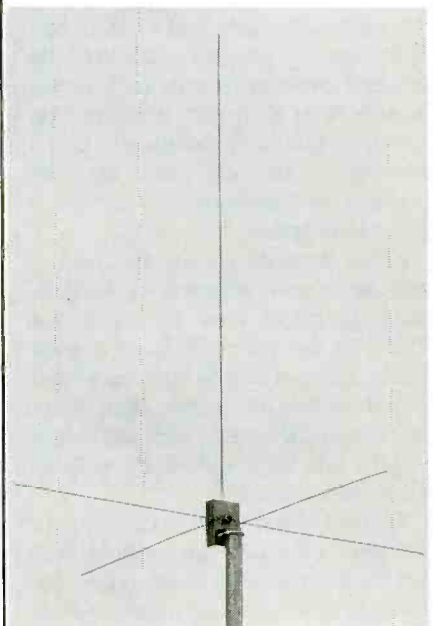


Fig. 3. A hand-made, ground-plane antenna costs only pennies to build.

6-METERS AND UP

Some antennas for VHF/UHF are special designs, but most are little more than adaptations of lower-band

TABLE 1

Frequency (MHz)	Radiator	Radial	L (Regular Coax)	L (Foam Coax)
	(Inches)			
50	147.6	59	40	47
144	51	20.5	13.5	16
220	33.5	13.4	9	10.4

antennas. Indeed, some are the same antennas. Many years ago, a friend, now-deceased, and I went to the Red Cross Chapter House in Fairfax, VA to operate our radio club station (W4PAY). The station had several operating positions on HF and 2-meters. I accidentally connected the 80-10 meter trap dipole to the 2-meter Gonset Communicator III used for 2-meters. We received outstanding signal reports, while operating for a couple hours. VSWR was "within normal limits" (i.e. under 2:1) at every frequency we selected.

Okay, so how does such a thing happen? Well, it seems that an 80- to 10-meter trap dipole is on the order of 120-feet long, making each half of the dipole about 60-feet long. Half wavelength on 2-meters is around 3.4 feet. That means that 17- to 18-half-wavelength, 2-meter dipoles can be fit into the length occupied by each half of the HF dipole. Sound familiar? The 80- to 10-meter trap dipole was acting as a pair of back-to-back longwire antennas, each with a length of 17 to 18 half wavelengths! If you check some of the standard antenna references, you will discover that such an antenna has more gain than a moderate size beam antenna. A gain of 10-12 dB was deduced off-the-chart from Bill Orr's *Radio Handbook*.

If you operate on the HF bands, and use a wire antenna or vertical, then you might want to check the VSWR on the VHF/UHF band of your choice. Using a device such as a MFJ SWR Analyzer is a better check than you rig's VSWR meter and, ultimately, the MFJ unit will eliminate more QRM to the rest of us.

Figure 1 shows a small collection of VHF/UHF antennas for portable rigs. Handheld units were once quite rare and quite expensive, but today they are very common and reduced in price. The antennas shown here are variations on the "rubber ducky" theme. They are flexible, so they should be able to survive the rigors of portable operation.

The antenna shown in Fig. 2 is a

magnetic-mount VHF/UHF antenna that is not dissimilar to cellular-telephone antennas. It is not permanently affixed to the car, but rather sits on the roof or trunk lid with a strong-grabbing magnet in its base. This antenna can be used for several different reasons. One is to make temporary use of the vehicle. A couple times in my life I've rented cars for a trip, and used a handheld 2-meter rig and a mag-mount antenna to temporarily make the rental car into a mobile rig. Apartment dwellers can affix a mag-mount antenna to the top of a window air conditioner for clandestine transmissions where antennas are not allowed.

The base station antenna shown in Fig. 3 is a variation on the "ground plane" antenna. It uses quarter-wave-

length radials, and a longer radiator. Depending on the particular design, the radiator can be half wavelength ($\lambda/2$), five-eighths wavelength ($5\lambda/8$) or three-quarter wavelength ($3\lambda/4$). Each of these antennas has its own impedance-matching system, so they are not universally interchangeable. However, if you buy a commercial product instead of building an antenna like the one shown in Fig. 3, then the impedance matching issue is a moot point.

ANTENNA PROJECT

The $5/8$ -wavelength, ground-plane antenna is a relatively easy way to obtain a dB or two of gain, and omnidirectional coverage at a cheap price. The antenna also has the easiest impedance-matching requirements. Figure 4 illustrates the basic design. The $5/8$ -wavelength radiator element can be made of aluminum tubing, wire, brazing rod, or the type of cylindrical brass stock sold in hobbyist stores. If you use a small-diameter brass rod, then select one that will fit over the cen-

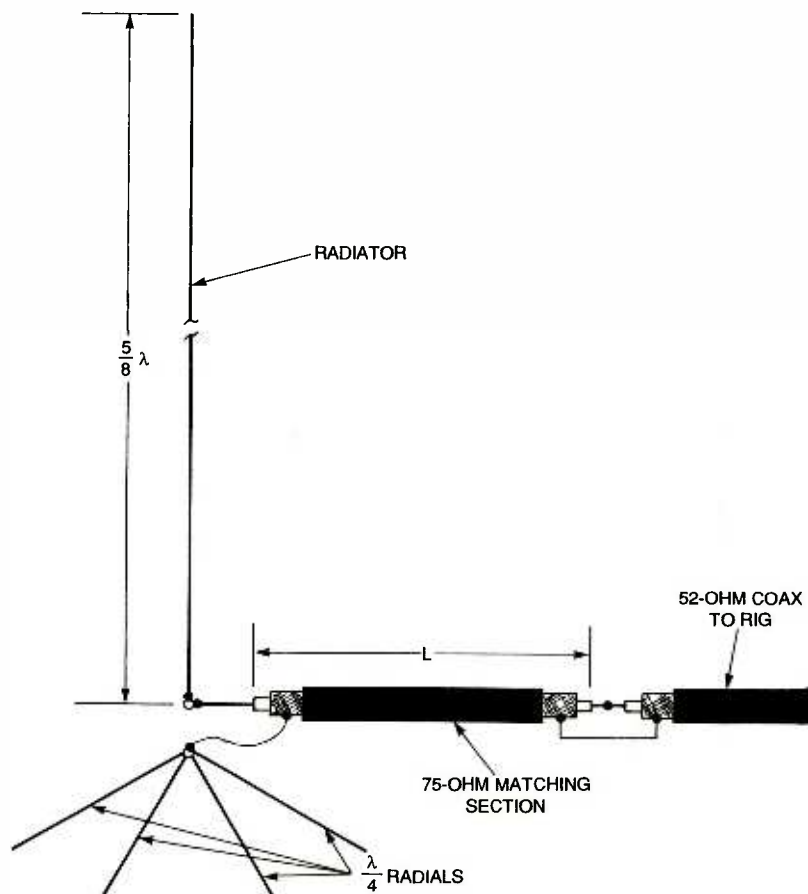
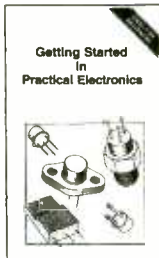


Fig. 4. You can build a $5/8$ -wavelength vertical antenna like this one tonight. See text for all the details.

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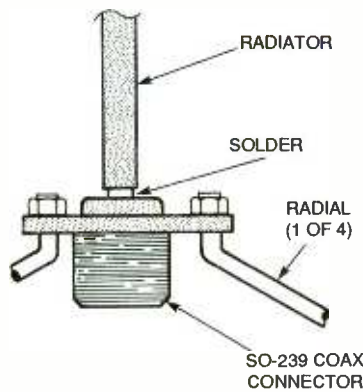


Fig. 5. Here are the base-connector details for the vertical antenna shown in Fig. 4. Only one of the four radials is detailed.

ter conductor pin on an SO-239 chassis-mount coaxial connector. It is an easy way to build that type of antenna (see Fig. 5). Make sure that the four radials are each one-quarter wavelength long.

The lengths for the radiator element, the radials, and the quarter-wavelength impedance-matching section are shown in Table 1. These antennas are relatively easy to build and adjust. Both initial adjustment and experimenting are made easier, if you have a VSWR analyzer.

That's all for now. Feel free to keep in touch. I can be reached by snail mail at P.O. Box 1099, Falls Church, VA 22041. Or, if you prefer, you can send me e-mail at carrij@aol.com.

THINK TANK

(continued from page 60)

5.1-volt drop in the Zeners, and because I have a reliable 0- to 12-volt, 1-ampere supply at the bench. Above 1-ampere, the tester connects to a 12-volt car battery.

—Thornton E. Benson, Benson, AZ

That's a pretty thorough test fixture. A switch to break the circuit through the LEDs for power tests would be a good addition.

Well, this month's column has come to an end. If you'd like to participate in an upcoming issue, send your schematics and explanations to: *Think Tank*, **Popular Electronics**, 500 Bi-County Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735. For each circuit that appears, you'll receive a book from our library. Send in enough circuits to fill a column, and you'll receive a kit and MCLC1010, too.

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ANTIQUE Radio

Antique Radio on the Web

BY MARC ELLIS

Last month we spent some time talking about antique-radio-oriented newsgroups and mailing lists on the Internet. But we ran out of space before we could even touch on the amazing array of information awaiting the antique-radio hobbyist on the World-Wide Web.

profit organizations; and individuals like you and me. They are being used to communicate every conceivable kind of information. TV networks promote new shows, manufacturers promote new products, and hardware and software manufacturers provide customer service and make available

tion and the posting of "brag" photos. But we'll get to that!

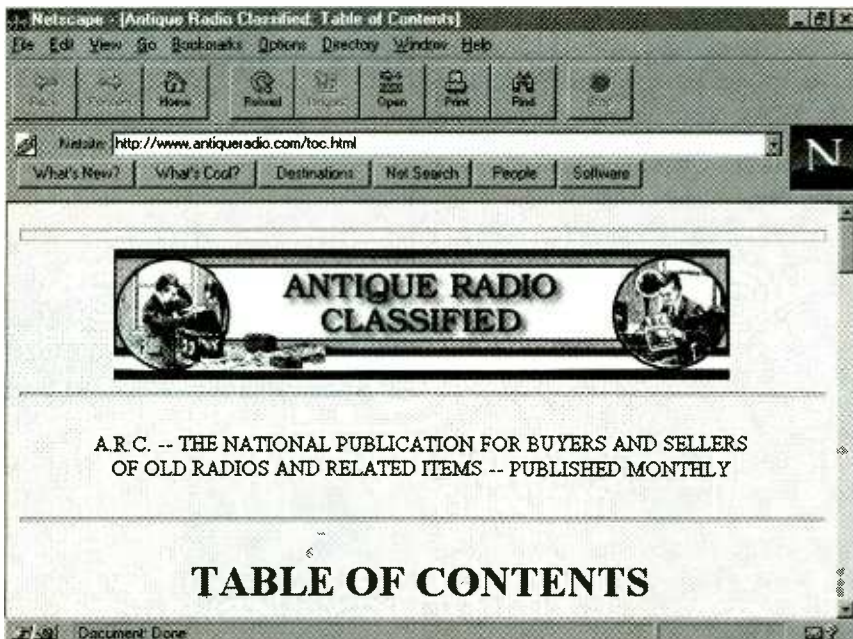
Another important feature of a Web document is the fact that it can incorporate *hypertext*. Words or phrases in hypertext are linked, by the author, to related parts of the document or even to other related Web sites. The hypertext word or phrase might be underlined and/or appear in a different color from the rest of the text. The reader just clicks on the hypertext with a mouse to jump to the linked material.

For example, on your Web site, you might have some text comparing two Philco receiver models. Elsewhere on your site, you have an illustrated catalog of holdings that includes pictures of both models. You link each of the Philco model numbers in your text to the appropriate picture. The person reading the text will then be able to click on either of the model numbers to see a picture of the set. If you don't have an appropriate picture on your site, you can put in a link to another site where the set is illustrated, perhaps that of another collector or a museum.

Access to the sites on the World-Wide Web is via a piece of software called a *Web browser*. One of the most well-known of those is *Netscape*, although there are others in common use, such as Microsoft's *Explorer*. A browser gives you the means to connect with a Web site of interest, which you accomplish by keying in the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) address that uniquely identifies the site.

Browsers also contain software elements that allow you to view the photographs and videos, and/or listen to sounds that might be included with the text you are reading.

You might be wondering how you can identify Web sites of interest without knowing their URLs. Most Web browsers incorporate access to one or more *search engines* that allow you to find sites by entering key words or phrases (for example: "antique radio," "radio parts," "broadcasting," etc.) The browsers will then



Our tour through the World-Wide Web was kicked off by the antique-radio resources listings found on *Antique Radio Classified's* Web page.

WWW BASICS

What is the World-Wide Web? Well, loosely speaking, it is a facility for delivering multimedia information (text, pictures, video, and sounds) to your computer. That information is handled by specialized computers, called *web servers*, which are located all over the world and linked via the Internet. It is delivered to you via documents, known as *web pages*, which are found at locations called *web sites*. The pictures, sounds, and text on those "pages" are stored as digital files that you can, if you wish, download to your computer and store on a hard or floppy disk.

Web sites are being put up by corporations and businesses of all sizes; museums, schools, and other non-

updated drivers and patches. I've even come across an international "marriage bureau" with thumbnail photos and bios of women from every part of the world seeking American husbands.

And here's the interesting thing: As of now, at least, access to the Web is so inexpensive and easy that individuals are on practically the same par as large corporations. All you need are some moderate programming skills, access to a scanner to digitize photographs, and a little good taste, and you can put up a page of your own that rivals that of a major corporation like General Motors.

What kinds of things do individuals put on the Web? Well, everything and anything. But hobby interests are very big, especially the sharing of informa-



The Phil's old Radios Web site has a sophisticated and attractive design.

scan all Web sites in their databases to find the ones that contain your key words. The results will be presented to you as a list of sites, each with a brief description. Just click on the one you want to visit!

WEB ANTIQUE-RADIO RESOURCES

Someone once compared the World-Wide Web to a lake 1000 miles across and 1/4-inch deep. In a way, that's a pretty apt comparison. There is a truly amazing amount of information out there—and quite a lot of it could be characterized as unreliable or shallow.

It is so easy and inexpensive to "publish" something on the Web that quite a bit of information is presented without benefit of thorough research or editorial filter. Beware, especially, of private Web pages authored by people whom you don't know—especially if you are a new hobbyist. A lot of misinformation and personal bias is being published in the name of truth!

Yet, at the same time, there is so much good and useful stuff out there that one would have to say that the Web is an indispensable tool for today's active hobbyist. Browse and enjoy, but keep your guard up!

Over the past couple of days, I've "surfed" many of the antique-radio pages on the Web, trying to come up with a structure for introducing the available resource to readers of this column. Time after time, I found myself

returning to the Web site of *Antique Radio Classified (ARC)* magazine. As most of you know, that well-known publication is a major marketplace for the buying and selling of antique-radio items. If you are new to the Web, I would recommend the site as a very good place to get started. The URL for connecting to *ARC* is <http://www.antiqradio.com/>.

At that site, you'll find articles from current and past issues, a picture gallery of antique radios, and much material of interest. But I want to call

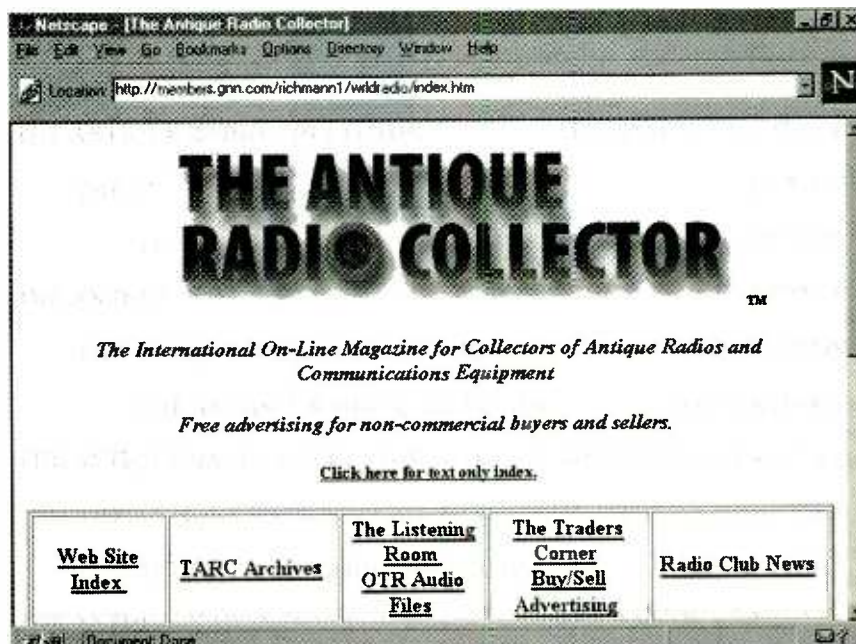
your attention to the extensive compilation of links to other antique-radio Web sites. To see them, just click on Radio on the Web on the Table of Contents page.

As this is being written, the compilation contains almost 75 hypertext site listings; you can visit any site by clicking on its name. The sites are divided into the following categories: Clubs/Museums, Collections and Individuals, Resources, Publications, For Sale/Services/Etc., and Other Sites.

Browsing through the Clubs/Museums category, I noted that The Antique Radio Wireless Association, in addition to basic information on the club, was offering complete information on its big annual conference in Rochester, New York. The Bellingham Antique Radio Museum caught my interest with its chronologies of the development of radio and radio broadcasting. The California Historical Radio Society was presenting a very useful array of restoration tips.

Moving down to Collections and Individuals, I browsed through the Classic Radio Gallery, which showcases the extensive collection of Merrill Mabbs. Then I looked at a couple of special-interest sites: Eric Braun's Wireless Postcard Page and Mr. Transistor (of London, England). On both of those pages, the proprietors show interesting examples from their collections, share their expertise, and

continued on page 67



The Antique Radio Collector is a unique online magazine.

COMPUTER BITS

Coming Trends

BY JEFF HOLTZMAN

This is the first issue of the year. In honor thereof, I want to discuss some of the biggest issues confronting the computer industry, and give my totally personally biased prognostications about what's coming up. The issues fall into four categories: hardware, networking and Internetworking, applications and utilities, and business.

HARDWARE

The biggest hardware *thing* to happen to the computer industry in a decade was not the advent of the Pentium, nor CD-ROM discs, nor cheap GB-size hard drives. The biggest thing was the availability in 1996 of cheap, abundant semiconductor memory. Prices are currently hovering around \$120 for 16 MB. That means you can put 64 MB of RAM in a PC for about \$500; and there's no reason not to. Pricing is still dropping, so when you read this column you should be able to do much better.

That in turn means there's a whole new set of rules, as far as the kinds of operating systems we can run, the applications we can use, and the data we can manipulate. If we had memory this cheap back in 1987, when IBM and Microsoft introduced OS/2, we might all be running OS/2 today. Running several huge applications on a 64-MB-equipped machine is not only possible, but painless. Doing multimedia kinds of things (audio and video) is infinitely more pleasurable.

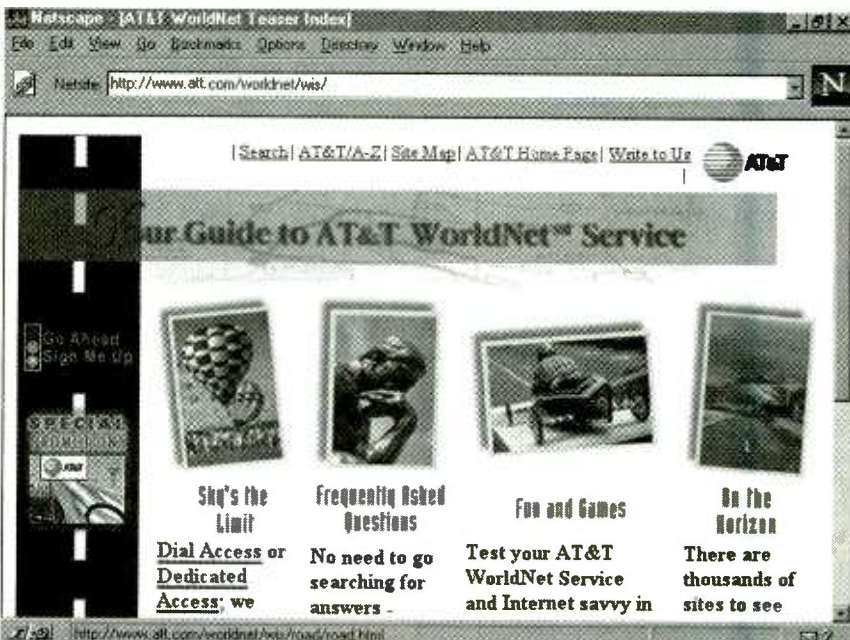
One upcoming hardware trend to look forward to is USB (Universal Serial Bus). USB is a standard that promises to make installing computer peripherals literally as easy as snapping in a telephone extension. USB provides a high-speed bus that current peripherals (mouse, keyboard, CD) can use, as well as a newly emerging category of what we traditionally think of as consumer-electronics devices, including things like audio systems, video systems, and digital snapshot cameras.

The biggest question is digital video disc (DVD) technology—will it or won't it succeed? CD-ROM technology is basi-

cally maxed out; we're already seeing multi-CD applications and databases. The computer industry already needs something like DVD, and if the entertainment industry doesn't take its foot off the brake, the computer industry will do something on its own.

What the entertainment industry doesn't realize is that no matter what copyright and encryption schemes it comes up with, hackers will inevitably find ways to crack them. If the entertainment industry was *smart*, it would

tiresome. Interrupted file transfers and servers that suddenly drop off-line are even more so. Home users may or may not find that acceptable, but business users absolutely will not. What will happen then is that the industry will segment into layers providing various tradeoffs among reliability of service, cost, and some kinds of value-adding features such as tech support. There is little doubt that the big telecom companies (AT&T, MCI, and Sprint) are going to eat the vast majority of the small



Will large Telecom companies like AT&T dominate the ranks of Internet providers in the coming days? It looks possible.

find ways to add value to the non-copyable portions of these products, such as the packaging. For example, most people I talk with who are old enough to have any sizable investment in vinyl LPs have little love for audio-CD packaging. We wouldn't want to give up the totally superior signal quality of CDs, but we nonetheless miss album-cover art and liner notes.

NETWORKING

Internet this, Internet that. What a bore. Delayed and failed log-ins are becoming more and more frequent and

ISPs (Internet Service Providers) for lunch. Whatever else you do, don't sign any long-term agreements for Internet services.

Then there's electronic commerce, that is, buying and selling products and services via the Internet. Already you can buy everything from music to software to stocks and bonds, and the trend is only going to increase. Perhaps we can look forward to the day when all purchases are made this way, totally eliminating the need for cost-inflating middle-men. In the process, we may create yet another dependent segment

of society. I wonder, how would we deal with that?

SOFTWARE

The major issue here is that of monolithic applications (and suites of applications) versus smaller, more modular, distributed chunks of software, downloaded and updated on an as-needed basis.

The distributed architecture makes sense technically, and is in a sense a continuation of trends most evident in the transition from mainframes to minis to PCs. But it doesn't fit the model that has been driving the PC portion of the computer industry for a decade and a half. Microsoft, for all intents and purposes having won the application suite wars, now by default owns that monolithic vision, hence it will be up to the company to defend it—or to change it. Again I think we'll see a tiered approach, ranging from everything-including-the-kitchen-sink CD-based application suites to mini-apps based on Microsoft's ActiveX (formerly OLE Controls) technology. The question is what, if anything, will occupy the middle tier.

Then there's the issue of Java vs. ActiveX, and Java vs. the monolithic suites. According to proponents, Java can be used to build everything across all tiers. However, we've seen no significant large-scale Java-based software to date. Java also has significant technical lapses, such as an incomplete range of application programming interfaces (APIs), and only moderate support from third-party tool vendors.

Java's biggest strength is not technical, but market-related: Java is not a Microsoft technology. Regardless of its technical merits or lack thereof, there may just be enough anti-Microsoft sentiment in the industry to find ways of working around, surmounting, evolving, or overcoming Java's relative immaturity, and thereby pushing development of compelling new applications.

BUSINESS

I guess the key point to be made in the context of a technical magazine like this one is that the battle is not *technical*. It is not about superior technology. It is about dollars. It is about power. It is about control. Anybody who tells you otherwise is naïve.

Another extremely important point is that computer-industry innovation used

to be measured internally, according to internal standards. Now the focus is outward and based on interfacing—interfacing with Hollywood and Nashville, with AT&T and MCI, with VISA and MasterCard.

To the extent that these outside influences are helping the PC industry mature, they are good. Solutions to the problems facing the industry may not be any closer, but the change to a more global context for developing solutions will benefit everyone. ■

ANTIQUE RADIO

(continued from page 65)

extend invitations to trade. I was also charmed by Phil's old Radios, a very sophisticated and graphically beautiful site. Those interested in construction Web sites will find it to be an excellent model. In addition to displaying Phil's collection, the site contains a very complete list of antique-radio resources.

What first caught my eye in ARC's Resources category was the Broadcast Pioneers Library of the University of Maryland Library system. In addition to cataloging the museum's holdings or recordings and scripts, the site also offers soundbites of several early commercials that can be downloaded to your computer. More soundbites are available at Radio Days: A Soundbite History, James Widner's page.

Moving along to Jim Hawkins Radio Room, I was treated to a photo tour of the Voice of America Relay site at Greenville, North Carolina. Padgett's Trans-Oceanic Page contains model identification information and restoration lore invaluable to any collector of these sets. Finally, Rich Samuel's Broadcasting in Chicago, 1921—1989 featured a virtual tour of the NBC Merchandise Mart studios as they appeared in the early 1930s.

In the Publications section, I took a look at Horn Speaker, which featured excerpts from current and past issues of *Antique Radio Classified* as well as reprints of vintage articles on radio repair. Xtal Set Society also presented interesting excerpts, including complete plans on how to build a Quaker Oats canister crystal set.

Looking through For Sale/Services/Etc., I stopped first at Antique Radio Grille Cloth (John and Mary Okolowicz), where I was able to view an online catalog of reproduction grille

cloth, complete with photographs of all styles. The Antique Radio Restoration and Repair site offered a nationwide radio restoration service covering every detail, down to ultrasonic cleaning of the knobs. Marty's Home Page (Marty Bunis) offered several items for sale and showcased a test version of the CD-ROM version of his *Collector's Guide to Antique Radio*.

Finally, under Other Sites, I viewed an edition of *Antique Radio Collector*—a very interesting electronic magazine. I also took a look at Chuck Schwark's Home Page, showing his extensive collection of wood-cabinet table models and offering schematics and advice on Philco restoration. The Transistor Radio Page, another site with beautifully designed graphics, treats us to excellent photos of classic transistor sets and includes a "wanted/for sale" classified section.

Well, readers, that completes our brief tour through the antique-radio resources of the Web. We've hardly scratched the surface, but I hope your appetite is whetted. And one thing is for sure—once you start looking, there's no end to what you'll find! ■

ANTIQUE RADIO CLASSIFIED Free Sample!

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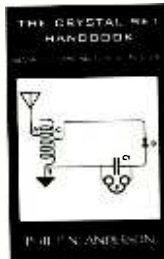
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Circuit Circus

Electronic Sensors

This visit we're going to explore the world of electronic sensors. In today's electronic age there are very few things that move or operate without the aid and guidance of some type of sensor. The modern automobile is a prime example. Just see how far you can travel when one of the sensors feeding the car's "brain" (microprocessor) goes off to never-never land. Unlike the model "T", duct tape and baling wire won't get you down the road. It's toe time.

Sensors don't have to be complicated or complex in nature. The simple on/off switch is probably the most often-used sensor. In a typical manufacturing operation the automated equipment uses numerous mechanically operated on/off switches to feed data to the controller. These switches tell the controller the location of various moving parts, such as starting position, end of travel, and other locations in between.

Anytime a mechanically operated sensor can be replaced with a non-moving electronic sensor the rate of failure will be greatly reduced. In fact most failures in our electronically controlled world are actually mechanical in one form or another. Basically, if it moves, it will eventually wear out and fail.

Our first group of non-moving, non-mechanical replacement sensors are light operated. That is perhaps one of the most popular types of sensor in use today.

SEE-THROUGH SENSOR

In our first circuit (see Fig. 1) an

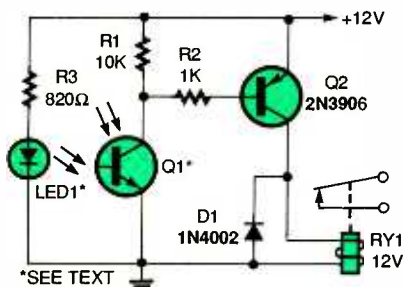


Fig. 1. Any opaque object blocking the light path between LED1 and Q1 will cause RY1 to open.

PARTS LIST FOR THE SEE-THROUGH SENSOR (Fig. 1)

SEMICONDUCTORS

Q1—NPN photo transistor (Mouser L14G2 or equivalent)
Q2—2N3906 PNP transistor
D1—1N4002 silicon diode
LED1—Infrared light-emitting diode (Mouser LED55C or equivalent)

RESISTORS

(All resistors are 1/4-watt, 5% units.)

R1—10,000-ohm
R2—1000-ohm
R3—820-ohm

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

RY1—12-volt DC relay
Power source, wire, solder, etc.

infrared emitter LED (LED1) is aimed at an infrared photo transistor (Q1). As long as the IR light path remains uninterrupted between the two, transistor Q2 will keep relay RY1 closed. Any opaque object blocking the light path will cause RY1 to open.

This circuit is a see-through-type light sensor. Such units are often used as part-in-place detectors and parts-counter sensors.

LIGHT-BLOCK SENSOR

The IR sensor circuit shown in Fig. 2 reverses the output operation of the circuit in Fig. 1. In this new circuit, relay RY1 remains open until the light path between LED1 and Q1 is blocked. As long as the IR light source is uninterrupted, photo-transistor Q1's collector voltage is near zero. The voltage at Zener-diode D2's cathode is too low for conduction, keeping transistor Q2 off and the RY1 open.

These first two sensor circuits are useful as shown but each uses an electromechanical output relay that could fail long before the IR semiconductors cease to operate. One simple solution to the problem is to remove the relay and use the transistor's output as a source or sink input to an electronic controller.

An example is the PLC (Programmable Controller), which is used in

BY CHARLES D. RAKES

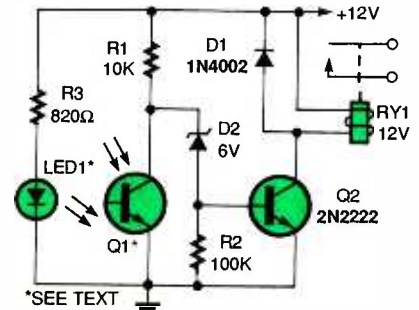


Fig. 2. In this circuit, RY1 remains open until the light path between LED1 and Q1 is blocked.

PARTS LIST FOR THE LIGHT-BLOCK SENSOR (Fig. 2)

SEMICONDUCTORS

Q1—NPN photo transistor (Mouser L14G2 or equivalent)
Q2—2N2222 NPN transistor
D1—1N4002 silicon diode
D2—6-volt Zener diode
LED1—Infrared light-emitting diode (Mouser LED55C or equivalent)

RESISTORS

(All resistors are 1/4-watt, 5% units.)

R1—10,000-ohm
R2—100,000-ohm
R3—820-ohm

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

RY1—12-volt DC relay
Power source, wire, solder, etc.

manufacturing plants throughout the world. This electronic marvel started out many years ago as a replacement for large banks of relays, timers, and mechanical sequencers used to control manufacturing equipment.

PLC INTERFACE

Our next circuit, shown in Fig. 3, is an IR sensor with a timed positive output pulse that will operate with older and slower PLCs. Some of the early PLCs have scan times of 15 or more milliseconds. A part on a fast-moving manufacturing line could pass by and not be seen by the controller.

The sensor's extended output pulse may be set, by R3, to a time period longer than the controller's scan time. The sensor may also be used as a stand-alone circuit to operate a

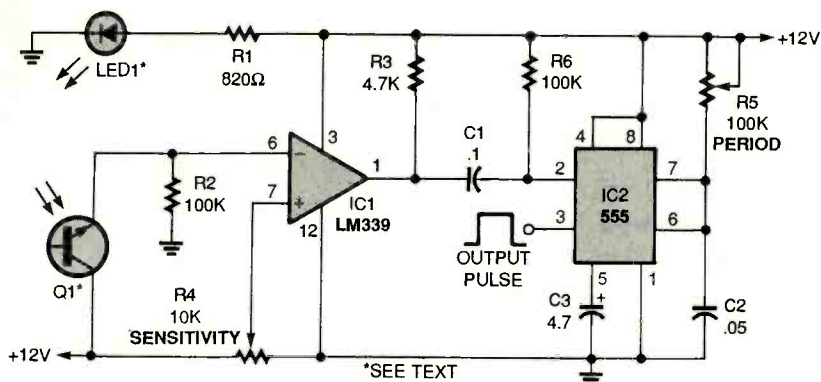


Fig. 5. Unlike the other sensors, this circuit produces an output when LED1's light is reflected from an object back to photo-transistor Q1.

PARTS LIST FOR THE REFLECTIVE SENSOR (Fig. 5)

SEMICONDUCTORS

IC1—LM339 comparator, integrated circuit
 IC2—555 timer, integrated circuit
 Q1—NPN photo transistor (Mouser L14G2 or equivalent)
 LED1—Infrared light-emitting diode (Mouser LED55C or equivalent)

RESISTORS

(All fixed resistors are 1/4-watt, 5% units.)
 R1—820-ohm
 R2, R6—100,000-ohm
 R3—4700-ohm
 R4—10,000-ohm potentiometer
 R5—100,000-ohm potentiometer

CAPACITORS

C1—0.1-μF, ceramic-disc
 C2—0.05-μF, ceramic-disc
 C3—4.7-μF, 25-WVDC, electrolytic

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

Power source, opaque tubing for Q1 and LED1, wire, solder, etc.

parator (IC1) is at or near ground level, and the output at pin 1 of IC1 is high. When the photo transistor detects a reflected light signal, the voltage at Q1's emitter goes high causing the comparator's output to go low. The 555 timer (IC2) is then triggered, and produces a timed output pulse at pin 3.

The circuit's sensitivity is set by R4 and its output time period by R5. You can alter the circuit's function to operate like the sensor in Fig. 4 by reversing the connections to input pins 6 and 7 of IC1. With this simple modification an object must move in front of the sensor and then move away for an output to occur.

Note that in this circuit, as well as in the next one, all of the unused input

and output pins of the LM339 must be tied to circuit ground.

TOUCH SENSOR

Our next sensor circuit (see Fig. 6) is a basic two-contact touch-switch sensor circuit. At its heart is an LM339 comparator (IC1). The negative input (pin 6) of IC1 is tied to the positive supply through R2 (which is actually two 22-megohm resistors connected in series), while the positive input (pin 7) is connected through R1 (made up of two 22-megohm and one 10-megohm resistor in series).

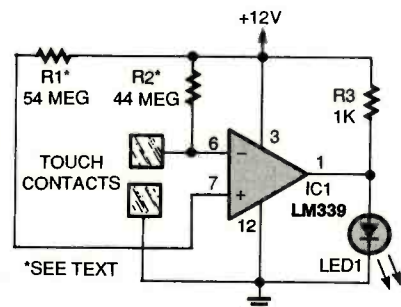


Fig. 6. The circuit shown here is a basic two-contact touch-switch sensor.

PARTS LIST FOR THE TOUCH SENSOR (Fig. 6)

RESISTORS

R1—54-megohm, 1/4- or 1/2-watt, 5% (see text)
 R2—44-megohm, 1/4- or 1/2-watt, 5% (see text)
 R3—1000-ohm, 1/4-watt, 5%

ADDITIONAL PARTS AND MATERIALS

IC1—LM339 comparator, integrated circuit
 LED1—Light-emitting diode, any color
 Power source, touch contacts, wire, solder, etc.

The comparator's output is normally low, keeping LED1 from turning on. When contact is made between the

two touch contacts the condition reverses, turning IC1 off and allowing LED1 to light.

Well, it looks like we've used up our allotted time this go-round, so tune in again next issue and we'll look over some more sensor circuits. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

(continued from page 10)

For more information, contact Paradise Multimedia Products, 811 East Arques Avenue, MS 80, P.O. Box 3409, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3409; Web: <http://www.paradisempp.com>.

CIRCLE 85 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

ANTENNA-TUNER TUNER

MFJ Enterprises' MFJ-212 Matchmaker lets you tune up your antenna tuner quickly, easily, and safely (without transmitting a single milliwatt! Because there's no radiated power, you can't cause QRM. You can also precisely tune your antenna tuner for a 1:1 SWR, with no additional tweaking required. The MFJ-212 protects your transceiver and antenna tuner by helping to avoid overheating and arcing caused by high SWR and long tune-ups.



The device is easy to use (simply plug it between your transceiver and your antenna tuner). Tuning noise is modulated so that it will be easy to recognize. If you accidentally transmit, MFJ's RF Guard automatically bypasses your unit to prevent damage.

The MFJ-212 Matchmaker works with all transceivers from 160 to 6 meters. It is powered by a 9-volt alkaline battery or the optional MFJ-1312B 12-volt DC, 300-mA power supply.

The MFJ-212 Matchmaker costs \$79.95; the optional power supply costs \$12.95. For additional information, contact MFJ Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 494, Mississippi State, MS 39762; Tel. 800-647-1800 or 601-323-5869; Fax: 601-323-6551. ■

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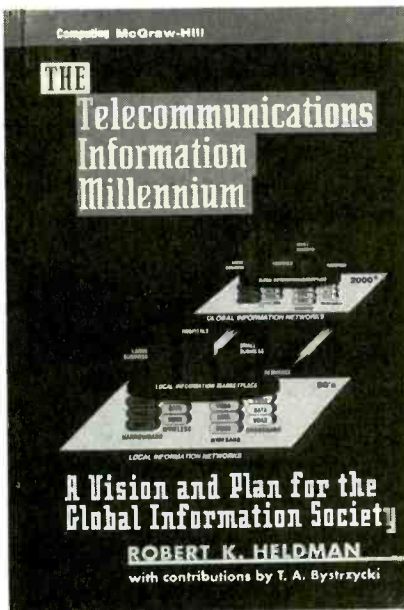
ELECTRONICS LIBRARY

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION MILLENNIUM: A Vision and Plan for the Global Information Society

by Robert K. Heldman

Grounded in solid fact and informed thinking, this forward-looking book thoroughly examines and analyzes all the obstacles, as well as the many potential benefits, of creating an interactive public information network. It postulates a feasible vision for the future in telecommunications and presents a plan of action for implementing it.

The book defines tomorrow's tele-



communications opportunities in terms of today's plans and strategies, the current approaches that successfully match the right network services to the right application. It covers narrowband, wideband, broadband, and wireless information, and discusses in detail the information highway and the information marketplace. The book examines the technical possibilities and the market opportunities that will become available with a new family of networks, products, and services. In addition, it explains the regulatory, financial, and technical hurdles that must be overcome to make a public data network a reality. The book presents a realistic

blueprint for the construction of a public data network that is fully interactive.

The Telecommunications Information Millennium: A Vision and Plan for the Global Information Society costs \$24.95 and is published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, 11 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011; Tel. 800-2-MCGRAW.

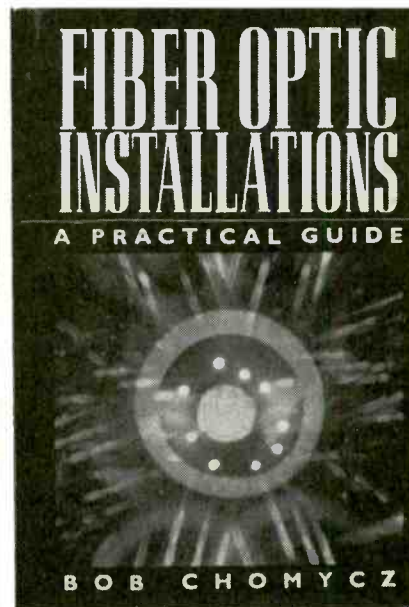
CIRCLE 90 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

FIBER OPTIC INSTALLATIONS: A Practical Guide

by Bob Chomycz

Conventional electrical wire techniques do not apply to fiber optics. If you're one of the many engineers or technicians now required to work with fiber optics, this book can fill a gap in your training with a wealth of practical information on fiber-optic systems. Using straightforward language and a non-mathematical approach, the book provides the principles for installing and operating safe, efficient fiber-optic systems.

The book offers reliable information to speed your projects along, including safety measures specific to fiber-optic



work, handling techniques, outdoor and indoor cable installation, splicing and termination methods, using patch

cords and connectors, power meter and OTDR test procedures, lightwave equipment, system integration, and maintenance procedures. It helps you understand commissioning, testing, troubleshooting, and repairing.

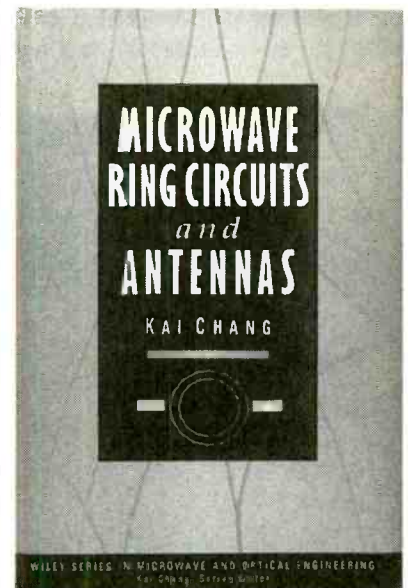
Fiber Optic Installations: A Practical Guide costs \$45 and is published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, 11 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011; Tel. 800-2-MCGRAW.

CIRCLE 91 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

MICROWAVE RING CIRCUITS AND ANTENNAS

by Kai Chang

Dedicated specifically to ring circuits and antennas, this guide to microwave circuit design and operation includes theoretical analyses and a wealth of practical applications. It covers most ring resonators and cavities as they are used in a variety of transmission



lines, including microstrip, slotline, waveguide, and coplanar waveguide.

The book opens with a general introduction to the ring circuit, its history, and its past and present applications. It then presents a general discussion of analysis, theory, modeling, modes, coupling methods, and perturbation methods of

ring resonators. Next, the book introduces electronically tunable and switchable ring resonators. Much of the book is devoted to the application of ring circuits to microwave measurements, filters, couplers, and magic-Ts, as well as their use in mixers, active antennas, oscillators, and optoelectronics.

Microwave Ring Circuits and Antennas costs \$98 and is published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158-0012; Tel. 800-CALL-WILEY.

CIRCLE 92 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

PRINTED CIRCUITS HANDBOOK: Fourth Edition

edited by Clyde F. Coombs, Jr.

For almost three decades, this definitive reference has provided comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the design, engineering, fabrication, and assembly of printed-circuit boards. The handbook will be useful to those just entering the printed-circuit field as well as experienced professionals seeking a single-volume reference that will allow them to stay competitive into the 21st century.

The fourth edition provides the same type of practical problem-solving information as its predecessors, but has



been fully revised for the 1990s and beyond. Written by a team of industry experts, the book contains information on such topics as designing and engineering for performance and manufacturability, developing an effective computer-aided design process; selecting computer tools for PCB design and

simulation, understanding and using SMT and MCM technologies, developing partnerships with the board and assembly suppliers, advanced materials and processes to take advantages of new components, and realistic acceptability standards for boards and assemblies. The book offers expanded sections on new component packages and design, and new chapters that provide industry-standard guidelines for inspecting boards and assemblies.

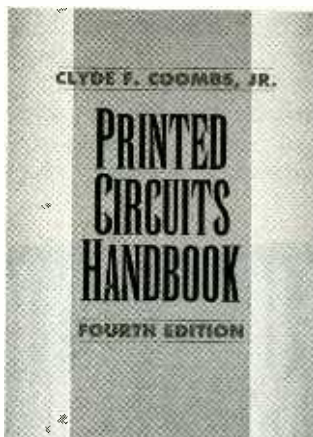
Printed Circuits Handbook: Fourth Edition costs \$89.50 and is published by McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; Tel. 800-2-MCGRAW.

CIRCLE 93 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

SOLUTIONS '96

from American Power Conversion

This 65-page, full-color catalog is filled with information and products to protect your company's computers and net-



works from power spikes and surges. It features tutorials explaining how power problems can cause catastrophic damage to electronic equipment and how to match power-protection products to your needs, and provides answers to the most commonly asked power-protection questions. Aimed at home offices and small businesses as well as large corporations, the catalog offers protection devices for workstations, PCs, peripherals, modems, LANs and WANs, servers, and datacenters. Other products include power conditioners and back up power systems.

Solutions '96 is free upon request

from American Power Conversion (APC), 132 Fairgrounds Road, P.O. Box 278, West Kingston, RI 02892-9920; Tel. 800-4APC or 401-7889-5735; Fax: 401-789-3180; Web: <http://www.apcc.com>.

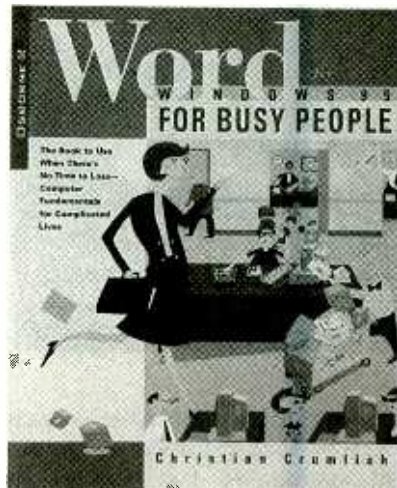
CIRCLE 94 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

WORD FOR WINDOWS FOR BUSY PEOPLE

by Christian Crumlish

How do you learn to use a new program when your schedule is already filled to overflowing? This book makes it possible to learn how to use Word for Windows 95 even when you think you don't have a minute to spare. It is aimed at people who need to know the essentials of Word, but need to learn them over lunch or in a few brief evening sessions.

The book cuts to the chase, giving you the precise steps you need to get your word processing or desktop publishing done quickly and accurately. It offers the right blend of shortcuts and vital skills to help you learn what you need, and then move on. Its step-by-



step instructions and imaginative illustrations reveal the program's new interactive features and impressive desktop-publishing capabilities.

The book uses several time-saving strategies. Quick reference sections at the beginning of each chapter demonstrate the essential tasks and features. It also presents tried-and-true shortcuts, advice on how to avoid time-consuming pitfalls, clever definitions to help you learn and remember the jargon,

continued on page 76

SCANNER SCENE

Area 51 Listening

BY MARC SAXON

Life is always getting easier, as proven by the *Optoelectronics Scout* handheld frequency counter. This amazing device excels at locating and finding active frequencies between 0 and 1400 MHz (1.4 GHz). Automatically and unattended, the Scout will store 400 discrete frequencies. All stored frequencies can be easily recalled for viewing or deletion. The Scout also records how many hits (up to 225) it records on each frequency stored in its memory.

There's a 10-digit LCD readout that's backlit for night operation. The display includes a 16-segment RF signal-strength bar graph. Distinctive audio beeps indicate frequency hits, and there's a pager-style vibrator for discrete recording.

The Scout's sensitivity is better than 1.0 μ V between 30 and 900 MHz.

When connected to an AOR AR8000/2000 receiver using the optional SAC8000, the Scout will automatically tune the receiver to its operating frequency. Using an Optoelectronics interface board, the Scout can also do this for the RadioShack PRO-2005, PRO-2006, PRO-2035, and PRO-2042.

The Scout can also be used with the ICOM R7000, R7100, and R9000 receivers. The Scout captures the frequency, then automatically tunes the receiver to that frequency simultaneously. No more programming or manual tuning to root out new frequencies. You'll discover new and unusual frequencies galore!

You can also download stored data from the Scout into a PC using an Optoelectronics Optolinx serial interface.

This is truly next-generation advanced scanning, and you'll certainly want to be in on the leading wave of this useful new technology. For more information, contact Optoelectronics, 5821 Northeast 14th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334. Their phone number is 954-771-2050, or you can reach them with e-mail sent to opto@igc.net.

CAUGHT IN THE WEB

Speaking of the Net, a number of readers have asked if we know of any World-Wide Web sites of interest to scanner users. Although there might be dozens, the ones that readers have told us about are listed in the "Scanner Web Sites" box.



Move into the world of next-generation advanced scanning with the *Optoelectronics Scout*, a handheld frequency counter that locates active frequencies between 10 MHz and 1400 MHz.

However, when you point your Web browser to those Web sites, keep in mind that sites in general come and go. We hope all the information is good by the time you read it. But a trip down the information highway is relatively inexpensive, and while you're exploring the ones listed here you might even find some new ones.

In the meantime, readers who can add to our list are invited to send us their information for inclusion in future columns.

AREA 51

From classics like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T.: the Extraterrestrial* to modern blockbusters like *Independence Day*, we're all

exposed to them. And the "them" refers, of course, to aliens.

It seems that all of the movies and TV programs (especially *The X-Files*) about space aliens have honed the public's interest in such matters. The recent discovery of fossilized Martian microbes has served to validate what some had previously merely suspected: that life forms do exist elsewhere.

Of course, there are those who have insisted that for decades our government has been storing, examining, testing, and attempting to duplicate captured UFOs at a secret Air Force test facility in the Nevada desert. And plenty of scanner enthusiasts out there seem to want to find out the truth.

That base, located at Groom Dry Lake, northwest of Las Vegas, lies within the extensive control zone of Nellis Air Force Base. Known as Area 51 (as well as *Dreamland* and *Skunkworks*), it's where the Stealth fighter and other high-tech secret aircraft are developed and tested.

Although Area 51 itself is heavily secured and off limits to the public, a good state highway and the tiny community of Rachel are nearby. Area 51 now attracts a huge number of inquisitive people hoping to catch sight of the strange aircraft being flown, including (perhaps) even a UFO! Most of those visitors do get to see interesting aircraft. Although many bring along scanners, not many appear to have done their homework, and they miss much of the action.

Because this is such a popular attraction, let's take a look. When I was there, half the scanner owners showed up with units that could not receive the 225- to 400-MHz military aeronautics band. That was their first mistake—it's an important band at Area 51. Some people didn't think to bring any way to power their handheld scanners from their vehicles' cigarette lighters, or at least to recharge their batteries. That's another big mistake—there are no RadioShack stores nearby and you can't buy replacement alkaline batter-

SCANNER WEB SITES

Central Massachusetts

<http://www.ultranet.com/~bellvill/radio.html>

Northern Pennsylvania

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ruhe>

Long Island

<http://www.li.net/~j4dice/scanli.html>

NYC Fire Department EMS

<http://www.gnn.com.emshighway>

New York State

<http://www.frontiernet.net/~dstark>

The Scanning Club

<http://www.enter.net/~jheller/index.html>

Scanning Ref.

<http://www.panix.com/clay/scanning/index/html>

ies very easily once the ones in your radio go dead. "Power" is the key word at Area 51.

If you visit Area 51, bring along a clear, self-sealing, plastic food-storage bag for your scanner. Punch a hole for the antenna to poke through. Area 51 is real desert, and the plastic bag will keep grains of sand from getting into the unit and doing damage. You can still operate the scanner with the protective bag in place, reaching inside if necessary.

The roving military security patrols use (F-1) 142.20 MHz and (F-2) 141.50 MHz. The base station is on 167.70 and 409.025 MHz. These are heavy-duty dudes, so you don't want to wander into any "off limits" zones. Ground-intrusion sensors (496.25, 496.275, and 496.30 MHz) are in use, as well as video surveillance equipment.

Among the frequencies in use for various aeronautical purposes are "Dreamland Control" on 118.7, 125.15, 253.4, 255.8, 261.1, and 392.1 MHz. "Darkstar" (965th AACS) AWACS operations are on 376.2 and 391.8 MHz. The 554th Range Group is on 238.3, 259.4, 268.2, 293.5, and 389.1 MHz. The "Skunkworks" is on 264.1, 264.6, 275.2, 283.7, 289.4, 292.1, 345.4, 349.3, 379.9, 382.6, 407.40, and 407.50 MHz.

We're always looking for your input! Please pass along your frequencies, questions, ideas, and what-have-you to *Scanner Scene*, **Popular Electronics**, 500 Bi-County Blvd., Farmingdale, NY 11735. See you next

ELECTRONICS LIBRARY

(continued from page 74)

and worthwhile Word habits to pick up.

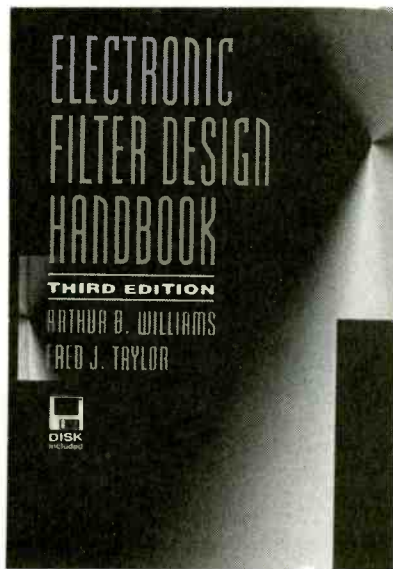
Word For Windows 95 for Busy People costs \$22.95 and is published by Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 2600 Tenth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710; Tel. 800-227-0900.

CIRCLE 95 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

ELECTRONIC FILTER DESIGN HANDBOOK: Third Edition

by Arthur B. Williams & Fred J. Taylor

This classic guide to filter design has been completely updated, and now includes software with new computer-aided design and analysis programs. The third edition provides complete coverage of the many recent advances in electronic filter design, while maintaining its emphasis on practicality.



The book offers everything you need to design an analog or digital filter. A new chapter on switched-capacitor filters presents the underlying theory behind the technology, together with design examples. Another added chapter focuses on the elimination of conducted and radiated interference, and describes the wide range of filters being used for EMI suppression. An expanded treatment of digital filters includes multi-rate filtering, quadrature mirror filters, filter banks, and other newly developed architectures. The book also provides new coverage of digital filter implementation using

state-of-the-art digital signal processors from Texas Instruments, Motorola, Analog Devices, and AT&T.

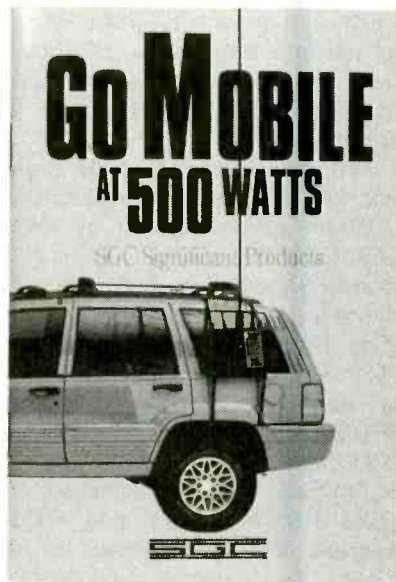
Electronic Filter Design Handbook, Third Edition, costs \$79.50, including disk, and is published by McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; Tel. 800-2-MCGRAW.

CIRCLE 96 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

GO MOBILE AT 500 WATTS

from SGC, Inc.

This pocket-sized book shows readers how to install a 500-watt mobile station in one of several automobiles. It has chapters on the basic layout of a HF mobile system, power for a 500-watt mobile system, antennas and grounds, noise and vibrations, and installation.



The book provides in-depth details of actual installations performed by SGC technicians in four different vehicles: a Jeep Cherokee, a Cadillac, a GEO Tracker, and a GEO Metro. The special installation variables of those four vehicles appears in Chapter 7. The book makes it clear that those tips apply to any manufacturer's gear.

Go Mobile at 500 Watts costs \$19.95 and is published by SGC, Inc., SGC Building, 13737 S.E. 26th Street, Bellevue, WA 98005; Tel. 800-259-7331; Fax: 206-746-6384 or 206-746-6384; e-mail: sgcmktg@aol.com; Web: <http://sgcworld.com>.

CIRCLE 97 ON FREE INFORMATION CARD

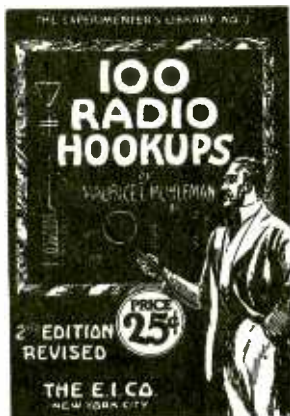
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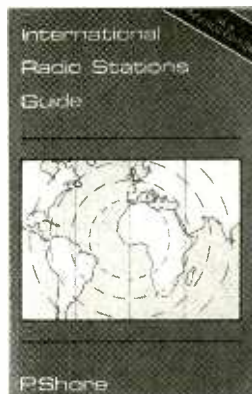
100 RADIO HOOKUPS
—#7—\$3.00

First published in May, 1923 this popular booklet went into reprint editions nine times. It is packed with circuits, theory, antenna installation and tips on consumer radio receivers that were popular in the early 1920's. Antique radio buffs and those inquisitive about the early days of radio will find this booklet an exciting, invaluable and excellent reference into the minds of early-day radio listeners. Sorry, we cannot honor the original 25-cent cover price.



INTERNATIONAL RADIO STATIONS GUIDE—BP255
—\$9.95

Provides the casual listener, amateur radio DXer and the professional radio monitor with an essential reference work designed as a guide for listening to the complex radio bands. Includes coverage on Listening to Shortwave Radio, ITU Country Codes, Worldwide Radio Stations, European Long Wave and Medium Wave Stations, Broadcasts in English and more.



HOW TO USE OP AMPS
—BP88—\$5.95

The engineer's best friend is the op amp. This basic building block is found in many circuits, analog and digital alike. The op amp finds many useful purposes such as: oscillators, inverters, isolators, high- and low-filters, notch and band-pass filters, noise generator, power supplies, audio, MIDI, and much more. Prepared as a designer's guide, some limited math is used, however engineers and hobbyists alike find it a useful text for their design needs.



WIRELESS & ELECTRICAL CYCLOPEDIA
—ETT1—\$5.75

A slice of history. This early electronics catalog was issued in 1918. It consists of 176 pages that document the early history of electricity, radio and electronics. It was the "bible" of the electrical experimenter of the period. Take a look at history and see how far we have come. And by the way, don't try to order any of the radio parts and receivers shown, it's very unlikely that it will be available.



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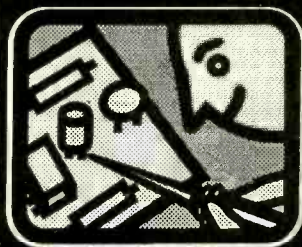
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Ever lost frozen food because your freezer stopped? The TC-2 kit would have saved you money. An alarm activates when the temperature reaches a critical point. Turn ceiling fans on automatically when it gets too hot. This kit gives you 100mA of output. SIZE: 2" x 1.4" Power requirement 6 to 15V DC.

If you want to switch more power see our Triac (TP-1) or Relay (RP-1) Power kit.

TC-2 **KIT \$7.95**



PHONE TRANSMITTER

Small but mighty, it fits anywhere. Phone line powered, never needs batteries. Transmits both sides of a phone conversation loud and clear, wireless, to any FM radio at great distances. Variable tunes from 70MHz to 130MHz FM. You can also use it as a speaker phone. SIZE: 1.25" x .6".

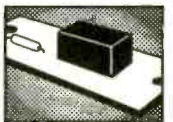
TEL-B1 **KIT \$12.95**



SUPER SNOOPER BIG EAR

Listen through walls, hear conversations across the room. Add a parabolic reflector and hear blocks away. The BIG EAR can be hidden about anywhere. Makes an ultra sensitive intercom. Can be used as a 1.5W AMP. We supply a mini-electret mike in the kit. Power requirement 6 to 12v DC. SIZE: 1.75" x 1"

AA-1 **BUILT \$29.95 KIT \$10.95**

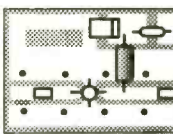


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Temperature Genie, Timer or Vox kits, use the Relay Kit. We supply a two pole relay 1.5 Amps ea., tie both poles together and get 3 Amps. Size .75" x 2"

RP-1 **KIT \$9.95**



WIDE BAND PRE-AMP

Uses PCB and surface mount technology for better performance. Use for scan-

ners, HT's, Frequency counters, Satellite Receivers. It amplifies low-level (weak) signals. If the signal is extremely low, two amplifiers can be used in a series.

- 1MHz to 2.5 GHz 2.8dB NF
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 - Gain: 1MHz- 20dB to 2.5GHz-6dB
 - Power requirement: 12v @ 6Ma
- WBA-6 **KIT \$19.95**



WIRELESS FM MICROPHONE

Small but mighty this little jewel will out perform most units many times its price. It really stomps out a signal. The WM-2 kit is a buffered wireless

mike that operates from 80MHz to 120MHz FM, the frequency of any broadcast FM radio. Includes a mini-electret mike. 6 to 12v DC. SIZE: 1.25" x 1"

WM2 **KIT \$14.95**

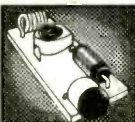


MICRO-MINIATURE PHONE TRANSMITTER

We haven't seen a smaller phone transmitter than the MMPT2 kit. Powered by the phone, it requires no battery. Transmits both sides of a

phone conversation to an FM radio up to a 1/4 mile away. Tunable from 88 to 108MHz FM. Attach it to one phone or add it to the line to pick up all incoming calls. The MMPT2 is undetectable if properly installed. Unit has surface mounted parts, you install the leaded parts. Size .45" x .6"

MMPT2 **KIT \$29.95**



MICRO-MINIATURE WIRELESS MIKE

So small you could hide this one on some real bugs! It's the smallest we've ever seen. With it's super sensitive mike it transmits a whisper or a room of conversation to an FM radio, tunable from 88 to 108MHz FM. With a proper antenna it transmits about 1/2 mile. The kit is made with surface mounted parts, we have already mounted these parts. You install the leaded parts. Power requirement 6 to 12v DC. Size .35" x .9"

MMWM5 **KIT \$34.95**



STROBE LIGHT

Do you need an attention getter, warning light, or flashing light for model airplanes? Then this kit is for you. Use it as an emergency light for your auto,

radio tower, even use it on your bicycle. Has a variable flash rate. Power requirement 6 or 12v DC. Size 3.5" x 1.9"

ST-1 **KIT \$11.95**

FM STEREO TRANSMITTER

Own your own FM radio station. Any stereo signal you plug into the FMST-100 will be transmitted to any FM radio tuneable from 76 to 108MHz FM. Transmit a wireless link through an auditorium, from your car to your camper, listen to your CD's while mowing the lawn, Play music on one channel sing on the other. Clarity is excellent, approx. 40dB stereo separation. Length of antenna determines the distance of transmission. Complete with stereo input level controls & crystal for stereo separation. 9v battery operation. SIZE: 1.5" x 2.5" x 3"

FMST-100 Cabinet **\$8.95 KIT \$29.95**

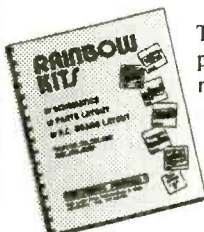
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Our TV filters eliminate unwanted TV channels or interference that alters both sound and video with a beep beep beep. Works on cable channels (2 thru 22) only.

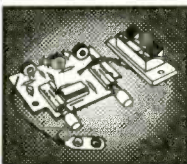
NOTE: All TV Filter Kits are sold for educational purposes only. You must obtain permission from your local cable company before using these filters on your cable system.

DF-222 **KIT \$14.95**



This Manual contains schematics, parts lists & P.C. board layouts for many of the Rainbow Kits. Use your own parts to construct our kits.

KIT BOOK \$14.95
\$9.95 with the purchase of any kit.



INDUCTANCE METER

This is the kit everyone has been asking for. Turn your digital volt ohm meter into an inductance meter. It will read inductors 3uH to 7MH. Power requirement 9v DC. SIZE: 1.75" x 2.5"

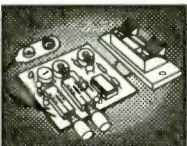
IA-1 **KIT \$14.95**
IA-1 CABINET **\$8.95**



DIGITAL THERMOMETER

The DT-3 kit will turn your digital volt ohm meter into an accurate digital thermometer with .1 degree resolution. Measure temperatures from -40° to 250F°. The remote sensor is .25" sq. and can be mounted many feet from the meter. Power requirement 9V DC. SIZE: 2" x 1.35"

DT-3 **KIT \$8.95**



CAPACITANCE METER

This kit will turn your digital volt meter into a capacitance meter. Turn that junk box of unmarked capacitors into a fortune of usable parts. Measure capacitors from <2.2pF to 2.2uF. Power requirement 9v DC. SIZE: 1.80" x 2"

CA-1 **KIT \$12.95**



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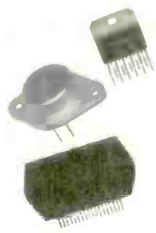


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2SD-1650	SANYO	5	1.69
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STR-30130	SANKEN	1	2.66
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NEW! Digital

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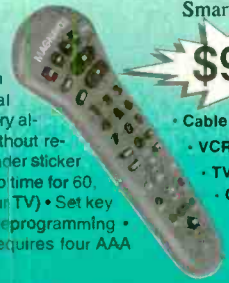
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Universal Audio/video Remote
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- Controls basic functions of TV, VCR, cable box, and CD or laser player • Ergonomic design! Main buttons are in line with natural thumb motion • Two-minute memory allows time to replace batteries without re-programming • Programming reminder sticker inside battery compartment • Sleep time for 60, 30, or 15 minutes (according to your TV) • Set key recessed to prevent accidental deprogramming • Spanish instruction included • Requires four AAA Batteries (not included)



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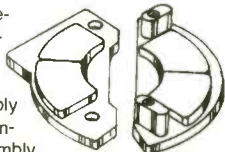
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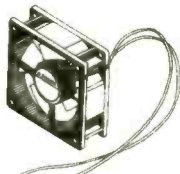
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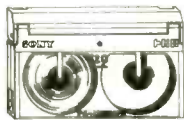


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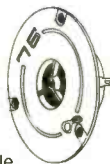
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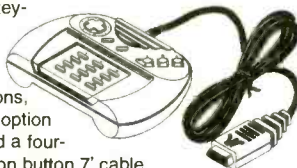
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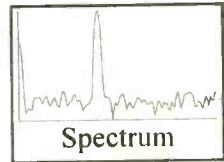
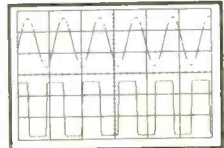
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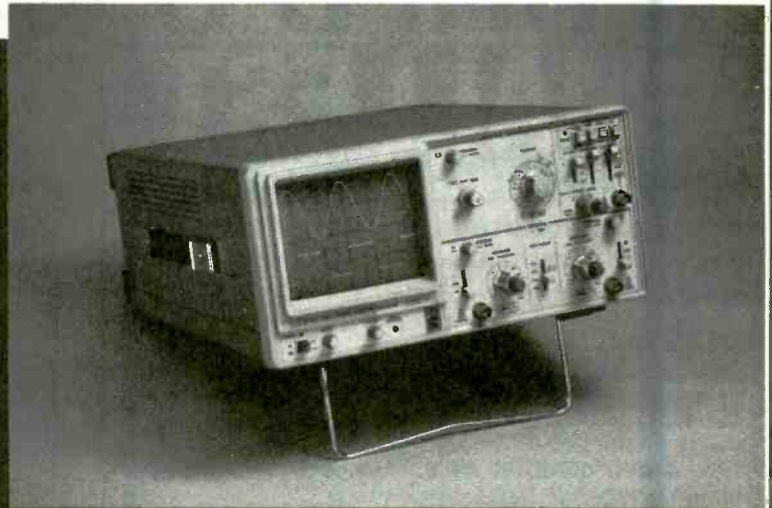
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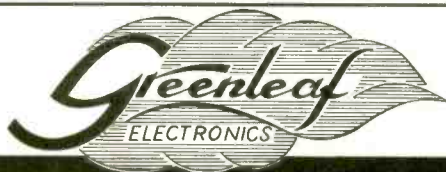
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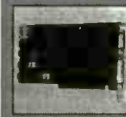
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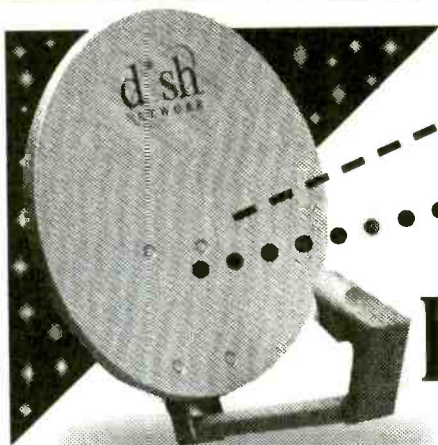
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Describes in detail how computers penetrate each other, and how VIRUSES, TROJAN HORSES, WORMS, etc. are implemented. Dozens of computer crime and abuse methods and countermeasures. Includes disk filled with hacker text files and utilities, and the legendary FLUSHOT+ protection system (Ed. Choice, PC Magazine). BBS advice, password defeats, glossary - much more! Manual + PC Disks.

PHREAKING CALLER ID & ANI \$29

Details on how they work and dozens of ways of defeating Caller ID, ANI, *69, *57, and Call Blocking & *67. Describes Caller ID, Orange, Beige, Cheese and CF Boxes, ESS, S57, E-911, various CLASS services, CN/A, NON PUB DA, CAMA, DNR, 800-ECR, Diverters, Extenders, Centrex - more.

HACKING ANSWERING MACHINES \$29

How answering machines are hacked to listen to - even erase - messages, and to convert them into mini-VMBs, and countermeasures!

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Describes every known means of credit card fraud and scams. Protect yourself! \$29.

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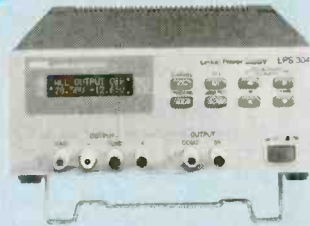
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Model	LPS-101	LPS-102	LPS-103	LPS-104	LPS-105	LPS-106	LPS-301	LPS-302	LPS-303	LPS-304	LPS-305
Rating	30V/1A	30V/2A	30V/3A	+30V/1A -30V/1A 3-6.5V/3A	+30V/3A -30V/3A 3-6.5V/3A	60V/1A	15V/2A(H) 30V/1A(L)	15V/4A(H) 30V/2A(L)	30V/3A	+30V/1A -30V/1A 5V/2A	+30V/2.5A -30V/2.5A 3.3-5V/3A
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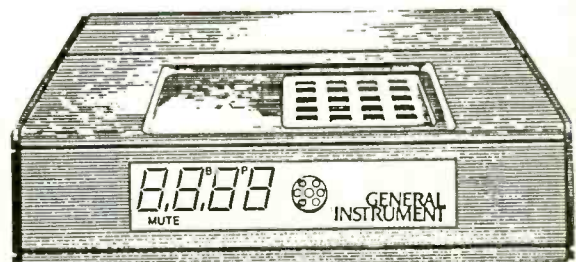
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Rubber Boot Included

General

Display: 3-1/2 Digit LCD. 21mm Figure Height with Automatic Polarity

Overrange Indication: 3 Least Significant Digits Blank

Temperature for Guaranteed Accuracy: 23°C±5°C RH<75%

Temperature Ranges:

Operating: 0°C to 40°C (32°F to 104°F)
Storage: -10°C to 50°C (14°F to 122°F)

Power: 9V Alkaline or Carbon-Zinc Battery (NEDA1604)

Low Battery Indication: BAT on Left of LCD Display

Dimensions: 188mm long x 87mm wide x 33mm thick

Net Weight: 400g

DC Voltage (DCV)

Range: Resolution: Accuracy:

200mV 100µV
2000mV 1mV ±(1%rdg+2dgt)
20V 10mV
200V 100mV
1000V 1V

Maximum Allowable Input: 1000V DC or Peak AC.

DC Current (DCA)

Range: Resolution: Accuracy:

200µA 100nA
2000µA 1µA ±(1.2%rdg+2dgt)
20mA 10µA
200mA 100µA
10A 10mA ±(1.2%rdg+2dgt)

Overload Protection: mA Input, 2A/250V fuse.

AC Voltage (ACV)

Range: Resolution: Accuracy:

200V 100mV ±(1.2%rdg+10dgt)
750V 1V

Frequency Range: 45Hz-450Hz

Maximum Allowable Input: 750V rms

Response: Average Responding. Calibrated in rms of a Sine Wave.



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Resistance (Ω)

Range: Resolution: Accuracy:

200Ω 100mΩ
2000Ω 1Ω ±(1.2%rdg+2dgt)
20KΩ 10Ω
200KΩ 100Ω
2000KΩ 1KΩ
20MΩ 10KΩ ±(2%rdg+10dgt)

Maximum Open Circuit Voltage: 2.8V

Diode Test

Measures forward voltage drop of a semiconductor junction in mV test current of 1.5mA Max.

hFE Test

Measures transistor hFE.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
9300G	Rugged High Quality DMM with Rubber Boot	\$19.00

Switchable Scope Probe Sets

(Selectable X1/Rel/X10) These high quality scope probe sets are for oscilloscopes up to 60MHz (model HP 9060) or 150MHz (model HP9150). Both sets include a handy storage pouch and include an IC test-hook adapter for

the probe. The BNC connector rotates to avoid cable tangle or kink. Cable length is 1.4 meters.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	100
HP-9060	Scope Probe Set DC~60MHz	\$16.49	\$14.49	\$11.58
HP-9150	Scope Probe Set DC~150MHz	24.95	21.95	18.62



Positive Photo Resist Pre-Sensitized Printed Circuit Boards

These pre-sensitized printed circuit boards are ideal for small production runs. They provide high resolution and excellent line width control. High sensitive positive resist coated on 1oz. copper foil allows you to go direct from your computer plot or art work layout. No need to reverse art.

Single-Sided, 1oz. Copper Foil on Paper Phenolic Substrate

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	50
PP101	100mm x 150mm/3.91" x 5.91"	\$2.55	\$1.90	\$1.70
PP114	114mm x 185mm/4.6" x 6.6"	2.98	2.45	1.98
PP152	150mm x 250mm/5.91" x 9.84"	5.40	3.98	3.60
PP153	150mm x 300mm/5.91" x 11.81"	6.15	4.48	4.10

Single-Sided, 1oz. Copper Foil on Fiberglass Substrate

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	50
GS101	100mm x 150mm/3.91" x 5.91"	\$ 3.90	\$2.98	\$2.60
GS114	114mm x 185mm/4.6" x 6.6"	4.80	3.49	3.20
GS152	150mm x 250mm/5.91" x 9.84"	8.69	5.98	5.78
GS153	150mm x 300mm/5.91" x 11.81"	10.20	7.20	6.80

Double-Sided, 1oz. Copper Foil on Fiberglass Substrate

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	50
GD101	100mm x 150mm/3.91" x 5.91"	\$ 5.07	\$3.68	\$3.38
GD114	114mm x 185mm/4.6" x 6.6"	5.95	4.29	3.99
GD152	150mm x 250mm/5.91" x 9.84"	10.47	7.39	6.98
GD153	150mm x 300mm/5.91" x 11.81"	11.95	8.69	8.30

Etching Chemicals/Ferric Chloride

A dry concentrate that mixes with water to make 1 pint of etchant, enough to etch 400 sq. inches of 1oz board.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	
		1	5
ER-3	Makes 1 pint	\$3.50	\$2.75



Developer This product is used as the developer on our positive photo-resist printed circuit boards. Includes instructions. 50 gram package, mixes with water.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	25
POSDEV	Positive Developer	\$.95	\$.80	\$.50



Etching Tank This handy etching system will handle PC boards up to 8" x 9", two at a time. Ideal for etching your PCB's! System includes an air pump for etchant agitation, a thermostatically controlled heater for keeping etchant at optimum temperature and a tank that holds 1.35 gallons of etchant. A tight fitting lid is also supplied to prevent evaporation when system is not being used. Typical etching time is reduced to 4 minutes on 1oz. copper board!

REDUCES ETCHING TIME!

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
12-700	Etch Tank System	\$37.95

Desoldering Pumps

These powerful plastic body desoldering pumps are designed for easy one hand operation for fast, efficient desoldering. Double O-ring piston seals for maximum suction.



CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	5	10
08-366S	Large Desoldering Pump	\$15.89	\$13.49	\$11.95
08-366E	Regular Desoldering Pump	10.89	8.59	7.39
08-366TIP	Replacement Tip	1.95	1.95	1.95

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Electronic Soldering System Here's the ideal solution when **Temperature Control** is required. Easy to use slide control allows user to set system from 300°F to 840°F. Voltage to iron from control unit is 24V Iron heating power is 48W. Replaceable 5.3mm tip is standard. Replacement irons and tips are available.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	
		1	5
SL10	Temp Controlled Soldering Iron	\$56.00	\$50.00
SL24V	Spare 24V Soldering Iron	10.50	7.50



Electronic Soldering System with LED Display

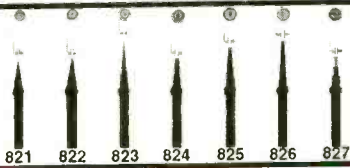
Deluxe temperature controlled system with LED display for maximum accuracy. Temperature is adjustable from 160°-480°C (320°-900°F). Iron heating power is 48 Watts. Runs on 24V from controller unit. Replacement irons and tips are available. Tip size is 5.3mm.

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	
		1	5
SL30	Deluxe Soldering System w/LED	\$86.00	\$75.00
SL24V	Spare 24V Soldering Iron for SL10 or SL30	10.50	7.50



Replacement Tips for SL10/SL30

We now offer a variety of replacement tips for the SL10/SL30 soldering stations.



CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	
		1	5			1	5
821	1/32" Pencil Tip	\$1.39	\$1.19	825	1/8" Chisel Tip	\$1.49	\$1.29
822	1/32" Pencil Tip	1.39	1.19	826	3/64" Chisel Tip	1.49	1.29
823	1/64" Pencil Tip	1.39	1.19	827	3/64" Pencil Tip	1.59	1.39
824	1/16" Chisel Tip	1.49	1.29				

Ball Bearing 12V DC Fans



These High Quality Fans feature Ball Bearings and Brushless DC Motors. All of them are designed to meet UL, CSA & VDE Standards. Design these fans into power supplies, computers or other equipment requiring additional air flows for heat removal. These fans are regular Circuit Specialists stock items — they are not surplus.

CAT NO	PRICE EACH			
	1	10	25	100
CSD 4010-12	\$ 9.88	\$ 6.38	\$5.48	\$4.87
CSD 6025-12	9.38	5.91	5.41	4.71
CSD 8025-12	8.88	5.85	5.19	4.49
CSD 9225-12	8.95	6.14	5.29	4.59
CSD 1225-12	11.45	8.96	7.82	6.85

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Specifications

CAT NO	DIMENSIONS (MM)	RATED VOLTAGE (V)	START VOLTAGE (V)	INPUT CURRENT (A)	AIR FLOW (CFM)	STATIC PRESSURE (INCH-H ₂ O)	SPEED (RPM)	NOISE LEVEL (dB)	WEIGHT (g)
CSD 4010-12	40x40x10mm	12	7	0.06	5.1	0.19	5,500	26	20
CSD 6025-12	60x60x25mm	12	5	0.13	13.7	0.165	4,500	28	65
CSD 8025-12	80x80x25mm	12	5	0.16	37.8	0.177	3,000	31	80
CSD 9225-12	92x92x25mm	12	5	0.32	42	0.18	2,800	37	95
CSD 1225-12	120x120x25mm	12	5	0.35	62	0.180	2,500	42	135

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We stock high quality 60/40(Sn%/Pb%), .031" and 63/37, .031" diameter. This is prime JIS certified solder that we maintain as a regular stock item (It is not "Left-overs, Rejects or Surplus") and you can buy it from us at a fraction of the price that you are used to.



Tired of Paying Inflated Prices for Solder?

CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH		
		1	10	25
RH60-1	1-lb. Spool, .031", 60/40	\$ 6.90	\$ 5.96	\$ 5.30
RH63-1	1-lb. Spool, .031", 63/37	6.95	6.10	5.41
RH60-4	4.4-lb. Spool, .031", 60/40	24.00	21.90	17.92
RH60-TUBE	6-oz. Tube, .031", 60/40	.99	.89	.79

CCD Camera - IR Responsive As Low As \$109!!

This black and white monochrome CCD Camera is totally contained on a PCB (70mm x 46mm). The lens is the tallest component on the board (27mm high from the back of the PCB) and it works with light as low as 0.1 lux. It is IR Responsive for use in total darkness. It comes with six IR LED's on board. It connects to any standard monitor, AUX or video input on a VCR or through a video modulator to a TV. Works with a REGULATED 12V power supply (11V-13V). Hooks up by connecting three wires: red to 12V, black to ground (power & video) and brown to video signal output.



CAT NO	DESCRIPTION	1	5
CA-H34A	PCB Mounted IRCCD Camera	\$125.00	\$109.00

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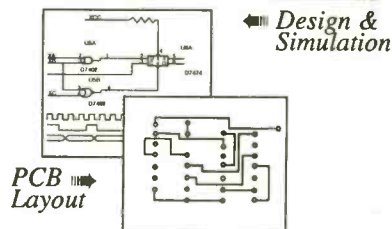


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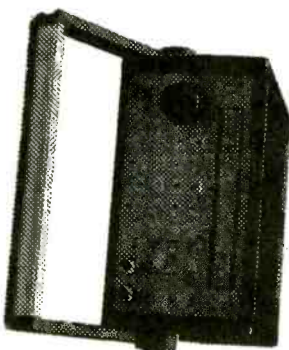
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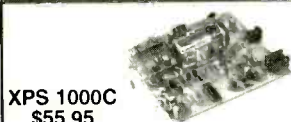
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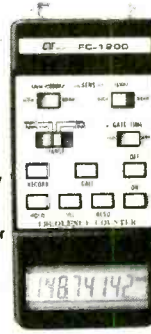
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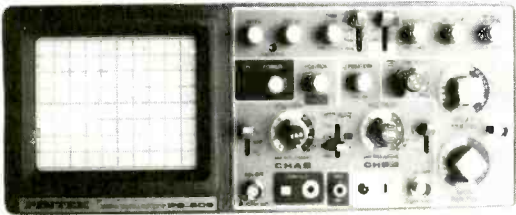


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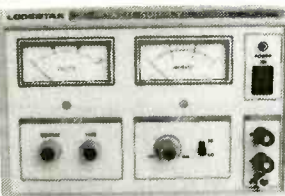


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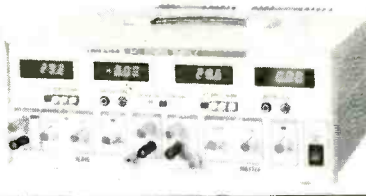
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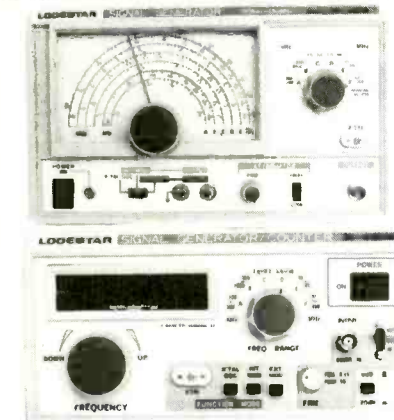
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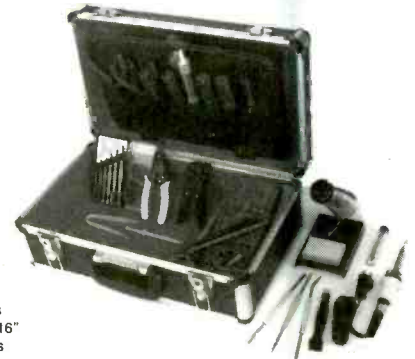
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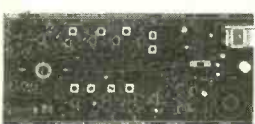
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OSCILLOSCOPE SELECTION CHART

ANALOG		Sensitivity (max)	No. of Channels	Sweep Rate Max ns/div	Delayed Sweep	Video Sync	Component Tester	Beam Find	Time Base
Model	Bandwidth MHz								
S-1360	60	1mV/div	2	10ns/div	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
S-1345	40	1mV/div	2	10ns/div	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
S-1340	40	1mV/div	2	10ns/div	No	Yes	No	No	1
S-1330	25	1mV/div	2	10ns/div	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
S-1325	25	1mV/div	2	10ns/div	No	Yes	No	No	1

DIGITAL STORAGE		Analog Sen (max)	No. of Channels	Sampling Rate	Memory Channel	Internally Backed Up	Prettrigger %	Output
Model	Bandwidth MHz							
DS-303	30	1mV/div	2	20MS/S	2K	Yes	0, 25, 50, 75	RS232
DS-603	60	1mV/div	2	20MS/S	2K	Yes	0, 25, 50, 75	RS232

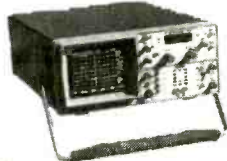
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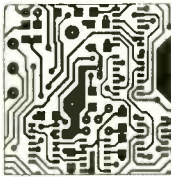
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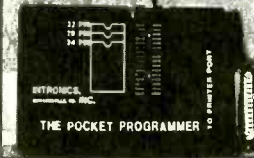
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MULTIMEDIA SUBWOOFER

(Continued from page 40)

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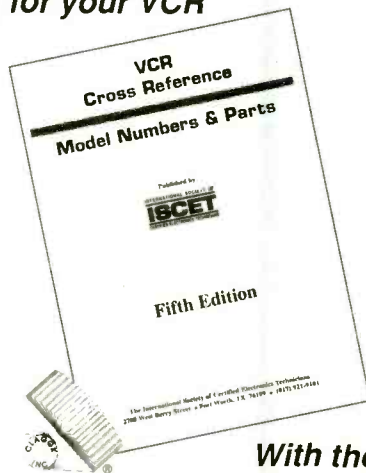
First, connect the multimedia speaker with the built-in amplifier and volume control to your computer. Attach the cable (just described) to the output of that first speaker and to the input of the Subwoofer (J1). Then plug the other multimedia speaker into the throughput jack of the Subwoofer (J2).

When the input connections are made, turn the volume knob of the Subwoofer down all the way and plug the unit into an AC outlet. Play some music or other audio through the multimedia speakers, and slowly turn up the Subwoofer volume. If everything is assembled correctly, the Subwoofer should produce deep bass. You'll especially notice it on games with crashes, explosions, and rumbling noises.

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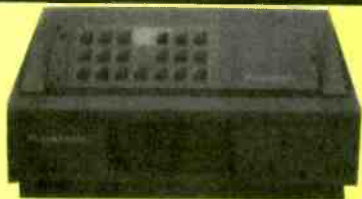
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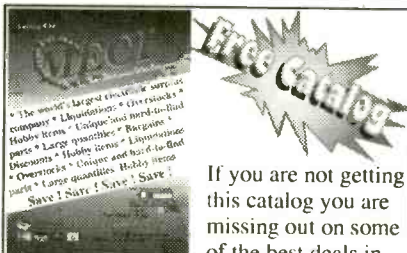
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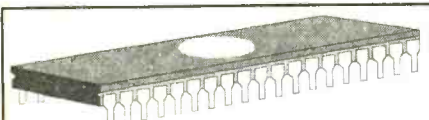
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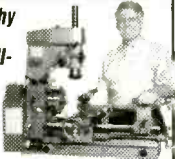
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Free Information Number	Page	Free Information Number	Page		
—	Aegis Research, Canada	85	—	Mega Electronics	106
—	AES	99	149	Mendelson's	102
26	Alfa Electronics	95	—	Mental Automation	92
28	All Electronics	82	171	MicroCode Engineering	3
137	Allison Technology	85	157	MicroCode Engineering	CV3
—	Allstar Electronics	102	—	Millennium Enterprises	108
—	AMC Sales	103	—	Modern Electronics	106
—	American Innovations	84	164	Mouser Electronics	22
—	Andromeda Research	99	—	NRI Schools	69
—	Basic Electrical Supply	92	—	Ohio Automation	98
32	C&S Sales, Inc.	96	43	Optoelectronics	CV4
—	Cable Discount	98	—	Orion Electronics	108
—	Circuit Specialists	90	—	OWI	107
—	CLAGGK Inc.	100	147	Parts Express	106
—	Cleveland Institute of Electronics	53	47	Prairie Digital Inc.	86
—	Command Productions	84	46	Print	89
—	Comtrad Industries	5, 9, 13	45	Print	86
—	Consumertronics	88	—	Professional Book Group	63
170	Cook's Institute	22	—	Quality Entertainment	88
150	Dalbani	79	—	Silicon Valley Surplus	106
148	Electronic Rainbow	78	—	Skyvision Inc.	87
—	Electronic Technology Today	77, 94	—	Smithy Company	107
158	Fluke	21	—	Synergex Scientific	89
—	Foley-Belsaw	101	—	Tab Books	35
—	Forest Electronics	84	—	T.C. Tronics	89
—	Fotronic Corporation	81	—	Tecma Maquila Services	7
—	General Device Instruments	100	—	Tech Serv	99
—	Grantham College of Engineering	4	146	Telulex	92
—	Greenleaf Electronics Inc.	86	136	UCANDO Videos	88
—	Home Automation Systems	107	—	US Cyberlab	103
—	I.E.C.	102	—	Virtual Reality Publishing	109
—	Information Unlimited	80	—	Visual Communications	103
—	Intelligence I	102	—	Weeder Technologies	98
13	Interactive Image Technologies	CV2	—	Weka Publishing	104
—	Intronics, Inc.	100	172	Windjammer Barefoot Cruises	63
—	Kableworks	103	—	World College (Div. of C.I.E.)	11
—	KDE Electronics	85	—	WPT Publications	106
—	Learn Inc.	19	134	Xandi Electronics	93
151	MCM	83			

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- DC Analysis [5]:** A graph showing Voltage (V) vs. X=Voltage (V) with a linear ramp and several horizontal lines.
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