


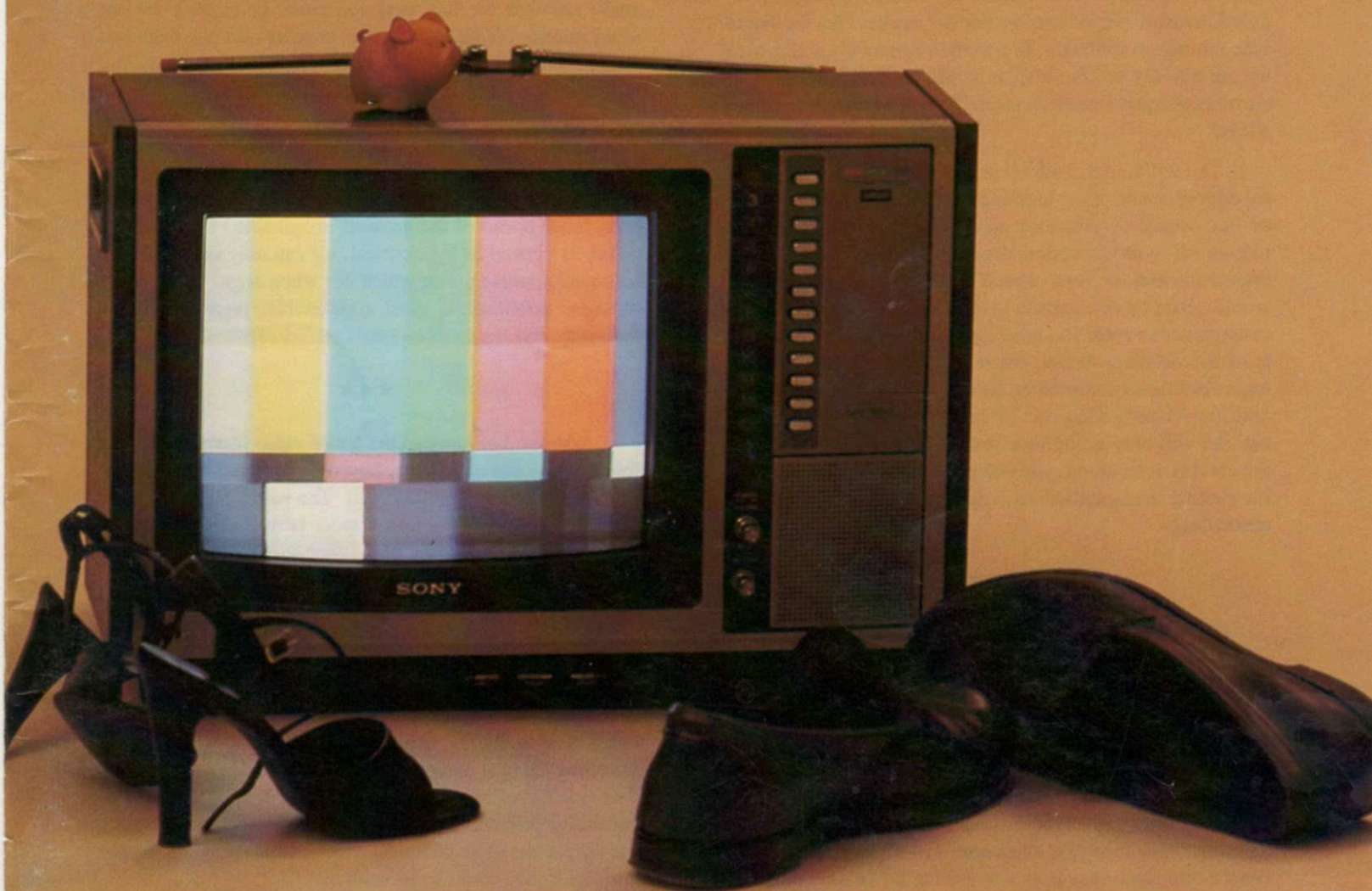
the VIDEOPHILE

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NMI

June 1980

25 



- We review the latest recorders from Sony, RCA and Toshiba
- Which brands of video tape are best
- Exclusive report on the Sony Betamax AG-200 Changer



tv wiggles

First off, I'd like to welcome the thousands of you who are reading *The Videophile* for the first time. You may be surprised to learn that we've been a mainstay of the home video subculture since September 1976. Only recently have we sought a wider readership through newsstand distribution and other channels. Our list of subscribers has grown to over 5,000 serious home video enthusiasts and we hope that you will be irresistably tempted to join their ranks. We think you'll soon discover that *The Videophile* is somewhat different in its approach from the mass market magazines that you are accustomed to. It is our primary intention to inform our readers, and to do so in a manner which does not insult their intelligence. On the other hand, we are continuously on guard to insure that neither we nor our readers take this home video thing too seriously. In a world beset by ills with which we are all only too familiar, it would be foolish, indeed, to elevate concern for such an insignificant endeavor to too high a level.

You will find that our reviewers (particularly our technical editor) can be pretty hard to please. Whether you realize it or not, many of you have never seen a *really good* TV picture. If your reception depends on rabbit-ears, a low priced antenna, or even cable-TV, chances are your picture would suffer by comparison to that obtainable by a top notch antenna with a rotor and amplifier. Similarly, if your TV set is of the no-name brand, discount-special variety, you are undoubtedly accustomed to picture quality that we would consider "barely adequate" at best. We know what is possible and will only grudgingly settle for anything less. If you are not this demanding, you will want to consider some of our nit-picking and qualitative judgments of the finer points accordingly.

★★★

To our long-term readers we are pleased to announce that we are distributing something like 15,000-20,000 copies of this issue to a variety of outlets throughout the country (primarily in the Northeast). Also, you will notice that we have accepted an ad for a nonvideo-related product in this issue, and we feel that a word of explanation is in order. From the outset, we have been of the opinion that we should limit advertisements to the type that our readers will look forward to, rather than turn past as an annoyance. To date, this has been a relatively easy policy to pursue for two reasons: (1) Big name advertisers have been ignoring us, and (2) We were under the impression that postal regulations relating to our controlled circulation mailing permit restricted us to advertising that related to the subject of the magazine, i.e. home video. It now seems that the latter is not the case. Consequently, we will *consider* other types of ads on a case by case basis, based on the arbitrary judgment of our staff. What this means is that an ad for rare movie posters or brass pig-shaped door knockers are more likely to be accepted (because of our

readers' special interests) than are ads for vegetable slicers or novelty "X-Ray Specs". We have no interest whatever in ads for cigarettes, beer, solid lifters, bongos or diuretics, and we will do our best not to allow these pages to be cluttered with same. Also, because our classified rates are ridiculously low, we will continue to limit that section to ads from subscribers and to items which are strictly related to video.

There continues to be controversy concerning our policy toward XXX-rated material. As some of you will recall, our own ad, which was to appear in the first issue of *PANORAMA*, was rejected because we carry ads for such material. What you may not know is that we too have rejected some ads that we felt were too crude or explicit for our sensibilities. We had a full color page ad sold and delivered for this very issue which had to be rejected because I did not feel that it passed our "grandmother test". We will not ignore the existence of this rather substantial share of the home video market, but we must insist to would-be advertisers that their ad copy remain within the boundaries of presentable eroticism, even if the advertised product, itself, is bold-faced porno of the grossest imaginable variety. If this policy is viewed as hypocritical, we can only say that it is a balanced approach with which our white anglo-saxon, middle-aged publisher is most comfortable, regardless of its defensability.

★★★

Add another entry to the list of video frustrations. I've found that some of the very best programming being shown on HBO is totally unannounced. The pay-cable service has recently stopped filling up the space between the end of one movie and the beginning of another with mere previews or "intermission" music and scenery. Instead, they are now regularly running seldom seen short subjects and musical numbers featuring popular artists, under the title, "Video Jukebox". Just the other day, while idly flipping through the dial what should appear before my eyes but the delightful clay-animation short "Closed Mondays". I managed to catch most of it, by pure chance. But, WOW, here I am watching the best thing being shown on HBO all month, and they don't even have enough regard for it to include a mention in the program listings. If anyone among our readership has access to a more complete HBO listing, we sure would be grateful if they could let us in on it.

★★★

We've come across yet another publication for those of you who are hungry for explicit reviews of "XXX-rated" tapes. "Source Video" (P.O. Box 50442, Nashville, TN 37205) presents lengthy plot reviews and evaluations of 10 or so films each issue, and also includes video chit chat not too unlike that found in these pages. The language in the reviews

is *completely* unexpurgated, so don't say we didn't warn you. Source Video also has a catalog of these same tapes for sale, but they are not reluctant to say that a particular title is no good. I don't have the price handy (though I think a subscription is \$10 or \$12) so perhaps you should inquire first. Mention the good ole *Videophile* when you do.

Speaking of other publications, those of you wanting to find out what this back yard earth station business is all about can get a cheap start by sending \$1.00 to Microwave General, 2680 Bayshore Frontage Road, Mountain View, CA 94303, and asking for a copy of "Home Satellite TV News" Vol. 1, No. 1. You'll get lots of illustrated info for beginners in this 8 page news sheet.

We're anxious to see the first issue of yet another new video magazine, due out in November. "Channels of Communication" (working title), under the leadership of former New York Times TV editor, Les Brown, will be a bi-monthly mag designed to strike a middle ground between industrial and consumer video interests.

★★★

The Summer Consumer Electronics Show is coming up in Chicago beginning June 15. In response to many inquiries, we remind you that the show *is not* open to the public. Check with your local dealer if you feel that you simply *must* attend. Perhaps he can slip you in under his auspices. Admission is free to members of the industry.

★★★

As you may know, the FBI and the movie industry are cracking down on the criminal bootleg tape activities of videocassette collectors (see page 12 herein). What you may not know is that Universal Studios, miffed by failure to win its suit against the Sony Betamax, is pursuing its own crack-down via civil lawsuits. We may be able to release details at some future date, but for now we will only observe that it is rather unbecoming behavior on the part of a giant corporation to callously harass innocent collectors who do not have the financial resources to defend themselves.

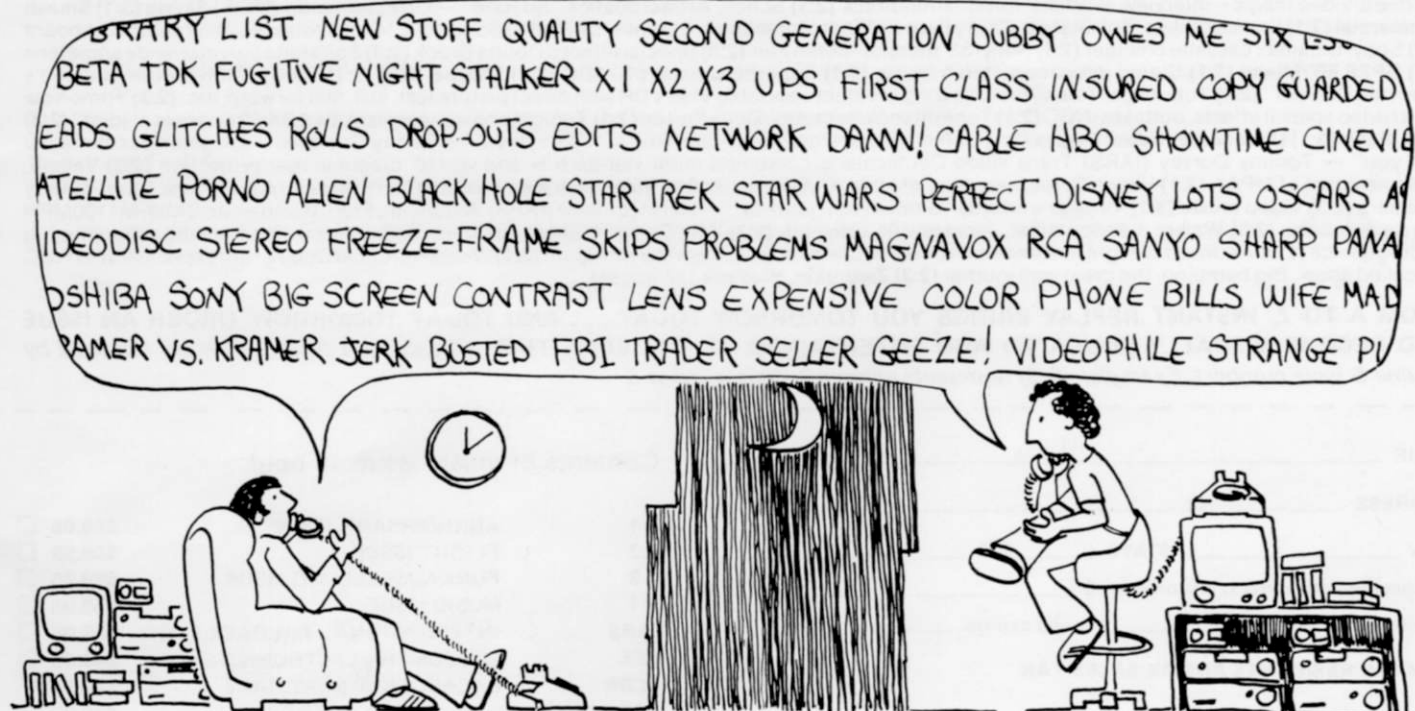
★★★

Due to lack of response (and lack of organization on our part), the proposed charter trip to Japan will have to be put off until next year. We have your names on file and will keep you posted.

As usual, we are most appreciative for all the clippings, other goodies, and words of encouragement. Special thanks once again to Robin Benson, and to Stan Sieger, Steve Loots, Paul Rayton and Ed Fleming, and especially to those of you who haven't heard from me yet about the wonderful idea for an article or VCR modification that you have sent in.

ALL THE BEST

Jim



WHAT IS INSTANT REPLAY?

Adwar video hip switcher (3:1) Allen, Bob/Satellite private terminal seminar (2:3) American Bandstand/Girl exposes breast—ABC (2:1) **Anthony, Mark/Rock & roller skating (3:1)** Apollo II/ The first step-moonwalk-Nasa (2:2) Astralvision/Computer generated video art (2:1) **Baba Ram Das (2:1)** Barone, Joe/Interview-Showtime Systems International-video juke box (3:1) **Battisi Lucio (3:1)** Behar, Bob/first earth station in Fla. (2:1) Behar, Bob/Oklahoma SPTS 79'-Bob Allen interviews Jim Vine of Paraframe (2:3) Banks, Chris/pre-race meeting: air show in Homestead & Bob Hoover's P-51 Mustang (2:2) Merle, Milton/comedy show-NBC: Lenny Bruce nite club footage (2:1) Bacardi Cup Boat Race (BCBR) **Blazek, Allen (3:1)** Brock, Donna/Lip sync error (2:3) Caiden, Marty/Iron Annie: WWII Junkers JU52/Author—"Cyborg", "I'll be seeing you"—Tommy Dorsey & Frank Sinatra (IARS) Camera technique/Renaissance Faire-example of verite (2:2) Caldwell, Bobby/music for rocket sequence (2:1) **Caldwell, Bobby (3:1)** **Cannes film festival commercials (3:1)** **Captain video/London (3:1)** Carnicas, Peter/interview with Jack Valenti (2:1) **Cathouse (3:1)** Children of Sanchez/film preview-Miami fest/Anthony Quinn & Hal Bartlett (2:1) **Cichlids (3:1)** Coconut Grove 1:27:30:08/George Monteiro (2:1) **Cooper, Bob (3:1)** Commercial outtakes/Olive soap, Marlboro, Westinghouse (refrigerator door sticks) cosmetic commercials, Don Rickles-Right Guard (2:1) Commercial outtakes-European (2:3) Commercials/gas-Citgo (2:2) Consumer Electronics Outtakes Show in Las Vegas CES Cooper, Bob/SPTS (2:3) **Cruise, Pablo (3:1)** **Dance of the Cameraman (3:1)** **Dangerous Diane/Spodarak (3:1)** **Devo (3:1)** **Doors (3:1)** Disco roller skating in costume (Madness Takes its Toll) **Eagles, The (3:1)** **Ecological Jazz Band/Duffy Jackson, Frankie Man (3:1)** Ecological Jazz Band I/ lush tropical setting (same name) Ecological Jazz Band II/stereo indoor jazz session-2 U-matic tapes in sync (same name) Egis/multi standard conversion equipment (2:3) Film/Miami Film Festival (2:1) Flight/Bob Hoover—"Blue Skies: Benny Goodman (IARS) Flight preparation/Hoover & Banks—" Fools Rush In" (IARS) Fredericks, Richard/opera star interview (IARS) **French commercial (3:1)** Frisbee Feats/Love 22 for President (2:2) Fussballet/Sony Corporation (2:3) & 3:1) Gardner, Lefty/aerobatics in P-38 "It's been a long time" - Charlie Spivak (IARS) **German commercial (3:1)** **Goombay in the Grove (3:1)** Harlan, Tian/Color Time (2:3) Hayes, Woody/ABC sports (2:1) Hays, Ron/video art, Star Wars concert in Montreal stadium, Palace disco theatre in L.A., Music series-PBS, Michele Le Grand conducting the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (2:2) Heimes, Hans Dietrich/Sony (2:3) **Hitler (3:1)** Hoover, Bob/aerobatics-P-51 Mustang, "Loch Lomond" - Benny Goodman, "Fools Rush In" - Tommy Dorsey, Frank Sinatra & "You're the top" - Ethel Merman/pre-race meeting (IARS) Hoover, Bob/International air race (2:2) Howe, Roger/U.S. Precision lens (2:3) Improv Comedy (2:1) **Indian commercial (3:1)** ITA spring seminar/in Hilton Head-Jim Bouras (MPAA), Homer 'Hap' Porter-(FBI) & Jules Yarnell (Recording Industry Association of America) (2:2) ITA seminar/in New York, Ron Hill demonstrating magnavision video disk player - first time shown, John Hiltz presents BASF's longitudinal scan video system - first time shown, Tony Mirabelli shows Quasar's one piece projection system & low cost super-8-to-video conversion unit (2:1) ITA seminar/N.Y. (1978), Jack Valenti (MPAA), Peter Caranicas, editor of videography magazine & Howard Polskin, managing editor of Videography Mag. (2:1) Jackson, Duffy/Big band favorites (Eco Jazz I) **Jagger, Mick (3:1)** **Jarreau, Al (3:1)** Kite Flying/Jacksonville coliseum (2:2) **Klaghorn, Bill/interview from Adwar video (3:1)** Klink, Roland/Grundig video 2000 flipable cassette shown for first time (2:3) Knievel, Evel/has last jump edited to "It's a crazy world" by Mac McNally, in London (2:2) Koomb's, Mike/inventor of world's first color commercial killer (2:2) Local news/football player wears panty-hose-WCKT (2:1) Man, Frankie/Jazz salutes to Duke Ellington among others (Eco Jazz I) Magnavision video disk (2:2) Maier, Bill/of Philips, first showing of Video 2000, videocassette changer 48 hour operation, Philip's 3-tube \$1700 camera (2:2) Matsushita/first showing of visc-pak, interview with Tadashi Nagaoka (2:2) **McCann, Les/PSA outtake (3:1)** Miami air race show/1948 newsreel, montage: "Fools rush in" & "You're on top" (IARS) Microvision Two/Berlin Fair-world's smallest TV (2:3) Mitsubishi/world's first 3-standard VHS VCR (2:3) Morita, Akio/Sony (2:3) **Murray the K (3:1)** Nasa rocket sequence, music by Caldwell (2:1) National Lampoon/"Disco beaver from outer space", The Breast Game-HBO (2:1) Nelson, Willie/superbowl-Cowboys vs. Steelers edited to Nelson's "Mama don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys" - Illustrated music (2:1) Overview montage/"Moon over Miami" - Eddie Duchin (IARS) **Paul, Pope (3:1)** Pilot, The/simulated explosion of DC-8, interview with Cliff Robertson (2:2) **Pinera, Mike (3:1)** Pioneer Corporation/Bill Pollack gives first showing of video disc player (2:3) Piracy/interview with Valenti, Caranicas & Polskin (2:1) Piracy/ITA at Hilton Head - interview with Bouras, Porter, Yarnell (2:2) Pit Stop/Interviews: Alvin Rey, Bill Shallen, Skeets Herfurt, "deep in the heart of texas" (IARS) Pollack, Bill/US Pioneer Corp. (2:3) Precision Lens/Roger Howe (2:3) Pre-race meeting/Bob Hoover, Chris Banks (IARS) **Preston, Billy (3:1)** Rahtgens, Peter/Akai PCM audio unit & first showing of Akai "Activation" VHS VCR & new Hitachi GP-4 (2:3) Red Devils aerobatic team/Charlie Hillard, Gene Soucy, Tom Poberny, "I get a kick out of you" - Ethel Merman (IARS) Reisting/home of Germany's first satellite earth station: Live tv from Israel & US (2:3) **Ringo commercial (3:1)** Robertson, Cliff/"The Pilot" (2:2) Rocky Horror/2nd anniversary party, Richard O'Brien, Disco roller skating (Madness Takes Its Toll) **Rock & Roller skating (3:1)** Rudd, Dennis/first showing of BASF's LVR with picture, direct video (2:3) Satellite reception station/Bob Behar (2:1) Satellite convention, Oklahoma City (2:2) Satellite private terminal seminar/Oklahoma City (2:3) Saturday night live/Mommie Dearest", montage/news of Christina Crawford's book (2:1) Schoener, Eberhard/video magic-interview at artists' forum/soundtrack (2:3) Scholl, Art/aerobatics-"So Rare" - Guy Lombardo (IARS) **Skiing (3:1)** **Smash commercial (3:1)** Sonic acrojets/Bob Bishop, Corky Farnof-"That old feeling" - Lombardo (IARS) Sony/Akio Morita-founder, chairman of the board (2:3) Sony/Betamax cassette changer (2:1) Sony/33' monitor-Berlin Fair (2:3) Special effects/Donna Brock (2:3) Spiratone curvatar/wide angle lens (2:1) SPTS 80'/Miami (3:1) Stereo interviews/stereo music (3:1) Superbowl excerpts/ABC (2:1) **Thorpe, Billy (3:1)** Today Show/Bertie Rindone's "Mommie Dearest" (2:1) Tokunaga, Yoichi/first showing of Hitachi portable VHS VCR with direct picture test, still, fast forward, etc. (2:3) Tomorrow show/video special effects, outtakes-NBC (2:1) Tonight show excerpts/Dolly Parton (2:1) Tonight show excerpts/Albert Brooks passes a "joint" (2:3) **Tosh, Peter (3:1)** **Underwater video/Eagles (3:1)** Unlimited class/gold heat-race time - "I got rythm" - Benny Goodman, "I'm getting sentimental over you" - Tommy Dorsey (IARS) Trans video Deutschland/combined multi standard tv and vcr/10' diagonal rear projection (2:3) Valenti, Jack/president of MPAA (2:1) Vance Cyrus, secretary of state, Cuban crisis (2:3) **Video disk juke box (3:1)** Video magic/police stars, Sting & Andy Summers (2:3) **Video music (3:1)** Vintage warbirds/"Sentimental journey" - Hal McLintyre (IARS) Waldheim, Fran/Wundercar-BMW-M1 130MPH ride on autobahn (2:3) Walker, Landon/kitist, Jacksonville coliseum (2:2) Will, Gerhard/Sharp vhs front loading vcr with automatic programming loading device (2:3) Wednesday night live/excerpt from Dick Clark show - interview with giant (2:1) Weekend/Lloyd Dobins-retrospective after NBC cancelled show, Big bambino, the great wall journal (2:2) **Zworykin, Vladimir (all issues).**

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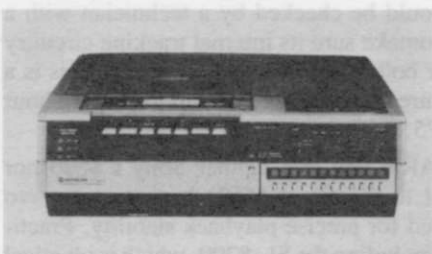
There is an incessant influx of novelty in the world and yet we tolerate incredible dullness.

—H. D. Thoreau (1817-1861)



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Survey

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the VIDEOPHILE

THE VOICE OF VIDEO FANDOM

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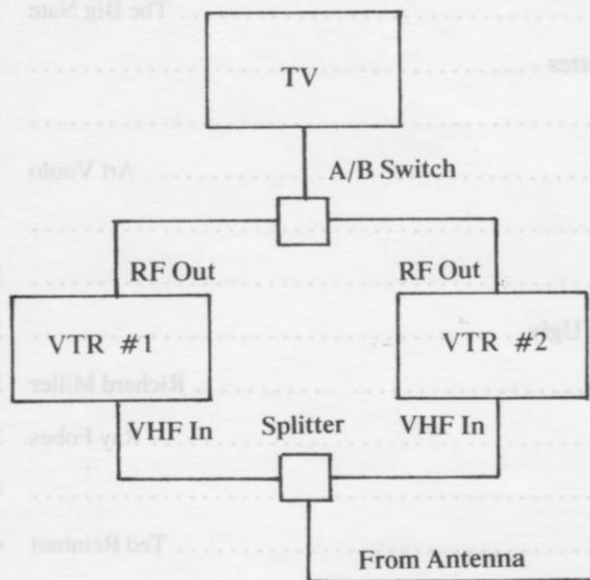
Ask the Videophile

TWO CAN LIVE AS CHEAPLY AS ONE

Q: Can you tell me how to hook up two VHS recorders (an RCA 400 and a 201) to the same TV in order to record on each VTR simultaneously either the same channel or two different channels?

J.M.G., Gastonia, PA

A: Your VTR's can be hooked up as shown in the diagram below to provide the recording set-up you describe. Note that you'll only be able to watch one of the decks at a time on your set, unless you have a multiple-picture TV set (such as the ones described in our previous issue's CES Report). [For another possible arrangement, complete with detailed instructions as to all the possibilities, see "How to Make the Most of 2 VCR's" in issue #12.--Ed.]



ERASING TIPS

Q: Are the commercially available videotape erasers (like the Sonar Radio VX-1401) any good? Which one is best?

R.S., Sarasota, FL

A: We honestly don't think erasers are necessary unless you do a lot of re-taping over used cassettes, or don't want to risk having what's left of an unwanted program come up after the end of a newly recorded show. Several electric tape erasers also called *degaussers* are suitable for home video use, and several cost between \$25-50. Keep in mind that your VTR's erase heads generally do a better job of erasing tapes than any tape degausser, and this may be an expense you can avoid.

MUTUAL INCOMPATIBILITY GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE?

Q: A friend of mine recently bought a Sears Betavision recorder with features similar to my Sony 8600. However, when playing back a tape made by the Betavision, my 8600 plays an image that jumps around like a film print in a defective projector, and breaks up somewhat. When I play it in my Zenith JR-9000, the jumping is less marked but is still more than just irritating, yet the tapes play perfectly well on my friend's machine. Hope you can help me.

J.A.F., Alexandria, VA

A: What we have here is a tracking incompatibility problem, either with your machines or your friend's, and we suspect the latter. The Sears machine (which is manufactured by Sanyo) should be checked by a technician with a factory alignment tape to make sure its internal tracking circuitry is adjusted properly, for both recording and playback. This is a relatively simple procedure that shouldn't take more than an hour or two, for around \$50-75.

WE SHOULD WARN you that neither Sony's 8600 nor Sanyo's 9100 (identical to the Sears VTR) has capstan-servo circuitry, which is needed for precise playback stability. Practically all 2 speed Beta's (including the SL-8200, which is identical to your JR-900) has capstan-servos, and should generally record and play back with greater stability than these one speed X-2 units.

CAMERA SWITCHING ON-THE-GO

Q: I've been trying to find out how to use multiple cameras of the JVC G-71US and Magnavox VJ-8241 type and selectively switch between them while using one recorder. Everyone has told me it's impossible because the cameras are internally synced. In the Sept./Oct. issue, you mentioned a Sony prototype switcher, the SCX-15, for use with their HVC-1000 which I'm told is also an internally-synced camera. My question is: are they marketing this product in the States yet? Will it work with other cameras? How does it work, since everyone tells me you can't use multiple cameras independently synced and switch between them without causing the recorder to break up?

M.L.S., Corinth, MI

A: Sony's camera selector will only work with cameras using 14-pin connectors, like their own HVC-1000. Like most consumer cameras, the JVC and Magnavox models have 10-pin connectors. The best way to perform this kind of operation would be to either have your cameras modified for use with external sync, or purchase more expensive industrial or professional cameras (like Sony's 1610) that have an external sync input, and then buy or rent a small switcher. Dynair, Shibaden, Sony, and Panasonic all make relatively inexpensive color switchers for between \$1-2,000. We will have a report on video switchers in a future issue.

THE OLD HEAD WEAR BLUES

Q: *Can VTR's be modified so as to avoid tape and head wear when in the pause mode, and is there any chance future VTR's will be made so as to avoid this problem? I really wonder, with today's technology, why VTR's are made with this pause problem to start with.*

J.M.G., Gastonia, PA

A: It is possible to install some kind of simple on/off switch to the DC power input cables going to the direct drive motor that's the video head, which would allow you to stop and start the video head's rotates at will, but it would take a degree of time and trouble to perform such a modification. Also, this might make editing a little more tricky, since you'd have to gauge when to re-start the head and when to release the pause button during commercial deletion. Perhaps the best solution is to wait until one minute or so prior to the end of the commercial break before you recue your machine and place it in the record/pause mode, which will at least minimize the head wear.

AS FAR AS technology goes, only the Sony Corporation has made any real strides in this area, with their VO-2860 and 2260 3/4" recorders offering a unique "Long Pause" mode, which gently pulls the tape away from the heads during extended pausing, for minimal wear and tear. Perhaps future 1/2" cassette machines will have such a feature; note that almost all manufacturers have already designed built-in "idiot-proof" safeguards in most of their machines to disengage the pause function when used for more than 4 or 5 minutes.

MORE BETAVISION PROBLEMS

Q: *I purchased a Sears Betavision deck back in February '79, and have two problems with it that my Sears serviceman seems unable to fix. Problem #1: When I try to play two tapes consecutively, the first plays alright, but 9 times out of 10 the second tape glitches throughout the program every few seconds. Adjustment of the tracking control helps only slightly. If I wait two or three hours, I can usually play the second tape with no problem. When this started a few months ago, I took the VTR to the serviceman, who thought the tracking was at fault and adjusted it, as well as one of the rollers that holds the threaded tape on the head. He's ordered a new part, but it hasn't come in yet and I still can't play 2 tapes consecutively.*

THE SECOND PROBLEM started a month ago. Now, when I try to play back a tape, horizontal broken lines of varying length start to appear at the top and bottom of the screen, impairing about 50% of the picture. This lasts from several hours to a couple of days. Meanwhile, my serviceman doesn't know if the two problems are related or what the problem is. I get the feeling my VTR is a guinea pig, or the local Sears serviceman is fresh out of repair school. And the thing that drives both of us crazy is that none of these problems affect my recordings at all.

T.H., Manhattan, KS

A: Before giving up, and reaching for the sledge hammer, there are a number of things you can do. First of all, you might try finding another serviceman to get a second opinion. It sounds to us like the machine may have a problem with

its tracking circuitry, malfunctioning when the circuits get too warm (which would explain why the symptoms happen only *after* playing a tape). Keep in mind that intermittent problems such as the ones you've described are among the most difficult to track down and repair. If the service department is having trouble getting parts, you might write the manufacturer (Sanyo Electric Co.) and see if you can obtain them yourself. Other than that, there's not a whole heck of a lot you can do except keep after the repair department until you're satisfied.

IF THEY STILL can't fix it, then you may be forced to "consolidate your losses" and see if they'll let you trade in the machine toward the purchase of a new one. Before you do, we should warn you that Sanyo's 9100 series (which is identical to your Sears unit) doesn't have the best reputation for reliability, particularly with their transport sections. Also, there's the unfortunate possibility that you've purchased a lemon. Either way, you might want to carefully look over all the new Beta decks currently available to select a replacement that will hold up a little better.

TO WIND, OR NOT TO WIND

Q: *I wonder about long-term effects of storing partially played videotapes without rewinding. It's such a bother to rewind a tape when one tires of watching it and wants to watch the rest of the program the next day . . . or next week.*

ALSO, I WAS having problems with picture skew "flagging" on my set, especially during dubbing. I finally figured out that the main contributor was my machine over-heating, so I now make sure that the playback machine is cool and not hot from previous use. Any comments?

D.L.C., Knoxville, TN

A: All video manufacturers advise rewinding tapes after use, but to our way of thinking, the ideal way of storing tapes would probably be to play them all the way through and remove them in this "tails out" condition, which will provide the smoothest possible wind on the videotape. Note that most professional audio engineers use this method to store their studio master tapes, to minimize "print-through" signal deterioration. We'd advise always keeping tapes either in a fully rewound or fast-forwarded condition, and to avoid removing them in the middle of the program, which may result in horizontal wrinkles marring the tape.

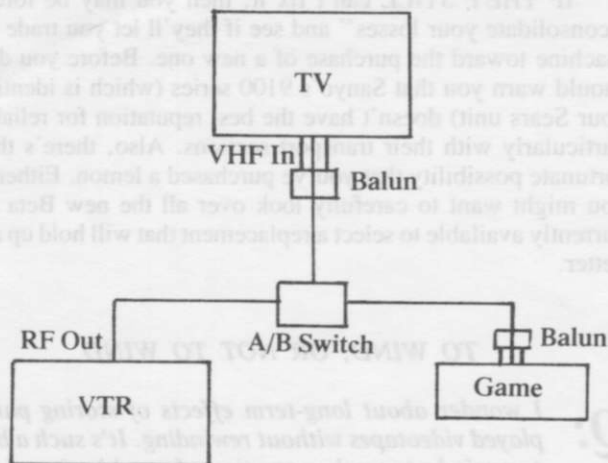
AS TO TAPE skew, we don't know why heat would affect your deck in this way unless it's actually causing the rubber belts in the VTR to sag or otherwise change the tension, which is the usual cause of skewing. Our advice is to have a technician inspect these belts and also use a Tentelometer to check the tension settings inside the machine. Otherwise, the problem could get worse and worse until all the tapes recorded on the deck won't play on anything else.

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Q: *I own a Magnavox Odyssey video game and a Zenith 25" TV console. How and what do I need to hook my TV, game and VTR together? Everything uses 300 ohm wire.*

R.S., Sarasota, FL

A: We'd first advise using "matching transformers" to change the 300 ohm outputs of your video game and the VHF input of your TV set to 75 ohm. These "baluns" as they're called sell for a couple of dollars, and are very easy to install. Your VTR should already have a 75 ohm output. Now that both your video devices are 75 ohm, you can use a A/B RF selector switch to select between your deck and Odyssey game, using the following diagram as a guideline.



IF YOU LATER add an additional VTR or pay TV decoder and need a more complex switching set-up, a number of firms are now making push button RF patch panels, including Beta Video's "Distriid" (which will be reviewed in our next issue), that can handle even the most complicated home video systems with ease.

YET ANOTHER MALFUNCTIONING BETA VISION

Q: Please, in the name of humanity, help! My Sanyo Beta VTR is driving me up the wall. It reproduces a beautiful picture for about the first 3/4 of any given tape. From that point on, however, gangrene sets in. The beginnings of the "jungle rot" are a line of "sparkles" about an inch wide across the lower portion of the screen. This line grows larger and more intense until it just about fills the screen, at which point the picture (what's left of it) becomes totally broken up and unwatchable. Five seconds later, the picture goes back to normal, then slowly reverts to garbage, with the process repeating itself to the end of the tape. Sometimes, I can minimize the problem by fast-forwarding and rewinding the tape several times in succession. Also, the problem seems to affect only playback, not record. Any solutions? My sanity is in jeopardy.

L.H., West Plains, MO

A: Well, our sanity has been in jeopardy for years, and it's never bothered us (much). We have seen the symptom you've described several times, sometimes stemming from a problem with the control track head (which will also affect recording), or more often with improper tension settings, which change as the tape is leaving the "feed" reel and going to the "take-up" reel inside the cassette. It's also possible that the tape itself is being damaged inside the machine, with occasional wrinkles impairing the prerecorded control track and causing the break-up. We hate to sound like a broken record, but again, only your serviceman will know for sure. If the tapes playback properly on other machines, then you have some kind of playback

problem with your deck; a factory alignment tape and a ten-telometer should be used to see if the deck is adjusted within the precise tolerances set by the manufacturers for tracking and tension.

HEAD CLOGGING CURES

Q: We recently had a problem with our RCA VBT-200 that seems to be cropping up again. At the top of the screen a bank of snow about 1 inch wide appears. We finally "cured" it by cleaning the heads, but now it looks like it's starting up again. What is this symptom due to, and could it mean that head replacement is in order? We use our VTR constantly and have owned it for almost two years.

C.C. & J.N., Cookerville, TN

A: It would seem that the symptoms you're describing indicate simple head-clogging, cured as you say by cleaning the heads either with alcohol or head-cleaning cassettes (reviewed in this issue). Whether head replacement is needed will have to be determined by your local serviceman. RCA advises replacing heads after about 1500-2000 hours of use, so if you've used your deck for 2 or more hours a day for a couple of years, head replacement may be needed. However, 1/2" videocassette heads have been known to last much longer than this in several cases. Only your serviceman can really say for sure.

BAD VIBES

Q: My fifteen-month old Panasonic PV-1000 recorder does not play back music properly when the "LP" mode is used. The picture quality is excellent. This audio problem developed recently. Can you suggest a solution?

J.R.L., Kalamazoo, MI

A: Well, the easy one would be to record all your future shows at SP. Barring that, we'd suggest taking the machine to your local service shop and have them evaluate the wow and flutter specifications, which may be suffering due to either tension problems or possibly an irregularity in the capstan (which may also lead to future video problems). Keep in mind also that most VHS manufacturers quote relatively poor-quality audio specs at the LP and SLP speeds; with the tape traveling as little as 1/2" per second, you can't expect very good performance at the ladder speeds. However, we've had several complaints from readers who tell us that their VHS deck's audio performance has deteriorated after taking them to the shop for a completely separate problem, which leads us to believe that the serviceman may be inadvertently knocking some internal assembly out of adjustment, which could be the cause of the LP distortion. Only another trip to the shop will provide the answer.

Puzzled readers may send their inquiries to:



Ask the Videophile
c/o The Videophile
2003 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee FL 32301

The Videophile's Newsletter



THE DISC

No sooner had we suggested that Zenith might be leaning toward the "optical disc" format, than they announced that they will cast their lot with arch-rival RCA and the "capacitance disc" format. Apparently, RCA has agreed to produce an initial batch of some 50,000 players with the "Zenith" brand name to get them started. Look for them on your dealer's shelf about this time next year. For once, we agree with views of MCA president, Sid Sheinberg, who is quoted as having said that RCA and Zenith decided to "go with something admittedly inferior solely because of price." Neither Zenith nor RCA units will have stereo sound capability, as does currently available system from MCA/Magnavox and the compatible forthcoming model from Pioneer.

Word has it that the "under \$500" disc player from RCA will cost about \$200 to produce and carry a "factory price" of \$250. As usual, a string of middlemen will tack on a profit before it reaches you.

Meanwhile, the folks at MCA and Pioneer have not exactly been sitting on their thumbs. Production plans for the optical disc system have been expanded, so that as many as $\frac{1}{2}$ million units, or more, may reach the marketplace next year, as the Pioneer plant in Japan cranks up. The Pioneer brand consumer model disc player will debut in four markets (Dallas-Ft. Worth, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Syracuse, and Madison) at a mildly surprising list price of only \$749, in June. You'll notice that the first two of these markets are already being served by the Magnavox player. In response to talk that lower priced RCA version will run all over MCA and Pioneer when it appears next year, U.S. Pioneer president Ken Kai says that they are convinced consumers want the stereo sound other features of the optical system. Besides, says Kai, Pioneer is capable of producing a stripped down model that could compete with RCA on a price basis, if necessary. The forthcoming Pioneer model will have all the features of the Magnavox player and digital random access. A full-function wireless remote-control unit will be available as a \$50 option.

Magnavox continues to add new markets for its system. Current schedule calls for sales to begin May 1 in Tampa, Denver, and St. Louis, May 8 in Detroit and Portland, OR, and May 15 in Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Knoxville, bringing total number of areas in which player will be on sale to 16. LAST MINUTE FLASH: Sony will market an industrial disc player compatible with Magnavox and Pioneer players.

FORMAT FEVER

We have an unconfirmed press-time rumor that Toshiba may have decided against bringing out its LVR ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") format, after all. Perhaps, nonavailability of software and current dominance of Beta and VHS formats are seen as prohibitive obstacles. Stay tuned.

Meanwhile, reports from Japan indicate that photo equipment biggie -- Canon, may be on the verge of introducing another non-standard VCR. Sketchy details say that unit will be a portable, $\frac{1}{4}$ " tape format having a compact color camera utilizing CCD technology. *** Another $\frac{1}{4}$ " system from Funia Electronics (mentioned last issue), is now on sale in Japan. Distribution, by Technicolor, of a similar unit is still anticipated in this country at a future date.

We've mentioned on several occasions that Kodak has a video tape recording system under development, though no details have leaked through their security blanket. However, a search of patents recently granted to Kodak suggests that they are working on a compact, easy-to-operate, lightweight combination camera with built-in recorder (!). The goal is to have a simple one-piece unit, not too unlike a super-8 movie camera. These patents indicate that Kodak may have succeeded in coming up with the required miniaturization. If they follow past patterns of marketing, no official announcement will be forthcoming until the product is ready to sell.

The much ballyhooed "Phillips 2000" two-sided, 8-hour VCR format may not be available on this side of the Atlantic as soon as initially indicated. Plans are now for a late 1981 introduction, rather than late 1980.

We expect several new VCRs to be shown at the June Consumer Electronics Show, possible even a new "generation" of features, though we've barely gotten accustomed to the 6-hour and Betascan models. Rumor has it that Sony will definitely introduce an "innovative" Betamax.

VHS fans will want to know that Sharp Electronics has introduced (in Japan) the first consumer video recorder with editing capability. This portable unit has an MPU timing control to prevent picture breakup between takes.

Quasar's "Great Time Machine" is singing its swan song on dealers' discount shelves, recently was being closed out in Washington DC outlet for \$299. (We warned you.)

PROGRAM NOTES

Walt Disney Productions has begun a test marketing of features on video tape, on a rental only basis, through 600 Fotomat outlets in San Francisco, Houston, Chicago and Philadelphia. Among the 12 programs are 9 feature films ("The Apple Dumpling Gang", and the like) and 3 cartoon compilations -- "On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and his Friends", "At Home with Donald Duck", and "The Adventures of Chip and Dale". The first of these is of particular interest due to the inclusion of the delightful "Mickey's Trailer" and "Hawaiian Holiday". Disney/Fotomat venture may go nationwide by this Fall.

RCA has acquired the rights to 10 episodes of "Star Trek" for release on their video disc (two episodes per disc), is said to have option on the other 69 episodes.

MCA Discovision will be offering a selection of stereo sound discs featuring such artists as ABBA, Olivia Newton-John, Elton John (no relation), and Loretta Lynn. Pioneer Electronics has announced formation of "Pioneer Artists", a subsidiary which will "produce and acquire software"--- primarily in the catagory of stereo music.

Speaking of stereo, the Summer Consumer Electronics Show is expected to see the introduction of seven musical video cassettes from MEDA which will include an audio cassette capable of providing a stereo soundtrack, synchronized to the picture on the video tape. The idea is to start playing the audio cassette when you hear the "beep" on the video. The package is scheduled to cost about \$5 more than the video tape alone. This one's a sure loser, as we see it, but we would still love to get ahold of one to review it for you.

The International Tape Association (ITA) has given its first "Gold Cassette Awards" (representing \$1 million

in retail sales) to M*A*S*H, Patton, Sound of Music and The French Connection. We hear that the next one will be Tora, Tora, Tora. We're betting that the awards group will overlook such entries as "Deep Throat" regardless of how many copies they sell.

Twentieth Century-Fox has announced that it may be interested (at some future date) in releasing films on tape *simultaneously* with theatrical release. Theatre owners think it is a rotten idea. Speaking of 20th-Fox, here's a one year in advance scoop for you -- We have it on good authority that the ever-popular "Star Wars" will be released on videocassette in the Summer of 1981. Remember, you read it here first. (Gee, I wonder how many of you will still need a copy by then? -- Ed.)

Warner Brothers' sales of "10" on video tape has exceeded expectations. We look for them to announce the release of another 10 or 15 titles in June. *** New titles expected from Paramount include "North Dallas 40", "Escape From Alcatraz", and "Starting Over." *** Among other titles now available or soon-to-be: "The Shout" and "Wifemistress" (Films, Inc.); "The Muppet Movie" (ITC); "Norma Rae" and "Breaking Away" (20th-Fox); and from the Time-Life Video Club: "Gimme Shelter", "Man Who Fell To Earth", "Pumping Iron", "Seven Beauties", "Midnight Express", "Scenes From A Marriage" and "Z". *** Concert tapes to watch for in the near future are: "The Wall" by Pink Floyd, "Double Life" with The Kinks, "Eat To The Beat" featuring Blondie, and "Divine Madness" starring Bette Midler. Also offerings from Anne Murray, Teddy Pendergrass and Dionne Warwick.

Universal Studios has bitten the bullet and begun marketing of 24 titles on videocassette. Among them: "The Jerk", "Animal House", "Jaws", "The Deer Hunter", "Psycho", "Frankenstein", "Smokey and the Bandit", "The Sting", "American Graffiti" and "My Little Chickadee". It just goes to show you that all things come to he who waits. Hopefully, the ready, legal availability of such titles will help dry up the bootleg market and make it far less tempting for collectors to traffic in hot tapes. *** MPAA president, Jack Valenti, says that 477 movie titles were available on cassette and disc as of January 31. It's probably several times this many if you include stuff like "The Pigkeeper's Daughter".

NTA (National Telefilm) is said to be offering home video rights to its library of 1500 movies. Wants to talk to someone who has a million dollars. (Me too.-- Ed.)

You'll soon be seeing some two-tape movies available on one cassette, as Magnetic Video begins to use new Scotch L-750 tape in cassettes. Our reports indicate that this applies to VHS format as well, which could mean that VHS shells are being packed with Beta tape, or new thin and longer VHS tape may soon be available.

CABLE/PAY-TV NOTES

HBO is planning to begin a supplementary "maxi" service which will increase the total available HBO service to 24 hours per day. Primary ingredient of added hours will be feature films. Showtime has also increased its schedule -- 12 hours a day, 14 on weekends.

SPN (Satellite Program Network) debuts "Network for Working Women" (hummm) on May 1, from 10 P.M. to Mid-night, featuring reruns of two previously syndicated soap operas -- "Return to Peyton Place" and "Dark Shadows". SPN will also offer a 3-hour weekly package

of French-language programming to 63 cable systems. Another 60 will get it via videocassette.

"STV" (Subscription television), for those of you who don't know, is over-the-air pay-TV; in other words it's pay-TV with cable. The broadcasting station scrambles its signal in such a way that it can only be received by those who have paid to have a decoder box attached to their TV set. There are 8 STV stations currently in operation, with dozens more either approved or with applications pending. In some cases an existing commercial station is converted to STV, while others are proposed as new stations. So far, every one of them carries a UHF channel designation, evidence of the fact that faltering UHF stations are turning to STV as a possible means of survival. Some industry sources are very enthusiastic about STV, even suggesting that its future expansion may be on a scale comparable to the growth of television itself 25 years ago.

The programming is substantially the same as that found on pay-cable systems, i.e. uncut feature films, sporting events and other specials, all uninterrupted by commercials. Initial installation can run as high as several times that of cable-TV (at least in my neck of the woods), and the monthly fees are in the \$20 range.

STV is certainly in its infancy at the present time. The 8 operating stations serve less than 1/2 million homes. By way of comparison, the two leading pay-cable systems, HBO and Showtime, together serve more than 10 times as many homes. Industry sources indicate that by 1990 pay-TV will reach 25 million homes (give or take a couple) and that possibly one-third of them will be served by STV.

Is your area scheduled to get an STV station? The following tables indicate what is in the offing. Those stations currently on the air are as of press time.

Speaking of STV, lucky Milwaukee viewers will have a two-tiered service available sometime in June. Basic movie package will cost \$19.95 per month, but for another five bucks you can get "Night Owl Theatre", which will air after 11 P.M. and will feature such fare as "The Pom, Pom Girls" (One of the worst movies I ever saw. -- Ed.), "The First Nudie Musical" and horror movies such as "The Hills Have Eyes".

If you live in Rochester, Minnesota, Moline, Illinois, Jackson, Mississippi, or Boise, Idaho, your local cable-TV system should be offering a new "Playcable" service, on a restricted, experimental basis. Mattel's "Intellivision" is available via cable-TV over a \$300 master component, which allows the player to select video games and make his moves.

"Las Vegas Entertainment Network" is expected to be available to cable-TV systems via Comstar satellite in September. Late-night programming will include night club acts and sports. *** "USA Network" (joint venture of UA-Columbia and Madison Square Garden) will expand its satellite service to cable systems from 6 to 8 hours daily in the Fall. *** "Z" channel in Los Angeles now runs movies all night.

SATELLITE NOTES

You win some and you lose some. Last issue we announced a joint venture between COMSAT and Sears to develop and market direct-to-home satellite service. Now, it seems that Sears has withdrawn. Industry sources suggest a number of reasons that more or less come down to feeling that Sears was not prepared to commit the cash to a venture that may be premature. COMSAT is continuing with its plans and will soon be filing its direct-broadcasting plan with the FCC for approval. Estimates from some that such a system is possible by as early as 1983 are generally viewed as much too optimistic.

STV applications that have been granted:

(On-air stations are in bold face)

City	Station	Channel
Ann Arbor, Mich.	WRHT	31
Baltimore	WNUV	54
Boston	WQTV	68
Chicago	WCIU-TV	26
Chicago	WSNS	44
Cincinnati	WBTV	64
Cleveland	WEEG	61
Corona, Calif.	KBSC	52
Dallas	KNBN-TV	33
Detroit	WGPR-TV	62
Detroit	WXON	20
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	WKID	51
Linden, N.J.	WNJU-TV	47
Los Angeles	KWHY	22
Milwaukee	WCGV	24
Newark, N.J.	WWHT	68
Oklahoma City	KFHC-TV	43
Philadelphia	WWSG	57
Phoenix	KNXV-TV	15
Providence, R.I.	WNET	16
Sacramento, Calif.	KMUV-TV	31
San Francisco	KTSF-TV	26
San Jose, Calif.	KSTS	48
Smithtown, N.Y.	WSNL-TV	67
St. Louis, Mo.	KDNL-TV	30
Vineland, N.J.	WRBV	65
Worcester, Mass.	WSMU-TV	27

Pending STV applications as of 3/1/80:

(Several markets have competing applicants for a frequency)

City	Station	Channel	City	Station	Channel
Atlanta	WATL-TV	36	Kansas City, Mo.	new station	62
Atlanta	new station	69	Miami	new station	33
			Miami	new station	39
Aurora, Ill.	new station	60	Minneapolis	new station	29
Baltimore	new station	24	Minneapolis	KTMA-TV	23
Broomfield, Colo.	new station	14	Mt. Clemens, Mich.	new station	38
Dallas	new station	27			
Denver	new station	20	New Orleans	new station	20
			Portland, Ore.	new station	24
Fort Worth, Tex.	new station	21			
Fresno, Calif.	KAIL	53	San Antonio, Tex.	new station	29
Gary, Ind.	new station	56			
Grand Rapids, Mich.	new station	17	Salt Lake City	new station	14
Greensboro, N.C.	new station	48	San Francisco	KTSF	26
Guasti, Calif.	KBBS	46	Seattle	new station	22
Houston	KHTV	39	St. Louis	new station	24
Houston	KDOG-TV	26	St. Petersburg, Fla.	new station	38
Houston	new station	20			
Indianapolis	new station	59	Tampa, Fla.	new station	28
Joliet, Ill.	new station	66	Vallejo, Calif.	new station	66
			Washington	WDCA-TV	20

Those of you with a serious interest in backyard earth stations may be interested in a trade association which has just been formed, with headquarters in Washington. The Society for Private and Commercial Earth terminals (SPACE) expects to represent the interests of earth terminal folks before congressional committees and regulatory agencies, along with providing other services common to similar trade associations. Information is available from: SPACE, 1521 "O" Street NW, Washington DC 20005 (202-387-1856). (For you new readers, this is not the place to get information about building a terminal in your back yard. See our back issues, for info of this sort. -- Ed.)

RCA is having to scramble in order to accommodate all who had reserved space on the "lost-in-space" Satcom III. Ted Turner (owner of WTBS "Super 17") has sued to insure a spot on Satcom I. Apparently his 24-hour news service "Cable News Network" will still debut on June 1.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

As they say in the old movies "The heat is on", so far as collectors of bootleg tapes are concerned. The FBI recently raided the home of a prominent video collector in northern Virginia. Among the 300 video tapes confiscated were copies of "10" (presumably an illegal copy), "Superman" (ditto), and "Norma Rae" (no doubt). The tapes and at least one recorder were turned over to a Federal grand jury for possible prosecution.

April 2nd raids on 6 Chicago area locations netted over 600 illegal tapes including copies of "Being There", "Kramer vs. Kramer", "The Jerk", and "The Black Hole". Motion picture and duplicating equipment was also seized which, along with the tapes, will be presented to a Federal grand jury.

One former Los Angeles mail order video operator has been fined \$15,000 and sentenced to 30 days in jail for selling copies of such titles as "Jaws" and "Star Wars".

Several collectors in the Los Angeles area were also recently raided. One of them saw 500 cassettes carted away, among them such titles as "Alien" (which we are told will be legally available this Summer) and "Apocalypse Now".

With respect to this latter FBI raid, we have in hand a copy of a 51 page application for a search warrant from an FBI agent to the appropriate Federal court. It makes fascinating reading, and is of particular interest in that it indicates the nature of the allegations and supporting evidence that must be submitted to a court as part of an application for such a search warrant. In this case, the FBI had used an undercover agent posing as a collector. This "collector" had ingratiated himself with a number of video buffs who were in the habit of securing 35mm copies of current Hollywood films, transferring them to video tape 3/4" masters and duplicating them on Beta and VHS format for both trade and sale. Working with an informant (who we are told is one of the five persons against whom the search warrant was sought), the undercover agent and other agents conducting surveillance of the homes, as well as delivery pickup points and other locations, were able to collect a truly impressive amount of damaging evidence, which resulted in the application for search warrant being granted and the raids being subsequently conducted. We are told that along with the many tapes and equipment confiscated, the FBI also came into possession of extensive trading lists,

complete with names and addresses. If you are among those who have not been able to resist the temptation to purchase or otherwise secure copies of illegally duplicated feature films from "a guy I know in Los Angeles", you have reason to expect that you may be subject to questioning in the future. As we have been saying all along -- you are asking for trouble if your desire to have taped copies of certain films is so great that you are compelled to resort to these channels. Now, more than ever, we advise: It's not worth it! As a purchaser, you probably have little to fear beyond questioning. But if you are duplicating illegal tapes, especially if you are then selling them, it is time that you stop kidding yourself about it being "just a hobby". The fact that otherwise decent and upstanding folks have been rudely awakened to the facts of life in the manner described above should be ample reason for you to mend your ways.

Law enforcement folks are also stepping up their activity against the pornography industry. In mid-March, police officers posing as distributors of obscene materials raided nine porno distributors who, police said, were responsible for selling \$12 million worth of videotapes per month. Deputy Police Chief Charles Reese (Los Angeles) said the videotapes depicted "deviate sexual activity, rape and bondage and also used children as subjects." The Los Angeles Police Department's vice division ran a fake business called Unique Video Specialties to buy the films. Four of the nine companies were included in the FBI's nationwide drive against pornography in February. They were: TVX and Wonderful World of Video, of Hollywood, S&L Distributors, of North Hollywood, and Arrow Films of Van Nuys. The other five businesses were Four Star Video, of Sherman Oaks, Video Home Library, of Beverly Hills, V.T.S. Enterprises, of Northridge, Cal-Vista Video, of Reseda, and JA-RAE Productions, of Hollywood. Warrants were requested for the arrest of 20 persons connected with the businesses following the raids. We have no further information, but what usually happens in these cases is that everyone is out on bail pending what could well be prolonged legal proceedings. Often, business continues to be conducted as usual, while the lawyers and courts ponder the situation. It is interesting to note that the Associated Press (from which all our information on this item comes) reported that investigators said that their two-month operation disclosed that 80 percent of so-called adult videotapes sold in the United States last year were made in the greater Los Angeles area.

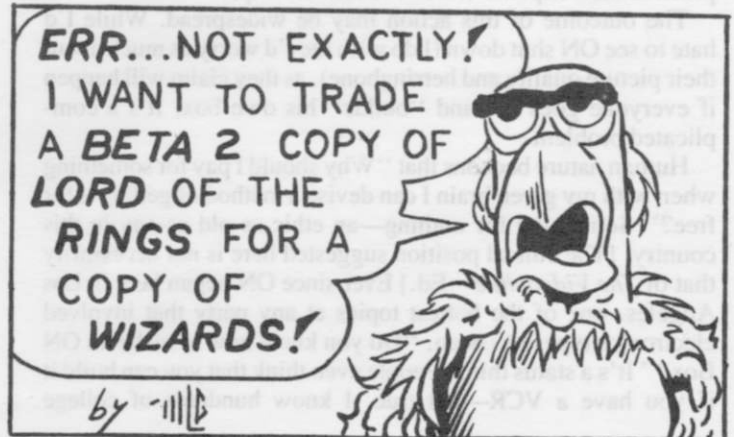
In legal action relating to matters other than pirated or porno videotapes, HBO has filed suit to stop the sale of a \$375 self-installed microwave antenna that is capable of intercepting signals broadcast over-the-air (though scrambled) by "Private Channel Club" in South Florida. An outfit called "Florida Home Carpets" placed an ad for the device in a television magazine and has sold hundreds of them to folks who did not prefer to pay a \$50 installation fee and \$10-\$15 monthly charge to obtain the service from the broadcaster. P.C.C. alleges that unauthorized reception of its signal is unlawful. Company spokesman was quoted as saying "It's like tapping into a wire that's going through your property to get the electricity." Yet, spokesman for seller of decoding device baldly claims "It's my understanding that the airwaves are free. We believe it's legal, otherwise we wouldn't be doing it." (See Nate's column for more with regard to a similar situation in the Los Angeles area.)

SEARCH FOR TOMORROW

Absent since issue #17, "Search For Tomorrow", a feature in which we inform you of TV fare which is in production or otherwise forthcoming from the networks, syndication houses, and pay-TV systems, is back. If those stuffy readers who hounded it out of these pages, on the grounds that its content was beneath the dignity of this magazine, are still out there, our editor implores you to bear with us. And for those who give a damn:

Ann Margaret will be offered big bucks to recreate her "Carnal Knowledge" role for TV mini-series version of same. // "P.M. Magazine" will soon expand to as many as 80 stations. Show is mixture of packaged material (human interest and educational features) plus locally produced segments. Result is that 2/3 of show is same throughout the country. Remainder is tailored for local audience. Usually runs at 7:30. We enjoy the version from Atlanta very much. // Operation Prime Time (a sort of 4th network project of independent stations) will have its first regular series next season, a one-hour music/variety program -- "Solid Gold". // "An Evening with Quentin Crisp" (the flamboyant British homosexual) is now in production and will be made available to Pay-TV, video tape and disc. // A TV series version of "Foul Play" starring Deborah Raffin and Barry Bostwick has begun production at Paramount. // NBC's "Second City Comedy Show" will be hosted by Fred Willard. // David "Hutch" Soul says he'll be back on the small screen as a Senate investigator, fighting corruption in high places. // Upcoming on HBO will be "Show Stoppers", a celebration of the American musical comedy. Among the 11 stars signed so far are: Mary Martin, Ethel Mer-men, Sandy Duncan, Robert Klien and Peter Gennaro. //

Other shows coming on HBO include "Rod Stewart in Concert" and "Coupling: Sexual Alternatives in the '80s". So far as we know there is no connection between the two shows. // Tammy Wynette's biography "Stand By Your Man" is set as a CBS-TV movie this Fall. // "The Body Human" series will be back next year with two more shows: "Sex Is - II" (a sequel to last year's show on human sexuality) and "Motion Machine" about extraordinary feats of the human body. (So far as we there is no connection between those two shows either.) // Big show spotlighting every living performer who has appeared on the Grand Ole Opry, will be taped Sept. 14-19 for broadcast as an ABC special. // Miss Barbara Eden has been signed to do a TV series version of her movie "Harper Valley PTA" (Yum) // Oscar nominee "Breaking Away" is having a pilot shot for possible TV series. Cast includes Shaun Cassidy, Vincent Gardenia and Barbara Barrie. // We're looking forward to the 2-hour TV-movie entitled "Murder Can Hurt You". A sort of "Murder By Death" TV-style, the film will resurrect the characters of Starsky & Hutch, Columbo and others, in a free-for-all effort to solve a crime which consists of each of them getting bumped off. The characters, with slightly changed names, and the actors who will play them are: Chief Ironbottom (Victor Buono), Studsky (Jamie Farr), Hatch (John Byner), Lambretta (Tony Danza), Salty (Connie Stevens), Nojack (Gavin MacLeod) and Palumbo (Bert Young). FAIR WARNING: If anyone complains about this column, we'll revive "Tuber Tidbits", last seen in Issue #8, in which we relate Hollywood gossip eg. "One Day At A Time" honey, Valerie Bertinelli, is being squired around by Steven Spielberg. (I'll resist the urge to say something about "Close Encounters" -- Ed.)



Greetings once again and welcome to another installment. This time we have more accessory devices (look for the "monstrous" device review in the next issue), info and product reviews.

The Free Toll Call Gambit Dept.:

Fotomat has added even more titles to its rental/sales cache. In addition to their offer which will transfer home movies and slides to videotape (they do a real good job with film transfer; I was very happy with the results!), Fotomat is also selling blank tape now in bulk at \$14.95 per 4-hour VHS or 3-hour Beta, or \$10.95 for an L-500 when you order three or more at a time. (This is not an idle promise like Mag Video quoted two years ago and then bailed out on.) It's pretty convenient *except* that you *cannot* specify which brand of tape you wish. After seeing the wide range of videophiles' tape brand preference, this is a real bummer. Also, even though your call is to St. Louis, you still have to pay *your* state's sales tax.

As to tape reviews (see Marc's tape quality comparisons elsewhere in this issue), I prefer TDK, Fuji and RCA. RCA is still longest.

The Who's Suing Who Dept.:

What is it about video? I just can't recall another hobby that can propagate so many notable lawsuits. Universal/Disney/Sony was the biggest to date and appeals will soon wage forth into the coming years. In April, in Los Angeles, "ON-TV" (the first subscription TV to offer movies over the public airwaves to be descrambled in subscribers' homes via a decoder, a.k.a. "The ON Box") initially filed suit against five electronics/video stores in the Los Angeles/Orange County area. ON claimed damages into the millions resulting from the fact that the five stores (SCR Electronics, JKL Electronics, R & R Electronics, J & R Electronics, and The Video Movie House) were allegedly selling blueprints and/or kits for construction by private individuals of a decoder "very" similar to "The ON Box." ON claimed copyright violation, loss of revenue, etc. The firms countered by claiming that any person with a nominal electronics background has the ability and intelligence to crack "The ON Box" system if they feel like pursuing it and, since the signal is transmitted over the public airwaves, that any individual has the right to receive/utilize this information. However, ON claimed that it wasn't right for "them" to make such a profit at their expense (loss of subscribership).

The outcome of this action may be widespread. While I'd hate to see ON shut down (I do wish they'd worry as much about their picture quality and herringbone), as they claim will happen if everyone goes out and "builds" his own box. It's a complicated problem.

Human nature beckons that "Why should I pay for something when with my given brain I can devise a method of getting it for free?" Something for nothing—an ethic as old as any in this country. [The ethical position suggested here is not necessarily that of *The Videophile*—Ed.] Ever since ON began here in Los Angeles, one of the hottest topics at any party that involved electronics types has been, "Do you know how to make an ON Box?" It's a status thing. People even think that you can build it if you have a VCR—not true. I know hundreds of college

students who dream of doing it, yet I don't know of one who can. True, curiosity plays a big part—"What's inside the ON Box, Uncle Nate?" Everywhere in this city for the last 2½ years people have tinkered with the idea.

I know of a case where an unsuspecting soul bought what he was told was a blueprint of a box (for \$19.95 plus tax—the same as ON's monthly subscription rate) only to be told that it was a schematic for a transistor radio. (Dick Tracy, are you listening?)

Anyway, now everyone who has recently bought a kit is worrying about whether or not ON will change their code. Who knows? Next Fall we'll probably see retrofit modification kits, and the cycle will go on and on and on.

The other lawsuit that catches my attention revolves around "synchronization rights," i.e., putting music on film. This supposedly may not be done without first obtaining permission from the music publishers. In this case, Northern Song, Ltd., a subsidiary of ATV Music, is seeking damages against certain video distributors and suppliers (Video Communications, Video Tape Network, and others). Northern Songs is seeking damages in the millions and also wants a total recall of all subject tapes. The musical selections in question are Beatles tunes, over 30 in all, as well as some of the group's personal appearances (Tokyo, Shea Stadium, and Ed Sullivan, among others).

Product Reviews Dept.:

[While we value Mr. Big Nate's opinion, we do feel compelled to note that the following observations are his alone and should not be considered as official "Videophile Product Reports."—Ed.]

One of the most handy devices I've seen in a long time is "The Video Switcher" (by Consumer Video Accessories, Inc., 2309 4th St., Tillamook, OR 97141 Phone 1-800-547-8821; in Oregon 503-842-8831). Measuring 4¼"×3"x7½", this is possibly the greatest switcher that I've ever seen. It has connectors for four video inputs and four video outputs, plus four knobs on its front face for selecting which of the four inputs you'd like to have sent to which particular output VCR. I love it! This way, I never have to worry about going from a 200 to a 400, a 400 to a 200, or to a Beta. No more plugging in and out, no more miles of cable splitters and switchers. Just one little box that does it all!!! Up to any combination of four VCR's, TV's or monitors, VHS or Beta. You can even get all the cables that the device will ever need. Just tell the folks at CVA the length and plugs that you'd like and they'll customize them to suit your system layout. I used the video splitter in an out of conjunction with CVA's new Video Distribution Amp (see issue #24, p. 4) and was more than pleased with the device's performance and operation in all modes. The last I heard the price for the video splitter (April 1) was \$109, but call and get the latest June quote and mention *The Videophile* and this column. Another device I like is the CVA Audio Splitter (Naturally, to complement the video splitter). The audio splitter also has four inputs and four outputs plus four knobs to select which input goes where. Also note that you can split the audio *directly* from your VCR to your stereo receiver. I send mine thru a Rhodes TE-200 Stereo Simulator (See review in issue #23). It sounds really nice.

(continued on p. 48)

THE VIDEOPHILE SURVEY OF BLANK VIDEOCASSETTES



If there has been any one topic that has been discussed and argued about more than any other in the world of the videotape collector, perhaps even more than the alleged superiority of one format over another, it has to be which brand of blank tape is best. Ever since Sony introduced its original K-60 formulation back in September of '75, with other brands following close on its heels a year or so later, there has been a mad scramble among all videotape manufacturers to capture the all important "after-market" of VTR owners, which can often mean many more dollars of profit than the initial deck purchase.

We have begun an all-encompassing study to try to determine the differences between brands of consumer Beta and VHS videotape, focusing on several parameters of performance—S/N ratio (freedom from grain and noise), dropouts, defects (including scratches and wrinkles), reliability, etc.—as well as cost considerations, to find which tapes provide the best performance for the money. Thus far, we've relied on our own decks, monitors, and eyes and ears to determine our choices from a variety of brands, with no less than a half-dozen samples of each brand obtained from several different batches.

As shown in the table, determining the actual OEM (original entry manufacturer) source of each brand of tape can be a fairly difficult procedure, mainly because several of the local dealers and manufacturers' spokesmen whom we contacted were unable or unwilling to provide us with accurate information regarding the true maker of their blank tape. However, based on all our available sources, we feel the information in our survey is accurate (as of press time).

Much of our testing was conducted through the courtesy of local video dealer Audio/Video Craft's facilities, which include a 25" Miratell color monitor, Sony's CVM-1250 monitor, Tektronix 528 Waveform Monitors, and a wide variety of 1/2" videocassette recorders including Sony's SLO-320, SL-8200 and SL-5400 (for X-1, X-2 and X-3 Beta evaluation, respectively), and Panasonic's NV-8200, PV-1500 and PV-1600 (for SP, LP and SLP VHS evaluation, respectively). While our results are by no means conclusive, we feel that they do show a representative average sampling that should prove valuable to those trying to decide which brand of tape is worth buying.

BETA FORMAT CASSETTES: According to our tests, as well as the results of the recent reader's survey (which is explained at the end of this article), TDK won top honors for Beta cassettes, though it was a two-way tie for second place with Sony (who is known to

be supplying tape to Sanyo, Sears, Toshiba and Zenith) and Fuji. (Some reports indicate that Zenith is obtaining some tape from TDK as well.) All three types performed very well most of the time. Since Sony is by far the biggest Beta tape manufacturer, they're known to have correspondingly larger amounts of defects, though we found very, very few with any of these three brands. Likewise, the Sanyo, Sears, Toshiba and Zenith tape appeared to differ from Sony's tape only by their brand names and different prices, with most of them costing somewhat less than Sony's tape, except for Sears, which is not available at discount.

Sony also offers the widest-available selection of lengths from any manufacturer, with L-125, L-250, L-370, L-500 and L-830 tapes now available from their Consumer Products Division, and intermediate LS-435, LS-530, LS-560 and LS-625 tapes available for duplicator use. We noted a visible difference between the performance of the L-750 and the L-500 as discussed in past issues, but felt that it was at most a 5%-10% loss of quality. The L-830's are still a little too new to offer a definite opinion on them, but so far we've had no problems with them except for a slightly diminished interchange ability, with minor difficulties in playing X-2 L-830's on a few machines. Other than that, the L-830's seem practically identical in performance to the 750's. We note that, unlike the 750's which provide a warning notice advising the user to test the tape before using, the L-830's simply state that they should be used only on machines with X-2 and X-3 record capability (i.e., the new Sony 5400- and 5600-type decks). Again, we had little or no trouble recording or playing back these tapes on a particular machine, but ran into slightly "flakey" performance when this same tape was then played in other VTR's, requiring extremely precise tracking adjustments.

After TDK, Sony and Fuji comes the often-maligned Scotch brand tape, which suffered from considerably more dropouts and a higher defect ratio than the previous brands. Although 3M's products have, indeed, been much improved over the last year or so, they still don't quite have the dependability found with the first three. A similar fate is shared by Ampex and DuPont, with the latter firm offering among the worst L-750's we've yet seen, suffering from all kinds of problems, up to and including mechanical defects, excessive dropouts (sometimes resulting in head clogs), and broken leader tape.

At the bottom of the barrel are new products coming out mostly from off-brand sources in Taiwan and Korea, featuring names like "Repro" and "Videx," which are probably useful only when kept in your bathroom next to the john, labeled "emergency use only."

Most of the tapes in the latter category are characterized by box logos and graphics looking *extremely* similar to the name-brand tapes (particularly with Sony, Fuji and Scotch), though with the cheapest possible plastic shells and poorest quality construction imaginable. The less said about the oxide and tape itself, the better. Suffice it to say that it's all but useless for video recording.



Samples of BASF, Memorex and Maxell tapes were unavailable at press time, but we hope to run an update of this report in a future issue with evaluations of these and other new brands.

For price alone, both Sony and Fuji (L-500) tapes have been selling for under \$12.00 in most large cities like Los Angeles and New York. Ampex and the Taiwanese brands have dropped below \$10.00 at several stores, but this would seem to be a high-price to pay for them in light of their inferior performance, particularly for the latter cassettes.

VHS FORMAT CASSETTES: Here the choice of brands is much more difficult, with well over 15 currently available. Fuji and TDK were the overwhelming preferred choices of our tests and most of the people responding to our survey, and RCA was a very close third—preferred by some because of its length, generally not less than 2 hours and 10 minutes (in the SP mode).

Maxell generally performed as well as the top three, though we down-rated it a little because of two or three defects we found in our sample batches. Although supplied mostly by TDK and Fuji, Panasonic, Quasar and the others were generally found to be slightly inferior to the OEM supplier's branded products due to lower quality control. We've been told by one manufacturer's rep that TDK, for example, maintains two separate manufacturing plants in Japan, one for bona fide TDK cassettes and one for manufacturing and assembling tapes for other firms, with all the quality control to be done by the buyer. This would explain why TDK's TDK tape is somewhat better than RCA's TDK tape, for example.

Much has been said about the next two brands on the list—Scotch and JVC—and some of it bears repeating here. Both were definitely inferior to the other tapes tested, though they often sell for a dollar or two less than the higher-rated cassettes. We experienced often surprising defects with JVC and Scotch, both in the

oxide and in the plastic shells, which would sometimes bind the hubs in such a way as to cause the recorders to revert to the stop mode due to excessive tension problems. The JVC and Scotch tapes also had visibly more noise and dropouts than all the other brands and, as if to add insult to injury, the Scotch tapes were the shortest tested—generally not more than 2 hours and 3 minutes—and also had the worst labeling, similar to the cheaply printed adhesive stickers found in the Scotch Beta cassettes.

For price alone, Fuji's tape has been widely discounted to as low as \$15.00 and under though Maxell has come close to this level on the West coast. Sometimes RCA tape can be had at considerable discounts as well. While we haven't yet seen any Taiwanese brand VHS tapes, we have little doubt that when they appear they'll offer the same great price and worthless quality of their Beta equivalents. Like the saying goes: "You get what you pay for."

We likewise haven't seen hide nor hair of any Memorex, Ampex or BASF tapes except at trade shows, but hope to evaluate them in a future issue. We also haven't had any conclusive results with the one or two sample "High Grade" series tapes we've evaluated from TDK and Maxell, but preliminary testing seems to indicate that they do, indeed, provide visibly better performance than the standard tapes at the SLP speed, as well as a very slight improvement at SP. It remains to be seen as to whether they're really worth the extra \$2-\$3, however.

CONCLUSION: By no means do we suggest that you blindly follow our advice as to which tapes are worthy buying and which are not. If there's anything we learned from going through several hundred tapes over a 6-month period of time, it's that every manufacturer—without exception—is capable of making a truly high-quality product. However, relatively few of them do so on a regular basis, which points out the need for tremendous quality control on the manufacturing line.

The other generalized statement we can advise is that there really isn't all that much difference, price-wise, between the top brands in each format and the worst ones. In almost every case it's worth going ahead and spending the extra dollar or two to avoid getting "stung" by an unfamiliar brand, particularly those from Taiwan or Korea. Likewise, used tapes should be avoided unless the price is simply too good to pass up. Even then, they should be carefully evaluated and checked out before using them to tape a once-in-a-lifetime event, to avoid "unexpected surprises."

Meanwhile, as far as our Reader's Survey goes, we've actually had very few responses so far—less than 50 in all—but many of you who took the time to write provided very detailed reports on your experiences with a wide variety of tape, indicating preferred brands as well as the ones giving you the most trouble, for which we're very grateful. We'll continue to tabulate the results and will print them in a future issue.

So keep those cards and letters coming in to:

The Videophile Tape Survey

P.O. Box 480315

Los Angeles, CA 90048

We'll share the results of that survey, as well as our tests on the "HG" tapes, in the next installment of this article.—MFW & JM



BETA TAPE CHART

Rank	Brand	S/N Ratio	Dropouts	Scratches	Packaging	OEM Source
1	TDK	excellent	excellent	excellent	good	TDK
2 (tie)	*Sony	excellent	good	excellent	good	Sony
2 (tie)	Fuji	excellent	good	excellent	excellent	Fuji
4	Scotch	good	fair	good	fair	3M
5	Ampex	good	fair	good	fair	Ampex
6	DuPont	good	fair	good	poor	DuPont
7	Repro/Videx	fair	poor	fair	poor	(Taiwan)

*(includes Sanyo, Toshiba, Sears and Zenith)

VHS TAPE CHART

Rank	Brand	S/N Ratio	Dropouts	Scratches	Packaging	OEM Source
1 (tie)	TDK	excellent	excellent	excellent	good	TDK
1 (tie)	Fuji	excellent	very good	excellent	excellent	Fuji
3	RCA	excellent	good	excellent	good	TDK
4	Maxell	excellent	good	excellent	good	Maxell
5	Panasonic	very good	good	excellent	good	TDK/Fuji
6 (tie)	Magnavox	very good	good	excellent	good	TDK/Fuji
6 (tie)	Quasar	very good	good	excellent	good	TDK/Fuji
8	Scotch	good	fair	good	fair	3M
9	JVC	good	fair-poor	good	poor	TDK/Fuji

TV LOOKS AT BOOKS

A BUYER'S GUIDE TO VIDEO CASSETTE RECORDERS

Published by: Sterling Publishing Co., 2 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(Softbound, \$5.95)

Written by: Cathy Ciccolella

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO VIDEO TAPE RECORDING

Published by: Stein & Day, Scarborough House
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

Written by: Boris Zmijewsky

Since the dawn of the consumer video age of the early '70's, up to and including the first appearance of *The Videophile's Newsletter* in the summer of '76, there have been a number of books on home VTR's providing generalized down-to-earth coverage of all currently-available recorders, cameras and accessories. The problem afflicting most of these books is that of becoming out-of-date the moment they're published, what with the electronics industry self-obliterating new VTR's every 6 months.

Such is the case with both of these paperbacks, which are both almost outdated to the point of becoming archaic. The 210-page *Consumer's Guide* is definitely the better of the two, providing an in-depth look at how VTR's work, what's available (a year ago, anyway), as well as chapters on video projectors, connectors, and simple maintenance and troubleshooting. Moving from the sublime to the banal, *The Buyer's Guide* is little more than a 128-page catalogue, with almost 50 pages containing either photographs or lists of equipment and suppliers' addresses. The information in the latter book, what little there is of it, could just as easily be found in any two issues of almost any consumer video magazine, and is likewise hopelessly out-of-date.

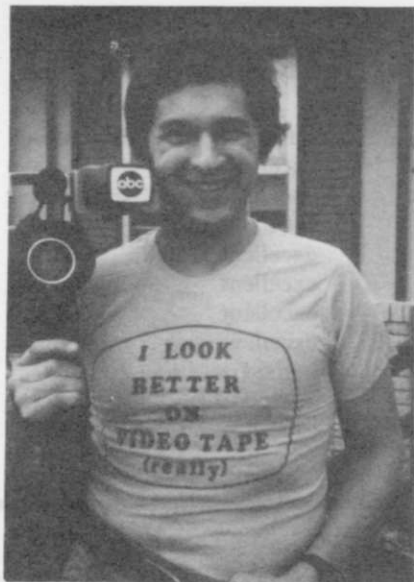
While I can sympathize with the authors and publishing companies for the problem of keeping the books current, *A Buyer's Guide to VCR's* has got to be one of the biggest wastes of time I've had this year, roughly equivalent to going out and seeing *Guyana*, *Cult of the Damned* (though not nearly as grotesque). Zmijewsky's *Consumer Guide* has much more practical information, and the author comes across as knowing far more about video and its consumer applications than miss Ciccolella, who even goes so far as to waste 7½ pages quoting facts and figures obtained from a *Mart* magazine survey concerning who's buying VCR's, how much money they make a year, and what they're using their VTR's for—all interesting facts, to be sure, but not enough that they need to be included here.

So, if you're looking for an in-depth book on all the newest home video equipment, how it all works, and what to do when it doesn't, *The Consumer's Guide to Video Tape Recording* is a good, generalized introduction to consumer video, even though it's a little out of date. But if you're reading this magazine already, I'd advise skipping *The Buyer's Guide* unless you want something you can give a pre-teen that'll help unravel some of the mysteries of video.—MFW

The whole damn thing is movin' too fast! Home video is growing at a rate even greater than some of the most optimistic predictions made as recently as last year. Several times a week I get calls from folks needing the straight-scoop on which machine to buy—or not to buy and why. If I would just wise-up and charge for this advise—I could retire.

Excuse me while I change my balls—or I should say "font"—it's the little ball with the type on it which these outrageously expensive IBM type-setting machines use. Now let me close the "line-gap" so I can squeeze in a few more words of wisdom to those of you out there that religiously read my humble column.

As evidenced by this nifty photograph, I have had a new batch of my spiffy T-Shirts printed up. The clever wording says **I LOOK BETTER ON VIDEO TAPE—(really).** The new shirts are light blue with dark blue ink and are high quality. None were printed in small size because I found out that there are no shrinpy videophiles out there—I guess most of us eat rather well. So, if you feel you absolutely can't live without one of these—send me a crisp \$5.00 bill and your size and I'll zip one out UPS—A.S.A.P. Unless, now that the warm weather has finally arrived, you feel your chest is just too impressive to cover—get a new shirt—I make about 35 cents on each one—so I don't do it for profit.



Hat's off to Channel 7 (WXYZ-TV) in Detroit. They had the good taste not to super the ID or run a "crawler" at the bottom of the picture during the closing of the Winter Olympics. This is the very annoying practice that most TV stations subscribe to which really makes us videoholics P.O.'d. At the top of the hour, especially during movies—they get great delight in super-imposing (and believe me it is an imposition) their call-letters and channel number right up there on the tube and naturally that goes right on your tape too! Some stations love themselves so much that they leave it up there long enough for the blind to see it. The crawlers are also a delight. These are the white-letter messages stations like to run across the bottom of the screen like "Channel 5 Eye-witness News will follow the ABC movie at 11:30." This is done because scientific research has shown that people watching another channel, but preferring the news on channel 5, might switch to 5—only to find (God-forbid) a movie instead of the news. So why do they print TV Guide? Even our friends at HBO and Showtime are occasionally guilty of this practice. Ever tape a much wanted film from Home Box Office, and while the opening sequences are rolling off—there it sneaks—slowly across the bottom of your supposedly commercial-free cable TV screen: **HBO would like to welcome the subscribers of View-More Cablevision in Billings, Montana to it's national network.** Grin and bear it folks—'cause there's nothin' we can do about it.

I hope those of you with Sony SL-5400's or 5600's aren't using that super-slow X-3 or B III or Beta Three speed. It's hard on the heads, and is really good for only one look and erase—same goes for SLP speed on newer VHS units—tape is not that expensive. Check out the ad's in this issue. Mid-America Video Mart in St. Louis—for example offers good stuff at very reasonable prices. You've gotta know how to shop wisely. Sticking with the standard speeds also helps if you enjoy playing your tapes in friends machines—let's try to make this hobby as compatible as possible—more speeds and format variations we certainly do not need!

A good friend, John McCray at WFDF in Flint, Michigan has had a 2-speed Beta for a couple of years and just made the mistake of picking up a VHS port-a-pack. He complained to the dealer (after the sale) regarding the technical quality of the picture. The salesman, at that point said "Beta has a better picture—especially in the portables"—don't ya just love it—why couldn't he have said that in the beginning? Because the warehouse was full of VHS portables and the salesman was full of....

STATE OF THE ART

ART VUOLO, JR. (MR. MEDIA)
P.O. BOX 219, YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN 48197

The most common type of question that I'm getting of late is from those of you who are buying various brands of color video camera's without knowing for sure whether or not it is going to work compatibly with your recorder—be it a portable or a standard home unit. The RCA CC004, one of the most popular and the Panasonic PK-600, have AC power units for use with home VCR's, but the remote plug which enables you to start and stop the tape from the camera doesn't fit in the jack snugly—therefore the connection is poor or non-existent. This can be very irritating. Another big problem—often discovered after it's too late—is the pause-button trigger on the camera **not** starting and stopping the tape in the proper way. Some models cause the tape to run only when the button on the camera is depressed and when it's released, the tape stops. This can make it rough on your finger. Others are just the opposite. The tape runs all the time, and stops only when the button is depressed—again a real pain where you sit. If you own a port-a-pack VCR, be it VHS or Beta, you are urged by this writer to take the unit with you when shopping for a color camera. It's a very big investment and you really should be sure that it's going to give you what you are expecting.

Speaking of cameras, wait til you see the new Sony HVC-80!

I just recently returned from a super trip to the west coast. My trip began with a tour of the NAB (National Assoc. of Broadcasters) convention in Las Vegas. That's where one gets to drool over all the professional stuff used by the TV and radio industry. Sony, RCA, Panasonic and all the rest had very impressive displays. But, while I was in Los Angeles, I had a peek at the HVC-80 by Sony. It looks much like a mini-cam unit used by remote TV news crews. Very compact and very professional. Price is about \$1,200—discounts available depending on who you know. After the Summer CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in Chicago, which will be in mid-June this year—just around the corner, I will have a closer look for you and videophiles can rely on a full product evaluation in these pages.

TIPS DEPARTMENT: For those of you with Sony SL-3000 portable VCR's, my local Betamax expert, RR—sez it can be adapted to record in the X1 fast speed! This could be an advantage to those of us who still enjoy higher speed quality and have several X1 machines. Those of you with technical questions regarding Sony equipment or Beta format video units can send them to me at the above address and be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE). I will give them to Rick and he will answer as many as possible.

Our "Mr. Fix-it" has also developed a new adaptor which makes it possible to use a ten-pin camera with a 14 pin recorder (like the Sony). This new slim and trim connector works in place of the CMA-202 accessory which we talked about last issue. Again—write, with a SASE for details and price.

Here's a tip for those of you who enjoy saving "quality" programs off television—but get really steamed when those damn network announcers talk over the credits on the end of the production—hyping the features on Good Morning America or the next thrill-packed episode of the Dukes of Hazzard. If you have a video recorder (VHS or Beta) with an audio-dub button, you're in business. After the program is over and the picture goes to black, stop the tape, rewind it and find some appropriate music. A tape or record will do—even right off an FM radio can work. Just record new audio **only—DO NOT** press record—just audio dub—over the old closing credit music with the unwanted chatter. At the end of "Amber Waves" on ABC, a great movie, I over-dubbed "America the Beautiful"—very effective. Keep 'em clean, stay legal—lay low and most of all remain in tune and in touch!

Statement of Policy: *The Videophile* is taking what we feel is a new and possibly daring step with this, our 25th, issue, providing reviews of video equipment and accessories that are unlike those you will find in most other video magazines. Unlike those publications, we will not rely solely on manufacturers' specifications, or even our own measurements, but will also take into consideration subjective evaluations based on extensive tests with our reviewing staff's eyes and ears—perhaps the most important and valuable senses available to the videophile.

In our never-ending quest for the "ultimate" video recording and playback devices, we promise to do our best to provide the most thorough, honest, and unbiased reviews we can in order to keep our readers from being swayed by mass-market puff-sheets masquerading as reviews, conned by overzealous dealers, and misguided by propaganda from well-meaning manufacturers. We can't be bought (well, maybe we can be rented for a while), and you can bet that if we say something isn't worth the cardboard carton it was shipped in, you can believe it. Likewise, if we advise you that a particular product is worth buying over everything else—at least for the moment—you can believe that, too.

Before we start sounding like a would-be presidential candidate, please keep in mind that our "high and mighty" attitude is tempered by the fact that we realize that we're only human, and also that most of the equipment we review in this and future issues is intended for the consumer market, not for use by demanding professionals in broadcast video situations. We understand all that. But, at the same time, we're not willing to compromise our aforementioned quest, and will continue to call all the shots as we see them, both good and bad. We are confident that our readers wouldn't want it any other way.

Product reviewers this issue:

Marcus F. Wielage, Kirk Leonhardt, Joe Mazzini, and Mike Clark.

SONY SL-5600 BETAMAX VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER



Manufacturer: Sony Corporation, 7-35 Kitashinagawa 6-Chome, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141, Japan (Distributed by Sony Consumer Products Company, 9 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019)

Source: Reviewer purchase

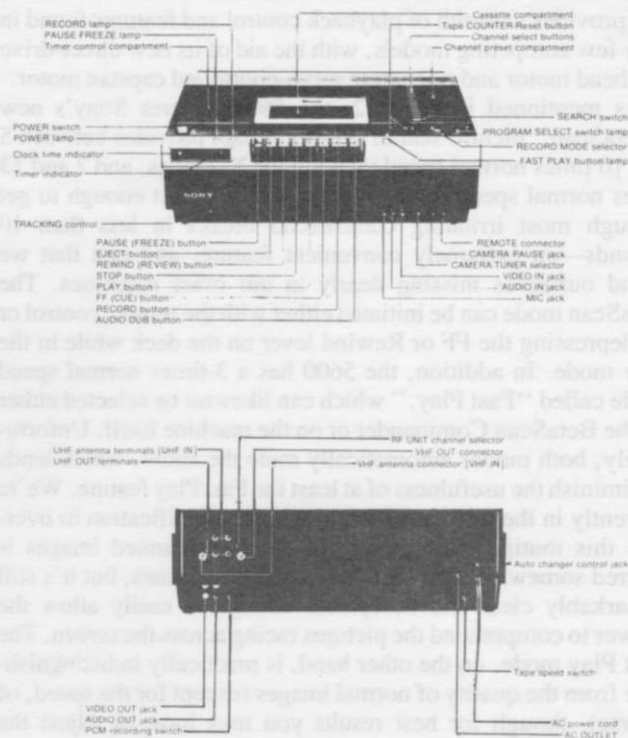
Cost: \$1,350.00 (includes RM-56W BetaScan Remote Controller, miscellaneous antenna cables and connectors, and sample L-250 videocassette)

The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

The SL-5600 joins Sony's SL-5400 (reviewed in TV #22) as part of their expanding Beta deck line, and is the first programmable deck from the firm we have tested. Like the 5400, it represents an all-time high in performance, features and convenience hitherto unachieved by any of Sony's other U.S. consumer products to date.

Appearance: The SL-5600 is very similar-looking to the 5400—an attractive wood-grained metal and plastic unit about 19½"×6½"×15", weighing about 36½ pounds, which is roughly equivalent to most currently available programmable VTR's. The 5600 has practically identical layout to the 5400, featuring a front-mounted blue LED timer (with slightly different-looking digits) and a programmable microprocessor section on its top left side; the middle contains the standard 5000 series transport, with solenoid-assisted controls for Pause-Freeze/Eject/Rewind/Stop/Play/Fast-Forward/Record/Audio Dub; and the right side contains a new light-touch tuner section,

LOCATION OF PARTS AND CONTROLS



During PCM recording when using the PCM adaptor, remove the rubber cover and set the switch to the left position.

with presets underneath a hinged panel. Directly in front of the tuner are switches for the 3X/Fast Play mode, X-2/X-3 record mode selection, and an RF selector for TV/VTR, as well as a 4-digit Index Counter with switches for memory rewind and electronic indexing. The latter feature has been found on most programmable VHS decks for some time, placing an inaudible electronic cue at the beginning of all program segments, providing fast and easy access to multiple timer recordings, for example.

The bottom front of the deck contains a knurled Tracking Control knob on the left side, and the right side has mini-phone jacks for Microphone and Aux. Audio inputs, a phono jack for Video input, a Camera/Tuner record selector switch, a sub-miniature phone jack for Remote Pause (from a camera), and an 8-pin DIN jack for the RM-56W Remote BetaScan Commander, which we noted was not compatible with the earlier 5-pin RM-55W Remote furnished with the SL-5400.

The back of the SL-5600 contains the usual F connector jacks for VHS in and RF out, terminal posts for UHF in and out, a switch for RF channel 3/4 selection, a phono jack for Video out, a mini-phone jack for Audio out, a switch for PCM recording (which alters the video processing to aid in use with PCM adaptors like Sony's \$4,400 PCM-1), and on the right side, a convenient AC outlet. In addition, there's a tiny hidden switch for X-1 playback (which is discussed in the instruction manual and literature), and a mysterious socket labeled "Auto Changer Control Jack," which we're told will be used with the multiple-tape changer to be available later on this year. (See our review of the AG-200 Changer elsewhere.)

Features/Operation: The SL-5600 is the newest addition to Sony's "4th Generation" of home VTR's, the first being the original one-speed X-1 Betamax introduced in 1976 (the LV-1901 and SL-7200), then the two speed X-1/X-2 SL-8200 in 1977, and later the X-2 only SL-8600 released in 1978. Like the 5400, the 5600 resembles the 8600 more so than the others, and provides a wealth of playback control and features found in very few competing models, with the aid of its new direct-drive DC head motor and a separate servo-controlled capstan motor.

As mentioned in TV #22, the 5600 features Sony's new "BetaScan" picture-search system, which provides between 5 and 10 times normal speed viewing for X-2 tapes, and 7 and 13 times normal speed for X-3 tapes, which is fast enough to get through most irritating commercial breaks in less than 10 seconds—an extremely convenient feature, and one that we found ourselves missing dearly in our other machines. The BetaScan mode can be initiated either with the remote control or by depressing the FF or Rewind lever on the deck while in the play mode. In addition, the 5600 has a 3-times normal speed mode called "Fast Play," which can likewise be selected either on the BetaScan Commander or on the machine itself. Unfortunately, both modes automatically mute the audio, which tends to diminish the usefulness of at least the Fast Play feature. We're currently in the process of working out a modification to override this muting. The quality of the BetaScanned images is marred somewhat by a half-dozen horizontal lines, but it's still remarkably clear and acceptable enough to easily allow the viewer to comprehend the pictures racing across the screen. The Fast Play mode, on the other hand, is practically indistinguishable from the quality of normal images (except for the speed, of course), though for best results you may have to adjust the tracking slightly for tapes recorded on other machines.

The programmable section of the machine is relatively easy to use, providing up to 14 days advance presetting of up to 4 programs, or up to 5 hours worth of programs coming on the

same channel and at the same time every day, which should be perfect for soap opera fanatics. The first event selector ("A") is part of a non-volatile memory which the 5600 will not "forget," in the case of taping the same show(s) every week; the other events ("B," "C," and "D") are discarded from the memory after they're used. A "2nd Week" button is used to tell the machine to record events next week; a front-panel indicator light is provided for this function, which otherwise could be a potential problem in case it was inadvertently activated, though we never had it happen in our testing. "Sun." through "Sat." pushbuttons are used to activate the daily presets, which appear above the numeral LED display. The user may also preset a "stop" time for programmed recordings, or allow them to go to the end of the tape ("Tape End"). Also provided is a switch for selecting a "Bright" or "Dim" display. Finally, in the event you confuse the machine or accidentally program in overlapping recordings, an Error indicator ("Err") lights up to point out your incompetence. We can imagine that future models will probably have a prerecorded voice that just tells you, "Hey, you pushed the wrong button, you idiot."

We did have one quarrel with the programming section—the necessity of keeping the "Event" button depressed whenever presetting the start or stop time, but this was a minor problem that we quickly got used to. Instead of having to keep this button pressed, we would have preferred using light-touch electronically-locking pushbuttons of the type Matsushita uses in their programmable VHS decks.

All of these features worked very well, though we had a minor quarrel with the placement of the eject lever just to the right of the pause control, which took a great deal of getting used to. We found ourselves constantly trying to eject by pressing the Pause lever by mistake and vice-versa, and wish that Sony had made the Pause control larger and completely separate from the other transport controls, perhaps a few inches to the left. But this is a minor complaint, especially in view of the remote control unit. Most users will probably use its Pause button rather than the one on the deck.

Performance: As with the SL-5400, the 5600 seems to perform as well as or better than the earlier SL-8200 and 8600 models, with fairly good picture quality in the X-2 mode, somewhat improved over the other decks. The X-3 mode was visibly noisier, with more dropouts and a less-sharp, grainy image, but still barely acceptable for delayed programs.

Although the video quality was alright, we were disappointed to find that the audio signal to noise ratio was only fair, provid-



The RM-56W provides remote control of the 5600's BetaScan, Pause, and Fast-Play functions.

ing more hiss and noise than we've noticed in earlier models. In particular, the X-3 sound quality is terrible—even worse than the difference in video quality between X-3 and X-2. Still, the audio quality is on a par with the slow-speed performance found in most competing consumer VTR's, though we hope that Sony will incorporate some kind of noise reduction circuitry in future models.

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Video S/N Ratio: better than 45 dB (X-2)

Horizontal resolution: more than 240 lines for color X-2 recordings

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB (at X-2; we'd subjectively give X-3 no more than 36 dB)

Audio Frequency response: 50-10,000 Hz (X-2); 50-7,000 Hz (X-3)

We'd rate the 5600's X-2 and X-3 performance as roughly equivalent to the SP and LP quality of most 2-speed VHS decks, though not as good as the SP quality from VHS decks with 58-micron heads (like RCA's VDT-625 and Panasonic's NV-8200, both (?) reviewed elsewhere). Neither speed is as good as the X-1 quality found in 60-micron Beta decks, like Sony's earlier SL-7200, SLO-320, and the new SLO-323 (which is also (?) reviewed elsewhere). All in all, we'd say that many consumers will not be able to tell the difference between the 5600's X-2 recordings and off-air pictures, though the critical eye will be able to note the additional video noise, dropouts, and lack of detail that characterizes most 1/2" recordings. While the improvement of X-2 over the past 3 years has not exactly been earth-shattering, it has indeed visibly improved to the point that the 5400 and 5600 have come close to providing the ideal performance/economy compromise long desired by videophiles.

The 5600's solenoid-assisted transport seemed to handle both L-750's and 830's with ease, subjecting the tape to less wear and tear than the earlier mechanical transports used in the SL-8200 and 7200. Performance-wise, the 750's and 830's were visibly noisier than the thicker tapes used in L-500 (and shorter length) tapes, but still adequate for most purposes. We did note that thinner tapes recorded on the 5400 and 5600 may not track very well (if at all) on 8200's and 8600's, particularly with the latter machine, which lacks a true capstan-servo circuit for drift-free recording and playback tracking. On the other hand, the 5400 and 5600 will often play back recordings unwatchable on 8200's and 8600's, providing an increased tracking range for maximum interchange compatibility. As a matter of fact, we found that even good tapes recorded on an 8200 will often look just a smidgen better when played on the newer 5000-series machines.

Lastly, the 5600 provides "crash" pause editing as good as any consumer VTR we've seen, with a minimum of glitches at the edit point, even for casual "start/stop" editing done only with the remote control. We noted that you could sometimes obtain better (and more accurate) results by re-cueing the tape as detailed in past issues: still-framing the playback just as the program fades to black, then initiating the record mode, and finally releasing the pause button when the program resumes.

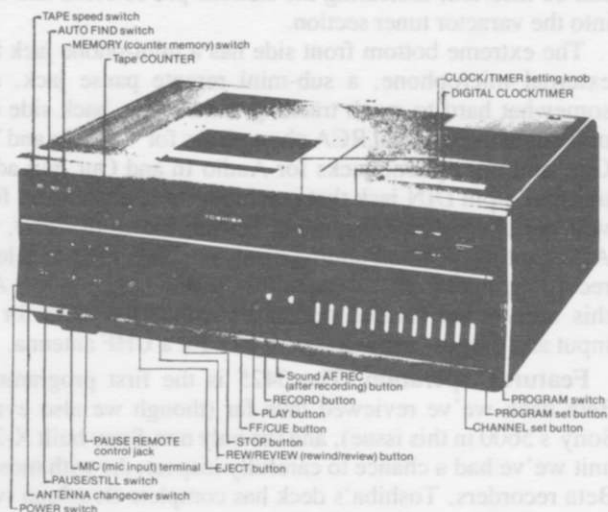
Conclusion: Like the 5400, we found Sony's SL-5600 to be a well-built, good-quality performer in every way, except for the audio shortcomings mentioned earlier (which are still not all that much worse than broadcast TV's sound quality), and the BetaScan and programmable features definitely put it several steps ahead of most other consumer VTR's. Except for its lack of X-1 record capability, we could find little fault with it, save for perhaps the need for audio noise reduction and a larger

programming capacity (perhaps 14 day/7 events, for use with its future 3-cassette changer).

We did find the instruction manual a little confusing in several areas—particularly in describing programming the timer, presetting the tuner, and explaining the method for installing the little plastic numbers in the illuminated plastic frame used for indicating the preset channels. The manual didn't exactly spell out the fact that the plastic frame is *removable* from the deck, thus allowing you to neatly push out or replace the numbers as needed.

Now that Matsushita has released their 4-head decks, we think that Sony will once more have to meet this performance challenge head-on by providing similarly-equipped Beta decks—possibly a 3-speed Beta VTR with heads optimized for good-quality X-1 and X-2 recording, and slightly lesser performance in X-3. In addition, we're going to hope that future decks will have slow-motion and noiseless still-framing—features not found in the 5600 or any other U.S. consumer Beta VTR. Until that time, the SL-5600 will be the best consumer Beta machine you can buy in America—certainly better than Zenith's version, the VR-9700, which doesn't offer the Fast Play mode switch on the remote control, X-1 playback, or the days of the week display on its front panel LED display—though neither is quite as admirable as the SL-J7. But then, few machines are.—MFW

TOSHIBA V-5425 BETA VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER



Manufacturer: Toshiba Corporation, 1-6 Uchisaiwai-cho, 1-chome, Chiyado-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan
(Distributed by Toshiba America, Inc., 280 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017)

Source: Dealer loan (Audio/Video Craft, 7710 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90048)

Cost: \$1,345 (includes 75 ohm antenna cable and connectors, dust cover, PR-10S remote pause control and sample L-250 videocassette)

Toshiba V-5425 is the updated X-2/X-3 version of the firm's previous 5420 Beta deck, which was the first programmable X-2 Beta-format recorder to be released in the United States and joins the firm's 5530 portapak as part of their "Beta family."

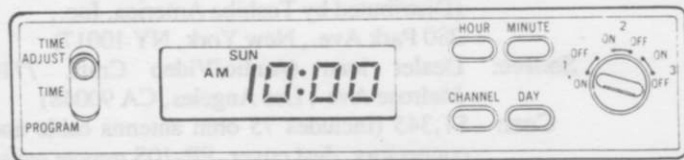
Appearance: The 5425 has a clean, uncluttered appearance, featuring an imitation wood-grain front panel (as opposed to the silver front panel in the 5420). As with most previous X-2 Toshiba models (including the 5310), Toshiba's deck has a unique transport design, characterized by 7 mechanical piano-type keys for Eject/Rewind/Stop/Fast-Forward/Play/Record and Audio Dub, all located on the front panel (as opposed to the upper front part of the deck, where the transport keys are normally found in most other units). The 19"×7"×15" unit weighs just a hair under 31 lbs.—one of the lightest AC-operated VTR's we've reviewed.

As shown in the diagram, the front panel of the 5425 contains 90% of all its operating controls, including Tape Speed Select (for X-2 and X-3), and Auto Find switch (which allows fast-winding to the beginnings of recorded segments by means of an inaudible tone placed on the tape, as found in RCA's 400 and 600 series decks), a Counter Memory (for rewinding to 000), and below, a Timer/On/Off Power selector, a TV/VTR/RF switch, and a solenoid Pause/Still switch. The right side of the machine contains most of the tuning and programmer circuitry, including a 12-position varactor tuner and an LCD clock display with appropriate controls for presetting up to 3 shows 7 days in advance.

We were very much surprised and annoyed to find that the manufacturer has chosen to designate its Beta speeds "SP and LP" for X-2 and X-3, respectively, which will no doubt add even more confusion to the already hopelessly mixed-up consumer video market. A green LED lights up on the front panel whenever the LP mode is used. Other lights include red ones for Pause and Record, and another green one for power indication. The right side contains a slot into which a channel number strip can be inserted, indicating the stations pre-selected and locked into the varactor tuner section.

The extreme bottom front side has a mini-phone jack for an external microphone, a sub-mini remote pause jack, and a somewhat hard-to-reach tracking control; the back side of the unit contains the usual RCA phono jacks for Video In and Video Out, and mini-phone jacks for Audio In and Out, but adds an unusual 6-pin DIN jack that combines these other jacks for use with certain cameras (including Toshiba's own IK-1650, via its AC adaptor.) A small sliding black switch is used to select the recording input from TV (tuner) to Camera (aux. inputs). Above this section are located standard F-connector jacks for VHF input and output, and a 300 ohm jack for a UHF antenna.

Features/Operation: The 5425 is the first programmable Beta deck we've reviewed thus far (though we also evaluate Sony's 5600 in this issue), and the only non-Sony built X-2/X-3 unit we've had a chance to carefully inspect. As with most new Beta recorders, Toshiba's deck has complete BetaScan (which they call "Picture Search"), but is, unfortunately, not remotely controllable with the simple remote pause switch provided.



The programmable section is relatively simple and straightforward, though it uses a completely different approach than that used by Sony, Panasonic and RCA in their respective programmable decks. To preset the recorder, you enter appropriate "On" and "Off" times into the LCD display by means of the "Program" time-adjust selector, using the right-

hand "Hour," "Minute," and "Day" buttons. It took a lot of getting used to, programming in the channel number by depressing the "Channel" pre-select button, rather than using the actual varactor tuner buttons themselves, but we eventually adjusted to Toshiba's system. It still seems more logical to use the tuner buttons, which is how every other manufacturer builds its programmable deck, but such is life in the world of video.

The LCD display seemed a little small and slightly harder to read than the LED's used with most other new VTR's, but it was still more than adequate for our purposes. Pre-setting the tuner was about as annoying, but again, didn't seem to be a major hassle once it was accomplished by means of the controls under the top right hinged panel.

Other minor quibbles we have with the 5425 include its relatively small cassette window, which makes figuring out how much tape you have left somewhat difficult unless you've remembered to "zero" the index counter at the beginning of the recording. We wish manufacturers would finally wake up and make the entire cassette compartment transparent, as well as adding an internal light to help see how much tape has been used in recording, to help avoid unexpected tape run-outs. The index counter was likewise impossible to read in the dark, and could use a little lamp of its own.

On the plus side, the 5425 provided just about the best edits we've ever seen in a consumer Beta unit, with practically no break-up or image deterioration at the edit points. It is also an exceptionally quiet machine, with ample ventilation and the fastest loading (less than 2 seconds) that we've yet seen in a Beta unit.

Performance: It was in this area that we found the most surprises with Toshiba's 5425. We were somewhat taken aback by the extremely poor quality BetaScan and Still-Frames obtained in the X-2 mode, which should have been at least comparable to the fair-to-good results found with Sony's 5400. These features were all but useless in "SP" (X-2), and our annoyance at not having a remote BetaScan controller was considerable. At X-3, the Still-Frame and BetaScan were much improved, however.

The manufacturer's X-2 specifications include:

Video S/N Ratio: better than 45 db (for B&W; they claim the same specs for X-3, with which we don't agree)
Horizontal Resolution: 250 lines (240 at X-3)
Audio Frequency Response: 150-8,000 Hz (at X-2; 50-7,000 Hz at X-3, which is not so hot)
Audio S/N Ratio: better than 40 dB

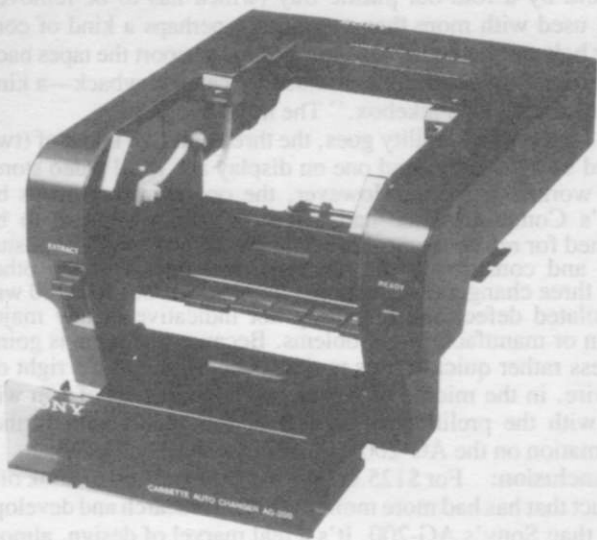
As usual, our eyes and ears verified most of the above, though we must confess that while the audio specs look worse on paper than several other consumer units, it sounds almost acceptable on a TV-sized speaker and adequate enough for most off-air recordings—which doesn't say a lot for the quality of broadcast TV audio. The quality of X-3 images were roughly equivalent to that of most comparable recorders—visibly noisier and with less detail than X-2.

We were disappointed to find that the 5425 takes just a little longer to come to speed than other Beta models, roughly 2 or 3 seconds. Also, the End of Tape sensors occasionally malfunctioned on us, with the unit refusing to go into the play mode from the beginning of the tape, shutting off two or three times until we stubbornly forced it into play through a little perseverance. There were a few other strange quirks with the machine, little things that bothered us like the non-cushioned cassette holder, which clanged upwards sharply when the eject lever was depressed. Toshiba's somewhat cheap, plastic appearance isn't helped much by these minor problems; the fragile-feeling transport controls are a prime example.

Conclusion: Considering that Sony's new SL-5600 sells for just \$5.00 more than the 5425, our opinion is that you'd have to be a fool to choose the Toshiba for purchase. Without remote BetaScan, and with only a 3-event/7-day programmer, the 5425 definitely suffers by comparison with either Sanyo's or Zenith's newest decks, and likewise with Sony's (which also offers X-1 playback as an additional feature). Unless you can get an exceptionally good deal on the V-5425, we'd advise against buying it.—MFW

The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

SONY AG-200 BETA VIDEOCASSETTE AUTO-CHANGER



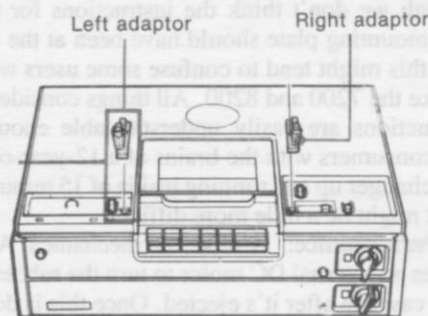
Manufacturer: Sony Corporation, 7-35 Kitashinagawa 6-chome, Shinagawa-Ku, Tokyo 141, Japan (Distributed by Sony Consumer Products Company, 9 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019)

Source: Manufacturer loan

Cost: \$125.00 (includes mounting plate for use with SL-8600, screws, adaptor clips, Phillips-head screwdriver, and 6V DC adaptor)

Long-time readers of this magazine will remember our extensive reports on Sony's original AG-120 changer, which was test-marketed last year and reviewed in #19. The interest generated by that original device has prompted Sony to intensify the effort to perfect their changer concept, which initially had no small number of problems in terms of dependability. With the AG-200, Sony seems to have solved these difficulties—no less than a Herculean feat, by our estimation—by using an all-electric drive in place of the mechanical design used in the test-marketed version for much-improved reliability and quieter operation to boot.

Appearance/Installation: The AG-200 is an attractive all-brown plastic unit made to match the styling of the original SL-7200 and SL-8200 Beta decks, in a streamlined package about 9 3/8" x 6 1/8" x 12 1/4", weighing nearly 5 pounds. Plastic silver-colored transport keys duplicating the line-up of those found on the deck are built into the front part of the changer, which covers up the entire area surrounding the deck's pop-up



cassette compartment. Two right and left-hand adaptors are supplied to attach the changer to Sony's SL-6200, 7200 and 8200 decks, and a metal adaptor plate is supplied to attach it to the SL-8600, which has a slightly different exterior design from the other decks. In each case, the changer quickly slides in and "clicks" in place, held snugly to the top of the deck with enough precision to insure proper operation.

Sony's engineers have gone to considerable effort to overcome the pitfalls and limitations of the earlier AG-120 changer. For example, an "Extract" button has been added to the front of the unit to aid in removing ejected tapes without having to reach all the way inside to fumble around trying to pull the cassette away from the VTR's grasp, and this is something we can really appreciate. In addition, screws have been provided underneath the AG-200's transport key-depressors to allow you to make the

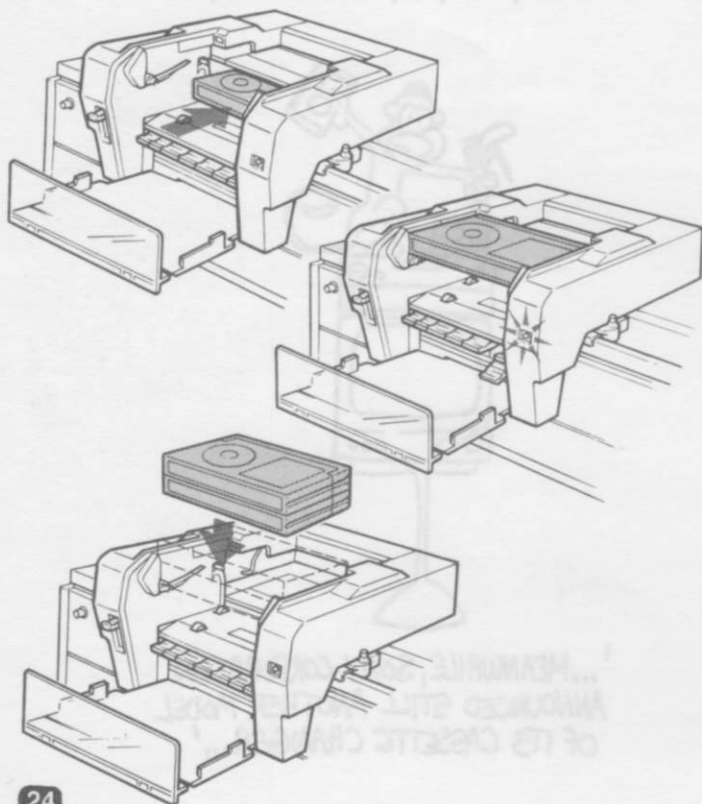


'...MEANWHILE, SONY CORPORATION ANNOUNCED STILL ANOTHER MODEL OF ITS CASSETTE CHANGER...'

changer put the deck into record or playback, which should be great for viewing long films or for lengthy industrial or educational applications. Best of all, the AG-200 holds not one but two cassettes, giving you a total capacity of *three* cassettes, including the one already in the VTR, and increasing your unattended playing time up to 5 hours for X-1, and—if you can believe it—a mere 10 hours for X-2, by using the new L-830 cassettes. To our way of thinking, that's more than enough for even the most demented, intense lunatic-fringe videophiles (which aptly describes several of the members of our staff).

Installation was fairly simple and straightforward. The instructions given in Sony's 15-page booklet are complete and to the point, though we don't think the instructions for the SL-8600's special mounting plate should have been at the front of the manual, as this might tend to confuse some users who own earlier decks like the 7200 and 8200. All things considered, we think the instructions are easily understandable enough that most ordinary consumers with the brains of a 12-year-old child could have the changer up and running inside of 15 minutes. For the rest of us, it might be a little more difficult.

Operation/Performance: Unlike the mechanical AG-120, the AG-200 uses an internal DC motor to turn the rubber rollers that extract the cassette after it's ejected. Once this is done, the cassette immediately above the deck is automatically dropped down and slid into the deck's cassette compartment, which the changer then slams shut with a gear-driven plastic "finger." The first cassette is slid into a smoked-plastic holder on the front of the changer, and a few seconds later, the record and playback keys are automatically depressed and the recording continues uninterrupted until the cassette ends, at which point the whole operation begins again. About 18 seconds is required for a complete cassette change-over. Several seconds are wasted in waiting for the unit to cycle through and push down the record and play buttons, which is a slight disappointment when compared to the AG-120, which required only about 12 seconds to change its cassettes. But this brings up the biggest advantage of the 200 vs. the 120: *the AG-200 works most of the time.* Unfortunately, this cannot be said for the AG-120, which failed about 25% of our tests a year ago.



When the changer is loaded with a cassette, the "Ready" light automatically glows to indicate that it's ready for action. The second cassette goes right on top of the first cassette and automatically locks into place the moment the first one drops down into the deck. By doing a little experimentation, we determined that the only thing that prevents the AG-200 from being a *multi-multiple* tape changer is the exclusion of some kind of guide to allow stacking a number of cassettes on top of the unit. One of our more industrious readers in the mid-west put together a cardboard tube about the same size as a stack of 10 cassettes, taped it to his AG-200 and voila—a working *10-tape* changer, which, of course, gave him the capacity of "only" *16½ hours at X-1 and over 33 hours at X-2!* He told us that he gave up after trying 10 cassettes, muttering "What's the use?"

Which brings us to an interesting point: in theory, one could stack as many tapes on the AG-200 as physically possible, and work out a way of catching them at the bottom, where the tapes are held by a fold-out plastic tray (which has to be removed when used with more than two tapes); perhaps a kind of conveyor belt system could be employed to transport the tapes back to the top of the stack for continued repeated playback—a kind of non-stop "video jukebox." The mind boggles.

As far as dependability goes, the three units we know of (two owned by TV readers and one on display at a local video store) have worked out fine. However, the one furnished to us by Sony's Compton office had a few problems and had to be returned for replacement. From all reports, ours was an unusual case, and considering the nearly-perfect record of the other two three changers, we're going to think that our AG-200 was an isolated defect and hopefully not indicative of any major design or manufacturing problems. Because this issue is going to press rather quickly (this review is being submitted right on the wire, in the middle of April), we hope that all of you will bear with the preliminary aspects of this report until further information on the AG-200's reliability can be compiled.

Conclusion: For \$125.00, we are hard-pressed to think of a product that has had more money spent on research and development than Sony's AG-200. It's a real marvel of design, almost Rube-Goldbergesque in its approach (though perhaps no more so than the AG-120), and aside from the caveats mentioned above, seems to work at least 95% of the time from the reports given to us by the aforementioned sources. For those poor unfortunates among you who feel chagrined by the recent introduction of the new 5-hour Beta VTR's, after having invested hundreds of dollars in your old 2-hour decks, this changer is a perfect way to triple your present recording capacity at a minimal expense.

And for those of you with the new 5-hour machines (specifically Sony's SL-5400 and 5600, and Zenith's VR-9000 and 9700), be advised that Sony is planning to come out with changers for these decks later this year. These may include some kind of programmable unit for the 5600 and 9700, which would take into consideration those VTR's microprocessor-controlled timers. We noted the presence of an interesting-looking socket in the back of the 5600 labeled "Auto-Changer Control Jack," which may mean that the arrival of such a unit can be anticipated in the near future. We also noted that the cassette compartment on this deck has a tiny black lever inside its top left side. When this lever is depressed, with the compartment popped up, the cassette can be made to eject *backwards*, towards the rear of the VTR, which seems to indicate that Sony may take this approach with these new changers. We look forward to finding out.

—MFW & JM

[As we go to press, further tests with the AG-200 indicate that it may not be as dependable as our initial reports have shown. We also neglected to mention that the changer works best with cassettes that have no labels. More on this in our next issue. We just learned on the wire that the new programmable changer for the SL-5600 will be called the AG-300 Beta Stack and will hold four cassettes.—Ed.]

SONY SL-J7 BETAMAX VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

Manufacturer: Sony Corporation, 7-35 Kitashinagawa 6-chome, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141, Japan

Source: Videophile reader loan (purchased from Showtime Video Ventures, 2309 3rd Street, Tillamook, OR 97141)

Cost: Y279,000 (plus shipping, includes RM-77 Remote Control, RK-74H stereo audio cables, miscellaneous antenna cables and connectors, and sample L-250 videocassette)

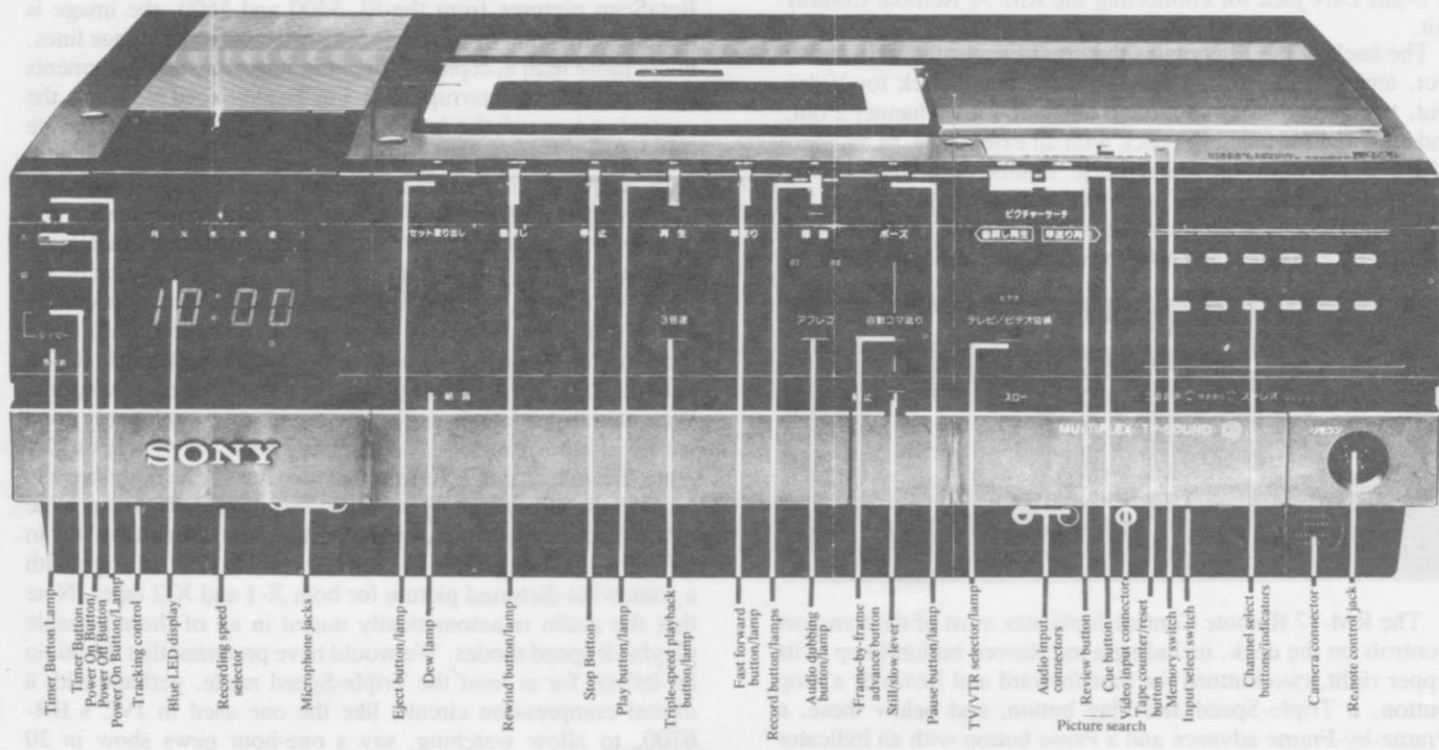
Ever since we first learned of the existence of this incredible recorder (which was first discussed back in TV #21), many of us with this magazine have been impressed enough to pursue the extremely difficult task of either a) obtaining a J7 directly from Japan or b) begging, pleading, or otherwise convincing Sony's marketing people in New York of the need for a similar machine in America. We quickly realized that, at least in the short run, the former method was going to be a lot easier than the latter, and so arranged to have one shipped over from Tokyo at considerable expense (about \$1,400, including shipping and customs duty).

Appearance: The SL-J7 with a very sleek, futuristic styling that is characteristic of Sony's Japanese electronic equipment, bears only a vague resemblance to most American VTRs. We found its overall look to be somewhat preferable to the more down-to-earth "living room" design of Sony's U.S. products, which often have wood-grain finishes and tones, apparently in order to gain the acceptance of American householders. The deck is about 19" x 6½" x 14"—almost exactly the same size as the SL-5400 and 5600, and weighs about 37 pounds. From left

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to right, its front panel controls begin with three light-touch pushbuttons used for turning the unit on and off or allowing timer control. The blue LED display to the right of these buttons has 7 Japanese symbols, one for each day of the week; a red light illuminates the preselected day for programming purposes. A hinged lid above and behind the LED's contains all the programming controls for the 7-day/1-event microprocessor, as well as providing a 50/60 Hz power frequency switch for the internal clock circuitry. Down below the clock is a knurled knob for Tracking, an X-1/X-2 record speed select switch, and two standard phone jacks for plugging in left and right channel microphones (the J7 is equipped to handle stereo recording by cutting the existing mono audio track in half).

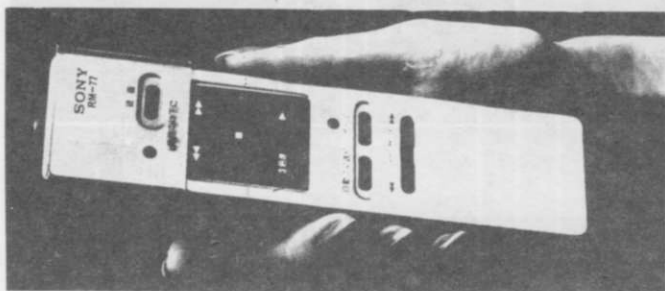
The middle of the deck contains all of the transport controls and indicator lights, with the top front containing light-touch solenoid buttons for Eject/Rewind/Stop/Play/Fast-Forward/Record and Pause-Still, as well as two separate pushbuttons to the right of these controls for "Picture Search," which is Japan's equivalent of BetaScan—a 20-times normal speed picture in forward and reverse, which is slightly faster than the firm's U.S. Betamax decks. An inch underneath these solenoid controls are tiny indicator lights to tell you at a glance the mode



in which the machine is operating. Below these lights are other switches and indicators: one underneath the Eject button for the internal dew/moisture detector; a switch and indicator light underneath the Play button for triple speed playback (which is inoperative with X-1 tapes); X-1 and X-2 record indicator lights, as well as an Audio Dub button and lamp, which are underneath the Record button; and underneath the Pause control, indicator lights and controls for the frame-by-frame advance button and variable slow-motion lever (from still-frame to 1/2 normal speed). Underneath the BetaScan controls (one each for Cue and Review—forward and reverse picture search) is a light-touch pushbutton for TV/VTR RF switching; its red light activates for VTR viewing.

Moving on to the right side of the deck, we find most of the tuner circuitry as well as the stereo multiplex decoder, both of which are compatible only with Japanese broadcast frequencies. The top right-hand side of the deck contains the 12-preset varactor tuner controls, which are found underneath a hinged door; in front of the door is a 4-digit index counter with memory switch. Below the tuner is another hinged door, which opens to reveal a number of switches: an audible end-of-tape alarm, which beeps a few seconds before your tape runs out; a Tab Index search system which allows fast-forwarding and rewinding to the beginning of program segments by means of an audible cue tone placed on the tape (just like the system used in most programmable VHS decks and Sony's own SL-5600); an on/off switch for the internal BNR noise-reduction circuitry (similar to the Dolby B system used in audio cassette decks); an audio monitor selector switch for listening to either channel 1, channel 2 or both (for the stereo tracks on the tape); and last on the right, two switches for controlling the multiplex circuitry—one for recording Japanese or English translations (or both in stereo), and one for turning off the multiplex circuitry for mono or noisy broadcasts. Below this door are two phono jacks for external left and right Audio Inputs, another phono jack for Video In, and a 14-pin "K"-type jack for use with a color camera. In between these jacks is a three-position input switch for selecting between recording from the external phono jacks (aux.), the tuner, or the camera jack. Finally (*whew*), there's an 8-pin DIN jack for connecting the RM-77 Remote Control unit.

The back of the J7 contains the usual F jacks for VHS In/RF Out, terminal posts for UHF In/Out, a phono jack for Video Out, two phono jacks for Audio channel 1 and channel 2 out, and a switch for using the deck with an external PCM adaptor, which deactivates its video noise limiter and VITS-slicing circuits to aid in recording the digital audio signals (just like the 5400 and 5600). Also provided is an auto/off switch for the internal Dew Heater, and a 400-watt AC convenience outlet.



The RM-77 Remote Control duplicates most of the transport controls on the deck, including a red Record button/lamp at its upper right, two buttons for Fast-forward and Rewind, a Stop button, a Triple-Speed and Play button, and below these, a Frame-by-Frame advance and a Pause button with an indicator

light. At the bottom of the control is a rocker switch for activating the Cue and Review/Picture Search (BetaScan) modes. The remote control comes with a 15 foot cable, which should be more than adequate for most homes, though an extension cord could probably be made without too much difficulty. Sony provides a plastic slide-on cap that covers up the top part of the RM-77 to prevent you from inadvertently depressing the Record button. Like all of Sony's recent consumer VTR's, the record mode on the J7 can be initiated by depressing only this single button, which could lead to trouble for those of us who are all thumbs.

Well, after describing all the J7's controls, dials, buttons and knobs, we don't know about you but we're exhausted. [If you can't figure out what we've been talking about in the past couple of pages, go back and glance over the diagram to get a clearer idea of where all the controls are and what they do.] There's no doubt about it: the J7 is one hell of a complicated VTR, and it's certainly not one that most of us would be able to immediately figure out seconds after taking it out of the carton. Still, its features and design are worthy of interest in that, undoubtedly, more and more consumer VTR's will be getting at least as complicated as this deck in the near future, so we feel the J7 bears close examination if only to prepare ourselves for things to come.

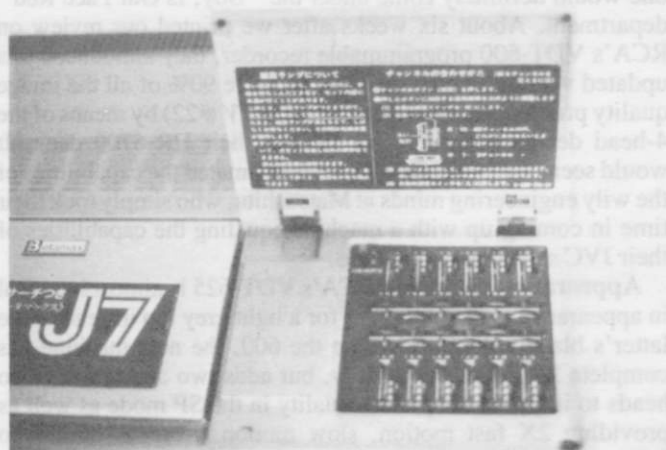
Features/Operation: The J7's 30-odd controls provide the most incredibly wide array of recording and playback functions imaginable, even for the most diehard videophile. At the same time, all of the controls are very easy to use, most of them being of the "soft-touch/solenoid" variety, though we had an occasional problem with the transport controls requiring a somewhat firmer pressure than we expected. (We're told that the latter problem has been solved in the new SL-J7H, the new updated version in Japan.)

To activate the variable-speed playback functions, you begin by placing the J7 in the Play mode, which will illuminate the playback mode lamp. The BetaScan modes can then be initiated by depressing either of the two buttons to the right of the pause control (or at the bottom of the Remote Controller)—the left for Review/rewind, and the right for Cue/fast-forward. Like the BetaScan pictures from the SL-5400 and 5600, the image is marred somewhat by a half-dozen horizontal interference lines, but is more than acceptable for getting past unwanted segments (like commercial interruptions). For Triple-Speed playback, the control underneath the deck's Play button is activated to provide interference-free fast-playback for X-2 tapes (but does not work with X-1 tapes). The tape can be returned to normal speed by again depressing the Play button. To still-frame tapes, you merely depress the Pause button and move the small lever underneath it all the way to the left; to advance the picture a frame at a time, you lightly depress the button immediately above the lever, releasing it when the on-screen image rolls forward one frame. By keeping the button depressed, it will continuously advance the picture one frame every 2 seconds. We noted that while the still-frame images were relatively good with X-2 tapes, there was an annoying noise-bar visible on X-1 tapes due to the deck's 30-micron video head. The noise-bar can be partially eliminated by using the lever to slowly advance the tape a fraction of an inch, and by pushing the lever all the way to the right, a variable slow-motion effect is obtained, though with a somewhat distorted picture for both X-1 and X-2 tapes. Note that the audio is automatically muted in all of these variable playback speed modes. We would have preferred that the audio be left on for at least the Triple-Speed mode, perhaps with a digital compression circuit, like the one used in JVC's HR-6700, to allow watching, say a one-hour news show in 20

minutes with semi-intelligible audio commentary. We also noted that after more than five minutes of still-framing, the deck reverts back to whatever mode it was in before the pause control was activated, just as with Sony's new U.S. VTR's.



We were unable to use or program the J7's tuner and stereo multiplex circuitry since we don't happen to have any Japanese TV stations nearby, but several TV readers in Japan have told us that they've had no problems with either of them and we'll take their word for it. The tuner is programmed just like the ones used in Sony's 5400 and 5600 decks, with a VHF low-band/VHF high-band/UHF selector providing control for the thumbwheel tuning knobs underneath the top right-hand hinged compartment.



Likewise, the LED timer control on the top left side of the deck was programmed somewhat similarly to the one found in the SL-5400, but we didn't have an opportunity to use it since the tuner was inoperative. We did, however, find that the timer was easy to program, using the internal switches for preselecting the 7-day/1-event microprocessor. We wish Sony had gone ahead and provided at least a 7-day/4-event or 14-day/4-event microprocessor as in most new programmable VTR's.

Performance: We were somewhat disappointed to find that, despite all the hoopla and acclaim we've given to the J7, its record and playback quality was really not all that much better than that found in Sony's U.S. decks, mainly due to its 30-micron head, which is optimized for X-2 recording. As a result, although there's an improvement in audio quality at the faster speed, the video looks only a tiny bit better—almost indistinguishable for most purposes, just like the SL-8200. The J7's edits

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likewise look about the same as those made on the latter machine—good in X-2, and only fair in X-1 recording.

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Video S/N Ratio: better than 45 dB (X-1 and X-2)

Horizontal Resolution: more than 240 lines in color

Audio S/N Ratio: 45 dB (X-1, stereo, with BNR); 43 dB (X-2, stereo, with BNR)

Audio Frequency Response: 50-13,000 Hz (X-1, stereo, with BNR); 50-10,000 Hz (X-1, stereo, without BNR)

The audio quality is actually a little bit better than the above specs would imply. We'd rate it roughly the same as Sony's U.S. Beta decks, though just a hair noisier because of the halving of the track width. We were surprised to note the effect BNR has on frequency response, rolling off some of the highs in order to remove the tape hiss, but felt that it was definitely necessary at least for X-2, where non-BNR recordings would probably go below 38 dB (which is about as bad as most prerecorded 8-track tapes). Still, even this marginal quality is not much worse than that found in many off-air broadcasts, though it's hoped that this situation will be improved in the future.

The video quality could have been substantially improved if the manufacturer had utilized the 4-head design pioneered by JVC with their 6700 (and Matsushita with their PV-1650). This would require two 60-micron heads optimized for X-1 recording and two additional 30-micron heads optimized for X-2. An added benefit of using 4 heads would be improved slow-motion and still-frame performance. The only problem with this is the increased expense, which would probably add at least \$100 to this already-expensive VTR. Needless to say, we think it would be worth it.

Conclusion: We hope that all of you will understand that we aren't trying to advise you to go out and buy a J7 today, by any means. As Sony themselves state in their instruction manual (which, at 54 pages, is without question the most complete and thorough operating guide we've ever seen for any consumer electronics product): "The J7 cannot be used in foreign countries as it is designed for use in Japan only." While this isn't exactly true, as the J7 *can* be used for recording and playing back any U.S. NTSC-standard videotapes, its tuner is indeed useless for off-the-air recording on this side of the world, and although modifying it for our broadcast standards is possible, it would most likely be more trouble than it's worth, requiring replacement of both the Japanese tuner and IF stages with comparable U.S. boards, as well as installing a new RF modulator for playback on our channels 3 and 4 (as opposed to the Japanese channels 1 and 2).

A new European PAL version of the J7, called the SL-C7 has recently been introduced. It differs mainly from the earlier machine by means of its digitally-synthesized tuner, which shows the selected channel in a red LED display on its front

right-hand side, as well as eliminating the J7's stereo multiplex circuitry. Even better, the C7 comes equipped with the RMT-200 wireless infrared remote control unit and a 14-day/4-event programmable tuner/timer, which would seem to make it the most advanced VTR money can buy. We'll try to have an update on this report (hopefully a somewhat more abbreviated one) featuring the C7 in an upcoming issue, as soon as we can get our hands on an NTSC version. But for the meantime, we continue to hope that Sony will answer our prayers with a U.S. version of this machine in the future. Although it will most likely not include the J7 and C7's X-1 record capacity, which Sony's U.S. marketing executives do not believe is commercially viable in this country, we can't help but hope that the U.S. version will be equipped to handle X-1/X-2/X-3 recording, with at least four heads optimized for the first two speeds for the best possible recording quality. In addition, we hope that the stereo recording and noise reduction capabilities will be retained, if only to prepare for the day when we'll have stereo TV broadcasts, and also for use with present-day FM-stereo simulcasts of concerts and TV specials.

For those of you looking for a budget Japanese machine, Sony has recently unveiled the SL-J5 in Japan, which is essentially a stripped-down version of the J7, lacking the remote control functions and X-1 record capability (although it can play back X-1 tapes), for under \$1,000. Its features are approximately equivalent to our SL-5400, only without the X-3 capacity, which Sony's Japanese marketing executives feel is not needed in their country; they consider picture quality to be of primary importance. *sigh*

All things considered, the SL-J7 comes very close to being the "World's Greatest Consumer VTR" for Beta collectors, at least more so than any other deck we know of at this time (save for the C7). If only the heads could be replaced and the tuner easily modified as we discussed earlier, we wouldn't hesitate to sing the praises of the machine to the highest heights. We'll continue to keep a close eye on Sony's new Beta products (which are due to be unveiled on April 28th, just a short while after this issue goes to press), and by then we'll be able to advise our readers as to what we think is the better buy—the U.S. "C7" (or whatever it's called) or the Japanese version—in our August issue.—MFW & KL

(Special thanks to local videophile R.C. for providing the J7 used in our review, as well as a nameless TV reader in the Midwest who provided us with the English translation of the J7's instruction manual. Also, thanks go to U.S. Video's Marty Meltz for letting us play with one of his firm's J5's, which are used for X-2 duplication at their Burbank facility. Finally, we thank CVA's Randy Burnworth, who advises us that his firm can be contacted regarding obtaining J7's from Japan c/o the address given at the beginning of this article.)

RCA VDT-625 SELECTAVISION VHS VIDEOTAPE RECORDER



Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric Corporation,
1006 Kadoma, Osaka, Japan
(Distributed by RCA Corporation,
600 N. Sherman Drive,
Indianapolis, IN 46201)

Source: Dealer loan (Video Village, 7505 Sunset
Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046)

Cost: \$1,395.00 (includes remote playback/channel
selecting control, antenna connecting cables,
and a sample VK-125 videocassette)

If we ran subheadings for our Product Reports section, this one would definitely come under the "Boy, Is Our Face Red" department. About six weeks after we printed our review on RCA's VDT-600 programmable recorder, they announced this updated version, which manages to solve 90% of all the image quality problems (complained about in TV #22) by means of the 4-head design pioneered by JVC in their HR-6700 deck. It would seem that we definitely underestimated the capabilities of the wily engineering minds at Matsushita, who simply took their time in coming up with a machine equaling the capabilities of their JVC subsidiary's creation.

Appearance/Features: RCA's VDT-625 is almost identical in appearance to the 600, save for a light grey top instead of the latter's black colored lid. Like the 600, the new machine has complete 2/4/6 hour capability, but adds two additional video heads to improve the picture quality in the SP mode as well as providing 2X fast motion, slow motion (from 1/4 normal to full-speed), still/pause (for freeze-frame), and frame-by-frame advance. None of these features (except the freeze-frame) can be initiated on the deck itself, instead relying on the remote unit, which provides all six playback function controls as well as the remote channel-changing button.

Like the earlier RCA programmables, the VDT-625 has a 4-event/7-day microprocessor controlled tuner, which allows you to preset up to 4 shows at a time, all recorded in one day or spread out over a one-week period. Considering that the 625 offers the 6-hour mode, we feel that they really should have provided a 6- or 7-event microprocessor, which surely wouldn't have altered the price by more than a few dollars and yet would allow the user to take full advantage of its slow-speed recording.

The 625's transport and auxiliary controls are configured identically to the earlier VDT-600 and 400X, with switches for power on/off, a TV/VCR RF output selector, SP/LP/SLP speed selector, keys for Eject/Rewind/Stop/Fast-Forward/Play/Re-

You'll Go Hog Wild!



Channel Change

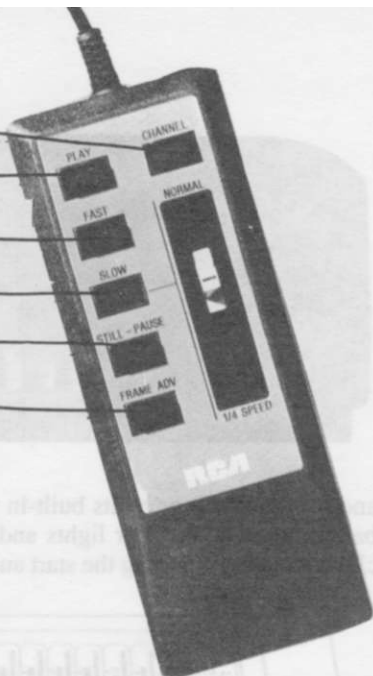
Play

Fast

Slow

Still-Pause

Frame Advance



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doubtedly be preferable because of the 625's ability to play back LP tapes. If the latter feature is important to you, then the extra \$50 spent on the RCA or Panasonic unit is well worth it. Otherwise, JVC's unit is still a worthy buy for \$1,350.00. But the 2-head VDT-600 and PV-1600 are definitely not recommended—both unsafe at any speed, proving that four heads are better than two.—MFW

cord/Audio Dub and Pause. The right side of the deck contains all the tuner and programmer circuitry and controls, which are used as explained in TV #22.

Performance: We were very pleased to find that the 625's record and playback quality in the SP mode were considerably improved over Matsushita's earlier 3-speed units. While the audio remains about the same, the video is easily a step above the marginal performance obtained from the 600. In particular, the quality of the still-frame and slow-motion images are about as good as any we've seen from 1/2" cassette units, and at least equal to JVC's 6700.

The manufacturer's specifications for the 625 2-hour mode include:

Video S/N Ratio: 43 dB (for black and white recordings; probably less than 38 dB for SLP)

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color)

Audio S/N Ratio: 40dB

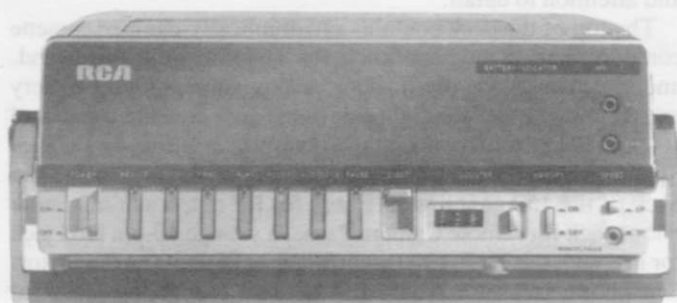
Audio Response: 50-10,000 Hz (no reference given)

The astute reader will note that these specs are practically identical to all of RCA's earlier units, which would seem to question their credibility. Be that as it may, our guess is that the video S/N Ratio is probably closer to 45 dB in the SP mode, again on a par with most industrial units and JVC's new machine.

We noted that the heads are optimized for the SP and SLP speeds, with the 4-hour LP mode lacking quality noise-free still-frame and slow-motion capabilities. As with the 600, the LP mode on the 625 is just about as bad as SLP, looking a little worse than most earlier 2-speed units. Also, the SLP mode still leaves a lot to be desired, particularly for collecting purposes, but should be barely acceptable for those who are primarily interested in delayed viewing. We also noted that there's a greater interchange problem with the 6-hour mode, making it more difficult to play SLP tapes recorded on other machines despite careful adjustment of the tracking control.

Conclusion: While we certainly don't retract our earlier review of the VDT-600, we do feel that RCA and Matsushita have taken a great stride toward redeeming themselves in the area of providing the consumer with a machine capable of recording reasonably good quality images. In particular, the VDT-625 should be well received by those collectors who've been looking for a new machine to upgrade their previous 2/4-hour model. RCA's new deck (along with Panasonic's twin, the PV-1650) comes just as close as JVC's 6700 to being a state-of-the-art consumer VHS deck, and for many will un-

RCA VDP-150 PORTABLE VHS VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER (with TDP-1000 Tuner/Timer)



Manufacturer: Hitachi, Ltd., New Marunochi Bldg., No. 5-1, Marunouchi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan
(Distributed by RCA Corp., 600 N. Sherman Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46201)

Source: Dealer and *Videophile* reader loan (Video Village, 7033 Sunset Blvd., Ste. #213, Hollywood, CA 90038)

Cost: \$1,315.00 (includes Remote Pause Control, #147000 Rechargeable Battery, earphone, removable handle, miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors, and sample VK-125 videocassette; optional accessories include \$409.00 TDP-1000 Tuner/Timer, \$200.00 PDP-500 AC Adaptor/Charger, \$54.95 KK-150 Carrying Case, \$50.00 extra #147000 battery, and \$11.00 #146920 DC Car Adaptor cable.)

RCA's VDP-150 is the company's first portable VTR, adding to their current VHS line-up which includes the two-speed VDT-350, the three-speed VDT 600 (reviewed in #23), and the VDT-625 (reviewed this issue), as RCA's answer to Panasonic's PV-2200 (which was reviewed in #20). Like most portapaks, RCA's provide an accessory tuner/timer that has a built-in AC adaptor which allows you to use the unit at home just as you would a conventional VHS recorder, thus adding greatly to its flexibility.

Appearance: The VDP-150 is an attractive silver and dark gray plastic and metal unit measuring about $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 10\frac{1}{4}'' \times 11\frac{1}{2}''$, the smallest VTR we've ever tested and also the lightest at about 14½ pounds with battery and handle. Unlike most consumer VTR's, the 150 has a full-function solenoid-controlled transport, with light-touch buttons and LED indicators for Rewind/Stop/Fast-Forward/Play/Record/Audio Dub/and Pause, plus a hydraulically-assisted lever for Eject. The Stop button's LED flashes to warn of excessive moisture on the video head. The Pause button's LED does the same when the deck has been in pause for more than 5 minutes, and automatically turns off most of the deck's circuitry to save power. To the right of the transport controls is a 3-digit index counter with a Memory rewind switch, an SP/LP/playback speed selector, and a mini-phone jack for the remote pause control. The top right front side has a red/green LED display to indicate battery consumption (red for "empty," green for "full"), and two mini-phone jacks for connecting an external microphone and an earphone. The lower left side has an on/off Power switch, which helps to reduce power consumption tremendously during extended periods of non-use and, again, points to RCA's thoughtfulness and attention to detail.

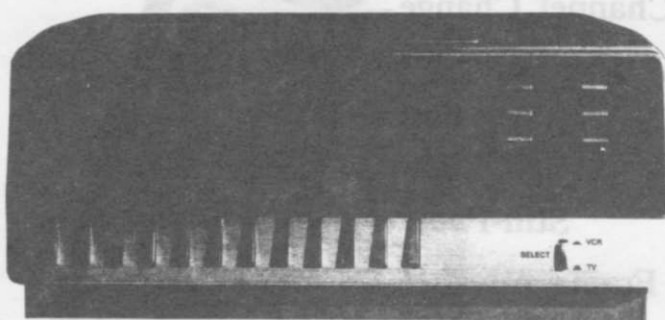
The top of the deck contains a hydraulically-damped cassette compartment, a recessed knob for Tracking adjustment and, underneath a sliding plastic door, a compartment for the battery and RF modulator. The right side of the deck contains a standard 10-pin DIN jack for connecting a portable camera and a DC jack for an external battery or for use with the Car Adaptor cable. The back of the 150 contains an F jack for RF out, a sub-miniature phone jack for remote Camera Pause, a strange 10-pin DIN jack for use with the TDP-1000 tuner/timer or PDP-500 AC adaptor, two phono jacks for Audio In/Out, and two phono jacks for Video In/Out. These external inputs are automatically overridden when the camera jack is used.

The PDP-500 AC Adaptor/Charger matches the silver and gray appearance of the VDP-150 and fits alongside it well at about $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 11''$. Its only two front panel controls are for Power On/Off and a VCR/TV RF output selector, and has rear panel F jacks for VHF In/RF Out, a 10-pin DIN cable for the 150's Tuner/

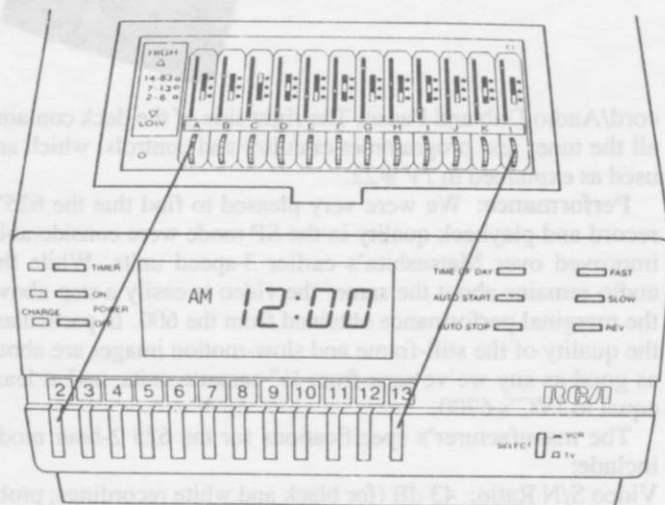


Adaptor jack, an RF cable that connects to the deck's RF Out jack, and a DC jack for charging another battery.

The TDP-1000 Tuner/Timer is an attractively-designed $10\frac{1}{4}'' \times 4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 12\frac{1}{2}''$ unit that likewise matches the VDP-150's appearance, a front panel dominated by a large blue LED clock/timer display. The 1000 has front panel controls to turn the deck on



and off manually or by its built-in timer, as well as power and battery charge indicator lights and six controls for setting the clock and programming the start and stop times for



automatic recording. The bottom front panel contains 12 buttons for the varactor tuner (which are preset by means of the controls under a hinged lid in the top of the 1000), as well as a VCR/TV RF output selector. While the PDP-500 Adaptor is made to sit alongside the VDP-150 deck, the 17½ pound TDP-1000 is designed to remain underneath the recorder, which results in an attractive and compact package. Its rear panel connectors include VHF In/RF Out F jacks, terminal posts for UHF In/Out, a DC jack for charging an external battery, and a short cable that connects to the deck's Tuner/Adaptor socket.

For easy carrying, the VDP-150 has a detachable swivel handle that swings out from its front panel, though we felt the optional shoulder strap was much easier to use in fast-moving situations.

Features/Options: The VDP-150 recorder is essentially a "bare-bones" VHS deck, with a minimum of operating controls as a means of keeping the unit as small and light-weight as possible. RCA even omitted the standard VHS automatic speed-sensing circuit from the 150 because it would have added another 7 ounces to its weight. Consequently you have to manually switch between SP and LP on the front panel. This does give you a sort of poor man's "speed play" in playing LP tapes back at SP, though the "slow-motion" effect of playing SP tapes at LP is, for the most part, unwatchable.

The VDP-150 is almost identical to Hitachi's VT-7000A, although the latter deck has still-frame capability in the pause mode and a front-panel jack for connecting Hitachi's optional VT/RM-70 remote control accessory, neither of which is found in the RCA. RCA informs us that they may include these features in an improved model which may be released later on

this year. The new unit will add the SLP speed as well, though RCA hastens to point out that the VDP-150 and the VT-7000A vary much more internally, with the 150 using RCA-designed circuits that they claim provide better performance than the Hitachi (which we haven't yet been able to review). It's possible that the existing VDP-150 could be modified to accept a remote control and to provide some kind of limited still-frame capability.

Both the deck and tuner-timer module were very easy to use, sporting light-touch controls for the transport functions and electronic tuning, and were also very easy to hook up and install, with detailed step-by-step instructions found in RCA's well-written 30-page manual. The only complaint we had with either was with the limited 24-hour programming capacity of the TDP-1000, which isn't nearly as flexible as Magnavox's 8253 7-day/4-event tuner/timer portapak or Panasonic's PV-A32E 14-day/8-event tuner/timer. We hope that RCA will provide a similar tuner/timer in the near future. It's possible that Panasonic's unit may connect without modification to RCA's portapak, but as of this writing (in mid-April), we haven't seen hide nor hair of it, nor have we been able to get an answer out of Panasonic. More on this in a future issue.

The TDP-1000 in effect turns the deck into a complete home video recorder, very much like RCA's earlier VCT-200 and VDT-201 decks, although its solenoid transport definitely makes it a lot more convenient and enjoyable to use. Many dealers and manufacturers we spoke with seem to feel that, ultimately, all home VTR's will be designed as components, with separate decks and tuners, just as with most audio recorders and AM/FM tuners. This seems like a good idea to us, and we note that this would allow you to easily update your deck or tuner with new ones, as well as possibly lowering the costs of VTR systems.

When powering a camera (like RCA's CC-004) the VDP-150 runs about an hour and a half before its battery is depleted—more than enough for most purposes. The green rectangle on the front of the recorder is illuminated when the battery is fully-charged; 5 minutes before it runs out, the red "E" (empty) indicator lights up to warn you of low power. About 8-10 hours is required to charge a fully-used battery, and RCA recommends that you always use up the battery completely before charging (because of the "memory" of the nickle-cadmium cells), although this isn't as important as being sure to charge the battery at least once a month, even if it hasn't been used.

For mobile recording, the 146920 Car Adaptor cable can be used to connect the VDP-150 to a standard cigarette lighter socket. Since the deck has an all-DC motor transport, it can run without regard to power frequency, which varies greatly with most car batteries. This isn't possible with some AC-operated decks, which require a very carefully controlled 60 hz frequency in order to run at the right speed.

Performance: We were surprised to find that, despite our initial fears, the VDP-150's 29-micron heads did a relatively good job at both the SP and LP speeds, at least as good as that found with RCA's VDT-400 and VDT-350 and certainly better than the VDT-600, which uses 19-micron heads. Naturally, the 150 is not quite as good as VHS decks with full 59-micron head gaps, like RCA's VDT-625 and Panasonic's NV-8200, but for a consumer deck, it should suffice for most people.

The manufacturer doesn't supply any specifications for the 150 either in any product literature or in the instruction manuals, but we were told by one dealer that the specs are virtually identical to Panasonic's PV-2200 (all for SP):

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 43dB

The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

Audio Frequency Response: 20-10,000 Hz (no quoted reference)

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB

We'd subjectively rate the deck's performance to be about equal to practically all 2-speed VHS recorders, with the LP mode perhaps a couple of dB's under the above specs for both audio and video signal-to-noise ratios, and losing a couple of thousand cycles at the audio's top end. If we didn't know any better, we'd say that the 150 does a slightly better job than RCA's earliest 2-speed units, though we were unable to find one of these decks for comparison. Compared to the 625, it's almost as good—perhaps even better at LP—and is much more convenient to use by reason of its aforementioned solenoid transport.

Since the 150 is a battery-operated machine, we tried swinging it around and running with it, as well as even shaking it up and down, to see if it made any difference to the recording, but all our tapes played back fine despite our most determined efforts. We even accidentally dropped the deck about a foot onto a carpeted floor with no ill effects (though it wasn't running at the time). TV reader Roe Adams has told us that he's had no problems with his VDP-150 so far, even in transporting it all over the country for *Instant Replay* videomagazine, and praised its high quality and dependability many times.

We did hear about one complaint from an owner in Hawaii who claimed that his VDP-150 tended to automatically stop a lot because of heavy humidity, but otherwise he had no real problems with it. Every owner we spoke to, however, complained up and down about their frustration at being unable to buy extra batteries (and a few of the other accessories) from their local dealers. We spoke to RCA's Ed Halberg, Service Manager for the firm's West coast distributing office, who acknowledged some difficulty in getting more batteries from their suppliers but promised that all orders were being filled as fast as possible.

Conclusion: According to the half-dozen RCA dealers we spoke with, the VDP-150/TDP-1000 combination is fast becoming a "best-seller" among all their VTR's, and is gaining wide acceptance from many of their customers. Without question, it's one of the nicest and best-built VHS decks we've seen, and should be perfect for any videophile on the go, as well as for those people who like the "component-styling" approach to video equipment.

Since Panasonic's PV-3100/3200 hasn't appeared as of this writing, we're most curious to see how Matsushita's version of this Hitachi-built deck will fare by comparison. According to its preliminary specifications, the Matsushita (Panasonic) deck is just a hair larger than the VDP-150, yet weighs about a pound and a half less, and provides still-framing and 6-hour recording, which might tend to make it preferable to the RCA deck for some. While we can see the advantages of still-framing, we really don't think the 6-hour mode is at all necessary in a portapak, and considering the overall drop in performance whenever narrower heads are used, we think the quality-

conscious user is much better off with a 2/4 hour deck instead—that is, unless someone comes out with a 4-head portapak, which might be too much to ask for. But then, you never know.

Special thanks to local videophile Bob Tamkin and also Video Village's Fred Chriss for providing the VDP-150 and TDP-1000 units used in this report.)

FUJI BCL-20 AND VCL-30 VIDEO HEAD CLEANING CASSETTES



Manufacturer: Fuji Photo-Film Co., Tokyo, Japan
(Distributed by Fuji Magnetic Tape Division,
350 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10001)

Source: Dealer purchase (Laos Video & Sound,
1630 West Redondo Beach Blvd.
Gardena, CA 90247)

Cost: BCL-20, \$18.50; VCL-30, \$25.00

SCOTCH V-HC AND VHC VIDEOCASSETTE HEAD CLEANERS



Manufacturer: 3M Magnetic Audio/Video Products
Division, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55101

Source: Dealer Purchase (Audio/Video Craft,
7710 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90048)

Cost: B-HC, \$27.95, V-HC, \$28.95

Long-time readers of *The Videophile* should remember much discussion in past issues over which method of head cleaning is best—sprays vs. cotton swabs, isopropyl alcohol vs. freon, etc.—but one never mentioned before is the idea of a head-cleaning cassette, long available in the ¾" industry to clean heads in U-Matic recorders. The reason: none have existed until very recently, when Japanese manufacturer Fuji and U.S.-based Scotch finally released Beta and VHS cassettes designed to do the same job as their larger ¾" equivalents.

Appearance/Operation: Both the Scotch and Fuji products look identical to standard videotape cassettes from the respective firms, except, of course, for the appropriate label information. Scotch's instructions are on adhesive labels which can be affixed to their cassette. The cassette comes in a hard plastic Amaray-style box. Fuji's instructions are printed on both the plastic sleeve and the cassette itself.

Each brand provides roughly five minutes of cleaning tape (about eight with Fuji's VHS cassette), which they claim should be capable of up to 300 passes. Fuji's tape differs from Scotch's in that the former uses a silver-colored nonabrasive formulation which they claim won't hurt the heads even if you run the whole thing all the way through your machine; Scotch's tape, on the other hand, looks like standard videotape and can be recorded with any video image in order to aid in determining when the heads are cleaned. The industrial Scotch cassettes we evaluated were blank, but a 3M spokesman told us at the Consumer Electronics Show that all their new consumer head-cleaning cassettes will have a prerecorded message advising "when you can read this message, your heads are clean. Stop the recorder now." Both industrial and consumer Scotch tape comes in unusual white plastic shells—the first such cassettes we've seen.

The cassettes couldn't be simpler to use. When you determine that your heads are clogged (indicated by a fuzzy, snow-filled picture that can't be affected by your tracking control), you simply drop in one of these cassettes and play it for 10 seconds or so, or in the case of the new Scotch tapes, until you can read the recorded message. That's all there is to it. Both manufacturers advise against rewinding the tapes, and instead recommend that you remove them after use and eventually play them all the way to the end; this will avoid using the beginning of the tape over and over again and wearing it out prematurely.

Conclusion: Either tape seems to perform admirably, though we weren't able to determine which did a better or faster job of cleaning the heads (which we deliberately clogged with one of the inferior brands detailed in our *Videotape Survey* elsewhere in this issue), though the new Scotch tapes will no doubt be easier to use with their prerecorded message. On the other hand, they cost \$5-\$10 more than their Fuji equivalents). As to which is "less abrasive," a Fuji spokesman claims that their tapes are "considerably improved" over their competitors' formulations, but we were unable to discern any differences between them. The long-term effects, however, are another matter. Most of the video professionals we consulted were of the opinion that all head cleaning cassettes would be by their very nature slightly more abrasive than the tried-and-true alcohol/cotton swab technique. One thing that's for certain is that the cassette cost a lot more than a bottle of alcohol and some swabs, though the tapes are equally effective.

In the long run, for occasional head-cleaning chores we don't see how either the Fuji or Scotch tapes will significantly harm or damage your deck's heads, though you'd be wise to follow the manufacturers' advice in using these devices sparingly to avoid excessive head wear. And considering how rarely heads become

clogged, you should almost never have to clean them, probably not more than once or twice a year, depending on the quality of the videotapes you use and how often you use your machine. With this kind of use, Fuji and Scotch's head cleaners should last for many years and provide hassle-free service, making up in convenience for their relatively high cost.—MFW

last word:

Your Technical Editor Continues to Make Mistakes Dept.:

Aside from completely missing the deadline for last issue, which has resulted in a jam-packed *Product Report* section this issue, mention was made in our review in #23 on Sony's RM-430 Automatic Editing Controller concerning which buttons are depressed when making an edit. Well, forget about what was said there (which applies only to the earlier RM-400). With the 430, when you depress the "Assemble" and "Auto Edit" controls, both your playback and editing machine roll back 5 seconds, go into pause for a moment, then release themselves automatically with the editing deck switching into "record" at the edit point. In other words, the pre-roll is automatic, as opposed to the manual pre-roll system used in the RM-400.

In issue #24, our illustrious printer (or should we say soon-to-be former printer) managed to switch a photo of Sony's SL-5600 with one of Hitachi's VT-5500, placing it on the next page and omitting the picture of the ACCESS control console entirely.

There was also mention made in a past issue about some "Video Erasing Tapes" (sic) in which the writer actually meant "Video Head-Cleaning Tapes," which we review in this issue.

Finally, if only to assuage the good name of Dr. Raoul Duke, we need to point out that the quote attributed to "Dr. S. Hunter Thompson" at the front of the last issue's CES report should actually be to "Dr. Hunter S. Thompson." Incidentally, Hunter's life story is reenacted by Bill Murray in a new movie called *Where the Buffalo Roams*, now playing wherever bad-craziness movies are shown. (and, *choke*, it's a Universal picture—the same folks who brought you *Guyana*, *Cult of the Damned* and several other annoying Betamax-related lawsuits.)

Updates to Past Reviews:

In our report on JVC's HR-6700 in #22, we did not mention something we learned fairly recently from several owners of the Vidstar deck—apparently, the cassette compartment in the 6700 has a tendency to sometimes jam or otherwise not rise up completely out of the top of the deck, although we understand that this can be easily fixed by a repairman. Also, one or two dealers have discussed plans to modify the machine to record and play back at SP, LP and SLP, using the 19-micron heads for the latter two speeds, just as done with RCA's VDT-625 recorder. We'll have more details on this modification in a future issue.

Also, after playing with Sony's AR-700 Beta Rewinder for some time now (it was reviewed in #23), we've realized that

the units do have an unfortunate tendency to fail to shut off after winding, which we've had happen with at least two 700's so far. It's an annoying problem, but one we've lived with simply by manually stopping and ejecting the tape when we see that it's finished rewinding. Consumer Video Accessories' Randy Burnworth tells us that he's continuing to work on perfecting his firm's Beta and VHS winders and will have one for us to review in the future.

And Coming Up in Future Issues:

We really mean it, bar-none, next issue (#26) will definitely have the long-awaited honest-and-for-true article on do-it-yourself film chains, which was actually completed long ago but we just haven't had time to prepare the photographs and diagrams needed to really do justice to the subject. As a sort of "mini-preview," we can tell you that our tests with Quasar's KT-502 Telecine Converter came out pretty well, though with some experimentation you can achieve almost-as-good results with a modified projector and conventional movie screen. The key is to obtain or modify a projector with a 5-bladed shutter and a synchronous motor, to minimize the "flicker" normally experienced with such set-ups. More on this next time, we promise. Our next issue will also contain reviews of the highly regarded 1/2" industrial VCR's: Panasonic PV-8200 (VHS) and Sony SLO-323 (Beta).

We've also just finished a report on Beta Video's "Distrivid" pushbutton RF selector which simply was not ready in time for this issue. The Distrivid is a well-built dependable unit and should be perfect for those of you with relatively large (two or three decks/one or two TV sets) systems. We'll have the full scoop on it in our next issue. (It's available from Beta Video, Inc., 6324 Varief Avenue, Unit J, Woodland Hills, CA 91367 213-888-6281.)

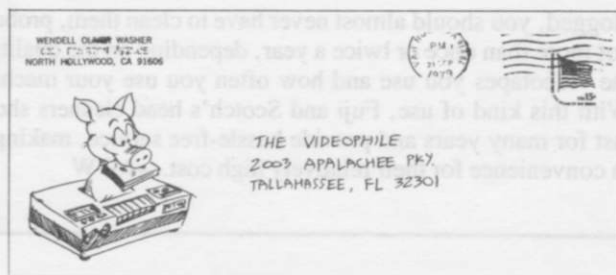
Also coming up are reports on the following: Sony's VO-2611 and LVO-7000 3/4" recorders, MGA's HS-300U VHS recorder, Sharp's VC-6700 VHS recorder, Sony's KV-1944R color TV receiver, a rundown of common TV antenna installation and reception problems, preventative VTR maintenance tips, reports on several new cameras, including Panasonic's PK-700 and Sony's DXC-1640, and the long awaited Projection TV roundup featuring the Kloss Novabeam One, which blew away all the other projectors we tested, even when compared to units costing as much as \$2,000 more. Our next issue should have a preliminary report on the summer CES in Chicago, at which we annually fear that all of these products and more will become completely obsolete because of the arrival of a multitude of new video products and accessories, just like last year. Well . . . that's progress for you.

Perhaps the most interesting innovation we have planned for our next issue is a new section dealing with our choices for "Recommended Components"—those video products reviewed in past issues that our reviewing staff feels to be unusually outstanding on the basis of quality, features, and/or value, which we intend to be a regular part of each issue. (We owe considerable thanks to the fine people at *The Absolute Sound* for planting this idea in our heads via their own component listings in their magazine, which is available from the publishers at P.O. Box L, Sea Cliff, NJ 11579.)

Interested readers are invited to send us their suggestions for future *Product Reports*, and manufacturers are likewise invited to offer their equipment for testing c/o:

The Videophile Product Reports
P.O. Box 480315
Los Angeles, CA 90048.■

Letters:



Dear Mr. Lowe:

Back in December I ordered the 1979 Videophile Annual. If you have already sent these out as of today, I have not received mine. Also, as you people no doubt are aware, the VHS boxes of Maxell, Fuji, JVC, etc. all have their hand openings in the center. Do you intend to offer VHS index cards with the words at the center. I sure would like to get some. -- Gary Andrews, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

We have nothing but more excuses to offer about the long delayed 1979 Annual. As I type these very words, just hours before this issue goes to the printer (it's Sunday, April 20, 8:25 p.m. EST) the annual does not officially exist. It is our fervent hope that it will be ready for mailing by the time you read this. All copies ordered up until that time will be sent by First Class Mail, as a partial attempt to make up for your patience. As to the VHS cards, they were designed back when only RCA and TDK tape was available. To be honest, it is not likely that we will have different ones in the foreseeable future.

Dear Jim,

Just received issue number 24 of THE VIDEOPHILE and felt compelled to comment. I am shocked that you would stoop so low morally as to print the highly risqué photo you used on the cover. Such disgusting chauvinistic pandering can only debase the image of your magazine and of you as publisher. I cannot believe it is necessary for you to cater to the lower and base nature of the reading public just to sell your magazine. If you have no more respect for yourself than to invoke such degrading activities, then at least respect your readers. Depravity such as this is running rampant throughout this great country of ours and if not soon checked it will spell our downfall.

Picturing an attractive girl in scanty clothing, her hips thrust lustfully to the side, her soft warm breasts poking provocatively at the tight shirt, her luscious brown eyes, her silky soft hair, her smooth creamy skin, her warm and inviting lips, her ah, well anyway I just loved it, but how come no wet T-shirt? How about a VIDEOPHILE wet T-shirt contest or a leather and shaving cream extravaganza, or whips and chains on the small screen.

Seriously, this was a very good issue. The last one was a bit weak and I was starting to question my subscription. This one shows you to be head and shoulders above the rest. And what a nice head and shoulders, smooth yet taut skin, finely proportioned form and luscious ah, anyway, nice issue. -- John Thonen, Jr., Independence MO

You're my kind of guy, John. But seriously, we do have to strike a balance. That's why we chose not to reveal the smooth innermost surfaces of her thighs.

Dear Jim,

I'm in love! Mainly, I'm in love with GAIL, who adorned the front cover of the April issue -- and who, I imagine, has been responsible for a sell-out issue. ... Keep up the super work; an especially nice touch is the inclusion of complete addresses of dealer/distributors within the articles. -- John H. Doyle, Atlanta GA

Dear Sirs;

I for one didn't buy your subscription to look at girly pictures -- I bought it to be informed about new products, new movies (I could care less about new westerns or cartoons released) and product promotions through ads placed by companies. Before I found out about TV I was buying blanks (VHS 4-hour) for \$18 plus tax and thought I was getting a deal. Now I have them delivered to my door for \$15, a big savings by volume buying. ... You can ship my magazine uncovered and/or stamped if it would mean a reduction in the magazine rates. ... One interesting note concerning the last issue of TV. I left it on my desk at work and a friend came in and looked at it and couldn't understand why there wasn't any girly pictures in it or a centerfold. -- Jim Bates, Highland IN

I had trouble understanding that too, Jim.

Dear Jim:

The Videophile is great but it's getting smaller and costing more. Do you attribute that to more quality vs. quantity or what? ... By the way, what has happened to the Amos 'n Andy list promised issues back, several times put off, that was never run? -- Raymond Keese, Longview TX

We attribute the smaller size to two factors. Our increase in ad rates has resulted in many of those who would have taken out a full page in the past, opting for only a 1/2 page or so now. Also, since we have begun to typeset the majority of the pages (excluding letters and The Videophile's Newsletter, which are done too late each issue to be done any other way than by yours truly on the faithful IBM correcting selectric) we have been able to get more text on a page. With the possible exception of Issue #24, I think you'll find that the actual amount of material is as great as ever. In any event, we hope and expect to increase the amount of information that we bring to you as time goes by and we get better organized.

Dear Editor:

First, pardon my typing errors since I am blind and bedridden with spinal arthritis and blind for ten years all spent in hospitals. I am 44 and a UCLA grad class of 1958 in History. I do see light and dark and shadows and outlines, but I cannot read print.

I do enjoy "watching" or listening to television, especially recently the PBS series documentary on Albert Einstein, and musicals or good old movies.

I am writing you because I am hoping that one of your readers or yourself can donate to me a new or used video tape recorder so I can get cassettes of TV shows or movies I have missed and especially new movies that I cannot get out to see in the theatres. It is too difficult for me to travel since I cannot sit up in a car due to my frozen stiff arthritic back and spine. It would be a great way to entertain myself and my sick friends or staff. I wish I could work by selling my stories and poems, but I cannot so far. So can you all help me add a little more entertainment to an otherwise lonely and shut in life of mine?

-- Richard Jastrow, Six West Floor, Harbor General Hospital, 1000 W. Carson Street, Torrance CA 90509

As I told you on the phone Richard, here's your letter (with errors corrected). Best of luck to you.

Gentlemen:

I would like to register my sincere appreciation (and that of many of my customers who read your magazine) for the objectivity and candor found in The Videophile. Of the torrent of new and semi-new video magazines, yours is the only one to fully retain these qualities. I know it is not without sacrifice on your part just as I know how the other magazines so easily prostitute their critical freedom away in exchange for major manufacturer advertising. The "comparison" or "test" articles one usually finds in specialty slick magazines, be they for autos, audio, photography, video, or whatever, are virtually worthless. At best they are bland and/or myopic. At worst, with an out and out dog product, they lie, either by omission or commission. Of course when one flips a few pages and finds a full page color ad for the "dog" product the situation becomes painfully clear.

I hope you can see your way clear to continue Videophile's editorial policies in the future. We desperately need at least one Diogenes in this business.

-- Adam Robbins, UDS, Manhattan Beach CA

Many thanks for your encouraging words. We need this kind of feedback now and then, especially when we read the other mags ourselves and want to reply to them, but know that any letters of protest or correction would be in vain. By the way, we'd love to review the portable Betamax that your firm advertised a while back, the one that has apparently been modified to operate at both speeds. How about contacting our technical editor at P.O. Box 480315, L.A., CA 90048

Dear Jim:

Received the April issue tonight and proceeded to read my way through it cover to cover as usual. Read about your printing problems (which I had never noticed). Then I hit The Videophile's Newsletter. My eyes had barely recovered when I got to the Mini-Ads, which was the last straw. Are you trying to ruin our eyes? Printing over any solid color screen reduces visibility, but black over grey is a killer. Why not keep it simple with flashy printing, if you must, on the cover. I appreciate the content much more than the quality of printing, which is very good now with the exception of these dark pages. -- Milton Sandy, Jr., Corinth MS

Dear Jim,

I agree that you are indeed having growing pains with your baby. But so am I having growing pains. My eyes are growing older sad to say. Why do you insist on printing two of my favorite sections ie. The Videophile's Newsletter and Mini-Ads, black on gray. I have been reduced to reading them with a magnifying glass! Can't you print black on yellow? Also you seem to have succeeded in driving away some of your quality advertisers. John Ralston, Ben Saia (not so --JL), Alfred Goldberger, etc. I believe you should rethink your pricing policy. In the process one must guard against growing greedy. In the stock market bulls can make money, bears can make money, but pigs only make piles. -- Norman Englund, Worcester MA

Needless to say (or apparently it is necessary to say), we did not intend for the screen to be so dark last issue. It was supposed to be the same as in previous issues, which we feel adds a little to the looks of the mag without diminishing its readability, but when the man from the printer drives up with a truck load of 6000 copies that are already much later than we would like to get them, there is little we can do, but just go ahead and mail them out. We hope very much that the issue you are holding will be the last that will be printed by our local shop. When we switch to our new printer in South Florida, you will notice quite a difference. We can't promise that there will never be another problem, but we can assure you that it upsets us as much or more than any of you. As for our ad rates being too high. Well, they are high by "collector" publication standards. But our total sales of the last issue was on the order of 10,400 copies. We expect to double that with the issue you are holding. Anyone will tell you that's a lot of exposure for \$300 a page.

Dear Editor:

After years of intensive research, which literally carried me to the four corners of Florida, I am pleased to offer to the readers of The Videophile this definitive profile of the tastes of editor Jim Lowe:

Favorite animated cartoon: The Three Little Pigs.

Favorite cartoon character: Porky Pig.

Favorite rock song: Pigs. (Pink Floyd's "Animals" LP)

Favorite rock musician: Pigpen. (Ron McKernan of The Grateful Dead)

Favorite books: "White House Years" (Kissinger) and "Memoirs" (Nixon). By and about pigs.

Favorite lines from a movie: "This is neither pig nor pork. It's ham." (Oliver Hardy, "The March of the Wooden Soldiers.")

Favorite movie: Rocky Horror Picture Show. (So it has nothing to do with pigs. It's great.)

Favorite George Harrison song: Piggies. ("White Album")

Favorite play: Pygmalion.

Favorite place in France: Pig'ally.

More as it's uncovered. -- Ken Weiss, New Rochelle NY

Here's your letter, Ken, but, frankly, I don't get it. Incidentally, I've noticed some tape reviews that you've been writing for another publication. If a simple invite would suffice to get you to send some of the same down this way, consider it done.

Many of you have requested that full names and addresses be included with all letters printed in this section. So please indicate when you write if you would like your name and/or address withheld in the event of publication.

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Dear Jim,

The enclosed two letters are self-explanatory. You have my amiable permission to publish both letters, and if I get a reply from WCI (which I rather doubt) I'll pass its contents on to you. It really is a pain in the neck to be ripped off in such a shabby cynical way. -- Brian Garfield, Alpine NJ

(Letter to Cinema Resources:) (Excerpts)

Recently I ordered, and you shipped me, a couple of pre-recorded videocassettes. Your service was fine and the quality of the tapes was excellent in all technical respects. This isn't a letter of complaint about your service; it is, however, an attempt to warn you that both you and I were defrauded by one of the cassette suppliers. It's not your fault at all, but I think you ought to know about it, and perhaps take it into account in your future advertising.

The suppliers of commercially prerecorded VCR cassettes, especially the studios (Paramount, Fox through Mag Video, now Warner Bros through WCI, so forth) advertise their products as "original uncut versions.". But the videocassette version of 'THE WILD BUNCH' that WCI is foisting off on you and me is not uncut. Please see my enclosed letter to WCI. I feel strongly that you and I have both been gypped, defrauded and ripped off, not to put too fine a point on it.

(Letter to WCI Home Video) (Excerpts)

Your catalog and other advertising appear to claim that the Warner Brothers films you're offering on video-cassette are the original uncut release-print versions. When a customer invests nearly sixty dollars in a movie on tape, at least he deserves to get what is advertised -- to wit, the original uncut version. The WCI cassette I bought was a VHS cassette of 'The Wild Bunch' (1969) -- your catalog number WB-1014. I found that the version you are selling is not, as advertised, the uncut version.

The Wild Bunch was originally released in a 152-minute print that represented more or less the director's cut. Later, Warners cut the film down, first to 141 minutes, then to 135 minutes. The version that went into wide-spread general release was the 135-minute print. The videocassette you guys are selling as "uncut" is 127 minutes in length. By nobody's definition is that uncut. ... If I'd wanted to see a cut-down version of the movie I could have looked at it on 'The Late Show' where that movie, in a butchered-for-TV version, is broadcast fairly frequently. ... I'm sure a great many film collectors feel the same way, especially with films like 'The Wild Bunch' which will never be shown in their original versions on TV because of excessive violence or other presumably offensive material. In the absence of a 152-minute version, I'd settle for

The following are unsolicited remarks with respect to the indicated dealers. To be fair, we cannot ordinarily list someone as a bad egg simply on the basis of a single complaint. This policy accounts, in part, for the fact that some of the remarks you may have sent in are not reproduced here. All comments with respect to particular dealers are excerpted from readers' correspondence that we have on file. With respect to Chapter 770, Florida Statutes, relating to civil actions for libel, publication of these excerpts is in the good faith belief that said readers' comments are a true account of their experiences. Also, since it is not practical to repeat everything each issue, new readers may want to pick up copies of TV #19-24 in which the first 6 installments of GB&U appear.

the 141-minute cut or even, in desperation, the studio's timid 135-minute version. I do not see, however, why I should put up with an arbitrarily chopped-down film when in good faith I bought it according to your own advertisement that it was "uncut". I'd appreciate a reply to this letter.

As you observed in the letter to the dealer, Brian, it looks for all the world as if further cuts were made in order to fit the film on a single cassette.

Dear Sir,

I have ordered from many companies and I have found Discount Video Tapes in Burbank to be the best. I received quick service every time I have ordered.

-- J.B., Fort Myers FL

Dear Jim,

A firm known as International Wholesalers of Miami, Inc. located at 17866 NE 5th Ave., Miami, FL 33162 has been running one of the most (deleted) ad campaigns we have ever seen. Enclosed you will find a copy of the ad that ran in last week's paper that lists pre-recorded movies on videotape from \$19.95. Not ONE of the movies listed sold for \$19.95 (They were all selling for the regular prices of \$45 to \$60). Even though the ad specifically states "Paramount movies ... from \$19.95." ... Another one of their infamous gimmicks is the old "bait & switch" routine. ... On FIVE different occasions we have gone in to purchase some of their \$12.99 sale videotape and been told that they are "temporarily out" of that brand BUT they did have a lot of other brands that were "only a few dollars more". Despite what the ad says at the bottom, no rain checks were ever received by any of us, so we had the choice of buying the more expensive tape or nothing at all. -- Jim Duffy, Kris Poole, Gulio Varanelli, Ted McKeever, Mike McKeever and Steve Smith, Miami Florida

Readers are cautioned that the firm mentioned should not be confused with Video Wholesalers, Inc. of Miami.

Jim & Friends:

(After description of frustrating failure to get an idler wheel for an RCA VCT 400 from the local dealer and distributor:)

I then called RCA in Indiana and was quite surprised with the results that followed. I spoke with Mr. Steve Hoffman (317-267-6445) in their consumer relations department (actually I yelled at first), and he promptly located the missing part in a RCA warehouse in New Jersey. He then arranged for the little wheel to appear in Houston 2 days later. Steve was then thoughtful enough to call me back to verify that everything had been handled properly. --Jim Paulin, Houston TX

"Look, . . . up in the sky . . . !"

By: Richard Miller

SPTS '80 (Miami Satellite Seminar) Bigger, Better and More Informative

Bob Cooper promised the second Satellite Private Terminal Seminar (SPTS) would be even "bigger, better and more informative" than the first such seminar held in Oklahoma City last August, and it was.

SPTS '79 had been deemed a definite success with more than 500 registrants jam-packed into facilities built for 300, and representatives of a half dozen serious hardware suppliers and participants from about a dozen countries.

SPTS '80 attracted more than 600 registrants, and facilities were far more comfortable and functional. The number of equipment vendors tripled to over 20 and this seminar was truly an international affair with registrants heralding from such distant places as Australia, Scotland, the Ascension Isles, Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico. Of course, most of the Canadian provinces and the United States were well represented.

The most important advance in the six months since the first seminar came not in the form of improved equipment or reduced price tags, but rather in the complete deregulation of private satellite receiving terminals by the FCC in October, 1979. Although we see many more businessmen and prospective businessmen trying to capitalize on the advent of this new era of communications, free market forces have not yet reduced expenses sufficiently to make home satellite viewing affordable to the average viewer. SPTS '79 featured a booth advertising the advent of the do-it-yourself \$4,000 home terminal. It was anticipated that the cost of such terminals would have been drastically reduced. However, this has not yet occurred.

Many registrants who originally were interested as home enthusiasts are now prospective businessmen joining those excitedly trying to capitalize on what is obviously the wave of the future by designing, building, marketing and installing low-noise amplifiers, receivers and dishes. We were interested to hear that Scientific Atlanta, the largest established company has now dropped their thriving Homesat subsidiary, apparently because of political pressure exerted by the cable television industry. Heathkit evidently has plans to join the competition. It was rumored that they had five representatives at the SPTS '80. We have long heard Radio Shack was planning a TVRO in kit form, but insofar as we could ascertain, they were not present at the seminar.

Bob Cooper, of Satellite Television Technology, sponsor of SPTS '80, has clearly established himself as the leading catalyst



in the satellite TV revolution and obviously enjoys his role in bringing together the business and technical experts.

Cooper was the first private individual to obtain a license from the FCC to own and operate a private terminal at his home. With the deregulation of home terminals and the onrush of new technology and increased competition, price tags will come down dramatically in the next few years to the point that millions will be joining Cooper in viewing 50 to 100 channels via satellite. ■



CABLE UP YOUR HOME

By: Ray Fobes

Being over 30 miles from the nearest major TV stations and some 50 miles from secondary TV stations (combined providing 7 VHF and 4 UHF channels), I have the need for a good antenna and distribution system. Wanting to provide the capability to watch TV in any part of the house, I have turned to CATV technology for my internal house TV distribution system. CATV has created a technology that provides low-cost, highly reliable components. As we all know, this is a major commercial industry and, as it expands, quality and economy are all important. I have applied this CATV technology to my system with excellent results. This article describes my system and I hope will get others thinking about similar uses.

Basically, my CATV system provides a highly flexible, low-cost cable TV environment. I am, in essence, my own common carrier and FCC rolled into one. The components of the system I have selected are readily available. The resulting system is an 800 MHz wideband cable transmission system running throughout my house. These are big sounding words which simply mean "cable TV". I am able to plug a TV or FM radio into an outlet similar to an electrical outlet in almost any room in the house and receive excellent reception.

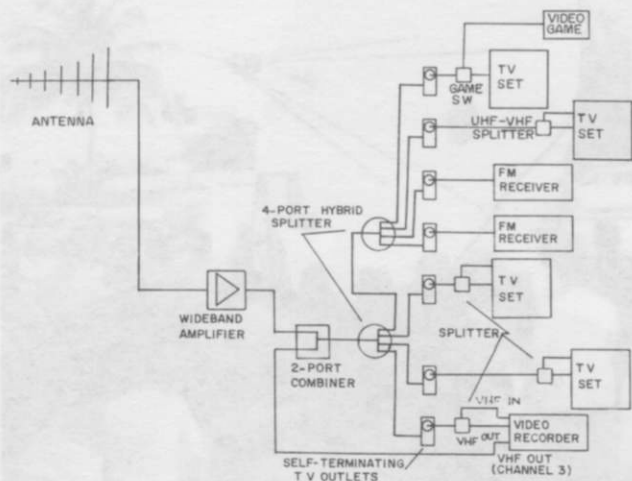
One of the major advantages of this system is that I can watch my video recorder on any TV set in the house. That's right, without all of the cables either. The set up is clean and straight forward. I also don't have to push the VCR/TV button on the recorder to monitor it either. The button is left in the VCR mode at all times. I have included a diagram of my system to explain to those that like wiring diagrams how versatile the system can be.

The system has two basic inputs, one being the output of the wideband amplifier (containing all VHF, UHF, and FM Channels) and the other being the output of the video recorder (set for Channel 3). The levels of the signals at this point, although not being exactly equal, are close enough for any television set to receive them properly. I am using a Radio Shack UHF/VHF amplifier. Although not the best on the market, it provides approximately 18 dB gain for VHF and FM signals and 16 dB for the UHF channels. This is adequate for my

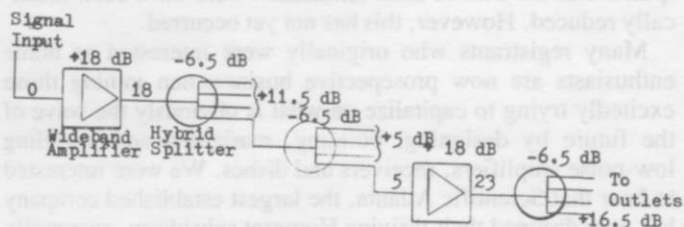
system and the \$40.00 cost is very reasonable. As each of the combiners and splitters induces RF loss to the signal, the amplifier is necessary to raise the signal level sufficiently for the TV sets connected. As mentioned, the output of the video recorder is set for Channel 3. The closest Channel 3 in the area is weak enough that I can combine the VCR output directly with the wideband amplifier without significant interference. However, when there is a channel in the area, even if it is too poor to watch, it may cause some interference on the received VCR Channel 3 signal. With some of the new video modulators coming on the market in the UHF range, this problem will be reduced even further (like the Betamax SL-8000 with Channel 30 or 39 available). It is possible to build an RF trap for Channel 3 (or whatever your offending channel is) thereby removing it from your system before adding your own VCR Channel 3. For a technician or engineer, this should not be too difficult. I would recommend, if you have this problem, that you try to obtain a commercially built filter. They are not easy to find, but will be well worth the price when installed.

Back to the diagram, the combined antenna and VCR signal is then fed to a four-way hybrid line splitter. The output of this splitter will be the strongest signal level usable in the system. That is why I have these outputs going to the most important video outlets. The ones that feed the input to the video recorder and the two main set locations (family room and kitchen, in my case). The fourth output is fed to another four-port hybrid splitter. The outputs from this splitter are for additional TV set locations and the stereo sets with FM tuners. The FM signal strength requirements are much lower than the video color signals so always have them on the "lowest level" outputs. The outlets I use are Jerrold STO-75F which mount in a standard wall outlet box and look like a blank AC outlet.

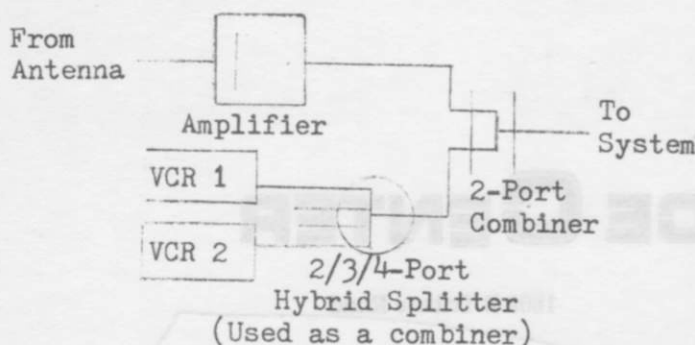
Now, if you have a big house and you want to put outlets in every room, you may have up to ten or more outlets on the system. At this point, you may want to amplify the signal again before extending it to additional outlets. My own system is full and any expansion will require another amplifier before I can add any more splitters and outlets. This addition schematically would look like this:



HOME CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEM



If you plan on moving your video recorder around, then you can make provisions for additional signal inputs also. The following diagram shows a way to have up to four locations where you could "plug in" a video recorder. Actually, if you are lucky enough to have more than one video recorder and can find more than one free channel to "transmit" on, then they can be plugged into the system at the same time and can be playing simultaneously on different channels. At this point, you have a real video house.



It would also be possible to extend your cable system to your neighbor's house. Take a cable tied into one of your higher level hybrid splitter outputs and run it overhead or buried underground. As the cable length will probably be over a hundred-feet, the signal should be amplified in the neighbor's house before it is split and run to outlets. This allows your neighbor to watch your video tapes in the comfort of his own house.

There are some system design problems to watch out for. Many older TV systems are 300 ohm whereas the newer ones are designed for 75 ohm cables. The use of 75 ohm cable is very important in these systems as this cable reduces signal loss and keeps out interference effectively. Even with 75 ohm systems, you can use TVs that have a 300 ohm input by using matching transformers. These are now common and inexpensive. Also, if the VHF input is separate from the UHF input on the set, the a VHF/UHF splitter is required at the back of the set. Some splitters now have combined 300 ohm-75 ohm transformers built in. This is highly desirable as it reduces components and connection problems. Remember, keep all cable runs as short as possible to minimize RF losses. The RF wideband amplifier should be located as close to the antenna as practical.

From a technical standpoint, the VHF/UHF wideband amplifier increases the 300 MHz wideband signal by 18 dB. This is added to the VCR output in a combiner. The output of the combiner reduces the signal level by 3.5 dB. The first four-port hybrid splitter reduces the signal at each of its outputs by an additional 6.5 dB in the VHF range and 7.2 dB in the UHF range. The resulting VHF signal is now 8 dB above where it started at the input to the wideband amplifier. The second four-port hybrid splitter reduces the signal the same amount again. So, at this point, the signal is 1.5 dB above the input level. Beyond this point we would have to add another wideband amplifier increasing the signal by 18 dB to 19.5 dB. This is sufficient signal strength to continue a system to more outlets, etc.

The system can support other types of communications devices as well. With the proper interfaces to modulate within the wideband spectrum of the amplifiers, any type of communications device can use the cable system, such as intercoms, home computers with multiple video terminals, etc. Many systems are being developed throughout the US to utilize cable systems. With your own cable system, you will be ready to take advantage of these new innovations. Systems like I have described are now in use in many office buildings. One big user of interactive wideband cable systems are hospitals where everything from entertainment television to doctor's medical terminals are supported on a single cable.

In summary, I think you can see the advantage this has for video recorder enthusiasts. (It is bad for the control of showing X-rated movies though.) The system when properly designed can be highly useful and provide flexibility to your video enjoyment. ■

FILMLAND DISCOVERS **THE FILM BUFF'S CHECKLIST OF MOTION PICTURES (1912-1979)**
©1980 BY HOLLYWOOD FILM ARCHIVE

THE FILM BUFF'S CHECKLIST
OF MOTION PICTURES
(1912-1979)

MOTHER OF PEARL! WHAT A WONDERFUL FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE THIS NEW FILM BUFF'S CHECKLIST IS.

IT GIVES THE NATIONALITY OF FOREIGN FILMS AND THEIR ORIGINAL TITLES.

DON'T FORGET THE ANIMATED AND CARTOON FEATURES IN IT.

YOU SAID IT, SWEETHEART, AND IT LISTS 19,000 TITLES. WHAT'S MORE, IT HAS PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOU AND ME AND LOTS OF OTHER FAMOUS STARS.

HOW FAR BACK DOES IT GO?

TO THE DAYS WHEN WE FIRST STARTED MAKING MOVIES AND LISTS THE YEAR EACH FLICK WAS RELEASED.

I HOPE IT TELLS WHAT STUDIO EACH PICTURE CAME FROM.

SURE DOES, WITH RUNNING TIME IN MINUTES.

RIGHT, PILGRIM, AN' WHETHER IT'S IN COLOR OR NOT.

IT EVEN LISTS LEADING ACTORS FOR THE FILMS. AT \$19.95, THAT'S AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE.

IT HAS A SECTION ABOUT THE STUDIOS AND DISTRIBUTORS WITH THEIR PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES WHERE YOU CAN GET THE FILMS OR BITE THE BEAUTIFUL SECRETARIES' NECKS.

UNLESS YOU PREFER THE DELUXE LIBRARY BOUND VERSION FOR \$29.95.

AND TELLS WHO NOW OWNS THE FILMS OF COMPANIES WHOSE MAD STUDIO EXECUTIVES MADE MONSTERS WHICH WENT BANKRUPT.

MILCHRISTIAN, WHAT ABOUT THE MANY BRITISH FILMS WHICH HAVE DIFFERENT TITLES IN AMERICA? AND VICE VERSA?

TAKE A LOOK, CAPTAIN. IT GIVES THE TITLES THE FILMS PLAYED UNDER IN BOTH COUNTRIES.

SUPPOSE I ORDER THE BOOK AND THEN DON'T THINK IT'S WORTH THE MONEY?

BY ST. CHRISTOPHER, YOU CAN RETURN THE BOOK AND I'LL SHARPEN THAT YOUR MONEY WILL BE REFUNDED.

AND THEY EVEN GIVE YOU BACK THE \$1.75 SHIPPING CHARGE SO YOU DON'T LOSE A CENT. EVERY PENNY COUNTS THESE DAYS, TAKE MY WORD FOR IT.

HFA HOLLYWOOD FILM ARCHIVE
8344 Melrose Avenue, Dept. V P
Hollywood, Calif. 90069

Rush me THE FILM BUFF'S CHECKLIST: _____ copy(ies) Hardbound at \$19.95 each and/or _____ copy(ies) Library Bound at \$25.95 each, plus \$1.75 shipping per copy. Add 6% sales tax on all orders shipped to California addresses (\$1.20 on Hardbound, \$1.56 on Library Bound). If I'm not completely satisfied, I'll return the book for a full refund of both the purchase price and \$1.75 shipping charges, and I'll receive another \$1.75 to cover the cost of returning it. I enclose total payment of \$_____ (U.S. funds).

☐ Ship by Special Handling: \$3.75 (instead of \$1.75) ☐ Foreign Airmail \$17.50 extra.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Charge my credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercharge - bank no. _____

Sign here (if using credit card) X _____

Card number _____ Expires _____

SAVE TIME BY USING YOUR VISA OR MASTERCARD CREDIT CARD TO ORDER BY TOLL FREE TELEPHONE. CALL 800-228-2606 AT ANY TIME, DAY OR NIGHT. IN NEBRASKA, DIAL 800-642-8777 INSTEAD.

YAH, BUT REMEMBER- THESE TOLL FREE NUMBERS ARE ONLY FOR CREDIT CARD ORDERS. OTHERWISE YA GOTTA ORDER BY MAIL. GEE?



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1808 B Tribute Road

Sacramento, California 95815
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916 332-1167

5/15/80

SUMMER SPECIALS

BLANK TAPES

Beta

4½ hr. Sony	L-750 per doz.	\$ 192.00
5 hr. Sony	L-830 per doz.	\$ 215.00
3 hr. Fuji	10 lot	\$ 130.00
3 hr. Sony	L-500 per doz.	\$ 147.00

VHS

4 hr. Fuji	10 lot	\$ 160.00
4 hr. Maxell	10 lot	\$ 160.00
4 hr. Panasonic	per doz.	\$ 180.00
4 hr. RCA	per doz.	\$ 180.00
4 hr. TDK	10 lot	\$ 150.00

All tapes in dozen or lot only.
Add \$4.00 per dozen or lot for handling.

VIDEO RECORDERS

Hitachi	VT-5000A	\$ 625.00	2/4 hr.
JVC	HR-6700	\$ 995.00	2/6 hr.
Panasonic	PV-1650	\$ 950.00	2/4/6 hr.
Panasonic	PV-1100	\$ 659.00	2/4 hr.
Panasonic	NV-8200	\$1250.00	2 hr.
Panasonic	NV-8310	\$ 975.00	2 hr.
RCA	VDT-625	\$1050.00	2/4/6 hr.
RCA	VDT-501	\$ 750.00	2/4/6 hr.
RCA	VDT-600	\$ 875.00	2/4/6 hr.
Sony	SL-5400	\$ 995.00	4½ hr.
Sony	SL-5600	\$1050.00	4½ hr.

Add \$20.00 to all recorders
for shipping, insurance and handling.

Panasonic PV-2600
Portable Recorder
and Color Camera with Zoom Lens
and Electronic View Finder
with Panasonic PK-600 \$1650.00

SONAR BULK ERASER

Special Price \$30.00
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Sony	KP-5000	\$2900.00
Sony	KP-7200	\$3400.00

Shipped Freight Collect

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Most Titles Available

Prices and availability subject to change at any time.



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U-MATIC

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THE PORTABLES ARE HERE

COLOR CAMERAS			RECORDERS		
Panasonic	WV-3200	\$ 795.00	JVC	HR-4110	\$ 950.00 2 hr.
Panasonic	PK-600	\$ 750.00	Panasonic	PV-2600	\$ 950.00 2/4 hr.
RCA	CC-003	\$ 745.00	Panasonic	NV-8400	\$ 995.00 2 hr.
RCA	CC-004	\$ 850.00	RCA	VDP-150	\$ 895.00 2/4 hr.
Sony	HVC-1000	\$1095.00	Sony	SL-3000	\$1025.00 3 hr.
JVC	GX-77	\$ 795.00			
JVC	GX-33	\$ 550.00			

All portables are AC/DC. We have all accessories in stock!

CASES	MOVIES
<p>They Open and Close Like a Book To Protect Your Cassettes</p> <p>Black Vinyl Grain - Amaray Brand</p> <p>Beta 20 for \$20.00</p> <p>VHS 20 for \$21.00</p> <p>Brown or White Smooth Vinyl - Mid-America Brand</p> <p>Beta 20 for \$30.00</p> <p>VHS 20 for \$33.00</p> <p>\$4.00 for shipping each lot of 20.</p>	<p>Magnetic Video</p> <p>Columbia</p> <p>Paramount</p> <p>Allied Artists</p> <p>Meda</p> <p>Warner Pictures</p> <p>Nostalgia Merchant</p> <p><i>Send \$5.00, refundable on first order, for the above catalogs.</i></p>

- Add \$10.00 to all camera orders for shipping and insurance.
- Add \$20.00 to all recorders for shipping and insurance.
- Write or call toll free for adult list!
- Don't buy any video equipment until you get our quote!
- Please allow 2 weeks for personal checks to clear.
- APO-FPO, Alaska and Hawaii, add sufficient postage for U.S. mail charges.

Prices and availability subject to change at any time.



BETA

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Tillamook, OR 97141

Phone (503) 842-8831

HOT LINE

Excerpts from a few of our letters—

I'm sold!!!! Nothing like a satisfied customer to sell products to other potential customers! Recently a friend of mine purchased one of your video amplifiers and copyguard stabilizers, and he has done nothing but rave about the quality. He also says you're really "hot" on coaxial cables.

**R. Tribbey
Escondido, Calif.**

Last week I was privileged to be among the lucky few who have received your video "Image Enhancer". This has turned out to be the most valuable and utilitarian piece of equipment that I, as a "video fanatic," have ever invested in at any price.

**Video Unlimited
Albuquerque, N.M.**

I redubbed the tape thru the enhancer and video dist. amp. I could hardly believe the results. The picture turned brighter, the detail was sharp and crisp. You can even see individual hairs in Santa's beard.

**Bob Benoitkin
Red Wing, N.M.**

Congratulations on being "the biggest hit" in Las Vegas with the consumer video dealers. I was working with two manufacturers near by and couldn't but notice your excellent products.

**J. Albert
Naperville, Ill.**

I am ordering an Image Enhancer because of the other two products that I bought from your company, the Dist. Amp. and the Copy Guard device. Both of the units work fantastically, so when I heard of your new accessory, I'm ordering one.

**M. Shimbukuro
San Francisco, Ca.**

The Stabilizers really did the job. The Enhancer did even a greater job in improving the overall picture. The Video Amp was a godsend, it is a must for duplicating

**T. Carbonari
Flushing, N.Y.**

Yes! We use this equipment ourselves. It was needed and that's why I developed it, and that's why it works. After months on oscilloscopes in engineering, before I put them on the market, they go into my home and homes of my friends. Then when we agree that all is right, we offer it to you because we want you as friends. With the way this equipment performs, with all its features, priced from \$107.00 to \$287.00, I'm sure our relationship will be a lasting one. We are currently believed to be the leaders in offering consumer video processing equipment in the world, and to stay in that position we must know our competition and the market needs. WE DO. And it's our opinion that our specifications and features are to be exceeded by no one, at any price.

VIDEO ORGANIZER Model No. 007. This has more tricks than "007" himself. It surrounds any VCR on the market with all the features of a NASA space ship. All processing instrumentation is close at hand and tucked away. You'll never lose your copy of "Home Video" or "TV Guide" because of the special shelf provided. It features a 9x6x3" drawer for extra cables, pens, and tape labels. The top shelf stores up to 20 VHS or BETA tapes in verticle position, for close-at-hand action. Constructed of birch hardwood. The video recorder opening is 22"x8 1/2" and stands 24" high. Introductory price of **\$80.00.**

VIDEO STABILIZER Model No. 170, \$197.00. No more "Copyguard" problems, and more. It helps to clean up color-bleed on copies.

IMAGE ENHANCER Model No. 270, \$287.00. Point blank! It does what it says and does it very well.

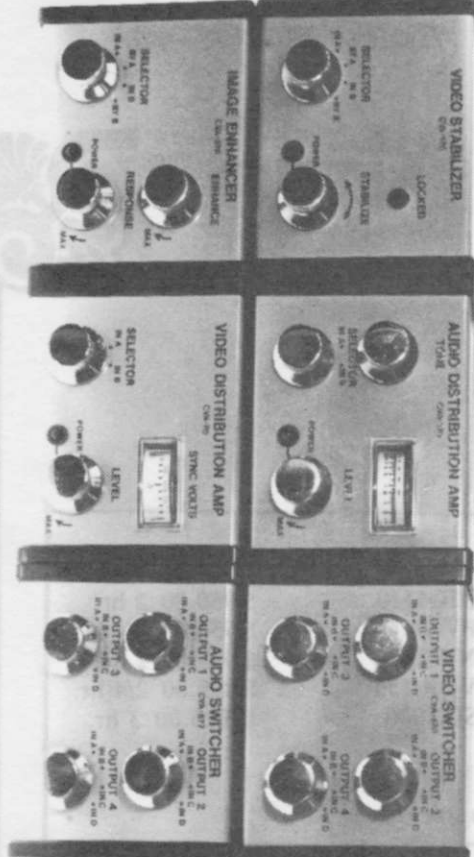
AUDIO DISTRIBUTION AMP Model No. 370. Four outputs plus stereo tone control. No more high volume "buzz" and much more.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTION AMP Model No. 70, \$207.00. Saturates tape with a very strong signal. Eliminates background noise and much more. It's portable with a camera.

VIDEO SWITCHER Model No. 570, \$107.00. Matched 75 ohm impedance and noise filters. High quality! Any four input combinations to any four output combinations.

AUDIO SWITCHER Model No. 577, \$107.00. Matched audio impedances and noise filters. High quality! Any four input combinations to any four output combinations.

AUDIO & VIDEO TO RF CONVERTER Model No. 470, \$187.00. Converts audio and video into RF on channels 3 or 4. Has built-in line amplifiers, one each, for video & audio, to two TV sets.



PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME. DUE TO VAST INTEREST, ORDERS WILL TAKE MORE THAN 30 DAYS.

**"STATE OF THE ART"
THE ART
HIGH CAPABILITY
LOW PRICE**

NO ONE



The Videophile PROGRAM REVIEWS

Before swallowing these evaluations hook, line and sinker, please consider these 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.
2. Most of the tapes reviewed herein were specifically requested from the mentioned dealer. 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, most 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 obtain each tape is indicated at the end of each review. Their full addresses are set forth at the end of this entire column.

Reviewers this issue, identified by their initials, are: JdB—John de Bartolo; JL—Jim Lowe; DS—David See. Their views are not necessarily those of *The Videophile*.

TAPES

THE MR. BILL SHOW (Walter Williams, 1979)

Credits: Cast—Mr. Bill, Mr. Sluggo, Mr. Spot, Mr. Hands. Director—Walter Williams.

Format/Length: 26 minutes/Beta II.

Content: A compilation of early Mr. Bill segments as seen on NBC's "Saturday Night Live". Included in this sadistic program are Mr. Bill's tour of New York City; his climb to the top, and plunge to the bottom, of the Empire State Building; his visit to Saturday Night Live (missing the scenes with John Belushi); an interior decorating lesson with Mr. Sluggo (Spot helps him make a dog-skin rug!); Mr. Bill's day in court, and many more. All are "as broadcast", with the exception of the missing scenes mentioned above, and the newly-added closing credits.

Evaluation: What can I say? Either you enjoy Mr. Bill's unique humor or you can't stand it. For his many fans, here's a great opportunity to obtain some early segments you may not already have on tape. Video and audio quality is very good. Print quality is as good as the original broadcasts. Editing between the segments is a little choppy, but nothing



objectionable. An interesting and unusual short for your "weird" collection.—DS

Source: Video Tape Network

☆☆☆

"ROLL YOUR OWN" SAMPLER

Roll Your Own Video offers a "program your own" tape service, which amounts to having them prepare a customized tape from selections they have available. The Beta format "sampler" they sent us for review includes a 10 minute *Superman* animated color cartoon (directed by Dave Fleischer) in which Lois Lane is captured by and rescued from a mad scientist; three episodes of the old TV show *Rocky Jones, Space Ranger* with Richard Crane; and a selection of James Bond theatrical trailers from *Dr. No* through *Man With the Golden Gun*.

Evaluation: R.Y.O.'s owner, Jill Kaysing, tells us that "all of our titles are recorded from first generation ¾" masters and are above average in quality." We would certainly concur with this, especially insofar as the *Rocky Jones* titles are concerned. For those of you unfamiliar with this show, it's a serial-style ancestor of *Star Trek* in which the crew of the Silver Moon seeks to keep things as they should be within the "United Worlds of the Solar System." The three 25-minute chapters of "Inferno in Space" we checked should be a delight for those of you who enjoy campy space drama from television's age of innocence. Personally, I love it when the evil Agar (exiled ruler of Medina) chastises an underling

thusly: "Do you want to be an insignificant little twirp for the rest of your life?" The black and white print quality and sound were quite good indeed for material of this vintage. The picture and sound of the *Superman* cartoon were good too, but the color had faded badly, leaving only shades of red and green for the most part. This is attributable to the original print, not the transfer to video tape. Similarly, the color quality of the Bond trailers left much to be desired. I've yet to see really good video copies of Bond trailers, though the picture (aside from the color) and sound of these are acceptable, I guess, for those of you who simply *must* have them. Inquire of Roll Your Own for details on their other titles and services.—JL

Source: Roll Your Own

☆☆☆

The Miss Bikini USA Beauty Pageant

Produced by: Ed Rich Productions

Content: Beauty contest held in Miami Beach, Florida.

Evaluation: Approximately 16 minutes on a T90 cassette. Advertised as "one of the sexiest pageants ever seen." It is suitable for showing to any church gathering and in no way will it offend even the most sensitive person. Color and quality are excellent. Definitely not recommended.—JdB

Source/Price: Ed Rich Productions/\$49.95 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. The *new low price* no longer includes a *free vacation* to Las Vegas (less meals and transportation).

★★★

BLOOPERS (Thunderbird)

Content: This selection of "bloopers" (outtakes, fluffs, what-have-you) includes: two of Warner Brothers' compilations *Breakdowns of 1936* and *Breakdowns of 1937*, which each run about 8 minutes and feature such folks as Bette Davis, Pat O'Brien, Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney, saying "Goddamit" as they forget their lines or otherwise mess up a scene; a 15-minute color short "Sports Snafu's" with Ray Scott; a selection of old black and white TV show bloopers from *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *Hogan's Heroes* among others; and about 14 minutes of color *Star Trek* bloopers — totally 51 minutes or thereabouts.

Evaluation: I'm always anxious to see stuff like this, but am disappointed more often than not. This occasion was not an exception. The picture quality of the VHS tape we perused ranged from extremely poor (the black and white TV bloopers) to fair. The "Breakdowns" segments were OK, but quite contrasty, with only fair sound and, frankly, not particularly funny bloopers. The sports segment had fair color, decent sound, a little jitter and forgettable content. The *Star Trek* segments ranged from poor to fair in color picture quality. I can't imagine even the monomaniacal fan getting much out of them.

Tom Dunahoo has a fine selection of unusual material at Thunderbird Films, much of which we have reviewed favorably in the past, but there's no way around it—this one is a loser. (It *did* come in a nice plastic case, and I *did* get a kick out of the 5 second spot in which Matt Dillon is too slow on the draw, in a phony *Gunsmoke* opening, and drops over dead.)—JL

Source: Thunderbird Films.

SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER (Columbia, 1977)

Credits: Cast—Patrick Wayne, Jane Seymour, Taryn Power, Margaret Whiting, Patrick Troughton. Director—Sam Wanamaker. Special Visual Effects—Ray Harryhausen.

Story: Sinbad returns to port and discovers that his friend Prince Kassim has been transformed into a baboon during his coronation by his evil step-mother, Zenobia, so that her true son could be crowned caliph. The Princess Farah asks Sinbad's help to find the ancient magician Melanthius, who can return Kassim to his rightful form. They travel to his secret island home, followed by Zenobia, her son, and her Minoton, a mechanical minotaur. Melanthius discovers that they must travel to the Shrine of the Four Elements, near the North Pole. This is the only place the transformation can occur. Along the way Sinbad and his men encounter a giant walrus and a friendly troglodyte. In the temple, Zenobia uses her magic in a final attempt to stop the transformation by changing herself into a sabre-toothed tiger. As she and the troglodyte fight to the death, the Prince becomes himself again and all eventually ends happily.

Evaluation: As a whole, *Sinbad and The Eye of The Tiger* is a fairly entertaining film but not of classic stature. It's one of only two Harryhausen films in release on cassette, so it's one of the best we have available. The story is episodic and complicated, (the synopsis above is greatly simplified). The actors and their performances are only fair. Harryhausen's effects work is up to his usual fine standards with animated ghouls, the baboon, the Minoton, the walrus, the troglodyte, and the tiger. Many nice touches are included in these special effects creations. The film is acceptable even though the videocassette quality was not as good as I had expected from Columbia. The video is very noisy and grainy with too much enhancement (crispness) but the audio is fine. There is also too much chroma (color) on this dub, causing bright, saturated colors, such as red, to streak, as well as a lot of chroma noise in darker scenes. The film print was cropped for wide-screen effect (black at top and bottom) except for some scenes which were full-screen. All in all, a somewhat disappointing but still entertaining introduction to Columbia's video releases. Their packaging is nice, with cassettes enclosed in a white vinyl, illustrated case. A Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment release.—DS

Source: DeMaio Video.

★★★

THE BUGS BUNNY/ROAD-RUNNER MOVIE (formerly "The Great American Chase," Warner Bros., 1979)

Credits: Cast—Bugs Bunny, The Road-Runner, Wile E. Coyote, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Elmer Fudd, Pepe LePew. Voice Characterizations—Mel Blanc. Producer/Director—Chuck Jones.

Length/Format: 90 min./Beta II.

Content: The Warner Bros. cartoons directed by Chuck Jones are considered by many to be the funniest, most imaginative, ever produced. This feature, hosted and narrated by Bugs Bunny, brings together several of these original Jones cartoons. They are connected by newly filmed animation of Bugs as he gives us background info on the segments. Most of the cartoons are condensed to some degree and are grouped according to subject and featured players.

The first subject is outer space, with Bugs trying to save



Earth from Martin the Martian and his ray gun. Next Daffy as Duck Dodgers battles Martin for possession of Planet X.

Next Daffy as a more down-to-earth hero, Robin Hood, tries to convince Porky as Friar Tuck that he really is the famous outlaw. From this swash-buckling role, Daffy next moves on to a more vulnerable role, as a cartoon character at the mercy of the animator's pencil in the unusual "Duck Amok!"

The next topic of discussion is travel, with Bugs in Mexico fighting a fierce bull, and then with Daffy in an Arabian Nights treasure cave, a funny sequence from "Ali Baba Bunny".

The next theme is hunting, with Elmer pursuing Bugs and Daffy as they each try to convince Mr. Fudd that it's open season on the other. Pepe LePew then gets into the hunting spirit as he tracks down his true love, the cat that looks like a skunk.

Music appreciation is the next subject, with Bugs up against an opera singer who has very different ideas about what makes good music. Then, in an unusual "tribute" to Wagner's operas, Elmer plays the thunder-wielding hero and Bugs his leading "lady."

Next it's Brains vs. More Brains, as Wile E. Coyote tries to catch Bugs for a rabbit stew, with poor results and an empty stomach.

Finally, Wile E. moves on to something more his speed: The Road-Runner. This sequence is composed of individual gags from various Road-Runner cartoons and runs for more than 15 minutes.

Evaluation: A great treat for fans of animation, and, in particular, fans of Chuck Jones' unique style and humor. The feature is well put together, with one clip leading smoothly into the next. The newly-filmed footage with Bugs is indistinguishable from the original cartoon segments. The film print quality is excellent with no projection lines or other imperfections. Video and audio quality are both very good to excellent. As for Warners' packaging, it's very similar to Paramount's original boxes, but is more substantial and less likely to be crushed. The back of the box is covered with liner notes giving background info. A fantastic WCI Home Video release, highly recommended!—DS

Source/Price: Video Specialties/\$49.95.

SEX ROULETTE (Euro Films, 1980)

Credits: Cast—Robert Leray, Vanessa Melville. Director—Alan Vydra.

Story: A wealthy gentleman, his niece, and valet take a tour of European casinos where the young lady plays the tables while uncle plays around with the local female population secured by his faithful man Friday. You know you're in for something a little different when the first scene features a smiling black midget carrying a big stack of phone books . . . the better to help him reach a young lady reclining on a table. The paper thin plot serves as nothing more than a frame of reference for a series of explicit sexual encounters, primarily between our elderly hero and a parade of young European lovelies. Finally, the compulsively gambling and sexually disinterested niece becomes aroused and joins in the fray.

Evaluation: This was our first opportunity to see a European (made in Germany) hard-core porno film on video and we, quite naturally, expected something a little different. Well, it was a *little* different. We'd not seen any black midgets featured before and, unlike most domestic products, the male lead was 60 years old if he was a day. Of course, for me the high point was the scene in the pig pen as two rather uninhibited couples went after each other to the accompaniment of a lot of bewildered oinking and snorting. The script was very bad and so bluntly crude in spots as to be a real turn off. The sound track is dubbed into English, so who knows what the characters really said? The color picture of the VHS format tape we watched was quite good, if just a tad contrasty. Also, we had to adjust our "hue" control to compensate for too much green, possibly due to the European origin. The sound was fine and even the background music was acceptable. The sexual entanglements are plentiful, well lit, in focus, and somewhat boring, but, for you dirty old senior citizens who've been seeking a porno hero to identify with, this may be just the fantasy fulfillment you've been yearning for. The young ladies were certainly attractive enough, especially the remarkably well formed, if reluctant, Miss Melville. *Sex Roulette* is one of a series of 4 releases from Euro Films. As a bonus, the tape includes fairly extensive previews of the other three features. If you're like me, you'd sometimes rather see 90 minutes of XXX previews than the 90 minute feature itself. Compared to other tapes of this type that we've reviewed, this one is no great shakes.—JL

Source/Price: The Video Connection/\$69.75. ■



SOURCES

Video Connection

1920 Sylvania Avenue, Suite 101
Toledo OH 43613

Video Specialties

11601 Katy Freeway, Suite 114
Houston TX 77079

DeMaio Video

20222 Morristown Circle
Huntington Beach CA 92646

Thunderbird Films

P.O. Box 67157
3501 Eagle Rock Boulevard
Los Angeles CA 90035

Ed Rich Productions
1950 South Ocean Drive
Hallandale FL 33009

Video Tape Network
115 East 62nd Street
New York NY 10021

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

Blackhawk Video
1235 West 5th Street
Davenport IA 52808

Ted Reinhart Enterprises
Edgewater Acres Resort
Alexandria PA 16611





Ted Reinhart's Western Roundup

Your cowboy crazy composer is "saddled up" once more, ready to hit the trail to the video west.

When I began writing a column for this publication for "Two-gun Lowe," I honestly questioned the value of such an occupation for a magazine of this purpose. I'm aware that a few vidiotis prefer that I would widen my scope of cassette reviews and not horse around constantly . . . "too damned much on those B-westerns," some say. Please put on your bifocals and read the pages previous to these. That Wild Bunch of Lowe, See, Hutchinson and company are doing a mighty fine job in covering the "other" genres. You mean you've been missing them all this time??? Anyway, it did this old cowhand's heart good to learn that for the second consecutive year B-westerns have placed second in total sales numbers among all video cassette subjects. Only "porn" outsold the westerns. Can't understand this. Maybe I've been spending too much time with my horses. But, Pardner, you should feast your eyes on this golden palomino I've been hangin' around with. Anyway, porn may be in first place, but westerns are close up there behind (*what?*).

Time to get on with this next installment of my "best of the movie A-west." As we progress down Ted's one-to-ten ladder, step number seven reveals the title, *The Gunfighter*. This 1950 release starred Gregory Peck and was directed by Henry King. The story line of this unusual western depicts the inevitability of a classic Greek tragedy. A gunfighter, weary of killing, now in his advanced years, is trying to avoid the encounters of his youth and to be reunited with his wife and young son and start anew. The constant challenges by assorted hoodlums out to make a reputation for themselves cast an awareness of doom over the central character. The mood, setting, and atmosphere are artistically devised to enhance the story idea throughout the entire film. The qualities of this motion picture really never received the proper acclaim.

My personal choice for eighth position goes to *The Westerner*. Produced in 1940, this movie features Gary Cooper and Walter Brennan, under the astute direction of William Wyler. This film gives Cooper one of his best roles, but Brennan's characterization of Judge Roy Bean dominated the picture which won him an Academy Award (his third). The entire movie was beautifully photographed. The scenario was quite simple with Cooper playing the cowboy who outwits the wiley "hanging judge."

Both of these A-graders merit shelf space in the serious collector's tape library and are freely available from a number of channels throughout the country.

Wanted, Dead or Alive . . . (either format). *The Red House* (can't anyone find this?), *The Wild North*, *Bite the Bullet*. These are my three priorities, right now.

I am really excited about my sales product special for this issue of TV. The original 1938 *Lone Ranger* serial is considered to be the best chapter play ever released. These many years, it has been the contention that this serial no longer existed . . . a lost (and/or destroyed) article. After much searching and hundreds of hours of hard work, I now make available the most complete version (to my knowledge) of a much-sought-after motion picture. (Please read my review and check the ad elsewhere in this issue.)

The Nostalgia Merchant and Blackhawk have been kind enough to provide me with this issue's review tapes. Thank you, Earl and Ted.

Ted Reinhart
Edgewater Acres Resort
Alexandria, PA 16611

☆☆☆

A Double Feature

The Arizona Ranger (RKO, 1948) Black & White.

Credits: Cast—Tim Holt, Jack Holt, Nan Leslie, Richard Martin, Steve Brodie, Paul Hurst. Director—John Rawlins.

Story: Jack Holt, owner of a large Arizona ranch, anxiously awaits the return of his son, Tim, who has just been discharged from Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Jack has big plans for his boy to assist him in running the Holt cattle empire. Upon arriving, Tim informs his father that he cannot settle down to ranch life. He has accepted a position with the Arizona Rangers and will direct their activities at a nearby outpost. Jack takes a dim view of Tim's decision and orders him off the spread with a statement that he is not welcome back. In his new capacity, Tim is assigned to sop an outlaw gang which has been conducting a crime wave throughout the region. The gang's leader (Steve Brodie) is married to a very attractive (and honest) woman (Nan Leslie). She is constantly mistreated by her husband and attempts to run away. Tim

meets and falls in love with Nan. This complicates matters for Ranger Tim, especially when his dad learns of the romance, far from acceptable by Jack's standards. Brodie is killed in the end, father and son reconcile their differences, even to the point where Jack intercedes for Tim to get the girl.

Evaluation: If ever I muster up enough courage to select the ten best B-westerns, *The Arizona Ranger* would be among the listed. Tim Holt established a reputation for consistently turning out superior movies. Many of us wonder why Tim Holt never became a "big leaguer." His acting successes in *Back Street*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Hitler's Children*, and *Treasure of Sierra Madre*, all major motion pictures, should have kept him there. Fortunately for fans of quality B-westerns, Tim Holt never "graduated." *The Arizona Ranger* is Tim's best of the "B's." Add father, Jack, to the cast, and you have a champion videocassette. Sight, sound, everything is excellent. Save your allowance for this one . . . everybody.

☆☆☆

Road Agent (RKO, 1952) Black & White.

Credits: Cast—Tim Holt, Richard Martin, Noreen Nash, Mauritz Hugo, Dorothy Patrick, Bob Wilke, Tom Tyler. Director—Lesley Selander.

Story: Tim Holt and his pal Chito (Martin) are stopped along the trail by a group of men who claim that they are riding on a toll road and must pay \$20.00 to proceed. Reluctantly, the duo complies but then decides this is unfair and retrieve their money. They later learn that the toll road owner, Milo Brand, is demanding \$5.00 per head from cattle ranchers to use his road to Bisby, the only route to the only nearby market. This will break the ranchers and give Brand the entire territory. Tim and Chito come to the rescue of the ranchers as frontier Robin Hoods, dressed in black capes and wearing masks. They steal from Brand and give to the needy. Eventually, Tim learns that Brand is operating outside the law and his scheme is foiled.

Evaluation: A good western is made to look only "fairly good" after following the likes of the first of this double feature. It's just too tough an act to follow. *Road Agent* was produced four years later and does evidence some budget cuts. Visual and audio quality are very fine. I consider this hour long oater as a "bonus" with the above.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant.

☆☆☆

A Double Feature

The San Antonio Kid (Republic, 1944) Black & White.

Credits: Cast—Bill Elliott, Bobby Blake, Alice Fleming, Linda Stirling, Duncan Renaldo, Glenn Strange, Tom London, LeRoy Mason. Director—Howard Bretherton.

Story: Walter Garfield (Mason), employed by a large oil company, discovers a supply of oil around the small cattle town of Maverick. He allies himself with Ace Hanlon (Strange), a crooked saloon keeper. Together they use violence and vandalism to frighten the ranchers into selling their oil infested property before the truth is learned. Red Ryder (Elliott) suspects that his constant enemy, Hanlon, is behind all the terror, and sets out to prove so. Red accidentally stumbles on oil in a cave on the Taylor Ranch, which shows

why Hanlon has been buying up all his property. To get rid of Red Ryder, Hanlon hires The San Antonio Kid (Renaldo) to wipe him out. Instead of killing Red, The Kid joins forces with him and together they stop Hanlon and his gang from fulfilling their crooked scheme.

Evaluation: This is one of the many titles of the Red Ryder series starring Bill Elliott. Most I have seen and I'd rate this as good as any. I always preferred Elliott in his non-Ryder roles (especially the "Wild Bills"), but his legion of fans will appreciate his performance in this vehicle, I'm sure. Picture and sound quality of this movie are most acceptable.

Kansas Terrors (Republic, 1939) Black and White.

Credits: Cast—Bob Livingston, Raymond Hatton, Duncan Renaldo, Jacqueline Wells, Howard Hickman, George Douglas, Yakima Canutt. Director—George Sherman.

Story: Stony Brooke and Rusty Joslin ship a herd of horses to a small Caribbean Island and are paid \$8,000 in gold, later to have it stolen from them by the soldier of the Commandante (Douglas), who rules the island with an iron hand. The two American cowboys team up with Renaldo, the leader of a band of rebels, to rid the island of the tyrants. After their cause is completed, Stony and Rusty are delighted to discover that Renaldo is aboard their boat heading back to the states. He has elected to join his new found friends and become a member of the Three Mesquiteers.

Evaluation: This is a very interesting B-western. The foreign soil "western" permitted many fresh ideas with a unique plot. *Kansas Terrors* introduced a whole new team to play the Mesquiteers. Livingston returned to his Stony Brooke role after a very long absence. Raymond Hatton had previously played Rusty Joslin in two previous pictures, and this is the movie which introduced Duncan Renaldo into the line-up. In this film Republic capitalized on Bob Livingston's recent role of the Lone Ranger, in the serial, *The Lone Ranger Rides Again*. Here the producers find an "excuse" to dress Bob in his complete Lone Ranger costume, white horse, and all. I even took note that the same voice dub of Billy Blletcher, used in the Lone Ranger, was again employed here when Livingston is masked. Why, I'll never know, but to a B-western freak, this is an item to look for. I find this the better of the twosome, which makes the tape a more attractive buy. All round quality is quite good.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant.

☆☆☆

Prairie Moon (Republic, 1938) Black & White.

Credits: Cast—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette, Shirley Deane, Tommy Ryan, Tom London, William Pawley, Warner Richmand. Director—Ralph Staub.

Story: Legs Barton, a city gangster who is hiding out at a remote ranch, is killed in a gun battle with the law. Legs makes a dying request of deputy sheriff Gene Autry to look after his three sons who are living alone in the big city. Gene agrees and sends his side-kick, Frog Millhouse (Burnette) to locate the kids and bring them to the ranch. The three boys are little "toughs" and become most difficult to control. A gang of cattle rustlers want the old Barton ranch and try to use the youngsters to accomplish this. The three Barton boys later help Gene round up the rustlers and bring them to justice.

Evaluation: This is the third Autry film to be released by Blackhawk this year. Many many more are "on the way." I feel this is one title which just as well could have been passed over . . . it's not one of the better Gene Autry pictures. I never could accept kids playing in B-westerns, even as a kid, and these little "monsters" do nothing to further the quality of *Prairie Moon*. There is one musical highlight. Gene and Frog singing "He's in the Jailhouse Now." The rest of the numbers won't excite even the staunchest Autry fan. Visual and sound quality rate quite good.

Source: Blackhawk Films.

☆☆☆

The Lone Ranger (Republic, 1938) Black & White.

Credits: Cast—Lee Powell, Chief Thundercloud, Herman (Bruce Bennet) Brix, Lynn Roberts, Stanley Andrews, William Farnum, George Cleveland, Hal (Wally Wales) Taliaferro, Lane Chandler, George (Montgomery) Letz, John Merton, Charles King. Directors—William Witney and John English.

Story: During the lawless period of Reconstruction following the Civil War, we find five Texans joining together to combat the ruthless outlaw gang led by a man who poses as Jeffries, a government minister of finance. This crusade is aided by two men who always appear when most needed . . . a mysterious masked rider known only as The Lone Ranger, and his Indian friend Tonto. As the pursuit of Jeffries gets more profound, it becomes apparent that one of the five Texans is the Lone Ranger. One by one these men are killed, until only Allen King (Lee Powell) remains . . . The Lone Ranger, and he brings Tefferies and his entire gang to their end.

Evaluation: As I stated earlier, this is *THE* serial. The miracle of miracles is that this motion picture has survived. To detail how would take pages and pages. The important factor is that the greatest serial ever made is now available on video tape. There is some missing footage from this 15 chapter production, and the quality varies greatly from segment to segment (from good to pretty darn bad . . . the latter is minimal, though). There are no annoying Spanish subtitles, and the opening and closing are titled in English. The serial is actually presented more as a very long feature movie. There is only one opening and closing title sequence, and no repeated footage is include at the "cliffhanger" moments. The entire production runs nearly 3½ hours. This version, the longest surviving one in the world, can well be considered a very valuable collector's item. I must emphasize the fact that the quality is not the greatest from the standpoint of picture, but this is more than compensated for in all other respects. Also on the second of this two tape special is my own personal narrated documentary—*Silent Memories* and *The Rough Riders' Trailers*.

Source: Ted Reinhart.

VHS Natework

(continued from p. 14)

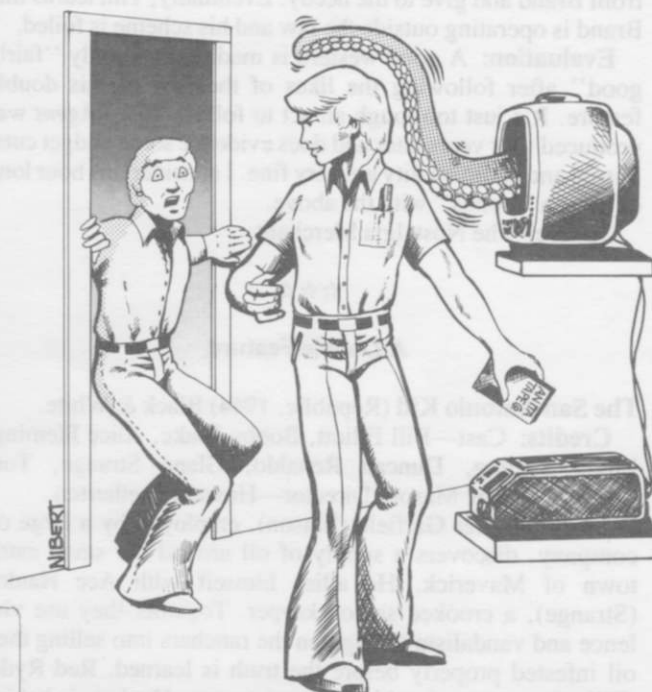
What We Missed in Las Vegas Dept.:

I finally got to see the Kloss Novabeam "Model One" projection color TV. It's pretty good, especially when you consider the initial price range of \$2,500 (hopefully to reduce even more). I felt it was a very good big screen and well worth the wait. You should definitely consider it when you are shopping for big screen projection TV's. One complaint—it doesn't have video/audio in/out jacks, so your VCR will have to remodulate and input to Kloss via the RF mode. (I have been told by major distributors that you may specify this option and pay extra to get it.)

That just about caps another column. Many thanks to John (Mr. Vidstar) and Sina, James L. Sutton (Mr. Movie Material Man), The Big Mort, The Furry LeRoy, and The Fuzzy Sloane, and Paula the Burrito Maker. [The Big Mort?—Ed.] Remember, if we can, let's help Jim Lowe promote *Devil Girl from Mars*. Jim, we know you've got a whole warehouse full of tapes of that flick that you'd like to unload as the latest Cult Mania film since *Rocky Horror* and *Bloody Vampire Dogs from Uranus*. [The Big Mort?—Ed.]

Anyway, address all correspondence, notes, graffiti, toaster schematics, trading stamps, and tacos to:

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



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MINI-ADS

FOR SALE

Betamax SL-7200 in excellent condition with Tuner/Timer. Best offer over \$275. (212) 333-4854.

Time Base Corrector

K.S.N. Model TC-1008, recently checked and aligned. Sold new \$3,000. Sacrifice \$800. (216) 333-4311.

VHS T-120 2-4-6 hr. videotapes very good condition used only once or twice per tape to record HBO and other movies. 50 tapes - \$25 each. Also will record any TV, HBO, etc. free of charge (your choice) when you buy tape. Marc Kesinger, 8 Willimantic, Rochester IL 62563 (217) 498-8517.

1980 Sony SL-5400 Video Cassette Recorder purchased Nov. 17, 1979. Still under factory warranty. Must sell - relocating. Take over payments or \$1,128. Richard A. Dolson, 309 Hickory St., Michigan City IN 46360 (219) 872-0253. Will pay freight & include 1 adult film.

Zenith Video Camera B&W, with power supply, cables and mike. Never been used \$160. Send confirmation letter before money. Larry Bieza, 1121 Jessamine Ave., St. Paul MN 55106.

For Sale: JVC CR-6100 U-Matic ¾" VCR. Like new. Make offer. Will consider trade for a new ½" VCR. Don Konicoff, 120 West Palmetto Park Rd., Boca Raton FL 33432.

B&W TV camera "Cartrivision Instant Replay" Sears Mod #15652200200 Eumig Zoom 9-30 FL9. Camera looks great, works? \$65/swap for Vivatar 365 or ? Scott McCann, 111 Old Mill Bottom Rd., Annapolis MD 21401 (301) 757-1991.

Sony SLO-320 "The Rolls Royce of the VCR's" (see *The Videophile* Sept. '79, page 13). Used, in good condition \$498 plus \$14 shipping. E. Bianchi, 1228 W 182nd St., Gardena CA 90248 (213) 327-2024.

B&W Sony 3600 open-reel video recorder, B&W Sony CVM TV/monitor 194, 12 blank tapes (good shape). New heads and belts on recorder. Asking \$600 plus shipping. Write John Sylvano, 4714 N. Cortez, Apt. 31, Tampa FL 33614.

RCA B&W video camera (model BW-004); has 3:1 zoom lense, built-in microphone. Comes complete with power supply box and all necessary video cables. Original cost was \$400, will sell for \$200. Richard Page, 2 Darby Drive, Mansfield MA 02048 (617) 339-8817.

IMAGE ENHANCER only one month old, mint condition with two "F" cables, originally cost \$290. No waiting, first phone call and check gets it for \$199. Also pre recorded VHS tapes: Blackhawk-Mark of Zorro (silent) \$20; Video T.E.N.-New Adventures of Tarzan serial on two tapes \$40. (405) 942-2370.

1980 Sony KV-2643R 26" Trinitron console TV. Purchased Nov. 21, 1979, but not used until Dec. 25, 1979. Factory warranty; remote control; reviewed in *The Videophile* Feb. issue. Take over payments or \$1,128. Richard A. Dolson, 309 Hickory St., Michigan City IN 46360 (219) 872-0253. Will pay ½ freight charges.

BETA

Would like any movies which deal directly or indirectly with the US Coast Guard. Also looking for a good copy of Star Wars. Have much to trade including HBO and X-Rated features (uncut). Send me your list and I'll send you mine. Ed Kane, 22 Central Ave., Chicopee MA 01020 (413) 594-4626.

Beta Trading partners sought, especially in New York metro area. Seeking to join or form video collectors club. My list for yours. Have many movies and TV. Write BAM, P.O. Box 317, Brooklyn NY 11209.

Important New Instructions Re: Advertising

In order to keep it simple, fair to everyone and, above all, *inexpensive* to the individual videophile, the following is our policy with respect to mini-ads. **ONLY SUBSCRIBERS** are eligible to place a mini-ad, and ads may be placed for **ONLY ONE** issue at a time. These are available for the extremely cheap rate of 50 words for \$2.00. However, after the first 50 words, *each word* will cost you an additional 10¢, and we must impose a limit of 200 words (\$17.00) per advertiser per issue. *It is permissible to place more than one mini-ad in the same issue. However, the rate charged is to be calculated on the combined total number of words in your ads. For example, two ads with 50 words each will be \$7.00 (not \$4.00)--50 words for \$2.00 and 50 words at the rate of 10¢ each.* Your name and address (within reason) equals 6 words. Telephone number equals 1 word. You may request that your ad be placed under any of the following classifications: For Sale, Beta, VHS, Just Plain Wanted, Personals, Video Discs, or Rubber Novelties. All ads *must* be related to video. Also, no mini-ads will be accepted for the sale of hardware or blank or prerecorded tapes and related items from those offering these items in quantities of more than one. Collectors may, however, place ads seeking to unload all their old tape. **NO** ads for copyrighted material **FOR SALE** will be accepted unless you have the rights to it.

DEALERS AND WEALTHY INDIVIDUALS: Please send for our rate card. Dealers are not eligible to place mini-ads. We do offer full page, half, quarter, one-third and one-sixth page display rates, special placement, and color.

DEADLINES: Ads absolutely **MUST** reach us by the deadline. Please, no more phone calls and speedy express deliveries after the deadline. The deadlines for the next two issues are: Issue #26 - June 2 and #27 - August 1.

Wanted: Beta X-2 copies of the following screen gems - *Amazons, Beautiful But Dangerous, Big Bird Cage, Big Doll House, Black Mama White Mama, Blow-Up, Caged Heat, Captain Kidd and the Slave Girl, Carmen, Baby, Coffy, Common Law Cabin, Gervaise, Ginger, Girls Are for Loving, Gone With the West, Greek Connection, Gunslinger, Heat of the Summer (Chaleur D'Ete), It's Hot in Paradise, Jessie's Girls, Jessie James Women, Judex, Lady Godiva Rides, Las Piranhas, Legend of Frenchy King, Lemmy Caution films, Love and Anarchy, Mini-Skirt Mob, Most Beautiful Girl in the World, Mudhoney!, Only the French Can, Potpourri, Pre-historic Women, Prison Girls, Reform School Girl, Robin Hood and the Pirates, Spy Who Loves Flowers, Swamp Women, Thrill Seekers, Thor and the Amazon Women, Tiger Takes a Hand, Timber Fury, Two Thousand Women, Untamed Youth, War Goddess, Wildcat Women, Wild Women, Wild Women of Wongo, Your Turn Darling, Nocturna*. I have HBO, and ready access to Showtime and Movie Channel. Can supply your wants if you'll supply mine. Keith Lawrence, 1340 N. Summit, Apt. 11, Decatur IL 62526 (217) 422-0687.

Available in Magnetic Video-Produced Beta-I: *M*A*S*H, Longest Day, Beneath Planet of Apes, Agony & Ecstasy, Song of Bernadette, Hello Dolly, Hot Rock, Patton, The Robe, Sand Pebbles, Cleopatra*. Also, *The Red Balloon, Mayerling, Secret Agent*. What have you in VHS? James G. Froehlich, M D, 3626 Brookwood Dr., Bayside CA 95524.

Want to hear from someone w/ch 52 in Los Angeles, Corona. Wanted in BETA *Chinatown, Wanderers, Brewster McCloud, President's Analyst, Greaser's Palace, Putney Swope, The Producers, The Wanderers, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, Laurel & Hardy, old TV shows. Anything unusual. Have over 600 titles to trade. Send list to Barry Glick, Almost Heaven Hot Tubs, Ltd., Renick WV 24966

Boston Area Beta Trader looking for same. Have lists & movie channel. Call Dave at (617) 628-3657.

Bill Frankel trades unusual Beta software. Write him at 650 Ocean Park Blvd. #2, Santa Monica CA 90405.

Wanted: *100 Men and a Girl*, Deanna Durbin (1937). Prefer on L-750 at X-1 but X-2 okay. Also any other Durbin films. Will tape off air [*Dr. Who* (uncut), older uncut films] or take blank tapes in trade. Also have indirect access to H.B.O. Mark Lucchese, 510 Ferndale Cresc., Thunderbay Ontario, Canada P7L 1H6 (807) 577-2720.

Beta Format Wanted - B/W movie *Maurice* - story of Stokes, the basketball player. R. L., P. O. Box 1048, San Diego CA 92112.

Wanted in Beta I format episodes from the 'Battlestar Galactica' series: *The Hand of God* (April 29, 1979); the episode with Fred Astaire (Jan. 28, 1979); the one in which Apollo was in a Western-style shootout with a cylon on a frontier planet (Oct. 8, 1978); and the two-part episode in which women became fighter pilots and Serena was killed (Sept. 24 & Oct. 1, 1978). Preferably without commercials. No recorded tapes to trade; name your terms. J. A. Hargrove, 3652 Overton St., Colorado Springs CO 80910 (303) 597-9392.

Beta Format Wanted: Bogart, Lorre/Greenstreet, *Dead-End Kids* uncut movies on X-2 videotapes, posters, books wanted. Also X-Rated adult movies wanted. Have access to HBO, Atlanta's WTBS, Chicago's WGN, Kansas City's KBMA, Wichita's KAKE, Madison Square Garden Sports, and 10 other stations. Let's trade! Tim Hessee, 715 Thurston, Manhattan KS 66502.

ST. LOUIS AREA VIDEOPHILES UNITE! If you're interested in trading for stuff on the air before you got a recorder, or finding someone who didn't push the wrong button on the recorder that night, maybe we can help! We also maintain contacts with other cities. St. Louis Video Fandom c/o John F. Donigan, RR 1 Box 377, E. Carondelet IL 62240 (618) 286-3557.

Wanted: All of the Green Hornet series, also Time Tunnel, The Invaders, and Johnny Quest cartoons. Wanted movies: *Dawn of the Dead*, any SF, *Them!*, *Tarantula*, and the Harryhausen movies, *It Came From Beneath the Sea*, *Jason And The Argonauts*, and *It Came From Outer Space*. Send trade lists. Larry Bieza, 1121 Jessamine Ave., St. Paul MN 55106.

Wanted: Laurel & Hardy *Pick a Star, Hollywood Party, Bonnie Scotland, Me and My Pal, Hollywood Review of 1929, Angora Love, Bacon Grabbers, Double Whoopee, Big Business, That's My Wife, Wrong Again, Liberty*. Have 50 Laurel & Hardy plus much more to trade. Earl Laskey, 20 Morning Dove, Irvine CA 92714 (714) 559-7029.

Wanted—Opera in BETA format: *Die Walküre Act I* concert version with Ozawa and Boston Symphony Orchestra. Broadcast on PBS, films by Richard Tauber, *UCLA Master Classes* by Lotte Lehmann, *Tucker-Merrill Concert* with Boston Pops, *Vita-phone* film shorts by opera singers. Have many concert and opera tapes for trading. Bob Scott, P.O. Box 1694, Wayne NJ 07470 (201) 696-1278.

In Beta II - I have 53 Amos and Andy shows and one movie, I have 31 action serials in mostly fine quality and I'm looking for more to trade with. I have 16 Laurel and Hardy movies and 38 of their 40 sound shorts. I have all 14 Sherlock Holmes with Basil Rathbone and 12 Charlie Chan movies with Warner Oland. Bob Wachtel, 1354 East 64 St., Brooklyn NY 11234 (212) 763-1490.

ADULT CASSETTES, EXCHANGED for only \$2 each to cover return shipping. Beta only. Have hundreds of titles. Will also trade one XXX-rated cassette for two used cassettes. Also want Amos & Andy, Smith & Dale. Have oldies. Chaplin, Keystone Cops, Cartoons, serials. Hal Wallace, 8633 N. Springfield, Skokie IL 60076 (312) 676-1771.

VHS

Wanted: Radley Metzger's *The Punishment of Annie* on VHS. I will trade any movie for it. Please contact Mark Small, 300 East 54th Street, New York NY 10022 (212) 935-0172.

Wait Until Dark with Audrey Hepburn desperately wanted in VHS. Roy Johansen, 109 Brookhaven Dr., Marietta GA 30066 (404) 427-3445.

Wanted to Trade XXX's - *Sensation's, Hot Lunch, Inside Desiree Cousteau, Sex Wish, Pretty Peaches, Summer in Heat, Sheer Panties, The Seduction of Lynn Carter*. Excellent quality only. SP mode. Over 200 titles to trade adult and non-adult. Gary Rabinowitz, 1381 Chandler St., Far Rockaway NY 11691 (212) 291-3178.

Wanted New York City subscriber to Manhattan cable or teleprompter to record *The Ugly George Hour* and *Midnite Blue Shows*. VHS format only. Have lots to trade. Please write. P. Gordon, P.O. Box 825, Framingham MA 01701.

PLEASE HELP!!!! Someone must have *The Glass Bottom Boat* or *The Colossus of Rhodes* or even *Atlantis the Lost Continent*???? I am also looking for: Mr. Bill (any). Any, all (and even every one) of the Mondo movies, *Sparticus, Ben Hur, Dracula* movies, *THX 1138*, all of Russ Meyers films, Foreman vs. Lyle fight, and any Super Bowl games. I have HBO and I am interested in hearing from other people that have other subscription TV or cable available that can trade and would be interested in what I have available in exchange. My interests are varied and I would like to hear from anyone that wants to trade on a continuing basis. Please RUSH your trade lists, Subscription TV Guides and TV Guides ASAP. Lew Brooks, 6596-B East Calle Lapaz, Tucson AZ 85715.

Want to trade all types of movie tapes. Let's exchange lists of titles. Write: Len Fellen, 8 Patterson Lane, Englishtown NJ 07726 or call (201) 431-0456 evenings.

I am wanting these films: *Rabbit's Moon, Illusions of a Lady, L'Age D'or, Desperate Living, Pink Flamingos, Zachariah, Having a Wild Weekend, Rust Never Sleeps, Performance, Eraserhead, Great Rock & Roll Swindle, In the Realm of the Senses, Devils, How Tasty was my Little Frenchman, Bitter Tears of Petra Van Kant, Score, I Am a Camera, Itallion Stallion, Eat to the Beat, Big T.N.T. Show, T.A.M.I. Show* and any other films out of the ordinary. I have a lot to trade. Brian Gray, 5711 So. Gary Place, Tulsa OK 74105.

Wanted: *Hellstrom Chronicles, Medium Cool, Blow-up, and Story of 'O'*. Let's trade lists, L. Pickett, Box 38, Douglass KS 67039 (316) 746-2650.

Wanted: *McCabe and Mrs. Miller, The Long Good-bye, 2001, Jesus Christ Superstar, The People Next Door* (with Hal Holbrook). Please call or write James MacEachern, 24332 Puritan, Detroit MI 48239 (313) 534-8589.

Wanted VHS: *American Gigolo, Kramer vs. Kramer, Night Porter, Empire Strikes Back, Saturn 3*, Gordon Lewis films, Andy Warhol films. I have Super Bowl XIV, 1979 World Series Highlights, Donna Summer Special, Tonight Show 17th Anv., and Recent movies. SEND LIST. Randy Jordan, 4531 Ludwig Rd., Murrysville PA 15668 (412) 339-4965.

Tired of that prerecorded XXX tape you purchased? Want to expand your tape library without spending any more money? Write and tell me the titles, manufacturer and quality of your tapes. I'll respond with my offer and list of 200 titles. VHS format only. P. Gordon, P.O. Box 825, Framingham MA 01701.

Wanted uncut SP mode, CBS made for television movie *Sole Survivor* starring William Shatner and Richard Basehart, Russian S.F. movie *Solaris* preferably dubbed in English, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Stranger in the House* (HBO), *The Other*, *The Incident* starring Martin Sheen, the rock group "Devo". David Alex, 2140 West 20th Street, Cleveland OH 44113 (216) 781-4389.

Wanted *Galloping Gourment*, *Strange Report* late 1960's 633 *Squadron* 1964 *Spy Who Loved Me*, *Moonraker* and *Shout at the Devil*. First quality only. Best price, first letter. Desire contact VHS owners in Britain to obtain BBC coverage 1980 Olympics. Happy Viewing Goodman, 227 Watson Suite C, Monterey CA 93940.

Will Trade New RCA BW003 Video Camera in original carton for quality blank or pre-recorded VHS tapes. Write A. H. Willett, 1135 Little Magothly View, Annapolis MD 21401 (301) 974-1471.

WANTED: Daniel Boone TV show (1964-1969 seasons). Specifically looking for episodes with Ed Ames as a regular. Have cable and many older shows available for trade. Deanie Smith, 1716 McConnell Avenue, Owensboro KY 42301.

I'm in New York and have Wometco WHT. They show 20 movies per month. Looking for cable subscribers from California to Florida to exchange movies taped from your system. Send a copy of schedule from your monthly guide and I'll send you mine. Ron Meyers, P.O. Box 160, Island Park NY 11558.

Desperately want - uncut - *From Russia With Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Jeremia Johnson*, *Alien*, *Close Encounters*, *Rollerball*, *North By Northwest*, *Journey of O*, *Call Me Angel*, *Sir*, *Defiance*. SP mode, quality only! Over 200 titles to trade - Also Adult XXX Tapes. Gary Rabinowitz, 1381 Chandler St., Far Rockaway NY 11691. (212) 291-3178.

Wanted XXX tapes *Intimate Illusions*, *Sheer*, *Female Athletes*, *Insatiable*, *Night Birds*, *Fantasy Island*, any new films or ? Send your list and I'll send mine. Write: H. Peterson, 10554 Decatur Ave. So., Bloomington MN 55438.

Wanted: *Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Fearless Vampire Killers*, *Hellstrom Chronicles*, *Blow Up*, *A Place Called Today*, *If...*, *Medium Cool*, *Titicat Follies*, more. Will exchange lists. Stan Sieger, 848-C Berkeley St., New Milford NJ 07646 (201) 967-9740.

Car 54 is shown locally. I would like to trade it for Warner Wolf sports broadcasts on WABC-TV. Also looking for Frank Sinatra, *The Committee*, 1979 Ky.-Notre Dame basketball games, 1979 episodes of *Dallas*, and *Vintage Sports*. David Andrews, 131 Page Rd., Nashville TN 37205 (615) 352-4148 before 10 pm CST.

BARBRA STREISAND VHS tapes wanted. Any interviews, award presentations, appearances, concerts, specials, etc. in VHS format. Also need uncut VHS tape of 1959 film *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Write: Randy Emerian, 5824 East Hamilton Avenue, Fresno CA 93727.

Hello, Sailor! I'm in Hades can you help? LADY-MAN, 3109 Explorer Dr., Sacramento CA 95827. Most wanted: *Victory Through Airpower*, *Superman* serial, *Robin Hood* (silent), *Pride & Prejudice*, *Idiot's Delight*, *Kung Fu* TV series, *Fiddler on the Roof*, all Steve Martin.

WANTED on VHS: International Roller Skating League/Roller Derby broadcasts. Have little to trade, but can work out a mutually beneficial trade if you can tape these games for me. Contact Philip Berrier, P.O. Box 283, Wallburg NC 27373.

ST. LOUIS AREA VIDEOPHILES UNITE! If you're interested in trading for stuff on the air before you got a recorder, or finding someone who didn't push the wrong button on the recorder that night, maybe we can help! We also maintain contacts with other cities. St. Louis Fandom, c/o John F. Donigan, RR 1 Box 377, E. Carondelet IL 62240 (618) 286-3557.

Wanted: VHS; I am looking for someone in Hollywood who gets KTLA. I am interested in Gene Autry movies and other westerns. I have a large list to trade and have HBO. Michelle Peters, P.O. Box 781, Pontiac MI 48056 (313) 589-2492.

JUST PLAIN WANTED

Interested in ALL Sci-Fi and Animation (pref. VHS), *Andromeda Strain*, 2001, *Dr. Who*, *The Prisoner*, *Star Trek*, *Space: 1999*, *The Starlost*, *The Avengers*, etc....International Animation Festival (PBS), *Allegro Non Troppo*, *Wizards*, *The Point*, etc....Have computer access and TWX...interested in starting North American trading club or consolidating listings for present clubs. Fritz Golman, 1459 Linden Ave., Highland Park IL 60035.

Desire excellent uncut copies of MGM musicals, Hitchcock and Laura Antonelli's films. Masaaki Suga, Shikamachi-kogyo High School, Shikamachi-cho, Nagasaki 859-61, Japan.

Want trading contact in EL PASO, TX. Also information on where *T.H.E. Cat* is now running. And does anyone in ENGLAND have PAL VHS tapes of any episodes of the last seasons of *Blake's 7* and *Saffire and Steel*? Barbara E. Warne, P.O. Box 4678, Albuquerque NM 87196 (505) 268-8531.

Wanted: *Quadruphenia*, *Baby Snakes*, *Rust Never Sleeps*, *Rock 'N Roll High School*, Beatles, Who, Stones, Doors, New Wave, or any rock, comedy, Water's films, Warhol, Mr. Mikes *Mondo Video*, *LeCage Aux Folles*, any cult, recent motion pictures, etc. Beta/VHS/U-Matic. P.O. Box 92, Station Z, Toronto, Ontario M5N 2Z3 Canada.

Tired of that XXX Adult tape you bought?? Want to trade? I want any tapes of VCX, Quality-X, TVX, Essex, Calvista, AVC, Arrow, Video King, Four Star, etc. VHS or Beta. I have many to trade. No money involved. Especially want quality-X *Pam Mann*, *Misty Beethoven*, *Calvistas' Bacchanale*, *Jezebel*, *Essex-Tangerine*, *Frat House*. I also have a CVA-Image Enhancer, retail \$287 to trade. Mint condition. Will trade for best offer in blank tapes or what have you?? Jack Laydon, 1427 So. 9th Street, St. Charles IL 60174 (312) 584-4988. Please no calls after 6 pm.

Wanted Beta or VHS: TV series *Movin' On*, *Ben Casey*, *Mod Squad*, *Route 66*, *Dog and Cat*, *Whirly Birds*, *Rescue 8*. Shows with Paul Michael Glaser, David Soul - any 1975-76 *Merv*, *Dinah*, *Mike Douglas*; 4-26-76 *Rich Little Show*; any 1980 *Mike Douglas*. Carol Huffman, 1804 Barron Lane, Fort Worth TX 76112 (817) 451-7380.

Wanted Beta Format Only: Neil Diamond concert special aired Feb., 1978, Barry Manilow live Greek theatre concert, length (1:50) and Chicago Pine Knob Detroit concert, length (1:17), both on sub. TV. Will buy, trade or deal. Send info to: Alice Cummins, P.O. Box 955, Rialto CA 92376.

I will sacrifice anything for the following movies: *Rock Baby Rock It*; *Incredible Torture Show*; *Three On a Meathook*; *Night of the Bloody Apes*; *Gruesome Twosome*; *Roman Candles*; *Eat Your Makeup*; *La Grande Bouffe*; *Thunderbirds Are Go!*; *Conquest of Mars*. I have lots of desirable material to trade, such as...MOVIES: *Last House on the Left*; *Mondo Cane*; *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*; *W.C. Fields* (uncut); Bond films; B sci-fi, etc. TV SERIES: *Green Hornet*; *The Champions* (all 30); *Secret Agent*; *Mission: Impossible* (w/ Landau & Bain); *Wild Wild West*; *Monkees*; *Captain Video*; *Invaders*; *Outer Limits* (uncut); *Man From U.N.C.L.E.*; *Time Tunnel*; *Untouchables*; *Burns & Allen*; *Car 54*; *Hitchcock Presents*; *One Step Beyond*; *Life of Riley* (w/ Gleason); *Honeymooners*; *Bilko*; *Thriller*; *Amos n' Andy*; *Doctor Who* (w/ Baker & Pertwee-uncut), etc. SUPERMARIONATION: *Fireball XL-5*; *Stingray*; *Thunderbirds*/promo rock shorts; *Midnight Blue*; old commercials; trailers, and much, much, more. I'm still very interested in obtaining many old TV series: early Russ Meyers', John Waters, and Herschell Gordon Lewis films; cartoon series; serials; Pete Smith shorts; uncut *Little Rascals*; and more. I will accept blank VHS & Beta tapes in trade. Michael Burgujian, 15-35 146th Place, Whitestone NY 11357 (212) 746-4473.

WANTED VHS or Beta documentary war films such as *Victory at Sea*, *Crusade in Europe*, *The Unknown War*, *Big Battles*, original German Newsreels, etc...interested in serials, old and new movies, just about everything. Have hundreds of titles for trade. Have HBO and cable. Jim Jones, P.O. Box 41192, Cincinnati OH 45241.

WANTED DESPERATELY: The movie *Zacharia* starring Don Johnson. I will do almost anything to get this movie. I have over 300 movies and 150 television shows to trade with. Brian Gray, 5711 So. Gary Place, Tulsa OK 74105.

Wanted: Video tape of uncut, serialized version of *Victory at Sea* with music by Richard Rogers. G.L. Cafesjian, 50 W. Kellogg Blvd., P.O. Box 3526, St. Paul MN 55165 (612) 228-2500.

We interrupt these ads to bring you the following urgent message: I would desperately like to find the first (1978?) Steve Martin HBO special. PLEASE help or provide leads. I don't have much to trade, but send wants. Many thanks and *excuuuuse me* for interrupting! Doug Dobbins, 115 Muscadine Dr., Mauldin SC 29662 (803) 288-5125 (last evenings best).

Wanted—mid-Atlantic area video fans to join VIDEO CLUB OF MARYLAND. Members swap tapes free and get big discounts on equipment and supplies. Our membership collects nearly everything and trades even more. We invite your trade and want lists. Dealer offers to members are solicited and acknowledged by publication in our newsletter. VCM members are active and repeat consumers of equipment and supplies. Join the club run by fans for fans. Your \$20 check makes you a member, gets you our latest butletin (with offers) and a complete membership list. Send your check to VIDEO CLUB OF MARYLAND, 113 Otis Drive, Severn, Maryland 21144. Phone (301) 969-7994.

INTERESTED IN ALL SCI-FI & ANIMATION. (Pref. VHS) *Andromeda Strain*, 2001, *Dr. Who*, *The Prisoner*, *Star Trek*, *Space: 1999*, *The Starlost*, *The Avengers*, etc...*International Animation Festival (PBS)*, *Allegro Non Troppo*, *Wizards*, *The Point*, etc...Have computer access and TWX...interested in starting North American trading club or consolidating listings for present clubs. Fritz Golman, 1459 Linden Ave., Highland Park IL 60035.

Looking for quality copies of many kinds of movies. have facilities to duplicate. Have 138 titles, 115 are perfect, first-generation. Have HBO—looking for someone with QUBE, ON, Showtime or other cable connection. Also have 21 adult features. Let's exchange lists. Barney Luce, P.O. Box AA, Carmichael CA 95608.

Wanted in any format: personally shot in concert footage of any rock bands. I have much footage to trade (*Blondie*, *Knack*, *Springsteen*, *Devo*, etc.) or will consider purchase. Any Springsteen video desperately wanted! Also wanted: *Outer Limits*, *Twilight Zone* and *One Step Beyond* episodes. Will trade for same. Movies wanted, good copies only *Renaldo and Clara*, *Don't Look Back*, *Journey Through the Past*, *Rust Never Sleeps*, *Quadrophenia* *Rocksucker Blues*, *The Trip* and any good rock films. Have many of same to trade. Send lists to: Fred Matt, 4536 Mimosa, Bellaire TX 77401 (713) 665-4112.

WANTED DESPERATELY ON BETA II OR VHS: Old TV series - *Sea Hunt*, any and all. *Superman* episodes, uncut: *Through the Time Barrier* (color), *The Case of the Talkative Dummy* (B&W), *The Man Who Could Read Minds* (B&W). I could identify all three of these by the TV Guide write-ups. Also, *Robin Hood* (shown recently in Atlanta GA) TV series. Quality must be good. Commercials can be left in. Can trade the following TV shows: *Phil Silvers*, *Ironside*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Twilight Zone*, *Bewitched*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Candid Camera*, *Perry Mason*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *Addams Family*, *Gilligan's Island*, *Maverick*, *I Love Lucy*, *Hogan's Heroes*, *Andy Griffith*, *Dick Van Dyke*, *Gunsmoke*, *Marcus Welby M.D.*, *Groucho*, *Lucy Show*, *Partridge Family*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Batman*, *Kung Fu*, *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek*, *Wagon Train*, *Little Rascals*, *Laurel and Hardy*, *Wrestling*, *Popeye*, *Flintstones*, *Bullwinkle*, *Casper*, *Mighty Mouse*, *Heckle and Jeckle*, *Jetsons*. Can also trade any movies that may come up. Send me your list and I'll send you mine. Let's also trade TV guides... maybe we've both missed something. Jim O'Toole, 123 N. 4th St., Apt. 308, Mankato MN 56001 (507) 387-3616.

Fellini's *Satyricon* desperately wanted! Any format. Have many old and new films and TV shows. Will also consider any terms that don't extend too far beyond the outer limits and into the twilight zone. Also, *Hercules and the Black Pirate* (Alan Steele), *Samson* (Brad Harris), *Goliath and the Dragon* (Mark Forest), *Goliath in King Solomons Mines* (Reg Park) and similar 'epics'? Facilities for copying. Harry Fried, 716 Ditmas Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11218 (212) 851-2427.

Shakespeare fan goofed on *Twelfth Nite* recording. I have access to many i.e., most movies nominees, etc. Will buy or trade for good copy if you have a copy. Please respond: Geo. Blair, 305 W. Torrance Blvd., Carson CA 90745. Phone (213) 973-6888. Also looking for copy of Russian version of *War & Peace*.

VHS or Beta - Johnny Mathis on tape (TV, cable, or pre-recorded) including his last X-mas special on the Z Channel in L.A. Will trade or make other arrangements. Contact: Wallace Kirschner, 262 Beacon Hill Rd., Trumbull CT 06611.

Shakespeare or opera collector will do some trading to get *La Boheme* (PBS) (MET) *Midsummer Nights Dream*, *My Fair Lady*, *Beckett*, *Lion In Winter*, *War and Peace* (Russian dubbed version), *Close Encounters*, *Cyrano*. I can get practically any film, new or old. Home phone (213) 973-6888, office phone (213) 538-2664 (early am). George Blair, 13707 Doty Street, Hawthorne CA 90250.

Endless Night, *Life of Brian*, *Helstrom Chronicles*, *Carry On-Nurse*, *Camping*, *Doctor*, *Cleo*, etc. C & C's *Up in Smoke*, *Rust Never Sleeps*, *F.T.A.*, Disney's *1001 Dalmations* and any good animation. Diane Lowery: I lost your address in N.Y. (again).. Bill Placzek, 2723 N. Dayton, Chicago IL 60614 (312) 477-9272 between 3:00 and 11:00.

Un-cut only, *The Sweet Ride*, *Second Wind*, *Breezy*, *The Stud*, *The Bitch*, *Forty Carats*, *Truckstop Women*, *Vampyres*, *Baron Blood*, *Master of Love*, *The Florida Connection*, *Fast Company*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Devils Rain*. J.M. Dolan, 5302 Pagewood St., Houston, TX 77056 (713) 965-0853 (late hours).

Wanted desperately on any tape format (prefer VHS): *NBC: First Fifty Years* and its sequels (*A Closer Look*, *Parts I and II*), *CBS: On the Air* ABC's 25th anniversary, or any similar programs. R. Bry, 931 Himmon Ave., Evanston, IL 60202. Please???

Wanted: Neil Diamond shows/movies, outtakes/bloopers, and Little Orphan Annie movies. Quality copies only, please. Many good titles to trade. Rich Olson, 8110 Curran, New Orleans, LA 70122 (504) 241-1071.

Early Classic TV specials wanted—*An Evening with Fred Astaire* (1958); *Another Evening with Fred Astaire* (1960); *Astaire Time* (1961); *Astaire's Hollywood Palace* (1966); *Fred Astaire Show* (1968); *Mary Martin's Peter Pan* (1960); *Bell Telephone's 10th Anniversary Program* (1976). Also, I am trying to locate CBS EVR film cartridges for a Motorola Teleplayer. I have NBC's and CBS's 50th Anniversary Programs on Beta I. Ed Reitan, 464 Midvale Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024 (213) 478-7393.

WANTED: Lou Grant series (first two seasons), Monty Python all shows and films, and Pro Wrestling from anywhere. Also, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. Will buy or trade. I have hundreds of movies (many not usually available) to trade plus other material. Both VHS and Beta. Paul Fishbein, 2304 Benson St. 1st Floor, Philadelphia PA 19152 (215) 338-8997.

Dr. Who serial *Mind of Evil* with Jon Pertwee. This was last aired in Buffalo, Los Angeles, Boston and QUBE in 1977-78. Also want *Champions* TV episodes recently aired in Pittsburgh. Have much adventure and Sci-fi TV to trade. Prefer Beta but VHS can be arranged. Larry Charet, 1219-A Devon, Chicago IL 60660 (312) 274-1832.

WANTED: Beta or VHS •*Thief of Bagdad*-Sabu version •*Cabin in the Sky*-Rochester, Ethel Waters •*Canterville Ghost*...Chas. Laughton •*Whispering Smith*...Alan Ladd •*Great Gatsby*...Alan Ladd. Tapes available for trade or I will buy @ reasonable prices — Please send me your XXX lists!! Jim Grimes, 2605 James St., Baltimore MD 21230.

Want to exchange have/want lists for XXX tapes. Use Beta, but may have both formats by the time this ad appears. Will give same day service. E. Brown, 411 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Desperately Wanted! *The War Widow* shown on PBS. Will trade blank tape or currency. R. Meyer, 2492 N. Jerusalem Rd., N. Bellmore, NY 11710.

WANTED IN BETA II FORMAT: Bruce Lee movies, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Forbidden Planet*, *Circle of Iron*, *Goodbye Girl*. Prefer to buy. Bill Roberts, Box 595, Bartow FL 33830. Thanks.

Wanted: *Upstairs, Downstairs*—the English PBS serial. I discovered this program when it was almost finished! Muriel Curyea, 2582 Dell Ave., Mountain View, CA 94043.

PERSONAL

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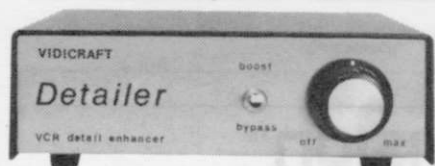
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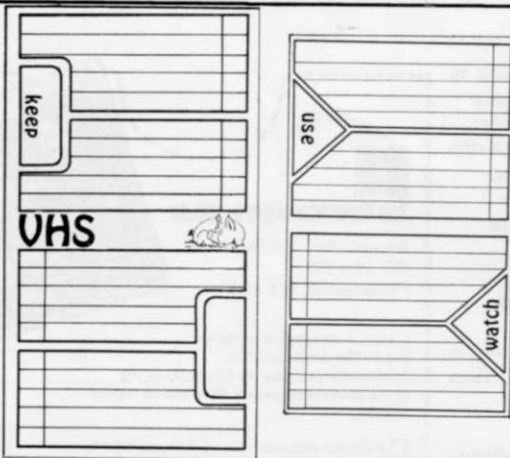
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- #13: How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8200 (or Zenith), Bob Burns' first column for "VHS" folks, Rambling Marc battles Universal attorneys, and reports on pay cable systems, lotsa questions and answers, great America 2Night cover.
- #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's & A's. Report on the Sony SL-8600, TVN goes to two conventions, The Ultimate Video Room, much more!!
- #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 future, VHS and Beta formats brashly compared, 3 pages of letters, Q's & A's, etc.
- #16: First issue of THE VIDEOPHILE, featuring our annual roundup of over 80 sources for prerecorded videocassettes, 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.
- #17: VHS and Beta Counter/Index time charts, "Time Base Correctors" and dropouts explained, How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8600, lots of tips, advice, letters, questions and answers, book reviews and tape reviews too, 80 pages.
- #18: Our 1st Annual Video Disc Issue, featuring reviews of the Magnavox disc players, The MCA DiscoVision discs, and an Interview with John Findlater, president of MCA's DiscoVision division. Also news of the "Betamax" copyright trial, backyard earth stations, and new products galore.
- #19: Featuring our interview with Harlan Ellison, "The Man Who Hates Television," Reviews of the Betamax Changer & Winegard indoor antennas, more on the copyright lawsuit, Winter Consumer Electronics Show, and an in-depth look at international TV standards, Fat 104 page issue!
- #20: Our "What's Legal?" issue, including an interview with the Chief of the film industry's antipiracy program, Part 1 of our extensive Summer Consumer Electronics Show report, 5 portable recorders reviewed and compared, and lots more in 88 pages.
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- #22: Featuring our reviews of the new longer-playing VHS and Beta recorders, News about the happy conclusion of the "Betamax" copyright lawsuit, and an unbiased ("hee-hee") evaluation of the other available video publications. Also reviews of home video accessories, and much more.
- #23: Our 3rd annual roundup of over 150 sources for prerecorded videocassettes, Where the video disc went wrong, Exclusive product reports on the 26" Sony console and video editing systems, lots of questions and answers, and much more.
- #24: Features our exclusive 11-page report on the new products at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, How to properly handle and store video tape, book reviews, tape reviews, and our regular columns round out an issue that may be our least substantial of the year.

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