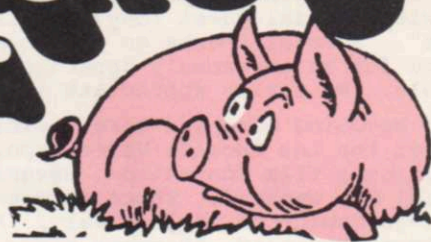


The Videophile's Newsletter

\$1.50



May/June
Issue 13



THE VOICE OF VIDEO FANDOM

TV Wiggles

What kind of a man reads "The Videophile's Newsletter"? Yes, the gentleman on this issue's cover is none other than your host and mine, "the toast of the coast", Barth Gimble, seen here with special guest Tony Roletti on the set of the Norman Lear syndicated oddity "America 2Night". Special thanks go out to Martin Mull, Bill Kirchenbaur, and photographer Marcus Wielage for so generously donating the time and cooperation necessary to make this photograph possible. We really appreciate it guys!

TVN is becoming more and more visible. Rambling Marc was scheduled to appear on the copyright panel at the Los Angeles Video Expo, May 9. We will also have a table in the dealers' room at the National Film Convention, Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, CA, to be held over the Memorial Day weekend. There is even a possibility that your humble editor will journey to the San Diego Comic-Con in late July. As anticipated our subscription list has swollen once again ... about 1500 paid, at press time. This includes readers in Japan, France, England, Holland, Germany, Belgium, Australia, the Phillipines and Madagascar. In addition, there have been feelers from New Zealand, Curacao, Venezuela, Colombia, St. Kitts, Algeria, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Gibraltar. Some of this was due to a mention in the Wall Street Journal of March 29, 1978. According to them TVN is "a folksy agglomeration of readers' tips, technical tricks and requests to exchange recorded material ...". I am grateful to each of you that sent me a copy of this clipping. The March 27 issue of the prestigious industry weekly, Television Digest, referred to modest mag which you now hold as "bible of videotape collectors". More is in the offing. Check out June issue (I think) of Money magazine at your newsstand.

My search for a "VHS" format contributor has borne fruit. Three in fact (contributors, that is). One says he wouldn't have time to do a regular column, but will send along tips when he can. Another, "The Big Nate", is relatively new to the world of video, but is willing to give it a shot (and does so herein) ... and the third, Bob Burns, of Wheelerburg, Ohio, presents his first of what I expect to be many, columns for the rapacious digestion and enlightenment of all you supporters of the VHS format.

I also welcome, with open arms, Mr. Steve Comet, whose "VCR News and Views" column will be a regular feature. For his initial outing, Steve puts to rest, once and for all (I hope) the question of how to defeat the muting circuitry on the Betamax SL-8200. Even "thumbs" Lowe was able to follow his step-by-step instructions, and I can report to you that the operation was a complete success ... the patient is doing fine. It took me 20-30 minutes, and there were some anxious moments ... the Phillips screws on the bottom panel didn't want to budge, and it took a pair of vice grip pliers to show 'em who was boss, also I was a little afraid that I would crush the connector with long nose pliers, but otherwise all went according to plan. Best thing about this method is that it is reversible. It's easy for me to see now why Sony chose to include this muting feature. The average consumer might think something was wrong with his machine if he saw and heard that unstable mess every time he pushed the "play" button. Steve didn't mention it, but another result of this operation is that a moderately acceptable still frame picture can be produced at the X2 speed by "pausing" the tape during playback.

In addition, we welcome back Art Vuolo this issue, though I do wish he would try to get a little more text in the space allotted, rather than wasting so much on trim. Put all this together with the usual fine jobs from indefatigable Marc Wielage and steadfast Joe Mazzini, not to mention the remarks of our humorist from North of the Border, Ralph Gordon, and I hope you will agree that we have yet another memorable issue.

The long awaited VHS counter index chart has gotten squeezed out again, although there is a severely abbreviated one in these pages someplace. Next issue, I expect to have a detailed VHS chart as well as one for the Beta L-500. I also have an incredible amount of interesting stuff on the copyright question. I may have to do a special issue or supplement or something to get this in print. Let me know if you would be interested in such a thing.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

This is the last time that I will be able to offer you the following rates. The cost of printing twice as many pages as there were when these rates were initiated, compounded by the insatiable appetite of the U.S. Postal Service (Wow! Just look at the postage on the envelope this came in.) make an increase unavoidable. Details next issue. Until then:

Six issues are yours for \$8.00 if you reside in the United States, its possessions, Canada or Mexico (but payment must be in U.S. funds). Other rates for the same 6 issues are as follows, and will come by AIR MAIL only: Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, Caribbean Islands, Bahamas, Bermuda, and St. Pierre and Miquelon ... \$17. All other countries ... \$20. Get 'em while cheap!

These rates are for new subscribers only. Sorry, but I cannot accept subs for more than 6 issues or allow you to extend your present subs, until I decide how much I need to gouge you for. If a (13) appears in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label, your sub has just expired!

Incidentally, the "I" that you keep seeing in these pages is I, your humble editor, Jim Lowe. I know we have 1000s of readers now, but I can't seem to change my style from the days when there were less than a hundred. THANKS !!! are due to so many that I will now neglect to mention. Special mention, as always to Sharon Wright, and also to Joyce Hilliard, two of the reasons you are able to read all this. Also a special nod to Cathy Pickett and her ever ready darkroom. Thanks too to Jim Gibbon, Harold Benson, Leo Daly, Stanley Sieger, Al Goldberger, and oh so many more!

VIDEO NEWS..

copyright lawsuit
postponed again...Sony un-
veils consumer portable VTR...
GE introduces "rear screen".
projection TV...pirate TV sta-
tion...disc...changer...



The press gave quite a bit of play in March to the "fact" that Screen Actors Guild, Writers Guild and "all leading movie studios except Paramount" decided to join the Universal/Disney suit against Sony. Less notice was given to fact that Judge Ferguson denied requests to join suit, saying that large number of issues which could be raised by so many firms would constitute an "insurmountable burden" on Sony. Be that as it may, the Judge still postponed May 2 trial date, this time until "early 1979". Preliminary hearing now set for November 13. Unwilling participant, Marc Wielage, has now come even with your editor by appearing for his second deposition ... see "Rambling Outtakes", herein. ¶ Meanwhile, two related court actions are proceeding. In suit against Hugh Hefner of PLAYBOY, Universal Studios is alleging that showing tapes at home to large group including business associates is just as illegal as if admission had been charged. In other case, Buffalo, NY federal court has issued an injunction against local school board stopping its practice of taping copyrighted programs off the air for distribution to schools. It is my understanding that schools were duplicating the tapes.

The copyright situation was a prime topic at recent International Tape Association convention in Tucson. Homer Porter, Los Angeles based FBI agent, reported that his office, working closely with industry groups like ITA and MPAA, has conducted over 600 raids on suspected audio and videotape "pirates" in the past 4 or 5 years. He says that communication is maintained with more than 130 countries, in some of which 95% of TV programming is pirated. "We found one pirate with 1600 customers. ... One made \$9 million in one year." Mr. James Bouras, of MPAA (and TVN subscriber), in speaking of hotel room cable pirates said "It's not uncommon to see people checking into hotels for 2 days with a suitcase in one hand and a Betamax in the other." Unless he is cuffed and led away, Marc should have more along these lines next time.

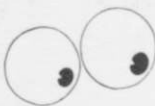
General Electric, at an April press conference in New York, unveiled its rear-screen projection (!) "Widescreen 1000" TV set. Expected to be available in June at a price in the neighborhood of \$2800, the unit is a single-tube, one-piece projection system with what Television Digest says is "brightest single-tube system we've seen." (Although not as bright as 3-tube one-piece unit developed by Matsushita, and reported on here last issue.) To my mind, a rear screen projector system has a number of advantages. One mentioned by GE is that entire optical system, from picture tube face to back of screen, is factory sealed against dust. The set has a 45.7" screen (diagonal), and also features random access electronic tuning and remote, dual speaker sound system. GE will be marketing its new 4-hour VHS system tape deck as a companion product. Ask your local GE dealer. They should be available right soon now.

Talk about tape pirates! A pirate TV station operated in Syracuse NY, April 14-15, showing such fare as the Steve Martin HBO Special, Deep Throat, and Twilight Zone. The channel 7 signal (with a logo of dice rolled to a seven) was suspiciously stronger in the area surrounding Syracuse University, and featured an announcer wearing a gas mask and noose around his neck. (Any of you out there got this on tape?) FCC official says: "They've got some sophisticated equipment." Signal reached only a limited downtown area. (Thanks to Jim S. for the clipping!)

THE DISC Little of note is happening on this front. MCA/Phillips optical system supposedly still on schedule for late this year, has chosen west coast ad agency. As speculated here earlier, RCA system and Matsushita "Visc" may be moving closer (in fact all 3 may!) with announcement that JVC may have developed yet another new system that would include all special features of the optical system, without the use of lasers. Sure would be nice if a standard could be agreed on before all these systems come to market.

The currency of our news has increased dramatically since the early issues, and I expect this to continue now that we are developing our own sources. As a result, I hope to bring you occasional inside info of a somewhat unofficial nature. The following is an example:

My sources report that the Betamax L-750 tape will not give consistently satisfactory performance on the SL-8200! This is due to the heads of those units and the oxide density of the new tape. The tape should be OK on the original 7200s, but will be primarily marketed for use with the single speed (X2) models. (sigh) ... Look for the tape soon. ... Word on the Betamax changer is that original models have failed tests (inability to consistently work more than 10 times in a row). Improved version, 20 of them, being tested right now. If results are negative, project may have to be scrapped. Changer of a different type (electronic, rather than spring mechanism) is a possibility, but would have to go at a much higher price. ... There is indication that 3/6 hour VHS tape may also be delayed longer than had been hoped. My source in Japan reports that "Sony units are taking a drubbing" over there and that "present prevailing feeling here is that the VHS system will be controlling the market before the end of 1979." Same source says Sharp brand TV "has clearest picture of the newly introduced spring model TVs."



New consumer color cameras and portable VTRs! Sony, at dealers' convention just before press time, introduced a portable recorder and color camera to be marketed to home users beginning September 21. The VTR (SL-3200) is said to resemble the industrial SL-340. Unit is said to feature special timing phase circuit which makes possible clean cuts between end of one shot and beginning of next. Camera weighs less than 5 pounds, utilizes "chip" micro-electronics, has single-lens reflex viewfinder, 3-1 zoom, automatic aperture control, white balance meter and signal-to-noise ratio of 45dB. Some reports indicate that picture quality is equal to current top-range cameras. Price in Japan is equivalent of \$1195 for the camera, \$1100 for the VTR. List may well be more than that here. ¶ RCA plans similar unit, with company official saying that color camera retail prices will drop substantially by early next year. ¶ Word directly to me from Japan is that JVC HR-4100 portable VHS recorder and GC-3350 camera (not yet available here) is a big seller at \$2450 for the package that includes battery and AC adaptor/battery charger. Said to give "near perfect color reproduction." ¶ At same Sony convention, dealers were shown new single-speed (X2) deck similar to that on cover of TVN #11. Has built-in timer and remote pause. While this new SL-8600 (I think) is a single speed machine, Sony has an improved 2-speed model available in Japan (as does JVC) which also features stop action and fast forward with picture. There is indication that full line of choices will eventually be available here. ¶ Quasar has also introduced its entry in the 4-hour VHS camp. Suggested list is \$995.

The Sony/Paramount joint prerecorded cassette venture, announced here way back and since delayed, may be dead. Disagreement over how soon after release new feature films should be made available on video cassette is to blame. Paramount doesn't want to alienate movie theatre compadres.

Manufacturers of both VHS and Beta format VTRs have now announced definite plans to market units in Europe. Shipments of certain brands of both formats will be under way this Summer.

Pioneer now has a TV audio tuner (TVX-9500) designed as a hi-fi component, to sell for about \$200. Unit is seen as future companion for home video disc system.

Sears should have its Betavision VTR in all of its 50 major regions by June and in Fall catalog.

FOR BEGINNERS ONLY ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

I have to keep reminding myself that there are those of you who are in the position that I was in way back around the time of Videophile's Newsletter #1, ie. you hardly know the first thing about video tape recording. I recently got a letter with some questions in it which, while incredibly simple to many now, could bear revisiting. So here goes:

Q: If you use the timer to record a program while you are away, does the TV set also automatically turn on?

A: No. Many beginners completely misunderstand the role of the TV set. It is used for playback only. The oft used phrase "recording a show from your TV" is misleading. The show is actually recorded from your antenna or cable. It makes no difference whether the TV is on, off, or even whether the recorder is hooked up to the TV. However, when it comes time to watch the recorded tape, naturally the machine must be hooked up to the TV.

Q: When you erase, can you erase only part of the cassette, or do you have to erase the whole thing?

A: You don't have to erase it all. Like audio recorders, erasing occurs automatically when you record something new over top of the previous signal. You can start the new recording at the first of the tape, the middle, or wherever.

Q: Can you use a 2-hour tape on a 4-hour machine (or a 1-hour tape on a 2-hour machine)?

A: Yes. It is not the tape, but rather the speed at which the recorder is set, that determines the running time.

Q: If you have a black and white TV, can your tapes be played back in color on someone else's TV in color.

A: Yes. All tapes of color broadcasts are "color tapes". They will not, however, play color on a black & white set.

Q: If you are recording on channel 10 and watching channel 6, if somebody changes the channel you are watching, or turns off the set, does the recording on channel 10 continue?

A: Yes. Again, this question and the previous one all go back to the fact that your TV set plays no role in the recording process, only in playback. The TV set could explode, and the recorder would just keep humming along.

Q: Can I take my tapes over to my uncle's house and play them back on his machine?

A: Yes, but only if your uncle has the same "type" machine as yours. If his and yours are both "Beta" type machines (eg. Sony, Zenith, Sears, Toshiba, Sanyo Betacord), or are both "VHS" type machines (eg. RCA Selectavision, JVC, Panasonic, Magnavox) you are OK. If not, you may as well try to play your tapes in his "Little Mac" burger maker. Also, if your tapes are of the 4-hour variety, you may experience picture quality problems on your uncle's machine.

Q: What's all this stuff about "3-second black out", and defeating the "muting circuitry"?

A: The more recent recorders are designed to blank out the picture if it breaks up because of heavy interference, the manufacturers figuring that the average consumer would rather see no picture as to see a broken up one. Since the picture is nearly always unstable when the tape first starts up, or where the pause control has been used to delete a commercial, the circuitry automatically blanks out the screen for a couple of seconds or so at these places. But, the picture is there, and is often watchable as well. By disconnecting the muting circuitry you are then able to see the picture, unstable as it may be, that was previously hidden behind the blank space.

If space were to permit, I can see that I could go on and on with this sort of thing. However, since TVN is a periodical, not a primer, I will attempt to put together a separate "beginners' manual" of some sort, in the future. Let me know, if you would be interested in such a thing (at \$3-\$4), and send in your questions for inclusion in it.

I FIGURED THAT SECRETLY YOU REALLY WANTED TO KNOW: Most widely used words of profanity on prime-time TV are "Hell", "Damn" and "God" (!) ... so says National Federation of Decency. During over 860 hours of TV monitored, 1054 profane words were used. CBS led with 470, ABC had 330, and NBC trailed once again with only 254.

The Videot

A bit of weird nostalgia

By GUY MacMILLIN



CHESTERFIELD, N.H.

EARLIER THIS fall, I mentioned that the early '50s TV generation grew up conditioned by "I Led Three Lives." Reaction to that remark indicates that some readers of this column are either too young to remember that program or have conveniently forgotten it. So I arranged to take a look at a recording of one of the episodes to review here. It was quite a jolt, seeing those familiar credits rolling back across 25 years.

At first I had one of those nostalgic reactions that can be triggered by an old song or a faded photograph. Soon, though, interest turned to cold fascination. The show was worse than I had remembered, a first-hand historical document which sheds light on that frightening period where we came close to chucking our traditions in exchange for some imagined security from internal subversion. It began like this.

"This is the story — the fantastically true story — of Herbert A. Philbrick, who for nine frightening years did lead three lives: average citizen, member of the Communist Party and counterspy for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For obvious reasons, the names, dates and places have been changed, but the story is based on fact."

The episode I just watched opened with Comrade Herb in his advertising agency talking with his friend Paul Murray, an art teacher who is helping him with a design. Paul looks worried, and soon he spits it out. "Look, Herb, I'm afraid the girl I want to marry is a Communist." Herb asks him how you can spot Communists. "It's their human reactions. They're sick in the head or something." Herb wants to know if Paul

has asked the girl if she's a Communist. "You certainly don't know anything about Commies," Paul answers.

As Paul leaves the office, Herb wonders to himself in voice-over narration: "Is he up to something? Nice boy, but he could be a Communist! And this could be a trap, Philbrick." When he talks to himself, Philbrick always calls himself Philbrick.

—o—

LATER HERB decides to visit Paul at his school. In the street he bumps into Comrade Blank, a disgusting fellow who tells him to "cultivate" Paul. Then, in an alley, Herb's FBI contact, Jerry Dressler, tells him to keep an eye on both Paul and Comrade Blank. It turns out that Paul's girlfriend is Margaret Kingston, the daughter of a defense scientist. And the girl's mother has reported Paul to the FBI as "a Communist suspect."

At the school, Herb meets Margaret, who is telling Paul how she hates bombing and wars. Herb and Paul exchange worried looks. Then the owner of an art gallery arrives and buys some of Margaret's paintings. Herb, talking to himself again, tells us that "Comrade art dealer" is also a Communist. You begin to get the idea that there are more Communists in America than there are Rotarians.

Herb goes to the art gallery to keep an eye on Comrade art dealer, and he learns that Margaret is, indeed, a Communist. Comrade Blank drops in to order Herb to break up the romance between Paul and Margaret. If that doesn't work, he says, "Frame him."

In the next scene, Margaret's mother and Agent Dressler are busy driving nails in the coffin of free speech. Dressler says

he has no proof that Paul is a Communist. "Well, where did my daughter get the outrageous ideas she's been expressing?" Mrs. Kingston asks.

In the end, it turns out that Margaret had been putting secret microfilms in her paintings. The FBI arrests the art dealer and Blank but lets Margaret go. She is repentant, and after all in love. Philbrick tells himself that she is "not only safe and sound but cured of her Communist infection, a real dividend for her mother and for Paul." That's Capitalist talk. Nice touch.

So everything is okay, right? Well, not quite. Next week, we hear, the show will deal with project "Captive Audience," a plan to staff the schools of America with Communists. And on it went.

—o—

WHAT ACCOUNTED for the success of this program? It was the top-rated TV show of its time. Did the America of the '50s give birth to this kind of knee-jerk politics disguised as entertainment, or did programs like this give birth to the America of the '50s? Whatever, it would appear that they deserved each other.

Why dredge this up again? Well, when people talk about what are known as the golden days of television, they always mention "Your Show of Shows" and "Playhouse 90." The "I Led Three Lives" are forgotten. And yet, the seeds planted by this type of entertainment probably had a much more lasting effect on the children, and adults, viewing than did any of the quality shows of the time. In fact, they probably had a much greater effect on people than does any conceivable amount of violence today. As for me, I'll take "Baretta."



Here, courtesy of Mr. Randolph Poling, is the tide-you-over-until-next time VHS counter/index chart that I promised "for sure" last issue. Look for the much longer one next time. Problem with a VHS chart is that different tapes are reported to be of quite varying lengths.

2-hour

VHS Counter Chart

Minutes	Counter #
5	65
10	121
15	172
20	220
25	265
30	303
35	341
40	378
45	413
50	446
55	478
60	508
65	537
70	566
75	593
80	620
85	646
90	672
95	697
100	721
105	744
110	767
115	790
120	813
125	835
127	845
130	857

Addendum

Is my face red?!! Last issues "important-looking treatise": HOOKING UP contained a mistake which must have been very confusing to anyone trying to figure out what it was all about. Many copies I sent out contained a slip-in correction notice, but the initial mailing did not. So, the headings on page 8 of issue #12 which read:

Watching a tape and recording another. ,and

Watching a show and recording two others at the same time. ..SHOULD BE REVERSED!

Now it makes a little more sense, huh?

Tom Joy, of Framingham, Mass., wrote to remind me that for best results you should not use an audio cable to connect the video jacks of two recorders for video dubbing purposes. Says he: "That's a NO-NO, because the audio cable has too much loss of video frequencies to give a good copy." What you should be using is 75-ohm coaxial cable. See your local electronics shop.

Also, it has come to my attention that in some areas, the pay cable or other special service is piped in on a frequency that the ordinary TV tuner cannot accommodate. Result is that converter box must be placed either before or after the VTR in the line, with resulting loss of ability to both record and watch regular/special channels at the same time. VIDEOGRAPHY magazine has an article on this, and suggested solutions via splitters, in its March 1978 issue. We've mentioned them several times in the past (so far, without reciprocation), but here goes again: VIDEOGRAPHY is a mag primarily intended for industrial users, but always has stuff of interest to the home hobbyist as well. A sub is 1 year (12 issues) for \$10, or a buck should get you the March back issue. Write: VIDEOGRAPHY, 750 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10017, and tell 'em they owe me a free plug.



Rambling Outtakes

Okay--we're back, after a brief rest of a couple months or so. It's been a fairly eventful year for me so far, with a new job, new challenges and, of course, several interesting new items in my burgeoning video collection. I didn't realize just how interesting until around the beginning of March, when I received a letter from Stephen Kroft, whom we all know well as the attorney for the "other" side in the infamous Universal/Disney/Sony lawsuit. The letter asked, innocently enough, if I "would be kind enough...to advise us which, if any, Universal and/or Disney motion pictures, cartoons or other film product you have recorded on your Betamax in 1978." As I believe Jim has mentioned earlier, he too received a similar letter around the same time.

Well, as the plot thickens, a couple of weeks later I found out that a certain suspicious-looking gentleman had been lurking around my apartment building in scenic West Hollywood. Since I had not yet answered Mr. Kroft's letter, I correctly surmised what this probably meant--that yet another subpoena, emblazoned with my good name, was about to be pounced on me. After successfully avoiding the process server for a week or so, I finally decided to call Mr. Kroft to see what he had to say about the matter; sure enough, they did indeed want to "chat" with me awhile.

So, on March 20th, I went down once more to Beverly Hills, to the MCA attorneys' plush legal offices in the United California Bank Building, for a couple of hours of in-depth word-play with the Sony and Universal lawyers. As with my last deposition in October of '77, Mr. Dean Dunlavey and Mr. Donald Sloan were there, representing Sony, but this time a Mr. Ed Smith asked all the intimidating questions for MCA, with Mr. Kroft arriving about halfway through the proceedings.

Without boring everybody to death, I can tell you that 90% of their questions had to do with a short list of films I owned on tape that I provided the attorneys. All of these films were recorded off the air either by myself or a fellow collector; I had to refuse to answer in a dozen or so instances concerning the identities of these other collectors. They didn't press the matter of these people's names, and all things considered, the whole affair wasn't nearly as bad as I had thought it might be. As a matter of fact, there were several moments of sheer hilarity as the Universal and Sony attorneys bandied about veiled threats and insults to each other throughout my questioning... none of which, sad to say, ever made it to the transcript. Some examples: after learning of the semi-complex cable hook-up involved in connecting my VTR to my Sony monitor/receiver, I recall Mr. Smith idly quipping "you almost have enough wiring to build your own electric chair," to which Mr. Dunlavey replied "well, maybe he'll invite you over to try it out sometime, Steve." Also: Mr. Kroft, who never actually asked me any questions directly, instead handing Mr. Smith written questions from time to time, was furiously scrawling some notes on a legal pad, prompting Mr. Dunlavey to ask "what are you scribbling there, Stephen?", to which Mr. Kroft replied "oh, just a few highly descriptive phrases about you, Dean." Yes, it was just like one big happy family in a situation comedy...fighting a multi-million dollar lawsuit. All we needed was a laugh-track and three beautiful ladies to have a pilot for the fall season.

So, like I say, the whole affair was pretty much an uneventful happening all the way around. Well...except for one minor chord struck when Mr. Smith asked me if I might be in Los Angeles "...during the first quarter of 1979." And you know what *that* probably means. Well, I guess that's one way to get a first hand report of the lawsuit at ring-side...the hard way.

Meanwhile, on to brighter news. I've learned through the grapevine and various trade papers that Sony plans on introducing not only the new model SL-8500 X-2 only Betamax deck but also the new "super" Beta deck, the SL-8300. This deck is reported to offer improved X-1 and X-2 editing performance (hopefully avoiding the 3-second black/muting problems in the 8200's), built-in LED timer, remote pause, still-frame, and having a picture visible in fast-forward and rewind. The latter feature is probably nothing more than doing away with some of the muting circuitry, as with modified 7200's and 8200's (discussed in TVN #10 and #12). Whether the deck will also offer slow-motion and/or fast-motion remains to be seen. There are also sketchy reports about extremely long Beta-format cassettes being under development at Ampex, a 2/4 hour tape...but I take that with at least a couple of pounds of salt. For me, I'll be happy just to see the long-awaited L-750 90/180 minute cassette come out, along with the AG-120 changer.

On the VHS front, JVC has announced their portable Vidstar full-speed only deck, very similar to Sony's SLO-340 Betamax portable, along with a new inexpensive battery-operated camera. It's said to be one of the lowest-priced color portapacks available, going for under \$4,000 in Japan, and should be available here by the summer. And the new T-180 3/6 hour VHS cassette should be out by that time as well.

I notice that more and more manufacturers are offering accessories for the home VTR crowd, including items like cameras, carrying cases, storage systems, etc. One I was somewhat interested in was the add-on remote pause control from the two Tennessee firms that advertised in TVN last issue. Apparently, what they've developed is a metal box that you screw to the top of your 7200 or 8200-type Betamax that pulls the pause lever for you via a 20-foot remote cable. I haven't had a chance to see one in action yet, but have been told that it's a fairly simple device that does the job pretty well. Several firms in LA have been offering their own custom built-in remote pause modifications for around \$200, installing a small solenoid near the pinch roller and capstan that pulls the tape across the video heads during the play mode; when you depress the remote switch, the device lifts the pinch roller away from the capstan, bringing the tape to a halt. A great idea--but a little steep at \$200. As I mentioned last time, I think you're better off to simply put a lengthy cable between your VTR and your set, and station your deck by your viewing position for easy access to its controls. A 25 or 30-foot RF cable can be easily made up for less than \$10. By using this kind of set-up, you'll be able to rewind and fast-forward the tape in addition to eliminating unwanted material with the pause lever on the machine.

One company in LA, Muntz Electronics (at 7700 Densmore Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91406) is offering several extensive modifications for 8200 Betamax decks, including the remote pause mentioned above as well as several unusual ideas I've not seen mentioned anywhere else. First, they're able to eliminate most of the editing difficulties with the 8200 by not only removing the black-out muting circuitry but also allowing you to select the VTR's playback speed manually, rather than relying on its frustrating built-in speed-sensing circuits. This way, it won't go to black dur-

ing edits, and won't try to change speeds, either; it also allows you to play back an X-1 tape at the slower X-2 speed for pseudo-slow-motion (which doesn't look all too hot), or an X-2 tape at X-1 for fast-motion. Muntz also can build in a switch to select between the Betamax's tuner or camera inputs, rather than relying on the deck's automatic input selecting switch that cuts off the tuner whenever anything is plugged into the input jacks. For most VTR owners, all of these extras are probably unneeded, but for gung-ho video collectors, they can really save you a lot of trouble. I plan on purchasing a super-modified 8200 before too long...that is, unless the SL-8300 comes out in the meantime. In any event, several friends of mine recommend Muntz very highly as some very knowledgeable people who do pretty nice work. The cost of these modifications runs around \$200-300, depending on what features you're looking for.

Just as a bit of interesting news, I recently visited Las Vegas for the glittering NAB show at the convention center, featuring the most awe-inspiring array of broadcast equipment I've ever seen, from top-of-the-line studio VTR's, to portable cameras, telecine chains, and a wealth of other video products too numerous to mention. At various locations were several huge projection-TV screens, most of them of the 30' or 40' variety from Conrac and Eidophor, costing upwards of \$100,000. Sony had a small display of their new consumer projector, similar to this illustration only much smaller, with about a 5 foot screen. When I asked several smiling Sony representatives if they had any in-



The 120-inch screen color video projection system.

formation on the screen--price, model number, availability, etc.--they laughed and chuckled and told me it was model "XXX"...apparently an experimental unit that wasn't destined for the marketplace for quite a while, and that there was no price set as yet. It seemed to be fairly bright and compared favorably with the Advent and Matsushita screens mentioned in TVN #12; like the Advent it was a two-piece design, but with only 2 guns inside of the usual 3. Leave it to Sony to try something different. It appeared that they left one of the colors--Red, Blue, or Green--alone, and combined the other two to lower the cost of the unit, though I overheard several people mentioning it may go on sale for \$5,000 or more. Incidentally, the 10-foot set on the preceding page is available only in Japan, and goes for a cool \$10,000. That's about a thousand bucks a foot.

I'm sure most of you have been exposed to the various Pay TV systems available around the country, either via cable or the new over-the-air companies like National Subscription TV in LA. Needless to say, having access to these Pay TV channels can provide a great source of recent motion picture fare for collectors--the very thought of which has been known to turn some motion picture studio executives purple with rage.

The largest of the cable Pay TV companies is Home Box Office, a division of the huge publishing conglomerate Time-Life, Inc. HBO offers a wide range of recent and classic feature films, sent via satellite from their headquarters in New York to local cable systems across the nation. This firm offers what's probably the best technical quality of any of the Pay TV companies, using only top-of-the-line film and video equipment for their programming as opposed to many local Pay TV firms who get by with a few 3/4" players and, if you're lucky, a Time Base Corrector for improving the VTR's signal quality. HBO remains the largest and most widespread "FeeVee" firm in the nation and, like I say, offers picture quality equivalent to the commercial networks.

Just about all cable TV systems in the U.S. offer some kind of Pay TV programming, generally for around \$10 a month in addition to your regular cable bill. Most of these firms use an automated 3/4" VTR set-up with a couple of players linked up to a simple computer that starts, stops, and switches the decks for a continuous program presentation. Unfortunately, being unattended, and being on 3/4" tape, lots of problems in these systems can occur, bringing on much teeth-gnashing to any home videotapesters. The weakest link in this technical chain, amazingly enough, is often the cable itself that brings all the channels into your home. With the quality (or lack thereof) of the equipment and personnel available to budget-starved cable companies, the picture quality on most cable systems is often not as good as a top notch antenna on your roof; they can, however, bring you distant out-of-town stations you'd never be able to pick up with a conventional antenna, and they also benefit those poor unfortunates who are unable to use outside antennas, like apartment dwellers or people in a deep valley.

Perhaps the most interesting cable system in the nation, and certainly the most revolutionary, is QUBE's service in Columbus, Ohio. As most of you will recall from Ray Glasser's informative article from last issue, QUBE offers a really wide array of programming including several Pay channels, featuring the best in recent (3 years or less), classic (mostly over 10 years old) and "adult" films. Also offered

are instructional and informational channels. Rather than billing the customer at a set rate every month, however, all pay programming on QUBE is offered on a "pay-per-view" basis--a distinct advantage to most other systems since this way you're charged only for those programs you actually watch. This seems to me to be preferable to paying for several months of subscription TV without watching or recording more than, say, 3 or 4 films.

The last type of Pay system is the over-the-air system now available in New York and LA, and coming soon to many other areas as well. Although broadcast Pay TV has been kicking around for almost 20 years, it's only been recently that they've been successful, due mostly to misguided legislation and a huge "Kill Pay TV" campaign by theater owners in years past. Here in LA, National Subscription Television broadcasts a scrambled picture, with encoded multiplexed audio as well, over Channel 52, which is unscrambled and decoded by a clock radio-sized box at subscribers' homes. Amazingly enough, the company is able to control each of these boxes individually through an incredibly complex computer-controlled switching system at their facility in Glendale; this way, if you happen to forget to pay your bill, they're able to selectively turn your box off and prevent you from watching any feature films for free. They're also able to occasionally offer "pay-per-view" programs as an extra service, turning on only those boxes for which owners have paid an additional charge.

By using a standard TV transmitter for their broadcast programming, NST is able to avoid the problems and pitfalls of cable reception. The company insures optimum picture quality by installing a good-quality UHF antenna made especially for their frequency on Channel 52, as part of their service. On the whole, I'd say they appear to be much more quality-conscious than most cable engineers I've battled with.

In any case, all of these Pay TV systems share one common philosophy: they dislike home videotaping, and in the case of National Subscription Television, they despise it. The reason is two-fold: first, taping the feature films at home at least technically violates current copyright laws, which upsets the Hollywood studios and brings pressure on Pay TV firms to be wary of subscribers recording films at home from their service. Secondly, in the case of pay-per-view companies, videotaping their programs enables you to avoid paying them for repeated viewings, which they don't like at all. I know in LA, NST will not hook-up their decoder boxes to any videotape recorder, nor will they even provide an installation in a home with a VTR.

I'm going to bet that following the expected outcome of the Home Videotaping lawsuit--that is, with Universal hopefully losing the case--Pay TV firms will be somewhat less hostile to videophiles. Be that as it may, I have a feeling that if all the Pay TV firms in the nation were to disconnect all subscribers who use their service for videotaping, they'd end up with half as many viewers than they had originally, if that many.

The future looks very promising for Pay TV. With current network fare continuing to spiral downwards into the depths of kiddy porn/garbage, with Roots-like programming coming up only sporadically at best, I'm sure that more and more viewers will turn to Pay TV as an alternative to entertainment from the networks and movie theaters.

And come the day when we all have little satellite dishes up on the roof, catching signals from an orbiting transmitter hundreds of miles off in space, I would not be surprised if the major networks drop all of their affiliates and offer their programming direct to the public on a subscription basis, operating on revenue from subscribers' fees rather than those God-awful commercials. But there I go dreaming again...

Back in the world of reality, here are a few nifty collecting and operating tips I've been saving for the past few months:

On organizing a collection--I've been using 3/4" Dymo-embossed labels onto which I stamp out a number/code for the cardboard Betamax cassette boxes, affixing it right under the "K-60" or "L-500" logo. I've been keeping my feature films separate from the TV series and specials by using an "M" designation for features and "T" for TV, then numbering each program starting with 101, 102, etc. If there's two parts to a film, then I'll label the tape "M-101A" for the first part and "M-101B" for the second. Next, I'll put an identical number on the square label that goes on top of the cassette itself, and then make a title label for the long narrow paper strip on the cassette's spine.

I try not to put any TV shows on any feature tapes, and vice-versa, though I have been recording occasional short cartoons at the end of most programs to "pad out" the leftover tape. I also have an SP category for miscellaneous items that don't fit into the feature or TV slots, like TV show outtakes or commercials. I list the locations of these miscellaneous bits and cartoons on 3x5 index cards which I place inside the cassette sleeve box and note on a master list, to keep track of all the odds and ends found on each tape.

Finally, I make a list of all the cassettes, in order by number, with the film's release year noted. I also try to grade their audio and image quality, taking into consideration their completeness as well, from "A" (excellent) to "D" (fair to poor). Also listed is the station or network from which they were recorded, how the length of my copy compares to the original un-cut length of the film (which is very important), and whether it's a dub or an original recording.

The end result is several rows of cassettes, each neatly labeled with one number on their respective cardboard containers, facing out. Granted, my system's a little complicated, but like I say it's worked pretty well for me so far and has the added advantage of letting ~~MCA~~ other collectors know exactly what kind of condition my tapes are in, in the event they're interested in trading.

On experiencing a bending picture at the top of the screen of your set: the fault here lies partially in your VTR, but mostly in the TV set itself. American sets have what's known as a slow AFC time-constant, which basically means that they're pretty sensitive to showing all the faults in unstable videotapes, like all home VTR's. On the other hand, Japanese sets, particularly Sony's Trinitron models, have improved circuitry that tends to hide these errors (mostly skew problems) and make the pictures look better than they really are. So if you've got these troubles on your set from your VTR, chances are you need a new set, and preferably one as helpful to videotape problems as a Sony.

On running out of room in your TVN column: for this there is no easy solution. All you can do is say you'll have a report on the Ultimate Video Room, the LA VideoShow, and all the new home video products next time. See you then. Send all your tips, news, subpoenas, and dollars to: Marc Wielage, P.O. Box 480315, LA, CA 90048

★★★★★ DEALER'S DOINGS ★★★★★



This feature was well received last time, so let's try it again:

MEDIA ASSOCIATES, 616 National Ave., Mt. View, CA 94043 (415) 968-2444, is offering several new products of interest.

For \$40 they can fix you up with a wireless remote pause control (replacing the present cord and switch on those VHS machines that have same. The conversion for Betamax, JVC and Sanyo is a somewhat steeper \$145. They also offer an "automatic commercial eliminator" that will work in your absence to pause during commercials. Only drawback is that this will work only with black and white programs, such as old movies. They will also convert 1-hour Sony timers to 2-hour for \$17. Inquire, and tell them that they should be paying for plugs like this one.

SOUND MACHINE (S & M Audio, Inc.) 2842 Kennedy Blvd., Jersey City, NJ 07306, finally came through with a refund on the recorder I ordered, AND PAID FOR, back in October. It was apparently lost by UPS. Sound Machine notified me (after several calls and letters) on Feb. 13, that UPS had approved the claim and that a check would follow, but it was not until my mildly threatening letter of April 4 that a refund check arrived without so much as a cover letter or comment. This firm has very attractive prices, but Wow!

INSTANT REPLAY, 4149 Bonita Ave., Coconut Grove, FL 33133 (305) 666-6787 (see their ad elsewhere in this issue) has undertaken a very ambitious project, that of a video magazine made up of contributions from videophiles around the nation and the world. I hope to be able to give you a review of their first "issue" next time.

REEL IMAGES, 456 Monroe Turnpike, Monroe CT 06468 (203) 261-5022 (EAST) & 10523 Burbank Blvd. No. 104, No. Hollywood CA 91601 (213) 726-0653 (WEST), has a nifty new catalog of prerecorded cassettes in BETA and VHS formats. Their many offerings include 6 Amos and Andy Shows, and a Colgate Comedy Hour. Catalog is free if you mention TVN.

CINEMA CONCEPTS, 91 Main Street, Chester, CT 06412 (203) 526-9513, also has a nice little catalog of Beta and VHS tapes. Offerings include the Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour, Flash Gordon, Charlie Chaplin & Warner cartoons.

PLEASE!! When you write to someone like REEL IMAGES and CINEMA CONCEPTS, tell them that you found out about them thru this magazine. It might also help if you tell them that you think it is a disgrace that they are feeding off these free plugs without so much as sending your humble editor some freebies that he can review for your enlightenment.

MISCELLANEOUS MAN, Box 1776, New Freedom, PA 17349, has the most wonderful catalog of original old posters, advertising memorabilia, and objects d' pop art, that you are likely to see. When I say, "original old", I mean like 60 years old and more. Of course he has recent stuff too, movie posters and what not, but his main forte is to cater to those who want framable beautifully lithographed printed material from years ago. His next catalog should be about ready. Send \$2 for it now while you are thinking about it. You'll love it, and tell George that Jim sent you.

MADMAN MUNTZ, 7700 Densmore Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406 (213) 988-7800, video pioneer, is still going strong. I've received more than one good report about his equipment, prices and service department. Those of you in the area may want to check it out. I wouldn't be surprised if you get some colorful video chat to boot.

VISIONDISC CORP., Box 102, Cooper Station, NY 10003, has announced first programming produced specially for home VTR. The first 7 of 40 planned original programs feature musical performances (some jazz). They list at \$30 for about an hour of programming, and are available in both Beta and VHS formats.

BIG NATE TALKS ON VHS

Thru the generosity and prompting of Jim Lowe, this column was begat for all VHS freaks out there in Videoland, USA. I am known as the Big Nate, and I hang around the Los Angeles area. On November 1, 1977, I bought an RCA Selectavision VCR, which began my introduction to video. Since then I have really freaked out with it. I freaked until the 15th of March when one of my heads met an unworthy demise. Now, not only do I know about new VHS, but also about repaired.

After many journeys in the L.A. area, I stumbled on to my main man in Long Beach, an RCA person who wishes to remain anonymous. Most of the following info I must credit to him. First of all, FLASH!! JVC has already marketed in Japan (soon to be released here -- maybe June) a portable VHS unit and a color camera. The recorder weighs 30 pounds, the camera 10. It is capable of 1 and 2 hour (or 4 hour format maybe sooner than they like to admit) and probably 3 hour on their new cassette. Total price for the recorder and color camera -- \$2400. complete.

The main man, who commiserates with my repair problems, offers the following advice. First, and most important, avoid using the remote and key pause as much as possible. It is better to Fast Forward, Play, Rewind than to pause for more than a minute, as the VHS head is ultra sensitive to friction and heat. (See head cleaners below.) VHS head components start at \$100 plus labor. They are the guts of the machine, and after talking and hearing from Betamaxers, the same holds for Sony, etc. The best investment you can make when you buy an RCA or Panasonic VCR is to part with the extra \$50 for the extended warranty and service contract. (I would assume that Magnavox, MGA, and JVC have similar service contracts available.) It is definitely worth the price of two cassettes. A technician wouldn't even touch my machine for less than \$42.50.

If you want to perform preventive maintenance, clean the head the same way that you would clean the audio recorder's. That is, with "Q-tips" or equivalents, and a good alcohol based head cleaner. WARNING -- Don't be misled by those "fly-by-night" head cleaners which rely on abrasive action -- friction is your worst enemy. Another good tip is to keep the machine covered when not in use. Remember though, that if the timer has been set or if the machine is running, a cover could interfere with machine motor heat rejection.

I have attempted to get info about "anti-muting", but so far all that I know is that this circuitry can be easily bypassed once one knows the scoop on how to. Trouble is, no one's sure yet. They do say that it may not be an independent subsystem like on the Betamax. More info on this next time, I hope. So, until next time, if anyone out there can help on this, let me know. Write to: THE BIG NATE c/o R & D Fernandez, 2617 Deerford, Lakewood, CA 90812.

VIDEO VOICE OF CANADA

Vol. 1, Number 3 (Exclusive to Videophile's Newsletter)

First off, stand up and applaud Jim Lowe on the glossy new cover and new look format. There is no doubt in my mind TVN is the leader... and a salute to Beta Electronics for the remote on the 7200... There is a valid point that pre-recorded programs in color on video should be offered on Beta One format, the franchised distributors are losing ground on this ... I have received many letters asking, what do you recommend to read. Here goes: THE MOVIE COLLECTOR'S CATALOGUE (Weiss), TAKE ONE, VIDEOGRAPHY, INSTANT REPLAY, THE SIGHT, AMERICAN FILM, FILM COLLECTOR'S WORLD, and INTERNATIONAL MOTION PICTURE ALMANAC. The best and cheapest book source is THE MOVIE BOOK CLUB, Latham, NY ... So many of us are disturbed about the RED syndrome in Kodak films on TV and at home. Many of my color films, 5 years old and older have turned red, the color almost all gone, yet KODAK will not refund, make good or warrant the costly films I have bought, some \$650 to \$1000 each. Is this not the giant rip off of all time, and as far as I know, the color film you buy today in 16mm will be faded out very soon also ... A special hats off to BRYAN OLSON for his "Sight" magazine. I don't know where he gets it all (But I can guess, I think he is more than a radio announcer, he must be a real film buff as well). If he would only get envelopes and letterhead and a typewriter for correspondence ... There are at least 3 video tape clubs in operation, but they nearly all offer the same goods and at the same prices. The loan out and trade back program has not worked ... Here in Canada, there is a Western outfit that offers the FOX films and others for sale, but higher than USA prices ... I still have not heard from MAGNETIC VIDEO about my PAID up membership \$10. What gives? ... I did over 6 hours of shooting on the SONY black and white video camera 8200 model, but removed the cheap lens and used a Canon C mount movie zoom lens (Super) and had to use a 7 inch DC color TV set for viewer. ... It lists here for \$499, but can be bought for less ... as black and white goes IT IS WELL WORTH THE \$. I also had to remove the mike that came with it, and used the Super Sony 150EE lapel minimike which I bought after hearing the SUPERB sound quality on the video playback ... Jim, you cannot get good quality from rabbit ears to rabbit ears [Editors Note: ?] ... My transfers from X2 to X1 have been excellent, provided I had a FIRST original to copy from Latest News: I'm afraid it's too little too late THE POLAVISION SYSTEM by Polaroid. I can't help wonder if it is being offered as a substitute for video in color. They brag of instant replay (video is quicker), the whole bag sells for \$700, with camera and 12" screen. It takes a 2 minute cartridge (how awful), camera has 1.8 lens and auto exposure, limited to 12" screen processor and playback unit. A replay control and movie light are options, BUT the result is GRAINY, the running time VERY limited, the screen size impossible, and the cost OVERPRICED -- this is no substitute for VIDEO CASSETTE, no matter what the Super 8mm people say. The film is trapped in the POLAVISION system, and cannot be projected on regular 8mm equipment, so where are we, and at what price. ... The JVC 3300 color camera (which works VERY well with Beta One and Two) is being SOLD OUT as fast as it comes to the nation's capital. The price has dropped in certain places to \$1350 (Mr. Audio) and L-500 tapes per dozen are \$220. The JVC camera still needs the electronic viewfinder at \$267 and the super Zoom lens at \$390, as options. I wonder if you can deduct the normal lens and viewfinder and get a refund on the better ones? ... Let me know if anyone has a good price on JVC, we have takers ... My final word on VIDEO PROJECTION, until video can project a 70 x 70 picture, the quality of the latest 16mm sound projection equipment (Eiki), then I will not recant ... I read about 14 publications a month dealing with arts and communication, and still with each letter I receive I learn a little more. That's what it's all about, trading news and views and growing in knowledge (enough of the sermon) ... Naturally, I think the MCA-Phillips disc, or whoever can deliver, will be a great ASSET to the video cassette for dubbing and loaning and trading, etc. with TOP quality results. In my mind it will be an accessory for the video unit, NOT a replacement or an alternative ... To my JAMES BOND fans, BRYAN OLSON is the best source of special material, The Bond Fan Club will do the rest, and I have found a poster and press book service that is tops ... also a guy in the USA who makes transfers of films to tape as a HOBBY without profit (imagine), yes, there are others who do it for love ... Last issue I reduced copy, because I thought I was being greedy, but after seeing Joe's 4 pages and Marcus' 6 1/2 (all well done) I feel threatened (Is that from insecurity, do you think) ... JIM has been really great with me, and since I write for 3 other mags, I may drop them all just to continue with TVN which I personally enjoy (oh the idle rich) ... The video shooting I did (6 hours to get 12 minutes) was to produce PREVIEW TRAILERS on a special tape, 6 of them, to introduce the programs before you put on the regular program tape ... "Hello out there, welcome to the Ralph Gordon private network, etc.", or "Hello and welcome to the XXX rated show" or "Hello kiddies, and welcome to the children's movie time show. We have a special treat for you Today" (Be sure to use the word Today, since you never know when you are going to replay.) I would love to know how RAY GLASSER got the motion in his trade mark in front of HIS films (I assume live color camera with simulated animation) ... Letters are now coming from Australia, New York, California, Texas, Vancouver, The Maritimes, Japan, Ohio, and all points in between ... If you want news about our activities (It's free) please write. It's true, I answer every letter ... I am looking for a SWITCH BOX with toggle switches, to plug in 6 color TV sets via co-axial cable, and to shut off any or all sets from the video deck via the panel, ... any ideas? I have a box now, but it's the commercial kind with all 6 cables attached and all live going out from the deck (If Jim can do this, so will I) ... Until next time, keep in touch, and remember, there are more honest and trustworthy video collectors than those who are not! RALPH GORDON 1664 The Baseline Road, Ottawa, Ontario CANADA

-hmmm

I've been getting the strangest mail from the Motion Picture Association of America office in New York. Every so often an envelope shows up from them, and invariably it contains a press release or newspaper clipping about how some poor guy has been found guilty of film piracy, dealing in stolen property (films), or been sent to jail for sell-copyrighted material on bootleg video tapes. One day they called me up and ordered 35 copies (!) of Issue #12 of this magazine. I was more than happy to make such a nice sale and, boy, were they impatient. The nice lady on the end of the phone said that they would have their special courier come by that very evening to pick them up. Sure enough, at 5:30 p.m. the lady from "Air Courier" came with her special pouch, picked up the 35 copies and took them straight to the Tallahassee airport where they were already booked on flights to Atlanta and thence to New York.

THE VIDEO COMPOSITE

by BOB BURNS

I'VE JUST RECEIVED NOTICE FROM OUR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF THAT I HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AS VHS EDITOR OF HIS EXCELLENT NEWSLETTER, THUS JOINING THE RANKS OF MARC AND JOE IN THE PAGES OF THIS: "THE TABLOID OF THE VIDEO ENTHUSIAST." I'D LIKE TO SAY IN THE BEGINNING THAT I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT THE NUMEROUS VHS OWNERS WHO HAVE BEEN, THROUGH NO FAULT OF OUR EDITOR, SO LONG NEGLECTED WITHIN THESE PAGES.

I THOUGHT I MIGHT GO INTO A LITTLE OF MY VIDEO BACKGROUND SO THAT YOU MIGHT BETTER UNDERSTAND FROM WHAT EXPERIENCE I SPEAK. I'M 29 YEARS OLD AND HAVE BEEN VIDEO TAPING IN ONE FORMAT OR ANOTHER FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS. MY FORMAL TRAINING IS LIMITED TO SOME POST-PRODUCTION AND EDITING PERFORMED WHILE ATTENDING OHIO UNIVERSITY IN ATHENS. MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH VIDEO RECORDERS BEGAN WITH A B & W R/TO/R MACHINE AND SOON MOVED UP TO COLOR. SEVERAL YEARS LATER, I TRADED FOR ONE OF THE FIRST GENERATION U-MATICS AND HAVE SINCE ADDED A BETAMAX AND A PANASONIC INDUSTRIAL VHS UNIT.

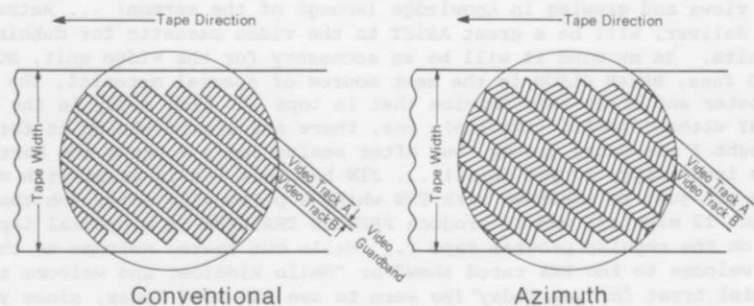
I PURCHASED THE BETAMAX PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT WAS THE FIRST FORMAT DESIGNED WITH THE CONSUMER IN MIND. SECONDLY, EVERYONE KNOWS IF IT'S "SONY," IT HAS TO WORK AND WORK WELL. I STILL HAVE THAT FIRST BETAMAX, SO YOU CAN SEE I AM DEFINITELY NOT "DOWN" ON THE BETA FORMAT. SONY'S CONCEPT WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO GAIN ANY WIDE ACCEPTANCE. IT PROVIDED EXCELLENT PICTURE QUALITY IN A RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE FORMAT. HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM WITH BEING FIRST IS THAT SOMEONE COULD COME ALONG WITH SOMETHING BETTER, JUST AS BETAMAX WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER CARTRIVISION, AND I PERSONALLY FEEL THAT JVC "VHS" FORMAT IS AN IMPROVEMENT.

ANYONE WHO HAS PURCHASED OR CONSIDERED PURCHASING A HOME VTR IN THE VHS FORMAT HAS BEEN INTIMIDATED BY THE ABUNDANCE OF SONY USERS AND FOLLOWERS, SO LET'S TAKE A SLIGHTLY PREJUDICED LOOK AT THE TWO FORMATS:

SONY DEVELOPED THE BETAMAX AS A CONSUMER VERSION OF THEIR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL U-MATIC FORMAT. THREADING IS PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL, EXCEPT FOR A CHANGE IN DIRECTION OF TAPE MOVEMENT (FOR THE CONSUMER WHO HAS BEEN ORIENTED TO LEFT TO RIGHT RECORDING).

THROUGH A MAJOR ADVANCEMENT IN HELICAL SCAN VIDEO RECORDING (WHICH, BY THE WAY, CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO SONY OR JVC), ENGINEERS WERE ABLE TO ELIMINATE THE "VIDEO GUARD BANDS" (see inset) AND THEREBY GREATLY REDUCE TAPE WIDTH.

THIS BASIC THEORY IS USED IN BOTH THE BETA AND VHS FORMATS. HOWEVER, THE VHS FORMAT UTILIZES A CONSIDERABLY SHORTER TAPE PATH (see top next page). NOW THE LOGICAL ASSUMPTION IS THAT A SHORTER TAPE PATH WOULD GREATLY REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF A JAM. HOWEVER, THROUGH SONY'S INGENUITY, THEIR LONGER TAPE PATH HAS NOT PROVED TO BE A FACTOR IN INCIDENTS OF A MECHANICAL FAILURE.

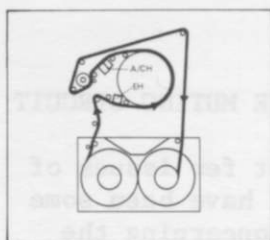


Conventional helical scan recording system with guardbands between tracks. When the playback head is not aligned correctly, signals from two tracks will be reproduced simultaneously at equal levels, resulting in "crosstalk."

In the Azimuth recording system, guardbands are eliminated, allowing more tracks on the video tape. Signals on adjacent tracks cannot be picked up when a head is misaligned, because of opposite slant of each track.

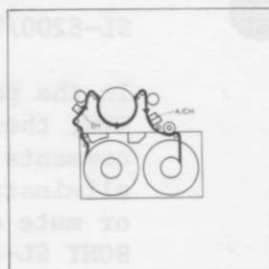
Azimuth Recording System

A major development in video tape recording, the azimuth recording system has enabled the use of smaller width $\frac{1}{2}$ " video cassettes which actually use only one quarter the amount of tape used in $\frac{3}{4}$ " U-format cassettes. By eliminating the need for guardbands between the video tracks, more video signals can be packed onto the tape. Instead, each track is recorded right alongside the next one, at a slightly opposite slant of 6°. This also eliminates video crosstalk due to misreading the tape — if one head passes over the wrong track because of misalignment, no signal will be reproduced.



beta

vhs



BUT THERE ARE MORE ADVANTAGES TO A SHORTER TAPE PATH THAN DEPENDABILITY. SPECIFICALLY, THE SHORTER TAPE PATH (AND THEREFORE SHORTER THREADING TIME) ALLOWS THE UNIT TO RETRACT THE TAPE INTO THE CASSETTE (UNTHREADED) EACH TIME THE "STOP" BUTTON IS ACTIVATED. FOR THAT REASON, THERE IS NO HEAD-TO-TAPE CONTACT DURING "FAST FORWARD" OR "REWIND." THIS CONSIDERABLY REDUCES WEAR ON THE VIDEO HEADS. FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT NOT KNOW, THE BETA FORMAT THREADS THE TAPE WHEN THE CASSETTE IS INSERTED, AND IT STAYS THREADED UNTIL REMOVED FROM THE MACHINE.

EVEN SONY'S U-MATIC FORMAT RETRACTS THE TAPE AWAY FROM THE VIDEO HEADS DURING "FAST FORWARD" OR "REWIND" TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY WEAR ON THE HEADS AND TAPE. ANOTHER DISADVANTAGE OF THE BETA FORMAT IS THAT THE TAPE STAYS THREADED EVEN WHEN THE MACHINE IS OFF. NATURALLY, THE CONSTANT EXPOSURE OF THE TAPE COULD EASILY CAUSE IT TO HAVE A SHORTER LIFE.

ANOTHER POINT IN FAVOR OF THE VHS IS THAT IT WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE 2 HOURS ON ONE CASSETTE. ONLY AFTER MANY ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP A LONGER PLAYING TIME FOR THE BETAMAX DID THE ENGINEERS LITERALLY CUT TAPE SPEED IN HALF TO EXTEND PLAYING TIME. IN REDUCING TAPE SPEED, SONY SACRIFICED SOME PICTURE QUALITY IN AN EFFORT TO COMPETE WITH THE VHS FORMAT'S LONGER PLAYING TIME. THIS RESULTED IN A LESSENING OF THE SIGNAL-TO-NOISE RATIO (WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS PICTURE QUALITY) TO JUST OVER 40 DB'S. BY COMPARISON, THE VHS FORMAT, IN THE STANDARD MODE, HAS A S/N RATIO OF JUST OVER 43 DB'S. THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONAL FIGURE WHEN ONE REALIZES IT IS IDENTICAL TO THE S/N RATIO CLAIMED BY THE SECOND GENERATION U-MATIC MACHINES WHICH HAVE BECOME THE STANDARD OF INDUSTRY AND BROADCASTING.

WELL, THAT ABOUT WRAPS THINGS UP FOR THIS MONTH. BEFORE I CLOSE, HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ONE THING PERFECTLY CLEAR: THIS COLUMN WILL ELABORATE ON THE ADVANTAGES OF THE VHS FORMAT! FOR TOO LONG HAVE VHS OWNERS BEEN INTIMIDATED BY THE PRESTIGE OF THE SONY NAME AND THE VOLUME OF SONY OWNERS. EACH FORMAT HAS ITS OWN HIGHLIGHTS AND I INTEND TO HIGHLIGHT THE VHS. IN COMING MONTHS I'LL BE DOING USER REPORTS ON THE VARIOUS VHS MODELS, VARIOUS NEW PRODUCTS, AVAILABILITY OF SOFTWARE, AND GENERAL TIPS AND TECHNIQUES. IF ANYONE HAS COME UP WITH SOMETHING HE'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE REST OF US, WRITE ME AT THE ADDRESS BELOW AND I'LL PASS IT ON.

"STAY TUNED"

BOB BURNS
BOX 23-16
WHEELERSBURG, OHIO 45694

MAGNETIC VIDEO CORP. reportedly "gambled" \$250,000 - \$500,000 plus a percentage to acquire rights to the Fox films. The firm has sold tens of thousands to its more than 7500 "Video Club of America" members since last September.

Home Box Office (HBO) pay cable system now serves over 200,000 folks thru some 500 cable systems. New satellite ground stations are being built in many communities throughout the country, in order to receive HBO signal and that of Channel 17, Atlanta.

Those of you who can make it, should consider taking in the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. Some 800 exhibitors, including 277 hi-fi firms will occupy space at McCormick Place, McCormick Inn and Pick Congress Hotel, June 11-14.

Latin entertainer, CHARO, and bandleader XAVIER CUGAT, have been granted a divorce in a brief closed-door session. Charo cited incompatibility. She married Cugie in 1966.



VCR NEWS & VIEWS

By STEVE COMET

SL-8200/THE MUTING CIRCUIT

In the past few issues of TVN, there have been some comments concerning the elimination of the blanking or mute circuit in the SONY SL-8200. This cir-

cuit, for those of you who may not be familiar with it, is the culprit responsible for your machine dipping to black for three to five seconds after you place it into the play or record modes. To date I have heard of two procedures for disabling the function. Both are incorrect and both warrant a short comment.

The first method requires the removal of a diode (D-4001) on the CS board. For the most part this is an irreversible procedure and as a modification is only partially effective. The machine will still blank, but for a slightly shorter period of time. However, when "rough tape" is encountered (tape or signal which has a momentary loss of sync) blanking still occurs.

The second method, which involves the termination of a single orange wire from a connector on the same board, does indeed eliminate video blanking, however, the audio signal is still muted so that during an edit, or when playing back, audio is lost for three to five seconds. This audio loss makes it impossible to perform acceptable edits, as there will be NO SOUND at the edit point.

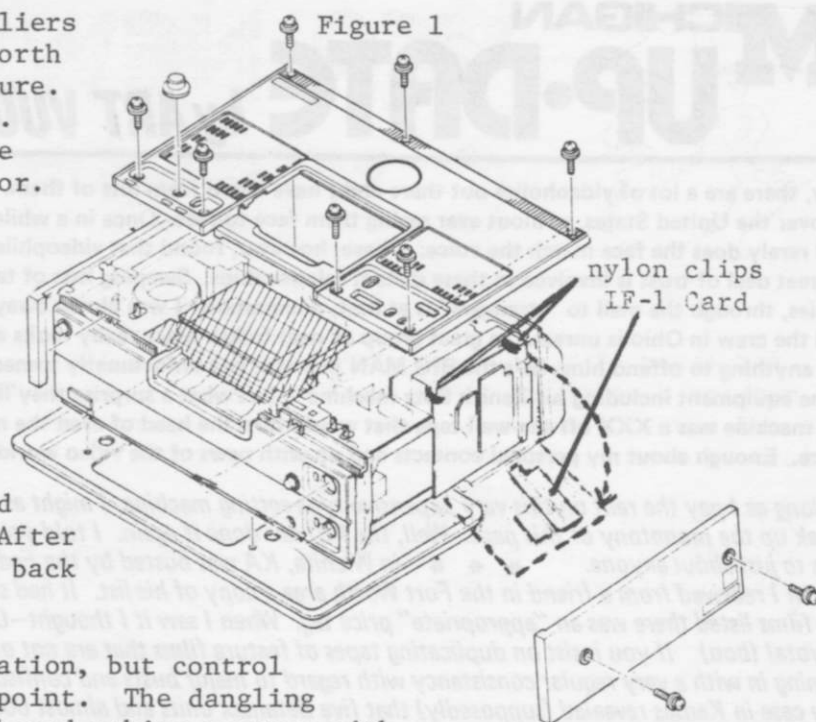
Before describing the actual method for the correct operation, just a short explanation about the circuit which we are going to change. The capstan servo (CS) board is the electronic heart of the SL-8200. This is where, among other things, the control track pulses regulate the head speed, thus insuring constant and correct tracking. In the play mode this circuit card is also responsible for generation of the muting signal, both sound and picture. We are going to eliminate the one lead that supplies the mute signal to the audio and video boards.

Here is what you'll need to modify your 8200. A Phillips head screwdriver, a thin dull edged item such as a jewelers screwdriver, a needle nose pliers, some electrical tape and about ten minutes.

First remove the line cord from the wall, and all audio and video connections to the Betamax. Remove the seven screws and small washers which secure the top plate to the machine. Next pull the tracking control knob gently up and off. Remove the top plate. You may find this easier with the tape load door open (but close it afterwards). Now turn the machine on edge with the tuner dials up, remove the wood grained right side end panel secured by two black screws. Finally remove the black metal bottom pan by removing the four brass plated screws and lock washers. The bottom pan will come away without removing the four rubber feet. Leave the machine end up and at this time — position it so that the cassette door is facing you. The end of the machine which is up is where we'll be working. The green board that you are looking at is the IF-1 card. It is hinged on one edge and can be swung aside by gently pressing two nylon clips (Fig. 1). Swing the board open (away from you) and the tan board that you have now exposed is the CS board.

At the upper left hand corner of the board you will see three white plastic connectors. The extreme left hand connector has eight pins with pin number one having a brown wire coming from it. This is the wire which must be eliminated. Before proceeding verify that you are at the proper connector, the number CN-4603 should appear on the board at

the socket. Using the needle nose pliers gently rock the connector back and forth while exerting moderate upward pressure. Remove the connector from its socket. Next it will be necessary to pull the wire from its channel in the connector. To accomplish this use the small jewelers screwdriver or similar tool and press as shown (Fig. 2). While pressing it will be necessary to gently but firmly pull the brown wire out of the connector. You may need three hands for this procedure so ask a friend. The brown wire with its clip end should be handled carefully - as it is easy to bend and damage the delicate spring action. After pulling the wire, plug the connector back onto the board.



That basically completes the modification, but control the urge to try the machine at this point. The dangling brown wire, and the swung open IF-1 board making contact with the chassis could cause damage to the circuit. Do not apply signal or power at this time. Tape the spring clip on the end of the brown wire well with electrical tape in such a way as to allow you to untape it should you wish to reverse the modification. After taping, leave the wire where it is. Double check to see that you have securely plugged the connector back in. Route any wires properly to allow the IF-1 board to hinge closed and resnap the nylon locks.

Now if you must, apply signal and power. When you're satisfied, replace the bottom pan, side panel, top plate and tracking knob. Remember to check that the dot on the tracking knob is at true center of rotation. That's all there is to it.

The benefits of eliminating the muting circuit are obvious, but here's a bonus. Suppose you're dubbing a tape which has some extremely "rough" areas. By rough, I'm talking about snow and hash. When the play machine (master) encounters this loss of sync signal it mutes. The record machine (slave) although capable of recording any signal being fed it from the play machine, sees only black, hence black is recorded. Now here's the bonus: Disable the mute circuit in the play machine and when the unstable tape passes the head, it plays, and of course, what you see is what you get. You won't suffer the four or five seconds of black because of a second or so of sync loss.

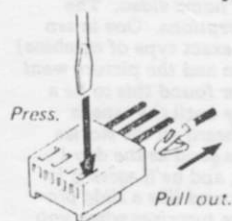


Figure 2

Remember also, that when you depress the record lever, your machine does go into record immediately. Muting will not let you see the picture, but you are recording. Pick up a tape recorded prior to your having made the modification and play it. At the very beginning you'll see five seconds of video you never thought you had! The first two seconds may not be locked but its there. If any of you have removed the diode mentioned in the earlier conversion you can obtain exact replacements for this from a Sony service center. The part number is D-4001. If you have left the old diode leads on the board long enough to solder a new diode into the circuit it would be wise to do so. The benefit of replacing this diode is that when you go to sell your machine and wish to restore the blanking function all you will need do is to replace the brown wire in its socket. In the next issue I'll include details on replacing the diode.

MICHIGAN M^UP•DATE by ART VUOLO, JR. Mr. Media

Boy, there are a lot of videoholics out there and I have heard from lots of them. Never in my life have I known so many people all over the United States, without ever seeing them face-to-face. Once in a while I get the opportunity of visiting via video tape and rarely does the face match the voice. I have, however, found that videophiles, as a group, are sincere, friendly and honest. A great deal of trust is involved in these distant relationships. Swaping lists of tapes, sending various tapes—including master copies, through the mail to "strangers" is at best, uncommon. I was blown away by a tape of Joe Mazzini and Marc Weilage (sp) and the crew in Ohio is unreal. . . a great group of neat folks! Marc really looks about the way he sounds, but Joe—wow. Never say anything to offend him—he's the BIG MAN in town, but unfortunately someone recently B & E'd his place and made off with some equipment including his Zenith Beta machine — but what a surprise they'll get when they plug it in. The tape that was in the machine was a XXX off-the-wall tape that would turn the head of even the most sophisticated. Hope the insurance was in force. Enough about my personal contacts and on with news of the video world.

*As long as I pay the rent on this very expensive type-setting machine, I might as well use a few different varieties of type to help break up the monotony of this page. Well, the FBI has done it again. I told you not to brag about what you have and toss out lists to just about anyone. * * * in Wichita, KA was busted by the Fed's according to my sources. While in Dallas in March I received from a friend in the Fort Worth area a copy of his list. It had some very impressive titles on it and for each of the films listed there was an "appropriate" price tag. When I saw it I thought—Oh boy it this guy asking for it. And he got it—Toyota! (boo) If you insist on duplicating tapes of feature films that are not off-the-air, you had best be careful, the reports are coming in with a very regular consistancy with regard to major busts and confiscations of tape libraries and even the machines. The case in Kansas revealed (supposedly) that five Betamax units and almost 600 tapes were seized in the raid and that ten FBI agents showed up on the guys doorstep to present him with the news. Watch out. Don't do dumb things people—remember there are a lot of folks — especially in the motion picture business that would like to see all video cassette recorders in a large pile and then set aflame like Beatle records when John Lennon claimed that they were more popular than Jesus Christ. Don't look now—but home video tape is getting very popular.*

BETA VS. VHS—THE WAR CONTINUES—BUT WHO IS WINNING???

The common man is being bombarded with mass advertising from the various home video manufacturers. Remember that there are really only two (2) name brands — SONY and PANASONIC, they're makin' em all. JVC is a third, but it's also VHS, so we'll classify it as similar to the Panasonic system. The new line of industrial VHS units are better than the home units but—mechanically they operate the same way. Here is my personal evaluation (slightly slanted) of both.

In talking to the "experts" BETA IS BETTER. At the out-set, let me say that I am not paid by Sony Corporation of America to make these statements and I don't receive any commissions for units sold. I have had a chance to play with both, and at this stage of the game feel I can give an accurate evaluation of both systems. The biggest single problem is COMPATIBILITY. Recently a friend left his RCA Select-A-Vision machine with me for a week while he went on vacation. He wanted me to copy a few of my tapes unto his unit—figuring they would look best when played back on the machine that they were recorded on—plus the fact that I don't own a VHS machine. Well, he was right, it would look better on the machine that it was recorded on, infact it would look good ONLY on the machine it was recorded on. While I had the unit I decided to make a sampler tape of some "goodies" from my library for a local store (all legit stuff—mind you) so that they could demonstrate the advantages of home video. The store carried Panasonic VHS equipment. The edits on the machine were (to me) very poor, break up on every one, with few exceptions. One in ten was reasonable. Worst off all was that when I took the tape to the store—recorded on an RCA and played on a Panasonic (same exact type of machine) the picture was very bad. The tracking control had to set very carefully right at one spot. . . a fraction of an inch in one direction and the picture went into a jumpy vibration, and a little in the opposite direction caused the entire screen to become smeared with static. I have never found this to be a problem with Beta format units. There is also less wear and tear on the tape in the Beta units which thread up and stay that way until the tape is ejected. The VHS format unwinds to tape back into the cartridge everytime you hit stop to fast forward or rewind. I have also heard all the stories about what the Beta system does to wear out the heads faster—but my old SL-7200, with over 100,000 miles on it still looks as good as the day I bought it two years ago. My new SLO-320, the Sony industrial unit is fantastic, Ray Glasser in Cleveland is also a proud owner, and he'll agree it is state of the art. All solenoid with memory and logic control it does just about everything, and weighs only 27 pounds—totes around like a slide projector, use BNC connectors for video in and out, and automatically rewinds the tape at the end of a cassette so there are no more surprises when you pull a tape off the shelf and low and behold—it needs to be rewound. The 4 hour mode on VHS units is impossible to play on anyone elses—even if the sets are identical models. Sony's industrial units are X-1 ONLY, they know that there IS a difference, even though the average TV viewer can't see it between X1 and X2 speeds. The SLO-340 is the same in many ways as the 320, but is battery-opt. and can be totally portable. Very sharp. Both Sony units are in the \$1,500-\$1,600 price range. Betamax units here in Michigan SL-8200 are going for about \$799 with timer. . . VHS units are about \$850. People are buying alot of RCA Select-A-Vision, because it has 4 hour capability—but where these people are getting the time to sit around and watch TV for 4 hours I'll never know. I have all to do just watching 60 minutes played back. The war continues—let see who wins. Film at 11.

Tape prices are still a little steep in most parts of the country, but if you know how to shop, you can find some exceptional deals. Recently I came in contact with S & A Video Tape Distributors, Inc. in New York (see their ad elsewhere in this issue). Prices are very good and the boss—George—is a man with a great deal of experience in the tape business. The battle also continues between SONY and SCOTCH (3M) video cassettes. Frankly, I have not had any problem with Scotch. There were some bad runs circulated a few months ago, but I never came across any of it, and perhaps my exclusive use of the X1 mode has something to do with my not having any drop-out problems with Scotch. Sony, occasionally, has a stability problem at the end of the tape. The picture will start to jump during the last 2 or 3 minutes. For those of us that use every inch of tape, and take pride in back timing tapes so that the last note of music and picture fades to black, just as the stop button clicks—this can be a real draw-back. Scotch is generally available at lower prices. Sony is supposedly better on the heads. You decide.

CLOSING COMMENTS: Would really like to hear from more and more TVN readers around the country. I'm into quality films, a very wide variety of specials off television and individual episodes of series which are exceptional in script and quality. I work in the radio & TV business (promotion) and enjoy seeing local news and local radio station spots from cities around the country. Best time to reach me is in the evening—the later the better. After 11 PM EST is best—and cheaper too! Always dial direct—automation takes over when I'm not in. PLEASE leave word, I try to return all calls. Direct contact at (313) 434-2712. Ma Bell must love the videophiles—our bills are outrageous.

ADVERTISEMENT: Empty Betamax tape boxes are available. Mostly Sony with silver binding. Most say L-250 and are available with labels. Mint condition. Will ship UPS. Cheap for fellow video folks. If you need some—contact me now Art Vuolo, Jr. PO Box 219, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. (313) 434-2712. First come, first serve basis. Have I gotta box for you!



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4 hr \$225.00 per doz.

BETA

2 hr Sony \$156.00 per doz. L500
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1 hr 3M \$ 85.00 10 lot K30
Add \$2.50 1st doz handling
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FILM TRANSFER SPECIAL

16MM, Super 8MM, slides to Video
tape.
\$30.00 per hr or fraction thereof,
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Regular 8MM transfer available
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GBC VIDEO CAMERA

B&W-W/TRIPOD AND MIC
NO ZOOM

\$225.00 SHIPPED!!!!

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RCA 2/4 hr	\$775.00	40 lbs	Sony V02850A	\$4250.00	77 lbs
Quasar 2/4 hr	\$775.00	40 lbs	Sony V02860	\$5195.00	80 lbs
Sony 2 hr	\$850.00	45 lbs	Sony V03800	\$2495.00	26 lbs
Sony SLO 260	\$975.00	48 lbs	Sony DXC1610	\$3350.00	11 lbs
Sony SLO 320	\$1250.00	28 lbs			
Sony SLO 340	\$1355.00	20 lbs			

PLUS UPS & INSURANCE CHARGES

SPECIAL FEATURE PACKAGE - OFFER ENDS JUNE 30, 1978

3 Full Length Adult Features (my choice) Beta 1, Beta 2 or VHS (add 45.00 for U-Matic). No discount - to avoid duplication, let me know what you have. Guaranteed Excellent Quality. \$115.00 includes shipping.

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INSIDE MARILYN CHAMBERS
* CB MAMAS
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To cover our additional costs, prices below are for these selections only.
Beta X1 (2 Cassettes) 85.00 Beta X2 70.00 VHS 75.00 No U-Matic

*Beta or VHS 65.00



BETA

U-MATIC

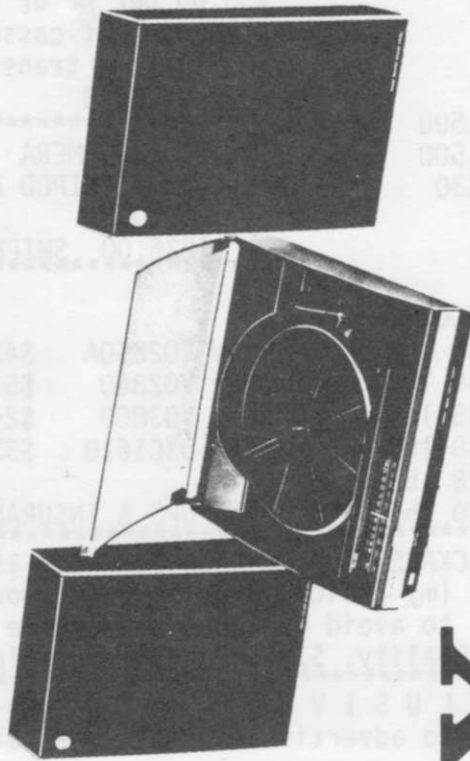
VHS



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UPS INCLUDED

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TORY NEW! COMES WITH COMPLETE
WARRANTY FROM SONY! FACTORY
NEW "SONY" CLOSEOUT... INCLUDES
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RCA SELECTAVISION----PACIFICA LABS WANTS TO SELL EVERYONE AN RCA VCR. OUR PRICE IS MATCHED TO THE LOS ANGELES MARKET EACH FRIDAY AND WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE MOST COMPETITIVE MARKET IN THE U.S.

BEFORE YOU BUY, CALL OR WRITE FOR OUR CURRENT QUOTE. REMEMBER, NO SALES TAX IF SHIPPED OUT OF CALIFORNIA. YOU PAY UPS SHIPPING AND INSURANCE, WHICH WILL BE ABOUT \$10.

VIDEOCASSETTES----WE STOCK ALL 50 FOX TITLES FROM MAGNETIC VIDEO AS WELL AS MANY OTHER PUBLIC DOMAIN TITLES.

WITH ANY VCR ORDER WE WILL INCLUDE ANY SINGLE CASSETTE TITLE FOR \$40 AND ANY DOUBLE CASSETTE TITLE FOR \$57. YOU MAY ORDER AS MANY TITLES AT THIS PRICE AS YOU WISH WITH YOUR VCR ORDER.

WRITE FOR OUR "STAND ALONE" QUOTE FOR PRERECORDED CASSETTES.

EXCHANGE SERVICE----WE WILL EXCHANGE ANY CASSETTE THAT WAS INITIALLY PURCHASED FROM US FOR \$12 SINGLE AND \$16 DOUBLE CASSETTE TITLE. THIS EXCHANGE IS FOR USED BUT FULLY GUARANTEED CASSETTES.

VCR ACCESSORIES----WE HAVE THE FULL LINE OF RCA SELECTAVISION ADD-ONS AND BLANK CASSETTES AT THE BEST PRICE ANYWHERE.

VIDEOPHILE SPECIALS----DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR OLD CASSETTES. PACIFICA HAS THE MAGNERASER FROM AMPLICORP. THIS UNIT IS HAND HELD AND IS USED BY ALMOST EVERY LAB IN HOLLYWOOD. THE MAGNERASER IS GUARANTEED BY AMPLICORP TO REMOVE ALL RECORDED SIGNAL AND TO LOWER BACKGROUND NOISE BY 3 TO 6 DB BELOW THAT OF VIRGIN, UNUSED TAPE. THIS UNIT HAS A TWO YEAR GUARANTEE, SHIPPING WEIGHT 5 LB.----\$32.50

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VHS

SPECIALIST

More Missives & Queries (& Even a Quip or 2)



Hope you can read all the small type. I'm assuming that you would prefer this, rather than not being able to share in all of this fascinating mail that TVN receives. So, without further ado:

"Since a new Copyright Act became effective on January 1, 1978, it will be helpful to a resolution of the issues in the case if you would advise us which, if any, Universal and/or Disney motion pictures, cartoons or other film products you have recorded on your Betamax in 1978." -- Stephen A. Kroft (Attorney MCA-Universal/Walt Disney)

[Mr. Kroft: I have not intentionally neglected to answer your request, however, as in the past, I doubt that Sony would allow a mere letter from me in evidence. You may as well just subpoena me for a 3rd time. -- J.L.]

"Yes, a new edition of TV MOVIES is in the works, and barring any unforeseen problems, will be available on October 1 of this year. It will include somewhere between 11,000 and 12,000 films. You'll be interested to know that we are adding old as well as new films, which have recently been released to TV, and of course we'll include many recent-vintage films which haven't yet been made available to TV or even cable TV. The book will also incorporate various additions, corrections, and revisions to make it more accurate and comprehensive than ever. ... we will not be dropping films ... in order to make room for new entries." -- Leonard Maltin

[Actually this was in a letter from Mr. Maltin to one of our readers. Thanks for sharing it with us Charlie!]

"I still can't believe discrimination among video recorders exists so blatantly in your magazine. Hey I have a Quasar GTM, and so do many others. I wish they would all write you a letter and put an end to all this slighting of a better machine than many models mentioned REPEATEDLY. How about some variety. Watergate, Koreagate, BETA-GATE: what next? I just want a little equal time. Put something in there about GTM. Come on, give us a break we're giving you a break, by buying a subscription. And stop making snide comments about GTM ... Wouldn't it be just as easy to print something positive and encouraging than put-downs? ... So come on and get your shit together and help rather than hurt the GTM. -- D.H., Atlantic City, N.J.

[I look forward to receiving your tips which I can print for the benefit of other GTM owners. I'm sure if there were no other VTR, we would all think the GTM was the greatest thing since BankAmericard. But as things stand, I feel an obligation to caution newcomers against any format (V-Cord, Cartrivision, GTM) that has a very good chance of being obsolete in the near future. I do expect to have articles from time to time for GTM folks, although my main hope on this so far was a gentleman who has recently switched over by buying a Betamax as a second machine.]

"You have the most fantastic newsletter I have ever seen. Please send me your back issues of #7,8,9,10. ... How can I get copies of issues 1,2,3,4,5,6? Please answer. -- W.S., Cerritos, California

[The first six issues of TVN are permanently out-of-print. I am now compiling a reprint of material from all of them in one volume. This reprint will run 70-80 pages and will be advertised at \$5.00 next issue. However, it should be ready for mailing well before then, for those who want to order one in the absence of more details now.]

"I have found the JVC 2-hour tapes are the same as RCA, Magnavox, or Panasonic tapes. Running time is 124-129 minutes, most 125-127. I always buy JVC tapes for my RCA machine as they run from \$5-\$8 per tape cheaper. Looking at the 4-hour mode, it is worthwhile, but there is a quality difference from the 2-hour mode. I see the advantage as ... cutting your costs in half for taping. On one 4-hour tape you can put eleven half hour shows, or five one hour shows. I prefer all movies and most other shows on the 2-hour better quality mode. I only tape 4-hour mode for some TV shows such as comedies with many episodes available. ... I was pleased to find out one can dub from Beta to VHS and vice versa with good results. Does anyone know if any problems develop when taping on one VHS model for playback on a different model? -- Randolph M. Poling, Brunswick, Ohio.

[Randy will soon be opening a comic book and movie collectors' store "The Cleveland Comic Book Company".]



CAUTION ABOUT USING OLD K-60 TAPES ON THE NEW MACHINES -- Regardless of what you have heard or read, there is a difference between some K-60 and L-500 tapes. New tapes now are identical, but the early c. 1976 series K-60 tapes [The ones without the little white line near the bottom of the spine on the box. --ED] do not have the same backing as L-500 tapes (you can see the difference too!), and the oxide will gum up the heads if you use these much in the slower X2 speed especially, for which they were not designed to be used. ... use new tapes for duping --especially avoid using old K-60 tapes in the X2 speed.

[The above advice is from the first issue of the V.E.T. Newsletter, a one-pager, not so unlike the first issue of this rag. Those of you in the East Texas and adjacent area who would like to contact some kindred spirits and perhaps participate in an occasional "mini-con" should contact: Raymond Keese, 1207 Nancy Circle, Longview TX 75601. A self addressed stamped envelope would probably net you a response.]



Dear Jim,



"Really love the newsletter, but suggest the title will not get mass support, even tho it merely means video lover. Just plain Video Newsletter may be sufficient."

-- S.P., St. Louis, Missouri

[Have been trying to decide whether I agree with you, since even before I got your letter Steve. Back when I typed up issue #1, I chose this name over such things as "Video World", and who knows what all. I then thought I'd change it to "Video Review" before someone else snapped up that name. Later, I decided to definitely shorten it to just "The Videophile", because I thought the connotation of "newsletter" was somewhat limiting, especially to those who were trying to decide whether or not to send me money. The question may now rest on whether or not I decide to seek a mass audience via newsstand sales, etc., or just stick with you guys.]

"Received the newsletter and am quite impressed. ... You almost have me convinced that I can't live without 2 VCRs -- and only 6 months ago, I was managing without any." -- K.S., Torrance, California

[Look for the "Addendum" to my Hooking Up article elsewhere in this issue.]

"Sure appreciate the use of the mailing envelope and first class mail. The postal system is a disaster here and it makes a big difference in getting the book here quickly and in one piece." -- J.H., Ottawa, Ontario CANADA

[Thanks for the encouragement Jay. First Class postage is a luxury that TWN's poor little budget may have to forego one of these days. Incidentally, there are now 3 or 4 dozen of you among us up there above the border. One who continues to send me piles of info is Doug Orlowski, 135 Blanchard Street, Thunder Bay P, Ontario P7A 7J6. He is attempting to compile info on TV in Canada and would appreciate the rest of you getting in touch with him.]

It's Q and A time again! The answer to John DiLoreto's question in #12 may be found within Joe Mazzini's pages in the back of this issue. Thanks also are due to the other two of you who wrote in about this "flagging" problem.

Chris Riesbeck of New Haven, CT has two questions: Does someone have a solution to the RCA Selectavision drop-out problem? "I get a lot of channels in better than fringe but less than cable quality, and the blackouts can get really fierce sometimes." ... "Issue 12 seemed heavy in pats on the backs -- aren't there any crooks to watch for?"

[Is there a VHS technician among the readership that can furnish instructions on defeating this circuitry, similar to those herein for Betamax owners by Mr. Comet? // As to the second question, I defer to the Security Office of the MPAA. Seriously, I would welcome a guest article from these gentlemen. Mr. Bouras? // Also, seriously, I have gotten a couple of calls from you indicating that you may have been ripped off via a bad check or otherwise by someone contacted through these pages. My ability to help you directly with these matters is very limited. Be sure you know who you are dealing with. Call and size up folks in advance, and to those of you who may be guilty of such: Please! 99% of us are the finest bunch of people you would ever want to meet. Don't mess up a good thing for those of us who are interested only in pursuing a decent and enjoyable hobby. I should also add that if you insist on dealing with pirates, and under-the-counter video tape "clubs", you shouldn't be surprised at who may come knocking on your door, someday. It's not worth it gang. Stay away from the bootleggers.]

I have gotten what is essentially the same question, in four different missives. Something like this:

Is there any way that you can transfer and/or convert video tapes from a European system to an American System? We also need to know if the VTR tuner can be modified to be switchable between different systems. If so, how, where, and how much \$? The answer to this sure would help to facilitate trading on an international basis.

Richard Beadman of Hearst, Ontario asks: "The problem is recording from Channel 3 while using a timer, or while watching another channel. When recording with the timer, I set the RF switch to channel 4, which is an inactive channel in my area, and set everything else as suggested in the operation manual, but all that comes through on the screen or the tape is snow. This only happens when I try to record programs from Channel 3."

Ray Wencil of Chicago asks: Since we all buy video tapes by the dozen and even hundreds, isn't it about time that we had some scientific proof that one cassette is better than the other merely because it costs more. Anyone know?

[Ray, you will find some remarks scattered through this issue re: Sony, Scotch and JVC tape. I agree though, who knows enough about the chemical makeup of these tapes to give us the final word on the subject? Help!]

Several of you have asked: "Are the Betamax SL-8200 and the Zenith Betamax. in fact, identical?" I now have it on what I consider to be the very best authority that they are, except of course for the cabinetry. There are some differences in the layout of the systems control board between earlier and later units, but this does not reflect any differences in design or quality between the units manufactured for sale to Sony of America as opposed to those manufactured for Zenith. The fellows on the assembly line probably don't know which is which.



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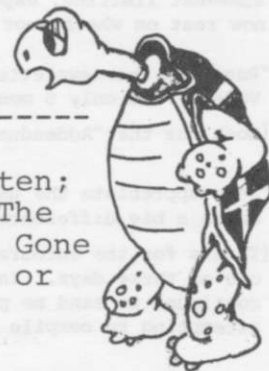
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NEW HOPE, VIRGINIA 24469

WANTED on BETAMAX X-1 or X-2: Any Beatles (together or solo) performances and/or films. Will trade or buy. Write or call:

Ron Cuoco
148 Summer St.
Orange, NJ 07050 (201-673-6583)

Have Beta unit. Want TV episodes of Twilight Zone, Amos and Andy, Night Stalker, When Things Were Rotten; Movies: Pink Panther, Return of the Pink Panther, The Pink Panther Strikes Again, any Mel Brooks movies, Gone With The Wind, Roots, and The Godfather. Will buy or trade. Send list.

Steve Haley, 3913 Potomac Court, Charlotte, NC 28211



RCA SELECTAVISION
TAPES TO TRADE WITH OTHER RCA OWNERS. SOME MOVIES, SOME TV SHOWS. WRITE:
LARRY MONACHELLI
87-16 WINCHESTER BLVD., APT. 3E, QUEENS VILLAGE, N.Y. 11427

Are there any fans of the Muppet show out there? Before I finally got my BETAMAX, the whole 1976-77 season had slipped by. It seems to me that some of last year's shows have never been equalled (even though the opening theme music was the worst quality sound dubbing in network TV.)

If you have copies of the early Muppet shows, even just to loan, please let me hear from you. I'll return your copy plus a fresh sealed tape. If anyone can add names to this first year Muppet show guest list, I'll return your postage. Phyllis Diller, Paul Williams, Sandy Duncan, Vincent Price, How about that show with Avery Schreiber! And my favorite, the show where Rita Moreno did "Sunny" featuring Animal on drums! A gem.
BETAMAX X-1 or X-2

Jerry Mass 1123 W. 4 1/2 Street, Davenport, IOWA 52802

WANTED
To trade Adult movies. Also, looking for a good copy of "BEST OF MIDNIGHT BLUE" parts 1 and 2. I will transfer your SUPER 8mm film on to any 1/2" format. For more info, write or call:

LONNIE FISHER
7016 New Horizon, Enon, Ohio 45323 Ph. (513) 864-1522

Keep up the good work Mr. Lowe, your TVN is great. Would like to see a monthly copy. [Thanks Lonnie! I appreciate paid encouragement. -- J.L.]

J. Lowe (Editor) still seeking "Walkabout" and "Devil Girl From Mars"! Help the poor guy.



I have a BETAMAX-2. Main interest is
Woody Allen and Bing Crosby. All lists welcomed.

Joe Onorato 46 So. Main Street Northfield VT 05663 (802) 485-9732

Horror Film Fans!

Let's exchange library and want lists. I have a Zenith Betatape recorder
and have 8 cable channels plus access to HBO. Especially want HAMMER films.
PAUL ALLEN, 4614-G Mercury Dr., Greensboro, NC 27410 919-855-6726

FOR SALE -- Concord Video camera, no viewfinder or zoom, but a good
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SONY U-MATIC portable player, Model VP 3000. New or used. Would also like
battery pack for same.

DOUG ROBERTSON P.O. Box 160567 Sacramento CA 95816 Phone: 916-452-6711

WANTED by owner of RCA SELECTAVISION

Complete copies of PBS broadcasts: I, CLAUDIUS, and especially:
SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII

JEAN BAKER 8699 CIRCLE DRIVE, BROOKFIELD, ILLINOIS 60513



WANTED: Columbus, Ohio "QUBE" subscriber to trade with fellow Buckeye on
a monthly basis. I can trade and dub on VHS or BETA, and currently
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SUPERCAR (1961)

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DIFFERENT (1972-Python)
POLYANNA (on VHS)
DAVY CROCKET AND THE RIVERBOAT
(on VHS) PIRATES
REEFER MADNESS
BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS

Also want to contact any Beta
or 3/4" collectors with access
to QUBE programming in Columbus,
Ohio.

Southern California
Fantastic Films Society
P.O. Box 480315
Los Angeles, CA 90048

WANTED: To trade or rent ADULT MOVIES in the VHS format. Please send list. Also seeking local videocassette recorder owners, VHS or BETA for tape copying and trading. Write to:
P. GORDON P.O. BOX 825 FRAMINGHAM MASS. 01701

WANTED on VHS: Telecast of 1977 Indy 500 Race and Time Trials
Raquel Welch Special (1974)
Send list to:

Bob Gibson
206 S. 6th St.
Sterling, Kansas 67579

WANTED:
Back issues of The Videophile's Newsletter, Issues #1-6
James Pollock P.O. Box 337 Gretna, Virginia 24557

* WANTED *
I am looking for Betamax owners who can tape wrestling shows in the following areas:

* San Francisco
* St. Louis

* BETAMAX OWNERS *
* Georgia
* Virginia, Carolinas area

* Any other persons in other areas of the U.S. who might be interested.

I am also looking for a Betamax owner in the San Francisco area who can tape Bay Bombers Roller Derby games for me as well as wrestling.
I prefer BETAMAX X-2 format, but will also accept BETAMAX X-1 format.

If you are interested in making a deal or some kind of arrangement, please contact me at the following address:

Tom Wersderfer
6201 Kingsessing Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19142



WANTED: Grade "B" westerns and old serials on BETAMAX tape.
I have many to trade plus others. Would like to exchange lists. TRADE ONLY. NO BUYING OR SELLING.
PAUL HORNSBY, 297 BASS RD., MACON, GA. 31210 (912-477-2887)

WANTED
Betamax (X-2) copies of: To Catch a Thief, North By Northwest
Where Eagles Dare, Shampoo, Sound of Music.

Harry Gifford P.O. Box 2707 Palm Beach, Fla 33480

WANTED IN BETA FORMAT: AMERICAN GRAFFITTI, DIRTY HARRY, THE SHOOTIST
A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, and FAREWELL MY LOVELY.

UN-CUT ONLY SUCH AS DONE ON A FILM CHAIN OR TAPED FROM HBO.
TERRY YAKISH, 712 PARK AVENUE, DES MOINES, IOWA 50315 PH. (515) 288-7508

I need the following black-and-white films in Beta-2 format (I have Betamax dubbing facilities): MASK OF DIMITRIOS, BACKGROUND TO DANGER, THREE STRANGERS, DEAD RECKONING, BEAT THE DEVIL, SIROCCO, PASSAGE TO MARSEILLE, ACROSS THE PACIFIC, all Peter Lorre MR. MOTO films, all Powell-Loy THIN MAN films, CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA, CAPTAIN BLOOD, and MR. WONG DETECTIVE.
I don't buy or sell, but I'll trade with anyone.

Mike Resnick, 11216 Gideon Lane, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242

I would like to trade swimming pool supplies for blank 2-hour Beta format tapes. Mr. Ray Cesmat, Leslie's Pool Mart, 7756 Balboa Boulevard, Van Nuys CA 91406. Call 1-800-423-3093 or in California call 1-213-988-1551



GREETINGS FROM LOUISIANA(Where good manners, beautiful women and
bad politics still prevail.)

Spring is here! Love thy neighbor! . . . provided she agrees, of course.
VHS people: Let not the Betamax voices of gloom, with which this
publication is heavily laden, cause despair in your hearts. The VHS
units weigh less, cost less, play longer, are more economical on tape,
have audio dub, built-in timer, remote pause control, and give fine
edits without cutting wires. Both VHS and Betamax produce super
quality . . . as does Quasar. So . . . let's quit hearing "knocks"
on one format by the owners of another. Peace!

Grab Bag, Edition No. 4, is small but tasty: (1) PANASONIC NV-9300
player/recorder/tuner, still frame, auto rewind, auto repeat when
desired, remote controller for ALL FUNCTIONS(record, play, fast forward,
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(This would be a good unit for a group to buy for their 3/4" U-matic
dubs, master or slave.) . . . \$600 off retail price (2) a couple of
new zoom lens for B/W camera for home video movies on your present
machine. WILL TRADE!! Especially for new tape.

Remember, I can DUB or EDIT from any format to any other, 3/4" or 1/2".
Now, some strongly suggested standards for all traders:(1) always send
new tape (2) make only a temporary label . . . each person has a
different library system (3)include the label card which comes with
every new tape (4) insure your package.

See you next time . . . Cecil C. Johnson . . . 1375 Tenth Street . . .
Slidell, Louisiana 70458 . . . (504)-643-6376.

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"	Jun. 5, 1956
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"	Feb. 4, 1956
"	Feb. 11, 1956
"	Feb. 18, 1956
"	Mar. 17, 1956
ABC Frank Sinatra Show;	Mar. 26, 1960

ALL local TV newsreel, interview, or other
ELVIS coverage, including local specials
following his death.

WILL TRADE: Steve Allen, Ed Sullivan,
Dorsey Show (Mar. 24, 1956) appearances;
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I need the following in Beta X-2:

ACROSS THE PACIFIC
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY
DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE
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THE HILL
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LILI
MASK OF DIMITRIOS
MURDER BY DEATH
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1776
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TRUE GRIT
ZULU

I will trade one-for-one for any of the
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with any Videophile. DIRECT TRADE ONLY
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"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE", 1977

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WANTED

WANTED

WANTED

I am trying to begin a Videotape Production Company in the North New Jersey area.

I have a number of ideas for movies, comedies and various other productions and plan to air them on Cable TV stations.

I need other creative people in the area who wish to work in specific roles: Actors, stage crew, recording, cameramen, editing, animation, scripts, and other aspects of production and post-production.

Anybody that wishes to submit ideas, scripts, screenplays or other written material would be appreciated.

A hint for those wishing to send written material--

make a xerox copy of your material, put it in an envelope, address it to yourself and mail it.
When you receive it, DON'T OPEN IT, the canceled postmark is your protection.

I also need sources for U-Matic to VHS and Betamax dubbing.

JOHN CONTE
52 NEPTUNE AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07305

WANTED in 3/4 U-Matic

War of the Worlds
The Day The Earth Stood Still
The Day The Earth Caught Fire
Flash Gordon (1936)
Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars (1938)
The Producers
Fantasia
Geldfinger
Thunderball
Big Bad Mama
Jason and the Argonauts
Everything You Always Wanted To
Know About Sex
Hearts of the West
The Cage (Star Trek pilot)
Superman and the Mole Men
It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World
M*A*S*H (movie)

from TV

Kolchak: The Night Stalker
Car 54, Where Are You?
Debie Gillis
Soap
Marty Feldman's Comedy Machine
early Laugh-IN --original cast
Ali vs. Foreman
Ali vs. Frazier (1st & 2nd)
Championship Wrestling Matches
The Fantastic Journey (pilot)
Bilke
Combat

Have To Trade

Comedy of Terrors
The Thing
The Night Stalker (movie)
This Island Earth
When Worlds Collide
Earth vs. the Flying Saucers
Forbidden Planet
Buck Rogers (feature version)
King Kong (1933)
The Hobbit
The Scarface Mob
The Wizard of Oz
The Mark of Zorro

Ellery Queen (episode)
Tonight Show (15th anniv.)
Quark (pilot episode)
The Fantastic Journey
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Poll winners play)

Also I wish to correspond with
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SCORPIO INTERNATIONAL IS HAPPY TO SAY THAT WE ARE A PART OF TVN THIS ISSUE! HAVE BEEN IN THE VIDEO AREA 8 MONTHS & EXPANDING ALL THE TIME! WE HOPE TO GET TO KNOW MANY OF YOU ACROSS THE USA & EUROPE. ALONG THE WAY MAYBE WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER OUT WITH OUR NEEDS AND WANTS IN THE CINEMA FIELD. WE ALSO HOPE YOU WILL TAKE A LOOK AT A COUPLE OF OUR OUTSTANDING GUSDORF VTR UNITS. WE THINK THEY ARE UNMATCHED IN THE MARKET RIGHT NOW FOR QUALITY AND DESIGN. WE OFFER FAST SERVICE ON THESE ITEMS TOO--WE CARE ABOUT YOUR SATISFACTION!

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Satyricon, Andy Warhol War, Clockwork Orange, Getting Straight, Magic Sweetheart, Steam Bath, Midnight Cowboy, ADULT FEATURES!!! HAVE FILMS IN MY COLLECTION

TO TRADE! WRITE FOR MORE INFO ON TRADES, ETC. WOULD LIKE ANY 60's ROCK SHOWS, OR RELATED MOTION PIX.

.....
Have you caught some of the premiere shows Paramount Television has been doing? They are super. "Disco Fever" was first in a schedule of about six such shows. PRIME TIME: has some great plans in the works too for the nations independents!

Let's hear from some of you other West Coasters especially in L.A./Southern Cal. areas.....

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*
*
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David Burris-Exec. Prod.
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MODEL 2410

VTR/TV/AUDIO

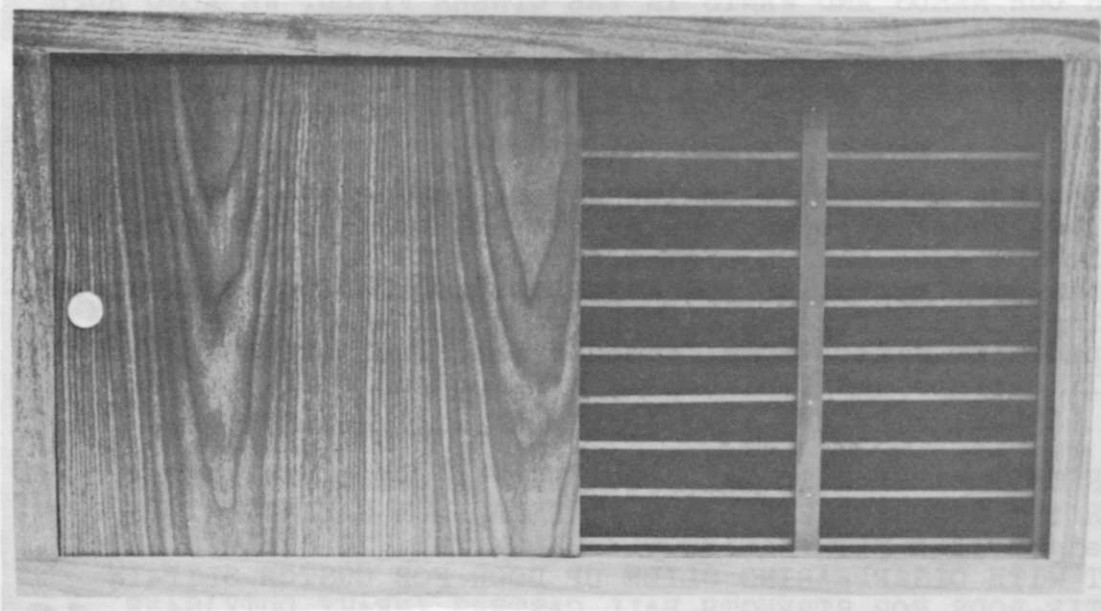
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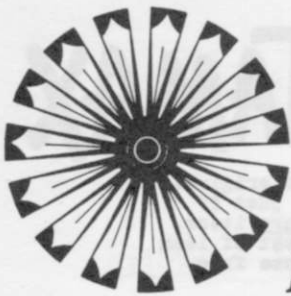
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BETA 2 HOUR TAPE L-500.....\$ 14.50
(by Zenith)

VHS TAPE 4 HOUR.....\$ 19.95
(RCA TAPE)

VHS TAPE 2 HOUR.....\$ 14.95
(RCA TAPE)

ZENITH 19" COLOR TV-MODEL J-1928.....\$388.00

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TOSHIBA 19" COLOR TV MODEL C-961.....\$329.95

TOSHIBA 19" COLOR TV (REMOTE) MODEL C-969.....\$399.95

JVC 19" COLOR TV WOOD CABINET WARRANTY 2 YEARS ON
PIC. TUBE, PARTS, AND SERVICE.....\$369.95

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FREE BONUS Each tape also contains rare animated color intermission trailers from the 50's... several different "start sigs"... and the famous FILMEX (L.A. Film Festival) trailer with footage from WAR OF THE WORLDS! Order now!!

VIDEO LOGS

...If you've ever tried writing the entire contents of a video tape on the tape box, you know how messy and unorganized it can get...especially when you record 5 or 6 programs in a row.

...VIDEO LOGS gives you a central reference source for all your video recordings.

...It is the same system used by broadcast traffic and tape library departments for logging the contents of their thousands of tapes.

Please send _____ set(s) of VIDEO LOGS
@ \$3.95 each, which includes postage to:

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address _____

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VIDEO LOGS
24049 Lyman Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44122

Each log is printed on card stock and punched for a three ring notebook.

One set of VIDEO LOGS contains 25 logs which is enough for 25 video tapes and lists up to 12 programs for each tape. It contains room for cut/counter number, program/record date and program length.

JOE MAZZINI'S

U-MATIC & BETA NOTES

It's technical question/answer time here at the U-Matic/Beta department of TVN. This will be an irregular feature. If you have some problems with your machines that you think I might be able to help you with, just drop a line to me. My address, as usual, appears at the end of this article.

I see that John Diloreto asked in the last TVN why when taping from machine to machine he sometimes gets the shakes in the upper six inches or so of the picture tube. To make this matter even more frustrating he only notices the problem on his 25" set (the 12" portable is immune) and it only occurs when he is making a dub. Off air recordings are fine.

Well, John, your problem deals with something called AFC time constant. Mother Sony has released a nifty little sheet called PETI-5 25¢ from

SONY TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS

47-47 VAN DAM ST.,

LONG ISLAND CITY, NY 11101

The problem is particularly apprent on older sets. However, I noticed it when I played back some 3/4" to Beta dubs on my mother's new Zenith 25". It's called "flagging" and can be best dealt with by a serviceman. If you know nothing of the electronic marvel you own, just take this article to a repairman. This minor surgery is essential if you are ever to have any peace. Apparently the information coming into the larger (or older) receivers is too broad to be properly locked into horizontal sync. I would guess that the cost of modification will run about 50¢ in parts and \$20 in labor.

Below is a quote directly from Sony's discussion of the subject:

HORIZONTAL AFC MODIFICATIONS

Playback a pre-recorded tape and adjust horizontal hold on the receiver for best sync stability. If noticeable hooking appears at the top of the picture proceed as follows.

Obtain the schematic diagram for the receiver and locate the network that couples the horizontal sync discriminator to the horizontal oscillator (or control tube). [Figures of various circuits follow this article.]

Compare the circuit of the receiver with those shown. If the circuits are similar, perform the indicated changes. If the form of the circuit is similar to one of those shown, but component values are different, follow the trial-and-error procedure. In general, the components that must be altered

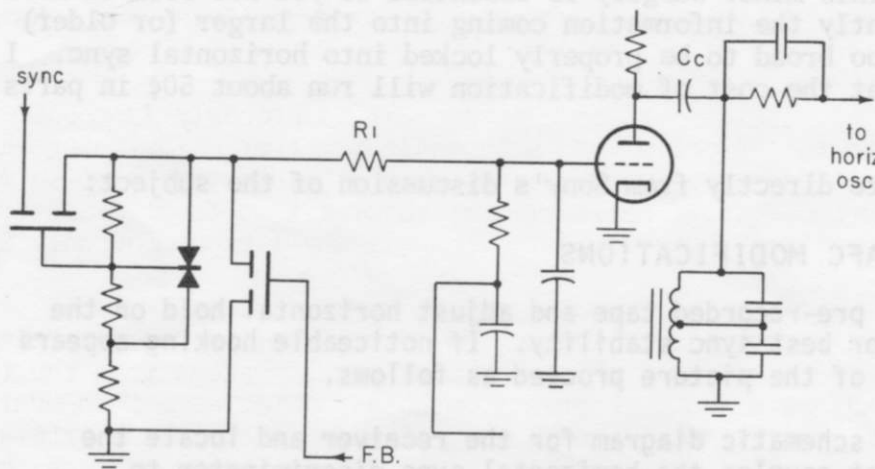
are designated C1, R1, C2 and R2. Make the changes indicated below, but change one component at a time. Check playback after each value change. Several values may have to be tried before good sync stability is achieved. If you go too far in the direction indicated, the horizontal AFC system will show evidence of hunting. This appears as a sine-wave like ripple in vertical lines in the picture. The displacement is greater near the top of the picture.

1. Decrease C1 by a factor of 2 to 3.
2. Increase the value of R2 by a factor of 2 to 4.
3. Decrease the value of R1 by a factor of 2 to 7.
4. Reduce the value of C2 by a factor of 1 to 3.

Additional circuit modifications are required in some receivers. In the Zenith receiver, for example, the 330 pF capacitor between the plate of the control tube and the grid of the oscillator should be increased to 0.01 μ F.

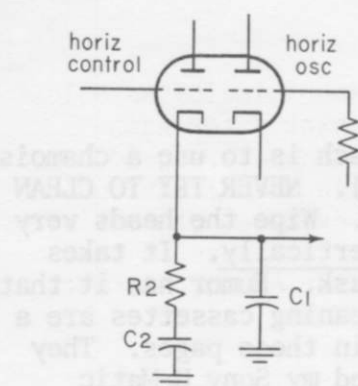
In some cases a damping resistor (27-50 K-ohm) must be added in parallel with the sine-wave stabilization coil. Remember to adjust the horizontal hold for best sync after each component change is tried.

Check horizontal AFC performance using an off-the-air TV signal after modifications have been made.



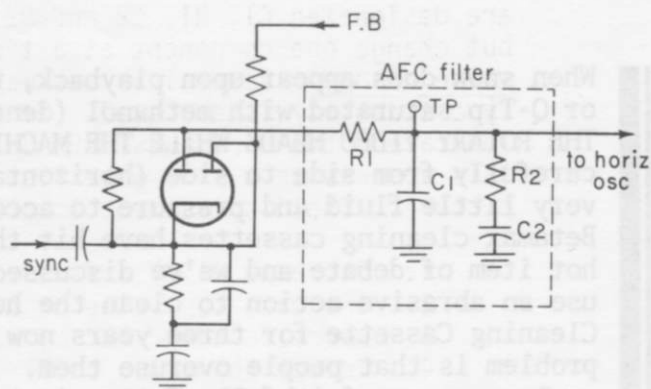
	original values	modified values
R1	1 Meg Ω	500 k Ω
Cc	330 pf	add .01 μ f in parallel

AFC changes in the Zenith 14N27 chassis



	original values	modified values
R2	3.9 k Ω	27 k Ω
C1	0.022 μ f	0.0022 μ f
C2	0.47 μ f	0.47 μ f

AFC modifications in RCA Synchroguide-type circuits



	original values	modified values
R1	1.2 Meg Ω	470 k Ω
R2	68 k Ω	68 k Ω
C1	5000 pF	3000 pF
C2	0.12 μ f	0.03 μ f

AFC modification to the GE "DA" chassis

I discussed these instructions some time ago in a TVN that is now out of print and the people who attempted the procedure had positive results. I do suggest, however, that before you start tampering (or take your set to a repairman) that you try the simple adjustment of your horizontal hold. I was able to control my "flagging" problem quite a bit on the 25" Zenith mentioned earlier by doing this. I did notice, however, that whenever a regular TV program was run through the set that I had to readjust the control and it was a hassle because it is located in the back of the set. Sony, of course, eliminates all of this by not even giving you a horizontal hold control, and one is not needed.

John, your 12" portable works fine because it is probably Japanese. I have yet to run into this problem with a Japanese receiver. The thing that is so amazing about Sony receivers in particular is that they have so many automatic functions (15, I believe) that cover all sorts of gross errors put out by your video tape recorder. This is why I recommend only Sony TV sets.

Another frequently asked question is "How often am I supposed to clean the heads of my Betamax or VHS?" This question usually stems from the toilet training you had as a audio recording enthusiast. You were told over and over again that cleanliness is next to godliness in audio cassette and U-Matic VTR equipment. This rule still applies to those machines, but best results are obtained if you don't do anything to your 1/2" cassette stuff (other than the recommended muting defeat modification mentioned in the last TVN).

Sony and repairmen have recommended to me that you not clean the heads until an ungodly amount of snow and video noise appears on your TV. This usually happens all at once and after about a year of heavy use. I know people who have never cleaned the heads of their SL-7200's and they have had them for over a year!

When snow does appear upon playback, the best approach is to use a chamois or Q-Tip saturated with methanol (denatured alcohol). NEVER TRY TO CLEAN THE ROTARY VIDEO HEADS WHILE THE MACHINE IS RUNNING. Wipe the heads very carefully from side to side (horizontally), never vertically. It takes very little fluid and pressure to accomplish this task. Rumor has it that Betamax cleaning cassettes have hit the market. Cleaning cassettes are a hot item of debate and we've discussed them before in these pages. They use an abrasive action to clean the heads. I've used my Sony U-Matic Cleaning Cassette for three years now perhaps four times. The biggest problem is that people overuse them. However, moderation is the key, and as long as you faithfully follow instructions (use only when snow appears on the playback of a tape) and only for the counter time indicated (usually 10 digits) you can't go wrong. Plus, you don't have to take the top off your machine.

On Page 4-1 of the Sony SL-8200 service manual, Sony states that cleaning of the rotary drum assembly (video heads), audio head/control head, pinch roller, and tape guides should be done periodically every 500 hours. Unlike the U-Matic, which requires constant cleaning of the pinch roller and guides, I think you would be best to do nothing about cleaning except on a yearly basis. They further state that at 1000 hours you should again clean the heads and possibly replace them. I have yet, however, to see a set of worn out video heads on a Betamax. The only exception to this is when some poor guy leaves his pause on too long and the heads are brushing against the tape for literally hours on end. This problem has been solved in the 8200 series by having the pause automatically shut itself off after a few minutes of being left on. At 1000 hours the audio/control head assembly should again be cleaned as should the pinch roller and tape guides. They recommend that in addition you should clean and lube the capstan bearing assembly (the shaft that contacts the pinch roller) and replace the capstan belt (a minor expense). By now your machine is over two years old.

The electronics should either fail when the machine is new or hardly at all. I recommend, then, that you make it an annual event to have your local serviceman clean and lube the machine as necessary. Why torture yourself with an operation that takes a qualified person very little time and one that will cost you probably no more than \$25?

With the U-Matic, though, we have a different story. The take-up assembly on the reel table must be thoroughly cleaned every 100 hours or so. If you don't clean the belts carefully (and that means not stretching them while you are removing deposits) you will have tracking problems. I make it a practice to replace all the belts once a year.

The way you can tell if you need a good cleaning and/or new belts on your U-Matic is when you insert a tape, fast forward it toward the end, and notice that in "play" no picture comes up, or one that has serious tracking problems. The sound is often garbled. It always occurs at the end of the tape and often won't if the tape has been run from the beginning without interruption. Here you have to invest in a service manual (usually \$15 from your manufacturer) and follow carefully disassembly instructions.

Some time ago I mentioned a problem common to JVC equipment: after a few hours of operating, tracking loss became apparent. This is due to a pinch roller that loses its shape. The only solution here is to replace it with another and/or keep it spotlessly clean. Drive belts must be kept spotless as should all rubber or contact surfaces. Lubrication is important, but don't over-lube. It can cause far worse problems.

Why do U-Matic machines acquire clogged heads so easily? I think this has to do with the precision of tape manufacture. Many of us purchase used tape which, to be truthful, has been used. The oxide comes away from the binder and attaches itself to some surface, usually the heads and pinch roller. U-Matic tape has been improving dramatically over the past few years, but you are dealing with a tape that has considerably more surface area and one that passes the heads at a faster rate (double or even four times). The Beta tape is so precision manufactured and has such high quality control and uses the latest binder/oxide technology, that this isn't much of a problem.

For cleaning surfaces and heads I recommend GC Spray Head Cleaner. I like the idea of a spray but I must warn you never to spray it directly onto the video heads. They are fragile creatures and with age become susceptible to cracking if attacked by something cold and wet. Spray the cleaner on a Q-Tip and go from there. Be absolutely sure that whatever rubber surface you are cleaning gets cleaned so thoroughly that no black residue remains on the Q-Tip. With U-Matic machines this means using many Q-Tips and patience.

The argument rages that Sony, Zenith and Toshiba tape is superior to Scotch. At this point I have to agree, but like to hear comments from others out there who feel differently. I've noticed a higher dropout rate on Scotch Beta tape. (Dropouts are those pesky little white flashes that move horizontally across your screen.) There also appears to be more "grain" in the Scotch tape. A technician friend swears it is because Scotch does not use Chromium Dioxide in their tape. This I cannot verify, but I do agree that their 3/4" tape is horrendous for grain. Some time back, a friend at DuPont sold me on Chromium Dioxide and I have used it ever since. Sony uses it and supplies the tape for Toshiba and Zenith. Rumor has it, though, that Zenith is going to be putting Scotch tape into their cassettes, so be careful. The 50¢ savings between Sony and Scotch-type Beta tape just can't be justified at this point. I have yet to run across a Zenith, Toshiba or Sony Beta tape that is anything but perfect.

U-Matic tapes, and to a lesser degree--Beta tapes, are very susceptible to humidity and temperature extremes. Nothing makes tape happier than an environment that is 65-70°F and 50% Relative Humidity.

A problem that has been plaguing me for some time (and still does not have a solution) is what to do when dubbing from one machine to another causes a 60Hz "buzz" on the audio track. The "white" level is so high that the video is spilling over into the audio and it is very annoying on bright scenes. Marc Wielage, being the simple-solution-to-complex-problem thinker he is suggested that I run video direct, but route the audio through my hi-fi receiver. He thought this would isolate the problem. Well, even without audio, naturally, the video still spilled into the sound. Another possible solution is to hook a 10-15 K-ohm pot (volume control) between the output of the master and the input of the slave. I hope someone out there tries this and lets me

know how it works. I'm afraid, though, of interfering with the broad-band signal coming out of one machine. The problem only occurs when I try to transfer film-chain 3/4" material to Beta. It never occurs when I run Beta to U-Matic or U-Matic off-the air into the Beta. It's frustrating and I will personally provide a one-year subscription to TVN to anyone who comes up with a solution. My serviceman friend, Ben Saia, says that the automatic video control in my Beta just can't handle anything above 1.4 volts. What we need to do, then, is cut down the voltage during those "bright" scenes without destroying the darker ones. Any ideas?

The importance of using the proper wire in connecting cables for video tape recording really comes home when you switch from audio to video use. Quite often a cable that works fine for running the line in and out of your receiver to your audio recorder will produce terrible herringbone-like interference with video connections.

If you can afford it, have a professional make up your connecting cables. If you're poor, like me, then write

BELDEN CORPORATION

P.O. Box 1331,

RICHMOND, IN 47374 and ask them for their

Catalog No. 876. It's an incredible document running 100 pages with a list price of \$2 on the cover, but I'm sure you can get it free if you express a serious interest in their product. They list several good 75 ohm cable stock for camera and interconnecting cable in lengths as short as 50 feet (Cable #9259) on P. 54.

They have a tremendous variety of 300 ohm and 75 ohm antenna lead-in wire. If you live in a fringe area like I do, their 9085p is great stuff. However, since it carries the signal so well, you must use it where interference is not a problem. They make the same wire with a ground shield called 9090pp that gives you the same signal combined with protection against electrical interference from cars or motors. If you don't need to bring UHF into your house, you can choose from many more types.

There are still some of you out there who haven't heard of

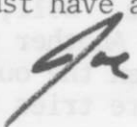
FILM COLLECTORS WORLD

1212 SECOND AVE.,

RAPIDS CITY, IL 61278

This is a fine publication that is bi-monthly and costs only \$7.00 for 24 issues or \$4.00 for 12. They've given us some good plugs in the past and are always filled with 16mm film information. Their video articles appear infrequently but are always interesting to read.

Well, as the sun sets here in the west (or is it east) I leave you. Surely someone out there must have a copy of MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN. If you do please contact me.


Joe Mazzini

Box 179, Arbuckle, CA 95912



Famous Brand* Beta Format **NEW L-500** Blank Video Tape

* Name on request

Introductory Price: **\$11.95** ➔ each
PLUS 25¢ SHIPPING ➔ each

IN MINIMUM LOTS OF TEN PIECES

OR **\$122 TOTAL** FOR TEN PIECES

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'MR. CASSETTE VIDEO' BRAND
\$18.75 ea. plus 50¢ shp.

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BANK CHECK, MONEY ORDER, OR CERTIFIED CHECK
FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY! (Company or personal
checks must clear bank before we will deliver.)

SEND ALL ORDERS TO:

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Video Tape Distributors
Attn: George Saddler
24-64 Crescent St.
Suite #2
Astoria, NY 11102

WAREHOUSE AND SHIPPING POINT:

S. & A.
Video Tape Distributors
Attn: Sy Altman
28-14 Steinway St.
Astoria, NY 11103
212-545-8888

ALL NEW AD RATES\$

Once again, the ad rates must take a dramatic upward leap. (At least for those who want a lot of space ... actually, rates for Mini-Ads are being reduced, read on.) Let's face it, where else can you place an ad with the absolute assurance that a couple of thousand VTR owners and enthusiasts will eagerly read it. Two types of ads are available:

(1) Those printed from CAMERA READY COPY, and (2) MINI-ADS, which I prepare from your rough copy. "Camera Ready" means that I take whatever you send in and give it directly to the printer, without retyping, cleaning up, or anything. It is critical that these be prepared in dark black or red ink and, if they are typed, that the typewriter have a nice dark ribbon. If it doesn't, the reproduction will be very poor, I will be unhappy with the appearance of my magazine, and you will be disappointed with the appearance of your ad. It is also essential that you leave at least a $\frac{1}{2}$ " margin on all four sides of the page (a little more than that would be better). The rates for CAMERA READY COPY are as follows:

A full page (submit on $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11" paper) \$40
A half page (submit on half of such a page) ... \$22
A quarter page (you guessed it) \$12

These can contain artwork (make sure the lines are nice and dark) or black and white photographs. However, I must exact another \$2 from you for the photo, unless it is already screened and ready for printing without further preparation at this end. Do not send any ad copy that needs to be reduced. (I hope to offer reduction by next issue.)

MINI-ADS: I'm scrapping the former four lines for \$2.25 rate, and replacing it with the easier to figure and consequently cheaper rate of 25 words for \$1.00. From 26-50 words is \$2, 51-75 words for \$3, and so on. Such things as Zip codes and abbreviations count as words. How can I double the full page rates and reduce these? Well ... I'm going to literally "reduce" the Mini-Ads (don't worry, they'll be readable). See, I don't want to soak you just because you'd like to place an ad, just if you demand lots of space.

NO ads for copyrighted material FOR SALE will be accepted except from those who have secured the rights to sale. Limit of 2 full pages to an advertiser.

Deadline

Ads and contributions for Issue #14 must reach me by JUNE 14 !!
Am expecting to get that issue out a little early, with full color cover, etc. Circulation should easily top 1700-1800 or so.

The Videophile's Newsletter
"Cash-In" Products Division
2014 S. Magnolia Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

I enclose \$_____. Please send me the following, for which I feel very confident that my money will have been well spent:

_____ Tee-Shirt(s) : color _____ Size: S M L XL at \$6 = \$ _____

_____ Cassette Card Pads at two pads for \$2 = _____

Back Issues 7 8 9 10 11 12 at \$2 each = _____

subtotal = _____

Fla. residents add 4% sales tax
on orders for shirts and pads

All prices include postage & handling TOTAL = \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

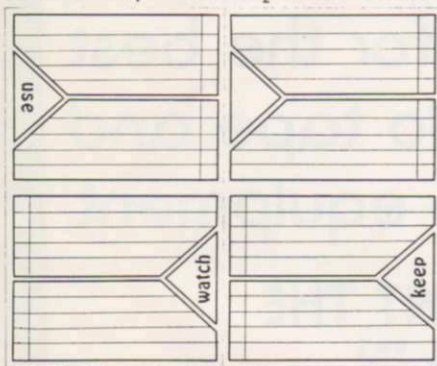
★ TVN: "Cash-In" Products Division ★

The response to my offer of Tee-shirts and cassette cards is now in, and in spite of that, I am going to continue offering them to you. Those of you who have one of these wonderful shirts may want to have it framed. It is destined to be a rare collector's item. Anyway, take a look at the happy models at right and imagine how pleased you would be with yourself if you had one of these snappy babies (tee-shirts) for your very own. They come in your choice of color and men's sizes S to XL, for the bargain price of \$6.00, which includes postage and handling. They are custom screened shirts that are available only from The Videophile's Newsletter. They come in beige or light blue, the letters are open, shaded in black, and our little porker is in "piggie" pink, as you would naturally demand. Buy one!



COLLECTORS' INDEX CARDS...

In a more practical vein, we present The Videophile's video cassette index cards. If you're like me, you never seem to have a 3x5 card or appropriate slip of paper at hand to write down titles on, and slip into the box.



The collector's cassette cards (shown here in both front and back views, reduced) measure 6" x 3 and 3/4", and are custom designed to fit into Beta format cassette boxes. They are deliberately designed without column headings, so that you can adapt them to your own purposes, whether for temporarily or permanently indicating the contents of each cassette. When inserted in the box, the words "Watch", "Keep", "Use" or another of your choice will be visible through the notch in the box. Best of all, these stiff cards come to you in pads of 50. Just peel one off when you need it, ... the rest of the pad remains obediently available right next to your machine. The price? A true giveaway at a buck a pad, with a 2 pad minimum order. Want some testimonials? Read:

"Thanks for the pads. Fantastic design job!" -- J.G., of Miss.

"Got my tape index cards a couple weeks ago. Every tape has a card in it now. They're just great." -- M.R., of Nebraska

BACK ISSUES...

Back issues #7-12 are the only ones still in print. They are in short supply. Issues 7 and 8 in particular are scarce, and this will probably be the last time that they will be offered.

Issue 7: Contains the response to my special subpoena issue, more about collecting commercials, a write up on the KC-90 tape, and has an autographed honest-to-goodness celebrity photo cover, especially for TVN, in addition to the usual news, views, etc. Last chance on this one!

Issue 8: Contains invaluable Betamax (K-60/SL-7200) counter index chart (time used/time remaining), a transcript of CBS News' report on the Sony/Universal lawsuit, how to modify the Betamax SL-7200 for still-frame, tubers' tidbits, and more.

Issue 9: First issue in semi-professional format. Contains first installment of "Rambling Outtakes", review of Time-Life Betamax offerings, first annual roundup of prerecorded tape sources, etc. [Compleatists take note: This is a full size reprint of the original #9.]

Issue 10: How to build your own Projection TV set, Editor's Open Letters to Universal Studios and fandom at large re: right to tape off the air, Rambling Outtakes gets subpoenaed, Great! cartoon cover, letters, and the usual fascinatin' stuff.

Issue 11: First 40 page issue. Packed with info re: comparison of consumer 1/2" recorders, projection TV sets, excerpts from lawsuit depositions, Art Vuolo's first "Michigan Update", results of readers' poll, reviews of TV gift-type books, first Voice of Canada, lots more.

Issue 12: First slick cover issue. Includes reports on "QUBE" two-way cable system, Video in Australia, Rambling Marc at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, How to make the most of two recorders, Dealer's Doings, A bunch of letters, and ads ... also the usual typos, etc.

Of course, each of these issues also contains the many pages of information primarily directed at users of the 3/4" format prepared by my good friend Joe Mazzini, as well as many advertisements.

Use the order blank on the page facing this one for the Tee-shirts, cassette cards, and our dwindling supply of valuable back issues. Next issue I will announce a 70-80 page reprint (sort of) of TVN issues #1-6. Those of you who have faith and/or are impatient can send me \$5 now and you will probably have that volume in your mitts before it is announced in Issue #14. Unlike some, I do not choose to officially advertise a publication until it actually exists.

5036 Ullrich
A-V Parts



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