


the VIDEOPHILE

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February 1981

Issue #29 

*The
Videophile
Goes to Japan*



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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)



Trip to Japan 15



Video Tape Reviews 41

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THE VOICE OF VIDEO FANDOM

CONTENTS

	Page
TV Wiggles	Your Editor 6
The Videophile's Newsletter	11
The Japan Diary	Marc Wielage 16
Letters	32
The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly	34
For Beginners Only	38
Video Tape Reviews	41
Advertisers Index	45
Western Roundup	Ted Reinhart 46
Tele-Communication	Gary Bourgois 50
Porta-Paking	Mike Silver 52
Mini-Ads	55
Videophile Products	61
Back Issues	Back Cover

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tv wiggles

It had to happen. The mass market newsstand video magazines are beginning to evolve into better products and, in some cases, carving out individual personalities for themselves. I nearly fell over when I read the December issue of *Video*, in which they actually printed a lengthy article describing why it is that the Beta format is superior. [Now that both *Video* and *Consumer's Report* have published similar conclusions, maybe we should reexamine our policy of neutrality and take a more firm stand on the issue.] The article, submitted by a reader and more or less disclaimed by *Video*, is presented in great, but fascinating, detail. If you haven't read it, I recommend that you do. Copies should be available from: Back Issues, *Video Magazine*, 235 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003, for \$2.25. When you write, tell them we sent you, and inquire as to when they will be publishing a photo tour of Berger-Braithwaite Labs.

Video Review magazine is also a good one. It is the more handsome package of the two and its actual content (thanks in part to our own Marc Wielage) is usually worthwhile. These two mags are shaping up as the *Time* and *Newsweek* of the home video world. As is usually the case, competition has been good for both of them. They are even allowing free plugs (in the form of names and addresses) to slip in now and then. So far, however, neither has felt that our modest little effort on behalf of video fandom is of sufficient interest to merit mention to their readers.

Beneath these two are *Videoplay* magazine, now styling itself as "The How-To Magazine For Home Video," a niche in which it may find a measure of success; and *Home Video*, a magazine in search of an identity (and why not since it's published by our friends at *Videography*). I was envious of the latter's recent cover picture of Marilyn Chambers, but that's about it. Not every newsstand carries *Videoplay*, so you might want to gamble \$6 on a subscription to: *Videoplay*, 51 Sugar Hollow Road, Danbury, CT 06810. Bringing up the rear, is *Video Action*, a magazine which, so far, has not demonstrated any compelling reason for its existence.

Others are on the way. Pending a future opportunity to review them at greater length, we should also mention two mags that you won't find on the newsstand:

—*View*, the "Magazine of Cable TV Programming," is a really attractive trade publication that is chock-full of info of interest to the cable TV industry. Subscriptions (12 issues) are \$19.95 from: *View*, Subscription Service Dept., P.O. Box 5111, FDR Station, New York, NY 10022; and

—*Video*, Sehen was Spab macht, a slick and very nice home video magazine from Germany. The text is all German, but there are many pictures that you won't see elsewhere. The big

surprise (to me, at least) was the 8 or more pages of "mini-ads," apparently from readers (selling at DM 1,50 per column millimeter). I can't read the darn thing, but I think subscriptions are available. Inquire to: *Video*, Postfach 1042, D-7000 Stuttgart 1, Germany (or call 0711/2043-371).

☆☆☆

So where does the plethora of consumer video magazines leave our little publishing venture, which once had the territory all to itself? I don't mind telling you folks, it's been tough. We seem to have fallen into a pattern of giving you a really good one every other time. To be frank, that has been the best that we could do. Rather than switch to quarterly publication, we have persevered despite adversity. I know I must sound like a broken record, but the simple truth is that each member of our all-volunteer writing and editorial staff has another full-time job and life to cope with. We continue to look to the future with great anticipation and still expect our full potential to blossom forth one of these someday. I tell you these things only because there are none of you who want this magazine to grow fatter and appear more often than do we.

Among our future plans are to continue to do the things that the "big boys" either can't or won't do. This means reviews of tapes from limited production sources, be they westerns, XXX, old TV shows or video "magazines" like *Instant Replay*. It means columns written by and for actual living and breathing videophiles, who *sometimes* have to make up in enthusiasm what they may lack in finesse. It means calling a spade a spade and, consequently, having to charge a higher cover price and subscription rate, because our readership (not our advertisers) is supporting this venture. On the other hand, it also means soliciting more advertising from firms that we think you *should* know about. Many of you, I am sure, deal almost exclusively with sources that are little known outside of these pages. Those who have earned your trust certainly deserve your continuing support.

Along this line, and because you have demanded it, we are going to experiment with offering special "collectors" ad rates for display advertising. These ads must be strictly "non-commercial" (just like our mini-ads) and will be *available only to subscribers*. Within these restrictions you may run a ¼ page ad in this magazine for the unheard of low price of only \$29. Here's how:

—You *must* prepare the ad copy yourself. It can be submitted in only one of two sizes, either on an 8½ X 11 inch sheet (which we will reduce to fit on a quarter page), or on a 4¼ X 5½ inch sheet, to be printed "same-size."

—The full size sheet **MUST** have $\frac{1}{2}$ " margins *on all sides* and the quarter size sheet **MUST** have $\frac{1}{4}$ " margins *on all sides*.

—Copy must be in black or red ink or typed *with a dark ribbon*.

This is a chance for you to reach many thousands of serious video enthusiasts with your message. It is also an experiment in low-cost, hobbyist oriented advertising. Observe the rules and help us make it work. For now, we're going to have to limit you to only one such ad per issue. Later, . . . well, let's see how it goes.

For those of you who have less to say (or are not inclined to prepare your own copy) our mini-ads for as little as \$2.00 are still the best buy.

☆☆☆

We have a tip for those of you who enjoy having someone "official" to complain to and who felt that the performance of your local cable TV service falls short of what the company promised when you signed up and forked over your hard-earned bucks. By all means, complain in writing to your local cable franchisee and also send a copy of complaint to: Cable Complaint Service, Federal Communications Commission, 2025 M St., Washington, D.C. 20554.

☆☆☆

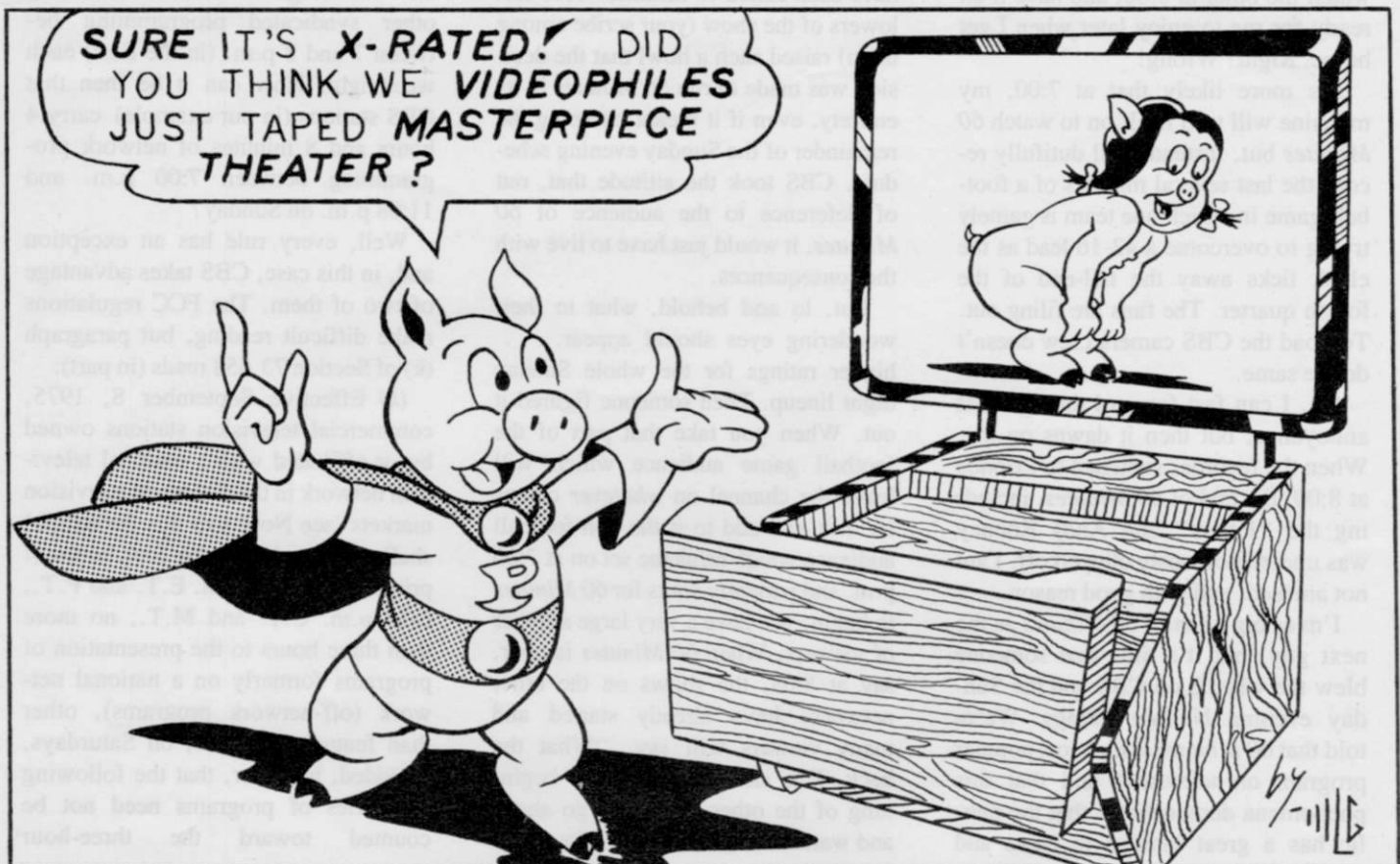
I continue to be so pleased with all the letters and clippings that so many of you are kind enough to send in. I do want to single out for thanks this time Ron Novinson and also Al Bianculli, whose generosity is exceeded only by his good taste.

☆☆☆

By the time you read this, the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show will be history. We'll have a booth there as well as part of our little group. With any luck, we'll have a full report for you next issue.

ALL THE BEST —

Jim



EDITORIAL

by: Jim Lowe

When the actors were on strike, I trust that many of you turned to PBS and enjoyed the many fine series being presented in its new season. *The Body in Question*, the repeat of *Connections*, *From Jumpstreet*, *Masterpiece Theater* and *Matinee at the Bijou*, among others, were certainly all well worth your attention.

I had particularly been looking forward to watching the 13-part series *Cosmos* with my man Carl Sagan at the helm. I'm also a *60 Minutes* fan, so this makes Sundays from 7 to 9 a special time for me. Shucks, even if I'm out to dinner, my trusty RCA VCT-400 programmable VCR ("trusty" that is, if the power doesn't blink on me) can watch one at 7:00, change channels, watch the other at 8:00, and have it all ready for me to enjoy later when I get home. Right? Wrong!

It's more likely that at 7:00, my machine will turn itself on to watch *60 Minutes* but, instead, will dutifully record the last several minutes of a football game in which one team is gamely trying to overcome a 42-16 lead as the clock ticks away the tail-end of the fourth quarter. The fans are filing out. Too bad the CBS camera crew doesn't do the same.

Oh, I can fast-forward through that annoyance, but then it dawns on me. When the recorder switched to *Cosmos* at 8:00, the end of *60 Minutes*, including the "letters" and Andy Rooney was unceremoniously clipped off. I am not amused, and with good reason.

I'm as big a fan of *60 Minutes* as the next guy, but it's time that someone blew the whistle on CBS and the Sunday evening Nielsen ratings. We're told that *60 Minutes* is the most popular program on television and that this phenomena demonstrates that the public has a great interest in news and

informational programming. But is this really true?

It may be, or it may be that CBS is deliberately manipulating the Sunday evening schedule to make it appear that *60 Minutes* is the most popular show.

A couple of years ago when CBS began to give us not one, but two, Sunday afternoon pro football games, they found that the second game nearly always ran late. That is, it almost never concluded before 7:00 p.m., Eastern Time. In order to maintain the announced schedule of its prime time programming, CBS adopted the policy of running an abbreviated version of *60 Minutes*. Thus, if the football game concluded at 7:13 p.m., we could expect to be treated to a show that could have been called *47 Minutes*. True followers of the show (your scribe among them) raised such a howl that the decision was made to run *60 Minutes* in its entirety, even if it meant bumping the remainder of the Sunday evening schedule. CBS took the attitude that, out of deference to the audience of *60 Minutes*, it would just have to live with the consequences.

But, lo and behold, what to their wondering eyes should appear, . . . higher ratings for the whole Sunday night lineup. Then someone figured it out. When you take that part of the football game audience which will leave the channel on whatever comes on next and add to it the non-football audience which turns the set on at 7:00 p.m. and patiently waits for *60 Minutes* to begin, you have a very large number of viewers. When *60 Minutes* is over, say at 8:08, the shows on the other networks have already started and many viewers will say, "What the heck, I've already missed the beginning of the other show. I'll go ahead and watch Archie Bunker." The ripple

effect then carries through the entire evening. What's more, viewers who begin their viewing at 8:00 or 9:00 on another channel can watch for a while, change their mind and still switch to CBS in time to catch another show from the start.

When criticized by the other networks for gaining an unfair advantage, CBS can beg off by saying, "Gee, we're sorry, but the game ran overtime. There's nothing we can do about it."

As you may be aware, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a rule that restricts network programming to no more than 3 hours each evening during the 4 hours of so-called "prime-time." This is why you have an hour of game shows, reruns and other syndicated programming between 7 and 8 p.m. (in the East) each weeknight. How can it be then that CBS stations (in our example) carry 4 hours and 8 minutes of network programming between 7:00 p.m. and 11:08 p.m. on Sunday?

Well, every rule has an exception and, in this case, CBS takes advantage of two of them. The FCC regulations make difficult reading, but paragraph (k) of Section 73.658 reads (in part):

(k) Effective September 8, 1975, commercial television stations owned by or affiliated with a national television network in the 50 largest television markets (see Note 1 to this paragraph) shall devote, during the four hours of prime time (7-11 p.m. E.T. and P.T., 6-10 p.m. C.T. and M.T., no more than three hours to the presentation of programs formerly on a national network (off-network programs), other than feature films, or, on Saturdays, provided, however, that the following categories of programs need not be counted toward the three-hour

limitation:

(1) On nights other than Saturdays, network or off-network programs designed for children, public affairs programs, or documentary programs (see Note 2 to this paragraph for definitions).

(2) Special news programs dealing with fast-breaking news events or other material related to such coverage, and political broadcasts by or on behalf of legally qualified candidates for public office.

(3) Regular network news broadcasts of sporting events, where the event has been reasonably scheduled to conclude before prime time or occupy only a certain amount of prime time, but the event has gone beyond its expected duration due to circumstances not reasonably foreseeable by the networks under their control (this exemption does not apply to post-game material).

(5) In the case of stations in the Mountain and Pacific time zones, on evenings when network prime-time programming consists of a sports event or other program broadcast live and simultaneously throughout the contiguous 48 states, such stations may assume that the network's schedule that evening occupies no more of prime time in these time zones that it does in the Eastern and Central time zones.

60 Minutes (which qualifies as a "documentary" or "public affairs" show) does not count toward computation of the 3-hour limitation (as is also the case with the Disney Show from NBC), nor does the spillover of the football game, since it is regarded as having "gone beyond its expected duration due to circumstances not reasonably foreseeable by the networks or under their control."

I challenge CBS on this point. It is my contention that (1) CBS not only "expects," but hopes and prays that the duration of the game *will* go beyond 7:00 p.m., that (2) the circumstances *are* reasonably foreseeable, and that (3) the situation *is* "under their control."

(1) How could they "expect" otherwise, when their past experience has shown that the second game of the pro football doubleheaders has repeatedly

run over past the beginning of prime time?


(2) Of course the situation is foreseeable. Why else would local affiliates be alerted to the possibility? Why else would they have "crawlers" prepared to go across the screen at 7:00 p.m. announcing that *60 Minutes* will immediately follow the conclusion of the game? When something has been happening in the past on a regular basis and you desire it to happen again, it's occurrence can hardly be regarded as unforeseen.

(3) There was a time in the innocent past when sporting events were "covered" by the media. If a game was scheduled to be played at 2:00 p.m., that was when the broadcast took place. No more. Today, many so-called sporting events are "staged" by the media. College football teams eagerly change their starting times to accommodate the desire of the networks to "cover" the event. The Memphis State/Florida State game (Oct. 25) was played at 11:30 a.m. in order to accommodate ABC. Indeed, a game may even be moved up on the schedule a *month or two* (eg. the recent Texas/Arkansas game) at the request of the network. If CBS really *wanted* the Sunday pro game to be over by 7:00 p.m. (or better yet, by 6:30 p.m., in time for an evening news broadcast), you can bet that they could make it happen. The circumstances are definitely "under control."

There are several avenues of solution to the problem. Owners of two VCR's can anticipate this outrage and plan for it accordingly. If you're at home, one VCR will do the trick, unless you're building a library of both shows.

Another possibility would be for the networks to approach the coverage of a football game in the same way that they do any other event. When the event is "over," *conclude the broadcast!* A game in which one team is leading another by 20 or 30 points with three minutes to play is *OVER* for gosh sake. They do this all the time with golf matches, concluding the coverage in time for regularly scheduled broadcasts, even though some non-leaders are still out on the course. Or, . . . and this is the most responsible choice . . . CBS could simply exercise its

influence and see to it that the games are started earlier (or that the second game is joined in progress) or otherwise scheduled in such a way as to insure that they conclude before the beginning of prime time.

CBS is unlikely to attempt *any* solution unless pressure is brought to bear upon them. But, as we see it, they are clearly operating in violation of FCC regulations at the present time, not only because of the situation herein described, but also because when the football game *is* finally over, they proceed with a post-game scoreboard show, which the FCC rule specifically states is not within the exemption. We think that this is the very sort of situation that begs for exposure by the investigative reporting expertise of the *60 Minutes* staff. We say, turn Mike Wallace loose and see if he can get to the bottom of this. 

Index of Advertisers

All Star	10
B & B Enterprises	49
Broadcast Quality	59
Camera	58
Comprehensive Video	4
Discotronics	54
Films Albion	59
Lambda Video	59
National Video Cassettes	49
Radio Wholesale	59
Shokus Video	59
Ted Reinhart	59
Video Deco	51
The Video Center	54
Video Service Center	60 & 61
Video Swapper	15
Video Take-Out	58
Video Values	54
Videocraft, Inc.	58

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The Videophile's Newsletter



The Disc

If all goes according to plan, you will be able to stroll into your local RCA dealer on March 23, plunk down your \$499.95 (plus tax, no doubt) and walk home as the proud owner of a brand new RCA "Selectavision" videodisc player. That's the date (March 23) that RCA intends to introduce their long-awaited product on a nationwide basis. Rather than following the regional introduction course pursued by MCA/DiscoVision, RCA is said to have built up an inventory of 30,000 players that will be available for a dramatic national splash in some 5000 stores.

The debut of the disc player will have the support of the largest single-product ad campaign in the company's history, something like \$25 million in promotional and advertising expenditures. Network TV commercials will start on March 22, and there will, of course, be newspaper and magazine saturation as well.

The discs will be priced at \$14.98 to \$27.98, with more than half of the initial offerings expected to be under \$20. We're told that the catalog will feature 100 selections, with regular additions totaling something like 200 by the end of the year. These figures are down somewhat from earlier expectations, but RCA may feel that they would rather have good supply of fewer titles, rather than over-extending itself and having to face disgruntled customers (a lesson learned without pain from observing the experience of DiscoVision).

Several new slogans will be employed in advertising the system. Among them: "It's Going to Change the Way You Watch TV", "Bring the Magic Home", and "Remarkably simple machine plays simply remarkable records." In addition to titles already announced (see many back issues), the following recent hit movies will be available on the RCA disc later this year: "Airplane", "The Elephant Man", "Urban Cowboy", "The Pink Panther", and "Ordinary People".

Obvious plan of RCA, and others who have aligned themselves with the "CED" format, is to take the market by storm, bowling over the competition in such impressive form that it will quickly emerge as the only survivor, thus establishing format as the "standard" and relegating "optical" format to the dustbin of obsolescence.

Will it happen? Well, RCA certainly has enough horses in harness. With Zenith, arch-rival CBS, Sears, J.C. Penney and, presumably, Montgomery Ward in its camp, RCA certainly appears to have a formidable group on its side. Add to these, now, Radio Shack, which has announced that it will offer its own CED format disc players (made by Hitachi) by this summer, through its 6000 outlets and catalog. Hitachi will also offer player under its own name, as will Toshiba.

CBS has announced plans to spend \$22 million on a disc pressing facility in Georgia. Plant will be used to press discs for its own label and for other CED format folks.

Neither of the other two disc formats is idly standing by. News from the "optical" camp includes the following:

-- Advent has announced that it will market a disc player to be made for it by Pioneer. Just when it will be available is not clear.

-- Pioneer will operate large disc pressing plant in Japan, which is expected to begin shipping 30,000 discs per month, beginning this Spring. Capacity is expected to be 5 million discs annually by sometime next year. As in case of CBS plant, Pioneer will press for its own (and MCA) label as well as custom work.

-- List of names now associated with optical format, in one way or another, include: MCA, Phillips (Magnavox), IBM, Sony, Pioneer, and now, Columbia Pictures and 3M (Scotch).

-- Supposedly the problems have been ironed out of the extended play (CLV) discs and several new titles are forthcoming on the hour-per-side platters: "Cheech and Chong's Next Movie", "Grease" and "Heaven Can Wait", among them.

-- The Pioneer "Laserdisc" player is said to be on sale now in over 50 cities, 600 outlets.

The third or "other" format is still acting as though it means business too. The grooveless capacitance (VHD) format is now hoping to have its system on the market a little sooner than previously expected, possibly even by August. Talks are proceeding with several movie studios, particularly Fox, Paramount, Warner and MCA (!), with view toward putting together a catalog of 400 available titles by the end of the year. The VHD format, though last of the three to reach the marketplace, may well be the standard in Japan. Its group of supporters include GE, Thorn/EMI (the giant British phonograph record company associated with Capitol records), and the Matsushita group of brand names: JVC, Quasar and Panasonic. Not a slouch in the bunch.

As we see it, the RCA group is clearly counting on the fact that the average slob does not have the same demands for his equipment as does the more sophisticated videophile. It's rather obvious that the RCA group is going to have the kind of product that you can buy at K-Mart and the MCA group will be catering to those who make their purchases at a specialty shop. The Matsushita group is somewhere in between.

If the optical system can survive the initial assault in fairly decent shape, we could well be in for the sort of prolonged battle that has become so familiar to us Beta and VHS protagonists. The optical system has had its problems, but we are yet to know what little flaws (or big ones) may hamper the other two once they have to actually join the fray and can no longer enjoy the stumbling efforts that have characterized MCA's efforts to get its system off the ground. We continue to feel that the optical "concept" is far superior to either of the other two, but in the world of big business, short run profit and/or lowest common denominator mass acceptance is often a more persuasive consideration.

One thing's for sure, the video disc is here! The world of home video will never be the same.

Battle of the Formats

Lest we forget, there is an ever-expanding war going on among the competing VCR formats. While we await word of new models from Beta and VHS, word comes that we may soon have prerecorded cassettes available in the new $\frac{1}{4}$ " "Technicolor" format. Home Theatre Inc., which has a fairly large library of 60 minute (or less) children's, educational, and other specialty programs is expected to begin distribution of same any time now. The first catalog will probably have no more than 25 titles, but among them may be some one hour TV specials. Present limited capability of $\frac{1}{4}$ " tape cassettes is such that feature films would all require at least two cassettes. Even that could be achieved only upon development of the supposedly forthcoming 1-hour $\frac{1}{4}$ " cassette.

Cable/Pay-TV Notes

There's lots of activity on the cable/pay TV front, nearly all of which can be reported in capsule fashion. So, here goes:

-- After having bought Teleprompter, Westinghouse now intends to also acquire Home Theatre Network, a pay-TV service that reaches 125,000 subscribers on 140 cable systems. Incidentally, purchase of Teleprompter means that Westinghouse automatically becomes 50% owner of Showtime. Teleprompter has announced that it intends to upgrade all of its 12 channel systems to handle 20-25 channels within the coming year. Our system here in Tallahassee is one of these, so we are anxious to know when the improvement will occur and also whether our HBO will be bumped in favor of Showtime. Perhaps they will offer them both. Those of you served by a Teleprompter cable system might want to similarly inquire of your local operator.

-- ESPN, the 24-hour sports channel, expects to have about 7 million customers by the time you read this. They added 900,000 this past September alone. ESPN has just signed a \$25 million advertising contract with Anheuser-Busch, enough to cover the cost of over 40,000 30-second spots over the next 5 years. By the end of that time A-B expects to be reaching 30 million subscribers via ESPN.

-- There's a rumor going around that Time, Inc. is interested in purchasing the Cable News Network. Everyone denies it, but CNN is losing money every day and could certainly use the boost.

-- Warner Cable has been granted the lucrative franchise to install cable TV in Dallas. The ambitious plans call for a multi-tiered 100 channel system, that would include QUBE and just about every other thing that you could imagine. It'll take 4 years to construct, but when they finally hook folks up, the basic package of 24 channels may cost as little as \$2.95. Who knows what the entire package of 100 including all the pay services would be. The whole venture may be held up by a legal action apparently being supported by corporate interests who are going to lose out as equipment suppliers. (Warner will supply its own.)

-- Warner seems now to be secure as the franchise holder for the Pittsburgh system and has apparently prevailed in Cincinnati as well. Maybe you've noticed that Warner stock has recently doubled in price and is also splitting two shares for one. (I notice that Sony stock has doubled recently too.)

The two Los Angeles pay-TV services (SelectTV and ON) continue to prosper. They may have as many as 400,000 subscribers between them, boosted by the Ali-Holmes and Leonard-Duran boxing matches. Pending the outcome of the Justice Department anti-trust action against Premiere, the movie studios have released a number of features to "ON" that are being withheld from HBO and the other satellite/cable services. The result is a rather impressive schedule for ON in the month of January. This is also the time of year that the Oscar nominees are broadcast on a limited basis in the Los Angeles area.

At press time, we had not learned the outcome of the Premiere action (see last issue), but, reportedly, the movie studio attorneys are not too optimistic. If Premiere does go on the air, as scheduled, in January, the first month's schedule will include only three titles (The Jerk, The Last Married Couple in America, and Chapter Two) which are being withheld from the other pay-TV services. Other titles scheduled for the month will/would include: Alien, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Humanoids of the Deep, The Rose, Harold and Maude, Pretty Baby, and that well known double feature -- Janis and Pete's Dragon.

Two more "cultural" cable TV services are in the offing. ABC has announced its intention to launch "Alpha", a evening-hours service that ABC says will be for audiences who "regularly seek exposure" to arts-oriented programming. Alpha is a joint venture with Warner Cable, and will be carried on the same satellite transponder as Warner's Nickelodeon service. Those who currently receive Nickelodeon will get the new service at no additional charge. Alpha is scheduled to start April 5.

The other such service, "Bluebird", you've probably read about in your local press. It's the one that has tied up an exclusive deal with the BBC, which will seemingly result in many of the British programs now being shown on PBS being no longer available to that network. Bluebird will be run by a new company, RCTV, (Rockefeller Center, Inc.) and expects to begin operations early next year. This is the sort of thing that happens when a venture like PBS gets "too good". Too good to give away for free that is. Cultural programming has never been seen as profitable for a mass broadcast network, but the cable/pay TV systems of the future are going to be tailored for specialty audiences, and the profits may well be there for any number of "narrowcasting" interests.

The Big Picture

RCA has broken its silence and announced that it will, indeed, have a large-screen projection TV set on the market right away, i.e. February. The unit will have a 50" screen, but the price and other details are not yet available. An RCA spokesman, noting that the RCA disc player will follow the set to market by about a month, said: "This mutual convergence of events will undoubtedly stimulate projection television sales for home use and help create a new and larger wave of 'videophiles' who are being attracted to new video products such as video cassette recorders and TV games." (RCA's first projection set, a 300 sq. inch, was in 1947.)

Satellite Notes

It's been a year now since the RCA satellite was lost in space shortly after launch. This year RCA plans to put up two new satellites, each of which will be devoted to serving cable TV programming. Each of the 48 transponders can accommodate 2 channels, so it would appear that there will be plenty of room to take care of all the new cable TV offerings that are being planned.

A special package of "R" rated films is now being carried on the Westar satellite (transponder 5) on Friday and Saturday nights between midnight and 3:00 in the morning. The service, known as "Private Screenings", features such titles as "Vixen", "The Happy Hooker Goes to Washington" and "The Playbirds". So far as we know, there are only 3 areas carrying it: Bayshore Cable in East Keansburg, NJ, Starcase in Boston, and Starcase in Albuquerque. If this is the sort of thing that appeals to you (heh-heh), contact your local cable operator and tell him that you'd be more than happy to pay the extra \$1.29 a month that the carrier, Wold Communication, is charging. The question of opposition by Moral Majority "types" to satellite broadcast of semi-explicit sexual material has been considered, but so far no problem is expected.

Backyard dish owners who also collect commercials will want to check out Westar I (on Mon, Wed & Fri, we think), for transmissions of commercials for Hershey Foods, Bristol-Myers and others. These are the first in a venture designed to distribute client's ads to 50 local markets for taping and rebroadcasting.

Updating our report of last issue re Sears' plans to operate a network of 100 or more low-power TV stations, we can tell you that the new Sears subsidiary, Neighborhood TV, has reserved Westar I's transponder 5 for daily delivery of the "country television" programming of KUSK-TV, Prescott, AZ. Actual upstart is still in the future, maybe even a couple of years, but someday the system is expected to provide "free" commercial supported TV to a national audience of 65 million viewers.

Bob Cooper's latest get together, the Satellite Business Opportunities Conference drew over 700 people to the recent Houston exhibit. The 30 or more exhibitors once again filled the parking lot with their ground stations. If you have the big bucks and the serious interest to pursue ownership of your own satellite receiving system, please don't rely on this magazine to tell you what you need to know. There's much more to it than we can cover. Contact Bob's group: Satellite Television Technology, P.O. Box G, Arcadia, OK 73007 (405-396-2574) and inquire about their publications and other materials.

Video and the Law

Legal ins and outs of cable-TV, satellites, copyright, and regulation will be covered in a meeting at New York University law school, Feb. 27-28. Contact: Dean Gerald Crane, Vanderbilt Hall, NYU, 40 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012.

Ruby Gottesman has been sentenced to 18 months in jail on a video piracy charge (transportation of stolen property) and given 3 months probation for copyright violation. This was a Miami, FL case in which anti-racketeering statutes were used. Gosh, even an interest in a \$250,000 home was forfeited.

Program Notes

How good a year was 1980. Well, estimates are that 2½ million or more prerecorded video tapes were sold. Of that number, about 1 million were accounted for by Magnetic Video. These totals are something like twice those of 1979. With so many feature films now available, the market share of porno titles has slipped to only about 15-20% of the total. Down 50% from 1979.

The movie studios have been fighting a losing battle to keep tape dealers from engaging in the unauthorized rental of prerecorded tapes. Consequently, Columbia, Fox and even Universal, have now decided to join Disney, Paramount and others in offering an authorized rental package. Columbia, for instance, will have black cassettes for sale, and "red" cassettes for rent. All the hub-bub turns on the fact that studios don't want dealers to have exclusive control over all the recurring profits from rentals, so they want to retain some say as to whether titles sold to distributors and dealers are for resale only or also for rental. As we see it, studios have no right to seek control over tapes once they have sold them. Fotomat apparently agrees with this view, having told 20th Century-Fox to take a walk. Fox didn't appreciate it, and doesn't appear to be interested in further business with Fotomat.

After some delay, Warner has now released cassettes of: "A Clockwork Orange", "Gilda, Live", "Summer of '42", "Klute", and "Every Which Way But Loose." "A Clockwork Orange" is on the new T-150 length tape that Scotch brand now has available to duplicators. Other new titles now, or soon to be, available from Warner include: "When Time Ran Out", "Tom Horn", "Simon" and "Up The Academy." Disney now offers "Mary Poppins".

New titles from Paramount: "Friday the 13th", "The Hunter", "Rough Cut". From MCA: "Smokey and the Bandit II", "Prom Night" & "Xanadu".

Closed captioned tapes (for the hearing impaired) are now available of two titles: "Chapter Two" and "The China Syndrome". Decoders and appropriate TV sets are available at Sears.

MCA Discovision will have a series of concert type discs featuring such artists as Neil Sedaka, Mel Tormé, Della Reese and Bernadette Peters. The problems have apparently been ironed out of the extended play (hour per side) discs. First new titles will be: "Cheech and Chong's Next Movie", "Xanadu", "Grease" and "Heaven Can Wait". Also a batch from Columbia which should include "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", "The Deep", and "Midnight Express" among others.

We're told that the "Eat to the Beat" video tape by Blondie has sold 20,000 or more copies around the world; 8000 in Great Britain alone. This title will also be available on the RCA disc.

MCA is reportedly having problems with the two 3-D features ("Creature From the Black Lagoon" and "It Came From Outer Space") recently released. Distribution has been halted. It seems that in several places in the tape there is a second or two delay between the beginning of a scene and the point at which the two distinct images converge to form the 3-dimensional picture.

Miscellaneous

In spite of the recession, VCRs continue to sell like hot cakes. More than 475,000 were sold in the U.S. in 1979, but this figure was exceeded in only the first 9 months of 1980. We figure that puts us in the neighborhood of 2 million owners in this country, by now.

There's some indication that the mass duplication of large numbers of cassettes is beginning to cause an increase in quality control problems. At least one source reports that Disney's "The Black Hole" is a particular culprit, with a supposedly disproportionate number of copies being returned with defects. Other sources say "No", insist that quality is just as good (or bad) as ever, citing fact that no more than ¼ are returned. Still, that's 15,000 or so cassettes that somebody is having to send back. To them the problem is a very real one.

Robert Pfannkuch, president of Bell & Howell Video, speaking at the International Tape Association confab, has predicted a number of developments which home videophiles will note with interest:

- duplication of tapes in the 4-hour VHS speed in the near future.

- higher resolution versions of movies, made especially for use with large-screen projection TV sets.

- off label "junk tape" (which we already have) and more service problems, now that the VCR population exceeds that of good VCR technicians by so much.

He also shares our view that the ¼" formats should not be sneered at. Technological advances may well enable them to do to VHS and Beta, what they once did to 3/4" format.

Purchasers of prerecorded cassettes can no longer count on getting a usable amount of blank tape at the end of movies that run only 97 minutes or so. Several tape manufacturers now make tape available to duplicators in several lengths other than the standard few that are available to the public. TDK, for instance, makes 11 VHS lengths and 7 in Beta.

Videobook has a new "Videocassette Mailing Kit" complete with mailers, plastic bag sealing system, etc. We haven't seen 'em yet, and they sound a little expensive at \$49.95 (includes labels and all kinds of stuff), but you can inquire for yourself to: VB P.O. Box 3570, Hollywood CA 90028 (213-465-0066).

The third annual "Video Expo San Francisco TV Trade Show" will be held at the Civic Auditorium Feb. 24-26. Details: Knowledge Ind. Pub., 2 Corporate Park Dr., White Plains, NY 10604 (914-694-1070).

Cameo Video, Inc. (P.O. Box 1164, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010), has an interesting little catalog of odds and ends, including early Elvis, commercials and some trailers (previously offered by Holland Video).

"Video Aerobics", an exercise course on tape is being offered by Amstar Productions, 2020 Ave. of the Stars, Suite 240, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

Let's fill out the remaining space with more titles just announced on tape and disc, in no particular order: Magnetic Video will release the 14 "American Film Theatre" package that ran on PBS last year (eg. "The Man In The Glass Booth", "Rhinceros", etc.). ... "Holocaust", apparently in the full 7-hour version, will be on RCA disc ... RCA disc will also have a Grateful Dead concert (made for the disc).

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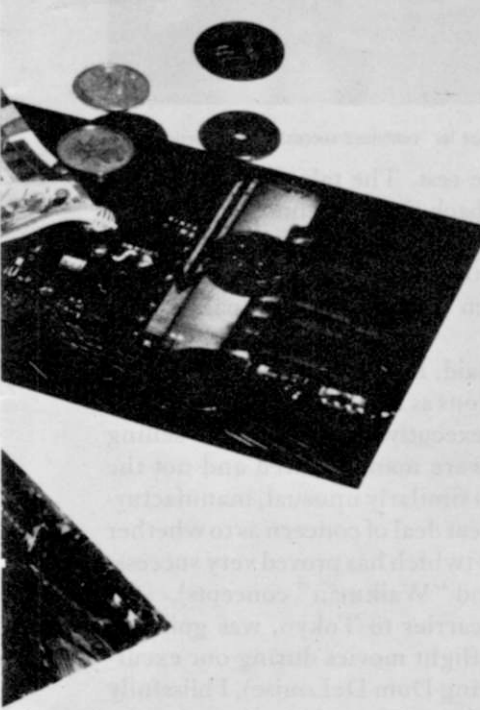
ILLUSTRATION BY
MICHAEL CLARK

JAPAN DIARY

A VIDEO ODYSSEY

BY MARC WIELAGE

Friday, October 10, 1980



ALL I KNOW IS, IF I CAN'T find my goddamn passport, the whole thing's blown out of the water!" I wailed. It was less than 12 hours till V-J ("visit Japan") Day, and things were already going wrong.

Everything had gone fine a few hours before. I had met with Mike Clark, occasional *TV* contributor and a close friend for many years, who accompanied me out to the LA airport to have dinner with Kenji Awakura, U.S. tape manager for JVC. Kenji would be flying out with me to Tokyo the following day. Our dinner conversation covered a broad range of video-related topics, up to and including the survey we had published last year regarding blank tape—specifically, the low ratings that JVC's tape had garnered. The American JVC marketing executives were concerned enough to ask me to talk with the representatives in their Mito City tape factory to try to get to the bottom of these problems, and I eagerly agreed to take them up on their offer.

But now, everything was going haywire. I had nearly a half-dozen *Product Reports* diagrams and photos lying in a half-finished state all over my apartment, with the deadline only a day or two away, and I was due to leave the country in 10 hours. And now my passport was gone.

Mike and I spent several minutes turning my place upside down, which only added to the confusion. Then Scott Severson, another West Coast *Videophile* reader, came by and saved my trip. Scott would be guarding my living quarters while I was gone, hopefully keeping away the burglars (they struck about two months ago and I wasn't going to take any chances). After chuckling over my wild-eyed stare and hysterical rantings and ravings, Scott quickly scanned the room and in less than five minutes reached underneath my couch and triumphantly whipped out the missing pocket-sized document. "Is this what you're looking for?" he chided. I sheepishly thanked him and turned my apartment rightside up again, and returned to my typewriter to whip the last of the reviews into shape for the November/December *Videophile*.

Saturday, October 11

I rattled away at the trusty Selectric for the better part of the evening until about 5 A.M., when I realized that I had hardly packed for my departure to LAX, two and a half hours away. I wearily began tossing my clothes haphazardly into my suitcases, finishing up just as Jodi Clark, Mike's wife, walked in the door, with Mike in tow. I brought along an extra practically-empty suitcase to hold whatever interesting treasures I picked up during my travels. Unfortunately it added to my already-bulky baggage—a small portable typewriter and another heavy, clothes-filled case.

We made our way back out to the airport, picking up Kenji at his hotel on the way, and finally stopped off at the International Flights terminal, a temporary "inflatable"

type building (believe it or not). We just happened to run into three other JVC employees, who were wheeling a mysterious metal case of electronic equipment into the building. They were likewise going to Japan and accompanied us inside to wade through an hour or so of red tape and inspections before we were permitted to enter the debarkation area.

On the way, we enjoyed a hearty breakfast (or at least as "hearty" as the airport restaurants could make it), while the entire JVC gang stopped off at a duty-free gift shop to pick up some presents for their friends back in Japan—a common custom in their country. We finally boarded the plane—my first experience on-board a "stretched" 747 with increased fuel capacity for the 3500-mile trip.

I had all but convinced myself that something would go wrong, and at the last minute I bought a \$250,000 insurance policy at the airport to cover any potential calamities, with the magazine getting half and assorted friends



Kenji and I pose with Victor tape employees. The plaque, center, expressed hope for "continued success and productivity."

and relatives splitting the rest. The takeoff was happily uneventful, and I settled back to several hours of interesting conversation with Kenji on everything from Japanese customs and language to the differences in video marketing philosophies between the various companies and countries.

JVC was unusual, he said, in that usually their design engineers made the decisions as to what products would be sold, with the marketing executives responsible for selling the products once they were manufactured and not the other way around. Sony is similarly unusual, manufacturing products without a great deal of concern as to whether a market existed for them (which has proved very successful with their Betamax and "Walkman" concepts).

Korean Airlines, our carrier to Tokyo, was going to show not one but *two* in-flight movies during our excursion; the first, *Fatso* (starring Dom DeLouise), I blissfully slept through, though I was awakened every so often by piercing shrieks of laughter from several nearby viewers. The second was *Star Trek—The (Airline Version) Motion Picture*. I groaned audibly, since I had transferred it several weeks before for Paramount Studios in Hollywood.

The picture seemed to go over well with the audience, despite the fact that it had been hacked by some 20 min-

utes. Gone were all of Spock's "Vulcan" scenes and a number of other moments, but not the long and drudgerous "Enterprise Tour" and "V'ger" scenes. Although we had transferred that print to videotape, the airline showed this version on *Super-8 Panavision*. A very grainy, dark and dingy image appeared on the small pull-down screen. "Well," I thought to myself as I settled back to dreamland, "it'll all be video in a couple of years, that's for sure."

WE STOPPED BRIEFLY IN HAWAII, land of sun, surfing, and Steve "Book 'em, Danno" McGarrett. While we waited to board again, I felt someone tapping my shoulder and turned around to find a stranger eyeing me suspiciously. "Say—are you Marc Wielage?" I choked and nodded my head, wondering if someone was going to hand me another subpoena (as part of the continuing Betamax lawsuit), but he smiled and replied, "I thought so. No one else would be crazy enough to wear a *Videophile* T-shirt on a Japan flight. I'm Steve Poe."

We chatted briefly about our respective experiences in video magazine publishing. Poe had formerly been an editor with *Video* magazine for a year or so before embarking on a consulting career with the Arco Oil Company, doing research into videodiscs. He's also the author of the excellent 1966 work *The Making of Star Trek*, a book I grew up with throughout junior high and high school.

Poe reminded me of the Japanese custom of exchanging business cards at every opportunity. I had brought along my own cards at the last minute as an afterthought, silently thanked the powers-that-be for my lucky foresight.

All told, the 3500-mile trip went smoothly, and I slept peacefully for most of the last half from Honolulu, catching up from my 24-hour writing binge from the day before. I dreamed mostly of strange wavering images, snatches of scenes from the two hour feature version of *Shogun* I had seen a few days before, and tried to hammer into my sleeping head the few Japanese words I had picked up from the show—*Konnichiwa* (hello), *Ikaga desu ka* (how are you?), and prayed I would have continued



One of many crowded streets in Akihabara, the electronics capital of the world.



Note the unique "walk/don't walk" pedestrian sign at this Akihabara intersection.

go-kigen yo (good luck).

Isn't a man but a blossom taken by the wind, and only the mountains and the sea and stars and this Land of the Gods real and everlasting?

Sunday, October 12, 1980

I awoke an hour or so before our landing at Narita Airport just outside Tokyo, and glanced out the window at the clouds and mountain-tops in the distance.—a peaceful contrast to the hectic pace of LA and New York. Kenji pointed out that although most Japanese men don't get gray hair until their late 50s or 60s, many of the JVC employees sent to America develop it only a few years after their arrival, just as many of us get prematurely gray in our early 30s. So much for the American way of life.

We landed and went through several more endless lines at immigration and the baggage pickup area, and headed for the customs inspectors. Remembering Paul McCartney's recent fate a few months before, I mentally scanned my own bags for contents that might be considered objectionable (including any drugs or, ahem, "pornography"—which would include something as innocent as a copy of *Playboy*). But the inspector waved me on through without ever glancing at my luggage, and I walked through the aisle out to an awaiting cab, feeling sorry that Paul hadn't had it so easy.

The other JVC employees drove off to the JVC Audio Research Center. Kenji and I took off for Tokyo and our hotel. I was immediately struck by the amusing differences in something as simple as a taxi cab. The Japanese car has a driver-controlled automated back door, and a "ding-dong" chime that sounded whenever the car was driven faster than 55 mph. The Japanese still drive on the left side of the road, as in most British colonies.

Like most Japanese drivers, the one we had took great pride and care in his job and owned his own cab, which was immaculate—the driver even wore white gloves. He skillfully darted around the other slower cars to the New



Jotting down notes on a new Sony PAL receiver in Pony's large audio-video showroom.

Otani Tower Hotel, almost in the center of downtown Tokyo. I was pretty exhausted by jet lag and the 15-hour time difference between the West Coast and Japan, and elected to hit the sack at least 12 hours before our event-filled schedule for Monday.

To understand Japanese you have to think Japanese. Don't forget—our language is the language of the infinite. Japanese is just learning a new art, detached from the world . . . it's all so simple.

Monday, October 13

I AWOKED A LITTLE EARLY ON MONDAY morning and glanced through the English TV listing the hotel had provided. They used a unique Remote Channel Selector (manufactured by Pioneer) that was almost identical to those used in QUBE's elaborate cable systems back in the States, providing three groups of eight programs, including seven Pay TV channels (only one of them in English, unfortunately). The Pay TV guide and other informational channels were being played back from optical videodiscs—I recognized the tell-tale disc dropouts and other familiar defects immediately—the first such use of videodiscs that I've ever heard of. Each Pay program was about 800 yen (\$4.00), while all of the others were free.

Kenji and I met with Mr. Yokozeki from the Victor Corporation, who took us across town to JVC's headquarters in the Chuo-ku section of Tokyo in a nest of gleaming, modern skyscrapers (the average "skyscraper" in Japan towers no higher than about a dozen stories, due to

stringent earthquake regulations.) We hurried upstairs to meet with several Victor Corporation executives—including Fumio Uchida, director of JVC's export administrative division, Motoyoshi Adachi, who worked out of that division's North America section, and Sadaaki Tanaka, the sales manager of Victor's tape division. They noticed my camera and asked me if I planned on taking many pictures during my stay. I did, but would need to stop off and pick up some film. Before I knew it, they quickly produced two rolls of Kodak film and offered them to me despite my protests. I was astonished at their generosity and thanked them for their unexpected kindness.

We walked through the ground floor of their building, half of which housed the Victor "Video Information Center (VIC), a large, multi-roomed facility designed to showcase all of JVC's video-related products, both consumer and professional, as well as providing low-cost film-to-tape transfers and editing facilities for the public. I was quite surprised, to say the least, to find that their rates were amazingly low—\$30 an hour for three-quarter inch editing (\$10 extra for a TBC), \$5 an hour for simple Super 8mm transfers (\$60 an hour for broadcast-quality film transfers), all the way up to \$150 an hour for a good-sized professional 3-camera color studio and control room with switcher, titling and complete production facilities—easily 25 to 50 percent of comparable rates in Hollywood.

In addition the VIC also offered a complete "lending library" of Victor's own "Pack 'n' Video" pre-recorded cassettes, with viewing facilities provided at a nominal charge. I was convinced that this idea of a "videophile-oriented" showcase and production center would be extremely well-received back in the States, and resolved to remind JVC about it once I returned to California.

Afterwards, we sat back in the VIC reception room for a comfortable, relaxed discussion about the center with technical chief Ryuichi Ishihara. A number of local video enthusiasts use the facility, he said, to make tapes to enter in JVC's "Tokyo Video Festival," which is a world-wide competition for amateur video buffs with prizes up to \$1200 (plus a free trip to Japan). The 1981 Festival's deadline is September 15, and further details can be obtained from the U.S. JVC Corporation, care of Burson Marsteller, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

Before we left, I noticed a small paper plaque on the wall extending best wishes to Victor's Video Center from none other than Forrest J. Ackerman, famed horror and sci-fi buff and editor of *Famous Monsters* magazine in the U.S. Apparently, Forry had dropped by during a recent vacation to Japan, and had left his mark behind for posterity. I'd have to tell him about this the next time I saw him back in LA.

Later, Kenji and I met Mr. Kumagai, manager of JVC's America department, as well the other Victor executives, for lunch at a nearby restaurant, which served us a delicious steak cooked "Benihana"-style from an open grill. During lunch, we discussed the pros and cons of copy-guard-type processes; they seemed to be very amused that more than half-a-dozen U.S. firms are now offering video stabilizers designed to outmaneuver these processes,

and were surprised to learn that neither DiscoVision's nor RCA's videodiscs currently use any kind of anti-piracy encoding. Tanaka explained that their VHD system will probably have some kind of encoding available, but laughed when I pointed out that for every kind of encoding system someone can come up with, American ingenuity will no doubt come up with an appropriate decoding process.

Following lunch, Kenji, Yokozeki and I dropped by Akihabara, the all-time largest and most awe-inspiring electronics shopping area in the world—a half-dozen square blocks of stores and shops specializing in audio and video-related equipment. No visit to Japan is complete without walking through this videophile's (and audiophile's) paradise; if it runs on electricity, you can probably find it here—a potpourri of washing machines, televisions, calculators, electric fans, heaters. Of course, videotape recorders and cameras of every possible variety, running the gamut from VHS to Beta, and even V-Cord II, VX (the so-called "Great Time Machine" format) and three-quarter-inch machines.

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, COMPETITION IN Akihabara (whose name, incidentally, means "falling autumn leaves"—falling *money* is more like it) is intense, with most prices ten to twenty percent below standard discount rates. . . as close to their own cost as they can get. Our first stop in this electronics wonderland was Yamagiwa's three story video center, with their first floor devoted to video recorders, blank tape and software, the second floor featuring cameras and accessories, and with a small studio occupying the third floor.

Each VTR was hooked up directly to a Sony Profeel monitor (a common practice throughout Akihabara), and A/B comparisons between machines could easily be made by means of a custom switching system. More than 30 different recorders were on display, and Yamagiwa manager Toshitaka Saito told us that his current top sellers were JVC's HR-3750 (a stereo SP-only version of our HR-6700) and Sony's SL-J9 (reviewed last issue). In fact, they had not one but *two* J-9's on display, due to customer demand.

I was very impressed with Yamagiwa's professional layout and selection, as well as their salesmen's wide knowledge and interest in the field. The average price, however, of the pre-recorded programs they had on display was about \$200—more than three times the cost of comparable U.S. videotapes! Kenji explained that the software market in Japan isn't nearly as well developed as it is in America, despite the fact that there are considerably more VTR owners in Japan than our country, but he thought that prices should come down in the near future.

We next dropped by Laox, a huge eight-story building crammed to the brim with every conceivable electronics product, from air conditioners to receivers to electric toothbrushes. The back of their first floor was devoted exclusively to video equipment (though not quite as elaborate as Yamagiwa), with other floors boasting huge selec-

tions of audio pre-amps, amplifiers, speakers, receivers, turntables, and accessories. The seventh floor was a "duty-free" area, selling a variety of world-wide products designed for use outside Japan; this is very useful for tourists since Japan's AC power, FM and TV frequencies are slightly different from those used in the U.S. and most other countries.

Our two-hour visit through Akihabara was tiring though still very enjoyable, and we later made our way back to the train station for our 90-minute ride to Mito City, located on the east coast just north of Tokyo. By the time we pulled into Mito station, I opened my bleary eyes to find that even though it was only about 5 P.M. or so, it was pitch black outside—though I still felt like it was about 1:30 in the morning. We joined Mr. Ishibashi, whom we had met earlier, and rode over to the Ooarai-Soo (oh-ar-eye-soh), which was kind of a combination geisha house/hotel on the Mito seashore. Several other Victor executives were there, including Mr. Tanaka, and also Mr. Masao Ishii, general manager and director of their tape factory.

After a soothing bath—soaping and rinsing off before soaking in a hot tub, Japanese style—we sat down in an ornate dining room. Two charming Geisha girls served us a large multi-coursed Japanese meal consisting of *sashimi* and *sushi* (raw fish), seaweed, shrimp and a number of items whose identity I could only guess at. At first I hesitated to swallow some of these strange-looking (and strange tasting) delicacies—hard enough to accomplish with chopsticks, let me tell you. Somehow I managed, much to the amusement of my companions and the young ladies, who lavished on us a great deal of attention (and sake, I might add.)

During our meal, Tanaka told me (via Kenji) that they were very pleased that I had taken so well to their Japanese food and customs; as a standby, they had a "Western-style" dinner hidden away in the event it looked like I wasn't going to be able to handle their unusual dishes. A top sirloin steak meal (known as "bifsteku") would have looked tempting at that point, but I was determined to make as good an impression on the Victor executives as I could. For all the trouble they



Two Japanese videophiles intently work on their video project at Victor's VIC in downtown Tokyo.



Left to right: JVC's Sadaaki Tanaka, tape division sales manager; Mr. Ishibashi, marketing executive for European sales division; Norio Torikai, engineer for Victor's

went through to get me to Japan, the least I could do, I decided, was to observe their customs and unusual meals. I drew the line at the raw oysters, which I did attempt to sample and nearly, uh, lost the rest of the dinner I had eaten in the process.

After dinner, the geishas sang a selection of ancient Japanese songs, with one accompanying the other on a *samisen*—the typical three-stringed guitar. They told me the instrument takes more than ten years to master completely. Following the geishas' serenade, each of the executives was called upon to sing one of their favorite songs, which we all enjoyed heartily (due, in part I think, to the half-dozen flasks of sake we'd been drinking); they insisted that I, as the honored guest, would have to entertain them with two "real, American" songs. In my befuddled state I gamely obliged with my meagre baritone renditions of a couple of Burt Bacharach tunes (*Something Big* and *Close to You*, believe it or not—the only two songs I could think of at the moment), which they responded to with tumultuous applause.

Next, the geishas entertained us with a couple of interesting games, similar to the old "scissors cut paper, paper wraps stone, stone blunts scissors" game. Some amusing twists included a "strip" version wherein the loser had to remove one article of clothing. Since we were wearing only a *tanzen* (a kind of padded bathrobe), our participation in the game would be a lot more of a risk than it would be for the Geishas, who wore complex ceremonial robes with over a dozen separate pieces. They insisted that I try my hand at this game, not once but several times, but I gave up after losing my belt and my glasses, wisely deciding to quit while I was still ahead (and clothed).

Tuesday, October 14

I awoke very early Tuesday morning, still a little dazed by the previous evening's excitement. Was I really lying in an ornate *ryokan* (a typical Japanese-style inn), tucked in an ultra-comfortable bed? I glanced at the time—it was about 5:30 A.M. Tokyo-time, but still about 2:30 in the afternoon back home. I walked over to the large glass-sliding doors that led to an open balcony about 20 feet over the seashore, and watched as the sun began rising in the distance. I smiled again at last night's memories, and began going through all the literature and magazines I

... today you're alive and here and honored, and blessed with good fortune. This sunset exists. Tomorrow does not exist. There is only now. It will never happen ever again, never, not this sunset, never in all infinity. . .

had collected from the previous day's travels through Akihabara.

A few minutes later, I turned on the television. Early morning programming consisted mostly of news and cartoon shows (not unlike the U.S.). I was surprised to note that several stations superimposed the exact time in one corner of their broadcasts, even during commercials, so that people won't get so involved in their shows as to be late for school or work—a distinctly Japanese approach that I imagined few American stations would attempt.

I met with Kenji and the others for breakfast several hours later—this time a more familiar meal of *iri tamago* and *bekon* (scrambled eggs and bacon)—and then departed the hotel in a private car, as some of the hotel staff bowed respectfully. A few minutes later, we reached a rural area that led into several large roads to the Ibaraki prefecture (suburb), site of the Victor tape factory division.

Our first stop was the Mito Plastics Molding Company, owned by Victor, where Vice President Kazukata Tohyama showed Kenji and me a number of automated injection-molding machines that make each of the twelve or thirteen parts for a JVC videocassette—everything from the black shell pieces to the clear plastic windows and the white tape hubs and related miscellaneous parts. Watching each part being stamped out (usually at least three or four at a time) and automatically removed and deposited in a parts bin was something like watching an old Warner Brothers cartoon from the 40s in which some kind of super-futuristic robot-controlled manufacturing plant pounds to the beat of *Power House*, a jazz tune from the period—an incredible sight.



European sales division; Isamu Minami, who works in Victor's tape Q/C department; Masao Ishii, general manager and director of the Victor Magnetic Tape Co.; Kenji Awakura, sales manager for JVC's U.S. tape division.

The next plant we visited was the actual raw tape manufacturing facility, the Victor Magnetic Tape Company, which is developing JVC's own new videotape formulations for use in their VHS cassettes, eliminating current dependence on outside raw tape suppliers. As with most tape plants, Victor makes their tape in wide sheets which are later slit to exacting half-inch widths and rolled into smaller lengths for assembling inside finished cassette shells.

This assembling is done in another "clean room" environment in the Mito plant, where white-smocked workers, aided by space-age assembly-line equipment, put together the finished tape cassettes. Another facility in the same building Q/C's these products, testing a number of cassettes from each batch at random, recording a variety of test signals and pre-recorded images to insure against any defective tapes sneaking through.

I was extremely impressed with Victor's attention to even the slightest details involved in running their factories. For example, one of the reasons the factories were located in such a remote area, right on the coast of Japan, is that the air here was considerably cleaner than that in more urban areas, like Tokyo or Osaka, which is necessary for delicate processes like tape oxide manufacturing. To guard against dirt particles being brought in by outside visitors, we walked through a series of "pressure-zone" doorways that automatically blew off dirt and dust.

Mr. Ishii and Nobuo Tsujitani, director of the Magnetic Tape Company, told me that one problem resulting from the ultra-clean environment is that their employees have a tendency to become very sensitive to diseases, due to the fact that the air they're breathing has been completely ridden of any bacteria and microbes, which our bodies normally use to help fight infection and respiratory-type illnesses. As a result, they try to limit their employees' activities inside these clean-rooms to no more than a few hours a day, making sure they get as much fresh air and exercise outside as possible. (And I used to think breathing LA air made people sick. . . .)

After our grand tour, we headed back to a conference room in which we had an appetizing lunch and in-depth discussion on my suggestions and criticisms of their tape products, which was attended by Kenji, Mr. Ishibashi, Mr. Tanaka, and Mr. Ishii. Two engineers from the tape

division, Isamu Minami and Norio Torikai, also participated. Everyone was most informative and helpful and promised continued progress on improving their U.S. tape products in the months to come.

Following the meeting, Mr. Tanaka produced a small package as the entire group began wishing me a happy birthday—a fact which had almost slipped my mind. Inside the box was a Casio wristwatch that did everything from playing a dozen different musical tunes to alarms for different times and days of the week to various stopwatch functions and more. (Oh, and it also told the time, too, plus the day and date of the week.) I stammered out my *domo arigato*, which they seemed to get a kick out of. I played with my new present just like a kid at Christmas-time all the way back to the Tokyo hotel on the train that evening.

Privacy in paper houses is impossible without politeness and consideration; without privacy, civilized life could not exist, so all Japanese are trained to hear and yet not hear. For the good of all.

Wednesday, October 15

The next morning Kenji and I took a long, winding freeway out to Kanagawa, 20 or 30 miles from downtown Tokyo, to JVC's Audio Engineering Research Center, which also serves as their Yamato research and development facility. There were unbelievable numbers of cars flooding the thoroughfares—even compared to those in L.A. Kenji pointed out that Japanese people, in general, take great pride in keeping their cars in tip-top condition, and in fact their government has strict regulations that forbid anyone to drive a "clunker", as well as making it almost mandantory for the populace to trade in their cars every two or three years for new ones, which helps stimulate their economy. I thought about my old beat-up '71



This medium-sized room in Victor's "Video Info Center" contains a six small Super 8-mm Telecine systems, which you can use for as little as \$10 to \$15 an hour—complete with VTR. Other facilities include complete VHS editing and viewing rooms at similarly low rates.

Beetle back home, as well as remembering the large number of broken-down old heaps polluting our nation's highways, and considered that maybe this unusual Japanese philosophy wasn't such a bad idea.

Once at the Research Center, manager Hideo Arisaka gave us the grand tour of every facet of the facility, including a demonstration of a "controlled reverberation" chamber in which the walls could be moved and rotated to create different audio delays, which aided in their continued efforts to refine speaker systems.

Next, we went into the anechoic chamber, which is the complete opposite—a specially-designed acoustically dead room with absolutely zero reverberation. Once the huge 15' x 15' door swings shut and you're inside the 30' square room, it's a very eerie feeling to try to talk or clap your hands; the sounds seem to stop about six inches away and disappear, something like talking in the middle of a dense forest. The floor of the chamber was made of wire mesh screen, stretched about five or ten feet over a surface of special sound-absorbent material, which likewise covered the rest of the walls and ceiling as well. The JVC engineers informed me that people who spent more than an hour or so in an anechonic chamber had a tendency to be come a little confused and unbalanced, and I had no reason to try to disprove their theory.

We quickly headed out into a smaller room for a demonstration of JVC's new 4-channel Binaural sound system, which recreates the actual human listening experience with uncanny accuracy. Using a complex theory of phase relationships combined with the effects of a special stereo microphone that precisely matches the placement of our ears, the technicians played back recordings for us that featured a man voice that seemed to come directly in front of me, then came closer and closer until he could whisper right "behind" my head, as if he actually were

standing a foot away. A similar tape made at a lakeside resort provided the sounds of buzzing flies so realistically that I almost shooed them away from my face. Quite an amazing demonstration, and it would seem to be about as big an advance in quad engineering technology over stereo as stereo was to mono.

On our way out of the demo rooms, Kenji and I spotted a large wheeled metal case—the same mysterious box we had seen at the airport four days before, which contained a prototype PCM encoder JVC had been developing for the professional market, designed to be used with their 8000 series three-quarter inch videotape recorders. The mystery, at last revealed.

ON OUR WAY BACK TO THE HOTEL, Kenji and I stopped by the Harumi Fair Grounds, which currently featured the Japan Electronics Show and Audio Fair. I picked up my admission badge and took a quick look around to familiarize myself with the show's layout. We gorged ourselves on "Japanese junk-food," which consisted of a strange-tasting piece of meat inside a cooked bun—their version of a hot dog. I later tried the Japanese equivalent of a cheeseburger, which was strange but still edible.

Kenji explained that even though most Japanese are still vegetarians, the popularity of junk food is definitely on the up-swing; I replied that for a lot of us crazed videophiles, eating junk food is practically a way of life, and that I still thought American junk food was a little better. He mentioned that a honest-to-goodness McDonald's was located just a mile or two away in the Ginza area of downtown Tokyo. That perked up my spirits considerably; after living without hamburgers for almost four days, I was practically going through withdrawal, being a confirmed "junk-food junkie."

After our brief walk through the show, we returned to the New Otani Hotel and met John Zimmerman and Charley Lehman, two *Videophile* readers who were U.S. servicemen living near the Yokota Air Base thirty or forty miles away. After a brief lunch, John, Charley and I wove our way through miles of traffic away from the big city and on out to the Fussa-shi area of Tokyo and stopped off at Pony's, a large electronics store that catered to the nearby Yokota servicemen. There, we ran into Bill Alcott, another *Videophile* reader and member of the base's Video Club, and we looked over Pony's large selection of equipment, which included both PAL and SECAM VTRs and monitors for those traveling to foreign countries. I discovered a new Sony Beta machine I hadn't seen or heard of before—the SL-T7, an NTSC/PAL/SECAM version of the J7 (reviewed in #22) that allowed complete PAL and SECAM recording and playback; and playback only of NTSC tapes. The SL-T7 sold for a little under \$1500—a bargain for the money and a must for the “international” videophile; JVC and MGA had similar VHS-format machines at roughly the same prices.

Of course, all of these triple-standard VTRs require corresponding triple-standard monitors and won't play back on our regular NTSC TV sets, but Pony's had a wide variety of three-standard sets with one model, a 17" Sanyo, selling for under \$800—again, surprisingly low, all things considered.

Later on, we drove down the street a few blocks and stopped off at Dino's Camera, a shop that boasted an *American* proprietor—Gene Cutler, a genial, informative video buff. Gene, John, Charley, Bill and I swapped various war stories about the trials and tribulations of the Japanese videophile, dealing with life in Japan, trying to get good American TV shows and movies on tape, and the various problems of an American running a business in

Japan, which normally frowns on *gaijins* (foreigners) owning companies in their country.

Gene and the others helped sort out the tons of technical information I had gathered up to that point. They also helped me fathom the mysterious ways of companies like Sony, which continued to be most unhelpful in advising me when and if some of their deluxe video products would be on sale in the U.S.

Our lengthy “Beta vs. VHS” debate as well as a “who makes the best tape” discussion ran late, so John and Charley convinced me that we'd be better off remaining in Yokota rather than going all the way back to the hotel. John and I headed over to his house, where visions of gleaming video monitors and strange looking video recorders danced through my head as I drifted off to dreamland.

*It's a saying they have, that a man
has a false heart in his mouth for all
the world to see, another in his
breast to show his very special
friends and his family, and the real
one, the true one, the secret one,
which is never known to anyone
except himself alone, hidden only
God knows where. . . .*

This room houses a medium-sized 3/4" industrial editing facility, complete with a small audio mixing system. The whole room rents for less than \$50 an hour at JVC's VIC.



Thursday, October 16

The next morning John and I joined Charley and took the express train back to town, stopping off at the hotel so I could change clothes and grab my camera and pocket tape recorder. We caught a cab and wove through the crowded streets to yet another station and boarded a train for the Harumi Fair Grounds and the Japan CES.

Unlike the U.S. shows back home, the Japanese shows were completely open to the public, resulting in total bedlam. After fighting through throngs of determined audio and video buffs, we stumbled through to the main exhibit hall, which held displays of the major manufacturers—Sony, Matsushita (known in Japan as “National”), Toshiba and the rest.

Sony's exhibit was the classiest there, featuring a mere *fifteen* Profeel monitors stacked alongside one wall, each displaying a different image played back in sync with a common stereo music track; when you stood back far enough, the images formed one single mosaic picture—an impressive sight that attracted hundreds of people. Just as many were pushing through the aisles; one setup displayed no less than six SL-J9s. The consumers put the VTRs through all their paces, Beta-scanning and slo-moing the demo tapes to their heart's content.

Sony had introduced two new accessories for the J9, the RMR-110K Infrared Wireless Remote Control (which allowed you to control the deck from up to 50 feet away) and the AG-9 four-tape changer, similar to the AG 300 found in the U.S. Other products Sony introduced at the show included the HVM 110S accessory for their HVC-80 camera (which is identical to our HVC 2000 camera except for the former's stereo capability). The HVM 110S allows remote control of all tilt, pan, zoom and focus adjustments—perfect for those looking for complete “hands off” operation of their cameras. While the motor action in the prototype wasn't exactly perfect (resulting in some jumps and jerks from time to time), it was still amazing considering its relatively low cost (under \$200).

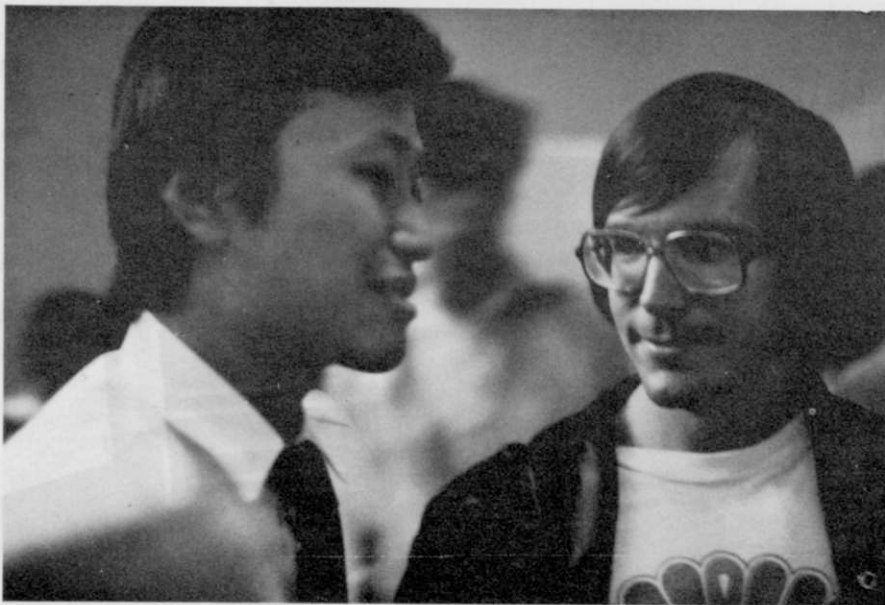
Elsewhere, Sony displayed working prototypes of their new self-contained “Video Movie” system, featuring a

large (26”) screen playback from the unit. The pictures weren't quite as good as what we've expected from top-quality Beta and VHS recorders—but still acceptable for most consumer applications. The CCD camera built into the unit had virtually zero lag or image smearing—the first such color video images I had ever seen. The CCD element used in the demo unit was slightly flawed, resulting in about a half-dozen tiny white squares permanently “stuck” into the picture, but that was only six out of several thousand such elements used in the camera's CCD array. Resolution, too seemed to be fairly limited, which may be due to the limitations of both the new quarter-inch tape format and the camera itself.

OVERALL, I WAS STILL VERY IMPRESSED with the prototype demonstration and felt that after a couple more years of development, Sony's “Video Movie” concept could be one of the most amazing technological breakthroughs yet to come from Sony's research and development wizards. Hopefully, future production versions will have longer zoom lenses and electronic viewfinders, as opposed to the 3-1 zoom and optical finder shown in the mockups at the show.

Hitachi announced their own VTR/Camera combo, which they've dubbed the “Mag Camera.” A Hitachi spokesman was a little reluctant to say whether they planned on working with Sony towards developing a single new portable standard format, though Sony has said publicly that they are discussing it with Hitachi and several other firms on this all-important problem. Meanwhile, Hitachi has stated that they will release this new product, not four or five years from now (Sony's target date for the introduction of the “Video Movie” unit), but as soon as *next year*. Hopefully, all the video manufacturers and Super-8 companies can cooperate (for once), avoiding the incompatibility problems we've long endured with quad sound, videocassette, and videodisc systems.

Speaking of the videodisc, Sony was practically the only manufacturer at the show not to unveil some kind of



This friendly Sony spokesman
was unable to shed any light
on the availability of the SL-J9,
Profeel monitors and high grade
Betamax tape in the U.S.

The Japan CES and Audio Fair

was housed in this spectacular
dome-like structure.

Note National's large booth

in the foreground,

which featured large VHS
and VHD videodisc displays.



working disc prototype. Instead, Sony plans to stick with tape for some time to come, believing that the difficulties in making reliable disc software and the inherent non-recording ability of videodisc players will make VTRs preferable in the home video marketplace. A tremendous gamble on the part of Sony, but we'll know before too long whether discs will become the big success most manufacturers and publications are now predicting—or the biggest disappointment since quad sound and the Edsel (to say nothing of PolaVision, Corvairs, the 45 rpm record album, *Heaven's Gate*. . .)

Perhaps the most advanced new VTR unveiled at the Japan CES was JVC's exciting new HR-7700, a 14-day/8-event programmable VHS deck. Features included a front-loading cassette slot, full solenoid-controlled transport, Dolby noise reduction, digital 16-channel tuner (an improvement over the 12- or 14-channel tuner found in most VTRs), and the same "special effects" features found in the earlier HR-6700. Plus—get this—infrared wireless remote control of everything up to and including programming the deck's microprocessor tuner/timer circuits!

Whether we really need a VTR that has every single function available on such a remote unit is beside the point; the 7700 seems to be the ultimate in advanced consumer VTR technology and is just the thing for those of you who'd like to spend the rest of your lives sitting in a chair, taping all of your favorite shows without once having to get up to push your VTR's buttons. Like almost all of the products unveiled in Japan, there's no definite date set as to when the 7700 will be released in America; we hope to have further word on these products after the Las Vegas CES in January (to be discussed in our next issue).

Toshiba displayed three Beta recorders, including their V-300 and V-500, the latter programmable for a week; plus the V-800, which is almost exactly identical to Sony's SL-J9. Elsewhere, Sharp showed their new VHS portapak, the VC-3000. It is remarkably similar to Panasonic's PV-3000 yet provides a few new features like solenoid

remote control and slow-motion playback, plus full speed-only capability for best picture quality. MGA offered the HV-1700, a low-cost (under \$800) all-solenoid VHS deck with several of the features of their deluxe HS-300, including still-frame and picture-search in the six-hour mode (but not in the two-hour mode).

Not to be left behind, Hitachi unveiled their own new series of low-cost VHS decks, featuring the full-function remote VT-8500 (under \$1100), which is now being released in this country along with the \$900 VT-5200, a more basic non-solenoid recorder, bringing the number of AC-operated VTRs in their domestic line up to eight. Nearby, Sanyo showed a working prototype of their VTC-R7, which is essentially their version of Sony's J9 Beta VTR, to go on sale later this year in Japan.

The most intriguing innovations found at the show were Matsushita's huge, sprawling booth, which featured numerous amazing products. Chief among them was a prototype VHS VTR resembling their standard PV-1750 (identical to RCA's VEP-650 reviewed last issue), which featured practically noiseless high-speed picture search—the first such non-broadcast recorder we've seen. Another similar looking National recorder boasted an internal voice synthesizer that verbally instructed you to program its 14-day/8-event timer, for those who can't fathom the written instructions.

PERHAPS THE ODDEST DEVICE THEY had on display was a plastic sphere, four feet in diameter, which had a binocular-type attachment at one end, through which I peered inside to see a surprisingly realistic 3-D video effect (though with some edge distortion and occasional blurring). The process uses two video cameras placed side by side, recording an image from two slightly different angles with an electronic shutter system that combines the two together to form the three dimensional effect. While the idea is interesting, I can't see any of us looking forward to having any four-foot spheres in our living rooms in the near future (shades of *The Prisoner*!).

In new TV set and projection TV products, several manufacturers had large displays, each trying to outdo the other. Sharp displayed a "component style" TV line, the CT-83 series, consisting of 17", 15" and 12" models with various accessories and remote control units not unlike Sony's Profeel system (discussed elsewhere), though without direct video monitor facilities.

Hitachi boasted a similar line featuring their deluxe C26-910S 26" color monitor, as well as their \$2600 C50-701 four-foot video projector, a bright three-tube one-piece unit. Aside from their excellent Profeel series, Sony unveiled an excellent triple-standard NTSC/PAL/SECAM 26" monitor, the CVM-2711PS—the largest TV set currently available that can play all three different world TV standards, selling for just under \$2000.

Also shown was Sony's VP-5030 and VT 7230 two-piece large-screen video projectors (identical to the 5020 and 7020 in the U.S.), each showing considerably improved picture quality over previous Sony projectors at a lower price. MGA showed not one, not two, but *three* different projector systems including their one piece four-foot LVP-530 console, the LVP/VE-707 two-piece six-foot projector (which is already available in our country), and the new LVP-550 overhead four-foot projector system, similar to Sony's VPK overhead industrial line.

***Almost all of the sets on display
shared one common feature—
stereo sound, and usually good
stereo sound to boot.***

Perhaps the most amazing TV set innovation at the show was the unheralded appearance of several prototype flat-screen "Liquid Crystal TV" portables over at Toshiba's booth, including one version with a built-in digital clock and another with an AM/FM radio. Although I managed to walk right on by this exhibit without ever getting to see them (one of the few things I missed at this unbelievably crowded show), several eyewitness accounts have reported that the two-inch flat-screens used in the prototypes were of adequate quality, though the concept is still several years away from the marketplace.

Almost all of the dozens of sets on display at the Japan CES shared one common feature: stereo sound, and usually *good* stereo sound to boot. Most of the manufacturers have begun using good-sized three-way speakers in their larger TV consoles, designed to take advantage of Japan's high-quality multiplex two-channel broadcasts, and from the demonstrations it was plain to see that their country is years ahead of us in this important area. Happily, several U.S. manufacturers (including Sony, RCA and Sylvania) have begun actively trying to improve the sound quality in their TV sets, and once the FCC approves a similar broadcast stereo system for the U.S., no doubt we'll be enjoying equally high-quality two-channel sound in the years to come.

The biggest crowds I came upon at the show were over at Toshiba's sprawling booth. I stumbled through waves of excited patrons, and found a large open stage area with an unfamiliar-looking American woman belting out jazz songs while a Japanese emcee provided commentary on most of Toshiba's products, until they got to the *piece de resistance*: all three different videodisc systems, placed side by side for direct comparison!

UNFORTUNATELY, THE DEMONSTRATIONS were all rather brief, and no close in-depth inspection of any of the units was permitted (a similar policy enforced by most of the other disc manufacturers at the show), but Toshiba certainly generated a lot of interest with their Laser-Vision, CED and VHD units. A Toshiba spokesman later explained that they provided the demonstration to prove their capability to provide any type of disc player to outside firms, offering their services as an OEM supplier. Elsewhere, Sanyo showed both CED and optical players, with three different versions of the latter available for consumer, industrial, and computer/interactive applications, respectively.

Naturally, JVC and Matsushita devoted considerable space to showcasing their own excellent VHD/AHD disc system, which we've reported in past issues. All three systems seemed capable of generally good to excellent picture quality, depending on the source material. The most important questions that remained were whether the manufacturers will be able to provide enough software for their systems, and which system will be less prone to defects and manufacturing difficulties, let alone the problem of competition in the consumer marketplace.

The latter problem has prompted the Japanese government to forbid their domestic manufacturers from marketing any disc system in their country until they all agree on a *single* disc system, which most observers feel will result in a two-to-three-year delay in the disc's introduction in Japan. That might not be such a bad idea for our country, come to think about it, except for the unfortunate interference in free enterprise and (ahem!) the American way.

Among the most unusual items on hand at the Japan show were a couple of products from Sharp and National—huge stereo color TV consoles that featured a built-in VTR, not unlike Sony's old LV-1901 Beta console of six years ago. Sharp unveiled a front-loading VHS unit built permanently into their CT-1818V "Video TV" console, whereas National's TH20-B20V has a pop-open compartment designed to hold a standard PV-3000 VHS portapak.

Another unusual innovation was Sharp's "Playback-Vision" system, which combines a high-speed digital computer with a solid state memory built inside an ordinary-looking TV console. The system provides up to five simultaneous still-pictures on one screen, with up to ten seconds of pre-recorded audio, for analyzing short segments. The system is unusual in that it uses no moving parts—that is, no conventional disc or videotape recorders—to provide the playback images, which I believe is a

English track on the right. By adjusting the appropriate controls on your stereo VTR you can record either or both as needed. Charley also explained that several manufacturers supply their dealers with pre-printed adhesive cassette labels for a dozen or so of the bigger broadcast programs telecast each month. If you decided to tape, say, *Alien*, your dealer will most likely have a label for your tape ready to go, free of charge—not something that I think we can plan on having in the U.S. anytime soon.

In addition, almost all the Japanese tape firms have intensely competitive “bonus coupon” offers, which feature all kinds of video-related accessories and prizes for those who send in coupons clipped from blank tape labels. For example, JVC and Sony each offer a variety of video-cassette shelves in several different sizes, in exchange for a set amount of coupons. Usually you can get a small 12-tape wall shelf free by sending in coupons from about 36 tapes, or a full 100-tape wall shelf unit for several hundred coupons. The latter coupon promotion deal is a great idea that would be well-received in America, and I resolved to try and interest the manufacturers back home in trying such a plan in the near future.

Later, John and I returned to his house and we watched a few minutes of a recent Japanese *Star Wars/Empire Strikes Back* special which showed how the two movies were made. I was surprised to find that the show was completely different from the two specials shown in America, and was even more surprised when Richard Edland, special effects supervisor for *Empire*, began to explain in fluent Japanese how he accomplished some of the visual wizardry in the popular film. Apparently, Edland had mastered the difficult art of speaking this almost impossible-to-decipher tongue (impossible for me, anyway), and I resolved to do my best to learn a little more Japanese over the next few months in preparation for next year’s visit, provided I can figure out a way to afford the trip.

As I lay back in bed, I went through the few Japanese words I had picked up. “Let’s see...there’s *sumimasen*—‘sue me, my son’ as John taught me, which means ‘excuse me’...*konnichiwa*, ‘hello’...and *kara firumu*, ‘camera film’...*aisukurimu*, ‘ice cream’...*appurupai*, which is ‘apple pie’...” — maybe it wasn’t so hard after all. I drifted back into slumber, this time with my dreams playing back entirely in Japanese without the benefit of English subtitles—not unlike *Shogun*’s TV broadcast a few weeks before.

Friday, October 17

We arose at dawn, not exactly feeling bright and shining considering our lack of sleep, but John was determined to get us off to as early a start as possible. We crammed John’s car to the brim with several large suitcases containing the JVC GC-4400 and HR-2200 portapak which Gene Cutler loaned us, along with a couple of battery packs, and with Bill Alcott began our 2½-hour trek north towards Nikko, a small town famous for their traditional yearly parade and celebration called the “Grand Autumn Festival of the Toshogu Shrine”. The festival featured hundreds of par-

ticipants clad in ornate ceremonial costumes, as well as about 100,000 spectators, and John and Charley said my brief trip to Japan wouldn’t be complete without seeing it. Due to the unexpectedly chaotic traffic and tremendous crowds, we arrived about an hour late, but managed to set up our equipment and tape the latter half of the festivities without a hitch.

The parade itself was right out of *Shogun*—complete with hundreds of golden-armored Samurai warriors, each carrying spears, bows and arrows, ancient guns, and of course the ceremonial swords, plus sacred maidens, drum carriers, musicians and dancers and Shinto priests, who were carried down the street inside intricately-detailed Pagodas—and we enjoyed ourselves immensely. Following the procession, we dragged all of our gear over to the nearby Toshogu Shrine buildings, which were dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate which ruled Japan for more than 250 years until about 1868, during the actual time of the *Shogun* novel.

I was honestly awe-struck by the shrine, which sprawled over a large area and encompassed a series of parks, gardens, and elaborate buildings that dated back at least a thousand years—my first encounter with anything that antique. The beauty and tranquility of the surroundings was jarred only slightly by the bus-loads of children visiting the area on field trips from nearby schools. We eagerly lugged our equipment up and down dozens of stone steps and across narrow footbridges in an effort to preserve all these sights and sounds on videotape for posterity.

Later we stopped by a sort of American-style restaurant and had a quick lunch consisting of a meat-loaf style steak with some kind of mild sauce, which I hungrily sank my teeth into. I was glad to eat something other than Japanese food for a change (despite my brief stop-over at McDonald’s the day before). After lunch, I headed downstairs to the restaurant’s bathroom facilities, not the conventional Western-style toilets, but rather only the floor-mounted Japanese variety, called a “benjo”, which don’t permit the user to, (*ahem*) sit down. I’ll spare all of you the rest of the details, but suffice to say that the experience wasn’t exactly one of the high points of my trip.

On our way back to Tokyo, I was comfortably enmeshed in the back seat with various wires and pieces of electronic gear, listening and occasionally singing along with some of the “oldies-but-goodies” John had brought along for our entertainment, and slept like a baby until John and Bill deposited me back at the New Otani Hotel. I staggered up to my room and fell into bed too tired even to take off my clothes.

Saturday, October 18th

I awoke that morning, and set about exploring the hotel and walking through the lavish New Otani Gardens that surrounded two sides of the building with a series of trees, flowers and attractive brooks and streams. I tried to put my notes on the trip together, as well as taking care of the arduous task of sending out a dozen or so postcards “to the folks back home”, most of whom insisted that I bring back a memento for them during my travels. I also



A spectacular view of Tokyo's Ginza section at night.

Sony's nine-story showroom, right, is near other major showrooms.

scanned the TV selection for an hour or so, enjoying the broad range of programming available—which didn't include any cartoons, despite the popularity of animated shows on Saturday morning back home.

John and I went through Akhibara early that afternoon, for the last time. I was determined to go through the area once more, this time with my traveler's checks firmly in hand. Most stores seem to specialize in several different types of products: one might stock only various types of air conditioners, another offered a floor-to-ceiling array of electrical plugs and jacks that seemed to spill out into the sidewalk, and others concentrated on mass-market items like clock radios and TV sets.

The more deluxe centers, like the ones I had seen the previous Tuesday, seemed to offer the best selection of video products, though not always at the best prices. John and I finally stopped by one small shop that seemed to specialize in antennas and blank tape (believe it or not), and I laid down a handful of yen for a case of Sony High-Grade Beta tape (currently unavailable in the States) and a variety of domestic Japanese types, to be used for our continuing tests on videotape. John wheeled and dealt with the merchant until both sides seemed satisfied—it worked out to about \$14 a tape, only a couple of dollars more than standard L-500's from most U.S. dealers—and we continued our trek throughout Akihabara until my bunions and callouses began aching and complaining again.

After a couple of last-minute stops for miscellaneous accessories, we fought our way back through the jam-packed Akihabara train station and rode an express over to the Ginza, the glittering downtown showroom part of Tokyo. John pointed out the way over to Sony's six story building at one major intersection and I hurried across the street, leaving John to return back to Yokota for his even-

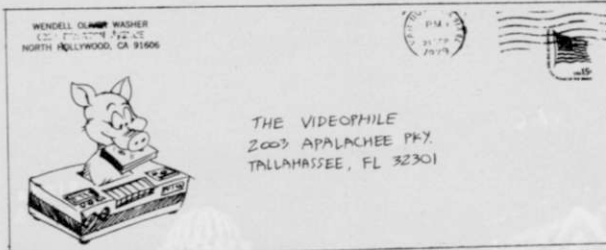
ing shift.

Like most of the other stores and public places I had seen that day, Sony's Ginza showroom was amazingly crowded. By "crowds", I don't mean what you've encountered at a big football game or a political rally. I'm talking about a veritable sea of people—a sweeping miasma of human souls, pressed together and wrapped around you tightly like an ill-fitting sweater. I tell you, I've never considered myself a candidate for agoraphobia, but those crowds are enough to make anyone neurotic after being unable to move more than a foot for fifteen minutes or so. Whew!

Despite the crowds, I lugged my parcels, packages and bags up all half-dozen floors, reveling in Sony's "high-technology" audio gear, including the perfectionist-oriented \$1500 pre-amps, tuners and even a \$2000 turntable, and finally made my way to the fourth floor, which house most of their consumer video equipment. Most, though not all Sony products were on display. I saw only J-1's (almost identical to our SL-5400), J-5's and J-9 VTR's, with a roomful of large and small Profeel monitors. All the Profeels were tuned to off-air baseball games, eagerly viewed by hundreds of avid sports buffs who pushed and shoved their way around the large screens in order to get the best vantage point possible, but I spent most of my time inspecting the other equipment and just watching the crowds, who were oblivious to their surroundings and cheered and raved just as they would at a real live game.

Seeking refuge from these rabid baseball enthusiasts, I inched my way over to a less-crowded corridor which led into a larger room that displayed one of Sony's wall-sized overhead projection systems, almost identical to the "VideoScope" I had seen back at last years Summer CES show (discussed in *Videophile* #26).

Letters:



Dear Jim,
That letter from John Good in TV #28 really (bleep) me off. (Bloop) him. If he doesn't think that your magazine should flourish and grow, he's got his head up his (Blap). I enjoy The Videophile very much and I think it's come a long way. While maintaining the folksy, informal and friendly tone, you've still managed to expand your outlook. I like The Videophile and I wanted to let you know that I, and my friends I've turned on to your magazine want you to continue onward and upward. I hope you can quit your full time job and devote more time to putting out the best general information video publication available today. Ignore any shmucks who tell you otherwise.
-- Richard Pachter, 7600 Granada Blvd., Miramar, FL 33023

Dear Mr. Lowe:
Everybody is entitled to his own opinion and entitled to express it. Michael Brunas is entitled to his opinion about Ted Reinhart's B Western reviews. I just hope you don't decide to act on it. Ted's B Western reviews are the highlight of each issue for me, and I would guess for many other B Western buffs. From a purely selfish viewpoint I had rather see you triple his space than cut it by so much as an inch. I don't know what kind of films Mr. Brunas likes, but he can't like them any better than we unreconstructed kids from the 1930s and 1940s like the Westerns. I hope you can give Mr. Brunas whatever he wants, but not at our expense, please. We want Ted. -- Elmer Kelton, 2460 Oxford, San Angelo, TX

Jim,
Around 12 years ago or so, Richie Meltzer, Lester Bangs and I decided to invent rock criticism. It was a great way of getting free records and getting paid to write gonzo journalism at the same time. Well, now I'm old and senile and into video. I hope this arrives before the deadline and that you find it useable. -- Graham Carlton, Midwest Record Recap, P.O. Box 333, Evanston, IL 60204

Many thanks for the review of "Never A Tender Moment", Graham. I enjoyed it immensely and am sorry that I had to edit your colorful comments in such a heavy-handed way. Please send more.

Gentlemen:
Will you please publish a sheet showing time and footage indication for the new VHS machines. You did one for the 2hr and 4hr one and now, to make it complete, will you please do one for the 2-4-6. -- Jack Sandorse, 214 Paterson Road, Fanwood, NJ 07023

Jack, we'd be happy to publish this information. (Here's how you can help.) The next time you have 6 free hours, sit down with your recorded, a stopwatch and a legal pad. Better have plenty of pencils too. Just keep track of the time and the index numbers, type up your results and mail them in before February 1, and we'll be able to get this valuable info in our very next issue.

Dear Jim,
Just a short note to tell you that the Dec issue is one of the best in recent memory (I was a tad disappointed in the last two). One thing that puzzled me though, in your article comparing Beta and VHS -- when you say it's easier to edit on a Beta. Do you realize on VHS machines you can go from PLAY (until you get to the part you want to cue) and if you press the pause control on the machine (not the remote) you can punch in the record button -- then you can put your remote pause in the pause position, so when you release the manual pause you're ready to go -- this makes for a great edit! One of our engineers here figured that out when studying the operations manual on the control switches. -- Al Bianculli, Combine Music, Nashville, TN

I am happy to pass this tip along for the consideration of VHS owners, but the fact remains that for "rapid" manipulation of the controls for cue and review purposes, there is general agreement that the Beta format is "easier". Often, you have only a few seconds to snip out an unwanted piece of a commercial. I have found it to be continually frustrating to even locate the point at which I want to edit (this is in the LP speed), let alone wait for the interminable whirring/disengaging/engaging of the VHS loading mechanism between functions. Yes, a talent for use of both the remote pause and the unit's own pause can help, but when the pressure of the moment is upon me, I much prefer the relative ease with which Beta units perform these functions.

Dear Jim,
There is a new interface cable available from Sony that enables you to interface a Sony HVC 2000 camera with any standard Matsushita 10 pin connection (found on all VHS decks). The cord is called a CMA-201A from Sony. Retail is \$109. (ouch!) -- Steve Eisenstadt, Video Product Sales, Irvine, CA

Thanks for your kind remarks, Steve, and also the suggestion for an interview (contained in portions of your letter not set forth here).

Dear Jim:
Just another note of thanks for your straight-from-the-shoulder, no punches pulled style of dealing with us video nuts and your general handling of "The Videophile" -- most notable in: The Videophile's Newsletter and such never-to-be-seen-elsewhere coups like Gary Bourgeois' open letter to

George Lucas!

Your openness and lack of pretension is really refreshing. ... Why editor/publishers of other technical and quasi-technical magazines don't realize that they are talking to and writing for real, live people, I'll never understand.

... I've been doing the weather here at Channel 2 under duress. My personal philosophy is that you can do the weather in 10 seconds flat. However, we spend 2½-7 minutes rhapsodizing on meteorological malarky when all they want to know is: "Is it going to rain?"!

Keep up your honest, forthright, piggy approach, and I'll be happy. -- John H. Doyle, Atlanta GA

Thanks for the encouraging words, John. As you may have noticed by now, we are hoping to make a regular feature of Gary's mutterings.

Dear Jim:

Your mag is looking slicker and slicker, but unfortunately the slicker it gets, the less I can afford to advertise in it! However, I don't mind as I know how dedicated you are to the hobby just as I am dedicated to converting old nitrate prints to safety film before they are lost forever. I do sell video right along, but my main concern is 16mm and super 8 film prints (and the preservation of nitrate prints).

I can't compete with other dealers who buy a Betamax or VHS, copy from me, and with a large advertising program offer the tapes at large discount prices. Take my print of *The Little Princess*. I have the only known 35mm technicolor nitrate of this title. I had my video master made right from the nitrate and there are no better copies available than from me. I see on page #59 of the October edition that Video Connection is advertising it for \$29.95.

... Anyone with two video recorders and enough money to advertise can now go into the home entertainment video business by ripping off other film dealers' public domain titles, and offering them at cut rate prices. ... All these Johnny Come Lately's, and this includes all who do not actually have a motion picture laboratory capability, are really rip offs of the public because they are selling second generation duplicates and passing them off as first generation. Of course there are a few legitimate dealers who do not duplicate, such as Famous Films in Miami who sell my, and other manufacturing dealers' product. -- Tom Dunahoo, THUNDERBIRD FILMS, P.O. Box 65157, L.A., CA 90065

I wish Tom weren't always so coy. I much prefer it when he comes right out and says what is on his mind. Tom has a catalog that always includes some unusual stuff seldom available elsewhere.

Dear Jim:

Here's a nifty little trick I use for cleaning my VCR heads. Rather than use Q-tips or swabs to clean in the head itself (the cavity) and risk breaking that itchy-bitsy little "wire", I use the Dupont solvent mentioned in a way-back issue, and a 3 cc hypodermic needle. I just fill the needle and use it like a teensy fire hose to flush the icky stuff out of the head.

Then I can use the swabs safely everywhere else the tape is contacted, without fear of doing real (expensive) damage. Also, the solvent evaporates so fast that I'm not concerned with using too much. The hypo gives pretty much the effect of an aerosol can, but with the hazard to the Ozone, or the possibility of freezing the heads.

... A suggestion I might make to videophiles using Jiffy Mailers when trading/mailling tapes: either write the "from" and "to" addresses closer together or use mailing labels, so the recipient can cover the address and re-use the mailer. All too often, I get tapes from people who have written my address on the lower middle, and theirs in the upper left, and they're a real bitch to try to re-use.

... (I recently asked a local dealer) ... if he was aware of *The Videophile's* existence. He said that he had seen one issue and had noted its ob-jective approach. As I stood blushing in your behalf, in my shrunken TV T-shirt, he added that he would never consider stocking this magazine in his store. His rationale for this is that ... if a customer drops by to see what his store has to offer, browses, picks up some brochures and buys a copy of TV -- intending to do a little comparison shopping on his own ... he will probably never see the potential customer again. -- Dave Crow, 7200 East Evans Ave. (#609), Denver, CO 80224

P.S. Whatever happened to "Devil Girl From Mars" ??

I give up, Dave, what did happen to her? I'm not surprised at the reaction of your local dealer. We have at least one large chain of video stores on our subscribers list (about 60 stores). They want the store personnel to read us regularly, but they have no interest in letting their customers in on what we have to say.

Dear Mr. Lowe:

Thank you for sending a sample copy of *The Videophile*. I am disappointed in your advertising policy, however. I hoped to advertise in your magazine, but since you do not let dealers advertise in your classified section I'm afraid I cannot afford a larger ad.

At any rate, perhaps your readers would like to hear about TV GUIDE SPECIALISTS. We have the largest inventory of old TV GUIDE in existence. I feel that can be said since at any one time we have at least 95% of every TV GUIDE published between 1953-1969. We also have dozens of pre-national TV GUIDES dating as far back as 1948. Most are priced in the \$3-\$7 range, all are in nice condition. We offer an illustrated pricelist for \$2.00.

Again, I am disappointed that we cannot advertise in your magazine, but I'm sure your readers would like to hear about us. -- Jeff Kadet, TV GUIDE SPECIALISTS, Box 90, Rockville, MD 20850

Here's your letter, Jeff. Frankly, we feel that even the smallest dealer can afford the \$15 that we have been charging for a column inch ad, but on the other hand, you are correct, we do think that our readers would like to know about your firm. My own collection of TV GUIDE is in pretty sorry shape prior to mid-1965, perhaps we can work out some sort of exchange for future ad space. I'm not too particular about condition, since they are strictly needed for research purposes only. (Those of you out there who have large collections of TV stills and similar material, take note.)

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

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 #19-27, in which the first 9 installments of GB & U appear.

Dear Sir:

I have a strong suspicion that one of your advertisers has taken myself for a ride. I sent Projects Three Inc. a money order back in April for a couple of tapes, and to this day I'm still waiting. Even after writing a couple of letters to them, I have not heard a thing. -- J.R.L., Dearborn Heights, MI

In addition to this one and the letters printed in our last issue, we have since noticed that The Big Reel (film collector's paper) has also been printing complaints from its readers about Projects III. Thanks to two of our readers, we have learned a little bit (not much) that may be helpful to those of you who wish to pursue your complaints against them:

Dear Jim --

... As you know I had dealings with those guys and finally, after a year, I got my money back. This was not without some detective work on my part. A friend of mine and I went to their New York address (and by this time I was ready to kill) and found it to be a mail drop! The guy there was more than helpful after I told him I would tear the place apart. He gave me a name -- Elston Ransom. He pays in cash and comes in once or twice a week to pick up the mail. Now I see Projects III has a New Jersey address -- perhaps he can be traced that way. I know after I started writing him on a name basis, I got my money back -- in two payments. I know this isn't much, but I hope it helps. -- Marty Greim, Box 132, Dedham, MA 02026

Many thanks Marty. The mail drop address in New York is 51 East 42nd St., Suite 517, NYC. Unfortunately, it is not too unusual for an apparently substantial address to turn out to be merely a mail pick up office. (Marty also wanted me to mention to Dave Lubin that the LUBIN robot is named after Marty's friend, Gary Lubin, who, he says "damn near shot me for the issue #28 strip."

We also have this re: Projects III:

Dear Mr. Lowe:

I too ordered a film from Projects III ... which I have not received. In response to a letter I had written the firm, a man called me -- collect -- and encouraged me to order \$300 in tapes. I was suspicious, but decided to gamble \$60 on a film After receiving no tape and no response to a letter, I called the number that the man had called me from -- it was a pay telephone in the Pan-Am building in New York City. I then called information

to get the phone number of Projects III. (There is a legitimate Projects Three in New York, but the one we are interested in is not listed.) ... I have since registered a complaint with the Bureau of Consumer Frauds and Protection for the State of New York. The phone number is: (212) 488-2623. -- K.H., Winder, GA

Putting the pieces together then, we would suggest that each of you who has been burned by Projects III, call the number mentioned and file a complaint against Elston Ransom, doing business as Projects Three, Inc. at the address above mentioned.

Dear Jim,

I have the RCA VET 650 and I love it. I got it from Red Fox Video Enterprises ... They have excellent service and it would be well worth it to check this place out. -- J.R., Ft. Myers, FL

It's nice to hear from happy folks now and then.

Dear Mr. Lowe:

We are writing to you on behalf of our client, Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., with regard to John Richards trading as Video Makers Supply Co. Our client is a creditor of this debtor and we are advised that he was a distributor of your magazine.

At this time, we are unable to locate John Richards and would appreciate any information you can provide us as to his whereabouts. -- James W. Adelman, Law Offices of Adelman & Lavine, Philadelphia

Nothing would please me more than to be able to tell you where the bum is. I just hope that his activities haven't had as crippling an effect upon the operations of Fuji as they have upon us. (Yet another of the great untold stories around these parts, folks.)

Dear Sir:

Although I am not in the habit of filing reports on the companies I do business with, I do feel compelled to comment on one such firm, Video Service Center of Sacramento, California. I have had the pleasure of ordering video equipment and supplies from them on numerous occasions. Each time the service has been prompt, generally less than five working days from ordering to receipt, even living in Virginia, which commends their shipping department. The two salespersons I have spoken with on the phone, Sue S. and Karen M., have been most helpful, polite, and courteous. With all this, the prices that Mr. Saia offers seem to be among the best in the country. -- F.M.U., Virginia Beach, VA

Jim:

... I'd like to recommend Mike Brody's Camerama (361 Willis Ave., Roslyn Hts, NY 11577) which lives up to its ads ("We are cheap! and we are fast'.) -- L.B., Prospect Park, PA

I attempted to visit several other floors, but they seemed to be filled mostly with outside stores and shops selling ladies's undergarments and sporting goods, so I elbowed my way outside and into an awaiting cab, which whisked me back to the hotel in just a few minutes. I spent the rest of the evening flipping through the TV channels, enjoying Japanese-dubbed versions of *Laverne and Shirley* and *Saturday Night Live* (the latter with Japanese sub-titles). I also caught up on my notes and went through several pounds of literature and brochures I had collected during my day's journey to Akihabara.

Sunday, October 19

John Zimmerman gave me a hand early this morning in videotaping some last-minute glimpses of life in downtown Tokyo, including a brief walk through the Ginza. Unfortunately, Sony and most of the other shops and showrooms forbid any picture-taking (especially with video equipment from competing firms), so we confined most of our production to exterior views of the city. We included a last stop-over at McDonald's, where I recorded the giggling waitress filling my order. I didn't realize how much attention John and I were getting until someone walked up and took a snap-shot of my back—due no doubt to the NBC peacock adorning my jacket (given to me by a video engineer friend of mine back in Burbank). "Now I know how Art Vuolo feels," I mused.

John and I said goodbye and parted company once more. I regretted not being able to spend more time in this fabulous city, and thanked him for his help and generosity "above and beyond the call of duty."—along with the rest of the Yokota videophiles, including Bill Alcott, Charley Lehman and Gene Cutler. Without these guys I would have really been lost and out of luck—which is exactly where I found myself about 30 minutes later, standing on a street corner and trying unsuccessfully to flag down a cab, more difficult than getting a ride into Harlem in New York City.

I finally spotted an empty taxi at a stop light and darted in, asking the driver to take me over to the Japan Electronics Show. He spattered out a mouthful of guttural Japanese words, and after a few seconds I realized he couldn't speak English—it was as if he had a different word for *everything*! Rather than pull Steve Martin's ploy of asking him, "What is *that* you're saying? Ha-ha-ha-ha," and trying to talk with a Japanese accent, I realized that this was the first time I had really been alone without some kind of interpreter during my trip—either Kenji or John had been with me the rest of the time—but I somehow managed to show him my destination by means of a newspaper left behind in the cab and some of my inventive sign language.

The Electronics Show seemed about twice as packed as it was before, but I was determined to see everything even it meant bulldozing through the crowds and stepping on small children (well, maybe bumping into them, anyway). I made my way through the two-building Audio Fair exhibits, which housed huge displays from companies such as Technics, Pioneer, Sony and Nakamichi.

I felt my mouth water at seeing the latest audio gear gleaming on plexiglas shelves, with the manufacturer's reps eagerly demonstrating all their new features and top sound quality. Perhaps the most unusual video-related innovations I saw here were Technics' new VHS recorder with built-in PCM encoder/decoder. I was a little disappointed with its tape-handling ability, which created a delay of about six seconds between the "stop" and "play" modes, but its sound quality was phenomenal—at least as good as any comparable low-cost digital systems I had heard up to that point.

Elsewhere, Phillips had a large booth designed to showcase their new "Compact Disc" digital audio system. The system uses a laser pick-up technique identical to their famous laser-optical videodisc system, except with the audio disc size reduced to about $4\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter. Like the CLV extended-play videodiscs, the Compact Discs rely on a variable rotational speed from about 500 to 200 RPM's, providing up to 60 minutes per side of excellent quality stereo sound.

The spokesman also showed renderings of projected prototypes that would encompass a complete Compact Disc system in both AC-operated and portable housings—including an ultra-miniaturized version designed to fit a standard auto dashboard! Imagine listening to a digital audio disc as you drive to work every morning! The concept is almost mind-boggling, though I found myself wishing that the standard optical videodisc players could be modified to also play the tiny audio discs, rather than requiring the user to buy a different player for audio and video.

Elsewhere, JVC echoed these sentiments, showing their combination VHD/AHD system which allows the user to purchase an accessory \$500 PCM decoder for their videodisc player, resulting in similar high-quality digital sound at a lower overall cost.

NO ONE DISPLAYING A PROTOTYPE RCA-type CED player had any similar PCM accessories, and a spokesman for Sanyo commented that they'd be unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. Sanyo will be offering their CED player to Sears, which has been buying their Beta VTRs for years as well, and possibly also to Radio Shack, later on this summer.

After traversing the miles and miles of corridors and hallways that ringed the inside of the Harumi fairgrounds, my worn-out sneakers certainly deserved a rest, so I left at about four that afternoon. I rode a cab back to the hotel and joined Kenji for a great dinner atop the New Otani, where we reminisced about the past week's activities.

Monday, October 20th

I rose early once again, padding around in the soft carpet of my tiny hotel room in my bare feet, and started packing all my belongings. That wasn't an easy task, considering the seven or eight pounds of brochures, catalogs and spec sheets I collected while at the CES and Akihabara—plus

the odds and ends that pile up on vacations.

An hour or so later, after forcing the suitcases' locks shut, I dragged my baggage downstairs to an awaiting cab—after a quick stop at the front desk to change my yen back into good ol' American dollars. We raced to the airport and I dropped by Korean Airlines, only to find that my travel agent had managed to book me on a Singapore Airlines flight instead.

So I had to trudge all the way to the other side of Narita Airport and go through an additional half-hour of red tape and inspections... about five times as intensive as the incoming quick check a week ago.

I boarded the 747 and settled back to three and a half hours of cigarette smoke piping into my face, courtesy of Singapore Airlines' unique "smoking area" policy that places the non-smoking passengers right on the same aisle as the smoking passengers. I gritted my teeth and muttered under my breath how the airline really ought to make gas masks standard equipment on these long flights.

I was surprised that it took so long to fly to Hong Kong. Like most Americans, I thought all these Far Eastern cities were close together. Believe me, though—Peking, Hong Kong and Tokyo are as far apart in distance as New York, LA and Miami. And, as I was to find, they're even further apart in their cultures and languages.

WE LANDED AT THE HONG KONG terminal and I made my way out, eager to gorge myself on junk food once more. A week had gone by without so much as a bag of M&Ms—there's not much American candy available in Japan. I was elated to find a box of Junior Mints and began inhaling them until I discovered its price: three dollars! Fortunately, those were Hong Kong dollars, which are worth about 20% of ours (much to my relief).

A quick cab ride led from Kowloon (the mainland side of Hong Kong) through a huge underground tunnel that forms the most populous part of Hong Kong. Finally we reached the Plaza Hotel and I scurried out of the cab and entered the hotel lobby. An eager bellboy was only too happy to carry the bulk of my suitcases, and rode up with me to my room. I flipped my wallet open for the tip, and the smallest bill in there was a \$100 Hong Kong note. I was dumb enough to hand it to him and ask him if he had any change.

Well, his eyes lit up as he realized how dumb this American tourist was, and he fumbled and mumbled about not having much change on him. Still not too sure of the exchange rate, I finally accepted about \$40 change and told him to keep the rest.

"Oh, thank you... you velly genelous Amelican! This must be my rucky day," he sang. He ran out of the room before I realized I may have overtipped him a bit (almost \$15, unfortunately). Damn.

I relaxed in my spacious room and watched a little Hong Kong TV on the PAL set. It must have been a foreign standard, since there was a strange flickering effect coming from the screen. I finally dozed off, with the strange garbled Chinese voices from the TV fading away

until they seemed to completely disappear.

Tuesday, October 21

"Mrs. Peel, this is our new associate, Mr. Wielage," Steed was saying as he introduced me to the tall brunette woman dressed in a striking leather-and-gold outfit. As I was about to speak, a nearby phone rang and rang in standard British fashion.

I awoke to find my bedside phone clanging, and fumbled with the strange handset as I muttered "hello." The voice on the other end belonged to Bob Chang, the Commerce Tours director, who cheerily invited me upstairs to breakfast with the rest of the charter group. "So much for *The Avengers*," I thought.

The meal on the top floor of the Plaza, with its spectacular view of the city and harbor 20-odd-stories below, went by quickly and I ran into a couple of familiar faces. Joining me were Leonard Marshall (Marshall Electronics) and Frank Coccaro (The Cable Works), both two top video accessories firms. Greg Mackie, president of the Audio Control Corporation (which manufacture excellent audio equalizers) and CES Publishing's Richard Ekstrakt (who is also my boss at *Video Review*) were also there.

Most of us elected to go on a special three-hour tour through the Hong Kong Electronics Show, which apparently showcased about 150 manufacturers of cheap watches, cassette players and electronic watches and little else. Not a video recorder for miles, sad to say. Later, the tour took us through a series of ornate gardens and shrines once owned by a frustrated cough-syrup magnate (so help me). He built them as offerings to the gods about 50 years ago, but failed to convince them to allow his wife to bear him a son and heir. Luckily for his empire, though, his daughter survived to keep the business prosperous for many years after his death, which may tell you something about women's lib.

WE SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY going over to the other side of Hong Kong island, dropping by a beach resort area that rivals Acapulco and Florida for sheer fun in the sun—one of the big surprises I had on the trip. Later we dropped by the city's harbor, where about 100,000 families live on *sampans*—small, wretched-looking houseboats. The guide said some of them never leave these boats during their lifetimes. A marked contrast to the rest of Hong Kong, which rivals New York and LA in modern development. Luxurious residences and hundreds of towering skyscrapers dot the mountains and hillsides like weeds, some reaching higher than fifty stories.

Later that evening, Greg Mackie (from Audio Control) and I got together at the tour banquet and swapped travel stories for several hours. I was moved by the plight of the *sampan* residents—until Greg told me they lived like Beverly Hills residents compared to most Taiwanese, who live just northeast of Hong Kong.

I realized there are people who don't have the time to worry about how much videotape they're going to buy

next week or when they're going to have to replace their old VTR. They're too busy worrying about survival. At least they don't have to worry about bad reception, dropouts, and legal hassles. . . .

Wednesday, October 22

The early-morning ride back to the airport through the seamier sides of Hong Kong seemed like outtakes from old movies—opium parlors, flea-bitten dives, and seedy-looking wharves. We went through a series of barbed-wire gates and electrified fences designed to prevent residents from illegally leaving this—ah—paradise, and drove up to the international terminal.

Since I had several hours to kill before takeoff, I tried to call Mike Clark back in California to let him know when I'd arrive at LAX. Much to my surprise, Hong Kong has no direct-dial capabilities. In fact, the operator told me that she couldn't even let me call collect. I'd have to place my call at a "wireless station". I tried to explain that I didn't want to send a *telegram*, I wanted to make a *phone call*, but apparently she didn't get that far in English classes. After several futile minutes it was obvious I was getting nowhere.

I trudged across the airport in a huff—or maybe a minute and a huff—to a wizened old man behind a wire-mesh wall. In a sing-song Chinese accent, he told me that it would take him at least twenty minutes to get my call through. In ten years of traveling through four or five countries I was somewhat taken aback. But I handed over my money and waited. And waited. And waited.

Forty-five minutes later, he motioned me over to a small booth where I found a small desk phone (circa 1949), picked it up, and heard the other end pick up. Before I could get a word out, Mike's automatic answering device began playing its monotonous, mechanical-sounding spiel.

I groaned in disbelief. "Of all the times for that schmuck to leave his Record-a-Call on," I muttered. I left all the information I could, cursing the bad overseas connection and the Hong Kong phone company. Apparently the string between their tin cans was wearing out. I

stormed out of the booth to my awaiting plane, which whisked me to Tokyo and finally, on to Los Angeles.

I SLEPT PEACEFULLY ON THE FLIGHT (well, as peacefully as I can while my kneecaps are shoved into my chest for fifteen hours), and awoke just a few miles from the California coast. I reminisced about everything I had been through. . . the gleaming, spotless JVC manufacturing plants. . . the hustle-bustle excitement in Akihabara and the Ginza. . . my new-found friends at the Yokota Air Force Base. . . the incredible equipment, rows and rows of machines, unveiled at the Japan CES. . . the slightly embarrassing episode at the Geisha house in Mito City.

I thought about the past week as I waded through crowds of bleary-eyed fellow passengers and customs inspectors until I finally met Mike. He had been waiting patiently for almost two hours. When he asked about my trip, all I could answer was, "Well, wait till I put the whole story in *The Videophile*. . . unless you have four or five hours to kill. . . ."

We tossed the baggage in the back of his Toyota liftback and headed home to West Hollywood, singing with the radio. ■

Turning Japanese
I think I'm turning Japanese
I really think so. . . .
Turning Japanese
I think I'm turning Japanese
I really think so. . . .

—The Vapors, "Turning Japanese"

Needless to say, many thanks to all the fine folks at JVC and Burson-Matsteller for their kindness in arranging for an eye-opening adventure. Thanks also to the guys at Yokota, including John, Gene, Bill and Charley.

Finally, my warmest *domo arigato* goes to Kenji Awakura, JVC's U.S. Tape Manager, for his uncommon interest and generosity, who made this all happen.

This article included quotes from *Shogun*, by James Clavell.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Starting next issue, we plan to inaugurate a regular column, "Report from Japan" as part of our continuing efforts to keep our readers up to date on new developments in consumer video technology.

For Beginners Only

This is the third installment of "FBO" since the feature was reinaugurated in issue #27. This time we'll take a look at some of the tips and tricks that bear repeating now and then with respect to maintaining a relationship with distant video tape collectors.

The Indispensable Guide

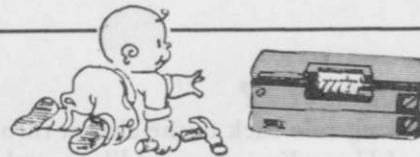
Of supreme importance is the well-known weekly publication, *TV Guide*. When you subscribe to *TV Guide*, they automatically send you the edition containing the local listings from your area. What you may not know is that it is possible, upon special request, to subscribe to any one or more of the 100 or so separate local *TV Guide* editions for the United States and Canada. I used to regularly get three different editions in the mail every week. The main drawback was that the Los Angeles edition seldom arrived before the Monday two days following the first day of listings.

The point of it all, of course, is that you are able to pour through the listings in other areas of the country in search of those movies and series episodes that never show up on your local stations. Quite often, local "specials" in other areas are of interest as well. If you've established an arrangement with someone in the other area, it then becomes a simple matter to pick up the phone and arrange to have that person tape a show and mail it to you. Information regarding the list of available *TV Guide* editions and/or subscriptions to them (at the regular subscription price) can be obtained from: National Billing Department, *TV Guide*, Box 400, Radnor, PA 19088.

This same objective can be achieved, of course, by simply furnishing copies of your want list to each of your far away friends. But it's really asking quite a lot to expect them to be ever alert to the fact that your wants are coming on and, besides, you may have forgotten that you've always wanted *Wrestling Women vs. The Aztec Mummy* until the moment that your memory is jogged by seeing it in the listings with your very own eyes.

As an aside, the manner in which I read my own *TV Guide* listings might be worth mentioning. As a long time magazine collector, I am extremely reluctant to cut-up or otherwise deface any magazine. (My regard for their physical integrity is unrealistically great.) However, necessity has forced me to be more flexible with *TV Guide*. Thus, with red felt-tipped marker in hand, I like to read through the entire week of listings, in one sitting, a day or two before the Saturday when they begin. (My subscription copy nearly always comes by Thursday and the newsstand usually has it on the previous Monday.) I then put a red check mark (or *) next to any show that I think I might want to watch or record. If the same show is being broadcast more than once, I check both listings in the event that I end up missing the first showing. (I've found that prime time PBS shows are often repeated, in the afternoon, one or more times on the two public TV stations that I can get.)

Having done this, I can make mental notes about all my other



by: Jim Lowe

plans for the coming week and make any necessary adjustments. It also, then, becomes very convenient to pick up the *TV Guide* each day and see, at a glance, if there is anything of particular interest coming up. Yes, all of my otherwise pristine back issues are marked up with a red pen, but that's the price I pay for not having to re-read the listings everyday or not being caught short at the last minute when I become aware of what is about to appear.

And Away We Go

Few minor thrills match that of coming home to a tape in the mailbox. This experience can be enhanced by keeping in mind a few modest pointers. Video tape is eligible for the same Special 4th Class mailing rate that applies to books and records. If you want to save on postage, simply indicate on the outside of the package "Special 4th Class Rate: Magnetic Tape Recording". Of course, First Class Mail or "Priority Mail" is faster (at a price) and you should *always* spend the extra few cents required for insurance. Many cities also offer "Express Mail" with guaranteed next day delivery. It's expensive (\$7-\$8), but sometimes ends up being free (at least between Los Angeles and Tallahassee) because, as often as not, the P.O. fails to meet the guaranteed delivery time.

Most cities also offer UPS (United Parcel Service), which has two types of delivery: regular and "Blue Label" (air). Many videophiles prefer UPS to the post office, though it is not always as convenient to *send* packages as it is to *receive* them. UPS has pick-up service in some areas, but in others you have to take your package to their office. You might notice that "XXX" tapes are commonly sent by UPS since there may be legal problems associated with using the mails to transport pornography across state lines.

If you're really in a hurry (and cost is not a factor) there are always such overnight services as "Federal Express" and other "courier" services. I've even been known to use Eastern Air Lines' "Sprint" service, with which you can get *same day* delivery, for an exorbitant price. For short distances (up to 600 miles or so), Greyhound or Trailways bus package delivery service is worth looking into. We've had good results over distances that do not require a change of bus.

It is of the utmost importance that your tape be properly packaged to insure its safe condition. You'd be appalled to find out the level of abuse that a small package may sometimes be subjected to in the course of a cross country trek. Several firms are now offering cardboard or plastic "mailers" especially designed for the shipping of 1/2" video cassettes. My limited experience with these indicates that they hold up quite well. Most of us, however, are still in the habit of using the so-called "padded mailers", and (for the record) we always recommend that they be used only once. There are so many cheapskate

videophiles that it is not at all unusual to receive a tape in such a mailer that has a series of labels on it and has been stapled, retaped and reinforced many times.

My advice is to *never*, NEVER use a padded mailer of the type that contains shredded newspaper for the padding (and don't exchange tapes with anyone who does). It is quite common for the inner lining of the mailer to rip open, resulting in a mess of lint and dust inside the shell of the cassette. If you insist on using such a mailer, wrap the cassette in a double layer of good quality wrapping paper (your leftover holiday wrapping, perhaps) and tape it securely before putting it in the mailer. I use the type of padded mailer that has the little clear plastic air bubbles in it. Even then, it's best to wrap the cassette, as well. These are available at office supply stores and at some post offices.

Let's Do The Time Zone

The fact that the east and west coasts are in different time zones can often be used to great advantage. Just the other day I was talking to Marc Wielage while "60 Minutes" was on in the East. Since it was only 4:30 p.m. in California, I was able to give him plenty of advance notice that Sid Sheinberg (President of MCA/Universal Studios) was on the show. Marc is sort of a Sid Sheinberg groupie, so I knew he would want to tape the episode. More than once I've been able to alert folks out West that something was going to be on (or that something was not worth watching) which they otherwise would have had no way of knowing in advance.

Perhaps the greater benefit is to viewers in the East. If I miss a show due to preemption, power or timer failure, interference, or whatever, I can call someone in California and request that they tape the show for me. Maybe a show that I'm watching is half over before I realize that I should have been taping it. Well, it hasn't even started in the West yet, so not only can I alert someone to it, but I can get a copy taped and mailed to me, as well.

Car 54, Where Are You?

Okay, you're ready, maybe even eager, but how does one go about finding that jewel of a person—the dependable trading partner on the other side of the hill? First of all, you have to be willing to come out of the closet and declare yourself. Place a mini-ad in this magazine indicating that you are seeking such a contact, and describing your interests. Something like the following should attract some interest:

Videophile in Ohio seeks to make contact with potential trading partners in San Francisco and Houston. Am interested in old westerns, pro basketball and rock music. Have access to pay-TV channel. Am willing to exchange TV Guides. Will answer all letters that include a stamp. Write or call (after 6:00 p.m. CDT). Dorsal Finn, 1116 Fishback Lane, Lake City, Ohio (513) 555-6870).

or perhaps:

Gentleman of discriminating taste is interested in video cassettes featuring carnival sideshow performers in embarrassing situations. My library of newsreel footage relating to the arrest of department store Santa Clauses is without peer. No weirdos please. Contact: Mort Urkey by calling 1-800-555-2633.

In short, if you are unwilling to reach out to others and describe your interests in some particularity, you cannot very well expect them to seek you out. I would recommend both phone calls and correspondence with any potential trading partner. Don't send anyone a big box of your most prized tapes until you have satisfied yourself that you are dealing with someone who is on the up and up. And please, *please* don't call this magazine and say: "Can you put me in touch with someone in San Diego?" We can't, or rather *we won't*. If someone in San Diego wants to be contacted, his or her ad will appear herein. We will not take on the responsibility of putting strangers in touch with each other simply because we have their names on our list of subscribers. Besides, we value their privacy too much.

Don't Fence Me In

Most of you probably have little interest in doing a stretch in the slammer, so it's best to keep your video exchanging on the right side of the law. *Never* sell a recording that you have made off the air. It's illegal, in our view, and just plain shouldn't be done. We have long maintained, however, that the *exchange* of legally made off-the-air recordings among hobbyists *not-for-profit* and with no cash involved is perfectly alright. To date, the question has not been addressed by the courts.

What about duplicates of off-the-air tapes, you say? That's another matter. Quoting from our article in Issue #20:

While we do not believe that an individual VTR owner who occasionally duplicates an off-the-air recording for nonprofit trading purposes is running a particularly great risk of being subjected to criminal or civil legal proceedings, we cannot in good conscience advise you that it is legal to do so. Certainly the risk of being sued by the copyright owner or "visited" by law enforcement authorities would increase in direct proportion to the blatancy of your activities.

The entire article, "*Home Video Recording . . . piracy or the pursuit of happiness*," is well worth your attention. It is far too extensive to set forth here, but we will reprint or update it in the future if our back issue department ever sells out of it (ahem).

These are a few of the things that should make your long distance exchanges more satisfactory. (Speaking of long distance, remember that telephone rates are quite cheap after 11:00 p.m. and on weekends.) There are many other tips, I'm sure, which we'll be happy to print in the future. As always, we are receptive to your input and will pass along any suggestions of general interest that you may have for this column.

The following 20 pointers on "Video Etiquette" were submitted by Lee Amirault of Exeter, NH. They are good advice for beginners and for the rest of us, as well. Many thanks, Lee. You're our kind of guy.

1. Do use the same brand tape that is received whenever possible.
2. Don't return Ampex or Scotch for a Sony without prior agreement to do so. Never use unbranded tape.
3. Do respond promptly to trades and to people who send lists. If you are delayed in sending a tape, write or call to explain the delay and give an estimate of when you will make a shipment.
4. Do keep a complete record of tapes received and sent. I keep a separate file folder for each person I trade with.
5. Do keep your list updated. Have a mailing list and send an update on occasion.
6. Don't make collect phone calls to people whose numbers appear in *The Videophile*, just to chat. (If you can't afford the phone call, you probably can't afford to trade videotapes anyway.) The only exception to the collect-call-rule might be if a movie on someone's mini-ad want list is coming up on TV that night. You might say to the operator, "This is John Devil Girl from Mars Smith calling (if your name is John Smith and *Devil Girl from Mars* is coming on).
7. Don't overextend yourself financially. Remember, it's easy for ten people to send you one tape each, but then you have to go out and buy a case of tapes to send back.
8. Do try to keep your promises. If you tell a trader you'll get him something off your cable, don't let him down. If you want to protect yourself from a big let down on an important movie, double or triple cover yourself. Arrange the trade with several people. However, don't cancel the others after receiving one. Remember, you still owe each one a trade in return.
9. Do be patient in trading. Good things come to those who wait.
10. Don't rush out and pay the Bootlegger big bucks for a new release. You will probably find a free trade eventually.
11. Don't threaten to blow up your local TV station even though they talked over the end of *Music Man*, cancelled your favorite series to air *The Kopy Kats* instead, cut five to ten minutes out of your favorite movie to make room for more commercials, or interrupted the network movie to tell you about some stupid news bulletin that could easily have waited for the late news.
12. Don't believe everything you hear on the news or read in *TV Guide*.
13. Do use a dust cover, and keep your heads clean.
14. Don't watch an ABC series for more than one hour continuously; it can cause brain damage.
15. Do remember to renew your subscription to *The Videophile* and recommend it to others.
16. Don't be satisfied with commercial tapes you have purchased which are less than perfect.
17. Do trade rather than buy whenever you can.
18. Don't offer copies of tapes for sale.
19. Do write and complain to the TV networks about the general lack of good programming and the unpardonable practice of editing for television. Films are works of art and should not be cut, ever, for any reason.
20. Do keep in synch.



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: GC—Graham Carlton, JC—James Camner, and JL—Jim Lowe. Their views are not necessarily those of *The Videophile*.

TAPES

A Festival of Funnies (NFL Films, 1980)

Format/Length: VHS/53 minutes

Content: A collection of spectacular stumbles, fumbles, bumbles, bobbles, bangs and boobs (spectators, not cheerleaders) taken from many years of NFL football games. The tape is organized into several separate segments, including: "Believe It Or Else," "The NFL Goes Metric," and "The NFL Sym-funny" in which selected footage is set to classical music, ballet and opera. There's also a short piece in which a young lad with stars in his eyes watches the "big boys" play a sand lot game.

Evaluation: As the tape's cardboard sleeve tells us, it's "The strange and bizarre, the unbelievable and the ridiculous of the world of pro football." If you're a football "blooper" fan, I'd say this tape is definitely for you. Some truly remarkable plays and mishaps have been captured and preserved on this tape. It covers quite a few years, too. A segment on quarter-backs entitled "Sunday's Glorious General" dates back to 1972 (you may remember having seen it then). The more humorless among you may not care for the phony sound effects, satirical narrative and rickytink musical accompaniment. Some of it even seemed a bit much to me, but on balance the genuine laughs, fine picture quality, and absence of drop-outs should make this tape a winner for fans who want to relive some of the more spectacular mayhem and mishaps of the Sunday afternoons that America has known and loved so well. Whether it's rain, mud, frustration, elation or grief that interests you, this tape has it.—JL

Source: NFL Films

★★★

The Charm of La Boheme German film, 1938, with English subtitles

Credits: Cast—Jan Kiepura and Marta Eggerth. Music by Giacomo Puccini with additional music by Robert Stolz (no fooling—that's what it says)

Content: Struggling bohemians are enjoying life in Paris. One of them is a would-be opera singer played by Jan Kiepura. He meets a beautiful girl who comes into the cafe he is singing in. This is Marta Eggerth and they fall in love. But she is ill and dying. He doesn't know this. She does. She becomes the mistress of a rich man to use his influence so that Kiepura can obtain an audition at the Paris Opera. He does. He succeeds. He misunderstands her motives. He becomes famous. They meet again, sing one performance together in *La Boheme* and she dies (for real) at the end of the opera. A disconsolate Kiepura stands over her body as her father consoles him with the words, "Life is cruel, yet you must be happy that it has given her such an exit."

Evaluation: This film is no more foolish than many of the Jeanette MacDonald-Nelson Eddy movies and if you like them you should like this one. The plot has as much in common with *La Traviata* as *La Boheme* and much of the music is by operetta composer Robert Stolz including an awful song, "Don't Cry" which Kiepura sings *twice*. But much of the music from *La Boheme* is sung throughout the movie and Kiepura, an opera singer who sang at the Metropolitan Opera, and who was known as the Polish Caruso, sings it quite well. Marta Eggerth, his

wife, is even more impressive. Her thin, but lovely voice and charm are quite winning. You may even like her more than MacDonald. I did. For fans of this genre, I think this is a must. A charming representative of musical films made in Europe. The picture quality was above average for this type of film and the titles were clear and only hard to read against light backgrounds.—JC

Source: Discount Video Tapes

★★★

Instant Replay Video Art Issue

Format/Length: Beta X-2/approx. 2 hours

Content: The usual "made especially for you" features that we have come to expect from Instant Replay "magazine," only this time the theme, or emphasis, is on "video art." The work of several pioneer video artists is examined (see the back cover of our issue #27 for an example), running the gamut from kaleidoscope graphics to a fascinating slow-motion piece in which people blow bubble gum bubbles that gently pop all over their faces. Other regular departments include:

—Satellite News, in which we see the "umbrella" style receiving dish, and reception of the 1980 Olympics from a Russian satellite.

—Sports, wherein a camera goes along for the ride on a hang glider, and

—Technical Corner, which features the first installment of instructions on how to create your own video "feedback" images.

Also, well known video artist Ron Hays narrates a preview of his first "album" entitled "Music Image Odyssey." The material ranges from classical to rock to disco, and is best suited, I would say, for giant (wall-size) screens. Information about the album is available from Box 6900, Hollywood, CA 90046.

Foreign commercials, visits to the Summer CES, Cable News Network headquarters and Henry Kloss' basement, plus other tidbits round out the "issue."

Evaluation: We have regularly reviewed the output from Chuck Azar and the gang in Coconut Grove, rarely finding fault with their presentation and selections. This tape, while maybe not quite up to the standard set by *The Music Issue* (reviewed in #26) or the *CES Summer 1980* tape (reviewed in #28), is no exception. If examples of what is happening on the frontier of video art is of particular interest to you, this one should be in your hands. If this aspect of the video age is of little or no concern to you, you will still enjoy this issue because of all the additional material that is included. Two hours is a lot of space to fill. Instant Replay has made a habit of filling it in a way that not only holds your interest, but often makes you feel that particular segments were too abbreviated. I especially enjoyed the feature on "feedback," a video art technique which even the clumsiest among you can play around with if you have a VCR, a camera, and a TV set. Infinite images and spirographic patterns, which take little or no talent to create, can be brought to life with minimal effort and knowledge. (Perhaps we can do an article on the subject someday.)

Among the snippets and contributions from subscribers, I especially enjoyed the segment in which a white gospel

singing group is lip-synching to a prerecorded soundtrack that begins to warble and run down. The commercial for Hamlet cigars was nice, too.

As usual, the picture quality and production values were quite good, at least for those portions produced by Instant Replay. Material included from other sources (eg. off-the-air or from subscribers contributions) is necessarily variable in quality, since it has sometimes gone through a couple of generations of duplication before reaching your eyes. The sound, on our copy at least, dropped out about half way through and, though it gradually recovered throughout the tape, it never reached full volume again. I'm sure IR would promptly replace it if your copy had this problem. Subscribe! I've never been disappointed.—JL

Source/Price: Instant Replay/\$59.95.

★★★

The 1980 Miss Nude Florida Pageant

Length/Format: 53 minutes/VHS

Content: The 7th annual Miss Nude Florida Pageant held at the Seminole Health Club, near Ft. Lauderdale, in the spring of 1980. Sixteen contestants compete in gowns, swimsuits and the altogether. All contestants are bona fide "nudists" (as opposed to exotic dancers from Miami area clubs) and for some unknown reason are sponsored, for the most part, by local area fire departments. The ladies range in age from 19 to 39*. The general format is not that different from regular network beauty pageants, though with a much lesser budget (eg. one of the main prizes is a bowling ball). Appearances by former winners of both the Miss and Mr. Nude Florida title and a couple of musical numbers round out the event.

Evaluation: In a word (or three)—I liked it. The pageant is quite entertaining and surprisingly non-erotic. Unlike *Nudes-a-Poppin* (reviewed in #27), the Miss Nude Florida Pageant is a straight forward beauty contest along traditional lines, except that the contestants don't have any clothes on. It's pretty much a combination of entertainment and promotional documentary for nudism as a healthy lifestyle. Smirks, giggles and titters are kept to a minimum, though there is no lack of enthusiasm among those in the audience who whoop and cheer with abandon for their favorites. The girls themselves, particularly the five finalists, are as pretty as you will find in any big time pageant. (Some of it may be due to the camera, but a disproportionate number of the ladies seemed to be of the type who spend a lot of time sitting down.) My favorite (the cutest little gal from Ecuador that you'd ever want to see) was one of the five. Did she win? You'll have to see for yourself.

The narration (a professional female voice) is well handled, the music is fairly unobtrusive (though I wouldn't want the soundtrack album), and the overall production values, especially the little interviews that are inserted throughout, are quite good (far and away superior to *The Miss Bikini USA Beauty Pageant* reviewed in #25). I didn't care for the slo-mo effects. They were distracting more often than effective. Also, the color picture quality was not as sharp and clear as a big studio production, due perhaps (I'm guessing) to a combination of lighting limitations, camera, portable recorder, and tape-to-tape duplications on equipment that may be a cut below that used by

the major production houses. I mention this only to be fully honest with those of you who demand only the best in picture clarity. For myself, I found the pageant to be quite enjoyable (even though the "dance" number by the Mr. Nude Florida fellows was one of the most ridiculous things I have ever seen) and certainly recommend it to those of you who have always wanted to see a good clean nude beauty contest, with pretty girls and no gimmicks.—JL

Source/Price: Broadcast Quality, Inc./\$49.95 (plus \$1.50 postage)

*Special note to Mike, Joe and Bill: The older lady's 9 year old daughter appears in a brief dance number, but this alone does not warrant purchase of the tape.



—NOTICE—

The following two tapes are true "hard core" pornography, containing explicit sexual activity that leaves nothing to the imagination. If such goings-on are offensive to you, please do not purchase them and then complain to us.

Randy "The Electric Lady" (Fast Forward Films)

Credits: Cast—Desiree Costeau, Roger Frazer and Justin Case as the chauffeur. Produced and Directed by—Phillip Schuman.

Format/Length: VHS/73 minutes (plus previews)

Story: Several non-orgasmic young ladies seek aid at a highly advanced and computerized sex clinic. Under the personal attention of a handsome young doctor, all our eager ladies appear to make progress. Unknown to them, however, the place

is really just a front for the evil dominatrix, Dr. Pendrick, who hopes to make a killing by selling the serum "orgasmine" to the highest bidder among sinister underworld and foreign powers. Randy proves to be the perfect experimental subject when, as a result of accidental computer feedback, her body produces the serum and, as a by product, she becomes potentially responsive to 812 sexual situations. Virtue (?) prevails when the evil doctor and her man servant accidentally overdose on orgasmine and react in such a way as to prompt our hero to exclaim "My God, they're going at it like a pair of maddened warthogs."

The tape also includes 10 minutes of previews for *Babyface* (reviewed in #18), *Pretty Peaches* (reviewed in #24), and *Untamed*.

Evaluation: I'd say that the execution didn't live up to the concept. The idea is a good one and Randy is ably played by Desiree "Pretty Peaches" Costeau, something of a pneumatic cartoon character come to life. But she alone cannot save this one from being strictly average. I enjoyed the scene in which three young lovelies are strapped to chairs and forced to watch "therapeutic" films, but the snippets that we see of these films are generally of more interest than the feature at hand. Some of the music track was too loud and distracting and, while the picture quality was generally pretty good, the closing scene in "the tower" was a bit dark. Overall, "The Electric Lady," while reportedly getting good reviews elsewhere, didn't measure up in my mind to any of the other films of this genre that I have more or less recommended. It *would* be a good choice for those of you who are first-timers, being both tame and explicit enough to get your feet (or whatever) wet with. If the denouement had been more fully fleshed out, I could probably be more positive, but as it is, I cannot advise those of you who are looking for something new and different to bite on this one.—JL

Source: Astronics.

Never A Tender Moment (Mitchell Bros. 1980)

Credits: Cast—Marilyn Chambers, the Bondo Buddies

Format/Length: Beta/75 minutes

Content: You know you're really in for it when the label on the cassette says that this will never be shown in theatres. Whoow- whee! The stroke brigade would make it necessary for the inside of the theatre to be sand blasted after every performance. I gave this to the old geez down the street, the one that gives the kids candy and wants everyone to call him "Gramps," and after he previewed it, he told me that this cinematic epic cures impotence. Medical breakthrough or home entertainment?

What could be so entertaining about a skin flick where nobody even does "the dirty deed"? Industrial strength bondage!!!! Yes indeed kiddies, if you make a double feature out of this and the "Mr. Bill Show" at your next party, it might be written up as one of the best of the season in the local gossip column. The tape is a video record of Marilyn Chambers' live bondage show, no story line, no pretense, no nothing except lots and lots of footage of a lovely young girl getting the crap clubbed out of her, a sport that ranks number three as a national pastime right behind baseball and football but comfortably ahead of soccer.

The tape begins HBO style, with Marilyn running into the dressing room telling us candid things about just how she prefers her anatomy to be manipulated. [In terms more graphic than we are known to use here.--Ed.] Then we cut to the dance floor where we find good old M.C. doing a nude dance for the peep show peepers. Lo and behold, out come a pair of biracial uglies dressed up in standard bondage gear. They shackle up our cookie and then, with the aid of a block and tackle (home producers note: I saw this same block and tackle at Sears on sale for \$13.95. I was gonna buy a pair but they didn't take Mastercharge, just Sears charge), they hang her upside down by her ankles and do all sorts of nasties, including a round or two with an industrial strength black dildo that looks like it took the yearly output of Columbia's rubber trees to make.

Evaluation: Make no mistake, this tape is fun for the whole family, especially if you have a rich grandmother you'd like to give a heart attack to.

Now the bummer: All good things have to end and "Never a Tender Moment" doesn't fill out the entire tape. The Mitchell Bros. apparently don't like to waste anything so they filled out the rest of the tape with stuff like "Hot Nazis" a musical comedy that looks like it was shot in somebody's basement and "Southern Belles" a tacky quicky with a funny/dumb soundtrack. Both pictures are boring.

Because of the cheapo features at the end, I recommend that you pick this up at the local rental club (mine can't keep it in stock), rather than buy it. The picture quality is above average and the directing looks like it was done by a UCLA film student that will graduate soon and probably become the next Martin Scorsese.—GC

Source: Mitchell Bros.

☆☆☆

Mud Honey (Delta Films, 1966)

Credits: Cast—Hal Hopper, John Furlong, Antoinette Crisiani, Rena Horton (wow!), Princess Livingstone and featuring Lorna Maitland. Director—Russ Meyer.

Format/Length: VHS/95 minutes

Story: Sometime in the midst of the 1930's depression, an upstanding young ex-con, making his way west, agrees to a farmhand job in Spooner, Missouri. The farm is run by Sidney Brenshaw and his wife Hannah, though owned by her sweet old uncle who has a heart condition. But, the Waltons they're not. The drunk, crude and evil Sidney spends much of his time over at the house of the grotesque Maggie Marie and her two daughters, the licentious Clarabelle (Lorna Maitland) and the stunning (though deaf and mute) Eula. Naturally our young hero and the farmer's battered wife fall in love. Mix this all together with a demented preacher, a country sheriff, a drowning, a lynching, greed, avarice, a glimpse or two of nudity, and a couple of atavistic cretins, and what emerges is a tale that evokes the typical response to a Russ Meyer film: "Is he putting us on, or what?"

Evaluation: It's not for everybody. *Mud Honey* is not the kind of film that you can rate as "good" or "bad." Nor can you say whether you enjoyed it or not. To some it would, no doubt, be a "bomb" of major proportions; to others a "cult classic." As a general rule, I like Mr. Meyer's work. It entertains me on a

different level and for different reasons than do other films. To set the stage for my opinion, I offer the following, excerpted from a recent letter to him:

"I've been a fan of your work since the earliest days, having seen the *Immoral Mr. Teas* back when it was considered to be 'pretty hot stuff'. I notice that in addition to *Ultravixens* you also have *Lorna* and *Mud Honey* out on tape now. I would love to review either or both of these titles in our tape review section, if you could lend us copies for that purpose.

"Do you have anything to say about the rights to *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, or is that all up to Twentieth Century Fox? It would be a big hit on tape, as many collectors that I know are clamouring for it. Heck, if it was up to me, I'd try to get it into release on the midnight movie circuit. Now that *Rocky Horror* has just about run its course, your classic should be a smash with these same audiences. I saw it at FSU recently and must say that the years have only added more lustre to the outrageous sappi-ness that I had recalled so fondly."

His reply, in part:

"Here is my cassette of *Mud Honey*. *Lorna* is far back ordered, I don't know when I can get a copy to you. Forget *Beyond/Dolls*. Fox refuses to move on it. . . . I appreciate your comments re *Dolls*. Hope we can get together sometime."

With that background in mind, here is my review of *Mud Honey*. The film is set in a sort of campy, surrealistic "Dog-patch." In some ways it's reminiscent of *God's Little Acre* or *Tobacco Road*. Many of the players are cartoon characters: Sidney is the quintessential drunken wife beater, Eula, a sort of mute Moonbeam McSwine, Brother Hanson, Elmer Gantry

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gone wacko, and so on. Yet, trying to cope with this are other, seemingly straight, characters like our hero Calif McKinney and Hannah, the farmer's wife.

In a similar fashion, tender scenes (or schlock, if you prefer) such as hand-holding lovers in silhouette against the sky and meadow are rudely mixed together with ludicrous situations and shrieking rooms full of crazies. Overly melodramatic music ranging from the 101 Strings variety to Dragnet accompany each mood. The result is a sort of mish-mash theatre of the incongruous. The film is shot in stark black and white and contains extreme closeups and unusual camera angles of the type that I would imagine are favorites with experimental film students.

I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn that John Waters, of *Pink Flamingo* and *Female Trouble* fame, had been influenced by Russ Meyer's early work. Maggie Marie (played by Princess Livingston) reminded me of no one so much as Edith Massey (as Mama Edie and Ida) in those two films. Such stuff as the fistfight at the open graveside, the drowning of Sister Lucy, and the religious conversion of Sidney, coupled with Calif and Hannah's attempt to act responsibly in a world gone mad, all add up to a somewhat uneven mixture of sappy sentimentality and outrage of the type that later was to culminate in the classic *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*.

Mud Honey was a follow-up, though not a sequel, to *Lorna*, which we hope to review in a future issue. The star of that film, Lorna Maitland, appears in a supporting, though dismissible, role in this film. The real star is Russ Meyer. Anyone familiar with his work would recognize his stamp, whether the credit lines revealed it or not. Is the man a genius or a jerk? No, I don't

think he is, but I do think his work is worthy of serious study.

As for the tape itself, the black and white print is very good to excellent. I should think it would do quite well on a 6 or 7 foot screen. The sound track, however, had a low level "hiss" throughout. Occasionally, it became pronounced enough to be a minor distraction. The entire film *barely* fits on the tape. It ran out while the "The End" card was still on the screen. *Mud Honey* comes in a black plastic case with an illustrated label featuring a pose of Rena Horton that is not quite in the film itself. Don't be misled into thinking that this tape contains lots of frolicking bare-breasted babes. It doesn't. That came later in *Vixen* and its offspring. This film is more for students of the strange and the absurd. Speaking for that group, I recommend it.—JL

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Ted Reinhart's Western Roundup

Any fan of the movie west would have been in his or her glory while attending the First National Tom Mix Festival, staged in DuBois, Pennsylvania, during the period of October 9 to 12, 1980. For a motion picture genre (let alone one of its very early performers) now considered "passe" by an industry which owes it its very life, there's still one hell of a lot of devotees around. And zealous ones at that!



Here's your singing cowboy columnist, microphone in hand, ready to croon his songs of the sagebrush before 1,500 spectators attending the First National Tom Mix Festival, held in Dubois, PA. In the background, the instrumental aggregation, The Golden Westerners.

I mentioned in my column of last issue that I had been selected as the featured entertainer and master-of-ceremonies of an event which would pay tribute to the all-time greatest screen cowboy, Tom Mix. This honor was essentially bestowed upon me due to my having known Mix when I was a seven-year-old living in DuBois (Tom's home town as a

youth). Well, I never dreamed that a man who has been a mere memory for 40 years (Tom lost his life in an auto mishap in 1940) would again be capable of attracting world-wide attention, particularly in the small backwoods north-western Pennsylvania community of DuBois. And I don't exaggerate "world" attention. Not only did the festival receive coverage from the three major TV and radio networks and such prestigious newspapers as *The New York Times*, *Pittsburg Press*, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, and a raft of minor leaguers, but representatives from Germany, England, and Sweden were also in attendance. As a passing fact . . . the largest Tom Mix film collection is owned by Yugoslavia.

I could ramble on for pages detailing the tremendous response to all the film and video tape showings of Tom Mix starring vehicles, the scores of absolutely fanatical memorabilia collectors who displayed countless paper items and valuable premiums obtained from the old Ralston Straight Shooters Radio Program. Incredible!



The Paradise Gulch Saloon, in downtown DuBois, PA, was created especially for the First National Tom Mix Festival. The sign on the window reads, "NO BAD GUYS ALLOWED," which kept Terrible Ted Reinhart from entering. When the saloon belles learned that the lonely cowhand outside wrote for "Lash" Lowe, Ted had to fight them off.

I was overjoyed to see people of all assortments in such a state of elation while viewing the movies. I haven't heard so much hoopin' and hollerin' since I was a kid attending the Saturday matinees. I'll have to add that the reception to my

show was equally favorable, as my group, The Golden Westerners, and I revived the great cowboy songs which were so much a part of old B-westerns.

It is my hope that this "Mixomania" will encourage the likes of Blackhawk and other big video dealers to begin marketing some of the rare Tom Mix products on cassette. I'm doing my part by offering a "Tom Mixture" as the bimonthly special video cassette. The tape includes the feature *Hidden Gold* and Chapters 1 and 15 of *The Miracle Rider* (see reviews and ad).

Perhaps some of you videophiles who are supportive of my western cause will be interested in saddlin' up and headin' to Tifton, Georgia, for the "Western Film Roundup" to be held February 26 to 28. Along with a number of former B-westerners scheduled to appear, I'll be present with my gal pal (wife, Ruth) to entertain. Jim and Joyce, why don't you two hop a stage and come on up to "Jimmyland" to meet your controversial columnist? [We'll meet you at the pass, pardner.—Ed.]

A special note to that "side-winder" from Fort Lee, NJ . . . Not only is my saddle equipped with blinking lights, but the saddle horn plays "Back in the Saddle Again." I've never fooled around with saddle bags, though. I'm a happily married cowboy. "Communication saddle-lights" . . . that's really bad, Jim. Perhaps you better *not* come to Tifton.

Ted Reinhart
Edgewater Acres Resort
Alexandria, PA 16611

VIDEOCASSETTE REVIEWS

☆☆☆

A Double Feature

Cheyenne Takes Over (PRC, 1947) B&W

Credits: Cast—Al "Lash" LaRue, Al St. John, Nancy Gates, George Chesebro, Lee Morgan, John Merton, Steve Clark. Director—Ray Taylor.

Story: Lash and "Fuzzy" St. John have been ordered to take a vacation, much to their disapproval. Rest and relaxation are not what the two fighting men of the plains desire. They're always ready for action, and this is exactly what they find at their vacation ranch. The boys quickly discover that strangers are not welcome. It turns out that the owner of the ranch has been murdered. The new owner is an unfriendly type of fellow, and Lash discovers why. He happens to be an imposter who was responsible for the former owner's death in order to get control of the valuable property. LaRue and St. John begin to enjoy their "vacation" by bringing this criminal and his gang to justice.

Evaluation: Since "maligning" one of Jim Lowe's favorite cowboy stars (besides video product dealers), I felt compelled to review a Lash LaRue movie. Perhaps, thought

I, by refreshing my mind with one of old Lash's pictures, I'll have a change of heart and begin to recognize this accomplished "bull whipper" as one of the truly greats of the sagebrush saga. Sorry, Jim. This LaRue flick is so much "bull whip," I just can't hack the "poor man's Bogart" in western clothing. The fact that the younger (?) guys were never exposed to the likes of Buck Jones, Tom Mix, George O'Brien, Tim McCoy and others did not permit the development of the proper criteria to determine the "biggies." Video and audio of this wasteland are quite good.

The Tulsa Kid (Republic, 1940) B&W

Credits: Cast—Don Barry, Noah Beery, Luana Walters, David Durand, George Douglas, Jimmy Wakely and his Roughriders. Director—George Sherman.

Story: Don Barry was raised from a youngster by Noah Beery, a professional gunfighter. Barry becomes alienated from his foster father when he witnesses a killing in which Beery is involved. Don, known as the "The Tulsa Kid" swears never to carry a gun again. Later Barry drifts into the town of Wind River and establishes himself as a man of law and order. A local outlaw leader (Douglas) hires Noah Beery to kill Don. A deadly encounter is staged. In the ensuing show-down, neither man wants to shoot at the other. Don attempts to blast the gun out of Noah's hand but wounds him in the shoulder. Douglas then attempts to fire at Barry, but his foster father drops the outlaw with a bullet in time. The two men resolve their differences with Noah Beery promising to give up gun fighting.

Evaluation: This is one of the very best B-westerns ever released, and by far Don Barry's finest. Noah Beery (Sr.) could be placed at the very pinnacle of the "bad guys" pile . . . especially playing a likeable baddie. The plotting of this oater is intelligently structured and should win over the most severe critic. Sight and sound compare well with the general high quality of *The Tulsa Kid*. Too bad this feature had to be coupled with the foregoing. Just press "Fast Forward" on your VCR if Lash is too much.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant

☆☆☆

A Double Feature

The Golden Stallion (Republic, 1949) Color

Credits: Cast—Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Estelita Rodrigues, Pat Brady, Douglas Evans, Frank Fenton, Greg McClure, Foy Willing and The Riders of the Purple Sage. Director—William Witney.

Story: Roy Rogers, in an attempt to round up a fine herd of wild horses, interferes with a shrewd smuggling gang that is sending a fortune in diamonds across the border concealed in a specially designed shoe worn by a tame horse that runs with the herd. The outlaws try to discourage Rogers from capturing the horses, and finally are successful when Roy's

horse, Trigger, is accused of killing a member of the crooked band. Trigger is sentenced to be shot, and in order to save him Roy takes blame for the murder and is sent to a long term with a road gang. While Roy is in prison, the outlaws turn Trigger into a genuine killer and leader of the wild horses. Roy is later released from jail, figures out the smugglers scheme, and helps to bring the group to justice. Trigger leads in the wild horses for Roy.

Evaluation: If you are a horse lover, you'll love *The Golden Stallion*. There are some really excellent sequences of hundreds of equines roaming and running over magnificent landscapes. The camera work is spectacular. I must admit that the story line is a bit far-fetched, but the action, songs, and settings more than atone for this shortcoming. The "Trucolor" is not quite as "true" as it should be. Sound is fine.

The Cherokee Flash (Republic, 1945) B&W

Credits: Cast—Sunset Carson, Linda Sterling, Tom London, Roy Barcroft, John Merton, Bud Geary, Frank Jacquet. Director—Thomas Carr.

Story: Jeff Carson (played by Roy Barcroft) is getting up in years and feels that it's about time to mend his ways from life as an outlaw. But former members of his old gang won't permit this, so Jeff goes for help to his foster son, Sunset Carson. Sunset, with the aid of sidekick, Utah (Tom London), agrees to see that Jeff's desires materialize. The three of them go to work on the gang and put them "away" for good. The elder Carson is now free to become a good guy.

Evaluation: Sunset Carson never made the "grade" with me. Had he never been given any lines to speak, this tall Texan would have been ahead of the movie game. He really looked the part, but, oh that voice and delivery! With *The Cherokee Flash*, I'm going to overlook Carson's weaknesses. This is a winner western, with a unique quality. Two performers who spent the major portion of their careers playing criminals take a departure from these roles. It really is strange to view Barcroft as a likeable person, let alone as the hero's foster father (shades of *The Tulsa Kid*). And Tom London as a comic sidekick??? He's really great! The picture and sound quality are up to the typical Nostalgia Merchant standards.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant.

☆☆☆

A "Tom-Mixture"

Hidden Gold (Feature Film, 1932) B&W

Credits: Cast—Tom Mix, Judith Barrie, Raymond Hatton, Eddie Gribbon, Donald Kirke, Willis Clark. Director—Arthur Rosson.

Story: Three bank robbers rob the safe of all its contents and hide the loot in a forest. The men are apprehended and sent to prison, remaining mum on the location of the "hidden gold." Tom Mix is asked to pretend he is a criminal, join the

three robbers in jail, and gain their confidence, which could lead to learning of the location of the money. Mix and the crooks break prison and make a getaway. Eventually Tom locates the stolen cash, two of the robbers are killed in a forest fire, and Mix takes the third back to jail.

Evaluation: Tom Mix "struts his stuff" in this movie. You see the great cowboy star riding Tony, Jr., over fences, through a river, and into a blazing forest fire, engaged in a boxing match, driving an antique auto at top speed, pitching some "woo," and displaying a fine flair for comedy. It's pretty corny in spots, but typical for a 1932 vintage B-western. It is a fun piece, and must be considered one of the few surviving Tom Mix motion pictures. The quality is surprisingly good visually and sound-wise.

The Miracle Rider (Serial, 1935) B&W

Chapters One and Fifteen

Credits: Cast—Tom Mix, Jean Gale, Charles Middleton, Jason Robards, Edward Hearn, Pat O'Malley, Robert Frazer. Directors—Armand Schaefer and Reeves Eason.

Story: Tom Mix, captain of the Texas Rangers, is called by his Indian friends "The Miracle Rider." Tom is doing battle with the unscrupulous Zaroff, the leader of a gang who is attempting to drive the Ravenhead Indians from their rightful land. Zaroff discovers the valuable mineral X-94 on the reservation. X-94 is a powerful explosive which will help the evil Zaroff accomplish any criminal deed. Tom and his Rangers route the villains.

Evaluation: This is a two-chapter sampling of Tom Mix's only serial, and final motion picture. Actually, these first and last chapters give the viewer a rather complete story line of a fifteen chapter serial. It's routine "cliffhanger" fare, but an especially good way to view a chapter play without spending four hours to do so. Picture and sound quality of both chapters are very good.

Source: Ted Reinhart



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TELE-COMMUNICATION: *the videosponding column*

by: Gary Bourgois

What a marvelous gizmo you own . . . Imagine, you can be the boss of your TV, making it show your favorite programs *when you want!* Ever since you plunked down those hard-earned shekles for your VCR and first batch of tape, you have become a different person. Let's face it, for some of us the video obsession is a force so great that all logic is thrown to the winds. Come on, let's see some hands . . . how many of us have bought a video toy instead of paying an overdue bill? OK. What about eating Kraft macaroni and cheese dinners for a solid week to buy that much-needed case of videotape to catch all the new shows on PBS, HBO, or SHOWTIME, not to mention *Shogun* and the other network spectacles?

The video obsession defies reason. I have no statistics, but I am sure it gets in the way of relationships. Since I purchased my first VCR a year ago, I have been on one date *outside* my apartment, and the entire time I kept nervously glancing at my watch, wondering if the timer would work this time, hoping I had flipped the switch from camera to tuner, and agonizing over the fact that I might have left the microphone plugged in *again* and would come home to an off-air recording of *It Came from under the Sink* with a soundtrack consisting of traffic noises and the lonely meowing of my Siamese cat. Those who visit me consider me a raving lunatic . . . with the exception of my deliver-it-to-your-door video dealer, who just last week brought me another VCR and clinched the deal with a Sinclair Microvision which looked so cute and homeless, I simply had to have it.

I mean, this video thing can get all out of hand. Although I do have a couple of friends who also own video recorders, I've found to my chagrin that

not everyone goes insane when he/she hears of a new video toy or anxiously awaits this month's crop of fancy new VCR's. What is needed here is a little communication. *The Videophile* and the other mags satisfy some, though not all, of the need. (Besides the fact that it was the *first*, this particular publication best satisfies that communication need, since it reads more like an old friend than a slick journal. The shiny pages didn't hurt, though I *was* worried.)

Communication, therefore, is the purpose of this column, and whether or not it becomes a regular feature of this magazine depends on you. In addition to providing you with replays of *My Mother the Car*, your VCR itself can help you make contact with those you need to hear from most—*other video junkies*. It is called *videosponding*. (Hmmm, maybe I should copyright the term before someone else does, and I am not allowed to use it.)

Perhaps you have heard of audio tapesponding? You remember, the whole family would gather around the Wollensac and talk to Grandma. Audiosponding was big during the Vietnam era, and in fact there was actually one audio recorder designed specifically for talking to our boys in khaki. (The recorder is no longer made, and I expect there is some poor soul out there who got stuck in the format and had to drop out of audio.) Audio correspond-ing still exists, and there are a couple of clubs devoted to it.

When I purchased my first video recorder, I patiently waited for one of the audio clubs to start a video division, or for someone to start a videosponding club. No one did, and I can't stand it any longer. Maybe some of you feel the same way. If so, let's talk about it with-in these pages and see what happens. My letter, which was printed in the

October *Videophile*, along with two mini-ads, already has brought some responses from others interested in the possibility of show-and-tell correspondence.

"OK," you say, "so let's get started." Being a staunch devotee of magnetic correspondence (began talking into the Wollensac at age 10), I know well the personal rewards that can come from corresponding on audio tape. And, while I've only been doing it on video for a year now, I can wholeheartedly say that videosponding is a *gas*. You can even come to prefer your correspondent's tapes to locally originated TV, especially if you live in the boonies like me. But, even if you have a 50-channel cable system at your antenna terminals, video correspondence can be a pleasant alternative, because it is *personal* TV made just for you, and TV that you make for a friend in a far flung locality.

What do you need to start? One would suppose the *minimum* requirement is a VCR, and, indeed, you could begin a nice exchange just using your present machine and adding a microphone that is compatible with the unit you own (a mike that has a 1/4" plug if you have a VHS machine, or a mini if you are entrenched in the Beta camp). Tapes to your videospondent could then simply consist of interesting local TV programs, spiced up by your own comments over the video, either by using your audio dub button after you have already recorded some segments of interesting TV, or by plugging the mike in while recording live. (Note: The microphone cuts out the audio from your VCR's tuner, but, if you have set the TV/VCR switch to TV and tuned the set to the same channel as the tuner, then the TV show audio will be heard in the background under your

comments.) You could, for example, comment over a local news program, "That's our new anchorman . . . notice how he parts his hair funny." Your local TV news may be of interest to your videospontent, perhaps to show what life is like where you live. You would be surprised at the cultural differences across our country that become apparent as you begin seeing news programs from other areas. Of course, either you or your videospontent may *hate* news programs, so it's best to first find out a little about the person you'll be exchanging tapes with.

Everything changes, though, when you add a TV camera to your system. You might already own a home TV camera. If not, you can sometimes find a new black and white camera for around \$100, or a color unit beginning in the \$400 range and going to infinity. Used equipment is becoming more available, so be watching the "for sale" sections of this magazine, among others, if you want a good deal on a used camera. (*Caveat emptor*: A color or black and white camera can be easily damaged by misuse, so try to determine the condition of a unit before you buy it.) Once you hook up a camera to your video system, you will never be the same. Goodbye home movie camera, bulky screen, and waiting two weeks to find out that everything came out black.

The joys of owning a video camera have been discussed in these pages before, so we'll concentrate on just what you can do with a camera in video correspondence. Obviously, your first idea may be to take your videospontent on a tour of your home, especially if you own a portapak. You could, however, bore your new friend to yawns and perhaps invite him to watch your tape or *BetaScan* (or its VHS equivalent) if you concentrate on every shingle and knickknack in your house. Don't try to show everything on your first tape. For example, if your home is a showplace and you want to impress your videospontent with your new stone fireplace, don't just point the camera at the fireplace and talk about it. Put the camera on a tripod and tape one of your on-camera segments as you sit before a crackling fire. (Be sure to

adjust the light levels in the room or use auxilliary lighting so *you* will be seen in addition to the flames.) Such a segment would be more visually interesting, and *personally* interesting as well. Videosponting is a new game, so there are really no rules, except: *Make it interesting and personal*. Try to keep something visually interesting on the screen, and do short segments. If you have a friend or a mate who can run the camera, so much the better, as that allows you to vary your shots without too many starts and stops.


If you have two or more machines, you can make your tapes even more interesting by showing material from your library, especially if you have collected short subjects in an area of interest you and your videospontent have in common. For example, science fiction. Perhaps your videospontent is missing a recent showing of a network or pay TV special you have on *The Empire Strikes Back* or something that your local TV station has produced when your favorite space movie came to town. Having a second machine also allows you to pre-produce segments and run them for more than one videospontent, such as the vacation you took to Andromedaland. You could edit it into a nice short feature and share it with several friends on the other side of the tube.

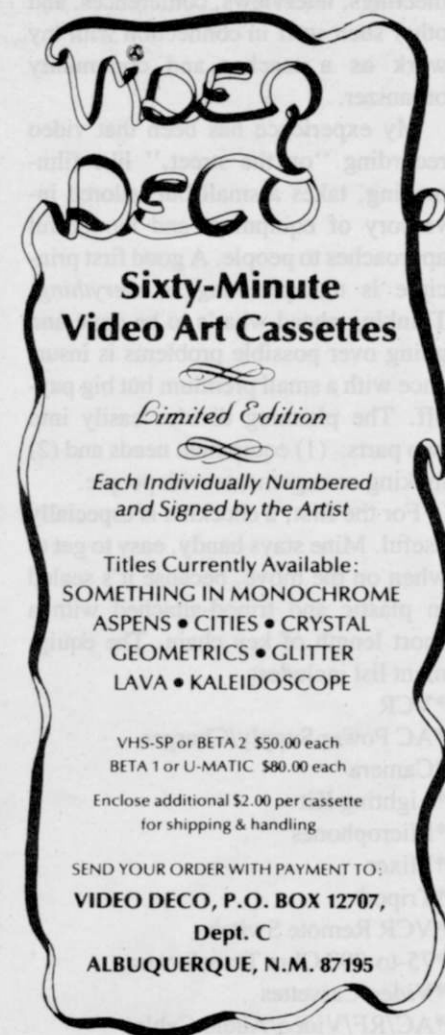
By the way, it goes without saying, but when videosponting always use the highest recording speed your machine is capable of to insure compatability and quality. You don't have to fill an entire tape either, and shorter tapes are available in all formats. An hour is a good length to shoot for the first time around.

Sounds like fun, but how do you find this mythical videospontent? Well, that is what this column is for. I am currently compiling a file of interested folks, and would like to be instrumental in assembling a loose sort of "club" for videosponting. Since I am self-employed, I don't have the time or interest to form a full-fledged, dues-paying club, but I would be interested in all the videosponting stuff, send me a card or, preferably, a letter listing pertinent facts (your format, age if you like, interests, equipment, topics you'd

like to share, whatever) to:

Gary Bourgois
Studio B
135 Washington Street
Marquette, MI 49855

Put *Videosponting* somewhere on the envelope, so I don't get you mixed up with the bills. Later, if we get some sort of reasonable response, you will read in these pages about how to obtain the complete list of videospontents, as well as other ideas for video "show and tell" correspondence. I will also try to answer each letter with a note about progress. For those who would like to send a tape instead of a letter, my formats are VHS and U-Matic. I am a bit slow, at times, but will answer all taped correspondence first, and will send your tapes back to you. (Yes, even you, Art Vuolo, if you haven't received the reply to those fantastic tapes you sent earlier in the year.) 



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PORTA-PAKING

by: Mike Silver

Porta-paking by more and more videophiles in the next few years seems inevitable. In fact, I'm expecting a stampede by the end of the decade. The progressively lighter weight of portable VCR's, plus their greater versatility, is undoubtedly going to encourage even the most timid to take to the road with camera and recorder. Thus, even as a relative newcomer to video, with a Panasonic NV8410 over the shoulder and WV3200 in hand, the idea of porta-paking was instantly appealing. Even though my only similar experience had been tourist-style Super 8 film-making in the distant past, I still felt confident about the possibilities for recording meetings, interviews, conferences, and other such stuff in connection with my work as a teacher and community organizer.

My experience has been that video recording "on the street," like film-making, takes a small but tailored inventory of equipment and thoughtful approaches to people. A good first principle is that *planning is everything*. Thinking ahead what's to be done and going over possible problems is insurance with a small premium but big payoff. The planning divides easily into two parts: (1) equipment needs and (2) making arrangements with people.

For the first, a checklist is especially useful. Mine stays handy, easy to get to when on the move, because it's sealed in plastic and tripod-attached with a short length of key chain. The equipment list includes:

- *VCR
- *AC Power Supply/Charger
- *Camera
- *Lighting Kit
- *Microphones
- *Mixer
- *Tripod
- *VCR Remote Switch
- *75-to-300 Ohm Transformer
- *Video Cassettes
- *AC/RF/Video/Audio Cables

- *Spare VCR Battery
- *Gaffer's Tape
- *Stop Watch
- *Release Forms
- *Balance Test White Paper
- *Flashlight
- *Rain Covers

The main question in porta-paking, however, is not what to take but *how*. What's needed is a strategy of "packaging" the equipment for portability. For starters, an apron-style canvas "tool caddy," worn tied around the waist, is a simple way to keep at hand a variety of microphones, cables, adaptors, and other accessories. Without feeling overloaded, it's possible to carry lavalier, desk, and stand mikes, miscellaneous small equipment items, and spares. The aprons are available at most hardware stores for about \$5. They're also made with more capacity, in bib style, for a dollar or two extra. When not in use, the apron is rolled up, with all the equipment, to make a compact storage system.

For carrying larger equipment, you can get an inexpensive wheeled caddy from luggage stores for \$10 to \$20, with prices varying according to the thickness of the metal rod used in construction. Most can easily carry a lightweight (12-15 lb.) recorder, AC power supply/charger, and small mixer.

If you're using quartz or other high-wattage lighting, fit the wheeled caddy with one or two AC outlet strips that have built-in overload circuit breakers (rated at 10-15 amps). The advantage is that, beyond ending the need for more than one extension AC power cord, they prevent your equipment from going over the normal 15 to 30 amp limit of most electrical circuits. If there is an overload, instead of a frustrating search for a fuse box or circuit breaker, only the breaker on the outlet strip has to be reset once the load is reduced.

Also on my list of essentials to have along when recording away from home

is 100 feet of heavy duty AC power cord, a spare VCR battery (fully charged), a pocket flashlight, plastic trash bags for emergency rain covers, and a lens cap retainer that keeps the cap attached to the barrel when the lens is uncovered.

Now, for the second part, my fiascos have taught me that, compared to planning for equipment needs, making arrangements with people is more critical to success—and it takes much more effort and sensitivity. While there may be one best place to start, I haven't found it. Assuming, however, that my projects weren't the first of their kind, it's been possible to get a leg up by looking at other video recordings and films (Baltimore's public library has a great collection) to anticipate problems and see how they've been handled by professionals. For example, doing this kind of checking prompted me, since I don't have a tripod dolly (or skill in using one), to ask in advance that a training workshop not use roundtable seating.

I've been surprised to find that one of the most interesting and fun parts of video is learning about what I'm going to record, whether it's an activity, individual, organization, or whatever. My understanding and enjoyment always goes up with more digging—usually reading or talking with people in the know—and seems to show up in the quality of the finished tape.

Possibly the most critical step in making arrangements with people is getting an okay to record. Unless you're the president of the organization holding the convention or director of the workshop group, you'll need introductions to these folks and others who can give you the go-ahead. And once they're convinced that video is okay, you'll need them to "publicly" declare their support, to guarantee everyone's cooperation. When asking for permission to record, I try to imagine the

host's interests and needs—and make my proposal accordingly. Also, if it seems right, I ask for someone to work with me.

The voice of painful experience says that on shooting day you should have an assistant recruited to lend a hand with equipment and other odds and ends. Let your helper know up front that the job involves a lot of waiting and being a “gofer” (going-for, that is, running errands). While it's assumed that equipment is checked out before leaving home, to avoid disappointments (that voice again!) plan to arrive at your shooting location early enough for set-up, testing, and *re-setting* if problems come up and equipment doesn't work right.


For safety and security, and to avoid maddening interruptions in recording, use a lot of gaffer's tape. Tape down light stands, lay long strips of tape to cover power and other cables where people are likely to be walking, and secure microphones with tape. It may also be a good idea to use chairs and lengths of tape to “rope off” lighting stands and other equipment from crowds.

While shooting, be sure to break the protective tabs off cassettes *as they're used* to prevent accidental re-recording. It's too easy for things to get mixed up when working under pressure. Another standard precaution is to tape or knot together sections of interconnected AC power cord or microphone cable.

Near the finish, there are several things to keep in mind. You may have to move fast for a transition shot, like going from an inside shot to a building entry to get a shot of a departing dignitary, or simply to get yourself and your gear out of the way if a lot of people are leaving at the same time. It may also be necessary at the last minute to get release forms signed if you plan to show your tape publicly or sell it. Hopefully, you'll have help with this business, but it can be less painful for those whose waiver and consent you need if you use a single form for several signatures. Rather than asking each person to sign a separate sheet, one form is used, headed by the release statement, with space below for several signers, their

addresses and phone numbers. Many people hesitate to sign release forms on the spur of the moment, but their reluctance tends to melt when they see that others have already given their approval.

For me, the best of video began as I got away from the places and people I know best—and went porta-paking. As a novice, the best guide to success was

careful preparation for dealing with equipment and people. I'm convinced that successful porta-paking is as easily accessible to other newcomers who've yet to use the full portability of their equipment. The trick is to hold your breath and dive in—*planning carefully*—and before you know it, you'll be a veteran. 

It's also *very* useful to know how much time you have remaining on the tape. There are now so many different VCR's that no single index counter/time chart can be constructed for use by everyone. But if your portable is a Panasonic NV8410 (VHS format), like

mine, you should be able to use this chart to get a rough idea of the time that you've consumed and have remaining. I've even included a column for reverse readings (set the counter to 000 at the end and then rewind), which may help you to locate segments during rewind.

FWD	TIME	TIME	REV	FWD	TIME	TIME	REV
READ	USED	LEFT	READ	READ	USED	LEFT	READ
0000	0000	0120	8155	1176	0062	0058	9331
0062	0002	0118	8217	1203	0064	0056	9358
0119	0004	0116	8274	1229	0066	0054	9384
0173	0006	0114	8328	1255	0068	0052	9410
0225	0008	0112	8380	1281	0070	0050	9436
0274	0010	0110	8429	1306	0072	0048	9461
0322	0012	0108	8477	1331	0074	0046	9486
0367	0014	0106	8522	1356	0076	0044	9511
0411	0016	0104	8566	1381	0078	0042	9536
0453	0018	0102	8608	1405	0080	0040	9560
0494	0020	0100	8649	1429	0082	0038	9584
0534	0022	0098	8689	1453	0084	0036	9608
0573	0024	0096	8728	1477	0086	0034	9632
0611	0026	0094	8766	1500	0088	0032	9655
0648	0028	0092	8803	1523	0090	0030	9678
0684	0030	0090	8839	1546	0092	0028	9701
0719	0032	0088	8874	1568	0094	0026	9723
0754	0034	0086	8909	1591	0096	0024	9746
0788	0036	0084	8943	1613	0098	0022	9768
0821	0038	0082	8976	1635	0100	0020	9790
0853	0040	0080	9008	1657	0102	0018	9812
0885	0042	0078	9040	1678	0104	0016	9833
0916	0044	0076	9071	1700	0106	0014	9855
0947	0046	0074	9102	1721	0108	0012	9876
0977	0048	0072	9132	1742	0110	0010	9897
1007	0050	0070	9162	1763	0112	0008	9918
1036	0052	0068	9191	1784	0114	0006	9939
1065	0054	0066	9220	1805	0116	0004	9960
1093	0056	0064	9248	1825	0118	0002	9980
1121	0058	0062	9276	1845	0120	0000	0000
1149	0060	0060	9304				

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MINI-ADS

FOR SALE

Used tapes—200 Beta L-500's (mostly Sony, X-2) at \$14.75 each or 10/\$120.00. 100 VHS T-120's (TDK, Fuji, Panasonic, RCA, SP) at \$20.75 each. Postage included. Tapes used to record HBO, other off-the-air movies. First letters or calls get first title choices. Ron LaRoche, RR 24, Box 247, Terre Haute, IN 47802. (812) 299-1030 6-9 p.m.

Used prerecorded tapes in Beta 2. Excellent condition: *Life of Brian*, *Fun with Dick and Jane*, *A Boy and His Dog*, *M*A*S*H*, *Fritz the Cat*, *Fantastic Animation Festival*, *Superman Cartoons* (MEDA). \$30 each or best offer. Will pay \$75 for working B&W camera or \$275 for working color camera, compatible with Sony home VCR's. Tim Davis, RD 2, Cincinnati, NY 13040. (607) 863-4409.

Prerecorded VHS tapes—All like new, only played a few times. Titles available: *Hombre*, *How to Marry a Millionaire*, *Born Free*, *Carnal Knowledge*, *Diabolique* (subtitles), *Von Ryan's Express*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Graduate*, *Fantastic Voyage*—\$30 each. *The Longest Day*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Chinatown*—\$40 each (2 tape movies). I'll pay postage and insurance. Please send money order or cashier's check. Call and reserve title

[(213) 463-1984]. I might trade if you have any recently released major-brand prerecorded tapes. Michael Ernst, 1835 Garfield Place, Apt. D, Hollywood, CA 90028.

Prerecorded VHS tapes from my collection: *Astronics X-rated Previews*, *Deep Throat*, *Bye-Bye Birdie*, *Cat People*, *Citizen Kane*, *Emmanuel in Bangkok*, *King Kong* (1933), *Things to Come*, *Gay Divorce*, *Meatballs*. \$42 each ppd. Stan Sieger, 8654 Parthenia Pl. #7, Sepulveda, CA 91343. (213) 894-6943.

BETA

If you have prerecorded XXX tape that you are tired of and would like to trade, write to me and list your title. I will send you my list and proposal. E. Brown, 411 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Have over 30 Hitchcock films, want 20 more and any of the Hitchcock TV shows. Also want early works of Stanley Kubrick (*Lolita*, *Paths of Glory*, *The Killing*, *Spartacus*) Brian dePalma (*Sisters*, *Hi Mom*, *Get to Know your Rabbit*, *Greetings*) Peter Weir (*Last Wave*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*) and TV shows directed by Spielberg ("Columbo," "Night Gallery," etc.). Over 300 titles to trade. All mail gets answered. Tim Davis, RD 2,

Cincinnati, NY 13040 (607) 863-4409.

Video enthusiast who enjoys watching HBO, WTBS, and WOR (late night only) on his cable system seeks correspondence with another (others?) who enjoys (or has enjoyed) *Fawlty Towers*, *Ripping Yarns*, *Three Men in a Boat*, *Firing Line*, and/or 1970 PBS *Pink Floyd* special. P. Weidner, 114 Water St., Spt. 18-B, Edinboro, PA 16412.

Wanted—Beta trading partners. Have 100 serials, B-westerns, B-detectives. Looking to trade for more of the same. Will trade for new serials or upgrade others. Let's exchange lists. Edilio Mattani, 47-01 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361. (212) 631-2966.

Needed: *Gone with the Wind*, any 3-D movies, science fiction, Elvis, Lindsay Wagner first TV special, Quark episodes, etc. George LaFreniere, PO Box 732, Worcester, MA 01601. (617) 757-1146.

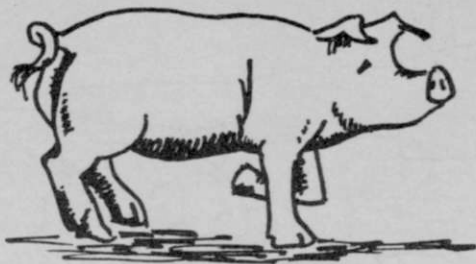
Wanted on Beta II—Russ Meyer's *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, *Homicidal*, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* (Woody Allen), *Mondo Cane*, *Great Huntings* part I and II, and other "unusual" documentaries of strange or unusual happenings around the world. Good quality only. Will buy or trade. Jim Thompson, PSC Box 4883, APO San Francisco, 96519.

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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.

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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 #30-February 1 and #31-April 1.



MINI-ADS

Desperate! Urgently need contact who receives *Johnny Quest* from a local broadcaster, not NBC. Also need any Jack Arnold movies. Also need: *Target Earth*, *It Came from Beneath the Sea*, *20 Million Miles to Earth*, *Jason and the Argonauts* and any SF. Looking for *Twilight Zone* episodes, "Nick of Time" and "The Invader." Send trade lists to Larry Bieza, 1121 Jessamine Ave., St. Paul, MN 55106.

Adult cassettes, dubs 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 'n' Andy, Smith and Dale. Have oldies, Chaplin, Keystone Cops, cartoons, serials. Hal Wallace, 8633 N. Springfield, Skokie, IL 60076. (312) 676-1771.

VHS

Barbra Streisand VHS tapes wanted. Any appearances, award presentations, commercials, etc. Especially need 1977 Grammy Awards with her. Also want Diana Ross live at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas from HBO. Randy Emerian, 5824 East Hamilton Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727. Also will accept any 16mm film on Streisand.

Wanted VHS XXX: *Reflections*, *For Love of Money*, *3 AM*, *Tropic of Desire*, *Count the Ways*, *I Want You*, *Cherry Harry Raquel*, *Teenage Pony Girls*, *Animal Farm* and other XXX rated movies. Will trade VHS XXX for above. Send trade list. No phone calls, please. Gary Schwob, 2336 Acme Court, Dayton, OH 45440.

Help! Power failure! Need Pt. 3 *Godfather*. Nov. 15, NBC. VHS format. G. Haug, PO Box 1218, Jupiter, FL 33458.

Would like to trade my VHS XXX tapes with other videophiles. Have both masters and first generation dubs. Send your list and I'll send mine. John Devine, Box 487, Humphrey Road, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925.

I'm looking for someone with a VHS unit and excellent reception of Quebec's TVA Network who will tape *Et Ca Tourné* for me fairly regularly. Also have Magnavox videodisc player for sale w/disc *Smokey and the Bandit*. Tom Konard, 3050 Sarah Street, Franklin Park, IL 60131. (312) 678-0399/6298.

Wanted: *Between Time and Timbuktu*, an NET Playhouse special first broadcast in 1972. Also, microwave receiver, microwave antenna, microwave communications information wanted. How

can I make best use of it in the Cleveland area? William Ritz, Box 24153, Cleveland, OH 44124.

I am looking for episodes of *Fernwood Tonight*, *Burns & Allen*, and *Car 54*. Have shows playing like *Sci-Fi Theater*, *Outer Limits*, *Star Trek*, *Beaver* and many other serials and movies to trade. Jim Bates, 2716 40th Place, Highland, IN 46322.

Serials and movies wanted, uncut, unedited in VHS SP or LP. I have Showtime, local friend has ON-TV, plus many tapes from three collections for trade. Need someone in southern California with Select-TV and "Z" Channel. Like to meet more VHS traders. Send me your list and I'll send you ours. Thanks to Don, Jim, Lew and Barney. All letters answered. Bob Snow, PO Box 2145, San Bernardino, CA 92406.

Crusader Rabbit and early Rock cartoons wanted. Offer 20 movies and all Manhattan Cable shows, including *Ugly George*, *Midnite Blue*, *English Channel*, etc. James E. Henderson, 338 W. 47th St., New York, NY 10036. (212) 246-4426.

Desperately seeking these films LP or SP: (1) *Xanadu* ('80), (2) *Somewhere in Time* ('80), (3) *Lost Horizon* (original), (4) *In Person* (1935), (5) *Kitty Foyle* (1940). Will trade anything. Call collect (212) 935-7297. Mark Small.

Wanted: VHS couple wishes to trade or buy foreign movies with English subtitles, including lesser-known films. Also theater, drama, concerts and opera. British humor, particularly *Two Ronnies*, *Fawlty Towers* (John Cleese), *Monty Python*, *Peter Cook* and *Dudley Moore*. Also feature films: *Oliver*, *Annie Hall*, *Swept Away*, *Godfather*, *Woodstock*, *Rashomon*, *The River*, *Groove Tube*, *Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Seven Brides*, *Candide*. Have collection and Select pay TV. S. Campbell, 3162 W. 152 St., Gardena, CA 90249. (213) 644-0853.

Wanted: *Scorpio Rising*, *Eaten Alive*, *Razor in the Flesh*, *20 Million Miles to Earth*, *When Worlds Collide*, *Wait Until Dark*—uncut SP only. Old TV wanted: *Mr. Peepers*, *Ripcord*, *Blue Angels*, *Capt. Video*, *Capt. Nice* plus hundreds more. Jim Dowdy, 640 Montclair, Olathe, KS 66061. (913) 764-3648.

Need someone to tape occasional show from QUBE. Have ON-TV and Z Channel to trade. John Good, 310 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, CA 91776.

Have for trade on VHS: *Combat*, *The Fugitive*, *Peter Gunn*, *Outer Limits*, *Twilight Zone*, *Sgt. Preston*, and over 50 old TV shows. I'm still looking for *Whirlybirds* with full credits or near full credits, and 2nd or 3rd generation will be fine. Also looking for *Pete & Gladys*, *I Married Joan*, *Ripcord*, *Broken Arrow*, and *Death Valley Days*. And would like to trade with people in Denver, Boston, Philadelphia, and northern California. Anyway, what have you got that won't take the wind out of my sails? Let's trade TV Guides and "have" lists. I can ship by UPS if necessary and receive UPS too. P. Bernstein, PO Box 33, Butler, WI 53007.

Laurel and Hardy shorts and feature films wanted in VHS. Also wanted: *Harvey* with Jimmy Stewart. Roy Johansen, 109 Brookhaven Dr., Marietta, GA 30066. (404) 427-3445.

Wanted: Los Angeles area videophile to tape "Science of Creative Intelligence" and/or other lectures Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in LP Station KSCI. Also (uncut, good): *Point Counterpoint*, *Lolita*, *Beat the Devil*, *Petrified Forest*, *Dr. Fumanchu* (Peter Sellers), *W.C. Fields and Me*, *Between Time and Timbuktu*. Harry J. Patrick, 905 5th Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37209.

Wanted to buy: used (or new) Panasonic PV-1500 VCR or possibly RCA VCT-400/400X in good working condition at a reasonable price. Mark Mitckes, 209 Sutters Mill Lane, Knoxville, TN 37919.

If you have a prerecorded XXX tape that you are tired of and would like to trade, write to me and list your title. I will send you my list and proposal. E. Brown, 411 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Wanted: Good quality copies: *Caligula*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Motel Hell*, *Tobor the Great*, *Last House on the Left*, etc. Have similar type items for trade. Mark Mitckes, 209 Sutters Mill Lane, Knoxville, TN 37919.

Wanted on VHS: *M Squad*, *T.H.E. Cat*, *Mr. Lucky*, *77 Sunset Strip*, *Wyatt Earp*, *Marty Feldman Comedy Machine*, *Eight Men*—Japanese Cartoon, *Checkmate*, *The Thin Man*, *The Man and The Challenge*, *The Detectives*, *Diver Dan*, *Lancelot Link-Secret Chimp*, *The Magician*, *Steve Canyon*, *Death Valley Days*—Ronald Reagan—host. I have about 70 old TV shows available, such as *Wild Bill Hickok*, *Branded*, *The Protectors*, *Garrison's Gorillas*, *Rawhide*, *The Buccaneers*, *Robin Hood*, *Peter Gunn*. James R. Laurain, 17297 W. Outer Dr., #17, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127.

MINI-ADS



Wanted: (Uncut preferred) *Pink Panther* movies, *Have Gun, Will Travel*, *The Prisoner*, *Secret Agent*, Clint Eastwood movies, classic British comedies—Alistair Sims, Alec Guinness, etc. All Alec Guinness, especially recent *Tinker, Tailor on PBS*. All *Dr. Who* wanted—episodes or movies. Have the Movie Channel and will send TV Guide. Darlene Parsons, 639 Park Ave., S.W., Canton, OH 44706. (216) 452-4488.

Wanted: TV—*Bill Dana Show*, *Do Not Adjust Your Set* (BBC), *Goodies*, *Jungle Jim*, *Sea Hunt*. Movies—*Barabbas*, *Cannibal Attack*, *Magic Christian*, *The Party*, *The Picnic* (BBC short). Any good animation. Have hundreds of movies and TV series to trade, including W.C. Fields, James Bond, Betty Boop cartoons, and much more. Will have TV Guides and lists. Scott Teal, 3808 Scotwood Dr., Nashville, TN 37211. (615) 331-7627.

JUST PLAIN WANTED

Wish contacts to trade TV shows. Will send TV Guide to anyone who sends me theirs. Have access all Canadian television nets. Al Lauraitis, PO Box 200, Champlain, NY 12919.

Wanted desperately: *The Loved One* with Jonathan Winters. Any format. Prefer VHS. Ron Spivack, 231 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Phone (813) 821-4794 days or (813) 821-3191 evenings. Thanks.

Are you bored with that prerecorded XXX tape? If it's VCX, TVX, Quality X. Cal-Vista, Essex, AVC, Arrow, Blue Video—why not trade with me. Especially want QX *Pam Mann*, *Misty Beethoven*, *Barbara Broadcast*. Beta or VHS. Jack Laydon, 1427 S. 9th St., St. Charles, IL 60174. (312) 584-4988. Please no calls after 6:30 p.m.

Wanted, desperately—someone with Channel 44 in Scranton/Wilkes Barre, PA and someone with Channel 52 in Corona/Los Angeles. Write Barry Glick, Almost Heaven Hot Tubs, Rt. 5, Renick, WV 24966 (304) 487-3163.

Beta/VHS: Serious collector wishes contact with others for mutually rewarding trades in the following categories: Rare Beatles, Steve Martin, Elvis, silent and early film classics, vintage B/W television. Have hundreds of titles for trade (only). Richard G. Seget, c/o 158 Miller St., Elizabeth, NJ 07201.

Multistandard VHS machine for Pal/Secam/NTSC compatibility or any information on the

above. Jim Dawdy, 640 Montclair, Olatha, KS 66061. (913) 764-3648.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: Movies, documentaries exchange only. English and all languages. Parties in French Canada and Mexico especially needed in NTSC standard. Pal and Secam transcoding available soon. Interlingua Audio Video Club, Box 4175, Arlington, VA 22204.

Wanted: 50's and 60's series—*Hawaiian Eye*, *Surfside Six*, *Adventures in Paradise*, *77 Sunset Strip*. Beta X-2 preferred. C.E. Ferritto, 6727 Katherine Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405.

Excellent non-commercial VHS or Beta copies. All transactions legal. Sample titles: *Shaft*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Brian's Song*, *Cry*, *The Beloved Country* some *Gunsmoke*, *Summer and Smoke*, *Cosmos* series, *Ben Hur*, *Hamlet*, *The Great Gatsby*. Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Kim Novak. More. D. Blair, 6900 Windward, Cincinnati, OH 45227.

Wanted on Beta or VHS—selected episodes of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, particularly first season b/w shows. Also interested in some *Avengers* and *U.N.C.L.E.* episodes. Bill Cotter, PO Box 9449, Glendale, CA 91206. (213) 956-0430.

Wanted—Prefer Beta 2 format—The segment of the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon featuring Neil Sedaka and Norm Crosby. Also want Winter Olympic coverage of February 18 hockey game and February 19 speed skating, Luge doubles and ice dancing. Will take entire days coverage. Will buy or trade. Gayle Pike, 81 N. Century, Memphis, TN 38111.

On Beta, need music, especially 50's and 60's acts. Much to trade. Don Barrett, 26878 Las Mananitas Dr., Valencia, CA 91355.

I will trade 10 for one! Yes, I will trade you 10 (including tape!) of any of my more than 100 feature films and 70 serials (many rare) for: *A Star is Born*—the three hour Judy Garland version, *Superman* (the serial *Atom Man Vs. Superman*, *The Phantom*). I will trade two for one—in Beta only—(you supply the extra tape) for *It's a Bird—It's a Plane—It's Superman*, *Walking My Baby Back Home*, *The Eddie Cantor Story*, *Repeat Performance* and *The Answer*. John Ziniewicz, PO Box 428, Burbank, CA 91503.

Los Angeles: Want someone to tape Los Angeles Rams football games. Will pay for taping or trade cable and New York programs—any shows (maybe sports—Giants, Jets, Patriots, Yankees,

Mets, Knicks, Nets, 76'ers, Rangers, Islanders, Flyers, Cosmos). Contact: Charlie Zabielski, 30 E. Homestead Ave., Palisades Park, NJ 07650. Phone (201) 947-1686.

Please help! Does anybody out there still get *The Two Ronnies*? I can send you movies from ON-TV and Z Channel or blank tapes in exchange. John Good, 310 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, CA 91776.

Wanted: *Videophile* #'s 1-10, first annual, *Video/Fall '78*. Will buy or trade for early issues of *Panorama*, *Video Review*, and *Video*. I want to correspond with other VHS'ers interested in old movies and TV shows. Jack R. Nissel, 3016 S. 72nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19153. (215) 365-7730 between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m. EST.

ARCTIC RESCUE from cabin fever, loneliness and boredom urgently needed! Novice vidiots on a REMOTE Alaskan Air Station DESPERATELY need WOMEN, VHS PROGRAMS and WOMEN! As women can't be mailed, will have to settle for video programs. Also need someone who receives a channel in Spanish. Any video pals out there in the real world willing to tape for us, please write: Bob "Rocky" Randall, 794 ACWSBX 1975 (NCCI), Cape Newenham, Alaska, APO Seattle, WA 98745.

Your have/want list or SASE for my list (Beta/VHS). Quality only. Adventure, WW II, travel, R and X rated (especially nostalgic 1950 and 60). All SASE or lists answered same day. Have many interesting films: Russ Meyer's *Immoral Mr. Teas*. No horror films. (301) 256-5885. Avis, 10018 Gunridge Circle, Kingsville, MD 21087.

Wanted desperately! *Scrooge* with Albert Finney, Beta or VHS. Will make very generous offer. Have many Hammer and HBO movies for trade. Interested in obtaining schematics for copyguard defeat, BetaScan and image enhancement. Paul Allen, 416 Muirs Chapel Rd., Greensboro, NC 27410. (919) 855-6726.

Any format, any condition: first 10 minutes of *New Avengers* episode shown October 27 concerning Hitler. Will trade or deal. Shirley O'Brien, 808 Tharp #221, Arlington, TX 76010.

Wanted: *Dr. Who* serials starring William Hartnell or Patrick Troughton. *Mind of Evil* serial starring Jon Pertwee. Any format. Can trade other old *Dr. Who* for these. Larry Charet, 1219A Devon Ave., Chicago, IL 60660. (312) 274-1832.

MINI-ADS



Desperately wanted on VHS: *When Television Was Young* (CBS, 1977), *Sing Along with Mitch* pre-1970, *American Bandstand*, *Supermarket Sweep*, *Shenanigans* cartoons, *Calvin and the Colonel*, *Linus the Lionhearted*, *The Alvin Show*. Also looking for foreign and Canadian collectors to trade local programs. Rich Borwy, 2215 Blaisdell Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404. Thanx!

Wanted: Original movie *Pressbooks*, any quantities, all studios, from the 1940's to present date. I have ON-TV, can tape your requests in exchange, or will purchase. Also need good Beta copies of *Raid* and *Friday the 13th*. Ralph Walters, 2059 Sutton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45230. Residence (513) 232-3763; Business (513) 961-4606.

Barbra Streisand VHS video tapes wanted. Any appearances, concerts, interviews, award presentations, etc. Anything and everything. Also want *Making of Xanadu* special and *Diana Ross in Las Vegas* from HBO. Randy Emerian, 5824 E. Hamilton Ave., Fresno, CA 93727.

PERSONAL

Help! "Video addict" desperately needs your discarded videocassette label sheets. Stop saving those partially used or complete label sheets and send to: Bohdan Czerwinski, Box 527, Iron River, MI 49935. Phone (906) 265-3182. Please hurry... Arrgh... P.S. Searching for broken, melted or crushed videocassettes for parts. Will compensate for postage if requested.

Editor of this very mag has son who would be thrilled to see video tapes of the original "Lynyrd Skynyrd" group concerts. Who out there can help? Contact: J. Lowe, c/o *The Videophile*, 2003 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, FL 32301. (Also still looking for late 60's soft core *Space Thing*. Does it exist?)



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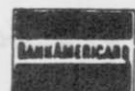
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SONY	KP-5020	\$2950.00

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- *WRITE OR CALL TOLL FREE FOR ADULT LIST!
- *PLEASE ALLOW 2 WEEKS FOR PERSONAL CHECKS TO CLEAR.
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WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO BECOMING THE LARGEST AND MOST DEPENDABLE VIDEO EQUIPMENT SALES STORE IN THE U.S. BECAUSE PRICES QUOTED MAY CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY AT ANY TIME, OUR POLICY WILL BE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST SERVICE AND LOWEST PRICES POSSIBLE. IF WE HAVE A PRICE REDUCTION ON ANY ITEM WHEN WE RECEIVE YOUR ORDER, WE WILL REFUND THE DIFFERENCE. IF YOU OBTAIN A PRICE QUOTE LOWER THAN OURS, CHECK WITH US BEFORE YOU BUY. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE UNDERSOLD. UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, ALL ITEMS ARE STOCKED AND WILL BE SHIPPED WITHIN 24 HOURS.

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- #12: First slick cover issue. Includes report on "QUBE" 2-way cable system, Video in Australia, Rambling Marc at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, How to make the most of two recorders, Dealer's Doings; a bunch of letters . . . and the usual typos, etc. (LIMITED SUPPLY)
- #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, 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 more in 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 I of our extensive Summer Consumer Electronics Show report, 5 portable recorders reviewed and compared, and lots more in 88 pages.
- #21: Another big one! Third Anniversary issue, contains our 1980 directory to over 100 models of 1/2" VTR's, product reports on several portable color cameras, Part 2 of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show report, lots of Q's & A's, and (of course) much, much more.
- #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 very well be our least substantial of the year.
- #25: We tell you which brands of blank tape are best and which to avoid. Exclusive reviews of the new VHS and Beta VCR's from Sony, RCA, and Toshiba and the Betamax AG-200 Changer. Install your own "home cable" distribution system.
- #26: First installment of our subjective "recommended components", seven product reviews, including the KLOSS Novabeam, "Distrivid," Sony and Panasonic industrial 1/2" VCR's, and the Sony CVM-1750 Monitor/Receiver. News from the Summer CES, the Cable News Network 24-hour schedule, our usual tape reviews, and more. (SHORT SUPPLY.)
- #27: Exclusive interview with Ernestine Wade (Sapphire) and Alvin Chilress (Amos) of "The Amos 'n' Andy Show," Glossary of terms For Beginners Only, and how to set up your own film chain, Questions, answers, book reviews, tape reviews (but no product reviews this time) round out our 4th Anniversary Issue.
- #28: Exclusive test reports of the 1981 VCR's from Sony and RCA, our editor tells you whether VHS or Beta is best for your particular needs, Part II of our report on the Summer 1980 CES Show, plus more than six full pages of questions and answers.

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