

\$2

the VIDEOPHILE

JAN/FEB



There's a light in the darkness of everybody's life...

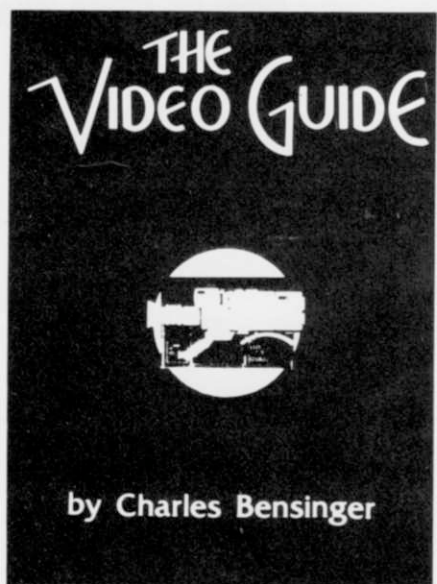
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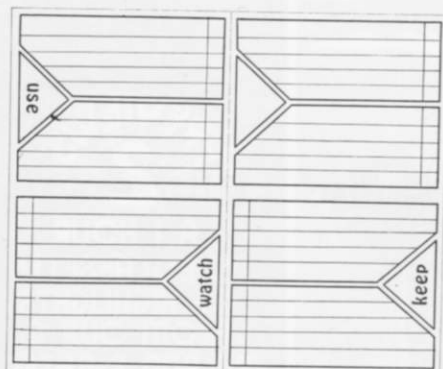
THE VIDEOPHILE'S ANNUAL: 1978 This is the snappy portfolio which contains most of the material originally published in #s 1-6, reprinted in 6 individual facsimile copies of those now long out-of-print issues. Total page count of the annual exceeds the 70-80 foreseen when we first announced this item. This is a limited edition of 500 portfolios, being offered at the bargain price of only \$6. Lots of fascinating stuff in these early issues. Close to 300 of these are already gone. Suffice it to say that it covers everything from how to edit out commercials (#4) to the somber excerpt from the editor's first deposition with Universal and Sony attorneys (#6), lots of video chit chat, tips for beginners (as we all were back then) and much more.

The highly desirable item at the right is no longer available. Neither are the tee-shirts. We do expect to have new tee-shirts in the near future.



In a more practical vein, we present The Videophile's video cassette index cards. If you're like me, you never seem to have a 3x5 card or appropriate slip of paper at hand to write down titles on, and slip into the box. The collector's cassette cards (shown here in both front and back views, reduced) measure 6" x 3 and 3/4", and are custom designed to fit into Beta format cassette boxes. They are deliberately designed without column headings, so that you can adapt them to your own purposes, whether for temporarily or permanently indicating the contents of each cassette. When inserted in the box, the words "Watch", "Keep", "Use" or another of your choice will be visible through the notch in the box. Best of all, these stiff cards come to you in pads of 50. Just peel one off when you need it, ... the rest of the pad remains obediently available right next to your machine. The price? A true giveaway at a buck a pad, with a 2 pad minimum order. Want some testimonials? Read:

"Thanks for the pads. Fantastic design job!" -- J.G., of Miss.
 "Got my tape index cards a couple weeks ago. Every tape has a card in it now. They're just great." -- M.R., of Nebraska



**Back
Issues
\$2 each**



- Issue 12:** First slick cover issue. Includes reports on "QUBE" two-way cable system, Video in Australia, Rambling Marc at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, How to make the most of two recorders, Dealer's Doings, a bunch of letters, ... and the usual typos, etc.
- Issue 13:** How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8200 (or Zenith), Bob Burn's first column for "VHS" folks, Rambling Marc battles Universal attorneys, and reports on pay cable systems, lotsa questions and answers, great America 2Night cover. Biggest ish to date.
- Issue 14:** First color cover. Report on new products at Summer Consumer Electronics Show, L-500/ Sony SL-8200 counter/index time chart, lots of info re: VHS format including Q & A's, report on the Sony SL-8600, TVN goes to two conventions, The Ultimate Video Room, much more!!
- Issue 15:** How to clean the heads on a Betamax, QUBE update, How to dub from/to a VHS recorder, first installment of Ted Reinhart's reviews, "Skew Error" explained, we dream of the Betamax of the future, VHS and Beta formats brashly compared, 3 pages of letters, Q's & A's, etc.
- Issue 16:** First issue of THE VIDEOPHILE, features our annual roundup of over 80 sources for prerecorded video cassettes, an exclusive interview with video pioneer "Madman" Muntz, reports on our visits to two Video Shows, news, letters, much, much more in its 88 pages. Issues 12 through 15 also contain Joe Mazzini's notes for 3/4" folks. Also Advertisements galore!

the VIDEOPHILE

"The world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them."

—T. H. Huxley (1825-1895)

Editor/Publisher

Jim Lowe

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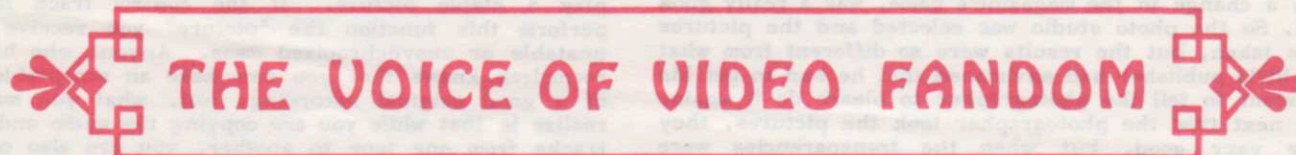
Christopher T. Pearson

Printed at:

The Printing House

Tallahassee, Florida

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The Videophile is published every two months at 2003 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. Application to mail at Controlled Circulation postal rates is pending at Tallahassee, Florida. A six issue subscription is \$10 in the United States, its possessions, Canada and Mexico (U.S. Funds). First Class mail subscriptions are \$16, also for six issues. This is Vol. 2, No. 2 (#17), the Jan/Feb 1979 issue. Entire contents is copyright 1979 ©1979, by James R. Lowe. World rights are reserved. Letters of comment are assumed to be intended for publication unless a contrary intention is clearly stated. Yes, I know the foregoing is not as snappy as it has been in previous issues. I would have preferred to say that The Videophile springs from the private sea, is a product of the Small Potatoes Publishing Company, etc. etc., but, see, the lady at the post office told us that those who are in charge of approving the application for a controlled circulation mailing permit (similar to a Second Class Permit) may not share our sense of humor. So, until we hear otherwise we'll have to be pretty straight forward with that portion of this nonsense which is required by the authorities. Anyhow, all uncredited items in this issue having that laid back, Southern boy way about them were penned by the editor. Personal correspondence which demands his personal attention should continue to be addressed to 2014 S. Magnolia Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32301.

TV Wiggles



As our cover indicates, there is, indeed, a light in the darkness of everybody's life. Well, almost everybody. (See, we came across this weird group at the local record shop and said to ourselves: "Hey, those are cover folks if ever we saw 'em.")



The television set, the tube, the box, or what have you, is probably the most pervasive distributor of popular culture that the world has ever known. As great as its influence is (and as alarming as this is to some folks), it is clear that we have only just begun. The VCR is here, the disc is here, two-way cable is here, direct satellite reception is coming ... worldwide participatory communication amongst those with the necessary equipment may well be possible by 1984 ... (wait a minute) ...

THE LITTLE PUBLISHER



Once upon a time there was an innocent little publisher who lived deep in an oak and pine forest. One day he decided to publish an issue of his magazine that would have more pages than ever before, and feature a full color cover taken by a professional photography studio. His associates agreed that such a plan, together with a change in the magazine's name, was a really good idea. So the photo studio was selected and the pictures were taken, but the results were so different from what the little publisher had envisioned that he had to get his assistant to tell the photographer to please do it again. The next time the photographer took the pictures, they were very good, but when the transparencies were processed, they all came out looking just as orange as sunshine on the citrus. Only hours remained before the little publisher had to have his copy to the printer, so a third photo session was hurriedly arranged. The pictures were not as good as before, but a couple of them were OK, even if they did turn out much too blue and had a splotch of mysterious origin here or there. So the little publisher gathered up all his contributions, together with the last minute special-delivery, express mail and air courier ad pages, and managed to whip together 88 pages of copy during a three-day (and night) marathon session with his assistants.

The printer was taken aback by the increased size of the job, and informed the little publisher that it would take more than the 10 or 12 days that he had been accustomed to. Well, the 10 or 12 days passed, and so did 10 or 12 more. The printer had some new helpers and one of them got the negatives in the wrong order, so the little publisher's magazine lost its place in line. Then a very unusual thing happened. Just as the presses were finally ready to roll, the printer ran out of paper. His supplier didn't show up when he was supposed to and the paper mills were on strike.

Time passed, and the little publisher began to fret. What must his readers think? His advertisers were beginning to squirm. His \$100 charter subscribers were looking for their attorneys' phone numbers. Finally, the printer said it would be ready on Tuesday, ... which became Wednesday ... whoops the cover had to be pulled and new plates made or it would come out upside down, so it would be late Thursday at best. The little publisher took his phone off the hook, went back to bed and pulled the covers up over his head.

On Saturday morning, December 2, 1978, one month and three days after delivering his copy to the printer, the first 3100 copies of his magazine were delivered. Now he could relax, or rather he could as soon as he spent three days stuffing and sealing 3000 envelopes and lugging 1300 pounds of them to the post office. With his magazine safely in the hands of the United States Postal Service, he knew his troubles were finally over.

Anyhow, here we are again with another grabbag of home video goodies. The long delay in the production of our previous issue has resulted in a couple of our features being abbreviated this time around, primarily the Tape Reviews and mini-ads sections. We anticipate expanding the number of reviews substantially unless you tell us no.

I anticipated including my remarks about the RCA VCT 400 this time, but since this is being treated by a couple of other guys, here's something that you wouldn't find of interest.

"Copyguard," "MV-Gard," "Stop Copy" ... these and others are "anti-piracy" systems now being used by prerecorded video tape producers to prevent their tapes from being successfully duplicated by video home hobbyists. I figured you would like to know what makes these systems work and also what you get if you do try to duplicate such a tape. At the risk of oversimplification ... each recorded tape has three tracks: the audio, the video, and a "control track." The control track insures that the many thousands of bits of information in the video signal being sent to your television screen are properly arranged in such a way as to display a stable picture. If the control track fails to perform this function the "picture" you receive is an unstable or unsynchronized mess. Anyone who has two recorders knows that you can make an acceptable copy of a good original recording, but, what you may not realize is that while you are copying the audio and video tracks from one tape to another, you are also copying the control track. As I understand it, the various stop-copy systems are capable of encoding a signal onto the video tape, when it is initially being duplicated, that will cause any further duplicated copy to have an unstable control track, i.e., a control track that can no longer "control" the flow of video information from the tape to the television set.

As an experiment, I attempted to make copies of two tapes protected by a stop-copy system, one of which was a tape sent in for review by a dealer who told me "Before you send it back, go ahead and run off a copy

for yourself if you want to." The tapes were played on an RCA VHS recorder and duplication was attempted on a 2-speed Zenith Betamax. When playback of the copy was attempted there was absolutely no picture at all. The screen looked about the same as if you were watching a station that had gone off the air. Viewing the same tape on another Zenith recorder which had been modified to defeat the muting circuit (see Steve Comet's VCR News and Views in TVN #13 and in this issue) allowed me to see what was really there. The picture and sound would appear for a couple of seconds and then the screen would go the station-that-is-off-the-air look for a second or so, then the picture would return for a couple of seconds, and this rhythmic pattern persisted for the duration of the recording, rendering it completely unwatchable for all but the incurably depraved videoholic.

This eyeball experiment proves a couple of points:
1. The stop-copy systems work, and work well. The average videophile using consumer-type equipment may as well forget about ripping off a free copy of a prerecorded tape that utilizes the process. Oh, sure, if you have enough sophisticated video signal processing equipment, and the know-how to use it, you can overcome the stop-copy system. It brings to mind a remark attributed to a former President of the United States: "That wouldn't be any problem ... but it would be wrong."

2. Defeat of the muting circuit, once again, allows the viewer to see what is on the tape when he would otherwise not have been able to. Steve Comet has been doing yeoman's service in the Betamax anti-muting corps. Who among you can step forward and instruct us with respect to same for the VHS format machines?

How can the encoded signal ruin the copy and yet not disturb the playback performance of the original tape? It beats me. Apparently there are some television sets (with pre-set or automatic synch) that have experienced vertical rolling problems when attempting to play back such tapes. Magnetic Video Corporation has reportedly asked the Electronic Industry Association's TV Receiver Engineering Committee to come up with a solution. If your set ever manifests this symptom, a service technician can usually cure it with an adjustment.

As always, thanks are due to a great many of you. Foremost among them this issue are Mary Shaeffer, Patti Leary, Al Goldberger, Doug Orlowski, Ira Gallen, and, of course, Joyce and Sharon for dedication beyond the call of duty. Thanks also to Sandy Winoker and Jim Gibbon and a special we-really-appreciate-it to Mike at Rochester Video Awareness.

It's time I pointed out that "next time," in these parts, usually means "one of these days." Having said that, we expect to have the following for you next time: A report on the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, the delayed-again feedback on my "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" article in #14, the also bumped-again "VTR Isolator" from Rick Redoutey, a selection of photographs from around the world of special interest to TVN buffs, and the hinted-at-last-issue feature relating to a whole new area of video cassette home entertainment that we expect to be an "exclusive" for THE VIDEOPHILE.

AS ALWAYS
Jim

NOTICE!

Effective July 15, 1978, the subscription rate to TVN increased from \$8 to \$10 for 6 issues, as announced last time and in our new ads and subscription flyers. Those who have subscribed since that date, at the old rate, have been credited with a 5 issue subscription.

Because of our #16 delay/deadline crush, we have only a preliminary response to our survey of last issue. The ballot reproduced here shows how the voting looks so far. We will report the final results next issue and take appropriate action in response thereto. Those who still want to have their views tallied should get them to us by February 12.

Survey ~

Our dramatic growth & continuing desire to improve content, coupled with fact that some 500 or more of you have subscriptions that expire with this issue, make this a perfect time to conduct a survey similar to that in TVN #11. We get quite a bit of positive feedback and an occasional brickbat with regard to our efforts, but only through your taking a few moments to offer us specific guidance can we hope to bring you the most of what you really want. This is your chance to tell us that some of our columns are worthless (keeping in mind that our contributors are all unpaid) or to heap praise upon them. Simply put an "X" in the column that most nearly represents your attitude.

It will also be a big help to us if you will be good enough to answer a couple of "marketing research" questions.

My VCR is a: Beta ☐ Quasar GTM ☐
VHS ☐ Sanyo V-Cord ☐ U-Matic ☐
The type of prerecorded tapes I would like to see made available is:
Current movies ☐ Old Movies ☐ Old
TV shows ☐ Instruct/Ed. ☐ Sci-Fi/
Horror ☐ "XXX" ☐ Musicals ☐
Westerns ☐ Kids' shows ☐
Other:

As in the past, we assure you that our mailing list will not be sold or be otherwise made available to anyone. However, we will be conducting mailings from our office on occasion. If you would rather not be included among those who receive these mailings of dealers' catalogs & the like, put an "X" right here: ☐

Your general comments and suggestions are welcomed:

Criticism



REGULAR FEATURES

	More	Less	As Is	DUMPER
TV Wiggles	18	0	22	0
Video News	27	0	9	0
Rambling Outtakes	17	2	20	0
Marc Wielage	9	6	19	2
U-Matic & Beta Notes	14	1	24	0
Joe Mazzini	18	2	19	0
The Video Composite	14	2	21	1
Bob Burns	4	10	14	10
VCR News & Views	6	9	22	0
Steve Comet	10	2	18	7
The VHS Network	21	4	11	3
The Big Nate	9	1	10	13
Video Voice of Canada				
Ralph Gordon				
Michigan Update				
Art Vuolo				
Cartoons				
Alan Hutchinson				
Tape Reviews				
Ted Reinhart, et al				
Search for Tomorrow				

GENERAL TOPICS

Equipment Maintenance & Modification	31	0	9	0
Television	11	11	13	4
Nostalgia	15	5	17	0
Broadcasting	9	14	13	3
Industry News	14	1	13	4
Interviews	12	1	24	0
Pulchritude	10	2	12	4
Photographs	18	1	18	2
Swine Herding	14	2	20	1
The Copyright Law	20	7	9	4
"Cash-In Products"				
Reviews of "XXX"				
Material				



betamax

The counter/index time charts have continued to pile up, so rather than withhold them from you any longer, we herewith present the best of what we have on hand. Those on this page are for Betamax tape lengths and speeds that have not previously been printed in TVN. They were prepared by Marc Wielage from information furnished, in part, by Alan Hutchinson and time chart pioneer Jim Gibbon. These charts are based on "time used", and are shown starting in increments of 5 minutes, reducing down to as little as 15 seconds as you approach the end of the tape. Many thanks go to Marc, Alan and Jim.

The VHS time charts on the following 3 pages were prepared by Don Treglown of Casper, Wyoming. We have other new ones from Pacifica Labs and our own Big Nate, but these from Don are in a form most presentable for print. The continuing problem in coming up with the perfect VHS chart remains the fact that tapes are not of uniform length, and the counters on the machines themselves may show some variation. Don has checked the admittedly erroneous chart we had in #15 with his Cronus electronic stopwatch, applied his engineer mind to the situation, and come up with these charts which he says are "temporary" until he can write a computer program. Tape thickness, hub radius, speed at which the tape moves, and perhaps more subtle variables have an effect on the counter readings, and this is more pronounced in the slower 4-hour speed. Since tape lengths are subject to such wide variation, it is unlikely that we will ever be able to give you an all purpose VHS chart having the degree of accuracy from tape to tape and machine to machine that we would prefer. All I can suggest is that you put these to the test and adjust them to your own particular findings. The VHS charts are based on the counter numbers and are shown in increments of 10 numbers.

L-500 - X-1

Index Counter	Time Used	Time Remaining
000	0:00	62:45
108	5:00	57:45
202	10:00	52:45
290	15:00	47:45
368	20:00	42:45
441	25:00	37:45
510	30:00	32:45
575	35:00	27:45
636	40:00	22:45
695	45:00	17:45
752	50:00	12:45
763	51:00	11:45
774	52:00	10:45
785	53:00	9:45
795	54:00	8:45
806	55:00	7:45
817	56:00	6:45
827	57:00	5:45
838	58:00	4:45
848	59:00	3:45
858	60:00	2:45
863	60:30	2:15
869	61:00	1:45
874	61:30	1:15
879	62:00	:45
884	62:30	:15
886	62:45	:00

L-250 - X-1

Index Counter	Time Used	Time Remaining
000	0:00	32:45
067	5:00	27:45
128	10:00	22:45
188	15:00	17:45
246	20:00	12:45
256	21:00	11:45
268	22:00	10:45
279	23:00	9:45
290	24:00	8:45
301	25:00	7:45
305	25:30	7:15
311	26:00	6:45
316	26:30	6:15
321	27:00	5:45
327	27:30	5:15
333	28:00	4:45
338	28:30	4:15
344	29:00	3:45
349	29:30	3:15
355	30:00	2:45
361	30:30	2:15
366	31:00	1:45
371	31:30	1:15
376	32:00	:45
380	32:30	:15
382	32:45	:00

L-750 - X-2

Index Counter	Time Used	Time Remaining
000	0:00	184:50
109	10:00	174:50
207	20:00	164:50
304	30:00	154:50
381	40:00	144:50
462	50:00	134:50
535	60:00	124:50
606	70:00	114:50
674	80:00	104:50
739	90:00	94:50
801	100:00	84:50
862	110:00	74:50
920	120:00	64:50
947	125:00	59:50
976	130:00	54:50
004	135:00	49:50
031	140:00	44:50
058	145:00	39:50
084	150:00	34:50
110	155:00	29:50
136	160:00	24:50
161	165:00	19:50
166	166:00	18:50
171	167:00	17:50
175	168:00	16:50
182	169:00	15:50
187	170:00	14:50
192	171:00	13:50
197	172:00	12:50
201	173:00	11:50
206	174:00	10:50
211	175:00	9:50
216	176:00	8:50
221	177:00	7:50
226	178:00	6:50
231	179:00	5:50
236	180:00	4:50
240	181:00	3:50
245	182:00	2:50
247	182:30	2:20
250	183:00	1:50
252	183:30	1:20
255	184:00	:50
257	184:30	:20
259	184:50	:00

L-750 - X-1

Index Counter	Time Used	Time Remaining
000	0:00	92:50
111	5:00	87:50
211	10:00	82:50
312	15:00	77:50
414	20:00	72:50
500	25:00	67:50
545	30:00	62:50
616	35:00	57:50
686	40:00	52:50
751	45:00	47:50
814	50:00	42:50
874	55:00	37:50
934	60:00	32:50
991	65:00	27:50
(1)047	70:00	22:50
103	75:00	17:50
154	80:00	12:50
164	81:00	11:50
175	82:00	10:50
185	83:00	9:50
195	84:00	8:50
205	85:00	7:50
215	86:00	6:50
225	87:00	5:50
235	88:00	4:50
245	89:00	3:50
255	90:00	2:50
265	91:00	1:50
270	91:30	1:20
275	92:00	:50
280	92:30	:20
283	92:50	:00

TIME CHARTS

VHS

VBT 200 - RCA VK125 Video Cassette

SP Mode				LP Mode			
Counter	Time Used		Time Remaining	Counter	Time Used		Time Remaining
	Hr	Min Sec			Hr	Min Sec	
10	0	01 39	1 03 11	10	0	03 18	2 06 22
20	0	03 19	1 01 31	20	0	06 38	2 03 02
30	0	05 00	0 59 50	30	0	10 00	1 59 40
40	0	06 43	0 58 07	40	0	13 26	1 56 14
50	0	08 27	0 56 23	50	0	16 54	1 52 46
60	0	10 11	0 54 39	60	0	20 22	1 49 18
70	0	11 56	0 52 54	70	0	23 52	1 45 48
80	0	13 44	0 51 06	80	0	27 28	1 42 12
90	0	15 33	0 49 17	90	0	31 06	1 38 34
100	0	17 22	0 47 28	100	0	34 44	1 34 56
110	0	19 12	0 45 38	110	0	38 24	1 31 16
120	0	21 04	0 43 46	120	0	42 08	1 27 32
130	0	22 57	0 41 53	130	0	45 54	1 23 46
140	0	24 51	0 39 59	140	0	49 42	1 19 58
150	0	26 45	0 38 05	150	0	53 30	1 16 10
160	0	28 40	0 36 10	160	0	57 20	1 12 20
170	0	30 37	0 34 13	170	1	01 14	1 08 26
180	0	32 35	0 32 15	180	1	05 10	1 04 30
190	0	34 35	0 30 15	190	1	09 10	1 00 30
200	0	36 35	0 28 15	200	1	13 10	0 56 30
210	0	38 36	0 26 14	210	1	17 12	0 52 28
220	0	40 38	0 24 12	220	1	21 16	0 48 24
230	0	42 42	0 22 08	230	1	25 24	0 44 16
240	0	44 46	0 20 04	240	1	29 32	0 40 08
250	0	46 52	0 17 58	250	1	33 44	0 35 56
260	0	49 00	0 15 50	260	1	38 00	0 31 40
270	0	51 03	0 13 42	270	1	42 16	0 27 24
280	0	53 17	0 11 33	280	1	46 34	0 23 06
290	0	55 27	0 09 23	290	1	50 54	0 18 46
300	0	57 39	0 07 11	300	1	55 18	0 14 22
310	0	59 51	0 04 59	310	1	59 42	0 09 58
320	1	02 05	0 02 45	320	2	04 10	0 05 30
330	1	04 22	0 00 28	330	2	08 44	0 00 56
332	1	04 50	0 00 00	332	2	09 40	0 00 00

VBT 200 - RCA VK250 Video Cassette

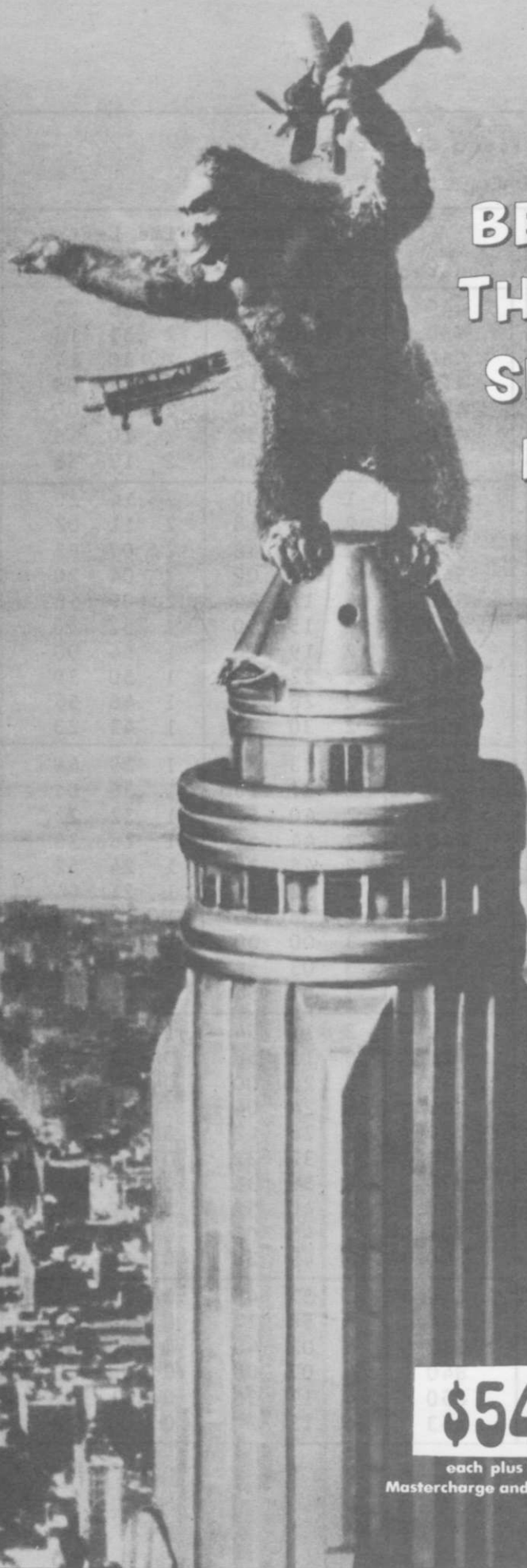
SP Mode

Meter	Time Used			Time Left			Meter	Time Used			Time Left		
	Hr	Min	Sec	Hr	Min	Sec		Hr	Min	Sec	Hr	Min	Sec
10	0	00	43	2	05	57	440	0	48	30	1	18	10
20	0	01	26	2	05	14	450	0	50	01	1	16	39
30	0	02	10	2	04	30	460	0	51	33	1	15	07
40	0	02	55	2	03	45	470	0	53	06	1	13	34
50	0	03	42	2	02	58	480	0	54	40	1	12	00
60	0	04	30	2	02	10	490	0	56	16	1	10	24
70	0	05	19	2	01	21	500	0	57	52	1	08	48
80	0	06	09	2	00	31	510	0	59	30	1	07	10
90	0	07	00	1	59	40	520	1	01	09	1	05	31
100	0	07	52	1	58	48	530	1	02	49	1	03	51
110	0	08	45	1	57	55	540	1	04	30	1	02	10
120	0	09	40	1	57	00	550	1	06	12	1	00	28
130	0	10	36	1	56	04	560	1	07	55	0	58	45
140	0	11	33	1	55	07	570	1	09	40	0	57	00
150	0	12	31	1	54	09	580	1	11	25	0	55	15
160	0	13	30	1	53	10	590	1	13	12	0	53	28
170	0	14	30	1	52	10	600	1	15	00	0	51	40
180	0	15	31	1	51	09	610	1	16	48	0	49	52
190	0	16	33	1	50	07	620	1	18	38	0	48	02
200	0	17	36	1	49	04	630	1	20	29	0	46	11
210	0	18	41	1	47	59	640	1	22	21	0	44	19
220	0	19	47	1	46	53	650	1	24	14	0	42	26
230	0	20	54	1	45	46	660	1	26	08	0	40	32
240	0	22	01	1	44	39	670	1	28	03	0	38	37
250	0	23	10	1	43	30	680	1	30	00	0	36	40
260	0	24	20	1	42	20	690	1	31	58	0	34	42
270	0	25	31	1	41	09	700	1	33	57	0	32	43
280	0	26	43	1	39	57	710	1	35	57	0	30	43
290	0	27	56	1	38	44	720	1	37	58	0	28	42
300	0	29	11	1	37	29	730	1	40	00	0	26	40
310	0	30	27	1	36	13	740	1	42	02	0	24	38
320	0	31	44	1	34	56	750	1	44	06	0	22	34
330	0	33	01	1	33	39	760	1	46	11	0	20	29
340	0	34	20	1	32	20	770	1	48	18	0	18	22
350	0	35	40	1	31	00	780	1	50	26	0	16	14
360	0	37	02	1	29	38	790	1	52	34	0	14	06
370	0	38	24	1	28	16	800	1	54	43	0	11	57
380	0	39	47	1	26	53	810	1	56	54	0	09	46
390	0	41	11	1	25	29	820	1	59	06	0	07	34
400	0	42	36	1	24	04	830	2	01	20	0	05	20
410	0	44	03	1	22	37	840	2	03	34	0	03	06
420	0	45	31	1	21	09	850	2	05	49	0	00	51
430	0	47	00	1	19	40	853	2	06	40	0	00	00

VBT 200 - VK250 Video Cassette

LF Mode

Counter	Time Used			Time Left			Counter	Time Used			Time Left		
	Hr	Min	Sec	Hr	Min	Sec		Hr	Min	Sec	Hr	Min	Sec
10	0	01	26	4	11	54	440	1	37	00	2	36	20
20	0	02	52	4	10	28	450	1	40	02	2	33	18
30	0	04	20	4	09	00	460	1	43	06	2	30	14
40	0	05	50	4	07	30	470	1	46	12	2	27	08
50	0	07	24	4	05	56	480	1	49	20	2	24	00
60	0	09	00	4	04	20	490	1	52	32	2	20	48
70	0	10	38	4	02	42	500	1	55	44	2	17	36
80	0	12	18	4	01	02	510	1	59	00	2	14	20
90	0	14	00	3	59	20	520	2	02	18	2	11	02
100	0	15	44	3	57	36	530	2	05	38	2	07	42
110	0	17	30	3	55	50	540	2	09	00	2	04	20
120	0	19	20	3	54	00	550	2	12	24	2	00	56
130	0	21	12	3	52	08	560	2	15	50	1	57	30
140	0	23	06	3	50	14	570	2	19	20	1	54	00
150	0	25	02	3	48	18	580	2	22	50	1	50	30
160	0	27	00	3	46	20	590	2	26	24	1	46	56
170	0	29	00	3	44	20	600	2	30	00	1	43	20
180	0	31	02	3	42	18	610	2	33	36	1	39	44
190	0	33	06	3	40	14	620	2	37	16	1	36	04
200	0	35	12	3	38	08	630	2	40	58	1	32	22
210	0	37	22	3	35	58	640	2	44	42	1	28	38
220	0	39	34	3	33	46	650	2	48	28	1	24	52
230	0	41	48	3	31	32	660	2	52	16	1	21	04
240	0	44	02	3	29	18	670	2	56	06	1	17	14
250	0	46	20	3	27	00	680	3	00	00	1	13	20
260	0	48	40	3	24	40	690	3	03	56	1	09	24
270	0	51	02	3	22	18	700	3	07	54	1	05	26
280	0	53	26	3	19	54	710	3	11	54	1	01	26
290	0	55	52	3	17	28	720	3	15	56	0	57	24
300	0	58	22	3	14	58	730	3	20	00	0	53	20
310	1	00	54	3	12	26	740	3	24	04	0	49	16
320	1	03	28	3	09	52	750	3	28	12	0	45	08
330	1	06	02	3	07	18	760	3	32	22	0	40	58
340	1	08	40	3	04	40	770	3	36	36	0	36	44
350	1	11	20	3	02	00	780	3	40	52	0	32	28
360	1	14	04	2	59	16	790	3	45	08	0	28	12
370	1	16	48	2	56	32	800	3	49	26	0	23	54
380	1	19	34	2	53	46	810	3	53	48	0	19	32
390	1	22	22	2	50	58	820	3	58	12	0	15	08
400	1	25	12	2	48	08	830	4	02	40	0	10	40
410	1	28	06	2	45	14	840	4	07	08	0	06	12
420	1	31	02	2	42	18	850	4	11	38	0	01	42
430	1	34	00	2	39	20	853	4	13	20	0	00	00



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The Videophile's Newsletter



Dum, da-dum-dum ! The story you are about to read is true. The names have not been changed and the innocent may need to be protected by someone. Just kidding folks, but the copyright lawsuit between Universal Studios/Disney and Sony Corporation is scheduled to go to trial on January 30 in Federal District Court in Los Angeles. It was decided at a pre-trial hearing in November that the issues in the case would not be narrowed to a select few, but rather the court will air the broad range of topics that have been raised in the pleadings by both parties. The trial is expected to last for 3 months or so, with hearings being held for a week and the court taking recess for a week as they go along. We have previously had indications that contributing editors Marc Wielage and Joe Mazzini may be called to take the stand as witnesses. As long time readers of these pages know, the two of them, in addition to your editor, have been called in to give testimony on a number of occasions already. Marc and your editor were named in Universal's amended complaint a year or so back, but not as defendants, only as examples of persons who are doing the sort of thing that the studios claim is illegal under the copyright statutes. I would remind all you interested observers that this case is a "civil" proceeding, not a "criminal" one. Naturally, we will keep you posted as it develops.

After first announcing that it was going to begin offering shares to the public, Magnetic Video Corporation turned around and got gobbled up by 20th Century-Fox instead. Fox has reportedly arranged to buy MVC for about \$7,200,000. (Gee, I wonder if they need a magazine to go along with it?) MVC first gained national attention a year or so back when it secured the rights to duplicate and market the original package of 50 Fox films. It has since become the leading producer/distributor of prerecorded videocassettes.

Despite the fact that MVC has just jacked up its prices by \$5, a goal of reducing the price to \$29.95 for movies by the end of 1979 is still thought to be realistic by Fox executives, who apparently believe that blank cassette prices will drop to the area of \$7 once 3M (Scotch) and other domestic suppliers get cranked up. Frankly, this would come as a pleasant surprise to me. If it happens, it will only be because of pressure from competition of cheap video discs. MVC will continue its separate identity under President Andre Blay, but for administrative purposes will become part of 20th Century-Fox Telecommunications.

Fotomat, having recently jumped into film-to-tape transfer and sale of blank tape in a big way, now says that it will begin marketing pre-recorded tapes through its 3400 outlets on both a sale and rental basis. Negotiations are in progress with major movie studios. A spokesman says that titles will be mainly those that "nobody else will have."

Yes, Virginia, there is a video disc. The Magnavision player (from Magnavox) and Discovision discs (from MCA) went on sale as scheduled December 15 in Atlanta, Georgia, as indicated by the ad from Rich's department store on the facing page. A call to Mr. Reed at Rich's verified that the list price of the player is \$695. They sold out of all 30 of the units they had within 5 minutes and do not expect another shipment until January 15. They are accepting mail and phone orders on a first-come, first-served basis. Apparently, only 3 locations in Atlanta had a supply, and all were sold out moments after the doors opened. Frustrated would-be purchasers then snapped up most of the available discs. We expect to have a full report on the video disc system in our next issue, following a demonstration at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The player is in short supply, as they are being assembled in Greeneville, Tennessee, from parts manufactured by Phillips in Holland. Industry sources indicate that the first year output will be no more than 20,000 units. This will increase once manufacture in the U.S. commences and marketing on a national scale begins around the end of 1979. Initial catalog of 200 titles is said to include: ANIMAL HOUSE, AMERICAN GRAFFITI, MAN IN THE GLASS BOOTH, ANIMAL CRACKERS, pilots for SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, KOJAK, and some ABBOT & COSTELLO oldies. Not all were available in Atlanta as of December 15, but they do have 80 selections available, including those mentioned in the Rich's ad. Catalog is not limited to Universal titles. There are also 8 or 10 each from Warner, Paramount, and Disney.

Another long-delayed item, the Sony Betamax changer is ready for national distribution. (We ran a picture of it back on the cover of TVN #8.) Intended primarily for owners of the original SL-7200 deck and LV-1901 console, the changer could increase the untended recording capacity of these models to 3 hours when using the L-750 cassettes. Apparently, you owners who make inquiries to Sony dealers will be given an opportunity to "test" the changer and a new timer (since the original one cuts off after about 70 minutes) for up to 90 days. If you want to keep it thereafter, you will reportedly be entitled to a special price of \$50 for the changer and \$20 for the timer, with your old one in trade. It's not clear whether it will work with the 8200 (6 hours!), but my sources say it definitely will not work on the 8600.

Satellite transmission to cable TV systems continues to grow. Updating reports in recent issues: WGN in Chicago and KTVU in Oakland, CA are joining super station WTCG in Atlanta. WTCG owner Ted Turner says that his "super 17" is now in 20% of the nation's cable homes and that he expects to add another 25% this year. My reports say that WGN is already reaching 200 cable systems. WOR-TV in New York and KTTV in Los Angeles have similar plans. "Vistar" (see last two issues of this mag) has resumed transmission after a false start a couple of months back. It's supposed to be free to cable systems, so if yours has a satellite ground station, tell 'em to pick up on the Vistar transmissions. Incidentally, the FCC is looking into the possible deregulation of satellite receive-only earth stations. VideoNews reports that some industry analysts see this as an acknowledgement by the commission that it is "serious about making it easier for small cable systems and others [emphasis supplied] to move into the earth station business."

Home Box Office has some 60 to 70 shows in development for 1979. Among them is a comedy variety show from National Lampoon that may become a series. In addition, Allen Funt is producing a series of "Candid Camera" shows for HBO. Since HBO is censor-free, one can assume (and industry sources indicate) that the new

series may sometimes resemble the Funt movie, "What Do You Say to a Naked Lady?" Showtime is said to be considering over 100 productions, of which 40 will join HBO and Showtime and offer its "Star Channel" via satellite distribution to most of its 600,000 cable TV subscribers throughout the U.S.

We expect more news on the promise of "metal videotape" to break at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. Indications are that the "metal tape era" may usher forth a 2nd generation of home VCR's. Such things as an ultracompact VCR, maybe even built into the body of a hand-held camera, would be made possible. The required new hardware and tape to supply it could be developed as early as 1980 if the major manufacturers opt to take that course. Since metal based tape (actually a metal powder coating as opposed to oxide) is by nature thinner than today's common varieties, serious attempts to develop video cassettes the size of audio cassettes is underway. Sony is in the advantageous position of keeping its plans and progress secret since it is the only company that makes both the tapes and the recorders, and does not have to coordinate its activities or reveal its plans to any other firm.

Briefly: Beta format tape from both TDX and Fuji is said to now be available in U.S. ... Both RCA and Sony have announced, or will announce, price hikes in suggested list of from \$25 to \$55 on their VCR's ... RCA model VCT 200 has been discontinued ... Sears may be about to add a VHS format machine to its line ... First 10 months of 1978 saw 415,000 home video recorders imported into the U.S. ... Beta and VHS format tape manufacturers are estimated to be turning out more than 1,000,000 video cassettes per month in each format ... Uganda (with 60,000 TV sets) has sent a representative to New York to purchase four series, "Good Times," "The Jeffersons," "Sanford and Son," and "For You... Black Woman."

Those of you beginning to shop around for a large screen projection-type TV may want to pick up the January issue of Popular Electronics magazine, which contains a very informative article on the subject. The different types of systems are explained in basically non-technical terms and a list of 58 available models, their features and list prices, is provided.

You're familiar with the one-speed and two-speed VCR's. Well, how about a 50 speed model? RCA has announced a time-lapse VHS recorder that can be operated at any of 50 different speeds and provide up to 200 hours on one cassette at the slowest speed. The machine, which sells for \$2,775, is intended for security applications only, but it is interesting to speculate on the possible picture quality of, say, a skip-field VHS recorder providing up to 8 hours on a VK-250 cassette. Incidentally, we've seen a couple of ads for prerecorded "adult" movies in the 4-hour speed. Will be interested to hear any reports relating to picture quality.

You'll be pleased to know that the National Association of Broadcasters has lifted its ban on "Love Affair Douche," thus paving the way for television commercials relating to this product. For some reason the personal products committee of the NAB's Code Board had initially objected to the product's name.

November 27 issue of Home Furnishing Daily carried an article linking heads of X-rated cassette producers to Mafia. Leisure Time Cinema (which is connected with Hustler magazine) is said to have monthly capacity of 75,000 cassettes and sales force of "1,000 home demonstrators." Other industry sources indicate that prerecorded porno tape business may soon be a \$30 million dollar retail affair.

Rich's introduces Magnavision® ...the world on a silver platter



New from Magnavox at Rich's Lenox

A record player that shows pictures.

Just place a simple disc on this simple machine that connects to your own TV.

A beam of light does the work of a needle.

Up-to-the-minute laser beam technology makes it possible. No scratching. No wear out. Your videodiscs should last practically forever.

So many discs to choose...

from MCA DiscoVision.*

MCA DiscoVision offers hundreds of discs. Typical half-hour programs will cost \$5.95. Typical hour programs will cost \$9.95. Recent feature pictures will cost \$15.95.

Go to the movies at home.

• Jaws • Jaws II • The Sting • Slap Shot • Smokey & The Bandit • Buck Private • To Kill a Mockingbird • The Other Side of the Mountain • Total Fitness in 30 Minutes Per Week • Jacques Cousteau • World At War • And many more.

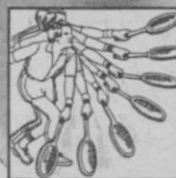
Start a cultural revolution.

Just drop on a disc and enjoy great works of art. And award-winning documentaries on everything from whales to World War II. Take lessons in cooking, tennis, and more.

Magnavision puts you in control.

Move forward or in reverse. Watch one frame at a time. Speed up to run past things you've already seen. There's instant replay, slow motion. Even freeze the picture.

Please note: Because Magnavision is so new, our quantities are limited at this time.



*DiscoVision is a registered trademark of MCA DiscoVision, Inc.

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There's more in store at

RICH'S

December 13, 1978 issue of Variety carried a report making it clear that Walt Disney Productions has absolutely no intention of releasing its animated feature films to television, pay cable or otherwise. Business affairs vice president Ron Cayo was quoted as saying: "A guy who owns a Betamax could just copy the telecast of one of our animated films and make it part of his permanent library. Then during his kids' birthdays or on other special occasions he could invite all the kids in the neighborhood to see it." Cayo was asked if he's constantly bombarded with big offers for Disney's animated feature backlog from executives of ABC, CBS and NBC, and he said, "They know our policy on this subject is so rigid that they're not even trying very hard any more."



Search for Tomorrow

A feature in which we inform you of TV fare which is in production or otherwise forthcoming from the networks, syndicators, and pay cable systems.

"Rhoda" is now cancelled, but fans of Julie Kavner can watch for her to co-star with Richard Thomas in CBS' 2-hour "No Other Love" which relates the story of two retarded people who fall in love.//MGM-TV and Aaron Spelling Productions is whipping up a 6-hour miniseries for ABC, "The French Atlantic Affair," to revolve around a conspiracy plot on a luxury ocean liner.//Pop culture freaks will not want to miss "Flatbed Annie and Sweetpie: Lady Truckers" coming to CBS in February. Show will star Annie Potts, Kim Darby, Harry Dean Stanton, Fred Willard(!), Rory Calhoun, Avery Schreiber and Arthur Godfrey. Guest star will be (who else?) Billy Carter.//Snappy title fans will also be waiting for "Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang," a syndicated TV-film about a little boy who says everything twice because nobody ever listens to him the first time.//Toni Tennille has concluded arrangements with MCA TV to star in a daily 90-minute talk show. The multi-million dollar production, to be presented by local television stations of a five-day per week basis starting in the fall of 1979, will offer Toni in a contemporary format involving daily features, guest stars and personalities from all fields. Tennille's husband, Daryl Dragon (The Captain) will be musical director.//TV will present a new series of Olympics-oriented hours tentatively titled "The Road to Moscow - 1980." Scheduled to air weekly beginning in the Fall of 1979, the show will feature in-depth personal profiles of outstanding candidates for the U.S. Olympic team.//The schedule for the "Holiday Network" package of syndicated films (announced here in TVN #15) has been rearranged. So if you thought you missed "The Phantom Toll Booth," have no fear. It did not air during Halloween, but will soon. "Ivanhoe," "Gypsy Colt," and "Journey Back to Oz" have aired, and among those still forthcoming are: "Kim" and "Around the World Under the Sea."//This may have already happened, but just to show you why some VCR buffs would rather be in Los Angeles than elsewhere, I am told that in January the "Z" channel pay cable system will be running, on a one-time basis, a number of feature films that are up for Oscar consideration, apparently as a convenience for members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.//Adrienne Barbeau Fans Early Alert Section: You've seen "The Clones," now be on the watch for "Sweepstakes."//Fans of Carol Wayne should write NBC. "The Carol Wayne Show" is in production, but no plans to air have been announced.//Following in the footsteps of "Return to Gilligan's Island" and an updated "Maverick," we will have a reprise of

"The Wild, Wild West."//Charles Kuralt and Bob Schieffer will anchor an expanded CBS news to air Monday through Friday mornings beginning January 28.//Mary Tyler Moore is back again, and among her upcoming guests are Lucille Ball, Mike Douglas, Paul Williams, Nancy Walker, Bonnie Franklin, and Eric Estrada.//New miniseries worth watching for is Ray Bradbury's "The Martian Chronicles," a six-hour job for NBC. Two versions are being shot so that a theatrical version can be released abroad. Teleplay is by Richard Matheson, but reportedly Bradbury is being consulted.//A new syndicated series of the health/human interest genre entitled "The Good Life" should begin appearing soon. Many of the projected 130 half-hours have already been completed. These include shows with featured celebrities such as: Gerald Ford, Bill Cosby, Alan King, and Cheryl Tiegs. Tennis pro John Newcombe is host.//Robert Wagner will star in the TV feature film (and '79-'80 season series) "Hart to Hart," costarring Stephanie Powers. The series will resemble somewhat "The Thin Man," even down to the pet pooch. Mrs. Wagner (Natalie Wood) will appear in a walk-on role in at least one episode (a la the "Switch" episode a while back).//Warner Brothers-TV and CBS are preparing "Dummy," the true story of a deaf-mute Chicago youth accused of murdering a prostitute.//Since John Jakes' "The Bastard" did so well as a syndicated prime time feature last Spring, two more volumes of his chronicle of the Kent family, "The Rebels" and "The Seekers" are being prepared. Expect one in May and the other in November.//Chuck Barris has another new project, a movie version of "The Gong Show." The nighttime version of "The Gong Show" (syndicated) has been so successful that it may switch to twice weekly, ditto Barris' "\$1.98 Beauty Contest." [Wow, did you ever stop to think that while I am writing this, and you are reading it, there is a real world going on outside the window that needs all the attention that talented and intelligent people can afford to give it? --Ed.]//Pressing on ... another series making the jump to the big screen is "Get Smart." A \$6,000,000 motion picture, "The Return of Maxwell Smart," begins filming at Universal in January. Don Adams, of course, will star, and Bill Dana is one of the writers.//20th Century-Fox has sold CBS and NBC the rights to 20 films (for \$61,000,000) which will be broadcast between 1979 and 1981. CBS titles include: "Silver Streak," "Fury," "Lucky Lady," and "Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother." Those to NBC include: "The Omen," "Damien, Omen 2," "Julia," and "Damnation Alley."//Fans of "The Young and the Restless" [God, help me. --Ed.] will want to know that Jaime Lyn Bauer (who plays Laurie Brooks, and who also did a spread (?) in Penthouse a couple of years back) is starring in a TV pilot by Universal entitled "Boston and Kilbride."//Fans of the flesh will also want to have some blank tapes on hand when Lynda Carter's CBS special arrives.//Comic book fans, take heart -- Buck Rogers and Captain America are in the works. Me? I'll have another serving of Doctor Strange. The pilot film with Jessica Walters was as good as this sort of stuff ever gets.//HBO (Home Box Office) specials upcoming in 1979 include "The Ventriloquists Show" (February), which will feature Ted Knight with a Ted Knight dummy; also Sheri Lewis, Senor Wences and Clifford Guest. Look for a 3rd annual "magic" special, as well as burlesque, circus, and ESP entries.//Hugh Hefner is reported to be working on an "electronic Playboy" -- putting outstanding features of the publication (including you-guessed-it) on video discs. Playboy, celebrating its 25th anniversary, also is cooperating with ABC for two programs. One will be an anniversary special, the other a fictionalized version of Hefner's life.//A new syndicated show, "Hit That Mother," is being prepared as a good taste (?) counter-punch to such shows as "\$1.98 Beauty Contest." Idea is to roast, insult and humiliate three well-known mothers-in-law. I can hardly wait.



Rambling Outtakes

by Marc Wielage

And, as the Betamax format sinks slowly and sadly in the West ... well, folks, actually it isn't all that bad yet, but sometimes I wonder. Some of you will remember a couple of issues back (TVN #15, to be exact) I sent Sony a long list of all the things I thought were wrong with their consumer and industrial video product line--basically saying that they were allowing VHS to pass 'em right on by with longer recording lengths, more features, and lower prices--and that they ought to wake up before it's too late.

Well, I finally got a letter from them a few weeks ago--from the General Manager of Sony's Press & Public Relations Department in Tokyo, Mr. Takashi Taono. His reply, in part, said: "We greatly appreciate your interest in Sony. We believe that we have products of the highest quality, but are always seeking to make improvements. I want to assure you that the suggestions put forth in your letter were previously known to us [emphasis mine] and that those suggestions, and many others, have been and are being considered by our engineers. For [reasons] which I am sure you can readily understand, we are not in a position to say whether or not we will market products incorporating [those] new features which may be covered by your suggestions. However, in response to the growing demand for various home video activities in the world, we have recently announced a series of new video products" He goes on to mention their new HVC-1100 color home video camera, the SL-3100 portable X-2 Betamax recorder/player (see TVN #16), and its programmable tuner/timer unit, the TT-1000--hopefully similar to the "TT-1000" I outlined in my letter to them. Taono also brings up Sony's new SVM/RSC-1010 "VideoStrobe" motion analyzer which, to my mind, represents one of the more useless products they've come up with in some time.



SVM-1010
Video Motion Analyzer
with Built-In
9" Diagonal B&W Monitor



RSC-1010
B&W Video Camera with
Rotary Shutter

Although the \$5,000 device is reported to produce genuine high-quality slow-motion pictures (in black and white only), total recording time is only 10 seconds, which seems to be far too little for any practical use except in a very few sports instruction classes and limited educational & industrial applications. And it's no "Best Buy" at \$5,000, either. [If you have \$5,000 and don't know what to do with it, Mr. Taono's letter does go on to say that the device can be used, along with the special RSC-1110 rotary shutter camera, to record a program on a Betamax and then examine any 10 second segment of that recording.--Ed.]

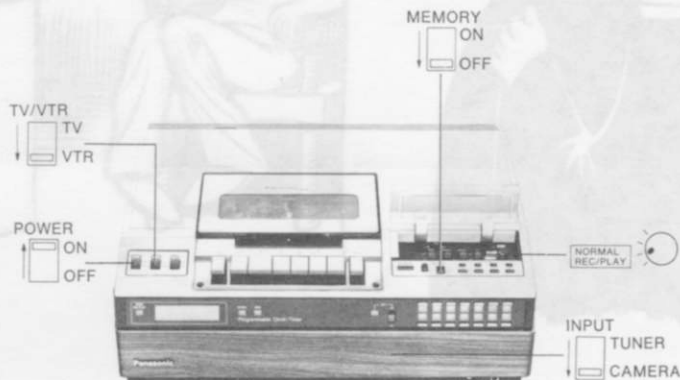
But perhaps Sony's biggest faux pas thus far is the recent announcement made at the Foreign Automobile Show in Tokyo that they're introducing a compact Beta-max player designed "primarily for automotive use"! The Sony car video system comes in 4 units, including a 5" color set, a power supply/adaptor, a case/mounting bracket, and the \$1100, 17 lb. Beta-player, said to be one-fourth the size of the current home Beta decks and lacking a tuner & recording capability. Well, at least now everyone can be Madman Muntz, in the privacy of their own cars.

It's just this kind of thing that drives me crazy about Sony. If they already knew about my suggested improvements, then it seems obvious to me that they should be spending every waking moment coming up with worthwhile products to compete with VHS. But noooooooo ... they come out with wastes of time like this auto-player. Speaking as both a collector and a stockholder, I'm frankly pissed at a company that continues to fumble the ball in this manner. I mean, here's RCA, Panasonic, and all the rest, slaughtering them left and right with VHS decks that record 4 hours, can be programmed for taping 4 shows up to a week in advance, plus other decks that have slow-motion, fast-motion, and still-frame capabilities ... plus all of them have the Audio Dub feature. It's enough to make any loyal Betamax owner scream to the skies, "gaaaaaah, what's a muthuh to do?"

At any rate, it remains to be seen how Sony will be continuing their assault against VHS--which is beginning to look like Pearl Harbor (sort of) more and more every day. In an extensive report next issue in which we'll be reporting on the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, we hope to have a short interview with several Sony marketing execs and will try to get some answers to these and more questions--even if we have to sit on top of them to do so.

At least some other manufacturers continue to come out with truly innovative video products, like Sanyo, who's just released an experimental stereo audio Beta X-2 deck in Japan for about \$1200. I don't have a model number, specs, or pictures on it yet, but hope to have the full scoop next issue. Also, Panasonic continues to improve their VHS line with the introduction of the PV-1500, their new programmable unit.

Similar to the RCA VCT-400 more in concept and features than in looks, the Panasonic has a remarkably well-built appearance and feel, and boasts the intelligent idea of having the digital timer on the front rather than on top, a definite advantage in my book. They retain the "automatic cue" feature of the RCA in which the machine can stop during fast-forward or rewind at the beginning of any non-pause initiated recording (i.e., when several timer recordings are on one tape, the deck



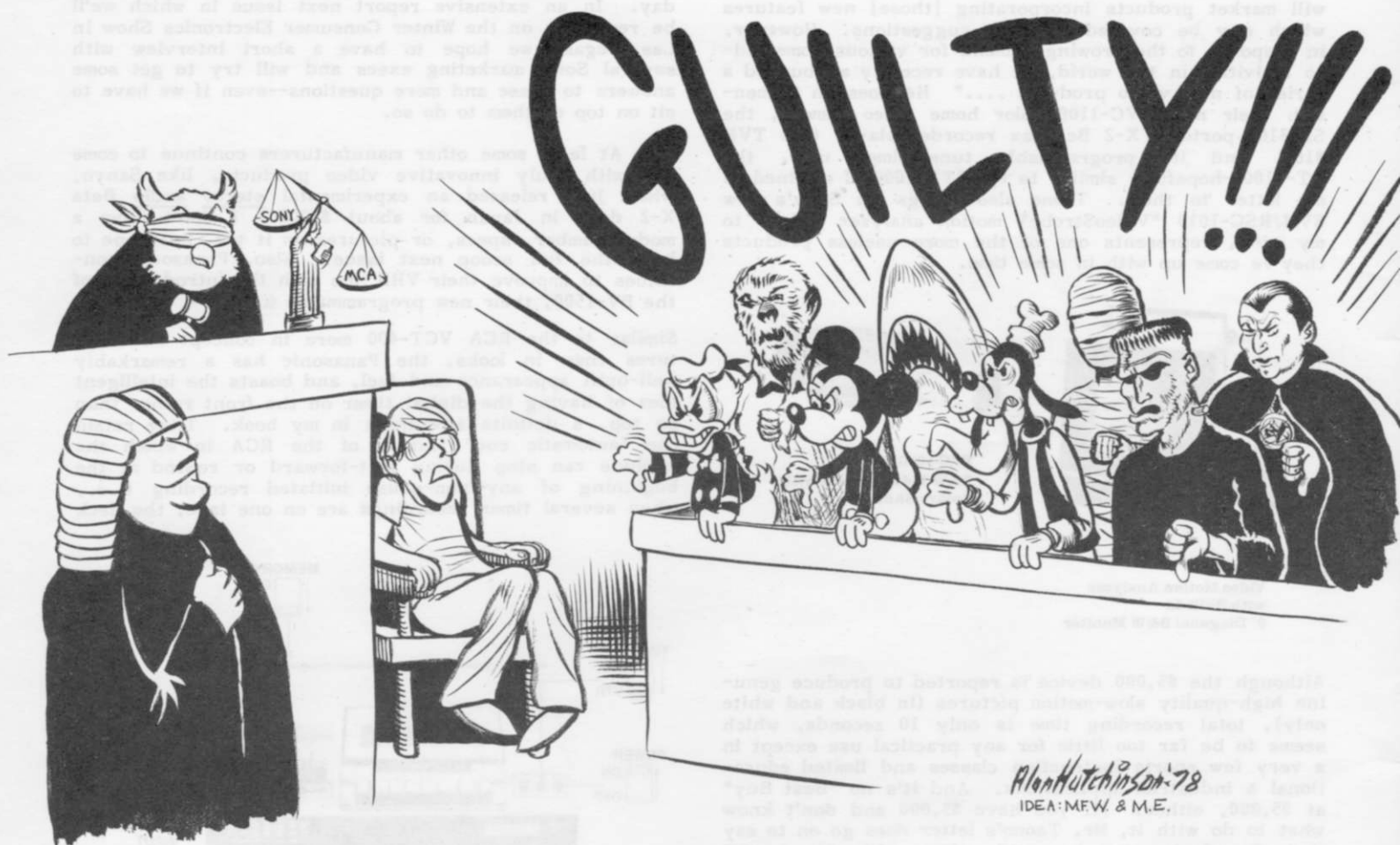
will automatically cue up each program when the FF or RW button is pressed), selectable on or off by means of the front panel memory switch. The PV-1500 also has several other new features, including a smoked-plastic dust cover that semi-hinges itself to the top of the deck, plus a convenient AC receptacle at the rear and better styling and operational comfort than the RCA. It's selling around town (L.A.) for roughly \$1150-\$1200, slightly higher than the VCT-400. (Special thanks to Audio/Video Craft's Ralph Eck and Bob McManus for news on this great new product.)

Other fascinating new VHS decks are RCA's TC-3250 & 3200 Time-Lapse decks, recording--get this--up to 200 hours on one tape! Of course, it's intended for industrial/surveillance uses only, recording at any of 50 selectable speeds (including real-time color & B&W). The decks go for around \$3,000 from RCA's Electro-Optics & Devices Division in Camden, New Jersey.

L-750 Betamax cassettes continue to be scarcer than chickens with lips, at least out here on the West Coast. Having used almost a dozen of them by now, I think I can safely say that my initial worries about the thinner tape are almost gone; all the 750's I've recorded so far have held up well, and at X-1 they're almost the equal, video-wise, of an L-500--almost, but not quite. Inci-

dentally, after recently finding myself in a bind for tape, I went over to Sears & Roebuck to get an L-750 tape (as Jim suggested a few issues back), and was appalled to find that the jokers ~~running~~ running the TV Dept. at the Hollywood branch on Santa Monica Blvd. have the nerve to charge a wallet-busting \$24.95 for one of those suckers! When asked why we had to pay four U.S. American dollars more than the suggested retail price in their catalogue, the salesman snidely replied that they always tack on an extra charge for all the merchandise in the store as a "shipping fee" and that it's often cheaper to purchase directly from the catalogue to avoid this fee. Well, folks, \$4 seems a little high to me for the shipping and handling of one 1-lb. videocassette (unless they're using Express Mail from Tokyo). In any case, forewarned is, well, forewarned, and you heard it here first: Make sure you aren't getting overcharged for merchandise on the shelf as opposed to merchandise in the catalogue, and if you are, then order it instead from the catalogue and wait a couple of days. And that's at Sears--Where America Shops ... but smart videophiles probably won't.

Meanwhile ... the lawsuit is coming up in just a couple of weeks now, and as shown in this terrifying bit of buffoonery by master illustrator Alan Hutchinson,



I, for one, am not looking forward to it one bit. Joe and I both hope that our participation in the trial will be peripheral at best, and that our time on the stand will be minimal. At any rate, I'm studying up on old episodes of Perry Mason, if only to learn how to break down and sob hysterically on the witness stand as I'm badgered to death

Before we move along to the rest of our scheduled feature, here's a couple of quick

BOOK REVIEWS

Back in September at the LA Home Video Show, I had the good fortune to talk to author Charles Bensinger and see his newest publication, The Home Video Handbook, an indispensable paperback for the videophile if there ever was one. Intended as a companion volume to his previous professional/industrial video book The Video Guide (reviewed in TVN #14), this 8½" x 5½" book is easily the best I've ever seen on the subject, with 207 pages on everything from do-it-yourself home video productions to editing and dubbing methods to large-screen projection TV systems. Because of the ever-advancing technology of home video, this first edition was sorely lacking details on the new deluxe and specialized home VTR's coming out, like the RCA/Magnavox/Panasonic programmable VHS decks, the JVC & Panasonic slow-motion/fast-motion/still-frame VHS decks, and yes, even Sony's automotive Betamax (gaaaaaaah). But take heart--all of these products and more will be mentioned in the updated version of The Home Video Handbook and covered thoroughly as far as installation and operation goes. All in all, it's a dynamite book, one that belongs on the shelf of any serious videonut; it's also mandatory reading for non-videophiles as well. It's available for \$8.95 (a bit steep, but what the hey, these are inflationary times) from Video-Info Publications, P. O. Box 1507, Santa Barbara, CA 93102.

One unusual publication that also came out at the LA Home Video Show is a 37-page catalogue of all the latest video gear from Sony, Panasonic, Advent, Sanyo, and several other major manufacturers, put out by a large local dealer, The Video Center. The catalogue lists dozens of decks, cameras, sets, and accessories, including most specs, sizes, and features, and is one of the most impressive listings of its kind I've seen. It's marked at \$5.95 for the well-printed 8½" x 11" booklet, but is being sold for \$2 a copy from The Video Center at 2311 Pontius Ave., LA, CA 90064. A word of caution: A number of collectors are pretty distrustful about The Video Center chain, not only for their reported unprofessional sales attitudes, but also for their rather high list prices; I'm suspicious of them myself for their recent advertising blitzes trying to unload on the unsuspecting public Sanyo V-Cord II's for \$595, not bothering to tell anybody that the machine's as good as kaput on the consumer market. But it is a good catalogue, at any rate.

Finally, on to this column's wacky feature ...

THE INS AND OUTS OF VIDEO PROCESSING FOR THE VIDEOPHILE - Part 2

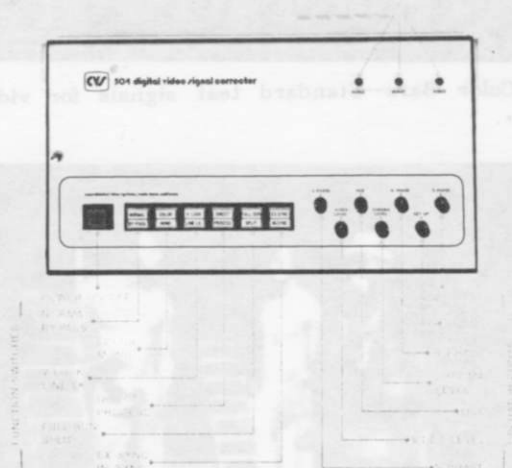
In continuing our discussion of TBC's, Proc-Amps, Image Enhancers and the like, I want to warn you that, first off, some of the following may get a little heavy as far as technical terms and videojargon goes, but I'll be simplifying what I know as best I can. Also, at the

present time, much of this equipment is priced way out of league for all but the most affluent video buffs, but it is expected that eventually the cost for these accessories will drop to a more affordable amount, possibly even low enough for manufacturers to someday build their features into VTR's, much as Dolby B noise-reduction devices are built into most currently available audio cassette decks.

To go over some of what was mentioned last time, Time Base Errors are the deviations in the time of the reproduced video from the precise television standard, caused by variations in the playback VTR--a fancy way of saying that a tape isn't playing back properly, due to the imperfections in the transport of the deck and the cassette tape itself. If these abnormalities aren't corrected, you might wind up with twice the original problems when you dub the tape to another cassette, eventually winding up with a tape that is, for all practical purposes, useless.

Visually, time base errors can show up as a bending at the top of the screen (see Chris Pearson's article on Skew Errors in TVN #15), picture tearing, and, if the picture is in color, break-up and color phase shifts (hue distortions). Some of the effects are reduced when seen on a Sony-type set or monitor, but generally look like hell on most American sets (particularly old tube models).

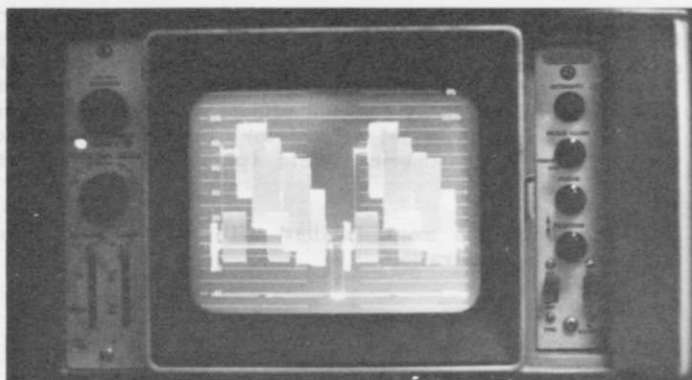
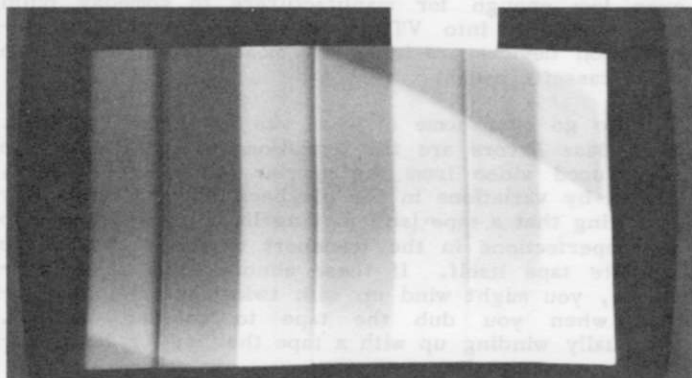
The TBC I'm most familiar with is the CVS 504, shown in this illustration.



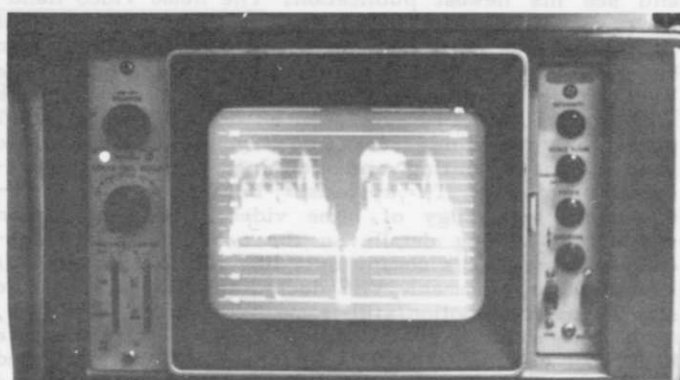
To process a video signal from most ¾" and 1/2" cassette decks, you feed the video into the TBC and designate the operating controls to "Normal," "Color," or "Mono" (B&W), as needed, "Line Lock" (from all consumer and some industrial decks), "Process," and "Full Screen." The Normal/By-Pass switch turns on the actual time base correction part of the unit, and the Direct/Process switch connects the proc-amp section to the incoming video signal.

Often, the difference between a time-base corrected tape and an uncorrected one is like night and day. As shown in the following photos, skew error disappears, the image can be brightened or reduced as needed, and contrast can be set as needed. All these adjustments should be made with both an accurate video monitor and a device called a Wave-Form Monitor, a modified oscilloscope (like the Techtronix 528 shown in these pictures) that allows you to see a graphic presentation of the video white level (brightness), black level (pedestal),

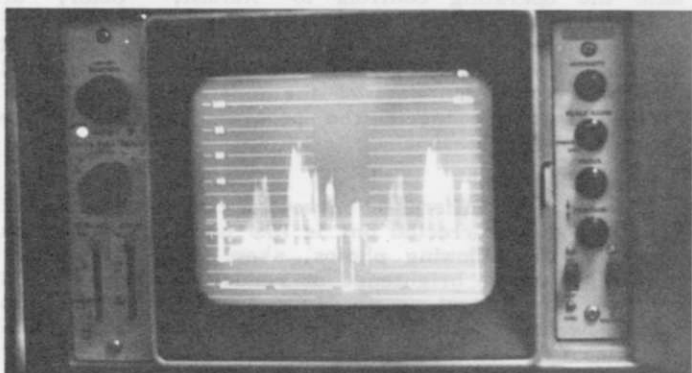
and sync signal coming from the tape and/or TBC, before and after processing. Note below the adjustments made to the images and the corresponding wave-form patterns.



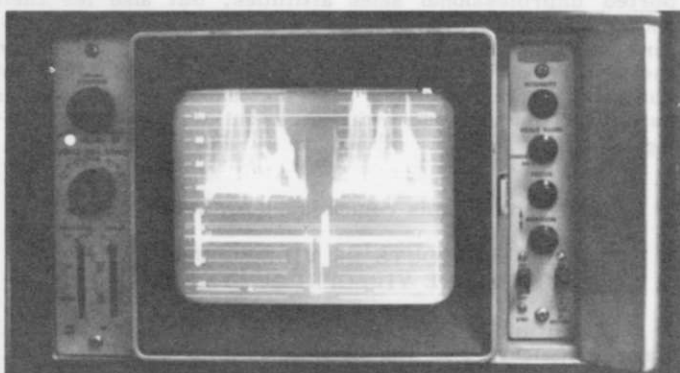
NTSC Color Bars--Standard test signals for video recording.



Properly exposed video--good overall lighting and signal levels.



Black level (pedestal) too high--not enough contrast; picture dull and washed-out.



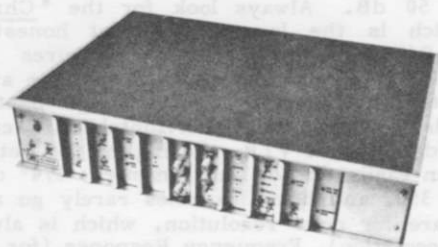
Pedestal too low--too much contrast. May not record properly on some machines.

The biggest drawback I've found to all the TBC's I've used is that they tend to go a little crazy when used with unstable or noisy tapes. The 504, in particular, has a habit of flashing in little vertical "glitch lines" during bad edits or video instabilities, which is an unfortunate problem. And again, there's the problem of the high cost of these professional TBC's--the CVS 504 sells for around \$20,000, fully equipped, as do most other units like Microtime's 2020 series. But less expensive TBC's are now finally coming out, like the \$3,000 Edutron mentioned last issue.

If a TBC is still too much, then video processing alone may be more affordable. The 3M Company, through their Mincom Division, has a full line of relatively inexpensive accessories like the P-50 Proc-Amp shown here.

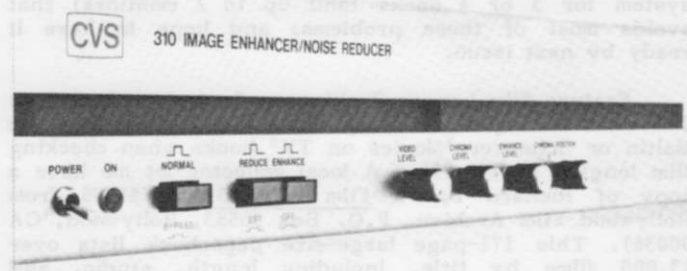


Besides allowing you to adjust the video, pedestal, sync and chroma levels, it also lets you use any inexpensive monitor to examine the head switching area for tracking and skew adjustments with its built-in cross-pulse generator. (See Steve Comet's column last issue for a more thorough explanation of this feature.) For a mere \$3,000 more, you can have 3M's DP-100 Helical Drop-Out Compensator/Proc-Amp, which reduces those nasty white horizontal glitches (dropouts) found in all videotape recordings and especially in inexpensive 1/2" cassettes.



It also provides the processing capabilities of its less-expensive sister unit. For another \$1,000 or so you can add an Image Enhancement option (a plug-in circuit board) that allows you to "crisp up" otherwise dull-looking pictures. (And by this I mean the image, not the content.)

Perhaps the most useful products for video processing that have come out thus far are the CVS Model 310 Image Enhancer/Noise Reducer and the Yves Faroudja's Record Booster units. The CVS unit, shown here



reduces luminance (B&W) and Chrominance (color) noise by as much as 6 dB, crispens the image like the Image Enhancer just mentioned, and minimizes fine grain noise, moire, and streaking. And again, this kind of quality and versatility ain't cheap--almost \$6,000 for the complete unit. I haven't yet seen the 310 in operation, but it looks comparatively easy to work with; it's intended as an addition for any TBC lacking enhancement and noise-reducing features.

The Faroudja "Record Booster" is the first pseudo-Dolby-type device for video that I've seen allowing you to artificially boost the signal going into most VTR's, reducing image flatness and improving overall sharpness--kind of like a "pre-enhancer." The manufacturer claims that the Record Booster will allow the user to make better master tapes on 3/4" or 1/2" cassette machines, thus extending the number of acceptable generations possible. At \$1500, it's somewhat more affordable than most of the devices mentioned so far. For more information, you can write CVS (Consolidated Video Systems) at 1255 E. Arques Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086, or Faroudja, c/o Telegen, 800 Welch Rd. - Ste. 354, Palo Alto, CA 94304. 3M's Mincom Division is at 3M Center, Building 223-SE, St. Paul, MN 55101.

As a last thought, one interesting feature of TBC's suggested to me by a local reader is that of their ability to circumvent most anti-copying systems used by large video duplicating firms. These systems, like the "Videoguard" encoder shown here



basically distort the sync signals on a tape in such a way that it can be watched on most home TV sets yet can't be copied by conventional means. If you do try to copy an encoded tape (including all new releases from Magnetic Video, Allied Artists, Nostalgia Merchant, and Teletronics/VCA), all you'll get is an image that's completely out of sync, rolling all over the screen with diagonal lines in the picture or having a complete loss of tracking, with a thin horizontal line (called "head switching," which normally stays at the bottom of the screen) crawling up the picture and filling the screen with an occasional burst of total "snow" ... in short, a ghastly mess.

But because TBC's automatically take apart and regenerate any incoming video with new, stable sync, they can often defeat most of these anti-copying systems. As the Videoguard brochure states: "Conventional methods of duplicating are not successful at making copies of Videoguard tapes. The encoding can only be broken by special video equipment [like TBC's] operated by an engineer with a knowledge of the encoding process. The Videoguard system is designed to effectively prevent small tape pirate operations and individual consumers from making illegal copies. In this it is successful and, therefore, will eliminate the vast majority of piracy."

They go on to mention that playback of Videoguarded tapes does reduce the range of vertical hold control on the set used, and that on some sets the image may "roll," though this can be corrected by adjusting the vertical hold. What it does not mention is that some

of these tapes look pretty wretched on certain older tube-type sets, often to the point where they are unwatchable regardless of how much you try to adjust them. (See Big Nate's comments elsewhere in this issue.)

Now, lest you think I'm suggesting that we all go out and buy Time Base Correctors to get around these devices, let me clarify myself (and THE VIDEOPHILE) with a resounding "NO!" These folks encode these tapes for a reason--and a very good one. They really do have every right to go to any lengths possible to protect their copyrighted programs, even if it drives would-be copyists crazy. As we've advised in the past, you're much better off paying the money and getting a legitimate copy, not only for the legality, but also for the better quality in an original tape (as opposed to a 2nd generation dub).

I'm indebted to reader Dave C. of Littleton, CO, who provided me with an excellent article on TBC's from the July issue of Photomethods, plus the courtesy extended to me by Ralph Eck and Ernie Van Leeuwen of AVC Duplicating for helping me obtain photographs for this article. For more information on Video Processing, you can contact CVS at the previously mentioned address for their excellent pamphlet, "A Powerful Tool for Better Video," about Digital TBC's, which does an excellent job of explaining not only how they work, but also when and why you may need them, with a minimum of plugging their own products. Another great source of info is chapter 9 of Harry Kybett's Complete Handbook of Videocassette Recorders (\$5.95 from Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214--Thanks, Joe, for this excellent paperback!) Again, I know some of this reads like an A-Bomb Manual for General "Bat" Guano, and if there's anything you don't understand and would like to know more about, feel free to drop me a line and I'll do what I can to further confuse you.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Got lots of 'em this time. For one, I'd like to advise all readers to always, always start your tapes at least 10 seconds in advance to allow for the initial instabilities of both the cassette and your machine. This is a must for VHS, I might add, due to the severe dropout problem found at the beginning of most VHS cassettes I've used. I make it a habit to lay down the local station's ID and/or movie open (including previews) before the movies I record; if this isn't possible, I try to record a few seconds of video color black at the beginning of the tape for the same purpose. (Any reader who'd like a cassette of genuine color black or color bars for this purpose can send me a Beta, VHS, or 3/4" tape and I'll do it for the cost of postage.)

In addition to giving yourself this "leader time" at the beginning of the tape, you might follow the trick used by fellow videophile K.L. in nearby Van Nuys, who manually hand-winds all his cassettes to the silver foil leader after rewinding them normally with his deck. The reason: This usually gets rid of the horizontal line rippling through the screen at the beginning of improperly-stored tapes, caused by the cassette hub and shell creating a wrinkle through several layers of tape.

On Organizing a Collection--Revisited: After giving it some thought, I've decided that it is, after all, better to keep your tapes on the shelf in alphabetical order by title rather than by the number system mentioned a few issues back, if only for faster access to a given program. I still do number all of 'em, if only to keep track of where all the miscellaneous short bits and cartoons

are that make up the ends of many of my tapes, and I also still separate the features from the TV shows and vice-versa.

On Lending and Borrowing Tapes: I've finally broken down and adopted a system used by a couple of local collectors (including Jumpin' Joe), to keep a list of who's got which of my tapes that I occasionally loan out. To keep it as simple as possible, I make a note of the borrower's name, what they're taking, when they're borrowing it, plus also their driver's license number, date of birth, and shoe size. (Well, all but that last part, anyway.) This system avoids the confusion of "Awright, who's got my copy of PORKY IN WHACKY-LAND?" I'm also trying to keep a record of exactly how many tapes I owe other folks, plus what things they wanted me to dub for them. Both lists really help out my poor old feeble brain, which is what I used to use for memory storage. Horace Horsecollar in Glendale says he's using a home computer to sort out his library lists, want lists, borrowed lists, owed lists, and list lists, and that it works great--only he spends so much time at the computer, he never gets a chance to watch anything. (Just kidding, Horace!)

On VTR Specifications: I've had several people ask me what exactly do such lofty-sounding technical terms as "Signal-to-Noise Ratio," "Resolution," and "Frequency Response" mean, so here goes: Video Signal-to-Noise Ratio, or S/N Ratio as it is commonly called, is a measure of the slight video noise and grain present in a videotape playback. Minimum acceptable S/N Ratio for VTR's is around 35-43 dB, which goes for most home machines (when properly measured). Industrial 3/4" decks go up to 46 dB, and professional 1" and 2" VTR's go beyond 50 dB. Always look for the "Chroma S/N Ratio," which is the lowest and most honest way of measuring S/N. Audio S/N Ratio measures the hiss (noise) you hear on a recording. Should be at least 40 dB or better; the best 1" machines go past 55 dB. Resolution is the number of horizontal lines capable of being recorded by the VTR--the higher the better. Pro machines can easily do 525 lines or more; 3/4" decks can get around 350, and home machines rarely go above 240 (all specs are for color resolution, which is always less than B&W resolution). Frequency Response (for audio) is basically the amount of octaves a recorder is capable of capturing, measured in Hz or Hertz (cycles per second). Most decks can do an acceptable job of recording broadcast TV's 50-12,000 Hz range, though the human ear is capable of hearing above 20,000 Hz.

VTR Switching Systems: I read with interest Bob Kyle's article on his "VTR Isolator" switching system detailed in TVN #15 and found what might be a major problem with it--since he's using RF cables to patch one machine to another or to the TV set, there are several potential sources of RF interference that may screw up tapes during recording, caused by several 75 ohm RF cables reacting with each other because of their close proximity. RF interference is often seen as diagonal lines rippling across a picture, called "co-channel interference." I'm working on a direct audio/video patching system for 3 or 4 decks (and up to 2 monitors) that avoids most of these problems, and hope to have it ready by next issue.

Feature Film Length Problems: I read with sorrow Jim Swan's chagrin at being unable to trust either the Maltin or Scheurer "Movies on TV" books when checking film length, in TV #16. A local collector let me have a copy of Richard Baer's Film Buff's Bible (\$5.95 from Hollywood Film Archive, P.O. Box 36553, Hollywood, CA 90036). This 171-page large-size paperback lists over 13,000 films by title, including length, studio, and review/rating and seems to be far more accurate on timings than any source I've yet found. Its only draw-

back is that it was published in '72, and as a result does not list any recent films, but we're hoping that a new edition will be released soon.

Drastic Fubar Dept.*: There were a few last issue. First off, I may've confused some folks (including myself) in my mention of Sony's new projection TV's. While they do indeed use three tubes for generating an image, only two lenses are used to project it onto the special screen, unlike the Advent & Panasonic units which use 3 tubes and 3 lenses. Also, as erroneously reported elsewhere last issue, neither of the new Sony units use VIR circuitry to automatically lock onto incoming broadcasts, though Panasonic's CT-6000 does have this feature. (*name courtesy Don Rosa of the RBCC's Information Center)

What's the Funny Jack on the Back of the 8200, Part 3 Dept.: According to an unsigned letter from someone in Telluride CO (Telluride?) the 5-pin DIN jack is set up as follows: Pin 1 - Video input; Pin 1 - Audio Dub E-E Switching; Pin 3 - Ground for Pin 5; Pin

4 -Record E-E 12 volt switching voltage; Pin 5- -Audio Input. Pins 2 and 4, according to this source, "tie in with Q and hold control system (sic) presently available in Japan." I dunno what all this means, either, except that the jack is probably more useful to a service technician than a home recordist. So the mystery continues ...

At any rate, that seems to be about it for this month--unsqueezed, this time. Next issue: that long-awaited (sort of) treatise on video editing, the equally long-awaited survey of new Projection TV systems, new products at the CES, the Magnavox VideoDisc--iewed and reviewed, and ... the none-too-eagerly-awaited MCA/Disney/Sony lawsuit. Couldn't like it less.

Send gold bricks, subpoenas, rubber biscuits, and tickets to Acapulco to:

Marc Wielage
P.O. Box 480315
LA, CA 90048

Television networks doomed

By MICHAEL KILIAN
Chicago Tribune service

NEW YORK — To look at the dazzling splendor of the three television network headquarters is rather like looking, in 1914 at the dazzling splendor of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

You know that in just a few short years all that decadent pomp and luxury will be gone. Those network potentates who zoom off in their limousines to their \$100 lunches in their \$1,000 suits will soon be selling life insurance or something in Newark.

The television networks are as good as dead. Finis. Kaput.

They will expire for the same reason the medieval horse carts ultimately expired: There was a better way to make use of the wheel.

There is a better way to make use of the electrical transmission of pictures and sound.

THE NETWORKS became the gluttonous monopolies they are because, until recently, television broadcasting has employed the rather primitive means of sending its television signals to home receivers through the air. This confined television, more or less, to the 13 very high frequency (VHF) channels.

In most cities, this has meant a choice of watching only two or three stations — and, nationwide, a choice of only three major networks. As their only ethic is to squeeze the maximum possible revenue from every millisecond they are on the air, they devote all their thinking and energies to getting the maximum number of people sitting in front of the screen watching the same thing.

As a consequence, no matter where you turn your dial, you see the same bouncing bosoms, the same cops shooting the same dope addicts, and the same antic "news" shows that make Saturday Night Live's "Weekend Update" look like Edward R. Murrow. (I will admit to occasionally watching "Charlie's Angels" and "Flying High," but at least I turn the volume off.)

Some markets also have one or two independent stations, but there you always see the same "Dick Van Dyke" or "I Love Lucy" reruns. UHF stations, when their signal reaches more than six blocks, usually have the same thing dubbed in Spanish.

ONE REASON this wretched system is going to come to an end is all those new video



Kilian



Discussing strategy to win ratings
... from the movie "Network"

game machines, which allow you to beat your opponent at tennis or destroy his tanks right there on the home screen. Their secret is that, if people are going to devote all that time to television's mindless idiocy, they might as well be participants.

Another death blow to the networks is coming from home video tape recorders, which can now be had for as little as \$500. They not only allow the viewer to record and play back programs, they permit him to play video tape cassettes back on his home screen. And in New York right now, the most popular TV tape cassettes are of X-rated movies. Why bore yourself with some network's version of an airline stewardess bouncing around in her underwear when you can have hours and hours of Linda Lovelace?

But the biggest and most deserving blow to the networks is going to come from something called cable television. Actually, cable has always been the best way to transmit television signals, but it suffered from the fact that very

few homes had cables hooked up to them.

Now, something like 25 percent of the television homes in this country are hooked up to cable. Soon, more than 50 percent will be, and that is when the revolution will come.

FOR CABLE CAN carry not just 13 channels, but a couple of hundred of them. Instead of programming for a single mass audience, broadcasters will be able to go after a mass made up of a multitude of individual special-interest audiences. There will be a channel with opera and Broadway shows, a channel with jai alai games, a channel with stocks and bonds market reports and analyses, a channel with the world's great books. Cable will even be able to attract people who long ago gave up on television by carrying news programs with actual news. The technology is there; it's just a matter of getting everyone hooked up.

But the network executives needn't sell life insurance in Newark. Someone will have to produce all those X-rated cassettes.

THE VIDEO COMPOSITE

by BOB BURNS

Seems like only yesterday that I received my latest issue of "The Videophile" and already another deadline is here (I think it was yesterday). Anyway, I've received many letters this past week concerning the defeating of the "muting" circuitry which Marc had mentioned to me that he had discovered. Unfortunately, he has been unable to get the instructions to me as yet, so we'll all just have to be patient. I'm just relieved that someone has found a way to do this. So now relief is just a schematic away.

Panasonic's NV-8310



Panasonic's new entry into the industrial VHS market is its model NV-8310--similar in appearance to its earlier model NV-8300 (of which I am a proud owner), but with some very significant differences. It features a direct-drive quartz-locked motor for the video head cylinder. This makes the elimination of belts and pulleys possible so as to reduce picture instability. The capstan servo is also powered by a DC motor which insures a constant tape speed (unaffected by changes in line voltages and adaptable to 50 or 60 Hertz operation), another DC motor, used for tape handling, makes a total of 3 separate motors on the NV-8310 chassis.

The timer on the 8310 is similar to that on the RCA VCT-201; i.e., it allows turn-off time, as well as turn-on time, to be entered into memory. Also, you have the convenience of being able to set the digital timer forward and BACKWARD (just in case you set the timer for 2:01 instead of 2:00). It also features a still picture in pause (the most stable I've seen, by the way) and, with an additional control located on the front of the unit, allows you to go from a completely still picture (in pause) to up to 1.5 times normal speed. Another control, located next to the variable speed control on the front of the unit, converts the pause button to a "fast forward with picture" control. This moves the tape at twice normal speed and, with the front panel switch properly set, this feature is remote controllable. In reference to the "still picture," the unit features circuitry which I have yet to see in any other format of video recording. Referred to in Panasonic's literature as "Automatic Still-Frame Compensation," it automatically adjusts the annoying "sync" line OUT of the video picture. (If you have ever seen a "still picture" on any video machine, you were undoubtedly aware of this "sync" line which appears to be a horizontal line of distortion and interference in the video picture.)

The unit also has a built-in VHF/UHF tuner (something which is NOT usually found in commercial/industrial videocassette recorders), remote pause control, audio dubbing, an RF modulator for playing back cas-

ettes on a normal television and a wide variety of video/audio inputs and outputs. As I mentioned before, the unit is one of Panasonic's industrial machines and it operates at the faster "SP" speed only. I would imagine that Panasonic will introduce (or may have already introduced) a consumer model with identical features, but including the slower "LP" speed. However, one should consider that the industrial machines have internal circuitry and parts designed to withstand the sometimes harsh and continuous use imposed by industry. While the units may look similar on the outside (in reference to appearance and features), the industrial units are more ruggedly built.

VHS Stuff

I heard the groans go out across the country this past month when you RCA SelectaVision owners read my comments concerning the four-hour (or "LP") speed. PLEASE, trust me. No one wants to build up a fine video collection only to find that the majority of video enthusiasts aren't interested in trading tapes at the "LP" speed. The quality of the "LP" speed is such that trading tapes recorded at this speed is impractical. I'm not suggesting that the "LP" speed is useless. This speed is ideal for that sports event or miniseries that you intend to watch once and then erase, or when you want to record an entire evening's programming (and with the VCT-400, it's quite simple). With the introduction of the VK-375 tape (3/6 hour) this winter, I see no problem in using either speed for whatever.

I'm still receiving on the average of two letters per week for information on dubbing between VHS machines. The matter has been discussed very thoroughly in the last two issues of TV, so I'll not go into it this time. The two methods were detailed in issue #14, and I suggest that you try both to determine which provides you with the best results. Most people indicate that they cannot obtain (or are unaware) of the proper cables to be used in dubbing. The cables described by "The Big Nate" and myself should be available in any well-stocked electronics store (such as Radio Shack or Lafayette). Actually, using my RF method, no additional cables or accessories are necessary.

Odds 'n Ends

This week's issue of "VideoNews" indicates that 20th Century-Fox has purchased Magnetic Video. Hopefully, this will mark the beginning of major studios venturing into the videocassette market. We may soon be able to purchase the latest movie releases before they're shown in the theaters. The "powers that be" may soon realize that the home videocassette market is a virtual gold mine. That same issue of "VideoNews" also announced that Sony would indeed be marketing its videocassette changer after the first of the year. The changer has supposedly already been test marketed in some areas of California. (How 'bout it, Marc?) Sales will initially be aimed at owners of the earlier SL-7200 machines; increasing their record/playback time to 3 hours with the L-750 tape. A Sony rep informed me that these changers would not be adaptable to Sony's latest videocassette recorder (the SL-8200).

December marked the first anniversary of Warner Communications' "QUBE" cable television system located in Columbus, Ohio. For those of you who haven't been around these last couple of years, "QUBE" is the experi-

mental two-way cable system designed to be the vanguard of things to come for all of us. Briefly, the system provides the subscriber with 30 different "channels," broken up into three categories: Community, Premium, and the standard broadcast stations. The 10 "Community" channels provide a variety of entertainment, including a station which advises of local grocery prices, a 24-hour-a-day religious station (PTL Club, Oral Roberts, etc.), "town meetings"--presented at various times during the week and inviting audience participation, a sports channel with 3 or 4 college or pro events per night, a 24-hour "Golden Oldies" channel with such favorites as "Here's Groucho," "My Little Margie," "I Married Joan," "Ozzie and Harriet," "Life of Riley," ... I could go on forever--all without commercial interruption. The "Premium" channels provide one station dedicated solely to specials and the like. There are five movie channels which show just about everything you could think of, and then some. Older movies are shown without commercials, including some they're still showing on the late show (all uncut and unedited). Of course, QUBE shows everything HBO, Showtime, or

Home Theater ever hopes to show. (They have to, they've got 5 channels on 24 hours a day. That's a lot of movies.) There's also the "Adult" channel, available by special request. Films on it are of the X-rated variety, but strictly "soft-core." Something new they've recently started is known as the "Cult Cinema" dedicated solely to those movies which have developed a large following, such as "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," "Reefer Madness," and a full range of Bruce Lee movies. One of the movie channels is for kids, showing only "G" rated and animated movies. The price for QUBE's services is \$10.95 per month, which includes the twenty community and television channels. Each of the "Premium" channels is priced individually, ranging from \$1 per movie to \$2.50 for all day. It's truly a videophile's dream, and hopefully it will someday reach all of us.

That's all this trip ...

"STAY TUNED"

FOR BEGINNERS



ONLY

In response to popular demand, and to stem the ringing of my phone, I have decided to tackle the single most discomfiting question that regularly comes our way. Here goes:

Q. I'm about ready to purchase a VCR but am confused by all the competing advertisements and sales pitches. As one who expects to have a serious interest in home video, should I buy a VHS or Beta format recorder?

A. Yes, you should. I would recommend this course of action over purchase of the Quasar VX, Sanyo V-Cord II or 3/4" U-Matic formats for most home videophiles. However, the real question is which of the two (Beta or VHS) should you buy. This is one that we at THE VIDEOPHILE prefer not to answer. No one wants to be responsible for guiding you into a decision that you may later regret. After a great deal of soul-searching, however, I can now say that I have no reluctance to emphatically declare ... it depends!

Each format has its avid supporters, as can readily be observed by reading a few back issues of this magazine. (This issue, too, is top heavy with same, as the battle rages.) The Betamax came first and had the field pretty much to itself for about 2 years. Accordingly, the group of 1/2" VCR enthusiasts who first began organizing video fandom on a national basis through these pages were almost exclusively Beta format devotees. Sony and Co. is apparently taking a beating at the hands of the VHS promotional campaigns at present, and ownership among "videophiles" may now be near the 50/50 point.

Lest I be misunderstood, I want to make it clear that both systems are "good." They both do all the things that you expect of a VCR and they do them well. Much can be said about picture quality at different speeds, but for most people's requirements, picture quality alone is not different enough to justify choosing one format over another. There are other characteristics that may well make the difference for you, depending on your particular requirements. Among them:

1. Recording length -- All consumer model VHS machines, other than the JVC brand, offer two speed

recording capability that results in a maximum recording length on a single cassette of a little over 4 hours. Beta format machines have a maximum of a little over 3 hours, when using the L-750 (thinner) tape on a Beta machine that records in the X-2 speed. A thinner VHS tape is expected before long and this would increase the VHS maximum to over 6 hours on a single cassette. VHS format cassettes cost more, but if cost per hour is of paramount importance to you and you have no problem with the slightly lesser picture quality of the "long play" (4 hour) speed, you will probably be happier with a VHS recorder.

2. Ease of operation -- I say the Beta machines are preferred for this, and for more than one reason. The two formats utilize distinctly different systems by which the tape is loaded, withdrawn from the cassette, recorded (or played), drawn back into the cassette, and ejected. (See discussion in #15 and other previous issues.) Regardless of the merits of either system with regard to tape and/or head wear (the debate continues), the simple fact is that it is easier to make "good" edits on a Beta format machine. All edits on 1/2" consumer model VCR's are subject to hit-or-miss variation so far as "good edits" are concerned, but the Beta format is easier. I also view the VHS timer as being less attractive. I expect to be covering this in greater depth elsewhere in this issue, so I will only repeat here that the lack of a second hand, the fact that the VHS cannot be manually operated while in the "timer" mode, and its insistence on returning to 12:00 A.M. whenever a brief power failure occurs, tips the scales to the Beta side. So, if the ease of editing out commercials, dubbing from one machine to another, rapidly running through the Rewind, Stop, Play & Fast Forward keys, and timer operation is of prime importance, you will probably be happier with a Beta format recorder.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PROGRAMMABLE VHS MODELS?!!

Yes, the programmable feature of the RCA VCT-400, and similar models, is a very big plus. It works like a charm. Of course, if you've got two or three recorders anyway you can pretty much take care of recording on different channels at different times without one of these marvels, but the fact that it will turn off

as well as on when you want it to is a highly desirable feature. I understand that a programmable Beta format machine is on the way from TOSHIBA, so this particular advantage for VHS is a temporary one.

3. Price -- List prices, discount prices and model close-out prices may confuse this consideration a little, but the truth is that a machine in either format can be bought for about the same price from dealers whose ads appear in these pages. The price of blank tape is another matter. VHS cassettes are larger and contain more raw material than do Beta cassettes. Consequently, they cost more and probably always will. While the minimum cost per hour for a VHS recording is less than that for a Beta recording (roughly 4 hours for \$20 vs. 2 hours for \$13), the cost of VHS at the "2-hour" speed is greater per hour than is the cost of Beta at the "2-hour" speed. This differential is reflected in the fact that many dealers charge more for VHS prerecorded tapes.

4. Accessories and other considerations -- VHS machines have the audio dubbing feature and come with a remote pause control (it's great for lazy folks that don't mind a little tape and head wear caused by prolonged pausing). Most Beta format units lack these features at the present time. Portable units are just becoming available in both formats, but only the Beta format presently offers a full line of "step-up" industrial models. Contrary to what many of you may believe, most consumer model TV cameras can be used with machines of either format. Compatibility is not a problem with cameras.

5. Dependability and repairs-- The Beta format has been around long enough to prove itself, the VHS has not. However, most heavy users of the Betamax that I know have had their machines in the shop for one reason or another if it is more than a year old. Don't be surprised if this turns out to be the case with any VCR. Sales and repair personnel generally have more experience with the Beta simply because it has been around longer, but this will change. Frankly, I'd say that the machines are equally as hardy.

So, what's a fellow to do? Well, it still depends ... it depends on the particular demands and uses that you have in mind. I'll go out on a limb and say that you can't go too far wrong with either format. In fact, I'll go even farther out (translation: reveal my bias) and say that if the primary reason that you want a VCR is so that you can "time-shift" your TV viewing and record

programs while you are away or asleep, maybe even build a small collection of TV broadcasts, and do so at the least possible expense, then you might be happiest with a VHS format recorder, especially one with a programmable timer. On the other hand, if you are primarily interested in building a serious collection of video tapes (and can't afford the 3/4" U-Matic route) and see yourself copying and editing

tapes from one unit to another, perhaps even purchasing an industrial model in order to have features that are a step closer to professional level, then you might be happiest with a Beta format recorder.

Of course, the solution for the more affluent videophile (who views compatibility with all his fellows as of prime importance) is rather obvious. Get 'em both. Sigh.

GLOSSARY

Here again is the glossary first printed in TVN #14. Hello to all novices joining us this time around. Herewith the secret code:

VCR or VTR--Abbreviations for "Video Cassette Recorder" or "Video Tape Recorder."

VHS or BETA--Literally, VHS means "Video Home System," one of the two most prominent types of 1/2" VCR's. This system has been adopted by RCA, Panasonic, JVC, Magnavox, and GE, among others. "Beta" designates the other of the two prominent 1/2" VCR systems. The Beta format has been adopted by Sony, Zenith, Toshiba, Sears, and Sanyo (Betacord). [Tapes designed to be used with one of these formats will play on all recorders using that format, but will not be able to be played in a machine designed for the other format.]

HBO--Home Box Office, one of the pay cable systems available in some parts of the country. These systems, some of which broadcast by satellite, feature uninterrupted motion pictures of recent vintage. (eg. *The Deep*, *Annie Hall*) as well as other special programming.

X-2--With respect to the Beta format, this means that the VCR or cassette will play for 2 hours without changing tapes. X-1 machines will play a maximum of 1 hour. For VHS machines, "LP" (long play) or "SP" (standard play) are sometimes used to designate the difference between the 4-hour and the 2-hour mode on those VHS machines which have two speeds.

DUB--To make a copy of one cassette from another, through the use of two VCR's. Also stands for the copy itself. Sometimes "dupe" is used to indicate the same.

PRERECORDED TAPE--As opposed to a blank tape, this is a tape which you buy because it already has a film or other material recorded on it. Same as buying music on tape.

PUBLIC DOMAIN--This refers to a feature/film/tape, whatever, that is not protected by copyright. This results from a work never having been registered for copyright or from a neglect to renew a copyright that has expired. A work which is in the "public domain" may be legally sold, exhibited or duplicated by anyone without concern for the rights of the studio or producer who originally created it. There may be exceptions in the case of films based on books whose copyrights have not expired, but that's another story.

DROPOUT--Simply put, dropouts are those little horizontal white streaks that flash across the screen when you are playing back a video tape. They are most often the result of minor defects in the tape, and are most noticeable in tapes which are less carefully manufactured (i.e., cheaper).

A number of Questions and Answers for beginners only have appeared in issues #13, 14, and 15 of this magazine. For those who want to go back to the very beginning, there are also lots of tips and tidbits for the novice in *The Videophile's Annual: 1978*, which reprints material from issues #1-6 and is still available from our "Cash-In Products Division" for a mere \$6.00.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! May I assume that most of you have survived another Holiday Season in fine style and are now placing bets as to whether or not you feel you'll be able to live through another wild and crazy year. It was a super Christmas for me which I spent with my family out in Denver. My brother, a videophile himself, as of last Christmas, and reader of "The Videophile," was really surprised when his "open me first" gift turned out to be a light-weight RCA black & white TV camera to record the festive day for posterity. My trip west took me through cities with videophiles like: Kansas City, St. Louis and Indianapolis. In Indy a very good friend, Steve (Super) Cooper at WIFE reads this "modest" publication cover-to-cover. Central Indiana readers can tune him in afternoons 1-5 PM on 13/WIFE-AM! I've got a couple of reviews this time and some interesting observations, so on with the latest from a very wintery-Great Lake State.

First of all a few words about the Toshiba 5310. It is the best buy in beta. The L.E.D. readout on the timer is bigger and easier to read than most. The remote pause is a little cheap, but very good, none-the-less. Best of all—it has audio-dub. To we production oriented types, this feature alone is worth the price of the set. The edits are excellent, better than 95% of them all look like camera-takes, very clean, very little (if any) break-up at all! The styling is sharp (Ooops, sounds like another brand) with the function keys mounted low (like the Sears or Sanyo beta machines). Everything it has in the way of controls is front mounted. In our area they are going for about \$795, in some cases even less than that! It's X2 only, but well worth looking at.

As regular readers of this column know, I am a beta-man all the way. This past summer, when I was interviewed on WJR in Detroit, an RCA representative heard the program and contacted me. Recently (just before Christmas) he was kind enough to supply me with a new RCA Select-a-vision programable VHS unit to run it through the paces. Included in the deal was a new RCA Color Camera with electronic view-finder and zoom lens. For the price (around \$1,300 complete) it does a very good job. The camera has three light settings: outdoor, indoor and fluorescent lighting. It also has a light meter on the back of the unit as well as a light-level indicator on the electronic viewfinder. Another electronic indicator tells the operator of the camera when the tape machine is running and when it is not. The camera has remote start and stop capabilities. Also, on the back of the unit is a setting for the red drive and the blue drive to tint the picture correctly. Very sophisticated piece of equipment. The biggest drawback is the lag when pointed to bright light sources, ie: open flame, spotlights, etc. But, even professional TV cameras in network applications often smear a bit on bright lights. Color still needs more light than black and white, but the quality of this new RCA camera is outstanding. Right now, and for the money, it is probably the best buy I've seen.

Now, the VHS pre-programmable VCR. My modified Sony SL-7200 (now with over 200,000 miles on it) has me very spoiled. The picture is on the screen the instant you press the play button. Even modified SL-8200's aren't that fast. So, VHS machines still frustrate me when it comes to quick searching for that exact spot on the tape you can't wait to show a friend. The new RCA machines do, however, have from what I can tell, some very good features. The electronic tuner is great. As an owner of an MGA color TV with all-electronic tuning, I've enjoyed instant channel selection for almost 2 years now. It's the only way to go. The old click-click method is on its way out. The memory bank in the RCA allows you to program it in a number of ways far too complex to try to explain here. The timer and clock system are VERY flexible—much more than most VCR's. You can set the clock to go forward or backward, hold—number of hours and minutes the machine is on for. It, of course, changes channels automatically and you do have the ability to tape 4 hours of programs on multiple channels all in one evening. Another VHS plus is the fact that the pause mode places a small air-space between the tape and the head-drum, so you can leave it in pause for a lot longer than 3 minutes without doing any harm to either the machine or the tape. The major technical controls and channel set-up knobs are hidden behind the front panel which swings down and open. I am not as anti-VHS now that I have played with this new RCA. Panasonic and other VHS brands will be out with programmable models soon, if they're not already on the market. Toshiba is slated to offer the electronic tuning and programmable feature on their new Beta units soon. The bottom line is check out the new RCA programmable VCR model VCT-400 and the exceptional new RCA color TV camera, model CC-002.

Couple of closing comments regarding the equipment that I tested. Here's a picture of the actual camera that I used. Incidentally, we put it to serious use when I produced a sales demonstration tape to be used at the 1979 N.A.B. convention in March. On a quality Sony TV, the resolution and crispness of the picture, made with both photo floods and fluorescent lights, was comparable (to most viewers) to a camera costing \$5,000-\$20,000 in a professional TV studio. It will work in ordinary room light, but brighter lighting really brings out true colors. Outside, the camera is incredible. I was very impressed with it. And yes, it will work on Sony, beta or VHS—I know.

Now I know what "bad Scotch" looks like. Little white specs all over the place. Tsk tsk. Sure glad the new stuff is better by far. The new Scotch video tape is BLACK, like Sony, some brown is OK, but, some of it is the victim of the faulty "run." Good luck and tape-on!

Home video is now three years old in the ½ inch cassette format and the changes and advancements are happening at a rate so fast one can hardly keep up with it all. In late November I had a chance to meet a videophile in western Pennsylvania that lived in an electronic fantasyland. Never have I been so blown away buy an audio and video set-up, and to ice the cake, he was a damn nice guy—which is something that I can say for most of us. We all trust one another a lot. Let's not lose that as we work our way in to another exciting technological year .. Hope the TVN survey didn't place me in the dumper. If not, we'll talk to you next time from the pages of the only magazine to bring together so many, so soon, so effectively and so inexpensively—Thank you Jim!





VCR NEWS & VIEWS

By STEVE COMET

SL-8600/THE MUTING CIRCUIT

While Sony has improved and desensitized its muting circuit in the SL-8600, making it somewhat less offensive than in the SL-8200, eliminating the blanking

feature altogether may still be desirable. Besides the obvious benefit of instant play -- you will, as in the case of the older machine gain a poor, but recognizable still frame picture in pause.

As with the SL-8200, the procedure is straight forward - but be prepared for a somewhat more difficult modification. This is due only to the fact that more of the machine must be disassembled to access the necessary board.

The modification will be performed on the system control (SRP) board. This board also houses the remote pause, and the +12 volt power supply circuits.

Here is what you'll need to proceed: a Phillips head screwdriver, needle nose pliers, electrical tape and a thin dull edged tool - such as a jewelers screwdriver.

Allow 30 minutes or more to perform the operation - and proceed exactly as described below. The exploded view (Figure 1) may be used as a guideline.

Place the machine on a work surface. Remove all cables and unplug the line cord. At this time the machine should be facing you. Remove the six top plate screws - and pry up the top plate - noting that it is held captive by a snap action lip.

Removal of the top plate will free the two side panels - but do not remove them at this time - as we will next want to support the machine on an end panel. Flip the VCR on edge - with the tuner dials up. You may now remove the right end panel if you so desire. Next unscrew the four chrome plated screws securing the bottom pan. The pan will come away without removing the rubber feet.

Replace the machine right side up - and facing you. The lefthand side panel may now be removed if you so desire. Now the front facia must be removed. The two screws securing the facia are located directly above the power switch "on off time" notations - and above, and just to the left of the VHF tuner knob. Remove the screws and pull the facia towards you and pry off. The board now visible is the SRP board. In order to make the necessary changes - we must access the boards connectors - located on the component side. To do this the digital clock must now be removed.

Four screws secure the clock to the frame. The first screw is just to the left of the digital readout, the second is to the right of the readout, and the third is to the left of the readout below the switches. The final screw is located on the left side of the machine - and passes through the small green circuit board and into the molded plastic clock frame. Remove the screws completely from the clock frame - and note their relative locations - to aid in their replacement.

The clock is now secured only by 2 runs of multi conductor ribbon cable. Gently pull the clock forward and to the left - (like swinging open a door) just enough to allow you access to the SRP board's screws.

Remove the 4 plated corner screws (Figure 3) which secure the board. Do not attempt to loosen the three center screws. The circuit board may now be lowered, and the component side exposed. Take care not to snag the white wires which are located on the right side of the board.

At this point reposition the clock so as to allow the SRP card to lay flat on the work surface. Do not be too concerned if the ribbon cable resists your pulling. It will take a moderate amount of abuse without any problem.

The muting circuit in the SL-8600 requires that two wires be terminated in order to defeat muting. These are located at pin position 1 on connector CN-4002, (for audio) and at pin position 1 on connector CN-4004 (for video). In both cases the wires are color coded yellow. Locate the two connectors which are on the lefthand side of the board, and verify their numbers which appears on the board at the base of the sockets. The numbers printed on the board may be abbreviated, thus CN-4002 may appear as CN02, and CN-4004, as CN04.

Now, the connectors must be removed from their respective sockets. Using a needle nose pliers, rock the connector back and forth while exerting slight upward pressure, until it is freed from its socket. Repeat this procedure for both CN02 and CN04.

Next it will be necessary to pull the wire (and contact pin) from its channel in the connector. This is best accomplished by using the small jewelers screwdriver or similar tool as shown (Figure 2). While pressing, it will be necessary to pull firmly on the wire. You may find it advantageous to get assistance from a third hand for this procedure. When the wire has been removed, take care not to damage the delicate spring action on the end of the contact pin. **DO NOT APPLY POWER AT THIS TIME. PLUG BOTH CONNECTORS INTO THEIR SOCKETS.** Carefully tape the bare contact pins with electrical tape in such a way as to allow you to untape them should you wish to reverse the modification. The two yellow wires may be left where they are.

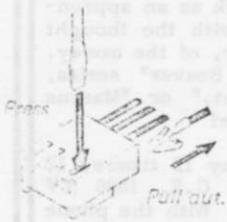


Figure 2

That completes the modification. If you desire to check your work at this time - you must replace the digital clock, the SRP board, and secure the front facia. Unless

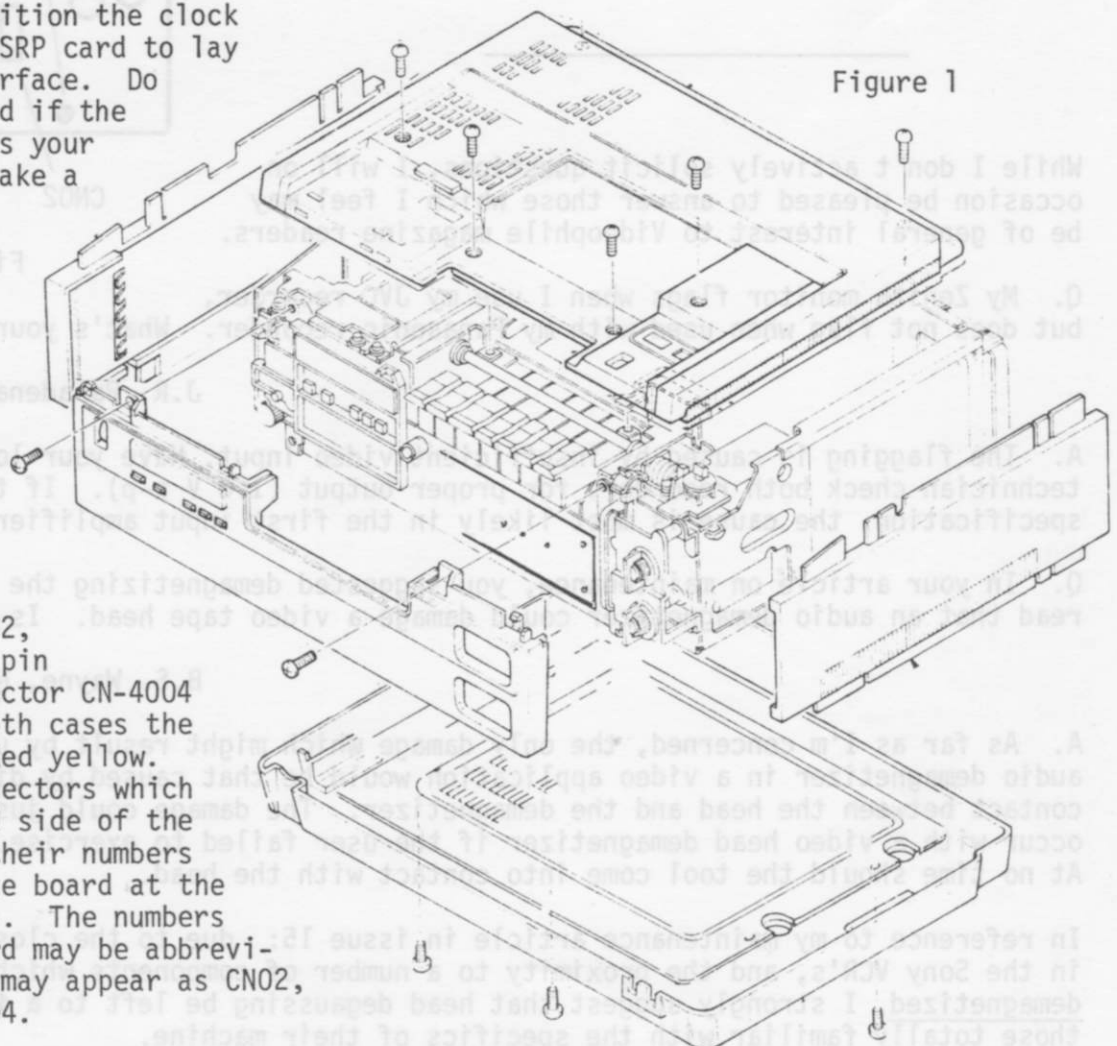


Figure 1

the facia is replaced - the machine will not shuttle tape.

Verify that the VCR (and clock) are functioning properly and complete the reassembly.

SRP Board
remove these screws only

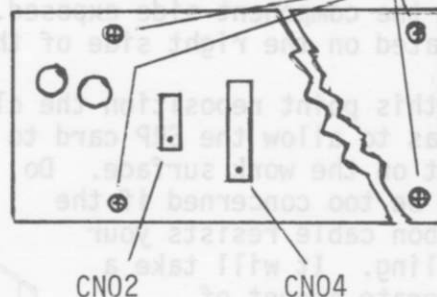


Figure 3

While I don't actively solicit questions, I will on occasion be pleased to answer those which I feel may be of general interest to Videophile magazine readers.

Q. My Zenith monitor flags when I use my JVC recorder, but does not flag when used with my Panasonic recorder. What's your opinion?

J.R. Pasadena, Texas

A. The flagging is caused by insufficient video input. Have your local service technician check both recorders for proper output (1.0 V p-p). If they check to specification, the cause is most likely in the first input amplifier of your monitor.

Q. In your article on maintenance, you suggested demagnetizing the video heads. I read that an audio demagnetizer could damage a video tape head. Is this true?

B.S. Wayne, New Jersey

A. As far as I'm concerned, the only damage which might result by using an audio demagnetizer in a video application would be that caused by direct physical contact between the head and the demagnetizer. The damage could just as likely occur with a video head demagnetizer if the user failed to exercise proper caution. At no time should the tool come into contact with the head.

In reference to my maintenance article in issue 15: due to the close quarters in the Sony VCR's, and the proximity to a number of components which should not be demagnetized, I strongly suggest that head degaussing be left to a technician or those totally familiar with the specifics of their machine.

Video Laffs

By Ron Seaman

I was ready. In less than 3 hours, there would be 7 shows on at the same time that I had to see. Johnny Carson interviewing his pet rock, Howard Cosell playing ping pong with the Pope on "Celebrity Religion," and especially the Saturday Nite Erotic Movie, "Bagel Queen," featuring Charles Bronson as a go-go dancer in a gay delicatessen.

I had spent the day hooking up my 12 Selecta-Visions side by side and waved to my wife as she and the kids drove away to see her lawyer. (Once last winter, during the "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood Rerun Festival," they took a two-week trip to Nigeria that I didn't notice until I realized that the new guy at the dinner table was a pygmy.)

I warmed up for the big nite by playing the piano for 2 hours, which I figured would help me operate 12 pause controls at once.

Gazing fondly at a box of 12 new video tapes, I tried to forget all my problems at work as an apprentice cumberbund maker, and glowed with the thought of what lay ahead. Think of the glory, of the money, of having the entire "Leave It To Beaver" series, starting with "Beaver In His Bassinet," or "Marcus Welby" when he started as a male nurse!

As the time grew nearer, I set my 12 timers, 12 play and record buttons, polished 4 G.E. 1000 TV screens, and made 2 pounds of fudge. With the phone off the hook, doors locked, and a quart of Visene, I was ready for Saturday night.

There! See that girl dancing around the summer sausage and bologna? That's Bronson.

The VHS Network

Greetings once again, and welcome to another humble, yet hastily prepared, column. This time we will discuss the consequences and future expectations of the Teleprompter/Viacom merger as it relates to Showtime's future programming and policies. Also included this time is a short discussion on incompatibility in BOTH VHS and BETA modes as well as the usual collection of tips, trivia, and wit (?).

First of all, this column is somewhat shorter this month due to many things which occurred since its last installment, most notably the long delay in the actual production of THE VIDEOPHILE (Nov./Dec.). Some of the problems encountered since last time include the fact that Guam had sold out all the 3/6 hour VHS tape, which killed one feature I was planning, plus the computer-aided reception system I wanted to cover is also postponed due to its size and ambiguities. However, the biggest problem to face your humble columnist is the fact that The Big Nate broke his arm this Thanksgiving at, of all places, The Magic Kingdom of Disneyland, California. That's right, gang! (And I don't even like Disney flicks.) Contrary to popular belief, I was not pursued through the park grounds, impaled by the Matterhorn bobsled, or mistakenly identified as Marc Wielage; although I did wear my TVN T-shirt and the force was not with me. It was a totally fruitless day, except that I was able to sell a Videophile subscription to the Emergency room X-ray technician. So on with the column.

SHOWTIME

Last time we met, there was something of a furor over the Teleprompter/Showtime merger and the fact that some 13% of the people who now enjoy HBO are being switched to Showtime. Naturally, you 13% are somewhat apprehensive about losing HBO in favor of Viacom's Showtime, so I would like to present a brief report on Showtime which I hope will put you more at ease.

I have had Showtime for 2½ years and have watched it grow from a fly-by-night, dirt-ball operation, featuring 2 movies a week and a very unique programming schedule (who would ever schedule ROLLERBALL four times, back-to-back, on the same night, and who else but me would watch it all 19 times it was scheduled and still beg for more?), to a "well-organized," multi-faceted entertainment medium. Showtime has been diversifying its schedule with more and more musical performances and comedy shows, as well as producing its own programs. I also get the HBO guide and would like to report that Showtime shows every major picture available to pay cable the same as HBO, though HBO usually shows them from ½ to 2½ months earlier simply because they front more mega-bucks for that privilege. I think that Showtime's guide is better than HBO's (though neither can hold a candle to the Z Channel guide which includes complete cast lists, is in magazine format--with ads, some video--and comes every 6 weeks, but not as good as the On Subscription TV Guide which is also available in greater Los Angeles/Orange counties.

I do have some peevs about Showtime, mainly its constant inability to consistently start their programming on time, though it's getting better at it. Also, as many of you know, most local cable companies are notorious for bad reception (even though improved reception is still pay cable's major selling point) which until recently was a problem here. The use of satellites and microwave transmissions, as well as the beefing up of the

cable power of local signals, has resulted in much improvement. And who in Long Beach can't remember when someone on the transmission end in Costa Mesa put the second half of BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS on line instead of the concluding half of NASHVILLE and let it run 25 minutes before they caught on (Robert Altman will never be the same). Another point worth mentioning ...

My surveys indicate that, in most parts of the country, Showtime is cheaper than HBO, Z Channel, or On Subscription TV. Also, Showtime shows some terrific 10 and 12 minute trailers in the daytime when there is no scheduled programming.

THINGS TO COME ON SHOWTIME

Since Showtime is expanding greatly, they are improving the service and guide drastically. (I believe they will soon be including full cast lists and credits. They once claimed it was too expensive, though they never answered my letter criticizing this policy, which included a Xerox copy of the Z Channel guide, at the time costing the same as Showtime and having a much smaller circulation.) Viacom has revised its first-run programming budget for Showtime to nearly \$7 million and has lined up a lot of talent for its "On Tour" series (similar to HBO's "Standing Room Only" series) which will feature 90-minute, live-on-tape performances, concerts, and nightclub acts--all uncensored and spontaneous. Committed entertainers so far include: Lola Falana, Crystal Gayle, and Roy Clark, as well as live rock concerts still to be announced. Showtime is also producing its own specials, with some programs being developed by Chuck Braverman (American Time Capsule). They conduct many monthly surveys and welcome viewer response. For more info write to them at this address:

Jeffrey Reiss, President
Showtime Entertainment, Inc.
1211 Ave. of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Problems & info

We've had some problems out here and have heard from other people with problems of a similar nature. The most pressing problem appears to be the poor quality of some prerecorded tapes which are being offered legally for sale, many thru the pages of THE VIDEOPHILE. Here is one glaring example: My friend and fellow columnist, Jim Swan, has purchased many of the prerecorded films (as have I) which are available thru Magnetic Video (MV) and their bullshit branch, The Video Club of America (VCA), as well as from other firms which have the rights to the Nostalgia Merchant & RKO collections. We have viewed these products with mixed emotions. MV's PATTON is excellent, whereas their versions of FRENCH CONNECTION, M.A.S.H., and VANISHING POINT look very dark and are very difficult to view. True, many of these films are done with natural lighting, but that is no excuse for such bad quality. Also, VCA attempted to rip me off, via a price increase, after I had already ordered over the phone. I was very rudely treated and even sworn at by their answering service which refused to forward my complaint to the VCA or to MV. Finally, I called my credit card bank, which I am glad to report went after them like a Bat out of Hell, and won my claim (I had documented proof). By the way, MV, I also sent a letter to the Interstate

Commerce Commission and the Better Business Bureau to record my difficulty. Swan's problems, though not as bloodcurdling as mine, were just as frustrating. Recently Jim sent away to CR Sales of Indianapolis for CITIZEN KANE, KING KONG (1933), and THE THING. After waiting 3 months (since CR had "legitimate" supply problems), Jim got his three tapes. Overjoyed that three of his favorite flicks had finally arrived, Jim popped one into his RCA, only to have it violently roll over. By adjusting the vertical on his TV all the way to the right, he was able to get the roll stabilized, though it still jittered. We pondered on this situation for a couple of days until another of our friends, Jim Esparza (first documentor of the Esparza Farness Test), came up with the answer--CR (or Nostalgia Merchant or whoever mastered the tapes) had used a special dubbing procedure to make the product non-transferable so that other folks could not make copies of their product. I personally think that it is O.K. for them to "whammy" their stuff, but not at the expense of making that product inferior to the original buyer who pays good bucks for this stuff which is already at inflated ripoff prices. To get EDITORIAL for a minute (got the scissors ready, J.L.?), I think it really sucks to have to pay such outrageous prices (notice how they are all the same; where are you anti-trust feds now that we need you?) only to receive non-prime product in return. Most of you guys don't even use 35mm prints and you discriminate against X-1 Beta folks. For shame! Hopefully, in the long run, the legitimate dealers who truly want to supply the home enthusiast will triumph over the fly-by-night parasites. [O.K., Nate, no scissors, but while I agree with your last sentence, I don't really think it belongs in a context which implies that some of the largest suppliers around (those you mentioned) are fly-by-night outfits.--Ed.]

Now back to the regularly scheduled column: Swan found that, by adjusting his TV's vertical hold completely to the right, the picture on KING KONG and THE THING stabilized to a watchable degree, while on my TV they would still jitter and vibrate. At deadline time, Swan had returned CITIZEN KANE with a letter asking for a refund and further explanation. The outcome will be reported next time. I discussed this situation with Ramblin' Marc who explained that the Nostalgia Merchant tapes will play fine on the Sony or other later model TV's, but will jitter on older or inferior TV's. So, if you are unsure of your TV, get a money-back guarantee. Most reputable dealers will give you one.

MACHINE INCOMPATIBILITY

Just a few notes here. We have observed that if anything recorded on the older RCA recorders ('77 model if you wish) is played on the new models, or vice-versa, the tracking control must be adjusted to the "4 o'clock" position on the VCR. Anyone know why? [See died-in-the-wool Joe Mazzini's column.--Ed.] Also, why is everyone screaming about 4-hour incompatibility in the VHS mode, and no one is mentioning the problems in combining Sanyos or Toshiba's with Sonys or RCA's? How about "equal time," guys? Where are the facts? Also, there are some skew problems on non-Japanese TV's when you combine a '78 VHS and a '77. Why? (See Chris Pearson's excellent article in TVN #15.)

Tidbits

In lieu of 'Swan's Song' this month (Jim is planning for next time and wishes to remind you all that the Maltin TV MOVIES book is good and available for \$2.95 at bookstores near you), I would like to present some trading tips penned by the erudite Dave & Susan Geffner (of mini-ad fame--that's right, gang, they're

together again) to facilitate etiquette, good-will, and courtesy:

1. Always send tapes completely rewound, unless cued up for some reason.
2. Always try to send new tape or only-been-used-once tape.
3. Always include a Blank Label.
4. Always protect tapes when you mail them (sandwich bags protect very well against dust, and tin or aluminum foil keeps out airport x-rays, if necessary).
5. Always put 15 to 30 seconds of lead time at the beginning of a dub.
6. Always proof your copy in 4 to 5 places.
7. Provide a temporary label. (Everyone has their own labeling system--I use a white grease pencil or scotch tape on a tab--Nate.)
8. Do not let the Esparza Farness Test (EFT) influence your tape quality evaluation.

[Nate, pardon my constant interruptions, but I would add that tapes should be securely wrapped in a section of newspaper and mailed in a padded mailer or box. As to content, it's always nice to put a surprise or two on the end. Dave does this, I know. "The Complete Home Video Recorder Book," reviewed elsewhere herein, states that airport x-rays are no problem. (Can someone tell us for sure?) Lastly, how about letting the rest of us in on what the heck the "Esparza Farness Test" is all about, anyway.--Ed.]

Well, friends, that's it for this time. Hopefully, next month we'll have a whole grab bag full of info and tips and the arm will be better, as well as the typing finger. Next month I hope to mention more new products from SHOWTIME VIDEO VENTURES, including their latest creation which is now on the drawing boards--a power amp with a better signal-to-noise ratio that also enhances color! That's right, color! Their new address is: 230 1/2 Third St., Tillamook, OR 97141--and, as always, tell them that you read it in THE VIDEOPHILE. As usual, I must extend thanks to the following folks: Mike Stevens (four stars from Maltin for you), Judy D., Susan and David Geffner, Randy & Jim, Brad & Janet, Jim Sutton, and a special flick of the pause key to Bruce and Amy Epstein. Please send VCR's, first born children, money, cheap & expensive slurs, plus anything else to:

The Big Nate
c/o R & D Fernandez
2617 Deerford St.
Lakewood, CA 90712

P.S. Two independent time charts for 4-hr. mode & 2-hr., one by Swan & one by me, are still available for VHS machines for the ridiculously low price of a stamped self-addressed envelope and/or 10 Krugerands. Also Trivia Question of the year: Swan and I have plowed through every page of the new Maltin movie book twice without success. Please help us, as we are going crazy. Does anyone out there know the name of the TV movie that starred David Janssen & Keenan Wynn (we think), where they played independent truckers hired by the government to take a top secret cargo from LA to Houston (?) in 18 hours? Wynn is killed and Janssen rams a helicopter with the truck, only to get to Houston 6 hours late, and then finds that the truck was a decoy filled with sand. I know it sounds familiar, but if any of you know it or have it on tape, let me know. Thanx.



Now that the review and evaluation of video tapes available for the home market is becoming a major feature within these pages, we feel it necessary to preface these reviews with a few remarks and admonitions:

1. Lest there be any doubt, and in case your expectations are unrealistically high, the editor of this magazine would like to say that he has seen few, if any, prerecorded tapes of color feature films that have a picture quality as good as everyday network broadcast television. There are reasons for this that we hope to expound on in a future issue.

2. Most of the tapes reviewed herein were specifically requested from the mentioned dealers. It is unlikely that they would consciously send us a defective copy to be used for this purpose.

3. Any reputable dealer will exchange or otherwise make adjustments for any tape that is defective or fails in some way to be what it is represented to be. Please advise us of any disreputable dealers with whom you may have experience.

4. Unlike audio cassettes, prerecorded video cassettes are currently being sold on standard length tapes. Often this means that there will be a substantial amount of blank tape left at the end, maybe even enough to use for a 1/2 hour recording, thereby perhaps offsetting the otherwise unjustifiable expense of purchase. If a tape contains a film that runs, oh, say 90 minutes, you can be pretty sure of getting usable blank space along with it (at least in VHS or Beta formats).

5. The source from which we obtained each tape is indicated at the end of each review. Their full addresses are set forth at the end of this entire column.

TED REINHART Tape Reviews

Our deadline pressure this issue has resulted in good ole Ted's usual remarks and bushel of reviews getting bumped, for the most part, until next issue. Ted did tell me that he is just back from the trail and has rounded up a small herd of 'em. We'll have those soon and, until then, we hope that these few will tide you over. Ride on, Ted!



RIDE, RANGER, RIDE

Credits: Cast--Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette, Kay Hughes, Monte Blue, Max Terhune, Chief Thunder Cloud.

Story: The Governor of Texas issues an order to disband the Texas Rangers, allowing the former Rangers to join the U.S. Cavalry stationed in the area. All the Rangers agree to become "horse soldiers," including Lt. Gene Autry, scout Max Terhune, and Pvt. Smiley Burnette. Indian problems abound, but the commander of the cavalry unit maintains that they can be solved by "proper understanding," not by force. Monte Blue, Director of Indian Affairs, and friend of the commander, turns out to be the catalyst for all the unrest. Monte dons complete regalia (war paint and all) and leads the red warriors on raids against ranchers and farmers. Gene and his former Ranger group are discharged from the U.S. Cavalry for brawling. From this point, they persuade the Governor to reorganize the Rangers, and they later rescue the Army boys from a sure Indian massacre.

Evaluation: This is one of the early Nat Levine productions, featuring his favorite protege, Gene Autry. *Ride, Ranger, Ride* is definitely a superior effort from among a group of "hit and miss" Autry's of this period. Gene has a strong supporting cast, with a particularly good comedy performance turned in by Chief Thunder Cloud. Smiley Burnette exercises control with his sometimes over-silliness. Max Terhune, without depending much on his absurd dummy, Elmer, is quite enjoyable. The Autry vocal refrains also are above par. Quality-wise, I found this Beta X2 cassette to provide both good picture and sound. This is not the greatest Autry movie ever made, but any fan of Gene would gladly accept this as part of his western collection.

Source: Thunderbird Films.

THE LAST COMMAND (Republic)

Credits: Cast--Sterling Hayden, Richard Carlson, Ernest Borgnine, Anna Maria Alberghetti.

Story: This is the oft-told tale of the Texan struggle for independence from Mexico. In the John Wayne version, *The Alamo*, Davy Crockett was the dominant personality to lead this struggle. *The Last Command* centers on Jim Bowie, played by Sterling Hayden. A major portion of this motion picture deals with, I'm certain, a fictitious aspect of Bowie's personal life. The movie concludes, as all "Texas Independence" movies do, with the large-scale battle for the Alamo.

Evaluation: The major drawback in this movie is Sterling Hayden. I can't "buy" him in this part. And, too, I continuously was comparing this picture with *The Alamo*, which really isn't fair, but there you are. It's obvious that Herbert Yates of Republic sunk many pesos in this project. The Max Steiner musical score is fantastic, and I highly approve of Gordon MacRae singing the opening theme. The tricolor images, both landscape and human, look fine, and all reproduced well on the VHS tape I viewed. I'd have to tab this a "to each his own" product.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant.

MAN FROM CHEYENNE (Republic)

Credits: Cast--Roy Rogers, George (Gabby) Hayes, Gale Storm, Sally Payne, Lynne Carver, Bob Nolan, and The Sons of the Pioneers.

Story: Roy Rogers returns home and makes two discoveries: (1) His childhood girlfriends (Storm and Carver) are all grown up into beautiful women; (2) The ranchers are plagued with an epidemic of cattle rustling. We learn that Ms. Carver is responsible for the rustling. She hates the West, and wants to amass a fortune so she can return east and live in luxury for the rest of her life. Her foreman, in active charge of the stealing, hides the animals in a blocked canyon, access to which is gained by an unknown tunnel. Roy discovers the tunnel, and finds evidence that Lynne's ranch hands are the rustlers. Not believing she is involved, Roy goes to warn her. Her foreman tries to kill Roy, and at this point Lynne shows her hand. Roy and the foreman fight while the female leader makes her getaway. Gale Storm prevents Lynne Carver's escape, and Roy, The Sons of the Pioneers, and Gabby capture the rest of the gang.

Evaluation: This early Roy Rogers vehicle features much that was not typical in his many westerns. Gabby Hayes tries his hand (or vocal chords) at singing...and does right well. Gale Storm (remember *My Little Margie*?) makes a top-notch leading lady--in every way as good as Dale Evans. Gale is a total delight; as cute as can be. I would have liked to see more of this lass in B-westerns. Bob Nolan, leader of the "Sons," is given a meaty part in this movie, and carries his histrionics off to perfection. The Pioneers, themselves, are as great with their warbling as ever...I could listen to them forever.

I also like the "gimmick" of the lady leader. It's refreshing to see a pretty villain. This is a super little western. The sound and picture quality rate high. I viewed a VHS cassette, packaged in Thunderbird's special new plastic snap-closed container (airtight)--reasonably priced when you order the container with the purchase of a videocassette.

Source: Thunderbird Films.

Now, for the TED REINHART SERIAL SPECIAL: I continue to be amazed by the response from all you fine folks out there in THE VIDEOPHILE readership. I really appreciate all the encouraging letters. My special offer this issue is the 15 chapter serial "Riders of Death Valley." This is the highest budgeted serial ever made, exceeding \$1 million, and often referred to as the Million Dollar Serial. The giant cast includes Buck Jones, Dick Foran, Lon Chaney, Jr., Charles Bickford, Noah Berry, Jr., and many others. All 15 chapters are priced as follows: Beta X-2 (3 tapes) -- \$75; VHS 4-hour (2 tapes) -- \$75; VHS 2-hour (3 tapes) -- \$85. Please add \$3 postage for each shipment. Am still looking for "The Gunfighter" with Gregory Peck, "Northwest Passage" with Spencer Tracy, and "Sequoia" with Gene Parker. Write me at: TED REINHART, Edgewater Acres Resort, Alexandria PA 16611.

J. Lowe Chips In



THE LONDON ROCK AND ROLL SHOW

Content: The scene is a massive outdoor stadium, London, England, the 1972 Rock and Roll Show--a live concert performance by some of the very biggest name performers from the mid-'50's Golden Age of Rock and Roll. Each of the headline performers is considered a giant by his respective followings: Bo Diddley, who performs "Roadrunner" and "Mona"; Jerry Lee Lewis, with "High School Confidential," "Whole Lot of Shakin' Goin' On," and others; Bill Haley and the Comets, doing "See You Later, Alligator" and, you guessed it, "Rock Around the Clock"; Little Richard, who offers "Lucille," "Rip It Up," "Good Golly, Miss Molly," "Tutti-Frutti," and "Jenny, Jenny" (and complains off stage that he should have gotten top billing); and a wild closing set by Chuck Berry, which includes "School Day," "Memphis," "Sweet Little 16," "Reelin' and Rockin'," and more. The show is opened by some local performers, one of whom (Lord Sutch, I think) presents a rather bizarre performance that includes girls in bikinis carrying a coffin on stage, a mock strangling, and even a strip tease dancer. The concert begins in daylight and ends at night, while the tape gives us 84 minutes, so it is obvious that these are only the highlights. The acts are interspersed with interview footage of most of the performers, as well as some with Mick Jagger.

Evaluation: I'll say it up front--this is the best all around prerecorded tape that I have seen. In fairness, I should reveal my prejudice. As a teenager, I followed these artists with the same level of dedication that was later accorded to the likes of The Beatles, Bob Dylan, or Kiss. The show does have a few minor drawbacks. The acts are not introduced, though this is hardly required once the locals move aside and make way for my man, Bo Diddley. Also, a fast rockin' fever pitch is maintained pretty much throughout. There are no ballads, no Five Satins, or other group vocals. Since the concert is filmed outdoors, partially at dusk and at night, there is an occasional dark shot, but overall the camera work, including the selection of off stage antics, is exceptional. I have seen

other "Rock and Roll Revival" type shows, both in person and on television, but, unlike some of these where the performers are pretty obviously just going through the motions, the London Rock and Roll Show works! This show has genuine spontaneity; there is hardly a slow spot in it. A few of the more choice moments and subtle nuances with Bo, Jerry Lee, Bill, and Chuck are simply fabulous. The print and duplication quality of the VHS tape we watched was very good. It's available in Beta format, too, and is protected against unauthorized duplication by Copyguard. In case I haven't made it clear, I highly recommend this to you if you are in the market for a really fine rock and roll "oldies" concert. This is the first prerecorded tape that I, tightwad that I am, am going to have to have.

Source: Michael Rogers' Video Film World International.

FRIGHTMARE

Credits: Cast--Rupert Davies, Sheila Keith, and Leo Glenn.

Story: Here we have the familiar story of the sweet old couple that only has one flaw in their otherwise exemplary lives: She's criminally insane and he feels obliged to protect her secret perversions while she fills the basement with bodies. This is a British horror production of recent vintage that features a gang of punks from the *Clockwork Orange* school, a young psychiatrist (England's answer to Brad Majors), and, of course, the good daughter and the evil daughter. The story is pretty cut and dried (pun intended); it starts out slow, but tapers off later.

Evaluation: This is a case where very good color picture quality, a sturdy plastic case, and an illustrated label are pretty much wasted on an abysmal film. To be fair, there may be those among you who would enjoy it, especially if you've always wanted to see an old lady go after someone's head with an electric drill. Don't confuse this one with British horror films of the Hammer genre. It's more akin to the drive-in circuit type (eg. *The Gruesome Twosome*, in case there's someone out there who ever saw that old favorite). At today's prices, or any other day's for that matter, the prospect of purchasing *Frightmare* is more frightening than any other thing about it. The top-notch duplication we watched was on VHS, but it's available on Beta II as well. Unauthorized duplication is prevented by Copyguard.

Source: Michael Rogers' Video Film World International.

ROCK, ROCK, ROCK

Credits: Cast--Tuesday Weld, Alan Freed, and a host of unknowns.

Story: Simple story of a high school girl anguishing over the possibility that her boyfriend may take some brazen hussy to the senior prom is used as the structure in which to showcase top rhythm and blues talents of 1956. Musical numbers include: "You Can't Catch Me"--Chuck Berry, "Over and Over"--The Moonglows, "I'm Not a Juvenile Delinquent"--Frankie Lymon & the Teenagers, "Would I Be Crying?"--The Flamingos, and "Tra-la-la"--LaVern Baker, among lesser numbers, all presided over by rock and roll mentor and promoter, Alan Freed. Tuesday Weld was only 12 or 13 years old when this film was made, 3 years before she appeared in the Dobie Gillis series, and all I can say is: "Brooke Shields, eat your heart out!" Miss Weld's songs were dubbed in by Connie Francis, and there are a number of musical production numbers that are pretty campy in retrospect, but fun for those of us who've been there. *Grease* it's not, but then neither were the '50's. The scenes with Miss Weld's movie family, especially her hapless dad, are reminiscent of such early TV fare as *Blondie* and *Trouble with Father*.

The eagle-eyed among you will notice the young Miss Valerie Harper in a crowd scene.

Evaluation: The black and white picture quality was nearly excellent, possibly the best prerecorded quality I've seen. The audio, too, was as good as TV sound ever is. I found no fault at all with the tape, but was somewhat disappointed with the original production of the film. All of the songs are done in the pet-peeve-of-mine "lip-synch" style. It doesn't matter so much with the numbers done by the regular cast members, but do not buy this one expecting to see a live performance by any of your old R & B favorites. The footage of all the name performers was shot separately and spliced in, with each of them going through the motions with the regular 45 rpm version of the song dubbed in. Still, it is enjoyable; so seldom do we have a chance to see any sort of footage of these wonderful performers. I grew up on this stuff, so to me a glimpse of Chuck Berry in his prime (duck walk and all), the wonderful Flamingos (even the phony format and applause track hardly diminish them), and the remarkable Frankie Lyman (he and the Moonglows get to do two numbers) is a treat to be sought and savored, even in this form. The tape comes in a sturdy plastic case and has an illustrated label. We reviewed a VHS copy, but Beta is available as well. Unauthorized duplication is prevented by Copyguard.

Source: Michael Rogers' Video Film World International.

Marc, too...



WHAT'S UP, TIGER LILY? (United Artists)

Credits: Cast--All kinds of unknown Japanese folks.

Director--Some Japanese director you've probably never heard of. *Hilariously re-edited by*--Woody Allen.

Story: Well, it's all something to do with several bands of good agents vs. bad agents, in a never-ending James Bondian search for, um, a valuable egg salad recipe. Something like that, anyway.

Evaluation: The year after he wrote *What's New, Pussycat?* (another film that has a question mark), Woody Allen apparently got ahold of this sleazy, incredibly violent Japanese spy-action-adventure spectacular, and hit on the idea of redubbing the sound with a completely different story--with amazingly comedic results. The film was a minor hit, and continues to be a cult favorite year after year on college campuses. Thunderbird Films is currently offering this feature along with dozens of other public domain films which are legal for anyone to duplicate and sell. Compared to, say, any of the color Magnetic Video films, unfortunately, this one doesn't fare particularly well. The quality isn't nearly as good as a decent off-the-air recording, though at least the film is pretty much uncut and uninterrupted, save for several small splices here and there. Apparently, the film was transferred on a relatively inexpensive film-chain, which resulted in a mediocre recording. Still, getting the film uncut proved, to me at least, to be preferable to getting a better quality cut copy off the air. It's one of Woody Allen's best and most bizarre early film efforts, and worthwhile in spite of the video quality (a B-), with the movie getting 3 ***'s. A must for any fan of the Wood-man. (G'wan, get outa here, you knuckle-heads!)

Source: Thunderbird Films (However, a few months after purchasing the Thunderbird cassette, I was able to lay my hands on a better copy, which had a noticeably cleaner looking image. It still was from a 16mm print, but was a professionally made "panned-and-scanned" version instead of the horizontally cropped Panavision print that Thunderbird is offering. This better copy is available from Studio Film and Tape Exchange.)

Tapes reviewed this issue were furnished, upon request, by the following sources:

Nostalgia Merchant
6255 Sunset Blvd.
Suite 1019
Hollywood, CA 90028

Michael Rogers'
Video Film World Int.
800 Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60610

Thunderbird Films
P.O. Box 67157
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Studio Film & Tape Exchange
6424 Santa Monica Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90038

J. LOWE LOOKS AT BOOKS

TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES PROGRAMMING: A comprehensive Chronicle, 1969-1975. By: Larry James Gianakos; Publisher: The Scarecrow Press, P. O. Box 656, Metuchen NJ 08840; Price: Approx. \$30 postpaid.

We mentioned this one a couple of issues back. In the words of the author: "The principal purpose of this volume is to allow the librarian to grasp television drama series programming as it has progressed over the fifteen-year period beginning with the fall of 1959. It is hoped that the enumeration of series episodes in sequence will aid the reader in finding that particular drama which has somehow made a lasting impression upon the memory." It is strictly a reference work, hardly fit for cover-to-cover reading, or even browsing for most folks.

Of course, videophiles are not "most folks." For me, at least, this book is a very valuable research tool. As its name indicates, only drama series are included,

no comedies, no variety shows or the like. Certain drama series (eg. GUNSMOKE, HAVE GUN--WILL TRAVEL) are also omitted, but what is included within nearly 800 pages is a mind-boggling compilation of almost every episode of over 360 different dramatic series. There is at least one paragraph describing the format or theme of the series, followed by a listing of the regular cast members, and then the title, broadcast date and guest stars of each episode. By way of example, we learn that there were 104 episodes of THE WILD, WILD WEST in its four seasons, that the 33rd episode, entitled "The Night of the Returning Dead" was aired on October 14, 1966, and that the guest cast included Peter Lawford, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Hazel Court. Many of you may not be aware that virtually every episode of every series, be it drama or comedy, has a "title" even though it may not appear as part of the broadcast. Those of you who collect 16mm films of TV shows know this because the title usually appears on the leader. This type of information, when used together with a

collection of back issues of TV Guide, takes much of the pain out of syndicated rerun searching. (For those who are interested, I could expand on this at length.) Regretably, the book does not index the actors' and actresses' entries, nor does it contain plot synopses of the individual episodes. Indeed, it could not do so, because such a work would be an encyclopedic set of volumes. If such a set ever appears, I, for one, would snap it up and hang the cost, but until this unlikely fantasy is realized, I heartily recommend to you Mr. Gianakos' very fine work.

TV MOVIES. Edited by Leonard Maltin; Publisher: Signet (paperback); Price: \$2.95.

Once again I take a shot at reviewing a book of reviews, an endeavor that may well be in the no-win category. Back in TVN #11 when I reviewed Steve Scheuer's *Movies on TV*, I concluded that his book, while a worthy effort, had to take a back seat to Leonard Maltin's *TV MOVIES*. Now, we have the 1979-80 revised edition of *TV MOVIES* and I must say that while my opinion remains the same, Mr. Maltin's book did not maintain the edge that I had expected. I know it is arguably pointless to quibble over ratings which we all recognize as subjective, but I do think it is appropriate to do so when a pattern of discrimination against a particular type of film can be demonstrated. This was clearly the case in Mr. Scheuer's book with respect to the Eastwood-Bronson films. Mr. Maltin's prejudice reveals itself in his tendency to bestow the "BOMB" rating without proper restraint on relatively recent, relatively big budget films which in one way or another did not live up to expectations or whose story lines were "trashy."

By way of example, this new edition of *TV MOVIES* advises that *MISSOURI BREAKS*; *NEW YORK, NEW YORK* and *THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT* are all BOMBS. Friends, ... it just ain't so. Maybe the talents of Marlon Brando and Jack Nicholson are somewhat wasted in *MISSOURI BREAKS*. Maybe *NEW YORK, NEW YORK* peters out after a rather enjoyable first 40 minutes or so. And, yes, *THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT* is an overblown soap opera. So what? None of them is a total loss, each has production values and performances, even story lines that are of as great or greater interest than the average network television broadcast. What are these rating books for anyway, if not to serve as a guide for the hapless viewer who wishes to waste a couple of hours being transfixed by the tube? This liberal granting of the BOMB (other examples are *LIP STICK*, *BOBBIE DEERFIELD*, *SWASHBUCKLER*, and *BOBBIE JOE AND THE OUTLAW*, which rates at least a ½ star for prurient interest) would have the weekend viewer settling down with his TV listings and opting to view *BILLY THE KID* vs. *DRACULA* (1½ stars) or perhaps *SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS* ("absurd fantasy," but rated 2 stars) rather than *MISSOURI BREAKS*. Is *BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS*, at 2 stars and described as "Not without interest, but definitely the director's dullest movie," really that much better than *MISSOURI BREAKS*, described as "a great director's worst film"? Is *AT LONG LAST LOVE*, at 1½ stars, musically and dramatically superior to *NEW YORK, NEW YORK*? UnUnh, no way. I know it, you know it, and I rather suspect that Mr. Maltin knows it. But since "BILL" and "LOVE" were not as disappointing as "BREAKS" and "NEW YORK" they survive the ax and get the ratings they deserve, placing them in the "so-so at best" category.

It seems to me that the BOMB rating should be used with greater restraint or else further classified into Bombs and Zeros or something, so that we could tell if the movie earned a BOMB simply because the film was

truly awful by any standard (eg., the incomprehensible *WEREWOLF IN A GIRLS DORMITORY*, which I swear to you could be shown with the reels out of order with no appreciable difference). I'd even like to see a distinction made for those films that have very, very low budgets and poor acting, but which are so engaging that we will watch them in spite of (perhaps even because of) these factors ... the so-called "Z" movie. Such a one is *SHE DEMONS* with Irish McCalla. Mr. Maltin rates it a BOMB, and truly it is pretty terrible, but I'd watch the darn thing right now if it were on. I know Mr. Maltin can relate to this view because this very volume gives the quintessential "Z" movie, *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS*, a whopping 2½ stars. (Boy, if I owned the rights to that one, I'd trot it out on the weekend midnight show circuit and tell *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW* to "move over.")

The fact that Mr. Maltin relies on the opinions of his assistants may very well account for a measure of inconsistency that is inevitable in a work of this magnitude. It certainly strains credibility to accept the notion that the same man who casually dropped all those BOMBS could have also sat through *EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC*, aptly described it as a "turkey," and yet said to himself: "That's more like it" and rated it 1½ stars. (If you prefer, you may reread the last sentence and substitute the ludicrous *IT'S ALIVE* for *EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC*.)

But enough ... let's move on to a nitpicking flaw: omissions. Many films such as *WRESTLING WOMEN* vs. *THE AZTEC MUMMY* were probably omitted by design, although it seems to me that a film which is regularly shown on TV should be included regardless of its merit. Indeed, if guidance is the purpose of these books, how are we to know about such items as *VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN* or *THE PHANTOM SPEAKS* (shown all the time, but neither listed) if they are not included. Other omissions, I assume, are pure oversight. Among those sought, but not found, are *BARBARELLA* and *MANDINGO*. Curiously, the sequel to the latter, *DRUM*, is dutifully included.

Does all of this mean that I don't like this new edition of *TV MOVIES*? Not at all. I think it's a must. But since I am as human as Mr. Maltin, I am also capable of overreaction brought on by disappointment.

On the plus side even more titles, both new and old have been added, for a total coverage of over 12,000 films in 800 pages. Best of all, some titles have been reevaluated in the light of changing times. Thus, *DR. STRANGELOVE* (my own personal favorite film) has been raised from 3½ to 4 stars, and *HAROLD AND MAUDE* has risen from 3 to 3½. Others may have been downgraded (I didn't notice any), but the fact that titles are subject to reevaluation from one edition to the next indicates that the author is seriously concerned about the topical values of his work. It's refreshing because it's something he didn't have to do. The book would sell anyway. Speaking of which, if one hasn't been sold to you yet, I recommend that you surrender to the urge. I should warn you, however, that books of this sort can be dangerously time-consuming. Don't expect to pick it up, read a single entry, and put it down again. Can't be done. Worse than trying to eat one potato chip.

THE COMPLETE HOME VIDEO RECORDER BOOK.
By: Len Buckwalter; Publisher: Bantam Books (paperback); Price: \$2.95.

This one would more appropriately have been titled "A Home Video Recorder Book." Its 377 pages are mostly divided between two main sections. The first of these covers the things that you would expect (an

explanation of the animal, different formats, using cameras, operating tips, a buyer's guide and glossary) and is more informative for those who do not yet have a VCR than it is for us veterans. This section is pretty much standard stuff, available from other magazine articles, manufacturers' instruction manuals and the like. There is an error here or there, such as the statement that "pressing the stop button not only stops the machine but returns the tape to its cassette, which takes several seconds." This is true of VHS format recorders, but not Beta format, which performs this trick only when the eject button is depressed. This is a significant difference between the formats and should not be ignored. Little or none of the text is devoted to such topics as editing out commercials, dubbing, time charts, or modifying recorders, and the terms "dub," "VHS," or "muting circuit" do not even appear in the glossary. The "Buyer's Guide" to the equipment includes 27 photos, but the format is so confusing that it is not always easy to tell which unit the text is talking about. To its credit, the book does give some treatment to the subject of using a home TV camera (including microphone use, lighting, etc.) in the production of home "movies" that is not commonly available from another handy source. Tips on antennas, care of cassettes, and even a guide to colleges that offer courses through a department of communications, are also provided. The second part, more than half of the book, consists of a catalog of prerecorded tapes. In this department, the book really shines. More than 1,000 titles are listed alphabetically. Information for each includes its year of release, rating, running time, whether color or black & white, the formats in which it is available, the price, and which of 18 dealer/sources it is available from (indicated by initials). Most of the entries indicate the cast and many give a brief plot synopsis as well. As you can see from the sample page reproduced here, comparison shopping is greatly facilitated, e.g., OF HUMAN BONDAGE is apparently available in two different lengths, in a variety of formats, and at prices running from \$39.95 (for Club Video members) to \$70. Considering the prices that I've seen for some of the other directories of available titles, this listing is pretty impressive.

Home video technology is advancing so rapidly that any attempt to produce a comprehensive volume on the subject is going to be at least partially dated before the ink is dry. This will also be a problem with the impressive title listings, since prices and even dealers' addresses are continually subject to change.

All in all, the book is an OK buy for the potential or brand new VCR purchaser. For the price, it collects about as much info for greenhorns as you are likely to find between two covers.

THE HONEYMOONERS' COMPANION. By: Donna McCrohan; Publisher: Workman Publishing (paper-bound); Price: \$4.95.

It's such a pleasure to come across a book like this one once in a while. In a world where it has become common place to cash in on the topics of the day, it's really a treat to get more than you pay for once in a while. **THE HONEYMOONERS' COMPANION** tells you all you are ever likely to want to know about this classic series.

Amid 236 pages awash with trivial and fascinating information about the Kramdens and the Nortons, you will find biographies, plot synopses, television history, quotes, accolades, even Ralph Kramden's Social Security number. If that's not enough, how about the sheet music to the Honeymooners' theme song, selected "fat" jokes, the script from the Saturday Night Live takeoff,

and more than 100 photographs, including Gleason's grade school graduating class.

One of the joys of video tape collecting, perhaps the primary one, is that after pouring through page after page of such engaging material, one has the power to walk to the shelf, pop in a cassette, and command an episode like "The \$99,000 Answer" to parade itself once again.

The book also explains one of the saddest realities in the history of TV situation comedy. Most of us will never be able to revisit more than 39 episodes of this delightful series. You see, the Honeymooners was a "live" show (unlike "I Love Lucy," "Sgt. Bilko," or "Amos and Andy"), done in an era that predates the preservation of shows on videotape. Only the 39 episodes of the 1955-56 season were preserved on film by the Electronicam process for later syndication. Kinescopes may possibly survive of a few of the earlier episodes and many later ones exist on film, but because the Honeymooners segment of the Jackie Gleason Show was not of uniform length they have not been packaged for syndication. According to Miss McCrohan, all of the episodes performed live from 1952 to 1955 are lost forever. Among these is my own best remembered episode, broadcast on January 15, 1955, in which Ralph takes Alice and the Nortons to a movie to celebrate Ed's birthday. Ralph buys the tickets and naturally Ed's ticket wins the drawing for a television set. I sent out a plea for a copy of this episode way back in the very first issue of "The Videophile's Newsletter," little knowing that this particular show had already passed into that gaping yesterday which lies forever beyond our reach. Thus, I am left with only the fragmented reruns that my own memory banks can summon to mind ... as the four leave the theatre, Norton is saying, "I've got to hand it to you, Ralph, anybody else would say 'I bought the tickets, that TV set is mine,' but not you Ralph. You're too big a man. Not you, Ralphie boy." After prolonged similarly complimentary provocation, Ralph can grind his teeth no more and predictably explodes: "I bought the tickets, the TV set is mine!" No need to ramble on. I highly recommend the book to each of you who shares my affection for those wonderful old shows ... and if it also causes us to lament those long lost delights, it also brings to mind the words of William Wordsworth:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.



DROPOUT

A video recording dropout is a momentary loss of signal. It is seen as a burst of white light at that instant in a picture line. Since the lines are being scanned, the white burst will appear to flash across the screen from right to left.

Both machines and magnetic tape can contribute to dropouts. Imperfections in tape coating, specks of dirt from the air on the tape, or dirt buildup on the recorder head all have the effect of presenting a rough spot that will 'bounce' the tape away from the playback head for an instant and cause a visible dropout. Video tapes in both reel-to-reel and cassette formats must be completely smooth to allow uninterrupted head contact, and have a static drain on the backing to reduce attraction of dirt. Regularly scheduled cleaning will help avoid particle buildup on the recorder heads. Although many people claim that the Beta and VHS format machines should not have their heads cleaned regularly, or not until it is noticed that you actually have loss of video picture, it is still a good idea to inspect the heads regularly and if you don't have to clean the heads, at least blow some of the dust out of the machine with Dust-Off or its equivalent. You'd be surprised to see how much dust accumulates inside that cover.

As recording signals are packed upon fewer and fewer square inches of tape (see chart), the effect of a momentary dropout encompasses more signal area and the dropout is proportionately more noticeable. In only 20 years, signal packing density has been compressed from 1800 square inches per minute for quadraplex recording in 1957 to only 24 square inches per minute for Beta 2 helical recorders in 1977. (I'm sorry, but I don't have the figures for VHS, so suffer!) To make this extent of signal packing possible, video tape technology and oxide coating techniques must achieve uniform oxide densities well in excess of the needs for each recording format as a quality safety margin.

TAPE CONSUMPTION OF SOME HELICAL FORMATS

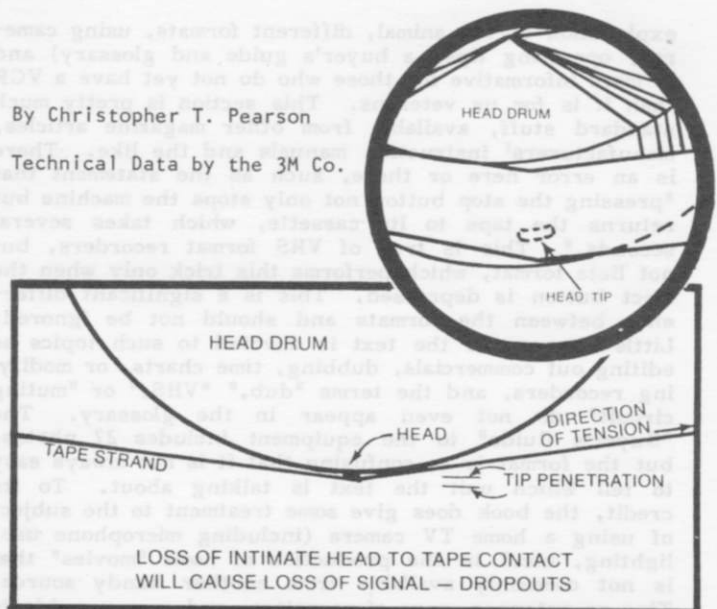
Format	Tape Width (Inches)	Linear Tape Speed (IPS)	Linear Feet of 1" Tape Equivalent Per Hour
Ampex	1	9.63	2889
IVC	1	6.91	2073
EIAJ	1/2	7.50	1125
U-Matic	3/4	3.75	834.75
Betamax	1/2	1.57	235.5
Beta II	1/2	.785	117.75

As recorder heads wear, pressure against the tape is less. Even though modern recorder heads are made of extremely hard ferrite, friction causes them to wear. In the home units, when the heads wear out, you simply replace them. In broadcast applications, the heads are rebuilt. When you rent a studio machine, what you are paying for is an engineer's time and a prorated head-wear rate. As the wear affects head-to-tape pressure, even a tiny amount of wear becomes significant. When viewed together with the setting of brightness (luminance) record drive, the effects of wear and improper record drive can increase the incidence of dropouts from near zero to almost 150% above normal.

When head-to-tape separation occurs, it causes a complete loss of signal, and a "peak white" dropout is said to occur. A separation of less than 1/10th the thickness of a human hair will cause such a "peak white" dropout. Constant pressure of the head against a tape must be maintained by both proper head projection and proper tape tension.

By Christopher T. Pearson

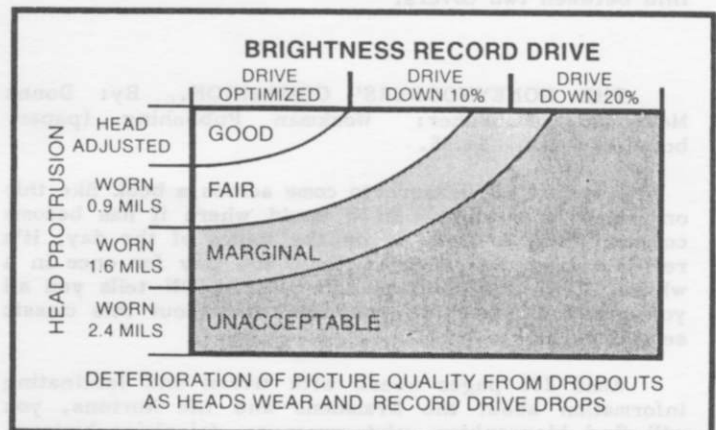
Technical Data by the 3M Co.



Holdback tension also figures importantly in both cause and cure of dropout activity. As holdback tension decreases, head-to-tape pressure is less. The reduction in pressure, as with other causes, results in increased dropouts. Increasing holdback tension to proper specifications, together with optimum head tip projection, will eliminate most dropouts. In addition, manufacturers' specifications for tape holdback tension must be followed to insure the synchronization required to interchange tapes from one machine to the next. Head-to-tape pressures up to the equivalent of one ton per square inch are encountered in recording and playback (do you still wonder why your heads wear out?). When the spinning head meets the moving tape, these pressures must be maintained uniformly, without damaging the tape surface or backing.

Tape interchange problems from recorder to recorder are aggravated by tapes that become out of tolerance dimensionally, as would be caused by excessive heat or humidity. This results in noticeable picture degradation. Even playback of a tape on the same machine on which it was recorded can become impossible due to heating of the tape backing to temperatures which may cause permanent shrinkage of the polyester backing.

Finally, if head-to-tape pressure is properly adjusted, the variable of record drive must be optimized to achieve the minimum of dropouts (see chart).



Manufacturers' specifications and actual picture viewing can be combined to achieve the best visual results.

It is obvious that machines must be kept clean and properly adjusted to prevent signal-loss dropouts. Of course, selection of quality, high-energy video tapes and videocassettes will further enhance equipment capabilities. But the major considerations are constant, uniform, intimate head-to-tape contact with proper pressure from both head projection and tape holdback tension.

VISUAL IRREGULARITIES THAT AREN'T DROPOUTS.

To evaluate possible instances of helical video dropout occurrence, it's useful to recognize two types of visible picture irregularities which sometimes are misinterpreted as dropouts.

1. Picture "jitter" from irregular tape speed.--Professional broadcast system quadruplex recorders have two servo controls to perfectly regulate both head drum and tape capstan movements, using signals that are recorded on the tape during recording and then "read" during playback. Lower cost helical machines, however, are likely to have only a single servo that controls head drum rotation, without a servo for tape speed. Speed variations cause the picture to "bounce" or "jitter." To correct a "jittery" picture, refer to your equipment manual for tape drive speed, tracking, or skew adjustments.

2. Lack of clarity in detail resolution and color purity.--The extremely high frequencies employed in quadruplex recording give maximum "full screen" line density and color brilliance. Most helical video systems use lower frequencies, because there is proportionately less tape area upon which to pack signals. The result may appear as less resolution because there is "less picture" to fill the same number of lines on the viewing screen. It is analogous to a photograph that has been over-enlarged and now appears grainy.

These are the most common "false dropouts":

1. picture "jitter" and 2. a lack of crisp resolution. They are readily distinguishable from the momentary, horizontal bright flash across the screen that indicates an actual dropout. Recognizing the difference helps determine if visual problems actually are dropouts, and often pinpoints needed adjustment without wasting time testing for "dropouts" that aren't happening.

If anyone has any comments about this article, or if you just need someone to write to, my address is 37541 Grove Ave., #202, Willoughby OH 44094.

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Dear Guys:

Shame on me. I loaned someone my issue #15 and the turkey lost it and subsequently moved so I can't even get him to pay for a new one. The moral -- Don't "PASS-ON" your Newsletters because everyone loses except the cheapskate who doesn't pay. Please send me a new #15. -- Paul LeSage, WZUU, Milwaukee, WI

Hi Jim,

Just had to drop you a note and let you know about the tremendous response to my ad in the new issue ... making new friends all over the country. ... Was very disappointed at the poor response to "Bald Faced Plea." Personally, I thought it was a good deal, but that's not the point. Anybody in deep enough to appreciate your magazine knows this is no cheap hobby. If the "little people" ... want to cry poormouth at the idea of having to part with a "big one", maybe they should go back to slot-cars or something they can afford. Excuse my preaching, but cheapskates get my dander up. -- Rick Wood, Miami, FL

Who would have ever thought that the subject of cheapskateism would be such a popular one? The chance to get in on the \$100 charter memberships is now passed, and I can report that we ended up getting about 40 of them, plus 3 of the larger variety.

Dear Jim:

As a fairly new home video enthusiast, I'd like to tell you how much I've enjoyed your fine magazine since I've received my first two issues. I find the info and articles useful and informative. Professionally, I'm a videotape engineer at KRIV-TV, Channel 26, in Houston, Texas. But I can tell you, there's a world of difference between "working" with videotape and "playing" with it.

I'm also getting into collecting pre-recorded tapes and so far have received tapes from two sources: The Nostalgia Merchant, and Video T.E.N., both advertised in your magazine. The quality on the Nostalgia Merchant cassette (Mighty Joe Young) was absolutely outstanding, looking as good as many of the 2" recordings we air at the TV station. I've heard that The Nostalgia Merchant transfers their 1/2" releases directly from 2" quad masters and it looks it. The Video T.E.N. releases were something of a disappointment. They contained excessive dropouts and losses of sync (carefully muted out by my Sony 8200), and were rather fuzzy. John Ralston of Video T.E.N. told me that his Beta-2 releases are dubbed from VHS masters which came from 3/4". Not exactly the high quality route. He redubbed the tapes for me, with little increase in quality. Of course, I may be a little more critical of tape quality than others.

Now here's a suggestion that you might like to pass along to your readers, if you haven't before. An extremely easy way to record black on your tape at the end of a recording is to simply attach an unterm-

inated cable to the "video in", and a separate un-terminated cable to the "audio in" on the back of the machine. After these connections are made, simply edit on black as you usually would. It looks OK with only a little breakup. The "audio in" cable is necessary because without it, the audio that the tuner is receiving will be recorded with the black. This should work fine on VHS machines also.

Here's a suggestion for a future article. How about a picture feature on the production and duplication facilities of a company such as Magnetic Video or The Nostalgia Merchant, possibly following one particular title through all the stages of production. ... Something big must be about to happen in 20th Century-Fox's video line. Quoting Arvin Erikson of Fox: "Within the next 12 months there will be more product on the market than either of us can imagine today." Something to think about.

And from Mr. Rocco Viglietta, a vice-president at American-International Pictures comes this quote from a recent letter to me: "Please know that at this time none of our features are available in 1/2" videotape format for home use. However, after the first of the year we are considering a change in company policy regarding this. Follow us again at that time with your requests."

Looks like something interesting could be coming our way from both of these companies. That's about it from Pearland, and thanks again for your fine magazine. -- David M. See, Pearland, TX


And thanks to you, David, for your cogent comments. See the News section re: the "something big" at 20th Century-Fox. Also, the picture tour is a good idea.

Dear Jim:

Bob Burns was slightly in error concerning the signal to noise ratio in U-Matic machines. He stated that the VHS machine has a S/N ratio better than the second generation U-Matic machines. The JVC Vidstar spec sheet lists S/N at "better than 40 db." And Bob says that it is in reality, 43 db. Well, I don't want to be a spoil sport, but the Sony VO-2600, which is at the bottom of the line for Sony U-Matics has a S/N ratio of 45 db, the new VO-2860 has one better at 46 db, and the BVU-200, which is the broadcast version of the 2860, specs in at 48 db.

If the Beta and VHS formats are so great, why doesn't the broadcast industry switch over to them? One problem is, you can't edit well with the things. I have seen an editing system using two SLO Betamax and a RM-430 editor, and the results were extremely poor.

It's about time someone defended Scotch tape. I personally use Scotch tape exclusively and am quite pleased with it (my collection is in U-Matic format). Scotch controls about 75% of the video cassette market,



with Sony placing second at about 15%. For most of you who are having problems with different brands of tape, let it be known that most Beta format tape, excluding Scotch, is made by Sony. I believe that Scotch is the best brand of tape that you can buy, and a lot of other broadcast people will back me up.

Now before this starts sounding like a commercial, let's hear some facts. I talked to some technical people at the Scotch Video Products Division in St. Paul, and they assured me that all video cassette tape, with the exception of Scotch, is of a Chromium Dioxide variety. Scotch uses a cobalt-doped ferric oxide coating which they say has better recording qualities (ie. +2 db improvement in S/N and RF output). The Scotch cassette is up to five times less abrasive than the typical chrome cassette. And Scotch says that they also have the lowest dropout rate in their Beta tape. So, if you are experiencing excessive dropout on your tapes, clean the machine.

I also suggest "repacking" the tape before use; that is, before you record on a tape, fast-forward and rewind the tape. This will help eliminate excess oxide off the surface of the tape, and allow the tape to travel smoother during the recording process.
-- Chris Pearson, Willoughby, Ohio

Chris, it's an oldie but a goodie: "The proof is in the pudding." There have been too many reports of dissatisfaction with Scotch Beta format tape to just brush them aside. I've heard from more than one source about a "bad batch" that got into a lot of people's hands, and it may be that this is the cause of some of the criticism. Anyhow, thanks for bringing to light some of the finer points. I don't know much about oxide tape coatings, so it may be that since the date of your letter (10/2/78) the statement that all tapes, other than Scotch, use Chromium is no longer current. Who out there can tell us more, in the technical line, about the Super Avylin TDK tape as well as others that may now be on the market?

Dear Mr. Lowe:

A couple of comments about Issue 16 and matters in general -
First, the December 11th deadline. When the magazine was delayed, I assumed the deadlines would be changed accordingly, or columnists/contributors would be notified so we could start preparing our material earlier. If you want some semi-professional material submitted, how about some leadership from the editorial corner?

Second, when I first saw the \$2.00 cover price of issue 14, I assumed (another bad assumption) that there would be a continuing improvement in the product to justify this price. The statements made editorially in Issue 15 seemed to further indicate this improvement would be forthcoming. Sad to say, this does not appear to be happening. Issue 16 was the same mishmash of type facings, rehashes of the same old technical data, duplication of material by various writers, boring interviews/columns, more ads than a magazine 3 times this one's size, and just general lack of direction. I'm not saying this is all your fault. It has more to do with the limitations inherent in a magazine of this type. There's just not that many ways you can cover the same, small territory without getting stale. I hope my \$100.00 isn't going to be wasted.

Finally, enclosed is the mailing label from a catalog that I recently received - look familiar? It's an exact duplicate of the one on your last mailing envelope - right down to the number 22 in parentheses in the upper right-hand corner. This brings to mind the logical question - how did someone get my name and address before issue 16 was even published? Are you providing your subscription list to potential advertisers by chance? I'd appreciate knowing, since if

that is the case, you can cancel my subscription right now. -- Jim Swan, Lakewood, CA

Last things first -- as indicated on page 29 of issue #16, our list is not being made available to anyone! However, we will be conducting mailings from our office. Anyone who does not wish to receive these mailings should notify us. As to your other remarks, well, Rome wasn't built in a day ... besides, not everyone agreed with your assessment. Witnesseth:

Dear Gang at the VIDEOPHILE,
Here is \$16 for my subscription renewal (FIRST CLASS mailing) for your ever-growing magazine. I don't know how you guys do it, but each issue is better and better! Keep up the good work!!

One of your old originals, Ray D. Glasser

Hi,
Well, your repeated Bald-Faced Pleas have touched my head heart, or in any event my wallet, so enclosed find my check for \$100 to enroll me in the vidiots, second chance division. The latest VIDEOPHILE was, in no small part, the clincher. Jim & folks, the magazine just keeps getting better and better. I especially liked the "Interview With A Madman"- Did Marc & Joe get a chance to see one of his modified SL-8200's (with switchable input/output and switchable speed controls)? KEEP IT UP! -- John Donigan, East Carondelet, IL

Am not sure, John. I too am interested in the idea of switchable speed (ie. playing back tapes at the speed of your choice). Steve Comet once told me that he had figured out how to modify the SL-8200 to do this, but that it was more trouble than it is worth. Perhaps we can have more on this in a future issue. // We really appreciate the support and criticism that so many of you have taken the time to offer. Face it, with the exception of my assistant, Joyce Hilliard, THE VIDEOPHILE, has no full time paid staff. We are aware of its shortcomings. We do, however, feel that most of them are due to the fact that it is the result of combined volunteer effort from a group of people who have a great deal else to do in their everyday life. (Deadline for \$100 refund claim is Jan. 16.)// Incidentally, I liked the Muntz piece too, although early survey returns indicate that many folks can do without the interviews. I guess that's one of the nice things about running your own mag, you can suit yourself once in a while.

Dear Jim:

What would we all do without you? The magazine is wonderful. -- Nik Macioci, Columbus, OH

We really appreciate the positive feedback. We are trying hard to be the type of mag that you want and expect. At the same time we are constantly aware of our shortcomings. Still there are a few readers who feel that we are overpriced. To them, we say: "Why not try a subscription to VIDEO INFO?" This outfit had a small ad in the recent special video advertising section of TIME magazine under the title POPULAR VIDEO. We sent in for the trial sub, and now have our first issue. It consists of 8 pages of full size type with lots of room between stuff, and features run-of-the-mill video news and tid bits that is commonly available from other sources. Of course, it is monthly and it only costs \$52 a year. Maybe it's for you.

Correction ➡

Last issue we printed a letter stating that: "RCA VBT-200 users may be interested that RCA has an excellent service manual available for \$9.95 from RCA Consumer Electronics, 600 N. Sherman Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46201. The correct price of the manual is \$19.95. Tell 'em we sent ya."

Dear Jim:

It is practically a "Must" that you publish a TVN READERS INDEX. The first fifteen issues have been packed so full of technical, service/maintenance/repair, dubbing, legal, programming, trade show/new products, VHS/Beta, general information etc., etc., it is impossible for even the most avid videophile to keep track of which issues contain what information! Any thoughts? -- Richard G. Seget, Linden, NJ

I agree there is a need for this; even I could use one. If we can somehow find the time to do it, I imagine it would be more likely to turn up as part of the VIDEOPHILE'S ANNUAL: 1979, than anywhere else.

Dear Jim:

Please report to your readers that the L-750 tape is a joke (this is not an opinion, but is based on established fact and extensive testing by our V.E.T. electronics engineer/designer member, Cory Martin). Sony really introduced this inferior tape in a frantic attempt to compete with the 4 hour VHS. He verifies this fact after conducting extensive tests with it in all types of Beta format machines. Any machine can be adjusted to perform, at first glance, reasonably well, but don't expect the RF signal on the tape to hold up under heavy and repeated use because (simply stated) in addition to the tape being thinner and not having as good a backing as the L-500 tapes, the signal (control track) is not "imprinted" that strongly to begin with. // For evidence of this, just experiment with your tracking knob with one of these tapes and notice how much more critical the adjustment is for optimum tracking than for an L-500 at either speed. -- Raymond Keese, Videophiles of East Texas

I don't doubt for a minute that what you say may be true, although I haven't experimented that much with my L-750s. Sony itself admits that they are intended for use primarily on the SL-8600 models. Yes, I do think they rushed them on the market in an attempt to answer the 4-hour VHS surge. It is also true, though that this problem is symptomatic of something that we "serious" videophiles may as well expect to encounter from here on. We want the best of both worlds, that is, we want products that are designed for the mass consumer market to perform as though they were intended for professional use. Nothing wrong with that. I say let's keep the pressure on the manufacturers of both the equipment and the tape to continually upgrade their product, but let's also not lose sight of why we must often either settle for what is available or else break loose the big \$\$ for 3/4" systems.

Dear "JOYCE":

I am probably the oldest geezer on your subscriber list. Your 'type' is a little hard on my 65+ old eyes. Apparently, it is reduced photographically before printing. ... You are probably ready for 'departmentalization'. That way, readers like me could skip all the palaver about the 'alphabet soup'. I am not interested in technical verbiage. RADIO was the last thing I knew something about. I never learned anything about TV, didn't want to; and I am not going to learn anything technical about VCRs. I JUST want a 'box' I can plug in ... and enjoy the show. IF ANYTHING, your mag is 'too wordy'. Sure, I know you want to 'cover the waterfront' every issue, but I would limit the 'well chosen' words of EVERY contributor. ... If JIM LOWE is going to be a regular contributor, why doesn't he call his column the: LOWE-down? Sounds pizazz-zy. -- G. Editor Phelan, Bloomfield Hills, MI

We have considered offering a "videophile's magnifying glass through our "Cash-In Products division". As to our tendency to run off the mouth and allow the

columnists to do so ... we plead guilty, but, WOW, you should see some of the stuff that gets edited out! It may surprise you to know that you are not alone among our 65+ age readership. One thing, though, that I have always been curious about: At what age does one pass from being a young geezer to being an old one?

Q & A



Hey!! It's Q. and A. time again! Let's get to it:

Q: What's the story on this VIR circuitry now offered by several manufacturers (eg. in GE television sets)? Does it record on the tape for playback, or does it mess up recordings when it is on? --RG & CR

We've had some reports that the VIR has caused problems with recording and also with the large screen Panasonic projection TV set. We don't have the answer yet, but hope to soon. Marc? Steve? Joe?

Q: I'm sure you've read the TV Guide article about satellite video reception. How can I find out more on these base stations. Do you know of anyone (or a group) who is set up and would like to trade tapes or information. --BH, Fairmont, WV

This subject is of consuming interest to me, Bob, so you can expect to find something on it in these pages soon. Apparently, it is not as difficult as I once thought to get a permit from the FCC to have a ground station. The cost, however, may be considerable. Even do-it-yourself systems can run into big money. Nippon Electric Co. of America has started marketing a 1.2 meter dish capable of receiving 5 channels that we are attempting to learn more about. Joe Mazzini tells me that military surplus is a possible source for the larger (20m) dishes. Keep watching, cause we're on the trail of the darn things.

Q: Do you think it's safe to advertise "Wanted: Slap Shot, or The Late Show, or some other recent movie" or is that just asking for a knock on the door from the FBI. I want lots of things, but I'm sort of afraid to ask for them.

Both of these films have been shown on HBO within the past few months. If it is OK to tape them (and we say it is at this point) it is OK to ask for them. I would suggest that you simply seek contact from others who have access to pay-cable systems. Also see p. 36 of TVN #15.

Q: Will it be possible to dub the video discs onto tape, similar to dubbing one tape to a second VCR?

Possible? ... yes. Legal? ... hmmm. Economical? ... in the long run, no. Feature films on the disc are going for \$15.95 list. We expect them to be cheaper than the cost of blank tape in the future. Of course, you do have to buy the MagnaVision to play them on.

Q: I'd like to have a "play only" VHS unit for my office. Is there such a thing and, if not, is there a market for used VHS units? --RL, New York

To my knowledge, there is not yet a VHS "Player". Someone will correct me if I am wrong. There is a Betamax player in the industrial line. Why not a discontinued model at close out prices. Check the ads in this issue, or perhaps place one yourself.

Q: How come you get to review the 'goodies'? Owner's license? -- Louis Bentley, Palm Spgs, CA

Hey, there's got to be some advantage to running this show. Can I help it if they send me what I ask for?

• • •

Q: Is it possible that Sony is holding back adding to features on their Betamaxes because they are going VHS? I really can't understand why they're being so slow. They created the market - why are they just sitting on their hands while others pass them by? You can bet they've got something up their sleeves. A worrisome note on the article on "Skew Error" in TVN #15: he warns us not to transport tape in the trunks of our cars on hot days. Well, wouldn't that also apply to tapes we order prerecorded? Freight trains and trucks can get damned hot. So, until someone convinces me otherwise, I'll not order prerecorded tapes from Southern Cal or Texas in the summertime. (By the way,

when can we get our Jimmy Lowe T-Shirts??) -- Steven W. Pond, Glastonbury, CT 06033

I think you said it Steven, Sony must have something up the sleeve. I sometimes wonder though if it isn't a case of Sony knowing more about video technology and RCA knowing more about mass marketing. Yes, I am sure that trains and trucks get hot, but some precautions must be taking place. After all the Sony video cassette manufacturing plant is at Dothan, Alabama (about 90 miles from Tallahassee) and I can tell you that you would be hard pressed to find a hotter place in the South, yet millions of blank cassettes are being shipped from there. As to the T-shirts, you and Stephen Kroft will be among the first to know.

ASK LEO

Our mail occasionally includes questions seeking video advice of a nature other than the "how-to" variety ... questions that require a social approach as much or more than a technical one. In order to respond to this sort of thing we have managed to secure the services of that little known, yet relatively obscure, advice columnist, Leo J. Weams, who just happens to be a home video buff as well. Mr. Weams' schedule is such that he will only be able to respond to your questions through this column and, of course, will only be able to address questions of general interest to the readership. We have advised Mr. Weams that, notwithstanding his previous experience, things are pretty informal around these parts. Consequently, we present the first installment of

ASK LEO!

DEAR LEO:

Do you know anyone who has a copy of STAR WARS (ANIMAL HOUSE, SUPERMAN, etc., etc.) that I can buy?--Status conscious.

Dear Status:

Officially ... no. Unofficially ... I don't want to know. I have to echo the feelings of our editor/publisher on this one. It is not currently possible to own a legal videotape of these titles. This magazine cannot be in the position of advising its readers as to where they may locate bootleg copies of current box office favorite films. Please do not call or write and ask for such advice. Nor are we interested in knowing that you are the first in your neighborhood to have obtained a copy of THE LORD OF THE RINGS, ROCKY II, or even HITLER'S SECRET SEX TRAINING FILM. We are not impressed and, frankly, we would rather not even know. It makes it easier to tell others that we can't help them. I empathize with the sometimes irresistible urge to acquire such current titles, but the risk in terms of your personal future and that of jeopardizing the legitimacy of home video as a respectable hobby is simply too great.

DEAR LEO:

I have a friend who seems to want to copy half of my collection. So far, it hasn't bugged me too much (and he has taped things for me when circumstances forbid my doing it myself), but it's started getting to me. Every time we get together, he says he plans to tape this and this ... the list goes on and on, even things that I erased months ago, which I hate to bring up at such a delicate time. Sometimes these are tapes that I paid good money for and/or are protected by copyright. Why should I let this guy copy them for no more than the cost of the blank tape to him? Now he even wants me to persuade my girl friend to let him

copy some of her tapes, too. I wonder if video collecting has ever strained any friendships?--Reaching the Limit.

Dear Reaching:

If I were Abby or Ann, I guess I would say: "Just tell the bum up front how you feel about it and (as Buffalo Bill once said) let the chips fall where they may. A true friend will understand and mend his ways." This is good advice, but then we can't always bring ourselves to do what we should. A more devious solution is sometimes preferred. You could start collecting only VHS 4-hour speed, so that your friend wouldn't want copies of your stuff. You could limit your future prerecorded tape purchases to those titles that are protected by "Copy Guard" (indeed you may soon be doing this whether by choice or otherwise), or (and this is my "wisdom of Solomon" special for this issue) you could say: "Look, each of us has a pretty big investment in these darn tapes. How about if we lend each other these titles whenever one of us wants to watch it, and save ourselves the expense of building duplicate libraries. I'll buy one prerecorded title and you can buy the next one. That way we won't have to worry about being investigated for having made unauthorized duplicates either." As to your girlfriend, be firm. She is starting with a clean slate, so it would be easy for her to take the position that she simply doesn't have the time to fool with it except in instances where this friend has something to offer in return.

DEAR LEO:

Early this week, I saw the new RCA Programmable SelectaVision, and it looks like a real winner. In fact, I'm seriously thinking of adding it to my Betamax. My friends and family think that I'm a fool to have 2 VTR's, but ever since playing with that first Betamax in the store, I've been hooked.--R.E., Los Angeles, CA

Dear R.E.:

Remind your family that while you are at home playing with your recorders, some guys are playing golf, some are playing the horses, and some are playing around with the lady down the street. By all means go out and buy another recorder. After all, it's not as if you were going to be able to do so the next time around.

That's it for this time, and I hope my advice does not fall on deaf ears. If you have a video related social problem (or disease) which you feel is of sufficient significance to bother a busy man with, don't continue to fret and fuss over it ... ASK LEO! You may address your questions to Leo, c/o THE VIDEOPHILE, 2003 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, FL 32301.



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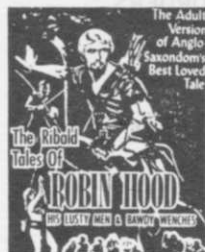
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Running Time: 82 Minutes

A M-1016



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Running Time: 70 Minutes

A M-1013



NUDE CLASSICS - NOT VERY DARING, BUT THIS WAS HOT STUFF IN DAD'S DAY. AN HOUR OF WHOPEE WHICH BEGINS WITH "WHY GIRLS WALK HOME", A CLASSIC FROM 1925. THEN "DORMITORY SECRETS", WHICH LETS YOU IN ON THE GOINGS-ON IN A TYPICAL (?) GIRL'S DORM OF 1937. FOLLOWING THIS ARE TWO GOODIES. A FANTASY ABOUT NUDES ON TV, CALLED "UNCLE SI AND THE SIRENS" AND THE DANCE EPIC "THE FOLLIES". ALSO HERE IS "NUDE FROLICS", A HOLLYWOOD POOL PARTY, AND A COUPLE OF CARTOON GREATS, "BURIED TREASURE" AND "LITTLE ANNIE". COLOR AND BLACK & WHITE.....CODE K

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Running Time: 82 Minutes

K M-1010



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A

Running Time: 90 Minutes M-1015

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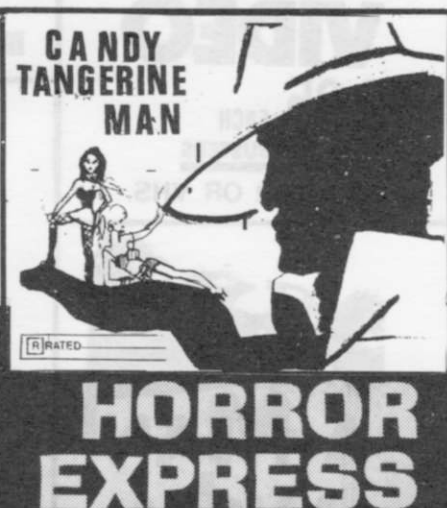
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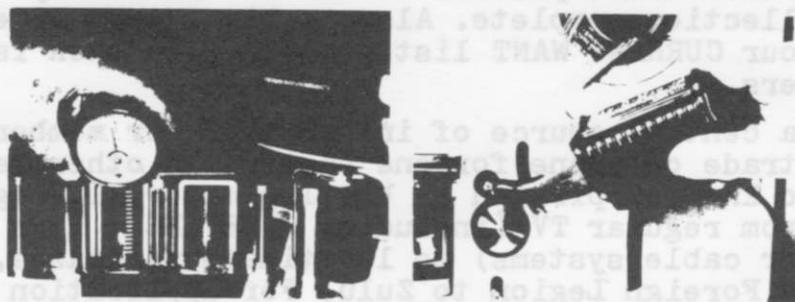
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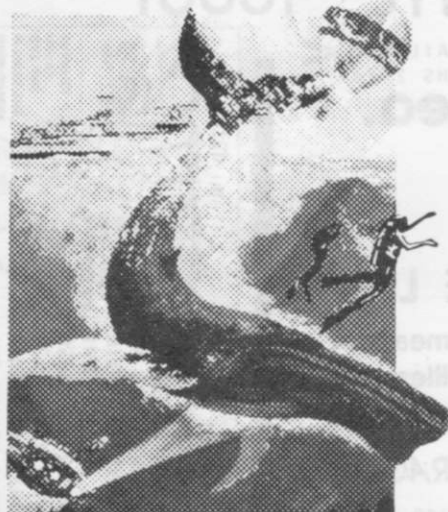
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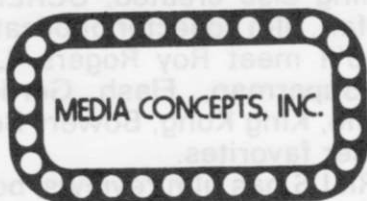
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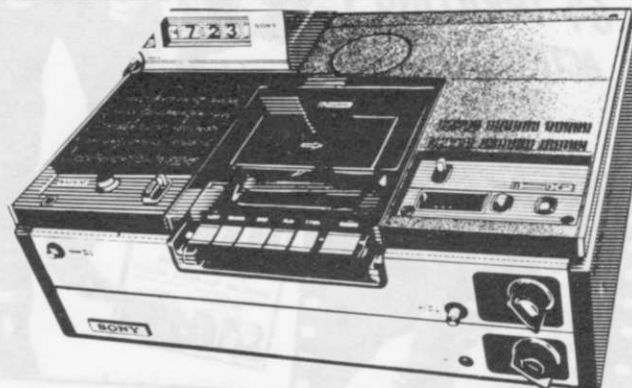
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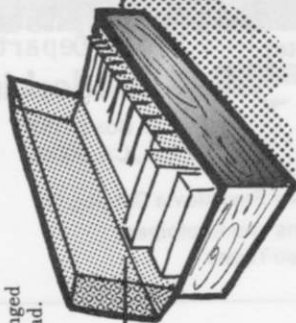
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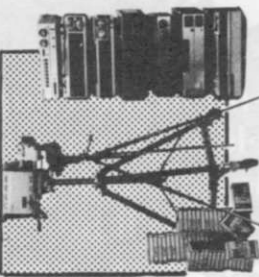
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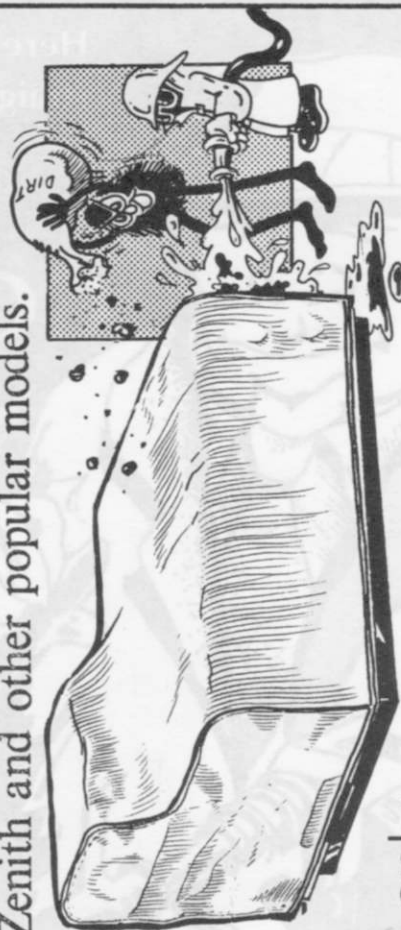
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QUACKSER FORTUNE HAS A COUSIN
IN THE BRONX (Gene Wilder)
RICHIE BROCKELMAN: MISSING 24
HOURS ('76 pilot)
RING OF FEAR (Spillane)
START THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT ME

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WHITE HEAT

Following TV shows
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A Star is Born
What's Up Tiger
Lily
The Sin of Harold
Diddlebock (Harold
Lloyd)
The Outlaw
Ecstasy
My Pal Trigger
The Lady Vanishes

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The Wild Geese
\$69.95
Citizen Kane \$44.95
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\$44.95
Sony L-500 Tapes
\$13.95 each

Beta I, Beta II, & VHS

It is neither the intention of The Videophile's Newsletter to serve as a conduit through which the illegal duplication or sale of material which is protected by copyright may be accomplished, nor to encourage such activity. We will not knowingly accept advertising for the sale of such material. In addition, we reserve the right to alter or reject submitted ads which offer "cash" for illegally duplicated tapes, or otherwise indicate that the advertiser stands ready to traffic in stolen property. However, until such time as a federal court or the United States Congress clearly declares otherwise, we adhere to the position that tapes which contain material transmitted through, and recorded from, the public airways may be exchanged between hobbyists not-for-profit where no rights to public exhibition are represented to be present, and we maintain that the same is not an illegal activity. Ads seeking material not yet broadcast over the public airways are presumed to mean "if and when such material is broadcast."



FOR SALE

FOR SALE: PANASONIC WV 341 black & white TV camera. This is not one of the small surveillance-type cameras. It is a studio camera, has manually adjustable beam, target, electronic focus, and 3" electronic viewfinder. Less than 10 hours on Vidicon.--\$250. Sony zoom lens for use with above or any C-mount type TV camera--\$65. Getting out of Beta: Used cassettes \$11 each, some K-60's, some L-500's, mostly Sony, a few Zenith, all excellent condition. Kenneth Searcy, 8709 Grande Pas, K.C., MO 64114 816-333-5009.

FOR SALE: KODAK SUPER 8 VIDEO PLAYER for sale. Like new, \$1300. With this you can show your films on a TV set or transfer to video. Paul Hornsby, 297 Bass Road, Macon, GA 31210. (912) 477-2887.

FOR SALE: SONY DT-30 Timer (1)--(4-hour on cycle) with hold-down clip. \$20. plus shipping (C.O.D.) John Donigan, RR1, Box 377, E. Carondelet IL 62240

FOR SALE: Quantity of Beta format 60m tapes, Scotch and Sony. Most used one time only. \$10.00 each postpaid. Rev. Frank Gilmore, PO Box 4545 G.S.S., Springfield, MO 65804

FOR SALE: Used Betamax cassettes, \$11 each. Some K-60's and some L-500's. Mostly Sony, a few are Zenith. All in excellent condition. Kenneth Searcy, 8709 Grande Pas, Kansas City, MO 64114. 816-333-5009.

STILL FOR SALE: Those great-looking Beta and VHS library cases and index cards, now stocked in depth. As low as 90¢ each in quantity. Sample of either VHS or Beta products (4 of each) only \$2.00, post-paid. TVN/WEST, P.O. Box 480315, LA, CA 90048. Watch for our ad next issue, featuring plenty big surprises!

A MUST BOOK FOR VIDEOPHILES! Now available, the 1979-1980 Revised Edition of TV MOVIES, edited by Leonard Maltin. Over 12,000 movies reviewed and rated - with complete running time given for each film. An invaluable tool for any videophile who tapes movies from TV. This book also includes many films on HBO as well as 800 made-for-TV movies. 800 pages long, paperback. \$3.75, which includes postage and handling. Order from Robert Weinberg, 10606 S. Central Park, Chicago IL 60655.

Selling my Quasar VR-1000, 1 yr. old; runs great. Has timer, pause, 10 2-hr. tapes, 1 1-hr. tape. Movies on some. Send for list. \$850.00 ppd. in U.S. Gary Statler, (402) 466-4288 or 464-4814. 6320 Platte, Lincoln, NE 68507

BETA FORMAT WANTED

ATTENTION VIDEOPHILES IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA! I am a native of D.C. presently living in Kermanshah, Iran. Would like to acquire Beta II taped shows of the stations that service the area. Interested in 'Skins' games, Bulletts and various movies (Roots, Rich Man-Poor Man, etc.). Also concerts--jazz, rock, blues. Will make you an offer you can't refuse! If interested, contact me at below address VIA Air Mail! Will be in Washington D.C. early January '79! So hurry! (Will be for private use only!!!) Jesse Wright, #4934, PO Box 411, Kermanshah, Iran.

Send me your Beta listing and I'll send you mine. I'm into a variety of subjects including: Comedy, Drama, Cult and Contemporary films. Beta only. Bill Frankel, 24049 Lyman Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44122

Beta Format Wanted--Copy of Walt Disney Show Dumbo that was aired recently on NBC. Please write to Alan Daniels, 1316 E. Patterson, Kirksville, MO 63501. Phone 816-665-2612.

BETA X-2 WANTED:

"Dr. Who" episodes starring Jon Pertwee; "Spearhead from Space," "Inferno," "Mind of Evil," "Three Doctors," "Frontier in Space," "Planet of the Daleks," "Green Death," "Invasion of the Dinosaurs," "Death to the Daleks," "Planet of Spiders." Have other "Dr. Who" and sci-fi shows to trade. Larry Charet, 1219A DeVon Ave., Chicago, IL 60660. Phone 312-274-1832.

WILL SWAP Adult cassettes. Send your list for mine. Also want boxing, old time silent movies and serials on Betamax 1 or 2 or RCA systems. Or will buy films or trade. Ray Wencil, 2904 N. Keating Ave., Chicago IL 60641.

Wanted Beta 1 or 2: Cyrano de Bergerac (50), Fra Diarolo L & H (33), King of the Khyber Rifles (53), Charly (68) and To Kill A Mockingbird (59) and others. Have several hundred movies. John Risdall, 1561 15th St. NW, New Brighton MN 55112. (612) 636-4292.

Wanted on Betamax X-1 or X-2--Movies: "Metropolitan," "One Night of Love," "Hitting a New High," "Tonight We Sing," "Big Broadcast of 1938," "I Dream Too Much," "The Chocolate Soldier," "BBC television film "The Golden Ring," Swedish film "Fram Foer Framgang." TV Shows: Bing Crosby Benefit Concert for 1976 Montreal Olympics, PBS production of "La Boheme." Bob Scott, Box 1694, Wayne, NJ 07470 (201) 696-1278.

VHS FORMAT WANTED

VHS--Looking for a copy of "The Time Machine," 1960's version. Not TV movie. Also, Amos & Andy, Burns & Allen, old TV. Would like to hear from other VHS owners. L. F. Harding, P.O. Box 47, New Hope, VA 24469. P.S. Would also like to hear from any dealers in projection TV equipment (a good unit for \$2,000--as good as Advent).

WANTED VHS FORMAT: Bob Dylan Special (9-14-76) "A Hard Rain" and any other Dylan material. All episodes of "Soundstage," "Monty Python," and "Saturday Night Live."--ALSO any films of the following directors and artists: Hitchcock, Altman, Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Paul Mazursky, Roman Polanski, Sam Peckinpah, F. Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Mike Nichols, Alan Pakula, Tony Richardson, George Lucas, Frank Capra, Billy Wilder, Brian DePalma, Tod Browning, Elia Kazan, Arthur Penn, Stanley Kubrick, Orson Welles, The Marx Bros., W. C. Fields, Jane Fonda, Bogart, Cagney, Candice Bergman, George Segal, Warren Beatty, Al Pacino, Faye Dunaway, James Caan, Dustin Hoffman, Robert Redford, and Robert Dinko -- I have access to HBO, VHS dubbing facilities and have many titles to trade, loan, or whatever. Included are: "American Graffiti," "The Graduate," "The Hospital," "Deliverance," "Shampoo," "The Producers," "Conrack," "Julia," "Oh, God!," "Silver Streak," "Barbarella," "Kinky Ladies," "Misty Beethoven," "Maraschino Cherry," and many more.--Let's trade TV Guides and want lists. Jay Krieger, E5 Carriage House East, Kirkwood, NY 13795 Phone: 607-775-1754.

WANTED ON VHS: Four reasons why I bought a VCR: Phantom of the Paradise, The Party (Peter Sellers), Rollerball, Traffic (Tati). RENEW MY FAITH IN MANKIND. PLEASE HELP! Mike Corneiller, 1017 Meadowlark Lane, Darien, IL 60559 (312) 852-4669.

Beginner in VHS collecting interested in 30's animation and special effects, jazz and swing personality features and featurettes. Looking for copies of "Animation Film Festival" originally telecast on PBS, early Warner Bros. cartoons, Betty Boop, early Popeye, etc.--Please send trade lists. Fred Hatfield, K8VDU, Box 494, Worthington, OH 43085 (614) 888-9278/(614) 436-7428.

WANTED IN VHS FORMAT: Midnite Blue Shows, Adult and NonAdult films. Will trade/buy. Send list or info. Write: P. Gordon, P.O. Box 825, Framingham MA 01701.

WANT LIST--VHS FORMAT: "Blazing Saddles" - Mel Brooks, Elvis - "On Tour," Elvis - "That's The Way It Is," Elvis - Early TV appearances. Ronald T. Karpowich, 725 Front St., Free-land, PA 18224 (717) 636-2358.

WANTED: The following football games in VHS format: 1978 Sugar Bowl (Ala. vs. Ohio St.) and 1977 game, Dolphins vs. Cardinals. G.B. Love, 792 Bateswood, #3, Houston, TX 77079.

WANTED ON VHS: Any wrestling TV shows except from the W.W. W.F., The Avengers show with Charlie Rigg, any Charlie Chan movies, El Cid movie, Knights of Round Table movie. Will trade HBO movies and New York City shows. Trade TV Guides. Own RCA 400 Model. Howard Rogofsky, Box 1102, Flushing, NY 11354.

DESPERATELY WANT ON VHS: "Chopper One," "Whirlybirds," "Sky King," "Ripcord," "Ozzie & Harriet," "Highway Patrol," "Wyatt Earp," "High Chapparral," and Mr. Roberts. Will supply tapes if unable to trade, and would be willing to exchange TV Guides. P. Bernstein, 382 N. Mill St., Saukville, WI 53080 (414) 284-2013.

JUST PLAIN WANTED

Looking for "Outer Limits," "Dobie Gillis," "Car 54, Where Are You?" "Stump the Stars," "Star Trek" (uncut), "America 2-Night," any "Steve Martin," "Ellery Queen" TV series, "Bee Gees, Bette Midler (HBO). John Conte, 52 Neptune Ave., Jersey City NJ 07305 (201) 434-0124.

WANTED ON U-MATIC the following John Wayne Films or any war films: "Stagecoach," "In Harm's Way," "The Alamo," "Flying Leathernecks," "Sands of Iwa Jima." Have many goodies to trade. Can dub in any of the following formats--Have 2 VHS machines, 2 Betamax machines, and 2 U-Matic Sony 2800's. Also interested in anyone willing to trade U-Matic blanks or used U-Matic tape for VHS or Beta tape. Can also transfer for those going to a smaller format. John J. Griffin, Jr., 3637 Bahamas Dr., Mesquite, TX 75150 (214) 270-1877 or (213) 270-1488.

WANTED - DESPERATELY!!! On either VHS or Beta format: Ice Station Zebra and QB VII. Will buy or trade (I have some good stuff!) Contact: Bruce Epstein, 9023 St. Andrews Dr., Seminole, FL 33541 (813) 397-8181.

WANTED ON BETA X-2 FORMAT: Masterpiece Theatre production of: "I, CLAUDIUS." Felix L. Zambetti, 710 W. 246 St., Bronx, NY 10471.

WANTED: TV movie "Cotton Candy," broadcast Oct. 26. Want to borrow, rent, or whatever. Beta or VHS. Tim Lussier, 709 N. Wilson Dr., Cheraw, SC 29520. Phone: (803) 537-5582.

WANTED: on X-1 Beta or 3/4" only. Certain select episodes of Saturday Night Live, particularly those with the Blues Brothers, plus the Blues Brothers' appearances on the recent special, "Things We Did Last Summer" on NBC. Also wanted: Vertigo, And Now for Something Completely Different, plus episodes of Supercar, Fireball XL-5 and Thunderbirds. Write: Marc Wielage, Ricochet Bisquit Dept., P.O. Box 480315, LA, CA 90048.

WANTED: A good copy of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" with Sinatra and Kelly. Scott Sayers, 6714 Royal, Dallas, TX 75230.

PERSONALS

Thank you, Eleanor, for saying, in print, what some of us felt about Ralph Gordon.
John Conte.

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Refined video tape enthusiast seeks contact with lady wrestlers who share his interest in rubber novelties. Inquire L. J. Weams, c/o The Videophile. No weirdos, please!

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WANTED: Will pay TOP DOLLAR and/or trade for a 16mm print of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. Have the following on VHS format: "The Prisoner," "Quark," "MASH" (early episodes), "Fawltly Towers." Also, "Forbidden Planet," "Day of the Triffids," "Burn, Witch, Burn," "Duel." I also have a copy of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW for anyone interested. NEEDED: "Outer Limits," "Avengers," "Time Tunnel," "One Step Beyond," "Science Fiction Theatre" (with host Truman Bradley), "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," "Three Stooges" shorts, etc., etc. Michael Burgujian, 15-35 146th Place, Whitestone, NY 11357.

WANT TO TRADE 1st class Adult films in VHS format. Have "Sex-world," "Chorus Call," "China Girl," "Snowy," "Barbara Broadcast," "Misty Beethoven," and many more to trade. Especially want "Merry-Go-Round," "Take Off," "High Rise," "Joy," "Marschino Cherry," "Honey Pie," "Bel Ami," "Felicia," "Memories Within Miss Aggie." Send your list and I'll send mine. Jack Laydon, 1427 S. 9th St., St. Charles IL 60174. (312-584-4988 4-6 P.M. Also interested in all first class movies.

WANTED: Other Betamax (X-2) collectors to trade tapes. Let's have a list swapping party. Kip Baringer, 515 Hickory, Mankato, MN 56001.

WANTED: "B" Westerns on Beta-max videocassettes (John Wayne, Roy Rogers, Charles Starrett, Warner's Dick Foran, etc.), plus want serials and serial features, excellent quality only, will buy or trade. FOR SALE: Ampex 1/2" reel-to-reel (EIAJ) color/b&w video tape recorder, \$250; JVC KC-360 b&w 1/2" reel-to-reel (EIAJ) video tape recorder, \$175; both in excellent shape, with instruction manuals. Call 901) 346-1071 or write Wayne Lackey, 1545 Finley, Memphis, TN 38116.

San Francisco Bay area VHS owner looking for other VHS users to trade tapes with. I will also accept tapes in lieu of trade. I have Showtime. If you send your want/available list, I will send mine. Current wants "Foul Play," "Jaws," Barry Manilow TV specials, all Mel Brooks movies, either "Godfather," "Tunnel-vision," "Fantasia." Write or call Bill Earle, 2951 Springdale Ln., San Ramon, CA 94583. Day (415) 828-1000; Night (415) 828-1239.



AD RATES & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Two types of ads are available: (1) Those printed from Camera Ready Copy, and (2) MINI-ADS. "Camera Ready" means that I take whatever you send in and give it directly to the printer, without retyping, or anything. It is critical that these be prepared in dark black or red ink (NOT blue!) and, if they are typed, that the ribbon be nice and dark. If it isn't, the reproduction will be very poor, and we will both be disappointed. It is also essential that you leave at least a 1/2" margin on all sides! The rates for camera ready copy are:

Full page.....\$100 These rates for display ads are guaranteed only for the next issue, #18. They
Half page.....\$55 will be subject to another upward adjustment as our circulation increases. Camera
Quarter page...\$30 ready ads may contain black and white photographs. Submit in any of these sizes:

Full page: 8 1/2" x 11" or 11" x 14"

Half page: 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" or 11" x 7"

Quarter page: 8" x 2 1/2" or 4" x 5 1/2"

MINI-ADS: These are still available for the very cheap rate of 25 words for \$1. From 26-50 words is \$2, etc. After 150 words, each group of 25 more is \$2. Name and address (within reason) = 6 words. Tel.# = 1. You may request that these be placed under any of the following classifications, effective next issue: For Sale, Beta Format Wanted, VHS Format Wanted, Just Plain Wanted, Personals, or Rubber Novelties. HOWEVER, no mini-ads will be accepted for the sale of hardware or blank or prerecorded tapes from dealers offering these items in quantities of more than one.

NO ads for copyrighted material FOR SALE will be accepted unless you have the rights to it. Also see disclaimer on Mini-Ads page in this issue. INQUIRE RE: Rates for color and special placement.

Deadline

Ads and contributions absolutely must reach me by February 12. Please, no more phone calls and speedy Express Mail deliveries after deadline. Our readership is (conservatively) 6000+

sub rates!

Six issues for \$10 in the US, Canada & Mexico (US funds). If you prefer First Class Mail, the same six issues are \$16. For highly impatient types, special delivery is \$28. AIR MAIL to Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, Caribbean, & Bermuda is \$17. All others--\$20, also by AIR. If a little (17) appears in the upper righthand corner of your mailing label, RENEW NOW!

the VIDEOPHILE

2003 Apalachee Pkwy.
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TOO LATE TO CLASSIFY

WANTED IN VHS FORMAT: "Fantastic Four" (1967) cartoon. It is now in syndication in various cities. I have access to local cable system. Will trade or buy. Michael Swanigan, 1522 S. St. Andrews Pl., LA, CA 90019.

INFORMATION WANTED: Any publication that shows LEGALLY any/ all Public Domain Motion Pictures ... not just opinions, but hard fact legal info. Where can such publications be obtained?? Jim Grimes, 2605 James St., Baltimore MD 21230.

BETA FORMAT WANTED: Cooper, Hayworth, DeMille films wanted on Beta 2. Hundreds and HBO to trade. Bill R. Mooney, 5519 N. 5th Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85013. (602) 264-6287.

WANT TO HEAR FROM Swap contacts in Sacramento area. Have extensive library of U-Matic and VHS. Write: Dominic, 2400 Pole Line Rd., #72, Davis, CA 95616. (916) 758-2647.

WOULD LIKE TO TRADE Atari/ Sears programmable video game cartridges. Send your trade list to: Dennis Bensen, 605 Hill Dr., #108, Hoffman Estates, IL 60194

VHS FORMAT WANTED: Am interested in trading my VHS XXX features for other adult or non-adult VHS features. Send list to: Dennis Bensen, 605 Hill Dr., #108, Hoffman Estates IL 60194.

DESPERATELY NEEDED!!! TV episodes of Space 1999, Logan's Run, Fantastic Journey, The Invaders, on RCA VHS 4-hr. tape or equivalent. Also the following movies: Night of the Lepus, Santa Claus Conquers the Martians, Have much to offer in exchange. Write Ray Radford, Rt. 1, Box 322-A, Eclectic AL 36024.

WANTED: Pre-1966 TV Guides, cheap or as gift, to use as reference material. (Also recent copies of B.I.B. movie & TV series source books.) Condition is of secondary importance. Also looking for "standees" (life-size color cardboard figures) of movie, television & recording personalities (Steve Martin, Dolly Parton, Mrs. Miller, etc.) like those you see in theater lobbies & record shops. Am also still looking for the following in Beta X-1 or X-2 (or VHS, sigh): Space Thing & Bush-whackers (both soft-"X" titles from about 1969), Vampire's Night Orgy, Mary Had a Little (w/Hazel Court). Jim Lowe, Editor, The Videophile, 2003 Apalachee Pkwy., Tallahassee FL 32301



HEY! LET'S REVISIT THE SCENE OF THAT GREAT COVER FROM TVN #15 !!



CHARLIE CHANNELS

GOT SOME IDEAS FOR WILD AND CRAZY THINGS THAT I COULD BE DOING?

SEND THEM TO OUR BEFUDDLED EDITOR AND MAYBE HE WILL HAVE ME DO IT.

(Translation: Maybe you can bail him out, since he can't think of anything.)



WARNING

Federal law provides severe civil and criminal penalties for the unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or exhibition of copyrighted motion pictures and video tapes. (Title 17, United States Code, Sections 501 and 506)

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I am looking of the following
football programs:
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JOE MAZZINI'S U-MATIC & BETA NOTES

THE FORMAT CONTROVERSY

What's a videophile to do? First the U-Matic hit the scene and I was one of the first to go out and buy one. For several years I couldn't think of a better machine on the market; then the Betamax arrived and its myriad of superior features included quicker access to program locations, better reliability, and (of course) lower tape cost.

Well, now VHS has done it, and I find it harder and harder to hold my ground with Betamax as the only system. It appears to me that both the Beta and VHS systems have their own advantages and disadvantages. There's no doubt that the Beta machine will be here for a long, long time, but its chief application may be on the professional level (as the U-Matic established itself to be.)

I spent a little time playing with the new JVC VHS 3600 and for the money (\$1200), it's quite a machine. The thing that impresses me the most is its ability to playback programs at double speed with no "Donald Duck Effect" in the voice. This means, as Bob Kerr of DuPont pointed out to me, that you can watch 30 minutes of the evening news in 15! The new Panasonic single speed VHS 8310 is also nice. It gives you slow motion and a new tape handling system that treats the tape better.

A couple of people wrote nice letters defending the VHS tape handling abilities of the VHS. From years of U-Matic experience, I have come to prefer the tape being kept against the heads in fast forward and rewind to having the tape winding back into the cassette for those functions. It's very difficult to argue head wear because at that speed the tape creates an air pocket between it and the heads. Even should someone find proof that the heads wear a little quicker, the trade-off still puts the Beta tape wrap system in the lead. It's true that relatively high tension only exists when the tape is being taken out of or put into its play mode on the VHS, but the tension is there.

Another disturbing thing is happening with VHS machines which are a year or so in age. Recordings made when the machines were new are now presenting problems when played back without adjusting the tracking control. This problem can eventually get so bad that recently recorded tapes are the only ones a user may play back. The only cure appears to be making sure that preventative maintenance takes place every six months if you're a heavy user (4-6 hours a day) or at least once a year.

At this point, though, only a VHS machine may be used easily in your car, boat, or van because of its DC motor.

I mention all of this because if you're just starting video you would make a conscious choice concerning the alternatives. God knows they've been discussed to death in this and other publications [Hey, Joe. Let's you, me, Marc, Bob and Nate discuss 'em some more this issue. O.K.--Ed.], but you should consider the format in its context. I've always preferred professional equipment and standards. You really can't argue tape cost in comparing the two formats because there is a great sacrifice in picture quality at the slow speed on VHS machines.

Betamax people have been around for a long time and if you want to collect programs that were aired several years ago, the Betamax system is the best system for you because so many long-time collectors own them. There is, however, a great deal to be said for RCA's new VCT-400 VHS which allows you to program a tape for a week's recording. The price is very reasonable and the quality is good for in-home viewing. At this point, however, duplication of slow speed VHS to slow speed VHS is pretty abysmal, as far as I am concerned.

If you plan to record a lot of football and other events that run over 3 hours, then go VHS. If you don't plan to do much editing, and if you anticipate doing very little trading and no duplication, then VHS is the format for you. My main dissatisfaction with VHS has been the general quality of the raw tape. However, TDK had just come out with its SUPER AVILYN and it is fine stuff. With its use, gone are the days of red streaking at slow speed and heavy dropouts.

On the Betamax side, however, I have learned that a company in Florida is adapting the SLO-320 series for on-air playback, so I predict that Betamax will take over in ENG (electronic news gathering). Marc will have more information on this development for you.

BETAMAX OWNERS' ALERT

A disturbing problem has happened with Betamax machines too many times for it to be chance, and you should be aware of it, especially if you have heard an odd noise beginning when it is running. This noise usually sounds like a ticking and becomes louder and louder. A belt eventually breaks, the noise goes away, and the machine stops functioning with a tape already half loaded-unloaded inside. This problem has happened to two friends and myself. It's about to happen to Ken Grimwood's too. The belt is inexpensive (\$4) and readily available from any Sony/Toshiba/Zenith dealer. The best solution is to keep a spare FF Idler belt (3-646-188-00).

While I was changing the belt, I decided to clean the heads for the first time since I have owned the machine. With at least 500 hours on them and a year's wear, they were dirty, but the picture was of its usual good quality before as well as after the cleaning, so in my opinion, there isn't really a need to clean until you start to see a lot of snow. Marc went to the trouble to take his Betamax to a repair station only to find that the heads were severely clogged. Don't make the same mistake yourself. Apply firm (but gentle--if there is such a thing) pressure with a chamois stick or cloth dipped in denatured alcohol and rub horizontally until the cloth doesn't show black deposits anymore. [Also see Steve Comet's complete instructions in TVN #15.--Ed.] On the following page is a reprint that Bob Kerr of DuPont wrote concerning cleaning materials. We'll be running some more of Bob's research into video tape as the issues roll off the press.

CHRONTRAL--A MICRO-COMPUTER TIME CONTROLLER

A couple of truly revolutionary electronic developments have hit the scene that I feel are worth noting. The first is CHRONTRAL. I first heard about this fantastic device in HIGH TIMES magazine when it was advertised as the perfect solution to using lights to grow marijuana. The main selling point in the ad was its

Cleaning Materials for Video Recorders

When asked what solvent to use as a cleaning agent for video recorders we always recommend FREON® TF Solvent. This is much more than an effort to support the product of a brother department, FREON TF has many things going for it.

There are a large number of types and makes of video tape and cassette recorders and the cleaning procedures should follow the recommendations of the manufacturer, through his agent, the dealer. We shall confine ourselves to the reasons for advising the use of FREON TF.

The "solvent" or agent used in cleaning must be an effective "loosening" agent and assist in carrying away the debris. In addition to cleaning assistance, the material must be safe to the plastic and rubber materials of the equipment, and above all, safe to personnel.

One of the advantages of FREON TF is that except for oils and greases, it is a poor solvent. As a normal cleaning agent it will not attack any of the plastic or rubber materials in the recorder. With one exception, a clogged video head, the cleaning agent does not need to be a solvent, merely an agent for loosening compacted debris and adhering it to the cloth or swab to be carried away: FREON TF is effective in this task.

FREON TF is particularly attractive because of its safety, both for fire and personnel exposure. Alcohols, ethyl and isopropyl, and petroleum naptha (lighter fluid) are innocuous as solvents but are flammable and under certain conditions could cause an explosion. Aromatic solvents such as benzene and toluene (Ptoluol) are harmful to plastics and rubbers, highly flammable, and considered hazardous for personnel exposure.

Esters and ketones such as nail polish remover, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK), and acetone are harmful to plastics and sometimes rubbers, as well as being very flammable. Chlorinated solvents are either harmful to plastics and rubbers or people in general.

FREON® TF has one of the highest threshold limit values (TLV) for continuous personnel exposure available, 1000 parts per million



Regardless of the cleaning agent used, the equipment manufacturers recommended procedure should be followed.

It may be argued that such small quantities of solvent are used in cleaning that the hazard is minimal. True, but bitter experience has shown the materials uncontrolled in a working environment must be idiot proof. FREON TF and its Allied Chemical counterpart are a clear "best choice" as a cleaning agent for recording equipment.

FREON TF in liquid form rather than in aerosol form is recommended because smaller quantities are used. There is little chance of cracking a video head by accidental chilling from the propellant, and the application can be directed to the surfaces to be cleaned without danger of spreading lubricants to unwanted places in the recorder. Any solvent sprayed into a lubricated area can spread the lubricant or perhaps remove it from the desired area.

Mention was made earlier of head cleaning. No attempt should be made to clean the video head tip unless there is evidence that the head is actually clogged or that head clog is occurring too frequently.

The person attempting video head cleaning **must be properly instructed by qualified personnel otherwise head breakage will almost certainly result.** FREON TF should be tried first. If this does not work, consult the recorder manufacturer for his recommendations. Chlorothene, for example, has been known to dissolve the cement holding the head tip to the carrier.

The question of flammability in a cleaning agent goes well beyond just the question of smoking. An accidental spill of cleaning agent inside the recorder could result in the buildup of an explosive mixture of vapor inside the machine after the cover is replaced. When the machine is operated, the inevitable small spark from operating switches, motor brushes, etc. could set off an explosion. At a minimum the top of the recorder would be blown off the recorder and a fire would be likely.

Most solvents will attack the plastic trim from parts of the recorder and leave unsightly marks. Solvents on the meter faces will destroy or impair the transparency of the cover and make the meters difficult to read.

FREON TF can be purchased from many commercial solvent suppliers listed in the "Yellow Pages". The minimum quantity may be too large for most people. MILLER-STEPHENSON is the best known repackager of liquid FREON TF. MILLER-STEPHENSON offers quantities as small as 4 oz. Contact any of the listed sales offices for purchase.

514 Carlingview Drive
Rexdale, Ontario
Canada M9W5R3
(416) 675-6090

6348 Oakton Street
Morton Grove, IL 60053
(312) 966-2022

1001 East First Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 624-3887

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Robert J. Kerr

Technical Service Manager
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VIDEOTAPE
VIEWPOINTS

Published by
E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. (Inc.)
Photo Products Department
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(302) 999-3876

variable time settings through 10 memories via four outlets. My mind raced at the possibilities for this timer could have for video taping. I have held back mentioning it until I had a chance to use and abuse it, but now I have tested it and if ever anything was essential for us video tape people who have several machines, this is it!



Earl Lindburg went to all the trouble of writing up a press release about the CHRONTROL, so, if you don't mind, I'll reprint it verbatim below. My comments concerning its use will follow.

ChronTrol, a unique microcomputer time controller with the capability to perform a wide range of time control variations, has been developed and introduced by Lindburg Enterprises of San Diego, California.

ChronTrol's uses range from security to household appliance control to the intricate time variations needed in laboratory or experimental work, according to Earl Lindburg, developer of ChronTrol and President of Lindburg Enterprises.

ChronTrol was originally conceived for its uses in horticulture and indoor gardening, where it can promote the growth of plants by simulating the natural daily variations of the photoperiod.

ChronTrol's convenient size--only 8½" wide--makes it easy to use anywhere in the house or work area. The device weighs four pounds and is portable.

Using ChronTrol is simple and requires no special skills. You simply plug ChronTrol into a standard 120 volt outlet, set the program you desire on the 20-key control panel, and plug the device to be controlled into the outlet on ChronTrol's rear panel.

ChronTrol can operate up to 10 on/off functions--the duration of the "on" time can be as brief as one second or as long as 168 hours.

The basic ChronTrol unit has one outlet, but multiple outlet models are available with two or four outlets, that allow performance of multiple operations, separately or coordinately. A battery-powered memory protection system is also available as an option, and protects all programs in case of power interruption.

Zetachron, Inc., of San Diego, has the limited exclusive manufacturing rights for ChronTrol. Zetachron was first to design and introduce the hand-held digital stop watch, and is currently involved with a time clock for field display at sporting events.

ChronTrol is currently sold by mail order for under \$70. By merchandising ChronTrol directly through the mail, wholesale and retail markups are eliminated. This enables the consumer to purchase ChronTrol for a modest price.

ChronTrol comes with a 30-day money back guarantee and a one year warranty on parts and labor.

Information can be obtained from:

LINDBURG ENTERPRISES

4888 Ronson Ct.

San Diego, CA 92111 (714) 292-9292

What the press release didn't say was that the unit comes with a very complete, step-by-step instruction manual that runs over 30 pages. Also, each unit is checked three times before it is shipped. Mine arrived, packed very well, after a reasonable four-week wait and has functioned perfectly ever since. The timer is limited only by your imagination and desire to use it to the fullest. Earl Lindburg is going to publish a small newsletter dealing with the applications of his timer. Already everyone from chicken farmers to experimental biologists are using it. I recommend that you write for a brochure. It's a beautiful one-sheet explanation of the device and its functions. I also recommend that you purchase the four-outlet ChronTrol which runs \$99.95. For an extra \$9.95 you can get the battery memory protection, which is essential if you have programmed your ChronTrol to the hilt, like I have, and live in an area where power interruptions occur.

Since it is programmable for a week's run, you can turn your Betamax into a true "time machine." Of course it won't change channels for you, but if you have several Betamax'es (or other VCR's of the nonprogrammable variety) you can set each for a certain channel and have the timer turn on and off the appropriate tape recorder when needed. Remember that it can be turned on for as little as one second or as long as 168 hours. That's a lot of flexibility. [But where's the 168-hour tape?--Ed.] Carl Vickery of AUDIO-VIDEO CRAFT was so impressed that he bought five. A fellow videophile in "The Valley" bought one and used it while he went on vacation. All of us have figured out a way to defeat Sony's switching that automatically stops all functions when power is deprived. Just use duct tape or any other strong tape such as masking or electrician's tape to keep the record lever depressed so the machine can stop, start, stop, start without taking it out of the record mode. Marc is working now on a sturdy plastic cover that will do this for you.

As for accuracy, we've found the timer to be accurate to within ±1 second over a 10-day period. That's ±0.1 seconds a day! You can't go wrong with this invention. I recommend that you plan ahead and get the four outlet version. You'll be surprised at how many things you can operate with it, and since it has a 600 watts per outlet rating, you'll not have to worry about overloading anything. Be patient with its operation. Anytime you think the machine is screwing up, you'll find that you didn't instruct it properly. It trains you quickly and has many fail-safe features to prevent erasure of important memory information. For example, you can lock the keyboard to prevent it from being operated by others and then "open" it with the code "103." There are so many features (such as the automatic variable timing) applicable to other areas, that ChronTrol will become indispensable in all areas of variable time and power control. I'll be writing up a detailed explanation for Earl's newsletter and would give you more information here, but it won't make sense until you have one.

IT NEVER FAILS DEPT.:

I propose that BENNETT ELZEY go down in history for his solution to removing labels from Betamax and U-Matic album covers and cassettes. Now, I'm sure that someone else has discovered a method, and it never fails that it's known elsewhere, but for now Bennett is the golden boy in Joe's eyes. How many times have we broken fingernails, poured solvent, and cried over removing unwanted, old labels from our boxes? Bennett discovered that if you use lighter fluid in reasonable amounts, the labels will come away from the plastic or paper easily. There are a couple of secrets to his fluid, however. 1. Don't rush it. Apply the lighter fluid and let it sit and sit. I have never found anything better

for removing labels from the paper Betamax boxes. 2. After you've applied a reasonable amount, apply a little more. 3. Be careful not to let any run inside the cassette itself. With proper application, the label will peel off very easily. If it doesn't, you've not put enough fluid on the label or have not waited long enough. As they say, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention," and for days Bennett sat in the tape room trying to remove stubborn labels from used STUDIO FILM & TAPE U-Matic tapes. As with Einstein, something clicked inside his head, and now we have a solution to the problem.

The other day I was having my throat examined (it had become irritated due to a combination of harsh, "unnatural substances" I had been inhaling too regularly and the LA smog) when I noticed the doctor's flashlight. The thought immediately came to mind that this was what I needed to solve my index counter problems. You see, my machines are all stacked on shelving that leaves very little room (or light) to see what is going on with them. Even when a Betamax or VHS is out in the open, it's still hard to see exactly how much tape you have left on the play-out reel. So, I found a Mallory Durabeam Penlight Flashlight. It uses AAA batteries, goes for \$2.19, and is called the model 901B. Now I can easily see what's going on and, so far, the original set of batteries has lasted well over three months. It's 3/8" in diameter and 4 1/2" long with a pen-clip for storage in your shirt pocket. [Long time readers of this mag will agree with me that Joe has hit his stride once again with this issue's column. I've been using a chunky flashlight for this same purpose and it always looks like someone forgot to put it back in the toolbox. Where else can you get as many helpful hints? I think I see still another coming up just a few words from here.--Ed.]

While you're shopping around for things like this, check out a stationery store. In it you'll find Avery labels from 1/2" in diameter to 1/2" by 2". The latter is great for writing tidbits on a Betamax or VHS tape. I highly recommend grease pencils too, since they can be used to write comments directly onto the spine of VHS or Beta tapes. Scotch 1/2" paper tape has a definite advantage because, as Marc says, "It's cheaper."

TIDBITS 'N TIPS

In our search for easy-to-understand information concerning antennas, Winegard's neat little booklet called "UHF TIPS" (order WS-30) sure comes in handy. Write for a copy from:

WINEGARD TELEVISION SYSTEMS
WINEGARD SYSTEMS
Burlington, IA 52601

You'll be amazed at how much information they have packed into this booklet. Over the years I have come to respect Winegard as the best antenna supplier going. I particularly like their interchangeability of parts and support systems such as boosters, distribution amplifiers, and the like. Besides, who else but a company located in Iowa would know better how to deal with reception problems? They even go so far as to provide antenna model recommendations for various rural areas in the U.S. If you're nice in your letter and mention specific locations, they'll help you tremendously.

If you're always looking for video programs like I am, you'll definitely want to purchase the INDEX of the VIDEOFINDER: THE INTERNATIONAL VIDEO PROGRAM GUIDE. It costs \$9 to subscribers of VIDEOFINDER or \$12 to nonsubscribers. I recommend that, while you're at it, you subscribe to the magazine. It is the only one of its type. It reviews videocassettes in the business, education, medicine, and home entertainment categories. It also contains articles on the latest equipment. For

example, the November issue had Carlo McDaniel's study of the Betamax SLO-340. A subscription is \$15 for one year and both the magazine and the index are available from:

VIDEOFINDER
P. O. Box 8087
Maderia Beach, FL 33738

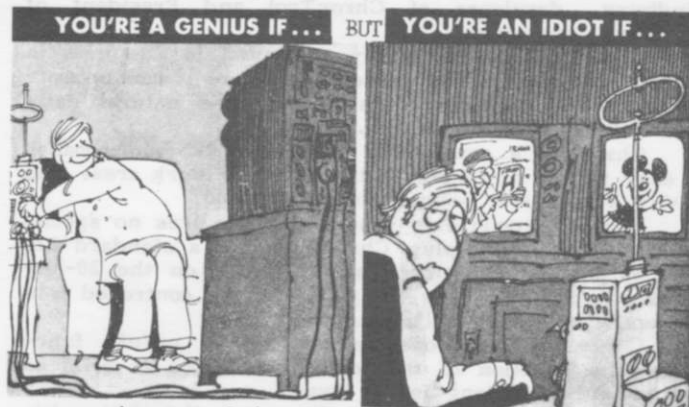
If you save \$50 in purchasing a tape because of VIDEOFINDER'S REVIEW, you've paid for several years of subscriptions.

By the way, I thought you might enjoy the cartoon printed below. It originally appeared in the NEW YORKER.



"When they put this show on a cassette, let's make sure we don't buy it."

Speaking of cartoons, did you see the brilliant study of us video people in MAD magazine? It kind of says it all, or does it? Talking with friends in the



... you invent a device that records one TV program while you're watching another one.

... you think today's TV programs are really worth going to all that trouble and expense.

Hollywood area, I find that few watch any commercial TV. For one thing, there is very little commercial TV offers, and for another, there isn't the time. The greatest thing about video tape recorders is that you can watch what you want when you want. How many times (in the pre-Betamax days) have we fallen asleep in the middle of Saturday Night Live only to wake up during the station's sign off? A regular ritual with me now is to watch Saturday Night Live on Sunday afternoon. After a few times of secretly thinking that doing so "was against God's will," I've now come to accept it as natural. The last time I timed Saturday Night Live I found that there was only 65 minutes of program and 25 minutes of commercials. There's a limit and I sure pity those people who don't have video tape recorders because they can't fast forward past the commercials. [Joe, 65 minutes is about right. I found long ago that you can squeeze S.N.L. on a 1 hour tape if you delete the commercials and one of the musical numbers.--Ed.]

I know it happened last May, but Marc Wielage spoke on a panel at the 1978 VIDEOSHOW in Los Angeles and his erudite comments and those of others, such as Homer Porter of the FBI, are now available on audio cassette. You can purchase the 4-hour cassette package for only \$23.50 postage paid from:

AMVID COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, INC.
2100 Sepulveda Blvd.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

I found it very informative and worth the money. Some fine discussions took place concerning formats, professional applications, and home video.

Once again, I'm running out of space and I haven't even started my in-depth study of the three main TV systems (PAL, SECAM, NTSC). I promise to do so next issue. I have received so much helpful information from people such as Doug Orlowski in Canada, John Seit in Australia, Bob Horvath in Brazil, and Dr. Bryne of New Jersey. I can tell you that the tapes from Brazil play fine on my JVC VHS. They were recorded in the PAL-M system which means that as long as you adjust the hue control on the monitor radically, you have a fine picture.

I was impressed with the over-all quality of the broadcasting from Brazil, but I was shocked to see so many scratches on their ID's and films. However, they use computer video effects far more than we do and to watch a Roto-Rooter commercial in Portuguese was one of the highlights in my video life so far. For three issues, I've held you people from information concerning these formats, but next time I'll make up for it with a world map showing the different systems and some great technical articles concerning the formats. In the meantime, you can now get SECAM or PAL tapes transferred to NTSC at a very reasonable cost by:

E.E.C. (Educational Electronics of California)
213 North Cedar Ave.
Inglewood, CA 90301 (213) 677-8167

They also provide AV learning systems and Bernie Keach is one of the nicest guys you'll ever do business with. As far as I know, only IMAGINE TRANSFORM also offers transfers from system to system, and they are at least twice as expensive. I was fortunate enough to acquire some rock stuff that was done in Paris on SECAM, transferred to PAL in England, and then transferred to NTSC here in the U.S., and it held up very well.

Sony now has released a full line of NTSC/PAL/SECAM recorder-players and monitors. My last communication from SONY stated that they were not available for sale here yet, but that was several months ago. Just as I was final-typing this article, good ole Marc came through with information about the SLO-8200/3 Betamax. It records and plays back in NTSC/PAL/SECAM and is available from SONY in London. We'll get Ted Dickson to help us out with some pictures and information and report on it next issue.

That's it until next time. By all means stay in touch and I'm still collecting articles on foreign video systems, so if you have anything you think will be of interest, please send it to me. STUDIO FILM & TAPE has just tied up with three more distributors, and we'll have a new catalog in the offing as soon as my inventory contains the titles. As you know, I stock the title and then advertise it because that way you get one-day service. If you have already requested a catalog, you'll receive supplemental pages automatically. If you've not seen our catalog, just ask for it. To TVN subscribers it's free, to all others it's \$2.

As Always, *Joe*

Joe Mazzini,
STUDIO FILM & TAPE
6424 Santa Monica Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90038



Mailgram

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

PLEASE PASS THE WORD TO YOUR READERS--I have some mint-condition equipment that I find I am not using enough to warrant its expense. First, a Concord PC-49 Color Camera, electronic viewfinder, and the battery-operated super-fast F-1.5 Zoom lens, power supply. 41 hours of use. List price, \$2500, but is now discounted to around \$2000. Second, a complete Betamax portable unit: The superb Sony DXC-1610 with a zoom, electronic viewfinder, and the battery-operated SLO-340, 2 rechargeable batteries, power supply and charger. Porta-brace back pack and hands-off shoulder-mount for camera, plus the wheel base part. Lists around \$6000. Only 7 hours on the unit. Will sell or trade. I'm looking for a 3/4" editor, other Beta or VHS decks, or what-have-you. All equipment 100 percent guaranteed. Ed Corley, Box 324, Pass Christian MS 39571

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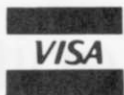
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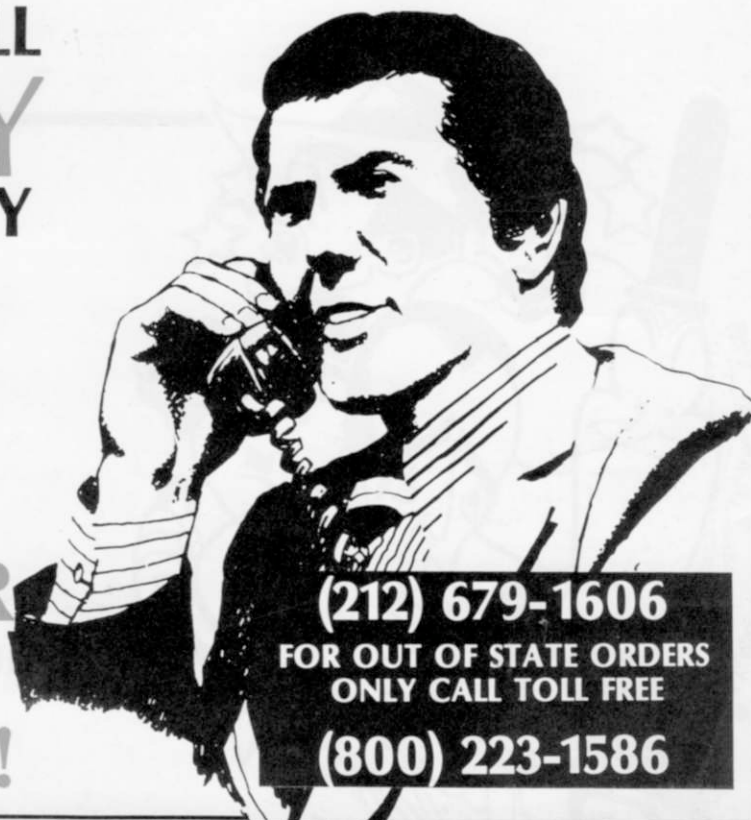


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