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**VIDEOPHILE**

Issue #28 [illegible]

**Test Reports on 4 recorders, 3 cameras, a “copyguard” stabilizer and more.**



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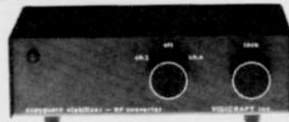
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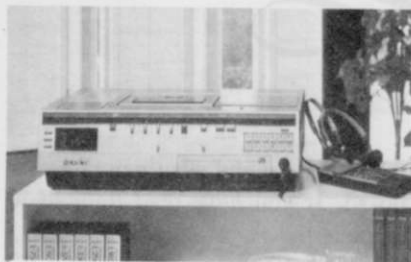
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There is an incessant influx of novelty in the world and yet we tolerate incredible dullness.

—H. D. Thoreau (1817-1861)



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# the VIDEOPHILE

THE VOICE OF VIDEO FANDOM

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# tv wiggles

The actor's strike may be the best thing that's ever happened to a new Fall season. If you're like me, you've taken advantage of this opportunity to tune in on what must surely be the finest new season that PBS has ever offered. *Cosmos*, *The Body In Question*, *From Jumpstreet*, *Matinee at the Bijou*, and *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (not to mention the repeat of *Connections*) are, to my way of thinking, a blockbuster lineup that should be able to do well against any competition. The actor's strike just makes it a little more likely that these fine shows will come to the attention of the average viewer. (Having just moved into a large old house, I've also been enjoying the *This Old House* series.) If you appreciate these offerings as much as I do, why not translate that feeling into a contribution to your local public TV station.

☆☆☆

As I write these words, our technical editor, Marc Wielage, is half a world away in Japan, attending the Consumer Electronics Show. How this came about, makes a long and interesting story. To make it short, I'll only say that the Japan Victor Company (JVC) was concerned enough about the rating we gave their blank tape (Issue #25) that they offered to send one of us to Japan to tour their tape plant, select a case at random and bring it back for evaluation. So, . . . we expect to revisit our assessment of JVC tape in our next issue. We'll also have a complete report on all the video goings on in Japan, and Hong Kong as well.

☆☆☆

On a serious note, it has come to our attention, from more than one source, that a gentleman who placed a rather innocuous little mini-ad in our April issue is, in fact, an undercover agent for the FBI. Now, although we have his name and address (even his *real* name), we do not intend to publish it. Blowing the cover of an FBI agent is the kind of trouble that I don't need.

The point in mentioning it at all is not to say "we know who you are" or to scare off our prospective advertisers, but rather to emphasize once again that any of you who are willing (if not eager) to deal in stolen property are making a terrible mistake. Please don't assume that you can casually duplicate and trade or sell illegally pirated tapes and expect to go along your carefree way forever.

This magazine, as well as *Film Collector's World*, *The Big Reel* and others, is being monitored by the FBI. We've told you that before. What we are now telling you is that at least one undercover agent is using these pages to solicit contacts from other video tape collectors. The fact that you might squirm out of trouble by mounting a defense based on "entrapment" would not make the entire experience any more comfortable or less expensive, I can assure you.

If you have not read our "what's legal and what's not" issue (#20), I suggest that you do so. If you *have* read it, read it again. . . and act accordingly, please.

☆☆☆

We at *The Videophile* like to think of ourselves as a sort of Consumer's Report of home video. Attempting to do this and at the same time keep our advertisers happy is not always a simple task. Having said that, I would like to make the following observations:

—We are *very* unhappy about the ads that Shelton Video (manufacturers of "The Editor") is running in several of the other video magazines, which quotes our technical editor in such a way as to imply that we recommend their product or otherwise find it to be fully satisfactory for its intended use. This is not the case, as a reading of our Product Review in issue #22 will confirm. I wouldn't be making such a big deal out of it except for the fact that Shelton Video assured us several months ago that they would revise their ad to meet our objections. Yet here I am looking at the November issue of *Video* magazine, and what do I find, right in front of my face, but the very same misleading advertisement.

—Many of you are interested in buying VCR accessory equipment of the type being offered by two of our long-time advertisers, Showtime Video Ventures and Vidicraft. You want to know which are the best and/or the "best buy." So do we. In issue #22 we reviewed Showtime's Copyguard stabilizer. We review Vidicraft's in this issue. We hope to have completed our tests of their image enhancers by next issue and will report the results to you straight from the shoulder, even though it could conceivably mean the loss of one or both of them as advertisers.

☆☆☆

Our very popular Issue #26 is close to being sold out. If you need a copy, don't wait any longer. Several other issues are beginning to approach "short supply" status. We sure can use the money, so if you've been meaning to complete your set, or purchase our limited edition 1979 Annual, now is the time to act. Speaking of the annual, we want to publically give Marc Wielage a big "thank you" for all the sweat and strain in preparing the index to our first 19 issues.

☆☆☆

It is with deep regret that we note the passing of Miss Lillian Randolph, who played Madam Queen on *The Amos 'n' Andy* Show. Miss Randolph was a very fine character actress who appeared in many feature films over the past 35 years or more. She was 65 years of age.



☆☆☆

Those of you interested in industrial level video accessories, like character generators, distribution amplifiers and triple racks of 5" monitors, at *relatively* low prices may want to check out flyer #980 S3 from The Denson Electronics Group, P.O. Box 85, Rockville, CT 06066. Tell 'em who told you about it.

☆☆☆

Some of you have inquired as to why the 3rd page of this magazine is shown as page "5". No, you're not missing any pages. It's the same old thing. . . postal regulations, or, at least, postal regulations as they are perceived by the local authorities whose understanding of such things is what we must abide by.

Several issues ago, we began sending our subscription copies with a wrap-around mailer (bound right to the magazine), rather than using an envelope. This saves us something like 9 cents a copy. So for 5,000-6,000 copies mailed to subscribers, the difference in our expenses is significant. We preferred the envelopes, but we would rather change than go into the red any further (or raise our cover price.) Also, the stuffing of envelopes usually delayed mailing by an extra day or three. Besides, how many other magazines come to you with *any* kind of protection.

Anyhow, the explanation is that we have to count the protective mailer as "pages" of the magazine. We haven't lost our minds (not with regard to this, that is) and you haven't lost any pages. If it changes back again in the future, it will be because we find that we can get away with doing it the right way (like some other

magazines we have observed, who are apparently in violation of the regulations). And so it goes.

Very special thanks are due this time to Issac George Prevette, way over in Sweden, who sent us the wonderful color picture that you see on the front cover. The illustration by Karin Lundqvist is from Mr. Prevette's own creation, the "Small Mighty Vikings" television program. We loved it, and trust that you will too.

Thanks also to Mike Russell, Earl Fleer, Robin Benson, Tom Garcia, Stan Sieger, J.P. Lawrence, Doug Orlowski, Tom Dunahoo, Paul Rayton, Stephen Gerardi, Kerry Decker, Michael Gross, Lee Skinner, Faith Bahr and especially Marty Greim whose letters I never manage to answer, but whose contributions are much enjoyed.

ALL THE BEST  
*Jim*

P.S.

Just as this very last page was about to go out the door to the printer, we got a call from our jet-lag weary Technical Editor, back from his trip to Japan and Hong Kong. We were pleased that all went well, even though it means that we will not be collecting on the \$100,000 insurance policy that Marc got at the airport. We're sure he would want us to say "Hello" to John Zimmerman and all the gang in Tokyo who were so gracious and accommodating to him. Look for much more on the oriental connection, next time.



WELL, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET MARRIED THIS SUNDAY  
BECAUSE CHANNEL "6" IS RUNNING "BEN HUR" UNCLUT  
AND I'VE GOT TO TAPE IT... NEXT SUNDAY IS OUT  
BECAUSE I'M TAPING "THE SOUND OF MUSIC"...  
TUESDAY IS OUT... OF COURSE THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT MONTH...

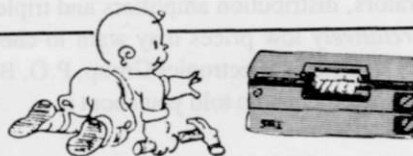


# For Beginners Only

In response to continuing demand, your humble editor has decided to revisit the single most discomforting question that regularly comes our way. Here goes:

**Q:** *I'm about ready to purchase a ½" tape video cassette recorder, but am confused by all the competing advertisements and sales pitches. As one who expects to have a serious interest in home video, should I buy a VHS or Beta format recorder?*

**A:** Times have changed a little since I last tackled this one in issue #17, but the answer is essentially still the same . . . it depends.



Each format has its avid supporters, as can readily be observed by reading a few back issues of this magazine. The Betamax came first and had the field pretty much to itself for about two years. Accordingly, the ½" VCR enthusiasts who first began organizing video fandom on a national basis through these pages were almost exclusively Beta format devotees. Sony and Co. is currently taking a beating at the hands of VHS, and ownership among "videophiles" may now be near the 40/60 point in favor of the latter.

So that all my cards are on the table, I think it only fair to disclose that I presently own three recorders: a Zenith JR-9000W (identical to the Sony SL-8200), Beta format: an RCA VCT 400, VHS format: and an RCA VDP 150, VHS format portable.

Why do I have these particular machines, and what is my opinion of them?

—The Zenith JR-9000W: My first machine (purchased in June 1976) was the original one-hour Sony SL-7200. When the newer model (SL-8200), which offered two hours on one cassette came along, I wanted it and was able to get a good price on the identical model under the Zenith name. This machine is highly regarded among Beta supporters, is considered to be rugged, reliable and a good buy if you can still find one. It permits recording and playback in both the X-1 and X-2 speeds and was at the head of the list in "Level Three" of our initial *Recommended Components* listing in Issue #26. The main drawbacks are the timer, which cannot be set to come on at intervals of less than 10 minutes, and the fact that the edits in the X-1 speed are not as good as in the X-2 speed. Of course, it is also lacking the more recently introduced features such as the programmable timer, still-frame and rapid picture searching capability. I'm quite happy with this VCR, but do expect to replace it with a programmable Betamax at some point.

—The RCA VCT 400: I got this machine in December, 1978, primarily as a means to achieve compatibility with those among you who were opting for the VHS format. I have used it nearly every day, because of the convenience of setting the timer to turn off and on at exact times and its ability to change channels while unattended. However, virtually all of the recordings I have made are for delayed viewing only, not for my

permanent collection, which is in Beta format. The main drawback of this machine, one which it shares with other VHS units, is the fact that whenever the tape is "stopped" you have to wait for the tape to wind itself back into the cassette shell. Then when you press "play" you have to wait again for the tape to thread itself. When you couple this with the fact that the least little movement of the tape skips through quite a bit of recorded material (especially when recorded at the slow speed), it can be *extremely* frustrating to attempt to skip through commercials or rapidly search in forward and reverse for a segment that you know is on the tape "somewhere." This procedure ("cue and review") is much easier to accomplish with a Beta format recorder.

—The RCA VDP 150: I bought this unit (together with the TEP-1400 tuner/timer) in an attempt to kill two birds with one stone. That is, to replace the RCA 400 with a similar programmable VHS system and, at the same time, provide portability. This unit has nearly all the features of the RCA 400 (lacking only the feature which stops the fast forwarding of tapes at any point where a recording has been initiated), so even though it is a portable, it can double as a full-feature programmable unit at home. [See our review in issue #25, and note that I have the TEP-1400 tuner/timer, not the TDP-1000 that would ordinarily come with it.]

The other reason for buying this one is so that I can record at the fast "SP" speed with a camera and then copy and edit those recordings onto Beta format cassettes, for permanent keeping, with as little loss in quality as possible. This could be better achieved with a single-speed VHS portable (such as the Panasonic NV-8410), but with the loss of 4-hour unattended recording capability.



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

1. **Recording length**—This has been a running battle. First there was the Sony Betamax alone, with one hour. Then came the JVC (VHS format) with two hours. No sooner did Sony bring out a 2-hour Betamax than RCA introduced its 4-hour VHS model. Thinner tape and/or slower speeds have now pushed the maximum figures even further. All current consumer model VHS machines offer two or three speed recording capability that results in a maximum recording length on a single cassette of up to six hours, or even a little more than that. Current consumer Beta format machines have two speeds and offer a maximum of a little over five hours when using the L-830 (thinner) tape on a Beta machine that records in the X-3 speed. A thinner VHS tape is expected before long and this would increase the VHS maximum to at least 7½ hours on a single cassette. VHS format cassettes cost more, but if cost *per hour* is of paramount importance to you and you have no problem with the slightly lesser picture quality of the "long play" (4 hour) speed or the markedly lesser quality of the "super long play" speed, you will probably be happier with a VHS recorder. New "high grade" tapes such as those from TDK and Maxell will offer some improvement at these slower speeds.

On the other hand, those who are primarily interested in collecting feature films should pause to consider whether it is better to have only one relatively high quality film on each cassette (as with prerecorded tapes) or two or more lesser quality films on each cassette. If you collect *only* prerecorded tapes, I'd recommend a VHS since prerecorded VHS tapes come in the SP speed which, for the same price (usually), is of slightly higher quality than the X-2 speed in which nearly all Beta format prerecorded tapes are available. This would be true for off-the-air recording of films, too, except that with VHS the temptation is so great to record in a slower speed (sacrificing quality to price) that I would recommend Beta format to someone whose prime purpose in having a VCR is to collect movies by recording them off the air. Two hours of Betamax tape (an L-500 cassette) purchased for \$12.00 (to be used at X-2 speed) would be a better buy than a VHS tape at \$14.50 (to be used at SP speed).

It should also be mentioned here that while the VHS format offers the greatest number of hours recording capability *per cassette* (and probably will continue to do so), the attachment of the new AG-300 changer to a current model (5000 series) Betamax will provide no less than 20 hours of unattended recording on four individual cassettes. That's enough to tape two college football games, two pro games, "60 Minutes," and probably the Monday night game as well, while you are off on a three day bender.

2. **Ease of operation**—I say the Beta machines are preferred for this. The two formats utilize distinctly different systems by which the tape is loaded, withdrawn from the cassette, recorded (or played), drawn back into the cassette, and ejected. (See discussion in issue #15, other previous issues, and in the box accompanying this article.) Regardless of the merits of either system with regard to tape and/or head wear (the debate continues), the simple fact is that it is easier to make "good" edits on a Beta format machine. All edits on ½" consumer-model VCR's are subject to hit-or-miss variations so far as "good edits" are concerned, but the Beta format is *easier*.

So, if the ease of editing out commercials, dubbing from one machine to another, and rapidly running through the Rewind, Stop, Play and Fast Forward keys, is of prime importance, you will probably be happier with a Beta format recorder.

3. **Compatibility within the format**—Alas, in the tumble to outdo each other, both Beta and VHS manufacturers have created incompatible machines within their own formats. Many of the newer Beta format units will not play back tapes recorded in the original X-1 speed. Several of the newer VHS recorders have the 2-hour and 6-hour speeds, but not the 4-hour. Thus, someone buying a first machine at the present time, intending to collect films at the 4-hour VHS speed, should be alert to the possibility that a potential trading partner may not be able to accommodate that speed even though he or she has a VHS format recorder. Those contemplating purchases of a Beta format recorder will find that all consumer-oriented machines being offered at the present time are compatible with each other, but if you expect to trade with an old-timer, you may not be able to accommodate playback of his or her X-1 tapes.

4. **Availability of features**—This, too, has been a see-saw battle. First VHS had "audio dub" and Beta didn't. Then VHS had programmable timers, then "still frame." Then Beta came up with "Betascan" (fast forward and reverse with visible picture). Newest VHS models have an approximation of this, too, but if this feature is of particular importance to you, make sure that the model you select has a visible picture in rewind as well as fast-forward.

The battle to offer more versatile features continues and new models are being introduced faster than we can report them to you. Possible features yet to come may include: a built-in monitor, full-function *wireless* remote control, built-in commercial killers, and even more versatile programmable timers. One thing you can be pretty sure of—any new feature worth having will be duplicated by whichever format fails to introduce it, just as soon as public demand is perceived. Consequently, I cannot recommend one format over the other solely on the basis of currently available features.

5. **Use for amateur video production**—Since it was first introduced, the VHS format has usually managed to keep one jump ahead of Beta most of the time as far as *consumer-oriented*



recorders are concerned. The reverse has been true so far as semi-professional/industrial models are concerned. All industrial strength Sony Beta format recorders operate only in the high-speed X-1 mode. The original SLO-260, its replacements—the SLO-323 and SLO-326, and now the new SLO-383 “editing” Betamax—are all highly regarded by “serious” videophiles who expect to do something more with their hobby than merely “time-shifting” or building a collection of off-the-air recordings. Panasonic has some fine VHS format industrial models, too, but I see these as a “step up” for those of you who are already wedded to the VHS format, not as the machine of choice for someone who is just entering the fray and intends to do so at the higher level. [See our review of the Panasonic NV-8200 and the Sony SLO-323 in issue #26.]

**6. Durability and repairs**—My experience and reports indicate that machines of both formats are equally hardy or, to put it another way, equally as likely to need service or repair. In this regard, however, it wouldn't hurt (especially for those of you in smaller communities) to inquire as to the *availability* of service. Your area may have a service center or individual serviceman who is particularly skilled and/or familiar with a particular format. Regretably, home video is still new enough that you will not bump into a top-notch VCR serviceman everytime you turn around. Considering the fact that your VCR may get a couple of hours use nearly every day, you should not be surprised if it needs an annual “tune-up.”

To recap, then, it would seem that if you are buying your first video recorder, your choice of format depends pretty much on the *primary* use to which you expect to put your machine. If you primarily desire to:

- (1) build a collection of *prerecorded* tapes,
  - (2) get the most recording time per cassette, without regard to picture quality, or
  - (3) have a VCR which serves as an “all purpose” portable and programmable home use system,
- I would say that you might be happiest with a VHS format recorder.

On the other hand, if you primarily desire to:

- (1) build a collection of edited off-the-air recordings, or
  - (2) have the greatest length of unattended recording capability regardless of the number of cassettes used, or
  - (3) produce your own video tapes and edit together tapes from a variety of sources,
- you should seriously consider a Beta format recorder.

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

#### Postscript:

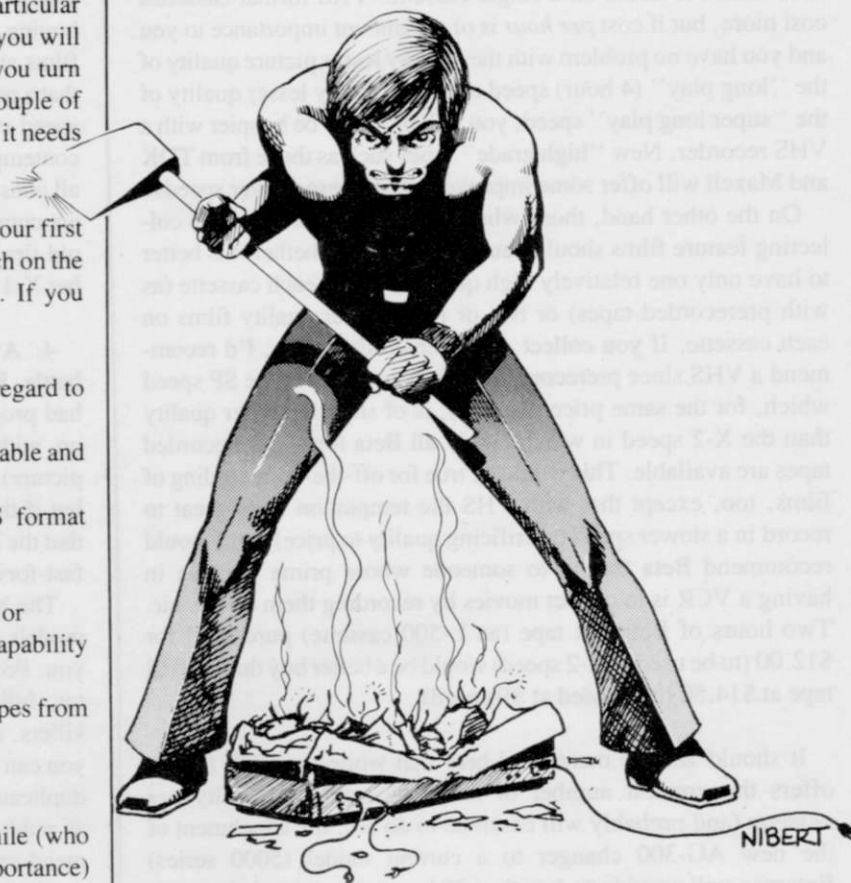
Having read over this article several times and realizing the potential persuasive effect that it may have, I am compelled to

offer three precautionary notes:

1. The opinion expressed in this installment of “For Beginners Only” is solely that of the Editor. It has not been reviewed or concurred in by our technical editors or any other members of the staff. It does, however, represent the “straight-from-the-shoulder” advice that I (as a fellow video hobbyist) can offer you as of October 1, 1980, the date on which these words are being written.

2. These observations are subject to change at any time that a dramatically new model is offered in either format. There do appear to be certain constants, however, eg. VHS cassettes will remain larger than Beta cassettes (thereby able to offer the greatest length of recording time per cassette), and Beta format recorders will continue to offer more satisfactory rapid manipulation of the controls for “cue” and “review” purposes.

3. We had all better keep an eye on the 1/4” format just being launched by Technicolor. Similar smaller format units are undoubtedly on the way. Someday, in the not too distant future, the choice posed by this question may well be resolved by obsolescence.





# The Videophile's Newsletter



Are hundreds of new television stations on the way? What would you think if you learned that the number of stations currently operating (a little over 1000) might double in the next year or two? Well, if the FCC has its way, that is exactly what is going to happen.

The FCC has approved the concept of authorizing a "significant number" of low-power new stations in both the VHF and UHF frequencies. Such stations could be assigned to channels which were "unavailable" in the past due to possible interference with existing stations. Present rules require stations using the same channel to be up to 220 miles apart, stations using adjacent channels to be at least 60 miles apart. But the "low-power" stations envisioned by this new policy could be as little as 100 miles apart on the same channel or 35 miles on adjacent channels. The maximum power of the new stations would have to be little enough that the chance of interference would be no greater than is presently the case under the old rules.

The new stations would originate their own programs, but could also relay signals beamed in by satellite, or otherwise, from other sources. The possible impact on the world of home video is one of the most exciting developments since the introduction of the home videocassette recorder itself.

Just imagine, each community could theoretically have about as many TV stations as it now has radio stations. Minority and other special interest groups would have greater access to the airwaves and potential for the increased diversity of limited audience programming would be almost boundless. We're told that a low-power UHF station could be put on the air for less than \$100,000. (Gee, maybe we could be WVID-TV and run nothing but old TV shows. --Ed.) (... or maybe WPIG-TV)

Since this news broke, the FCC has already received a couple of hundred applications, the bulk of them (160 or more) from Sears/Allstate Insurance who want to install an earth terminal at each of these stations for the purpose of broadcasting a country music service (KUSK) originating in Prescott, Arizona.

As you might expect, the established broadcasters are screaming. It's the old story, free enterprise is fine so long as those who enjoy a protectionist government policy can keep all the newcomers out. View of FCC Chairman Ferris is encouraging. He recently told the National Press Club that "We now insure the survival of the fittest, not the survival of the fattest."

As we understand it, each of these new stations would probably only be able to reach 15 or 20 miles from the transmitter, but that would be plenty to serve most communities. Also there would be no reason why such a station couldn't have a satellite uplink and reach a much larger audience in the same way that WTBS (Channel 17) in Atlanta does at the present time. For that matter, there would be no reason why we videophiles couldn't record and trade oddball local programming from all parts of the country. // For an equally exciting development see Satellite Notes herein.



## The Big Picture

Sony surprised everyone (particularly Kloss Video) by bringing out a low-cost two-piece projection television system. Everyone was caught by surprise primarily because Sony has no such product on the market in Japan.

Two models should be available as you are reading these very words. One is a 50" model, priced at \$2495(!), and claiming to have 100 foot-lambert brightness. The other is a 72" model, priced at \$2995, with 50 (or more) foot-lambert brightness. The units utilize three 5.5" projection tubes in a "cocktail table" style cabinet. The screens are washable aluminum, which are freestanding or may be mounted on the wall.

These models feature electronic tuning, but, in order to keep the price down, they do not have remote control (which is sort of superfluous in a 2-piece unit anyway), nor do they have direct video inputs (a major disappointment in a unit which, though relatively inexpensive, still costs a couple of thousand bucks or more).

It remains to be seen whether this move can renew interest in 2-piece projection units. The recent shift to single-piece units was an indication (even by Advent) that the average prospective purchaser would prefer a single-piece "console", even though picture quality is not up to the standard set by 2-piece units.

No sooner had Sony's announcement been made, than Advent announced its new 72" 2-piece projection system. It's priced at \$3295, but with discounts may end up quite close to Sony's \$2995 model. It's tubes, lenses, and appearance are quite similar to the Sony model, but the Advent model does have remote control (5 functions), plus (and this is the good part) two direct video and audio inputs, as well as 3 RF inputs. That should be plenty to take care of your recorders, disc players, video games, and what not.

Both Sony and Advent units will be competing with the 6½' Kloss model, which was priced at \$2495 when we reviewed it in issue #26 (since increased to \$2995). We've also gotten an indication that Advent, and possibly Sony as well, will have something else to show at the Winter CES in Las Vegas.

We are also expecting word of plans from Toshiba and Sharp. The latter has a projection system on sale in Japan now. On the domestic front, RCA is still mum, but Zenith may offer a unit in 1981, possibly an "assembled" version of the 2-piece model being offered as a kit by its Heath subsidiary.

Meanwhile, GE may be joining the price war. We've heard of at least one dealer (Abraham & Straus in New York) that is ~~already~~ selling the new GE 3-tube rear projection model at \$2800.

In Japan, Matsushita has introduced a video projector which resembles an oversize TV set with a 45" screen. It stands nearly 5' high and is over a yard wide. The model TH-4500 is priced at the equivalent of about \$2300 and is being produced at the rate of 2000 per month. Matsushita expects to sell 30,000 of them in Japan this year.

We'd say the latest offerings will be tempting enough to make some of us who have been waiting for a "better" big screen set, to belly on up.

## The Disc

Pioneer and Magnavox are stepping up the effort to have the optical "DiscoVision" system available on a substantially nationwide basis by the end of the year. Here's the most current list that we can compile of markets in which one or the other brand (or both) is available:

Dallas-Ft. Worth, St. Louis, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, Buffalo, Phoenix, Syracuse, Madison, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Tampa-St. Pete, Seattle, Kansas City, Cincinnati, Portland (OR), Knoxville, Boston, Washington, Houston, Baltimore, Richmond, Jackson, Ft. Wayne, Annapolis, New York, Baton Rouge, Indianapolis, Dubuque, Charlotte, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Milwaukee, Omaha, San Diego, Great Falls, Albany, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Ft. Dodge, and the San Francisco bay area. Whoops, here's two more: Sacramento and Louisville.

MCA and Magnavox are reportedly still having quality control problems with their discs and players, but are not quick to admit it. Reports persist that some Magnavox players have difficulty playing discs produced by DVA. The Pioneer players are said to handle them better, and we understand that Magnavox is modifying its players upon request or when otherwise being serviced.

Disc player owners are still screaming for new titles and MCA group is struggling to get hour-per-side discs on the market before RCA enters the fray with its disc system in March. If optical system group can't get its act together by then, it well may be a rout. Too bad, if so, since we continue to feel that optical system offers greater potential. Incidentally, RCA says that it will add stereo capability to its players in 1982.

What we regard as the "third" format -- VHD -- is apparently going to be adopted as the standard in Japan. It's being backed by JVC and Matsushita, with Toshiba and Yamaha poised to join them, though still officially uncommitted.

We are expecting Advent to announce that it will be joining the optical system camp, with a player to be manufactured for it by Pioneer.

First "made-for-disc" programs should be available soon from Optical Programming Associates (a joint venture of Phillips/MCA/Pioneer). Entitled "How to Watch Football" and "The National Kid Disc", they will allow interaction of the viewer and the disc by means of the unit's freeze frame and other special capabilities.

The whole concept of the video disc may become obsolete in the not too far distant future. According to Joseph Lipson, of the National Science Foundation, this will occur when low-cost random-access computer solid-state memories reach storage capacity of 100 billion bits, allowing complex color pictures to be stored in digital form. Sounds great to us. As we see it, feature films would then be produced in a form somewhat similar to video game cartridges. Just plug in the little module and watch the pretty pictures. Perhaps the player would be built into the TV set.

The 3M company has agreed to begin mass-market custom pressing of optical system video discs for MCA/Phillips, thus helping to alleviate one of the problems that's been plaguing DiscoVision.



## Battle of the Formats

Has Sony's demonstration of its VCR/Camera combo inspired other manufacturers to seek common ground on a standardized format for such units? Of course not! The latest entry in the combo sweepstakes is the "Mag Camera" from Hitachi. With availability possible within 2 years (rather than 4 or 5 for Sony's "Video Movie" unit), the Hitachi model is designed to deliver 2 hours recording time on a small  $\frac{1}{2}$ " tape cassette. Recording length is to be achieved by cutting the tape speed to .6 inches per second, about half that of the new "Technicolor" VCR from Funai. Price is expected to be \$1400.

Initial test reports of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " format tapes from Technicolor indicate that, while Beta and VHS have nothing to worry about, so far as home-based VCRs are concerned, the unit delivers a picture good enough to make it a real factor in the portable market. We hope to have our own report on it soon.

Guess who's making a comeback? Latest figures from Media Statistics Incorporated indicate that the Beta format has recovered somewhat (though not to where it was at this time last year) from the blitz of VHS advertising and sales. As shown in the chart, sales for Beta from April through August of this year are up to 35.8% of the total. VHS is still in an enviable position at a 64.2% share, but the difference is not quite as commanding as was the better than 2 to 1 dominance enjoyed by VHS earlier this year.

	Jan-March 1979	Aug-Dec 1979	Jan-March 1980	April-Aug 1980
RCA.....	25.7%	32.5%	34.9%	32.0%
Sony.....	28.7%	29.7%	20.0%	21.2%
Panasonic.....	14.7%	10.2%	9.0%	12.3%
Magnavox.....	6.7%	5.8%	6.7%	8.1%
Zenith.....	8.9%	5.0%	7.4%	7.3%
Quasar.....	7.8%	4.3%	5.5%	3.8%
Sanyo.....	7.7%	0.5%	2.2%	2.9%
JVC.....	7.2%	2.0%	2.2%	2.9%
Sears.....	7.4%	7.8%	0.2%	2.2%
Toshiba.....	7.2%	7.7%	0.8%	2.2%
G.E. ....	3.3%	0.7%	2.7%	2.0%
Hitachi.....	--	0.5%	--	1.0%
Sylvania.....	0.7%	2.5%	0.4%	0.8%
Curtis Mathes.....	0.7%	0.9%	7.4%	0.6%
Sharp.....	--	--	7.7%	0.3%
Philco.....	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Beta Format.....	42.8%	40.7%	32.4%	35.8%
VHS Format.....	57.2%	59.3%	67.6%	64.2%
Sample Size .....	476 owners	406 owners	565 owners	618 owners

Markets surveyed (DMA areas): New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Dallas-Fort Worth, Denver-Boulder, Detroit, Fresno, Milwaukee, St. Louis, San Francisco, Washington, Houston-Saltwater, and Seattle-Tacoma-Everett.

CAUTION: All figures on brands subject to normal sampling variation.

MEDIA STATISTICS INCORPORATED • 8120 Fenton Street • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

The report in the October issue of Consumer Reports which recommends the Beta format over VHS will not do Sony and friends any harm either.

Media Statistics also reports that "video recorder penetration is approximately 2% of the TV homes in the 16 markets covered."

We're told that Clarion, the auto stereo folks, are working on a VCR for automobiles. Shucks, Madman Muntz has had one in his car for years, as readers of our interview in issue #16 will recall.

## Program Notes

Industry sources now admit that a "compression" technique is being used to speed up films in order to make them fit on a standard-length cassette. The technique, being offered by Video Corporation of America, is used at the time of making the videotape master. The number of frames per second is increased by a small amount and the soundtrack is corrected by a digital process that keeps it in synch and at the proper pitch. Video Corp. says that the compression process has been used on "hundreds of thousands" of Warner and Vidamerica (the rental club) cassettes.

Apparently, the compression can be applied throughout the film or in selected portions only. It is said that the maximum possible time able to be "saved" is about 8%. This would mean that a 130 minute film could be squeezed onto a 120 minute tape. It would also mean (it seems to us) that many purists would prefer to have a copy for their collection that has been taped off the air. Mort Fink, president of Warner Home Video, is quoted as saying that time compression is "an important breakthrough" and there has been an absence of consumer complaints. You may help to remedy that situation by writing to Mr. Fink at: WCI Home Video, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, NY, NY 10019.

3-D cassettes? Yes! Your favorite dealer may already have the first two titles -- "Creature From the Black Lagoon" and "It Came From Outer Space". The cassette comes with 4 pairs of red and green glasses. Keep in mind that these are black and white movies, not the color ones (requiring special Polaroid glasses) which have the more dramatic 3-Dimensional effects.

Speaking of 3-D, we're told that SelecTV (the subscription TV service in Los Angeles) will broadcast the 3-D feature film "Miss Sadie Thompson" on December 19. Broadcast will also include a 3-D Three Stooges short. Special red and green glasses will be available at Sears. Reportedly, the same film (but not the short) will also be shown over the STV outlet in Milwaukee, possibly in December.

New titles now, or soon to be, available on tape include: "The Blues Brothers", "Cheech & Chong's Next Movie", "Julia", "Turning Point", "Phantasm", "Take the Money and Run", "Notorious", "Rebecca", "The Killing of Sister George", "Straw Dogs", "Ben Hur", "Dr. Zhivago", "Star Trek: the Movie", "Bon Voyage Charlie Brown", "Starting Over", Little Darlings", "Up In Smoke", "They Shoot Horses Don't They?", "Lovers and Other Strangers", and "Kotch".

Magnetic Video release of "All That Jazz" garnered \$1 million in orders from dealers on its first day of release. MV pres., Andre Blay said: "This marks the coming of age of the video entertainment industry, and indicates that we have now reached a mass market status." The previous fastest-selling videocassette was another Magnetic Video title, "Alien", which achieved \$1 million in sales after 45 days. "All That Jazz" will enable MV to win its eighth ITA Golden Videocassette Award.

Titles scheduled for release on the optical Disco-Vision format include: "The Blues Brothers", "The Island", "Smokey and the Bandit II", "Cheech and Chong's Next Movie", "Xanadu", and "The Wiz". The RCA disc system (CED) will have a Blondie disc with "Eat to the Beat" on one side and other material by Debby Harry and her group on the other.



NBC has announced its first package of titles (50) to be released on tape, including the made-for-TV "Heidi", "Little House on the Prairie", "Saturday Night Live", "Victory at Sea" and the "1980 World Series". Many of the NBC titles, including "Reading, Writing, and Reeper" (?) will also be available on RCA Selectavision discs. Package may also include some unannounced early TV comedy and variety shows as well as episodes of the "NBC White Paper" documentary series.

Similarly, CBS Video is (or will be) offering 24, mostly theatrical, titles on tape. Among them: "Wizard of Oz", "2001: A Space Odyssey", "Network" "The Boys In the Band", "The Sunshine Boys", "Jailhouse Rock", "A Night at the Opera", "Loose Shoes", "Meet Me In St. Louis", "Coma" and "Adam's Rib."

CBS has further announced that "all" of its product is available for videodisc and videocassette. (I wonder if "all" includes "Amos 'n' Andy" -- Ed.)

Home Theatre/VCI will be releasing 250 "How-To" tapes, 30 of which are expected to be available before Christmas. Topics include sports, gardening, music, exercises, decorating, hunting and fishing. Each tape will be about an hour in length and retail for \$39.95. // The same folks have also released two Shakespearean plays on tape: "Richard II" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor".

A package of six tapes of "The Flying Fisherman", with well-known salt- and fresh-water fishing authority, Gadabout Gaddis, will be released by The Video Society, 1 Century Plaza, Suite 3440, 2029 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067

If you don't know about "Videowest", you should. They've been broadcasting some great stuff on KGO (Channel 7) and KQED (Channel 9) in San Francisco, and now on KABC (Channel 7) in Los Angeles, as well. These are late-night Friday and Saturday music and art presentations that are simulcast on Bay area FM stations. Examples of recent programs are: "Beach Blanket Armageddon", "The Lighter Side of Death" (including a report from the College of Mortuary Science), and "A Day in the Life of Frank Zappa". Musical performances have included the likes of Devo, Meatloaf, "Tattooed Love Boys" by The Pretenders, and Boz Scaggs, not to mention profiles of such personalities as Willie Nelson and ultimate rock fanatic, Jim Turner, of "Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre". If you think your local station might be interested in carrying some of this madness, have them contact: Fabrice Florin or Tim Curry at Videowest, 735 Harrison, San Francisco, CA 94107 (415-957-9080).

Select Programs has launched its first "preview" tape. The \$29.95 cassette includes clips from about 25 movies ranging from softcore porno to cult films, and includes one hour of vintage cartoons from the 1930s. We haven't seen it yet, but thought you'd like to know. You may contact them at 15720 Ventura Blvd., #610, Encino, CA 91436 (213-995-0436).

MEDA has published its first catalog of Spanish language tapes. The movies, including some animated films, are dubbed into Spanish and are available in NTSC and PAL formats. MEDA also plans to release tapes dubbed in other languages, including French, Italian and German.

All Star Video (Box B, 3483 Hempstead Turnpike, Levittown, NY 11756 (516-752-7898), has released "The Definitive Sinatra", latest in its "Golden Classic Series" of music and concert tapes.

"Video Shack", of New York City, which bills itself as the "world's largest video cassette center" has begun publishing a list of "best sellers". Unlike so many of these lists, this one does not ignore the existence of "XXX" or "adult" cassettes, though it does list them separately. The top 5, in each category, for September were:  
FEATURE FILMS: (1) Alien, (2) Bruce Lee, Return of the Dragon, (3) The Rose, (4) The Muppet Movie, and (5) Superman.

ADULT FILMS: (1) Female Athletes, (2) Tigresses, (3) Inside Jennifer Welles, (4) Deep Throat/ The Devil In Miss Jones, and (5) Misty Beethoven.

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## Cable/Pay-TV Notes

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The U.S. Justice Department and "Premiere", the proposed competitor for HBO, Showtime and The Movie Channel, (see previous issues) are still battling it out. Time is drawing nigh for the January 1 start-up and, so far as we know, not a single cable-TV system has signed up to carry Premiere. It's really a strange situation. With 4 big studios (Columbia, Universal, Paramount, and Fox) supporting it, Premiere could be an instant success if it can overcome the anti-trust stumbling block. Meanwhile, HBO, whose dominance of the present market approaches monopoly status, itself, is crying the blues as though it would go under if Premiere is allowed to operate.

We say that the best solution is to allow Premiere to begin, with appropriate safeguards against anyone dominating the market. But we would also hope that local cable franchises would offer their subscribers several pay-TV services (as they are doing in some areas) so that the marketplace can determine the success or failure of each particular offering. What's wrong with HBO and the others tailoring their services to attract a distinctive audience, rather than having 4 "movie" channels each so similar that they must depend on exclusive franchises and an absence of competition in order to survive?

Westinghouse has purchased the nation's largest cable-TV operator, Teleprompter. Westinghouse, which already owns a handful of cable systems (including ours in Tallahassee), thus picks up ownership of some 450 cable systems, not to mention the "Showtime" pay-TV service.

"ON" TV in Chicago (WSNS-TV, Channel 44) will carry 4 University of Illinois and 4 Loyola basketball games during the coming season.

"Showtime" Fall schedule includes: Fellini's "Satyricon" and Jane Russell in "The Outlaw", also the Broadway show "Eubie" and a new comedy series entitled "Bizarre".

The "Modern Satellite Network" (with which we are not familiar) has a new series "Cowboy Classics" which features old-time cowboy stars. (Ted, your local cable company can inquire to: Modern Satellite, 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10111.

The supplementary HBO service, "Cinemax" will increase to a full 24-hour schedule in January.

Speaking of HBO, we're very pleased that they have been running some older feature films that always suffer when they are run, with interruptions, on regular network TV. An example of this in October has been the showing of "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World". (It fit rather nicely on an L-750. -- Ed.)



In conformity with its decision to open up the airwaves to more and more users, it now appears that the FCC will also approve direct satellite broadcasting on a substantially unregulated basis. FCC staff reports that the United States is expected to be allocated at least 5 time slots and that up to 8 satellites could be positioned in each one. If each satellite had 20 transponders, our old Unisonic 888 "Slide Roulette" tells us that there would be room for 800 channels.

As presently envisioned by the FCC, direct-to-viewer satellites would not be subject to duties imposed on present over-the-air broadcasters, i.e. they would be exempt from such things as the "fairness doctrine". Frequencies would be assigned, to avoid conflict, but beyond that operators would be pretty much on their own.

The FCC staff report expresses the view that such a policy would provide "incentive to try to satisfy intense preferences of relatively small audiences." Examples that quickly come to mind would be opera, chess tournaments, and apartment house wrestling. The FCC has expressed the opinion that the satellites would be located in such a way as to make it possible for viewers with a single antenna to tune them in.

Actual widespread availability of so-called DBS (direct broadcast satellite) service is undoubtedly still a few years away, but this latest development makes the prospect seem almost too good to be true.

Video pioneer, Earl "Madman" Muntz, is now on the earth station bandwagon, selling a backyard system for \$4995 installed (!). He hopes to be able to produce one a day by year's end. Muntz has a 13-foot fiberglass dish of his own construction and plans to eventually offer a line of his own electronic components as well.

The Society for Private and Commercial Earth Stations (SPACE) has successfully lobbied Congress to forget proposed legislation (at least for the time being) designed to control unauthorized interception of satellite transmissions.

SPACE has altered its stand from opposing any payments for the private use of satellite signals to paying for pay-TV services. SPACE attorney, Rick Brown, says that he hopes legislation will be enacted in the future to compel private earth station operators to pay rates similar to those paid by cable system operators to program suppliers (which is currently \$4-\$5 monthly), rather than that charged by cable operators to subscribers. According to Brown, SPACE's membership has grown from 140 to 250 in recent months. You can contact SPACE at 1526 O Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Satelco, one of the pioneers in backyard earth terminals, is working on a remote-controlled private earth station that will hook into a personal computer. The complete system will sell in the neighborhood of \$10,000 - \$12,000, and will be available late this year. The mini-computer will control transponder selection, orientation of the dish and program selection. This would enable users to steer from one "bird" to another, and tune in programs at ease. Direct your inquiries to Satelco, 5540 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019 (213-931-6274). Tell 'em we sent you.

Ralph Smith, convicted of "video piracy" in Texas, has been sentenced to 4 years imprisonment and slapped with a \$100,000 fine. A Federal jury in Houston had, on July 18, 1980, found Smith guilty of piracy for videotaping motion pictures off the air without authority and then providing the tapes to corporations for the entertainment of employees.

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, upon hearing the news, said: "The sentence handed down in Houston is an object lesson to all pirates that they can now count on substantial jail time when they are caught and convicted. The days when pirates might expect only a 'slap on the wrist' are over."

The Justice Department has announced that it is undertaking a major crackdown on "white-collar" crimes, including film, video and audio tape piracy. The Department further noted, however, that "the dollar amounts must be large and the illegal activity ... widespread before ... cases are considered priorities."

We're told that further sale of subscription TV decoders (see previous issues) used to "pirate" scrambled over-the-air broadcasts, has come to a halt in California. The FCC has warned that manufacture, sale or use of unauthorized STV decoders is a violation of the Communications Act and, as such, is subject to fines of up to \$2000. // Court victories in Cincinnati, Detroit and elsewhere have just about driven the whole business underground.

### Miscellaneous

We knew it was coming, and now it's almost here -- component TV systems. Sony is expected to introduce a line of TV components in 1981, after showing it to dealers at the annual Spring show. To be known as "Profeel Trinitron Modular System", the set-up will consist of a separate monitor with input jacks for a tuner, VCR and what not, as well as output jacks for speakers. The monitors are expected to incorporate advanced picture quality features that will provide resolution of up to 400 lines. Three sizes are available in Japan right now: 15" (\$500), 19" (\$640), and 26" (\$1085). The tuner is in the \$300+ range.

Both MCA and CBS are looking into the possibility of forming video tape clubs along the lines of the familiar book and record clubs. Unlike present video clubs, members would join in specific categories (horror, westerns, etc.) and have a monthly selection automatically sent. MCA is said to be considering joint venture with one of the established clubs, while CBS could simply expand its "Columbia House" to include such an operation. Incidentally, we're told that Magnetic Video's "Video Club of America" has some 50,000 members, Time-Life Video Club around 15,000. Columbia Record Club claims over 3,000,000 members. (Gee, now if only each of them would subscribe to The Videophile, we could get our financial statement back in the black. --Ed.)

JVC will sponsor a video competition for undergraduates, graduate-school students, and art school students. Qualified people who want to enter should submit taped programs in any or all contest categories (documentary, creative, and news shorts) by December 1, 1980. Maximum length is 20 minutes. Details from: JVC Student Video Festival, c/o Burson-Marsteller, 866 3rd. Ave., New York, NY 10022.



Hitachi has made surprise announcement that it will market a solid-state consumer video camera, utilizing metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) technology, in Japan this coming April. We expect to see it in the U.S. "later" in 1981. Price will be in the area of \$1600, but keep in mind that this is a "no tube" camera, the first to offer micro-chip technology in such a product. Hitachi says that the camera has 260 lines horizontal resolution and doesn't suffer from the "lag" that is so common to vidicon tube-type cameras.

Those of you interested in film-chaining or direct viewing of films on your TV set, will be interested to know that Grundig, Elmo and several Japanese firms have demonstrated prototypes of "videoplayers" that can be used for such purposes without a video camera. We're told that the unit from "Goko", of Japan, may have the most promise, with its ability to handle films or slides, and add special effects such as fade-in and titling. A 24-faceted prism (rather than a shutter) permits viewing of the film on your TV screen while edits are being performed.

Seiko, the Japanese wristwatch firm, has developed a very small (1" x 1½") flat, liquid crystal diode TV screen. We understand that they are about ready to market what can only be described as the world's first "wristwatch" TV ... the first, that is, other than the one that Dick Tracy has been wearing for years. // Timex is said to have similar plans in the works.

One of the major domestic TV manufacturers is planning to sell out to Magnavox parent company, North American Phillips. GEE! No, GTE. If the Justice Department approves the merger, Phillips will purchase GTE Consumer Electronics, and the resulting combine of Magnavox/Sylvania/Philco could challenge the "big two" of RCA and Zenith. Merger would also seem to put Sylvania and Philco in the optical disc camp, and add to possibility that the European Phillips "Video 2000" VCR format would be introduced in the U.S. Apparently, Magnetic Video has agreed to furnish disc and tape programming for both the optical disc and Video 2000 format, as well.

The Sharp "Dualvision" picture-in-picture 17" TV set has not been a commercial success, so Sharp is closing them out for \$599. If you want one (they originally listed at over \$1000, we think), check with your friendly video discounter.

Sony Chairman, Akio Morita, continues to believe that tape will prevail over the disc. In addition to touting the versatility of tape, (a fact of which we are all aware), he has announced that Sony is working toward reduction of the list price of blank tape to about \$10-\$12, as well as the eventual reduction in the price of a VCR to about \$600.

Still more video mags! We'll try to have another roundup of 'em soon. In the meantime, watch for "Video Today", a mag-within-a-mag, to be found in "High Fidelity" and "Modern Photography" magazines.

Stock market buffs noticed that Sony stock has doubled in price this year. We hear that video tape recorder sales (both machines and tapes) now account for 50% of Sony's sales.

Watch for new "Magnex" brand video tape, which is manufactured in Japan under a joint venture by Ampex and Konishiroku Photo. ... We also anticipate "RKO" brand tape in Beta format only, at first, with VHS to follow.

In Japan, Sony has released a premium quality "Dynamicon HG" tape, said to deliver significantly better picture quality.

NOW WE'VE HEARD EVERYTHING DEPARTMENT: "General Hospital", "One Life to Live" and "Love in the Afternoon" casual wear for women and men is being manufactured and marketed under a licensing agreement reached between ABC Merchandising, Inc. and Strawberry Shirtcake, Inc. of Dania, Florida. The project was generated by the popularity of the ABC network's daytime serial dramas and the ABC afternoon viewing theme, "Love in the Afternoon". The line includes T-shirts, heat transfers, night shirts, dorm shirts, scrub suits (!), sweat shirts and related casual wear. The next thing you know someone will be peddling T-shirts with a picture of a pig on them.


Sears has ordered 10,000 copies of ABC's Winter Olympics cassette, all in the Beta format, ... perhaps as a promotional giveaway for the Sears Beta format VCR?

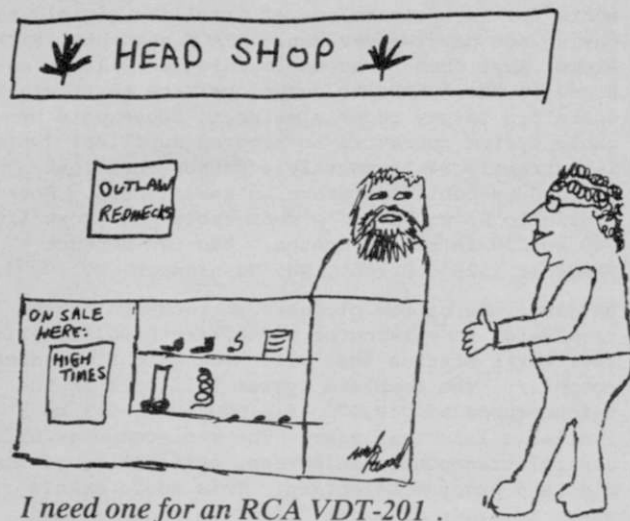
The remaining inventory of bankrupt Allied Artists Video has been purchased by three large dealers: A & H Video Sales, Sound Unlimited, and Video Station.

In case you were wondering, the number of homes in the U.S. which have a television set in them stood at 78 million as of January 1, 1980. That's an increase of 1,400,000 since the previous year.

A related statistic tells us that 564,900 VCRs were imported into the country from Japan during the first 8 months of this year; 85,000 in August alone.

West Coast readers may be interested in a conference to be entitled "Telecommunications for the 80s", which will be held December 8 & 9 at UCLA. Participants will include Cable News Network president Ted Turner. Details from: CTM, P.O. Box 915, 6861 Elm Street, McLean, VA 22101 (703-734-2724).

Apparently the cable franchise in New York City is considered to be such a juicy plum, that officials are hoping to negotiate free basic service for cable TV subscribers. There are 17 applicants seeking franchises for the boroughs of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. If it works out, nearly everyone could be expected to sign up. The cable company would make its profit from pay-TV movie channels and the like, which could be offered as optional add-on services. 





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# Ask the Videophile

## FINALLY, HELP IS ON THE WAY

**Q:** *Help! We're having a lot of problems with our antennas, and can't seem to get rid of ghosts and interference when trying to record videotapes off the air. What can we do, besides slashing our wrists?*

*Dozens of Readers, U.S.A.*

**A:** All we can say is, many thanks go out to the fine folks at the Sony Corporation, who have come through with an excellent book called the "RF Interference Handbook" (#TV990 1177-1) to help their dealers with reception problems. Interested technicians and antenna installers can order it for \$5.00 directly from Sony's Technical Publications Dept. (4747 Van Dam Street, Long Island City, NY 11101). It is, without a doubt, the most complete study on the subject we've ever seen, providing over 60 pages with solutions for image ghosts, power line interference, and other common reception ailments. Armed with this book, you should be able to tackle almost any such problem with relative ease (with the aid of your local antenna shop or video dealer). In addition, the EIA (Electronic Industries Association, 2001 Eye Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006) has a publication called the "Consumer Electronics Service Technician Interference Handbook (Television Interference)," which is a somewhat more in-depth look at the same subject, with an emphasis on technical diagrams and filter traps.

Reception difficulties are so complex that to attempt to solve them in this magazine, without actually seeing them first-hand, is beyond the scope of our capabilities. Armed with these guidebooks, however, you should be able to diagnose some of the common problems yourself or, with the aid of your local dealer, the more complex cures.

## STRANGE BUTTON REVEALED

**Q:** *On the bottom of my VCR, there's a recessed adjustment screw labeled "V. Position." What does this screw adjust and do you have to be a technician to fool around with it?*

*J.D., Detroit, MI*

**A:** Just as explained in our reviews of JVC's HR-6700 and Panasonic's PV-1650 (and RCA's identical VDT-625), the "V. Position" screw affects the still frame performance of your VTR by adjusting the deck's internal servo circuits to automatically provide the best and clearest freeze-frame it can. If the image on your set appears to vibrate or exhibit excessive jitter or noise when you still-frame the tape, this screw can be carefully turned until the image improves. Note that not all VTR's have this control, and that still-frame images are almost always worse than normal pictures on most consumer VTR's. Also, tapes made on standard dual- or triple-speed VTR's will not still-frame very well

on industrial or 4-head consumer VTR's because of the difference in record gaps (29 microns vs. 58 microns).

## COLOR BURST WOES

**Q:** *I've noticed that, when I'm recording black and white programs off the air, my VTR experiences a control track break when my local station kills the color signal. Is there a filter I can use in-line to delete the color burst in B&W shows if the local station engineer forgets to do so?*

*M.L., Richardson, TX*

**A:** What you're experiencing is a slight instability caused when the VTR's color-detector circuits note the presence (or lack) of the color burst signal, which switches its color decoding circuits on or off as needed. The only practical way around it is to turn your deck's AFT (automatic fine-tuning) control off, and de-tune the local station slightly until the incoming signal becomes black and white; be sure to make a test recording to insure against some small part of the color signal coming through and inadvertently triggering the VTR's color circuits. You'll note that in most cases, recordings made with the AFT off will not look quite as sharp and crisp as those made with it on. As a result, you may want to turn the AFT back on a few seconds after the program resumes, when you think the station has killed their color burst. Note that this is extremely difficult to accomplish with some CATV systems.

Unfortunately, no one has come out with an inexpensive "black box" type color-to-black and white convertor, although somewhat costly "proc-amps" (processing amplifiers, discussed in TV #16) can be used to provide this feature. It's expected that such devices will be available soon, possibly from the same companies now offering other processing devices like anti-copying systems and image enhancers.

## TRADING AROUND THE WORLD

**Q:** *I was recently in England, and they're just now starting off with the video industry, which is beginning to catch on fast. There are many people there who want to watch U.S. movies on their VTR's, and likewise there are several pre-recorded films over there that haven't even been in theaters over here yet. What I want to ask is how can I transfer such tapes from England to be able to play them on my U.S. standard SL-5600? I'm not trying to break any copyright laws; my plan is to purchase the tape and then have it transferred so that I could watch it here in the U.S.*

*D.S., Pleasant Hill, CA*

**A:** As Joe Mazzini has discussed in his extensive articles on world-standard video (in Issues #22, 19, 16, and several others), standards incompatibility has been an almost



insurmountable problem for a long time and only recently has technology come up with ways of transferring high quality images from one format to another. Unfortunately, as you apparently have realized, such equipment is usually very expensive (on the order of \$100,000 and up) and way out of league for most consumers. There are a few companies that can transfer multi-standard tapes (including Image Transform in Los Angeles and Audio + Video International in Northvale, New Jersey), but no firm we know of will handle any 1/2" copyrighted programs without clearance from the producer, and even then, the transfer charges are at least \$100/hour, again putting it out of league for most videophiles. The only other solution is to purchase a multi-standard VTR (like those modified by Audio + Video; toll free 800-526-0291), which will provide you with the capability of watching video tapes made anywhere in the world when playing them back on an appropriate multi-standard TV set like Sony's PVM-1850PS.

Even this type of set-up doesn't come cheap—approximately \$2,000 for the VTR and \$1,500 for the TV set—and it still won't allow you to dub from one standard to another, since this requires the extremely specialized and expensive equipment mentioned earlier, but with two such VTR's, you can dub from, say, PAL to PAL or NTSC to NTSC; also, PAL and SECAM are essentially compatible in B&W, and PAL-M (a modified version of the European PAL standard used in South America) is essentially compatible with NTSC in B&W.

In the long run, there's really no practical or low cost way of working out this problem, save for trying to convince U.S. program suppliers of offering the same feature films currently enjoyed by our fellow videophiles across the water. Still, it would seem that the United States has more programs currently available on video tape than any country except possibly Japan, and certainly more than Europe and England, so if anything, video enthusiasts overseas should be even more interested in figuring out this multi-standard riddle than we are.

### THE MYSTERIOUS HORIZONTAL LINE

**Q:** *I've noticed that with a few of my tapes recorded several years ago, I'm beginning to see occasional horizontal lines rolling through the picture, from top to bottom. On another tape, snow appears at the bottom of the screen and the picture jumps. And yet another recording tends to slow down. I played all of them on the original deck they were recorded on, and it's just been cleaned and demagnetized. I've had none of these problems with recently recorded tapes.*

*Is it possible that these problems are due to the way I'm storing the tapes? Most of them have been kept between 50 and 90 degrees. Also, sometimes after I played a tape I didn't rewind it before putting it away. Any clues?*

*J. McL (no city)*

**A:** Improper storage conditions can definitely result in some of the symptoms you describe. For example, when a tape isn't rewound, the tape can be bent or creased very

slightly inside the cassette, which will only worsen over a period of time. When this tape is played back, a series of horizontal lines will roll down the screen, indicating the position of the wrinkles or creases on the tape. Unfortunately, once wrinkled, a pre-recorded tape is permanently damaged. You can, however, usually re-record over it without any problem, except in the event of extreme scratches or stretched tape (both of which are thankfully rare).

The tape that plays back with "snow" at the bottom of the screen may need to be played back with a careful adjustment of your deck's tracking control, because as a deck gets older, its belts and internal components will loosen up and change tolerances, which may result in a gradually changing tracking setting over a period of years.

It's always a good idea to check the tracking of any tape, regardless of when it was recorded or what machine it was made on, for best results. This tracking adjustment, however, would have nothing to do with the recording that you mention is "slowing down." This sounds like it could be a mechanical problem inside the cassette itself—either dragging hubs or a bad pinch roller, or possibly a lack of lubrication on the tape or in the machine's transport. Try to play it back on another machine to be sure. If that isn't the problem, then the cassette itself may be defective. You might try to play it back one more time to dub it to a new tape, or it's possible you could "transplant" it inside a new cassette shell (which will unfortunately entail disposing of this new cassette's tape). Lastly, it's also possible that the tape was somehow traveling too fast when it was originally recorded, and is now playing back a little too slow on your deck. Only your serviceman will know for sure.

We would definitely advise against storing tapes between 50 and 90 degrees. Tapes, just like people, feel most comfortable between about 65 and 70 degrees at a relative humidity of no more than 50 percent. And be sure to either rewind or fast-forward your tapes all the way to their foil leaders before storing them, to avoid wrinkling your programs.

### TOO MUCH FLAG WAVING

**Q:** *I just bought a JVC HR-6700 VHS recorder and find it good for recording programs off the air. However, when I play back pre-recorded tapes rented from Fotomat or my local dealer, I get a picture with the upper quarter of the screen rapidly waving back and forth. The TV set I'm using is a Zenith SC-100 Model SD-1610. Is there any cure for this problem? I tried to correct it by adjusting the vertical hold on the TV as recommended by the manufacturers, but I'm getting only minor improvement of picture stabilization.*

*N.M., Silver Spring, MD*

**A:** This is one we get asked about all the time, but the answer bears repeating. The culprit here would seem to be your TV set, which may not have a fast enough AFC-time constant in its horizontal hold circuits to overcome the skew problems inherent in low-cost 1/2" VTR's. This often results in a



“flag-waving”/bending effect in the top third of your screen. Your local Zenith service center may be able to take care of the problem; otherwise, your only hope may be to trade in your set for a new one, preferably one with less sensitive circuits. As noted many, many times in past issues, Japanese sets (particularly those made by Sony, MGA and several other firms) generally seem to play back videotape images better than those sold by domestic manufacturers like RCA, Zenith, Sylvania and GE. Some of these manufacturers are learning how to handle the problem, however, and are re-designing their sets to work better with VTR's. The best advice is to have your dealer play back one of your tapes for you on any set you're contemplating purchasing, and see for yourself how it performs.

#### WHEN IS A 10-PIN NOT A 10-PIN?

**Q:** *I'd like some information concerning the connection of JVC's GX-77U color camera to a Sony SL-3000 portable VTR. I've purchased Sony's adaptor cable (the CMA-202) to convert from the deck's 14-pin jack to a 10-pin, but that's where the easy part ends! Any help you can give me would be greatly appreciated, although I'm beginning to feel like I need my head examined for trying this route in the first place!*

*D.K.P., Lake Charles, LA*

**A:** You've discovered one of those ugly little problems that crops up occasionally in the world of video marketing: deliberate non-interchangability, which certain manufacturers seem to delight in inflicting on innocent video users. Although JVC uses the standard 10-pin Hirose connector, you're correct that it doesn't always work 100% with Sony's 10-pin products, and vice-versa. The only practical way around this is to either purchase or build a custom 14-pin to 10-pin adaptor cable that connects the right wires to the right sockets, such as the CWSM (2 meter) adaptor from The Cable Works (4228 Santa Ana Street, Southgate, CA 90280), which sells for about \$100—a high price to pay, but hopefully worth it for the peace of mind it should give you. The only alternative would be to re-wire the camera or recorder, which we really don't recommend because you may want to replace either of them in the future with new, more compatible components.

In any case, don't kick yourself for trying to match up one manufacturer's camera with another's VTR. This is a common practice in the professional and industrial video industry, and makes a lot of sense in many cases—provided you can get the two units to work together, that is.

#### VIDEO AT SEA

**Q:** *For the past six months, I've been looking for a color AC/DC TV set between 11" and 15". The largest I've found so far is 9". Do you know of any manufacturer making any larger sizes? I'd like to use this set and a Sony SL-3000 on a 42' sailing yacht that has plenty of 12VDC but no AC when underway. Please advise.*

*J.W.K., Columbus, OH*

**A:** We know that both Sony and Panasonic have battery adaptor kits for their black and white models, but we don't think they adapt to their larger color models. Considering that most color sets use nearly twice the power of a comparably sized B&W TV, it's not surprising that no one is offering any large battery operated models. The black and white 12" portable that MFW had a few years back ate up its 12V battery power in less than an hour, so this length of time would be even shorter with a color model.

Your problem, though, is unusual in that most TV manufacturers don't design their sets to be used aboard trains and boats and planes, or inside autos. The best advice we can think of would be to obtain a good 500 watt filtered power inverter, which will convert 12VDC current to 120VAC. Be warned that such invertors sometimes make a lot of racket, which may require installing it far away from your viewing area. Also, you should be careful not to overload the capabilities of your on-board batteries or generator with heavy current drains. Your local electrical or hardware dealer should be able to provide this kind of set up, or alternatively, a marine parts or mobile home supplier may be able to recommend the necessary accessories. Oh, and happy sailing.

#### X-RAY PHOBIA

**Q:** *I'm planning on taking my JVC portable VTR and camera on a vacation this year. My question is: when I get to the airport, I'll have to go through their security system before we board the plane. I think they use both the X-ray and metal detector methods. Will either of these devices affect my videotapes, heads, or camera vidicon tube?*

*R.S., Levittown, PA*

**A:** We've taken a variety of video equipment and tapes on board planes for several years now, and have had no trouble at all despite battling incompetent airlines and clumsy baggage handlers (not that all of them are bad—just most of the ones we've seen). Most airlines claim that their low voltage X-ray equipment will not harm camera films or audio and videotapes of any kind, though the best bet would seem to be to hand carry any of your particularly prized films or tapes on the airplane in a small suitcase that can be slid underneath your seat. Most tape manufacturers advise that while X-rays themselves can't hurt tapes, the heat generated by some X-ray systems can marginally affect their performance. Also, there are a few metal detecting systems that use magnetic fields to detect metallic objects, and these would definitely tend to erase any recorded tapes. Your video heads and camera tubes are almost certainly well shielded enough to avoid any harmful radiation, although if you take them on a plane, make sure they're extremely well padded and protected, preferably in a sturdy metal Hallicraft-type photographic equipment case. (Such cases are available from manufacturers like Thermodyne International, Ltd., 12600 Yukon Avenue, Hawthorne, CA 90250 and Anvil Cases, P.O. Box 888, Rosemead, CA 91770.)



## NO ELECTRICITY, NO TAPE-EE

**Q:** *I own an RCA VCT-400 (no "X") which is proving to be virtually worthless to me as a programmable VTR, which was its main purchasing point to me. The problem is that where I live, power interruptions are an almost daily occurrence. The vast majority of them are of the split second variety, which is just long enough to destroy any memory in the deck. I've been told by the salesman from whom I bought the unit that the circuitry in the VCT-400X would alleviate my problem, but that my deck can't be modified or repaired. What do you suggest?*

*J.S., Oklahoma City, OK*

**A:** Well, unfortunately, this is one of those cases where you may just have no other easy choice except to take the deck in for a trade-in for a new machine, even if you have to take a slight loss on the deal. When the 400's first came out a year or so ago, we too were very irritated when its volatile memory failed at even the hint of a momentary power failure or surge. RCA realized the problem, and added some capacitors to the 400X's memory's power supply to keep it charged up to 5 or 10 minutes, despite a power loss. There are a few companies that provide back-up AC power supply equipment, but these products would probably cost a lot more than just replacing your VTR.

We talked to an RCA service spokesman, who told us that their policies prohibit modifying or changing the circuits of any RCA product, strictly limiting their activities to servicing and repairing. "I think you're stuck with it," was their only other comment. We also tried two local video firms that specialize in modifications, and struck out there as well. Our deepest sympathies go out to any of you [That includes me, folks. \*sigh\*—Ed.] who purchased a VCT-400, and we can only advise you to ask your local power company to see if they can do something about these power interruptions, or try to trade in your deck soon.

## SERIOUS VIDEO

**Q:** *I'm planning to buy a 3/4" portable VTR and an ENG-type camera, and possibly a used 1" VTR and broadcast studio camera. In my opinion, serious video amateurs will prefer 3/4" to 1/2" for production, just as serious amateur photographers use 35mm SLR's instead of Instamatics. What do you think?*

*L.F., Washington, DC*

**A:** Considering the improved quality involved, our answer is yes, the most image conscious amateur video enthusiasts will opt for 3/4" instead of 1/2", just as obsessive compulsive film buffs will collect 35mm prints instead of 16mm. . . but only if they expect to have a great number of doughnuts (i.e., "dollar-inies") on hand. Most 3/4" decks sell for somewhat over \$2,000 (like the VO-2610 reviewed in issue #26) and even used 1" decks can be considerably higher, particularly with the newer 1" type C decks, which start at around \$40,000 for a basic machine. Broadcast quality ENG cameras often go for a similar amount. You might consider the possibility of equipment rental

or leasing, a plan offered by several manufacturers and rental firms. Cinema Products Corp. (2037 Granville Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025), for example, offers a lease/purchase plan on their \$30,000+ MNC-71CP ENG camera, and RCA Broadcast (with offices in several major metropolitan areas) offers a similar deal on most of their products. You might want to investigate through the three main broadcast equipment journals: Broadcast Management/Engineering (Broadcast Information Services, Inc., P.O. Box 6056, Duluth, MN 55806), Broadcast Engineering (P.O. Box 12901, Overland Park, KS 66212), and Broadcast Communications (Globecom Publishing Ltd., 4121 W. 83rd St, Suite 132, Prairie Village, KS 66208), all sent free to qualified broadcast professionals, and each featuring a ton of ads from most leading professional video manufacturers. Alternatively, your local industrial video dealer may be able to provide some assistance.

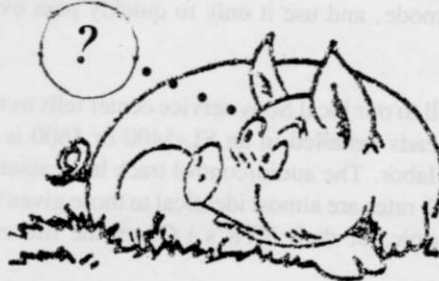
## A DO-IT-YOURSELF VIDEOCASSETTE

**Q:** *I have access to new, video grade tape on spools but I haven't been able to locate any empty cassettes to load this tape into. Can you be of any help in steering me in the right direction to a supplier that can supply these empty cassettes?*

*L.L.B., Sunnyvale, CA*

**A:** Unfortunately, most of the manufacturers we've talked to (including Sony and JVC, the licensors of the Beta and VHS formats, respectively), weren't too helpful in supplying information on your request. It seems that in order to protect their patents and the strict tolerances in their formats' designs, most manufacturers are very much against any "inferior" low-grade cassettes being put together by anyone, even amateur video enthusiasts. They don't want to run into the same problem found today with audio cassettes—a profusion of "el-cheapo" 49¢ type products flooding the market, most of which seem designed specifically to jam up in your audio deck.

There is a company making a "U-Load-It" type VHS shell that accepts small reels of video tape which the same firm is marketing. This company is called AVT Products (920 12th Avenue, Seaside, OR 97138) but we warn you in advance that their reloadable shell is fairly expensive at about \$14 each, and the tapes themselves are over \$12/hr. Given the problems of quality control, storage, threading, loading and mechanical problems, there's no doubt in our minds that you're much better off just living with regular store bought videocassettes. Considering the rock bottom prices some dealers are charging (as little as \$13 for T-120's and \$12 for L-500's), unless you're getting a really unbelievable deal on blank tape reels, the "load-it-yourself" idea isn't very practical.





**Q:** *I know The Videophile is biased towards Beta format VTR's. I was never interested in Beta, being a VHS man, until I saw BetaScan. I have some questions about Beta: what are the speeds and writing speeds of Beta I, II and III? What are the head gaps for each speed? How long do the L-250, L-500, L-750 and L-830 play at each speed? How much faster do the audio and video heads wear when using BetaScan? What's the replacement cost for the audio and video heads? Is it possible that the VHS format could come up with a feature like BetaScan?*

B.M., Ft. Worth, TX

**A:** Well, first off, we've been unaware of any overt bias towards or against any video format in *The Videophile*, having reviewed a number of different VTR's over the past few years and both praising and condemning different decks for each respective format. If anything, the only thing we try to be biased toward is *quality video*, regardless of format. This would tend to leave out any slow-speed recordings, for both VHS and Beta.

The writing speed--which is the effective velocity at which the video images are being recorded on tape, taking into consideration the actual forward tape speed and the 1800 RPM video head speed--is about 690 inches per second for Beta and about 570 for VHS (in the NTSC system). The actual linear velocity doesn't alter this specification very much, because the greatest speed determining factor is the head wheel diameter and speed, which is constant. The linear speeds for X-1, X-2 and X-3 are 4 cm, 2cm, and 1.3 cm/sec., respectively, and the ideal head gaps for each speed are 60 microns, 30 microns and 20 microns. You'll note that it's important to use as wide a gap as possible for recording, though this is not so much an important point in playback. We've already covered the maximum record/playback times of Beta and VHS cassettes in Issue #21, but suffice it to say that a standard L-500 tape can provide 1 hour, 2 hour, or 3 hour recording at X-1, X-2 and X-3, respectively, and an ultra thin L-830 can provide 100 minutes, 200 minutes, or 300 minutes (5 hours) of recording at the same three speeds.

The problem of head wear in BetaScan is one we've devoted a great deal of thought to in the past few months. Although Sony claims that their improved head and transport guide designs result in negligible wear with BetaScan, it's a safe bet that there's more wear using BetaScan than there is in normal playback or fast-forwarding and rewinding. A Sony spokesman explained to us that BetaScan doesn't significantly harm tapes or video heads more than, say, extended pausing. The best advice would probably be to avoid watching a lot of 2-hour movies exclusively in the BetaScan mode, and use it only to quickly pass over unwanted segments.

A quick call to our local Sony service center tells us that a new set of video heads installed in an SL-5400 or 5600 is right around \$175 with labor. The audio/control track head assembly is about \$150. (Both rates are almost identical to those given to us by RCA and Panasonic for their VTR's.) Given the life expectancy of

these heads to be at least 1000 hours (and often more, by our own experience), this works out to roughly 30 cents an hour, which would seem to be a pretty good bargain.

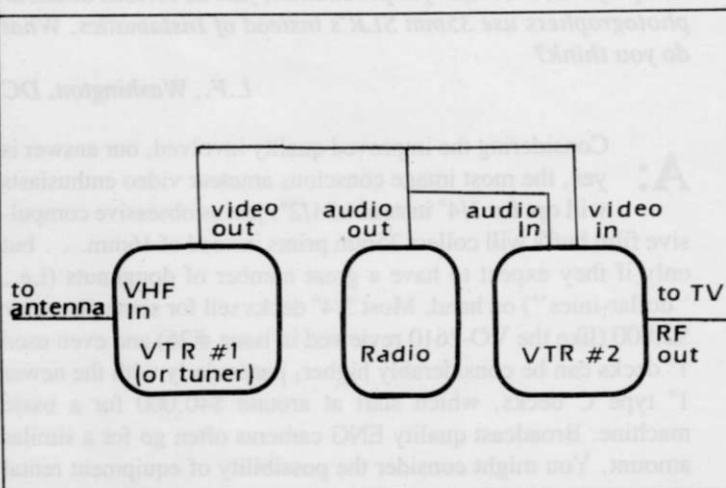
The VHS format definitely *has* come up with its own version of BetaScan, which some of the manufacturers are calling "Picture Search," or "Speed Search," or "OmniScan." Any way you call it, it's all about the same, though be forewarned that few such VHS search systems run as fast as their Beta equivalents; also, very few of the new VHS machines released so far can search or still-frame 2 hour/SP-mode videocassettes, which is most unfortunate considering the fact that nearly all VHS prerecorded tapes are SP-mode cassettes. However, RCA's new VET-650 (reviewed in this issue) can work with all 2/4/6-hour tapes by virtue of its 4-head design, and yet also offers high speed search in all three modes (unlike the VET-250 and VET-450).

### A BASKETBALL FAN'S LAMENT

**Q:** *I have a new Zenith VR-9000W (similar to Sony's 5400) and want to record a radio announcer's play-by-play while simultaneously recording the video from a University of Kentucky basketball game broadcast. Apparently, the configuration of my recorder is such that it is impossible for me to accomplish this. Is there any way to accomplish this "simul-dub"?*

J.L.R., Glasgow, KY

**A:** Unfortunately, most new Beta machines have a tuner/auxiliary switch to select both sources going into the recorder, precluding using the video from one and the audio from the other. The only easy method we can think of would be to buy or borrow another tuner (or another VTR) and feed its off-air video output into the deck, then connect your radio's output to your deck's aux. input as shown in the diagram below. Note that earlier Beta machines (like Zenith's JR and KR-9000 models) used an automatic aux./tuner switch, which would allow you to just plug in the audio, leaving the video alone. It's possible your deck could be modified to provide *separate* audio/video source switching (i.e., from the tuner and an aux. audio source, or from the aux. video source and the tuner), but it might be more trouble than it's worth to try such a modification.





## A SONY ANTIQUE

**Q:** *I own a Betamax console, the LV-1901, and recently purchased an SL-5400 deck. I concurrently sold off the recorder (X-1) section of the console. I still have the electronics that were used to feed the recorder, and I wonder if there is any use I can make of them. The 5400 has its own electronics, so there's no point in using the console's electronics for recording; I don't have a second VTR. Is it possible to hook up the console into some kind of patch bay, provided I can figure out something useful to do with them?*

C.A.K., Mission Viejo, CA

**A:** Actually, it would seem to us to have been a much wiser idea to hold on to the LV-1901 in its entirety, since we think there's a very good chance that it may ultimately become a kind of "Video Antique" similar to valuable old sets from the 40's and 50's (like Philco's odd-looking "Futura" TV set, your Technical Editor's favorite oldy-but-moldy). Surely you can't really get much money for the old SL-6200 (the deck in the console), since it records only X-1 and has no tuner or RF modulator.

But as far as your question goes, although you do have a complete set of tuner electronics inside the console, it can't really be used for much except to feed the picture tube or another VTR, and although a direct audio/video patch bay would facilitate this kind of use, it's hard for us to see how this could be practical if you don't have two VTR's already. Since the 1901's internal tuner does use standard phono and mini-phone plugs for video and audio, respectively, hooking it up to another source wouldn't be difficult, however. Hook the tuner up just as you would a camera or other external source, and it should work fine.

## YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE

**Q:** *I've been thinking of buying a portable VTR and camera, and should be making this purchase in the very near future. I'm planning on taping a friend's wedding, in the event I make the purchase soon enough. What I need to know is, will I need a lighting set, a tripod and an extra mike? I'd like to make it as professional as possible, and present the tape to my friend as a present. I'm thinking of the Panasonic PV-2200 recorder and the PK-300 camera. Do these sound like a wise choice?*

R.J., Sarasota, FL

**A:** During mobile taping with a portable video set-up, always use a tripod whenever possible to insure the steadiest possible picture. For indoor shooting, a small lighting kit like Comprehensive's LK-10 Econo Litepak (available for under \$200 from your dealer, or from Comprehensive Video Supply Corp., 148 Veterans Drive, Northvale, NJ 07647) should be all you'll need for most situations, giving you three small 600-watt quartz lamps and stands. Or, \$100 more will buy you essentially the same kit plus 3 four-leaf barndoors, used to help you aim the light more accurately. Unfortunately, almost all good quality photographic lights are fairly expensive; the bulbs alone for even

the inexpensive system described above are more than \$15 each. But as one experienced lighting director once put it, "you're nowhere without light."

Your video dealer should be able to recommend and supply an inexpensive tripod for your camera for as little as \$100 or so. We'd advise avoiding anything cheaper, staying away from models intended for use with still cameras. Ideally, a small 16mm fluid head tripod can be used, though most of these cost well over \$300 and may be out of league for the casual user.

Any large electronics store or local Radio Shack should be able to provide you with a good quality inexpensive microphone in the \$20-\$50 range. One of the best we've found is Superscope's EC-12B (similar to Sony's ECM-31HVC), which is a telescoping "wand"-type unit similar to expensive professional TV microphones, and doubles as a tiny lavalier mike that can clip to the lapel of your performers. If you plan on having your camera far away from your subjects, it's definitely a wise idea to purchase a long extension cord and run an external microphone as close as possible, and avoid using the camera's built-in mike.

Finally, we'd advise against the PK-300 camera because of its age and limited white-balance circuitry. Also, it was never intended as a portable camera, and weighs considerably more than newer models like the PK-600, 700 and 750. We'd recommend you evaluate any of the latter cameras (or similar units like RCA's CC-004 and 006), and opt for one of them unless the price on the PK-300 is simply too good to pass up. On the other hand, even though the PV-2200 has been discontinued by the manufacturer, it's still considerably better than the updated 2/4/6-hour PV-2600 (recently discontinued as well), though both are much heavier than Panasonic's recently introduced PV-3000 series and RCA's 150 series.

## PRICE GOUGING?

**Q:** *Can you explain as to how a retailer (a mail order tape distributor) can sell a pre-recorded tape at a lower price than the wholesaler (a very large tape club and manufacturer in Michigan)? It sounds like an attempt to hold prices up unfairly.*

D.B., Sheffield, MA

**A:** If the wholesale company you speak of is Magnetic Video, we can tell you that their \$50-60 list titles are supplied to their dealers at a wholesale cost of perhaps 25% less, or close to \$40. In quantity, this cost can go down even further, depending on how many tapes are ordered. In some cases, certain independent distributors can get much lower prices by ordering in extremely large quantities, and then supply the tapes to their dealers at a cost below the manufacturer's standard wholesale rate. This is one explanation of what this mail-order tape distributor may be doing. There are other possibilities that spring to mind, including the possibility that the dealer is selling unauthorized bootleg copies of the actual pre-recorded tapes, which would certainly lower their cost considerably (though at a significant quality loss, as well).

(continued on page 74)



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

## SPECIAL REPORT—

### *The new VTR's for 1981*

In the next few pages, we present the results of our recent tests on what we believe are the cream of the crop among all the current video recorders—RCA's VET-650 (identical except for a few cosmetic changes to Panasonic's PV-1750 and several other models from Magnavox, Quasar and other firms), RCA's VET-250 (ditto, with Panasonic's PV-1250 and others), Sony's SL-5800, and the incomparable SL-J9.



Although our final opinions on these machines haven't yet been completed, all of us on TV's technical staff feel they represent the state-of-the-art in video technology, each in their own way, and dramatically demonstrate the incredible progress occurring in the consumer video industry. Frankly, we did not believe that such developments as full-function remote, slow-motion, and high speed picture-search would be the norm by 1980 when we first predicted what features might be appearing in consumer VTR's of the future (in TV #15's "What I Would Do if I Were Akio Morita"). Whatever the case, we're glad to see that most of the time such features are being combined with a refinement of audio and video quality, improved construction and design, and an ease of operation that makes last year's machines look like Model T's by comparison.

What do we have to look forward to in the VTR's of tomorrow? Well, for one, pushbutton random-access tuning, which would allow programming all 105 possible channels available for cable TV use, including mid-band and super-band Pay-TV and infor-

mational channels. Improved editing capability is another important feature that was attempted (with marginal success) by Matsushita in the VHS machines reviewed here. We're going to hope that future machines will be even better, possibly rivaling broadcast  $\frac{3}{4}$ " units in this regard. Add on a few other expected technological advancements, like 3-week/20-event programming (don't laugh—we didn't even giggle when Panasonic's 14-day/7-event decks were first shown) or possibly new improved oxide formulations (like Metal tape, first discussed back in #15), and you may come up with a machine that once again renders the wonders of 1980 into the Model T's of 1983. Only time will tell, but we sincerely hope that videophiles everywhere will carefully evaluate these apparent advances before laying down your hard-earned cash for any new VTR. We'll continue to try to sort out the honest advances from the tawdry pseudo-innovations as best we can in upcoming issues.

### RCA VET-250 VHS VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

**Manufacturer:** Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., 1006 Kadoma, Osaka, Japan (Distributed by RCA Corporation, 600 N. Sherman Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46201)

**Serial No.:** 0212FM089 (May 19, 1980)

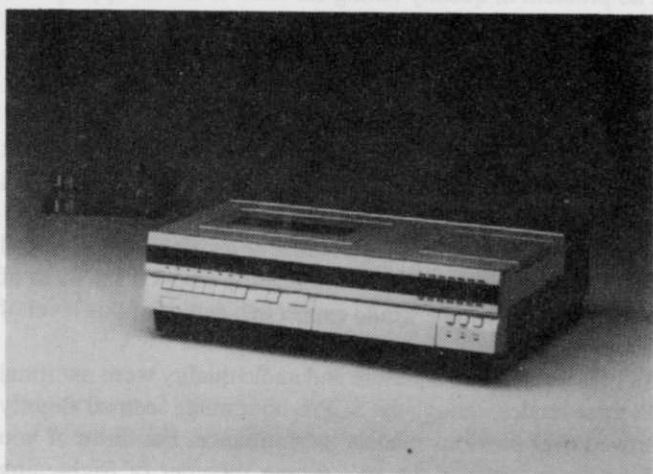
**Source:** Dealer loan (Muntz Electronics, 7700 Densmore Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91406)

**Cost:** \$995.00 (includes miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors, remote pause/picture search/channel selector, and sample VK-125 cassette)

RCA's latest Matsushita-built VTR's have met the "BetaScan" challenge from Sony head-on, utilizing a newly-designed transport and a modern low-profile cabinet, providing a very attractive VTR at a modest price. The VET-250 is the first "3rd Generation" 6-hour deck we've evaluated so far (the first two being the original 2/4/6-hour and two- and four-headed mechanical transport decks), and is the subject of this **Product Report**.



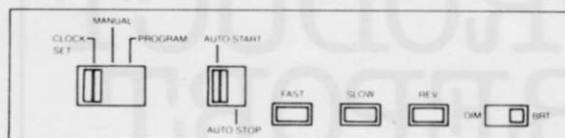
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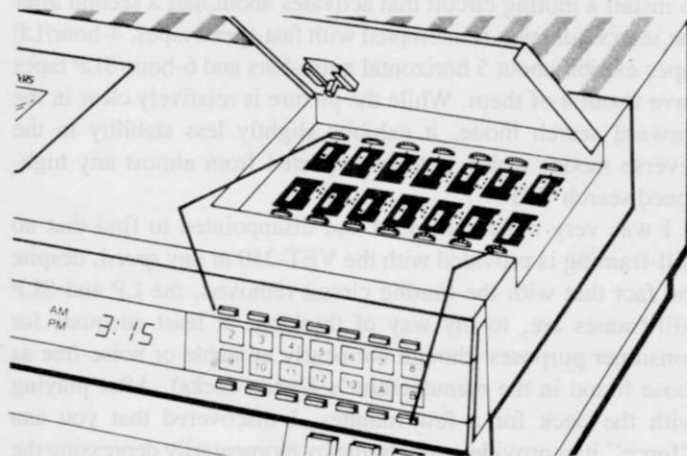
**Appearance:** The 250 has a sleek silver and mahogany-colored plastic cabinet, about 19"×14"×5½", and is very lightweight at less than 28 pounds. Unlike all earlier Panasonic and RCA-type consumer AC machines, this VTR uses light-touch solenoid transport controls in the standard Eject/Rewind/Stop/Fast-Forward/Play/Record/Audio Dub/Pause configuration. Also provided are two additional solenoid controls for Picture Search (forward and reverse), and a three-position switch for SP/LP/SLP record speed selection. A small sliding door opens to reveal a hidden compartment underneath the transport control area, providing a sub-mini phone jack for camera remote pause, phono jacks for external Video and Audio inputs, a mini phone jack for an external microphone (which overrides any other audio input), a switch for selecting between recording from the internal tuner or the external inputs, and a knurled Tracking knob. Above the transport controls are small LED's that light up when each control is activated, as well as two additional LED's for indicating when the camera input is used and when the VTR senses excessive moisture on its video heads, respectively.

A mechanical 4-digit index counter with memory rewind is located in the center of the 250, along with a blue LED clock/timer. Underneath the deck, a hinged flap (which seems rather flimsily constructed) provides access to controls for adjusting the

time as well as presetting one on/off event in its memory. Nearby, a Dim/Bright switch can be used to adjust the intensity of the readout.



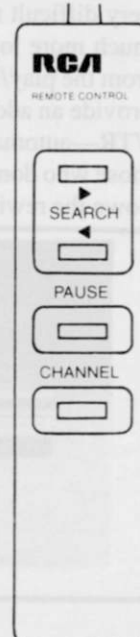
The right side of the deck contains the bulk of the internal tuner circuitry featuring a 14-position varactor selector, with a hinged panel on the top side of the deck opening to reveal the tuner preset controls. A switch inside activates the AFT circuits (which we left



on for most of our tests). The bottom right side has three silver mechanical buttons for selecting RF output (TV or VTR), activating the timer, and turning it on or off manually, with respective LED indicators. Finally, a 6-pin DIN jack is used to connect the remote Pause/Search/Channel-selector, which is provided with a lengthy 20 ft. cable for operating the recorder from across the room; this remote control has 4 light-touch pushbuttons for Forward/Reverse Search, Pause, and Channel Selecting (up only).

The back of the 250 has the usual array of 75 ohm VHF F jacks and 300 ohm terminal posts for antenna inputs and outputs, a channel 3/4 RF modulator selector, and two phono jacks for Audio and Video Out, as well as the AC cord. We noted that the deck is rated at 53 watts—probably the lowest power-consumption rate of an AC VTR yet released, except for Panasonic's identical twin, the PV-1300.

**Features/Operation:** The VET-250 is the first VHS machine released in the U.S. that features high-speed picture search, not to be confused with the two- or three-times normal speed viewing found in previous models (like RCA's own VDT-625, reviewed in #25). Unfortunately, because of the deck's 19-micron video heads, the noise bars present in scanning 2-hour SP recordings render



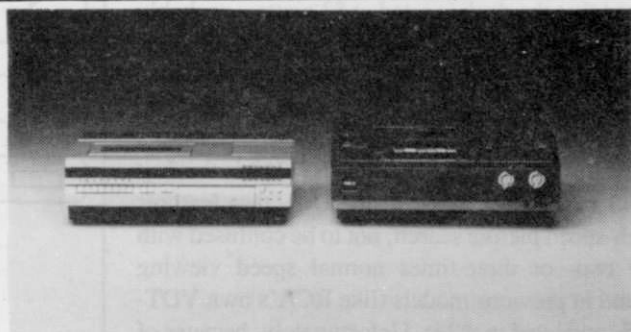


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the image very difficult to view, so the manufacturer has elected to install a muting circuit that activates about half a second after the search function is attempted with fast-speed tapes. 4-hour/LP tapes exhibit about 5 horizontal noise-bars and 6-hour/SLP tapes have about 4 of them. While the picture is relatively clear in the forward search mode, it exhibits slightly less stability in the reverse mode, which is to be expected from almost any high-speed search VTR.

I was very much surprised and disappointed to find that no still-framing is provided with the VET-250 *at any speed*, despite the fact that with the muting circuit removed, the LP and SLP still-frames are, to my way of thinking, at least adequate for consumer purposes (though not nearly as stable or noise-free as those found in the manufacturer's 4-head decks). After playing with the deck for a few minutes, I discovered that you can "force" it to provide a still-frame by momentarily depressing the "Search" button every second or two, though naturally this little trick is not covered in the otherwise thorough 32-page instruction manual.

The 250's light-touch solenoid controls were not quite as easy to work with as we had hoped, requiring a solid depression before they were properly activated. In addition, all the transport controls are of the same size and the same distance apart, making it very difficult to operate the deck by "feel"; it would have been much more logical to at least separate the stop and wind modes from the play/record and dub modes. The solenoid transport does provide an additional benefit not found in any previous consumer VTR—automatic rewind at the end of the tape, which is handy for those who don't like the exercise of having to walk over and press down the rewind button manually.



Like last year's VDT-501 (an essentially identical unit with a click-stop tuner and lacking the 250's search capability and solenoid transport), the new deck is essentially a "no-frills" VHS recorder, providing only 1 day/1 event programming. The clock/timer preset controls allow you to program the start and stop time with the standard "fast/slow/reverse" controls, though because of the new transport design, it cannot be set to *playback* at a specific time (useful for dubbing via timer), but rather, can be set for recording only. We noted that it has a newly-designed cassette housing which ejects quite solidly and is pneumatically damped, yet seems to expose a great deal of space behind it, a potential (though probably unlikely) source of trouble should any object(s) slip down and fall inside the machine.

The internal tuner circuitry is essentially identical to that found in all of RCA and Panasonic's previous varactor decks, and we had no problem in quickly tuning the deck to all the appropriate local stations. A channel lockout feature is provided to help avoid accidentally changing the station during recording unless the pause button is depressed first.

**Performance:** When you get right down to it, I can't help but echo Dickens and say that "it was the best of VTR's, and it was the worst of VTR's." I found testing the VET-250 to be frustrating in a number of ways mainly because of its superior design and features *up to a point*, which unfortunately stopped far short of providing the quality one would expect in a device of this level of technology.

As I feared, the 250's picture and audio quality were marginal in all three modes, though the SLP/6-hour mode seemed slightly improved over previous models' performance. For those of you looking for a "state-of-the-art" 6-hour recorder (a frightening thought, but possibly unavoidable for some collectors), the 250 is probably your best bet. Using sample High-Grade tapes provided by TDK and Fuji, we achieved fair-to-middling results at SLP, improving the audio a little more than the video. At the other speeds, these provided only a slight improvement, but still a hair better than standard tapes.

The manufacturer's specifications for the 2-hour mode include:  
Video S/N Ratio: 43 dB (for B&W recordings; subjectively less than 39 dB for SLP)

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color; perhaps 10% less for SLP)

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB

Audio Response: 50-10,000 Hz (no reference given; the SLP response probably loss at least 3,000 Hz)

FF & Rewind Time: about 3½ minutes (for T-120)

As in the past, these specs are practically identical to most of RCA's previous units, which tends to make us question their credibility. All things considered, while the 250 leaves a lot to be desired for video quality when compared to industrial or 4-head consumer decks, it does a barely acceptable job for most mass-market applications. . .

Except in one area: *editing*. We've deliberately saved the worst part for last—the single biggest disappointment we had



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with the VET-250. In an effort to reduce video moiré (the shimmering color effect often seen at edit points made on consumer VTR's), all of the new Matsushita solenoid decks automatically back up the tape half a second whenever the pause control is depressed, to insure a clean "cut" during a pause edit. Unfortunately, this technique also deletes the last split second of the program segment recorded right before the commercial break, which makes precise editing extremely difficult, if not impossible. After a lengthy practice session, we were finally able to get the knack of allowing the deck to record an additional fraction of a second into the commercial break *before* depressing the pause control so that when the automatic-backspace function occurs, the only portion that will be missing is that same unwanted half-second of commercial. (This process is a lot more difficult to explain in print than it is to try in person, so bear with us.) Unfortunately, this "knack" is very difficult to control precisely, and recueing the machine for mis-fired edits (during unexpected commercial breaks, for example) or putting together in-depth, complex, edited programs is enough to turn one's hair gray. Obviously, someone in the R&D department foolishly dropped in this poorly-designed backspace-edit feature without bothering to compensate for the aforementioned automatic erasure problem, and this severe deficiency alone is enough to dictate against our recommending it—unless you don't plan on deleting many commercials or doing much editing with it.

It's just the kind of half-baked, short-sighted thinking that frustrates us most—resulting in products that come close to the mark but just miss because of one or two stupid problems.

**Conclusion:** Considering how adept most videophiles we know are at editing, and how much pride even the average VTR owner takes in carefully exising commercials during off-air telecasts, we would be extremely reluctant to recommend the VET-250 unless significant modifications or design changes were made to the recorder in the immediate future to alleviate these editing problems (a highly unlikely event, to be sure). However, for the budget-conscious videophile looking for the best 6-hour recorder available, and provided you can work out the difficulty of accurate editing, it would seem to be about the lowest-priced (around \$750, discounted) VTR available at this time. But don't expect it to offer much convenience, outside of the picture-search feature.—MFW

[Special thanks to video consultant Fred Chriss for providing the VET-250 used in this review.]

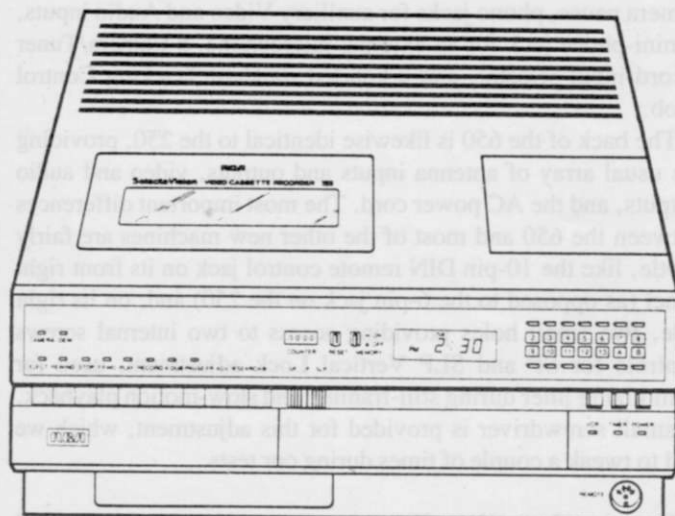
## RCA VET-650 VHS VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

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

**Serial No.:** 0325FM089 (August, 1980)

**Source:** Dealer loan (Muntz Electronics, 7700 Densmore Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91406)

**Cost:** \$1450.00 (includes miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors, full-function remote control/channel selector, and sample VK-125 cassette)



Fleshing out the rest of RCA's new VHS line is their high-end VET-650, the most expensive consumer video recorder yet released by the firm. It matches the 250's styling and is the first U.S. full-function remote-control consumer VTR we have tested (and hopefully, not the last).

**Appearance:** The 650 is almost identical in appearance to RCA's 250, with an attractive silver, black and walnut-colored plastic cabinet. The main difference between the two is the 33-pound 650's slightly larger size (about 6½" x 19" x 14½"), mainly an increase in height to accommodate the additional slow-motion controls and programmable timer circuitry, and an all-black top as opposed to the 250's silver-grey plastic top. Its light-touch solenoid controls include an additional "FR. ADV." button used for advancing the still-frame playback one frame at a time, located between the Pause and left and right Search controls. Immediately underneath the SP/LP/SLP record speed selector, in the middle of the deck, is an easy-to-open, spring-loaded



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compartment that opens to reveal a 14-day/7-event microprocessor-controlled timer and a small round knob for Slow Tracking adjustment. The blue LED timer has several additional displays for the days of the week as well as a 1-bar/2-bar readout to indicate week #1 or week #2. The lower left side of the 650 contains a hidden compartment with all the same controls and jacks found in the 250, including a sub-mini jack for remote camera pause, phono jacks for auxiliary Video and Audio inputs, a mini-phone jack for an external microphone, a Camera/Tuner record input selector, and a knurled standard Tracking Control knob.

The back of the 650 is likewise identical to the 250, providing the usual array of antenna inputs and outputs, video and audio outputs, and the AC power cord. The most important differences between the 650 and most of the other new machines are fairly subtle, like the 10-pin DIN remote control jack on its front right panel (as opposed to the 6-pin jack on the 250) and, on its right side, two small holes providing access to two internal screws controls for SP and SLP Vertical Lock adjustment, used for minimizing jitter during still-framing and slow-motion playback. A small screwdriver is provided for this adjustment, which we had to tweak a couple of times during our tests.

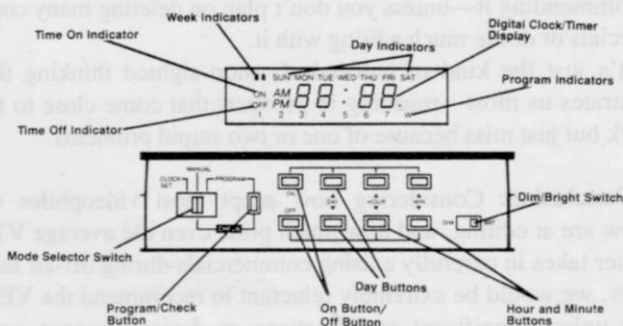
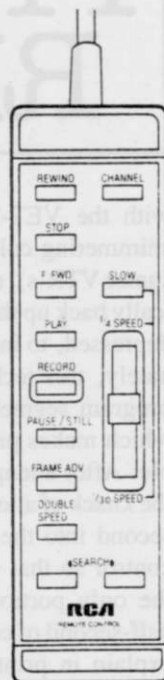
**Features/Operation:** The most welcomed feature we found with the VET-650 was its unique 4-head design (as first used in JVC's HR-6700 and later in RCA's own VDT-625 and Panasonic's PV-1650, all reviewed in past issues), which provides the recorder with excellent SP and adequate SLP recording and playback, with the LP mode not very distinguishable from SLP. In addition, the 4-head design allows a variety of "special effect" playback functions including slow-motion and still-framing in the SP and SLP modes, though LP recordings are muted during these functions due to the aforementioned head compromise. We might add that in order to provide noiseless still-framing, Matsushita has elected to make one of the heads for each mode slightly larger than the other (90 and 70 microns for the SP mode, for example), which results in a standard 60 micron, two-hour recording due to adjacent track erasure, yet helps avoid scanning any noise-bars during playback. (A long-winded explanation, to be sure, but we just thought you might like to know.)

Also provided in the VET-650, as well as the 250 and 450, is Matsushita's new "Picture Search" feature, essentially a VHS

version of Sony's "BetaScan"; Panasonic even goes so far as to call it "OmniScan" in their respective PV-1750, 1400 and 1300. Unlike the 250, however, the 650 allows high-speed search in all three modes, though the LP mode is somewhat noisier than the other two.

Perhaps the most exciting feature of the VET-650 is its unique full-function remote control unit, which allows complete operation of every transport mode except audio dub, as well as providing remote channel selection, variable slow-motion from about 1/4 to 1/30 normal speed, frame-by-frame advance, and Double Speed playback. The 650's slow-motion mode is initiated by depressing the Slow button on the remote and adjusting the variable lever. The Double Speed playback mode allows viewing programs in half the time, though unfortunately with the audio muted completely. RCA would be wise to incorporate some kind of audio compression circuit during this mode to provide some kind of intelligible soundtrack, as found in JVC's 6700. Neither the Double Speed nor the Slow-motion controls are provided on the recorder itself, as with Sony's 5800. They can only be activated with the remote control.

The 650's internal 14-day/8-event microprocessor is only slightly more difficult to program than the system used in RCA's earlier VCT-400X and VDT-625 decks, and is virtually identical to that used with Panasonic's PV-A32E and PV-A35E tuner/timers provided for use with the firm's portapak. As a matter of fact, Matsushita's new AC-powered VTR's are almost identical to their new VHS portapaks and tuner/timers, combined together inside one



complete cabinet, though at a somewhat lower overall cost than buying the two units separately. The timer controls include a three-position switch for choosing between setting the clock, Manual (standard) operation, and Program recording. To program a timer recording, you place this switch in the Program position and depress the Program Check button until the desired event number (1-7) appears in the LED display. Next, you use the additional 6 up/down controls to select the desired day, start time



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and stop time, and depress the appropriate tuner button for the channel number, which will flash when activated. To help you through the programming, LED read-outs for "On" and "Off" appear in the timer window to tell you which one you're entering. When you run through the days of the week a second time, two little blue bars will appear in the upper left of the read-out to indicate Week #2, as explained earlier.

For recording at the same time and day every week, you go past event 7 with the Program/Check button until the "W" illuminates and then program the VTR normally. Likewise, to record at the same time every day of the week (useful for you soap opera fans), you depress the Day button past "Saturday" until all the day indicators have illuminated, and then program in the start and stop time normally. We noted that using all 7 of the program numbers plus the additional "W" program gives you 8 potential preset events—the largest amount yet provided by any consumer VTR.

All of this is much more difficult to explain in print than it is in actual practice, but suffice it to say that most beings of average intelligence should have no difficulty in mastering the 650's programming after digesting RCA's well-composed instructions. We noted that like all the new Matsushita-type machines, the 650 cannot be programmed for timer playback, which precludes using it for automatic playback shut-off during timer dubbing.

**Performance:** We found the VET-650 to match the earlier VDT-625's picture quality by and large all the way down the line, providing very good SP recording and somewhat mediocre LP performance, about equal to the barely-acceptable SLP mode. Due to Matsushita's new design using all direct-drive motors, we felt that the 650's audio performance was somewhat improved, at least for wow and flutter (especially in the 6-hour mode).

No manufacturer's specifications were provided, but we would subjectively estimate them to be slightly improved over the VDT-620 and PV-1650 reviewed in #25, which included the following:

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 45 dB (monochrome SP; probably around 39 dB for SLP)

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

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB (at SP)

Power Requirements: 62 watts at 120 VAC

We noted the usual subtle image smearing with the LP and SLP modes, though SP mode recordings were almost as good as those made on our highly-recommended NV-8200 industrial VHS deck. The special effect functions yielded fair-to-good results, with a slight amount of noise and flickering noticed in the slow-motion mode, though the still-frame performance was excellent. Operationally, I found the 650's controls somewhat difficult and frustrating to use since all 11 of them are arranged and sized identically, making working them by "feel" almost impossible. Matsushita would be wise to re-group them, at least staggering the placement of the wind mode controls separately from the play/stop/record controls for faster, easier operation.

I also noticed a tendency for the 650 to act very sluggish and erratically between the Search and regular Playback modes, resulting in at least a 1-second delay between functions. In addition, we found the high-speed search picture quality to be slightly worse, overall, than either the 5800 or J9, but still perfectly acceptable for most consumer applications. I also noted that the transport goes into a variety of conniptions during the slow-motion mode, subjecting the take-up hub to a strange "bump and grind" motion which led me to wonder whether this would lead to increased tape wear or early transport failure. After several days of testing, our results were inconclusive, though I felt that this unusual movement probably would not result in any real difficulty unless it was overused (say, 10 hours a day, every day, for several months). This would be difficult to accomplish considering that the deck contains a built-in circuit that stops the machine after about 10 minutes of slow-motion playback (or 5 minutes of still-framing).

In addition to the above operational problems, we again noticed the inclusion of the new "backspace edit" feature, which provides an almost glitchless crash/pseudo-assemble edit by backing up on the tape a second or two whenever the machine is put into pause during the record mode. I noted that although the accidental-erasure problem seemed a little improved over the VET-250 (see review), a little trial-and-error practice was still needed to determine exactly how much recorded material was lost when the pause mode was used.

Other than the aforementioned transport sluggishness and minor editing problems, I found the VET-650 to be excellent inside and out and capable of generally good results with a variety of dubbed and off-air material.

**Conclusion:** Even though it's not really fair to do so, I want to point out that at no time did I feel any of the 650's special effect modes exceeded the quality of the identical modes from Sony's SL-8200 and J9. However . . . and before my mailbox becomes stuffed with angry complaints and letter bombs from irate VHS owners . . . let me also point out that, as expected, the VET-650's SP mode still seems slightly superior to the X-2 mode from these Beta-format decks, though the comparison is becoming more and more difficult to evaluate as each manufacturer continues to improve their format's overall image quality. My most honest opinion at this time is that I have a tendency to notice better color and image sharpness with X-2, and fewer dropouts and



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better audio with SP, so the final word on which definitely out-performs the other is not an easy point on which to argue.

One thing is for certain: the full-function remote of the VET-650 clearly makes it much more convenient to operate than any U.S. consumer Beta recorder yet released, regardless of picture quality, and for the average consumer, the 650 will most likely be preferable to the 5800 on a feature-for-feature basis. This opinion is borne out by the reportedly record sales of the VET-650, which is selling like hotcakes all over the country (discounted to as low as \$1100 in some areas). So, for VHS collectors, the 650 would seem to be the most state-of-the-art recorder money can buy, with the exception of a few industrial decks and portapaks. While its picture quality and overall performance aren't exactly light-years away from RCA's earlier 625, we'd still highly recommend the VET-650 as an excellent, all-around deluxe VHS recorder.—MFW

[Special thanks to the Madman himself, Earl Munts, for providing the VET-650 used in our review.]

## SONY SL-5800 BETAMAX VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

**Manufacturer:** Sony Corporation, 7-25 Kitashinagawa 60-chome, Sinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
(distributed by Sony Consumer Products Co.,  
9 West 47th Street,  
New York, NY 10019)

**Serial No.:** 12059

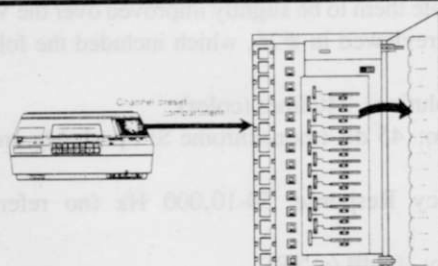
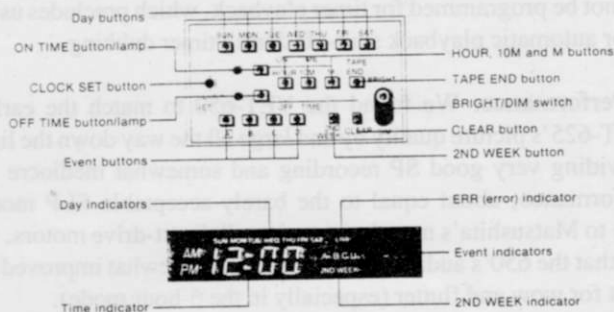
**Source:** Dealer loan (Video Network, 1353 E. Colorado Blvd., Glendale, CA 91205)

**Cost:** \$1450.00 (includes miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors, RM-58W Remote BetaScan Commander, and sample L-250 videocassette; does not include optional \$150 AG-300 Videocassette Auto-Changer)

Sony's newest U.S. consumer Beta recorder, the SL-5800, is the first consumer VTR from the firm to incorporate noiseless slow-motion and still-framing, while retaining the SL-5600's basic design and 14-day/4-event tuner/timer. It's also the most expensive home video recorder yet released by the firm in America.



**Appearance:** The SL-5800 is practically identical in appearance to the earlier SL-5600 (reviewed in #25), except for the bold "Time Commander/SL-5800" legend on the upper right corner of the front panel. The attractive wood-grain 19½"x6½"x14⅞" unit weighs about 36½ pounds—just about identical to the 5600 in every way. The solenoid-assisted transport uses mechanical piano-type keys to select the various modes, arranged in the familiar 5000-series Pause/Eject/Rewind/Stop/Play/Fast Forward/Record/Audio Dub configuration, with the Record key slightly wider than the others to allow easy operation by touch.





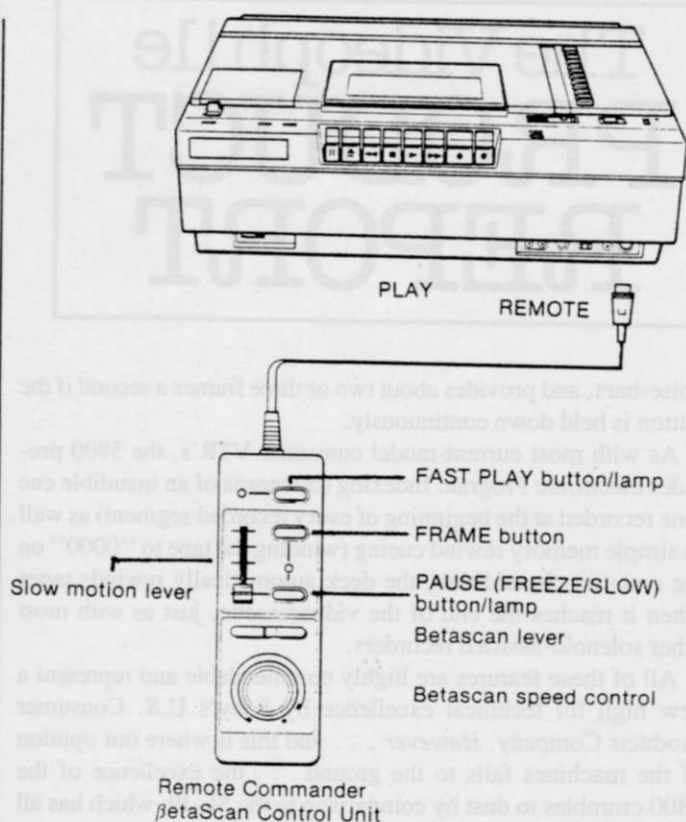
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and timer circuitry, and the upper right has the 14-channel varactor tuner, presettable with the controls hidden under a hinged panel. The lower left side of the deck has two knurled knobs for Normal Tracking and Slow-Motion Tracking, respectively, and the lower right side has two mini-phone jacks for an external Microphone and Auxiliary audio inputs, a phono jack for Auxiliary Video In, a sub-mini phone jack for Remote Camera Pause, and an unusual 13-pin DIN jack for the remote BetaScan Commander (which we sadly noted would not accommodate the 13-pin RM-78 full-function Remote Controller provided with the J9, reviewed in this issue).

The back of the 5800 is likewise identical to the 5800, with appropriate jacks for connecting antenna sources and an RF channel  $\frac{3}{4}$  output, as well as a phono and mini-phone jack for Video and Audio outputs, respectively. Also provided is a small black knob for adjusting the Vertical Lock of the slow-motion and still-frame playback, which we did not have to adjust for our tests, and a hidden switch for altering the VTR's video processing for PCM digital audio recording (with adaptors like Sony's \$5,000 PCM-10). The right side of the 5800 contains a sub-miniature phone jack for connecting the optional AG-300 Auto-changer, allowing complete programmable timer recording and cassette changing, and also a switch for manual X-1 playback speed selection. Finally, a convenient 400 watt AC outlet is provided next to the power cord.

The RM-58W Remote BetaScan Commander provides complete playback control of all the SL-5800's playback functions, including light-touch pushbuttons for Fast Play (three times normal speed), Pause/Freeze/Slow, a variable lever for varying the speed from still-frame to about  $\frac{1}{3}$  normal speed, a Frame button (for advancing the image one frame at a time), and a non-locking rocker switch for Forward and Reverse BetaScan, with a round knob for varying the BetaScan from 5 to 20 times normal speed. by turning this knob fully clockwise to the "Max" position, the 5800 enters the high-speed Rewind or Fast-Forward mode with a muted (black) picture. Yellow LED indicators are provided to tell at a glance if the remote control is in the Fast Play or Pause modes.

**Features/Operation:** Like Sony's other 5000-series recorders (the SL-5400 and SL-5600), the 5800 is designed to record at the X-2 and X-3 speeds, playing back all three Beta modes with the aid of the aforementioned rear-panel switch. (We note that this is automatically taken care of by the J9—a definite plus for the latter



machine.) Unlike the former two machines, however, the 5800 uses a unique "double azimuth video head," essentially providing one head slightly smaller than the other to avoid scanning the noise bars during still-frame and slow-motion playback.

In addition, the 5800 provides variable-speed BetaScan of up to 20 times normal speed (for X-2 tapes; even faster for X-3 recordings), with the picture quality varying from having only three or four noise bars for 5X scanning to eight or nine for 20X scanning, otherwise leaving the high-speed image unimpaired for careful study. I noted that varying the speed during the scanning was a little difficult to accomplish, requiring one hand to hold down the button and the other to rotate the knob, though I concede that once the speed is set you really shouldn't have to vary it. Like the other recent U.S. Beta decks, the 5800's BetaScan can be activated either by depressing the Fast-Forward or Rewind button while in the Play mode or by touching the appropriate BetaScan switch on the remote controller.

While the quality of the BetaScan images are slightly marred by noise-bars, we encountered virtually no image impairment in the still-frame and slow-motion modes, which are almost as good, crisp and clean as any we've seen from a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " VTR, save for a slight flickering which did not substantially detract from the overall image. The Slow Tracking control is adjustable only in one direction (clockwise), and didn't always provide enough range to allow perfect slow-motion playback from tapes recorded on other machines, but was still very acceptable and superior to the slow-motion performance from most other VTR's. Likewise, the frame-by-frame advance mode has absolutely no visible



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

noise-bars, and provides about two or three frames a second if the button is held down continuously.

As with most current-model consumer VTR's, the 5800 provides electronic Program Indexing (by means of an inaudible cue tone recorded at the beginning of every recorded segment) as well as simple memory rewind cueing (winding the tape to "0000" on the counter). In addition, the deck automatically rewinds tapes when it reaches the end of the videocassette, just as with most other solenoid-assisted recorders.

All of these features are highly commendable and represent a new high for technical excellence by Sony's U.S. Consumer Products Company. *However . . .* and this is where our opinion of the machines falls to the ground . . . the excellence of the 5800 crumbles to dust by comparison to the SL-J9, which has all of these features, as well as end of tape alarm, a built-in camera jack/DC power supply, stereo audio (which is arguably not of extreme importance in our country at this time), the aforementioned automatic X-1 playback circuit, a sleeker appearance, and, most importantly, *full-function solenoid remote control*.

**Performance:** We were pleased to find that the J9 was equalled in practically every area of performance by the 5800, and slightly bettered in terms of audio (due to the 5800's full mono track, as opposed to the J9's half-sized stereo tracks).

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 45 dB (monochrome X-2; subjectively about 40 dB for X-3)

Audio Frequency Response: 50-10,000 Hz (X-2, no reference given); 50-7,000 Hz (X-3, no reference given)

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB (X-2)

Power requirements: 65 watts @ 120VAC, 60 cycle

We feel that Sony has continued to upgrade the overall quality of X-2 recording to the point that the 5800's recording performance almost equals that of the X-1 quality found with the original SL-7200 released way back in 1976—*almost*, but not quite. Considering that the tape is crawling along at the snail's pace of 2 cm/sec., this is a notable achievement and is a far cry from the somewhat noisier results obtained with the SL-8200's and 8600's of yesteryear.

The editing quality of the SL-5800 was also quite good—perhaps not quite as good as the J9's "time-phase" edits (also found with the SL-3000 portapak), but very acceptable nonethe-

less, with a minimum of moiré and glitches. I had a minor quarrel with the layout of the controls on the RM-58 remote unit, which places the Pause button in the middle of the remote rather than closer to the top, which, to my way of thinking, would have made more sense. As a result, I found myself constantly depressing the "Fast Play" button instead of Pause at the most inopportune moments. Old habits die hard, I'm afraid, but this should be an easy one to overcome with a little patience.

My only other criticism lies with the design of this and almost every other one of Sony's new VTR's, both foreign and American—the inclusion of front panel auxiliary input jacks. This has led to a variety of unsightly cables dangling from my shelves, as well as the potential problem of bending or damaging the input jacks, which really aren't capable of withstanding the use and abuse that 6 months' worth of patching and unpatching can cause. I think it would be far wiser to keep the auxiliary inputs at the *back* of the deck and keep the input selector switch and a 14-pin camera jack at the front of the machine for easy access. That way, the rear panel jacks can be left permanently connected (the standard configuration for most videophiles I have seen), with the front panel camera jack available for a quick temporary auxiliary connection (with an appropriate 14-pin adapting cable) or camera recording, as needed.

**Conclusion:** When you boil the whole thing down, my feelings for the 5800 are tainted because of my high regard for the SL-J9, and this makes it difficult for me to come to a conclusion as to which is the best buy. While at first glance the J9 would seem to have everything going for it, its lack of a modulator and channel 2, 3, and 4 recording capability, as well as its 100VAC power supply, make it a difficult machine to live with on a day-to-day basis unless several modifications are made. However in the long run I feel these are very small concerns and they wouldn't stop me in the slightest from going out of my way to own an SL-J9 as soon as possible.

The SL-5800, while clearly the state-of-the-art U.S. consumer Beta recorder, is far from being *the* state-of-the-art consumer Beta recorder. This title can only belong to the SL-J9, but until the latter machine achieves widespread distribution in this country, I fear that some of you may have no choice but to settle for the otherwise excellent, though inadequate, 5800. And until Sony offers a U.S. version of the other deck, it's not a bad compromise, though one I truly wish we didn't have to live with.—MFW

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## SONY SL-J9 BETAMAX VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

**Manufacturer:** Sony Corporation, 7-25 Kitashinagawa  
60-chome, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
(distributed by Sony Consumer Products Co.,  
9 West 47th Street,  
New York, NY 10019)



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

Serial No.: 2119

Source: Dealer loan (Video Service Center, 1808-B Tribute Road, Sacramento, CA 95815)

Cost: approx. Y300,000 or \$1400.00 (plus shipping and duty tax; includes miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors, dust cover, RM-78 remote control/channel selector, sample L-250 cassette, and RK-74A stereo audio cable)

We sincerely hope that our readers will forgive the rather breathless tone of the following **Product Report**, because the mind of your humble technical editor is still, to quote Hedley Lemarr from *Blazing Saddles*, "... aglow with whirling transient nodes of thought careening through a cosmic vapor of invention ..."—and in this case, it's Sony's incredible invention, the J9, that's caused this excitement.



Without question, the SL-J9 is *the* most amazing, incredible (etc.) consumer VTR yet released since the dawn of the video age. As you'll see in this report, it sets the new standard for the state-of-the-art in low-cost video recording for quality and features. Unfortunately, like the previous SL-J7 (discussed extensively in #21 and #25), the J9 is presently being marketed only some upteen-thousand miles away in the mysterious Orient, for reasons which are presently thought by most of TV's technical staff to be both stupid and short-sighted on the part of Sony's

marketing and product-planning executives. But ... on with the review.

**Appearance:** Like most of Sony's J-series recorders, the J9 has an extremely modern-looking silver and gray plastic exterior. In keeping with Sony's desire to market the deck exclusively overseas, the J9 stark, sleek appearance has a distinctly futuristic look characteristic of most domestic Japanese products, as opposed to the more pedestrian stylings used by most American distributors. The new deck is slightly heftier than the previous model at just over 38 lbs.—somewhat heavier than most current consumer VTR's, as well, but still lighter than many first-generation Beta and VHS units. The J9 is likewise a little larger than the J7 at about 19"x6½"x15¼".

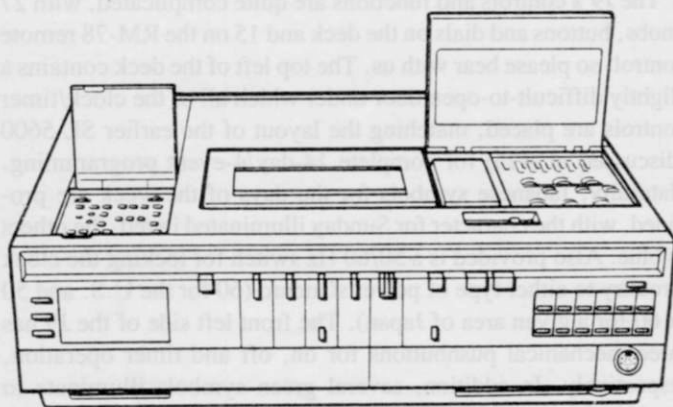
The J9's controls and functions are quite complicated, with 27 knobs, buttons and dials on the deck and 15 on the RM-78 remote control, so please bear with us. The top left of the deck contains a slightly difficult-to-open door under which all of the clock/timer controls are placed, matching the layout of the earlier SL-5600 (discussed in #25) for complete 14-day/4-event programming. Naturally, Japanese symbols for the days of the week are provided, with the character for Sunday illuminated in red, the others in blue. Also provided is a 50/60 Hz switch for locking the clock circuitry to either type of power standard (60 for the U.S. and 50 or 60 for a given area of Japan). The front left side of the J9 has three mechanical pushbuttons for on, off and timer operation, respectively. In addition, several green symbols illuminate to signify which type of operation has been chosen and for a few other functions explained elsewhere. Below the timer's ledge is a fairly hard-to-reach section which has a standard tracking control, a slow-motion tracking control, and two phone jacks for connecting external microphones (for channels 1 and 2).

The center section of the SL-J9 has nine very light-touch solenoid transport controls (somewhat improved over the earlier J7 controls) for Eject/Rewind/Stop/Play/Fast-Forward/Pause and Forward and Reverse BetaScan (at 20 times normal speed, somewhat faster than the standard U.S. BetaScan found in the 5400 and 5600). Directly underneath the Play button is a small knob for activating the 3X normal speed feature; a frame-by-frame advance knob is likewise located underneath the Pause control. Green function symbols above each transport control illuminate whenever the appropriate controls are used; the forward/play symbol flashes where the 3X mode is initiated. The record control is an unusually-shaped knob requiring a firm push before the deck will go into the record mode, apparently as a fail-safe feature. Unlike the other controls, this one glows bright red when in use. Above the transport controls is the cassette compartment, which is pneumatically-damped and solenoid activated for fast, smooth ejecting. Immediately in front of this compartment is a 4-digit mechanical index counter with memory rewind.

The top right side of the deck has all the usual tuner circuits (usable only with U.S. broadcast channels 5-83) providing 12 preset-capacity, as opposed to the 14 channels offered by most U.S. decks. Right above the tuner pushbuttons is a solenoid



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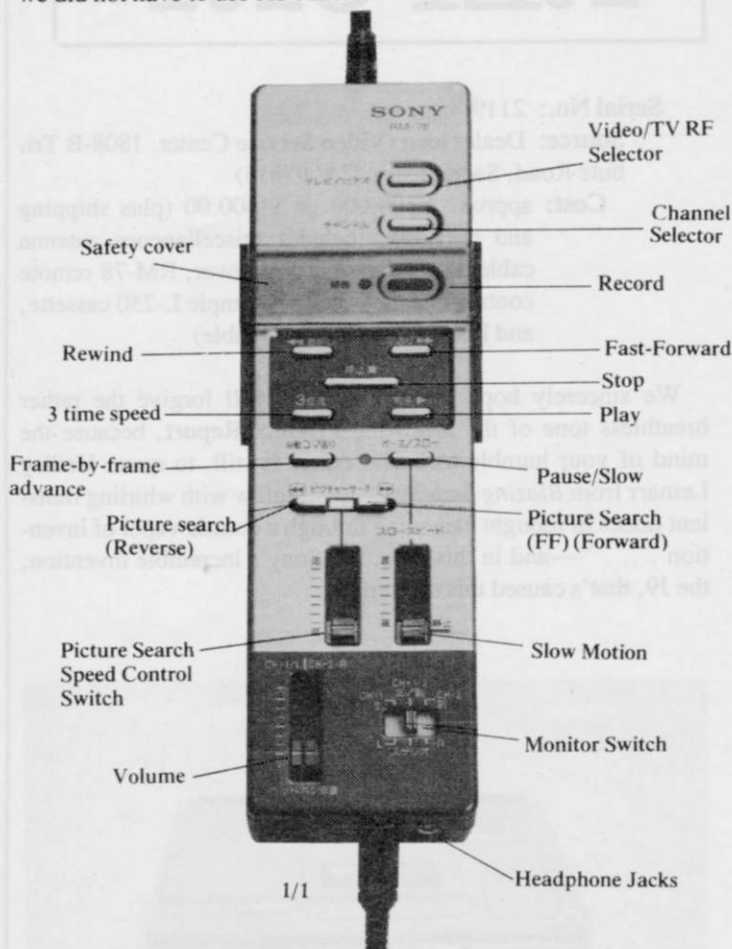
button for selecting either TV or VTR RF output, and an AFT on/off switch is located underneath the tuner-presetting control door.

Below the tuner is a small, difficult-to-open hinged door bearing the legend "Multiplex TV Sound - Video Cassette Recorder J9," under which are located a number of ancilliary controls. From left to right, these controls include: X-2/X-3 record mode selection; Audio Dub (for Channel 1, 2 or both); End of Tape Alarm (which sounds a loud, pulsing tone for 5 seconds after the tape has ended); Program Indexing (like the "Tab Marker" system used in the 5600 and most programmable VHS decks, allowing fast cueing to different segments on a tape); Beta Noise Reduction (a Dolby B-like pre-emphasis system used to help reduce audio noise during recording and playback); Audio Monitor (from Channel 1, 2 or both); and two controls used only for stereo off-air TV broadcasts, one for recording from either channel 1 or channel 2 or both, and the other for recording in mono or stereo.

Below the door is a 13-pin DIN jack for the RM-78 remote control, a 14-pin K-type jack for connecting a Sony HVC-1000 or 2000/80 color camera, and three phono jacks for auxiliary video and audio 1 and 2, as well as a switch for selecting between the three record sources (aux/tuner/camera). The camera jack also provides a 120VDC power supply, doing away with the need for an external AC adaptor.

The back panel of the SL-J9 provides the usual terminal posts for UHF in and out, F jacks for VHF in/RF out, a PCM-record

switch (which automatically deletes the top 20 or so lines of the video signal to avoid interference with the digital adaptor), an RF output selector (for Japanese channels 1 and 2, not receivable in the U.S.). On the right side we find a Dew Heater switch (for automatically removing excess moisture on the video head assembly), a 400 watt AC outlet, and the power chord. Also found was a small black knob used to adjust the Vertical Lock (horizontal jitter) for the J9's still-frame and slow-motion modes, which we did not have to use for our tests.



But, that's not all folks. Next we have the feature-laden RM-78 remote control, which is a lightweight and comfortably-designed 8"x2½"x1" unit with a non-detachable 13 foot cable that plugs into the front of the J9. The RM-78 is similar to the J7's RM-77, with controls for TV/VTR RF output selection, remote channel-changing, and all the standard transport mode functions (except Audio Dub, a minor omission) plus additional controls for Slow-Motion (variable from still-frame to about ⅓ normal speed) and variable BetaScan (from about 5 to 20 times normal speed). The biggest surprise we found on the remote control were two stereo mini-phone plugs used for connecting two sets of headphones (like Sony's excellent lightweight MX-series), complete with variable volume control and channel ½ monitor selection. A sliding plastic cover prevents accidentally depressing the record control or the other transport controls, for those videophiles with two left hands.



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**Features/Operation:** Sony's excellent instruction manual for the SL-J9 covers each and every aspect of the VTR's operation and functions with exacting thoroughness, presented with a plethora of photographs and diagrams in a 58-pp. booklet (!). Although the J9's complexity may overwhelm you at first, it still operates like most VTR's. You start by turning the power switch on (which results in an almost-inaudible, high-pitch whine that comes from somewhere inside the recorder), dropping a tape in, and using the controls just as you would with a conventional deck. Since the J9 has full-logic circuits controlling its solenoid-operated transport, you can easily switch from one mode to another with lightning speed—even faster than most industrial VTR's and definitely with more response than any other consumer machine we've seen.

Without question, the J9's stereo capability and full-function remote control make it *the* most exciting and advanced consumer video recorder yet released in the world, and we found it to be a joy to use in every way. Because of Sony's unique "Double-Azimuth Video Head," which is essentially two standard rotating heads, one made slightly smaller than the other to avoid scanning video noise bars, the deck's slow-motion and still-frame performance is without peer, almost flawless except for a very slight flicker in slow-motion that we found to be unnoticeable by most people. We noted that like the earlier 5000-series, none of these special functions works during X-1 playback, which is most unfortunate.

As mentioned in our discussions on the earlier J7, the J9's tuner is not capable of receiving U.S. channels 2 through 4, using a different frequency band to receive Japan's channels 1-4; likewise, its internal RF modulator provides only a channel 1/2 output, which is not compatible with American receivers. To get around this, we used an additional VTR's auxiliary input and modulator for our testing; we're told by several video firms that the modulator could easily be replaced with a channel 3/4 model, although the tuner modification procedure would be somewhat more difficult. One solution for the latter would be to use a conventional RF up-converter, which changes all the standard VHF frequencies into UHF (channel 2 to 36, 4 to 38, and so on), although this would most likely result in some slight image impairment due to the imperfect up-conversion process itself).

The SL-J9's timer is practically identical to those found in Sony's earlier SL-5600 and 5800 except that it uses standard

24-hour military time for the LED read-out ("18:00" for 6:00 p.m., for example)—a minor irritation, and one we got used to after a few days. Programming as many as four shows over up to a two-week period is easily performed using the internal time-setting controls (with separate numeral-advance switches for days/hours/minutes), although we noted that no provision is made for timer playback. (For the uninitiated, timer playback is a handy feature for those diehard buffs who do a lot of dubbing, allowing you to use timers to turn off both a record and a playback deck for unattended duplication.) We found another minor problem with the Audio Dub control which automatically puts the deck into the play and dub modes when activated. Likewise, depressing the Record button starts the machine in the record mode, although this can be done in conjunction with the solenoid pause control for precise editing.

Several improved functions are provided in the J9 including automatic X-1/X-2/X-3 playback selection, which lights up an appropriate "Beta I/II/III" mode indicator above the timer. Also, the noise-bars appearing in BetaScan playback have been reduced somewhat to perhaps only three or four at 5 times normal speed and about eight or nine at 20 times normal, with the picture remaining otherwise clear and undistorted—at least as good as all previous models and better in some ways. We noted that changing the BetaScan speed during the function is quite difficult since you have to hold the button down with one hand and move the variable lever with the other, but we feel that once the proper speed is set, most people won't need to change it except for an occasional special requirement.

The stereo audio outputs of the J9 can be connected with any conventional audio system for playback through larger speakers for better frequency response. Additionally, you can hook up two sets of stereo headphones to the RM-78 remote control for private listening. You'll need Sony's PC-33 adaptor to use most U.S. headsets with the deck, which will allow plugging in 2 standard stereo phone plugs to the special stereo mini-phone jacks used in the unit.

Aside from these minor quibbles, we had no difficulty in quickly setting up the J9 and deciphering its functions by a sometimes painful process of trial and error, aided in part by some quick translations from Japanese TV reader Hiroshi Kamiya. Like most American decks, the J9 provides replaceable channel numbers that slide into a horizontal slot on its right side, complete with an "NHK" symbol for the major Japanese TV broadcasting network. We certainly wish U.S. products had this unique feature, furnishing ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS labels for our own tuners.

**Performance:** We're very happy to report that the J9 exceeded our expectations in every area of audio and video quality, providing the best X-2 record/playback performance we've seen to date. Even more importantly, almost all of the edits made on the VTR were absolutely noise-free, due to Sony's exclusive "TP" time-phase circuit, which helps reduce edit interference and moiré to a negligible degree. The variable-speed slow-motion and BetaScan modes make recueing commercial edits a breeze and



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

simple enough for even a child to master and the full-function remote control makes arm-chair operation a snap.

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 45 dB (at X-2; subjectively no more than 41 or 42 dB for X-3)

Audio Frequency Response: 50-10,000 Hz (stereo X-2 w/BNR); 50-7,000 Hz (stereo X-3 w/BNR)

Audio S/N Ratio: 43 dB (with BNR at X-2; subjectively less than 40 dB without)

Power Requirements: 63 watts @ 100VAC, 60 cycles

We noted that X-2 performance seems visibly improved over past models like the SL-5400 and 5600, at least on a par with the new 5800 (to be reviewed in a future issue) although like most stereo VTR's the J9's audio performance is not superlative, but is still more than adequate for most off-the-air broadcasts. We noted that using BNR brightens the top end of the recorded signal considerably and takes the response down again in playback, very similar to the actions of Dolby-B circuits used in consumer audio recorders. This results in a slight roll-off of the high frequencies (including most of the noise), with somewhat more extended and yet noisier response found with non-BNR recordings. Also, playing BNR tapes on a non-BNR machine will result in a somewhat shrill, noisy playback, so we'd recommend against giving BNR tapes to friends unless they, too, happen to have a J9 or similar Japanese Beta recorder, or alternatively, a small graphic equalizer. [An informed source tells us that Sony has been unable to complete negotiations with a major Japanese electronics manufacturer to permit marketing the Beta Noise Reduction system in the U.S. Once this situation is resolved, Sony may start building the feature into American recorders as well.] While we were basically impressed with BNR, we can't help but question Sony's reasons for not installing a standard widely-accepted Dolby-B noise reduction circuit into the J9, just as most VHS manufacturers have done (as witnessed by Akai's VU-7530 portable).

JM noted a subtly improved visual performance with the J9 at X-2, possibly due to a new video noise filtering circuit. I wasn't certain whether the noise factor was in fact reduced, but felt that the overall sharpness and clarity was improved, as was the unit's dropout compensator, which seemed a little better than most consumer Beta recorders we've tested. Color purity and definition were excellent at X-2, though we can't help but wonder how much this could've been improved if only the J9 had been equipped with 4 video heads for complete X-1/X-2/X-3 recording and

playback. Aside from this omission, there is no question in our minds that the SL-J9 sets a new standard for overall X-2 performance and for all consumer videotape recorders as well.

**Conclusion:** As mentioned throughout this review, there's no doubt that all of us have been extremely impressed with the SL-J9. At X-2, it's by and large state-of-the-art all the way, although it's only adequate at X-3—but still no worse than any other ultra-slow speed video recording we've seen. What didn't I like about the J9? Well, aside from the two or three difficult-to-open control panels, and the BNR incompatibility problem, I would definitely like to see an LED display with an hours/minutes/seconds display (automatically switchable for any speed) for elapsed tape time instead of the antiquated mechanical counter and possibly also a keypad-type digital tuner, for presetting every available CATV channel including mid- and super-band frequencies, just as with Sony's top-of-the-line 45R TV sets. Other than that, I'm hard pressed to think of any other real criticisms except that using the J9 with our 120V AC outlets, resulted in warming up the back of the deck considerably, though perhaps not hot enough to fry an egg on it. We'd definitely advise any and all J9 users to buy a small 120/100 volt step-down transformer, just to be on the safe side.

The biggest problem that remains is how the hell to buy one. Considering Sony's repeated insistence that the J9 is simply not suitable for the U.S. market, we're going to think that it's doubtful such a recorder will be widely available in this country for some time to come (unless Sony's marketing execs find out how well RCA's VET-650 is selling). Video Service Center's Ben Saia tells us that he'll definitely consider importing the SL-J9 if the demand warrants it, and Laox Video & Sound (1630 W. Redondo Beach Blvd., Gardena, CA 90247) and Video Network (1353 E. Colorado Blvd., Glendale, CA 91206) are likewise thinking about handling it. All we can say is—it's well worth going to any amount of trouble to get your hands on a J9. Once you do, it's doubtful you'll ever be able to settle for anything less again.—MFV

(Special thanks to local videophile Fred Chriss for aiding in our tests of the J9, and Hiroshi Kamiya for translating certain technical information; and very special thanks to Ben Saia for kindly allowing us to use and abuse his J9 for this **Product Report**.)

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## RCA CC-004/006 COLOR CAMERA PANASONIC WV-3200 COLOR CAMERA

**Manufacturer:** Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., 1006 Kadoma, Osaka, Japan  
(distributed by RCA Corporation,  
600 N. Sherman Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46201  
and Panasonic Video Systems Division,  
1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094)



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

**Source:** Dealer loan (Audio/Video Craft, 7710 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046)

**Cost:** Approximately \$1295.00 (for CC-004; 006 costs about \$250 less but does not provide optional power supply)

Matsushita's color camera line has been changing and fluctuating so erratically for the past year or so that we've had to constantly re-double our efforts just to keep track of exactly which camera is being manufactured by who, and which model has just been replaced. The 004/006/3200 unit is an excellent product, though it has recently been outdated by the new CC-007 (along with Panasonic's PK-700, 750 and 800), and can still be purchased at very reasonable prices from most video dealers.



**Appearance:** All three cameras are essentially identical, measuring about 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x9 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " with the shoulder mount (included). They weigh just a bit over 6 lbs., and provide a hefty, comfortable feel without the bulkiness associated with past units (like the earlier CC-002, reviewed in #21). Most of the cameras' operating controls are located on their left side, which include a two-position Power Zoom rocker switch for the 6-1 lens (about 11.5-70mm, F1.8), a "BLC" switch for adjusting the back light compensation circuits (to avoid excessive light levels when taping rear-lit subjects), a White Balance control, an Indoor/Outdoor color temperature switch, and two thumbwheel controls for Red and Blue color balance (green adjustable only internally). The adjustable handle grip has a locking push on/push off switch for starting and stopping most portable VTR's, and the lens is very similar to those found on most home movie cameras, with

standard controls for focusing and zooming (though none for the F stops or video level, which is automatically set by the camera's internal AGC circuits). The front of the camera includes the side-mounted electronic viewfinder, which provides a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " magnified screen with a moving horizontal line used to set white balance and indicator lights for recording (green) and low-light level (red). A duplicate recording indicator light is also provided on the back of the camera, along with a mini-phone jack for an external microphone, which automatically disengages the telescoping top-mounted camera microphone, and a power indicator light.

**Features/Operation:** The CC-004/006/3200 cameras all provide fairly smooth and accurate zoom control, though we noted that their design doesn't allow for varying the electric motor's speed of the zoom. You can, however, vary the zoom rate by rotating the zoom ring manually. I didn't like the fact that when you use the power zoom, which requires depressing the zoom switch with your left hand (if you're right-handed), you can't simultaneously check your focusing with your opposite hand because it's holding the handle of the camera—not unlike the first ENG camera, eg. Ikegami's original HL-33 (a pain in the back if there ever was one).

All three cameras allow moving the viewfinder to either the left or right side, or removing it entirely for certain specialized applications. Likewise, the shoulder mount can be removed from the bottom of the camera when used with any standard tripod. We noted that this type of camera—the shoulder-held variety—is much, much easier to use than the usual ultra-lightweight "Super 8" types, like Panasonic's PK-600 and 700, though both are fine for tripod use.

Color balance is easily attained with these cameras, simply by shooting a white background, placing the White Balance switch in the "Check" position and adjusting the red and blue gain controls until the viewfinder's horizontal indicator goes as far down as possible. This type of feature is a must to insure proper color throughout your production. We caution any newcomers that you'll need to reset this color balance each time the lighting is changed in your setting (going from a bright sunlit beach to an indoor area, for example). This really isn't a time-consuming operation, usually requiring only about 15 seconds or so once the AGC has automatically adjusted the video level.

These cameras also offered a variety of small, almost unnoticeable extra features like automatically closing their iris the moment power is shut off or the VTR goes into the playback mode (the latter automatically switching the camera's viewfinder to receive the deck's playback). Also, the BLC control helps quite a bit for certain high-contrast scenes, like the beach recordings referred to earlier. The WV-3200 goes one step further than the RCA cameras by adding a "Stand-By" mode switch, which allows you to turn the camera and VTR off *without unthreading the deck* and thereby saves power without causing a glitch in your pause edits. The latter made the 3200 a little more attractive than the others as far as convenience goes.

The CC-004 and WV-3200 each come with a small AC adaptor



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for using the cameras with standard AC-operated VTR's. These provide a standard phono plug for Video Out, a phono plug for Audio Out (from the camera's built-in microphone), and a mini-plug for Remote Pause. The CC-006 deletes this power supply and makes it available only as an optional accessory, which helps cut off a couple hundred dollars from its list price for those who don't plan on using it with any non-portable VTR's. All three cameras use a standard 10-pin Matsushita-type ten-foot cable for using them with everything but Sony's SL-3000 (and VO-4800, which use a (\*sigh\*) unique 14-pin jack and require special adaptor cables.

**Performance:** Camera quality is perhaps one of the most subjective and difficult to rate items in the consumer video field. Almost every home video camera we've seen has elicited awe and delight from every person seeing one for the first time, and most of them could care less as to what they really *look* like. Luckily for all of us, the CC-004/006/3200 units put out excellent pictures for the money—not quite as good as industrial and broadcast units, but still very good nonetheless, providing just a bit of lag in dark recordings and generally excellent results in well-lit scenes. I'd go so far as to say that these cameras do as good a job as I've ever seen from similar consumer units—and better than most, with the exception of several higher-priced models from Sony and RCA (which we hope to evaluate in a future issue).

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal resolution: 240 lines at center (B&W)

S/N Ratio: 43 dB (B&W at 140 foot-candles)

Minimum Illumination: 10 foot-candles

Camera Tube:  $\frac{2}{3}$ " stripe-filter vidicon

Power Consumption: 8.4 watts

We don't know exactly how the manufacturer comes up with "10 foot-candles" for minimum illumination, since we got pretty bad results at this level. We did get barely acceptable results at perhaps 50-75 foot-candles (an average reading for an ordinary living room). The results outdoors were even better, though the lag suffered from rapid horizontal pans was sometimes severe. We advise any and all prospective users to avoid duplicating the mistake made by that famous Apollo astronaut—pointing the camera at the sun, which may not fry it out completely but could result in a semi-permanent "burn." With most cameras, temporary burns can sometimes be eliminated by pointing the camera at an all-white object for a few minutes.

**Conclusion:** While we're still in the process of developing some kind of in-depth accurate way of comparing different cameras' performances, we think that the CC-004/006/3200 series is a very fine entry for the do-it-yourself home video buff, and now that the 004 and 006 have been discontinued by the manufacturer in anticipation of the new CC-007, both can be purchased at rock-bottom discount prices (as low as \$795.00 from several dealers). We strongly recommend the 004 and 3200 over the 006, since they include the AC power supply, and we prefer the 3200 over the 004 since it has the stand-by mode and a slightly more durable look and feel, being part of Panasonic's industrial line rather than the consumer series. We'd likewise advise against buying Panasonic's WV-3210, which does away with the 3200's electronic viewfinder, a must for accurate framing and operational convenience.

[Special thanks to Audio/Video Craft's Mark Phillips for providing the cameras used in this review, and ditto to local video consultant Fred Chriss for assisting with our tests and evaluations.]

## VIS "DIAL-A-TIME" VIDEO RECORDING TIME CALCULATORS

**Manufacturer:** Video Information Systems, Inc.,

P. O. Box 185, Deep River, CT 06417

**Source:** Manufacturer's loan

**Cost:** \$14.95 (plus postage)



Since issue #4, *The Videophile* has been the first (and only, as far as I know) video magazine to publish index counter/time charts designed to help determine how much time you have left on a given videocassette while you're recording. Most of us have suffered at least one or two moments where a tape has run out unexpectedly, when you were *positive* you had enough tape to get the rest of the show without fail, but *nooooo* . . .

In the early days of video, we only had one or two formats and



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

one or two different speeds and tape lengths to worry about. Now we've got three speeds and, in the case of Beta alone, at least four different lengths (L-250's, 500's, 750's and 830's) to take into consideration whenever new time charts are contemplated. Well, folks, your humble technical editor has done give up. Ain't no way I can ever find the time or patience to worry about all these 5- and 6-hour time charts, no sir.

But, fear not, for the kindly folks at VIS, with the aid of a relatively amazing computer program (similar to that used by Pacifica Labs in their early VHS chart printed a year or two ago), have prepared timing charts providing every possible speed and standard tape length that you can think of and will ever need to use, for both Beta and VHS. These charts, which are actually rotating plastic discs about 6" in diameter, provide various index counter readings on the outer circumference of the circle, with two small clear windows in the center to indicate how much time has been used and how much time is remaining on a given cassette, at each of the three standard speeds. There are Beta models for L-250's and L-500's and L-750's and L-830's, and also a VHS model for T-60's and T-120's, with two different tape types on each two-sided chart. (Other VHS models for T-150's and T-180's are currently in preparation.) The calculators are made in slightly different forms depending on which brand of machine the tapes are used with (including Sony, Toshiba, Matsushita-types, Hitachi and JVC), to help take into consideration different transport designs and counter readings.

The two Beta models we received for evaluation did an OK job with 5000-series Sony machine (including the SL-5400 and 5600), but were somewhat off with older SL-7200's and 8200's. For example, the chart indicates that the two-hour point for L-500's on the latter machine is reached at "846," whereas our home-grown chart (first printed in #14) found this number to be closer to "870." The manufacturer notes that their calculators are subject to a plus or minus 3% variance "... due to VTR model differentials, manufacturing tolerances, counter belt fatigue and cassette leader length differences." Be that as it may, I wasn't disappointed with this minute lack of accuracy at all, and was happy to have a reliable chart that told me a tape was going to end too soon rather than too *late*, which could really lead to trouble.

While the somewhat high cost of these calculators (\$14.95) is offset by the fact that they are extremely well-designed, easy to read and convenient to use, I can see where some people might object to spending as much money on a chart as they would on a

single videocassette. Luckily for you thrifty types, the manufacturer has also released a small 12-page booklet with all 6 charts reprinted in standard non-deluxe form, not unlike the original charts we put together years ago, updated with the latest X-3 and SLP listings. Perhaps the best solution is to buy one or two "Dial-A-Times" for your own format, then invest another \$4.95 in the booklet for those times when you're dubbing to another system. At any rate, the VIS charts are definitely recommended for helping make life a little easier for the befuddled videophile.

—MFW

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## VIDICRAFT COPYGUARD STABILIZER

**Manufacturer:** Vidicraft, Inc., 4825 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.,  
Portland, OR 97215

**Source:** Manufacturer loan

**Cost:** \$98.00

This is the no frills model copyguard stabilizer (not to be confused with the \$185 unit that's also an RF converter) which is designed to "stabilize" the playback image of any prerecorded videotape that has been encoded with a special signal to prevent duplication. The announced purpose of the device is to overcome the vertical roll problems that are experienced when trying to play back such tapes on certain TV sets which do not have a strong enough circuitry to hold the picture steady. As most of you surely know, however, (or can guess) the device can also be used to defeat the encoded signal and thereby successfully duplicate a prerecorded tape, the wishes of the producers notwithstanding. The ability of the Vidicraft unit to perform this task is the subject of this **Product Report**.

**Appearance:** The Vidicraft Copyguard Stabilizer is a rather unassuming little gray box, measuring 3"x5½"x1½" and weighing next to nothing. It has a single control—"Lock" on the front, two phono jacks on the back, and some sort of mini jack to which the AC power cord attaches. Why the AC cord is not permanently attached mystified me—the plug on the end of the AC cord (supplied) didn't feel as snug in the jack as I thought it should, but apparently it was, since I experienced no problem with the power supply.

**Features/Operation:** When preparing to use the stabilizer, the first thing you may notice is that you don't have the cables you need and, so, must abandon the project until you can get them. The reason for this is that the stabilizer connects from the phono jacks on the unit itself to the "Video Out" jack on the playback recorder and the "Video In" jack on either the TV set (if it has one) or the second recorder. You may already have suitable cables, but if not, this unit will be of no use to you until you get them, since this model does not operate between the "VHF Out" and "VHF In" jacks, and no cables are supplied with it.

It's at this point that being editor of *The Videophile* has one of



its few advantages, because you can say to yourself, "Now, where did I put that set of cables that someone sent me?" [Good ole John Cunningham of Radio Wholesalers, 2012 Auburn Avenue, Columbus, GA 31906, (404) 561-7000] sent me two sets of "custom" patch cables, made "by hand" in his shop. One, for VHS, has phone jacks on all four ends; the other, for Beta, has the mini-plug required for the Beta audio jack on one of the four ends. John tells me that he uses only the "correct" quality coaxial cable, fittings, and connectors, and will be happy to make up a set (two cables) and deliver them to anyone who is interested for \$24. They did a dandy job for me, and . . . but I digress.] It is important to have *video* cable and not just rely on audio cable which, though easier to find, is designed primarily for use with stereo equipment.

Now, you're back from the electronics shop and ready to proceed. The instructions don't mention it, but since the stabilizer processes only the video signal, you also have to remember to connect the "Audio Out" of the playback VCR to the "Audio In" of the record VCR. Except for forgetting to plug in the AC power cord, I experienced no problems with the installation. Since this is a product review, and not an in-depth article on how to duplicate tapes, I do not here pretend to touch on all the tips and tricks of dubbing; but you will want to make sure that the "tuner/camera" switch of the "recording" VCR is in the latter position on VCR's which do not automatically make this selection for you. (We really need to do an update on our article from way back in #12).

The instructions tell you how to adjust the single "Lock" control once a picture is on your screen, and adjustment is easily accomplished in a moment or two. Once set, you shouldn't have to fool with the control for the duration of the tape being played.

**Performance:** Using RCA VCT-400 and Zenith JR-9000W (same as Sony SL-8200) recorders, and a Sony KV-2643R television set, I attempted to copy two tapes, using first one and then the other of the VCR's as a playback machine. Without running the signal through the stabilizer neither duplicate was watchable. The two prerecorded tapes I tried utilized different types of encoded signals. The "Copyguard" protected tapes, when played on the RCA and recorded on the Zenith, resulted in a duplicate which, upon playback, displayed a picture in an alternating stable-unstable-stable pattern, with each segment lasting several seconds. (My Zenith has had the muting circuit disconnected, so on an unmodified unit the result would probably have been a stable-blank screen-stable pattern.) When playing a "StopCopy" protected tape on the Zenith and attempting to record a copy on the RCA, the result was a tape that looked like the horizontal hold was permanently on the blink. No pattern here, just a steady instability with perhaps a bit of "roll" as well. Also the sound seemed to be a little slower.

Enter the Vidicraft Copyguard Stabilizer! (Fanfare, please.) These same hookups and tapes, when used with the stabilizer, produced copies which, to my layman's eye, were free of instability and otherwise just as good as duplicates of tapes which are not encoded with the scrambling signal. This was true with record-

ings at Beta X-1 and X-2 speeds and at the LP speed in VHS. (I forgot to try it at "SP," but the results would have been the same.) My results are reported on the basis of only several minutes of dubbing. (I own the prerecorded tapes and have no need for duplicates), but there is no reason to doubt that the results would have been similarly satisfactory throughout.

In short, the Vidicraft stabilizer worked like a charm! The only problem I experienced was some slight RF interference which I attribute to leakage in the signal in one of my machines, not to any fault of the stabilizer. (A little fiddling with the VCR/TV switches on the two machines usually clears it up.)

**Conclusion:** If you've been reluctant to purchase one of these devices and if your reluctance is based on fear that it may not work, we say that your fears are unfounded. At \$98, the Vidicraft unit is one of the least expensive around, though you may also have to choke up another pretty sizeable piece of change for the appropriate cables if you don't already have them.

I wasn't able to check the unit's ability to stabilize the picture on my TV screen since the advanced circuitry in my set has no problem playing back these tapes anyway. But since the stabilizer did such a fine job of making a duplicate there is no reason to expect that its performance for the other purpose would be anything but similarly praiseworthy.

If your purpose in purchasing this unit is to illegally duplicate tapes which are protected by copyright, we would recommend *against* it in the strongest possible terms. There are many reasons not to do so, among them being that you could be getting yourself in for a peck of trouble before it's all over. Also, the fewer number of pirated copies of tapes that are floating around, the greater the likelihood that the major studios will be inclined to release their product on video tape. Our advice continues to be—Just plain don't do it!

There are, of course, many public domain prerecorded tapes floating around with copyguard on them. Also, while perhaps technically a violation, we see no reason why, within the privacy of your home, you shouldn't be able to make copies of short segments of *any* tape for the purpose of making "sampler" tapes, studying and comparing certain scenes and film makers techniques or otherwise organizing your collection. With these purposes in mind, we say the Vidicraft Copyguard Stabilizer is perfectly suitable and a relatively good buy.—JL

---

## Further thoughts on the Kloss Novabeam (#26):

We have a couple of minor corrections to add to our review of the Kloss Model One, prompted by a discussion with Kloss' Western Regional Sales Manager James Wellnitz, who took exception to a couple of our extremely minor criticisms of the overall color quality of the Novabeam. Upon going back and re-evaluating our assessment of the Model One vs. the MGA



# The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

VS-700, we have to agree that, indeed, the Novabeam is superior in that area. In addition, we erred in our statement that the Advent Model 1100 (an industrialized version of the earlier model 1000A) in any way rivals the Novabeam except for sheer picture size—not quite 10% bigger than the 6½' Kloss unit.

Meanwhile, several reports of defective units have come in from a number of TV readers, several of whom live in southern California. The latter group has, for the most part, had nothing but nasty comments to make on the allegedly piss-poor service they've been getting from Stereo/Video Service Corp. Encounters with the firm have led to much frustration and dissatisfaction on the part of several disgruntled Novabeam owners. At press time, we've learned that most of these disgruntled owners have finally achieved satisfaction from Stereo/Video, but only through numerous phone calls to Mark Allspacht (Service Manager for Kloss Video in Cambridge), and the Stereo/Video Corp. directly.

We've also learned that both Advent and Sony are about to unveil what are essentially clones of the Novabeam—three-tube two-piece projection systems that provide remarkably improved images on a 6' screen for approximately \$3,000. While we haven't yet seen the Advent BV-225, we have verified that both the Sony KP-5020 and KP-7020 "Videoscope" projectors are much improved over the earlier KP-5000 and 7200, respectively, though it remains to be seen as to whether they actually outperform the Novabeam. We noted that the \$2995 KP-7020 provides a 6' screen and an attractive lowboy-style console, but lacks the Novabeam's remote control, which we feel is a significant omission. More on this in a future issue.

Meanwhile, Kloss Video has raised the list price of the Model One up to \$2995, which makes it still the best large-screen projection system we've seen thus far. The only thing that may better it is the about-to-be-unveiled Model 100, which a Kloss spokesman claims will provide an exceptionally bright picture on a 10' to 14' screen (!). The Model 100 uses a unique 6-tube design for increased light output, built inside a cabinet roughly the same size as the Model One's, and will be available early next year for "under \$8,000." (More info can be obtained directly from Kloss Video Corp., 145 Sidney Street, Cambridge, MA 02139.

## Further thoughts on the RCA VDP-150 (#25):

Sharp-eyed reader J.B.M. of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, spotted an error in our review of RCA's old portapak wherein we described its battery as a Nickel-Cadmium (Ni-Cad) type. Actually, the battery is a lead-acid type, which requires at least 6 to 8 hours for a full charge. Ni-Cad's generally need only a couple of hours, though they cost much more as a rule. We do not currently know of a Ni-Cad replacement for the RCA lead-acid cell, but we'll let you know if we hear of one.

## The Wrap-Up:

Boy, do we have a lot of stuff coming up soon. In addition to the reviews on Panasonic's PV-3200 portapak and RCA's CC-007 color camera, we hope to have an in-depth report on RCA's SFT-100 CED SelectaVision Videodisc Player, along with tests on Sony's AG-300 Beta Changer, some new processing equipment and accessories from HMS Electronics and the TRJ Corporation, and the long-awaited review of Sony's deluxe Japanese "Profeel" monitor series and also the ultimate SLO-383 Betamax Editor.

We've had a wide variety of reader feedback on our **Product Reports**. L.B. of Prospect Park, PA asks that we try to limit our reports to affordable consumer-type equipment and avoid discussing overly-expensive industrial equipment. While this would be an enviable approach, it's our opinion that *The Videophile* must continue to seek out the ultimate video products *regardless of price*, but at the same time try to achieve a balance between ordinary schlocko consumer garbage and \$200,000 broadcast recorders, neither of which is an ideal videophile product. On the other hand, we also heard from B.P. in Minneapolis, who asks that we review Phillips' 2000 Series VTR's, which were recently unveiled in Europe, and Sony's new CVM-3000 30" monitor/receiver. Well, B.P., we, too, are excited about Phillips' new format, but until we get a three-standard monitor, we don't see much point in reviewing the VTR's (all PAL-standard as of this date) anytime soon, nor do we think they'll be of much use or interest to most of the NTSC videophiles. If they ever decide to market an NTSC version, however, you can bet we'll be among the first to check them out. As for Sony's \$7,800 CVM-3000 30" monitor/receiver, this exceeds the \$5,000 limit established in our "Recommended Components" section and is, at least for the moment, not exactly something we think our readers are going to start saving their nickels and dimes for any time soon. We've evaluated the set at a number of professional conventions and industrial dealer shows and, although we agree that it's the best 30" set that money can buy, the 3000 is so far out of reach by all but a minute fraction of our readership (if any at all) that to



attempt a complete discussion of it here would prompt L.B. of Prospect Park to fly out to LA and stuff your humble technical editor into a trash compactor. (And rightly so.)

But just because we won't be discussing \$7,800 Sony monitors (or those from Barco, Conrac, or Tektronix, for that matter) doesn't mean that we can't review \$1,000 Sony monitors, which are a little closer to the realities of our everyday lives. Sony's new 1900 series comes to mind as being first-class top-quality indus-

trial color monitors in this price range, and we plan an extensive evaluation of these units in an upcoming issue.

As always, your comments and suggestions are welcomed. Manufacturers are likewise invited to comment on our reviews, as well as to submit products for evaluation to:

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

## QUICK CUTS

by: Marcus F. Wielage

With this issue, we're reaching the point where, if we pause to catch our breath, we'll miss out on reviewing a number of interesting products that at least deserve some kind of mention, yet, for one reason or another, we're unable to provide a full-scale in-depth review on them in our current issue.

☆☆☆

One such device is MGA's **HS-300** videocassette recorder, which we've looked over at two electronics shows and at a local dealer's. Frankly, we weren't very impressed. Neither JM nor myself was all that excited about a machine that had everything going for it except picture quality, since, even though it's an extremely sleek-looking, modern unit with full-function remote, slo-mo, and many other innovative features, it has only two mediocre 20-micron heads, compromised for the SLP/6-hour mode. As a result, its two-hour quality is very disappointing, and the effects in that mode are, to put it mildly, utter garbage.

What we didn't know is that, according to reader A.F. of Big Bear, CA, his MGA was not capable of playing any of the 6-hour tapes recorded on his JVC HR-6700, and vice versa. Further, he discovered that the same situation existed with almost every other 6-hour machine he got his hands on, all of which were perfectly compatible with the 6700 and each other, but not with the MGA. He dumped this problem into the laps of several MGA service executives who scratched their heads and futilely attempted to explain that, apparently, the Mitsubishi design engineers back in Japan didn't have access to a 6-hour alignment tape with which to set up and align

their products, and apparently they had gone ahead and come up with their own *de facto* 6-hour standard which was incompatible with everybody else's. Incredible, but true, and luckily A.F. was able to get a refund on the spot for his trouble.

We feel badly about this, mainly because, like we say, the HS-300 looks like a wonderful machine on the surface, at least for the 6-hour VHS collector. In addition, since its introduction several months ago, we've heard nothing but complaints about it concerning a plethora of failures and defective units. As a result, we're going to avoid getting into any in-depth *Product Reports* on MGA's HS-300 until all its various bugs have been worked out. We're sorry about any inconvenience the lateness of this abbreviated discussion may have caused, but, hopefully, it will at least stop a few of you from wasting your valuable time and money on it. Hopefully, an updated version will be unveiled at the January '81 CES.

☆☆☆

Another such unreviewed product is Pioneer's **VP-1000H**, video disc player which is just now beginning to have widespread sales around the country (supposedly nationwide by December '80). We've had little success in getting PR information about it from the U.S. Pioneer Corporation, which apparently cares very little about the struggles of a small but hard-working consumer video magazine in trying to report on or publicize its videodisc player. Despite this lack of assistance, most of us are very pleased with Pioneer's player in our early evaluations and feel if you must have a videodisc player, this one is probably your best bet.

Just don't complain to us about any problems you have in trying to get ahold of some undefective disc programs. [Ed.'s Note: *Video Review #6* has a fairly good review of the Pioneer player, though they were somewhat critical of optical disc quality.]

☆☆☆

RCA's **VET-200** (identical to Panasonic's PV-1200) is an ultra-inexpensive non-picture search version of the VET-250 (reviewed this issue), and isn't recommended unless you can get one for a song (and a cheap song, at that). It's retailing for at least \$50 less than the 250. Likewise, RCA's **VET-450** (Panasonic's PV-1400) is a two-head, non-special-effect version of the 650, providing an identical 14-day/7-event timer. It's essentially a programmable version of the 250 at a couple hundred dollars more. Neither the 200 nor the 450 are recommended mainly because of their compromised head design and/or lack of features. The 650 and 250 are much preferable in this regard (except for the mediocre picture quality of the latter).

☆☆☆

**Rear-Screen Projectors**, for the most part, are unadulterated ca-ca all the way, no matter what your local dealer may tell you. We've looked over both of GE's "**Widescreen**" models, including their new model 3000, and Panasonic's "**CinemaVision**" **CT-4500**, all of which represent the bottom of the barrel in high-cost projection TV technology. As large-screen projectors, they make great pieces of furniture (and little else). Anyone who buys them has either bad eyesight, money to burn, or both. Considering that the least



expensive of these, the \$3,200 GE unit, costs even more than the Kloss Novabeam and provides a considerably smaller and dimmer picture, you'd be out of your mind to buy it. If and when the quality of rear-screen projectors improves, we'll consider reviewing them. We'd rather not waste your time and ours discussing them any further at present.

☆☆☆

Sony's **HVC-2000 Color Camera** is already the favorite of AV, who has spent some time evaluating it over the past couple of weeks. At press time, we've been unable to complete our tests due to last minute scheduling difficulties, but take our word for it, the camera is an excellent buy and does a great job, aside from its non-variable speed electric zoom lens, which we felt was a little bit too slow-moving. We plan on covering not only the 2000 but also RCA's CC-007 and Panasonic's PK-750 and 800 in a future issue, together with an in-depth evaluation of Sony's mid-priced industrial DXC-1640.

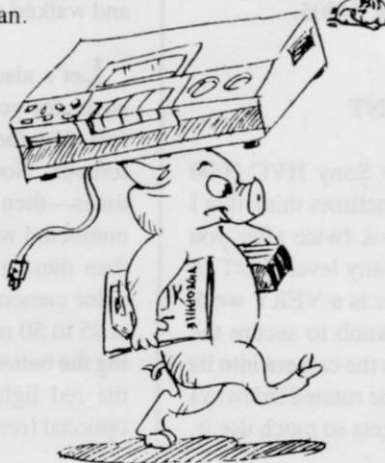
☆☆☆

We've spent some time looking over **Video Enhancers** from Video Ventures (affiliated with Showtime Video Ventures in Tillamook, Oregon) and Vidicraft (in Portland, Oregon), but have not yet had time to review the latest deluxe unit from the latter firm. Each company has claimed to be the actual inventor of the enhancement process used in both units, though we understand that due to a few minor technicalities, the circuits are not patentable at the present time. While we don't want to get personally embroiled in the middle of a war between two competing manufacturers (not unlike the Muntz/Shelton Video skirmish discussed in #22), we feel we owe at least a brief explanation to several readers who have written us asking which enhancer is best. When you get right down to it, my honest opinion is that neither device will work wonders or help a less than-good-quality recording, and while the improvements they make in sharpening up the images from top-quality tapes or live

broadcasts are alright, they have a tendency to enhance the *noise* present in the programs as well. To be absolutely honest, even the \$20,000+ Thomson-CSF 9000 Digital Noise Reduction Device (which your humble technical editor has evaluated and used extensively throughout the past 6 months at a Hollywood post-production firm) and similarly-expensive professional image enhancers don't really do all that much either, especially with 1/2" videocassettes. It's my opinion, and JM's feeling as well, that in our heart of hearts we don't really think the relatively high cost (\$250+) of either the Video Ventures or Vidicraft Enhancer justifies buying one, if what you're looking for is a low-cost video problem solver. There really isn't one. . . at least, not at present. However, JM says that these units can do an acceptable job as long as you don't expect too much from them. He also points out that neither enhancer really does much more than the "sharpness" or picture-peaking control found on most TV sets (including all Sony Trinitron models). We expect to have JM's extensive review of the Showtime device and the new Vidicraft enhancer in our next issue.

☆☆☆

Lastly, Sony has recently introduced some truly exceptional new consumer TV sets in their **45R** series, including **KV-1545R**, **KV-1945R**, and **KV-2645R**. We planned on evaluating the 15" and 26" models in this issue, but we just ran out of the time and space needed to do full justice to them. Folks, these sets are winners all the way, albeit ridiculously expensive winners (\$650 for the 15" model, for example). If you haven't seen one yet, we urge you to do so as soon as possible—but avoid paying through the nose for them if you can.



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# STATE OF THE ART

Art Vuolo, Jr.  
(Mr. Media)  
PO Box 219  
Ypsilanti, MI  
48197

Well, there goes another year on video tape! How many more victims will home video claim before 1980 bites the dust? The dollar is tighter than ever, yet these very expensive electronic toys seem to be selling better than ever. Sure, sales could be better—but then everything could always be better than it is. Isn't it amazing how many folks are taking the video-plunge?

1981 will no doubt be even crazier than this past has been. Since we last communicated via these well-read pages, I have made a number of observations which I would like to share with you.

Look at all the new video stores—all in a row, see how they blossom, watch how they grow! We've got two here in Ann Arbor, and the local outlet, Video Warehouse just opened a new store at 12 Mile Road and Northwestern Highway in Southfield, an "upper income" suburb of Detroit. A new chain of video soft-ware (pre-recorded tapes and blanks only) stores is starting in New York City. Video-To-Go is the name and its potential is great. When I was in "The City" a few months ago I met with Larry Cohen, a reader of this magazine since the earliest issues, who invited me to "check out" their premiere location in Manhattan. Look out Foto-Mat, Video-To-Go is comin' on strong.

Total Video is a company out of San Diego which offers some very worthwhile products like low cost lighting systems, video distribution boxes and a very nice leather-type dust cover for Sony 5400, 5600 & 5800 recorders. They have a toll-free number (outside of California only) 800-854-2893.

Shape, Inc. makes a black plastic box for storing video cassettes which is unique in design, good-looking and practical. A bit expensive perhaps, 3 for about \$10, but a super way to store your video library. They designed it to accept either Beta or VHS tapes. Better video outlets should stock them, or contact Shape, Inc., Biddeford Industrial Park, Biddeford, ME 04005.

## WARNING DEPARTMENT

Last issue I spoke very highly of the new Sony HVC-2000 color TV camera. Well, for all of you who sometimes think that I am "on-the-take" from Sony, you might think twice after you read this. This new color camera is great on many levels BUT, it has one major flaw. The electronic viewfinder is a VERY weak link. It has a very poorly designed latching knob to secure the viewfinder in place. Everytime the user returns the camera into its handsome carrying case, the viewfinder must be rotated sideways in order to fit properly. Because this "joint" gets so much use it



Mr. Media (right) with Fred McGee of Seattle who flew two-thirds of the way across the country just to share some good times with fellow videophiles.

should be very durable. It isn't. Mine has been in the shop three times so far. Now, however, the great minds at Sony agree that the part is inadequately designed and a new part has been issued. All HVC-2000's now being produced have the new viewfinder, while those of us, that had to be "first on our block" can get this problem resolved at any local authorized Sony service center. Oh, by the way—the bad latch will only break if you tighten it too hard or at a time when you need it the most. Also, watch out for the control knobs. The color tint (white balance) control, the filter adjustment (indoor/outdoor) and the iris control (automatic/manual) are all very close to each other—be careful that a fade-out doesn't become an alteration of the color hues.

More warnings for VCR owners that own a Sony or Zenith with Beta-Scan. These newer programmable units are great, but they have one catch. When setting the timer (which is very sophisticated) be careful to have the camera/tuner switch in the tuner position if you intend to tape a program off the air. If you leave it on "camera," your tape will be black with no picture or sound. That's how I managed to miss the classic (now off the air) game show The \$20,000 Pyramid—the only day that my cousin was on and walked off with ten grand!

Let's also clear up a myth about BP-60 rechargeable battery packs for your portable (Sony or Toshiba) owners. Most of you feel that these \$60 batteries can be recharged over and over forever. Not true. They're only good for eighty to a hundred times—then you can kiss them goodbye. You know its days are numbered when it completely recharges in less than an hour and then dies in twenty minutes. The best time (recording) with a color camera, electronic viewfinder and motorized power-zoom is 45 to 50 minutes, maximum. A secret to remember is recharging the battery as soon as it becomes discharged enough to kick on the red light and kick off the recorder. The SL-3000 has an optional (remember the "o" in Sony is for optional) black leather



carrying case with a detachable side pouch for extra batteries, connector cables, etc. It's very classy looking, adds a few more ounces to the weight, protects the unit better and costs about \$45.

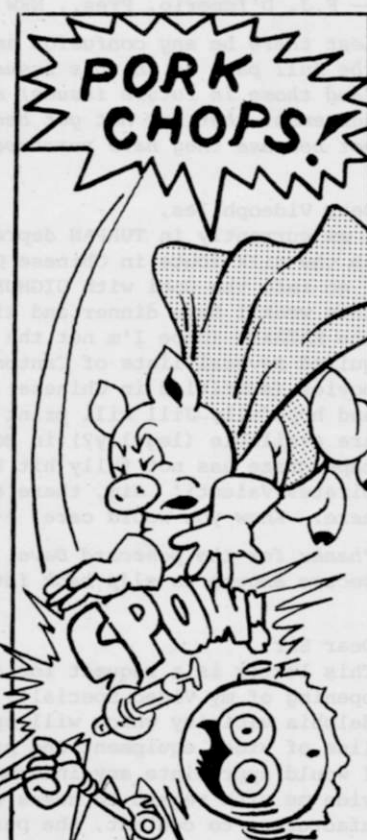
Video is a very costly hobby as stated in my opening comments—but behold my fellow videophiles for there is hope on the horizon. Here in Southeastern Michigan we are blessed with a great number of stores which run spectacular sales on video equipment and related supplies on a regular basis. For a lot of you, though, especially those in smaller communities and remote parts of the country where can you go to avoid rip-off's and get really good deals? Funny you should ask. We just recently uncovered a "hot-source" for video goods. Associated Video Buyers is a mail-order house that buys right from the manufacturer and is offering unheard of prices. The only "catch" is that it is a video club and it takes \$25 to join. Believe me—it's well worth the investment. They charge only \$9.95 for Sony or Fuji L-500's and only \$13.45 for Fuji VHS 2-4 hr. Sony SL-5400's are \$795, new in the box and RCA 250's for the same price! Sounds like a good deal to me. I joined and the service is terrific. More information can be obtained from AVB, at 289

C.R. 73, Fremont, OH 43420.

The first half of the month of October was spent in sunny California checkin' in with the Golden State Wonder Boys. They have an understanding of and enthusiasm for home video which is difficult to put into words. The trip west was for a major radio convention coordinated by Radio & Records and the National Radio Broadcasters Association (NRBA). Back in mid-September I made a video presentation for WIOT (FM/104) in Toledo (which is the top-rated album rocker in the country). My tape was shown at the Radio-Expo in Los Angeles, and most people found it difficult to believe that it was entirely put together on 2 home Betamax recorders. But it was!

So goes 1980. We look forward to an even more exciting '81 and here's hoping that your holiday's are the best ever—those of you with video camera's be sure to get it all on tape! See ya next year—in the meantime: keep 'em clean, stay legal (the FBI is everywhere you know) and IN TOUCH!

—ARV





# Letters:

WENDELL OLIVER WASHNER  
C/O. P.O. BOX 100-45  
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA 91606



THE VIDEOPHILE  
2003 APALACHEE PKY.  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301

Dear Editor:

In your October issue in which our advertisement appeared, an article was written by a Ted Reinhart whereby he has maligned our company with a statement that reads "Many of us have been receiving literature from a new firm advertising blank video tapes for low prices. I've been waiting over five weeks to receive my first order (and last)."

First of all we are not a new firm ... we have been in business for over sixteen (16) years, are rated BBl with Dun & Bradstreet and the delay that gentleman refers to was caused by a burglary at our warehouse that put us only a few weeks behind on orders. We are now fully stocked with shipments going normally within 48 hours.

To quote Mr. Reinhart ... you have received our first advertising order and our last.

-- F.J. D'Imperio, Pres., NEW PRODUCTS CO.

*Lest there be any confusion among our readers, the full page ad in this issue from NEW PRODUCTS (and those in future issues) appear under an agreement that has not yet been fulfilled by us, not because they have purchased additional space.*

Dear Videophiles,

I am currently in TURPAN depression near URUMQI on the silk route in Chinese Central Asia. Today I go into the Gobi with UIGHUR tribesmen and later this week I have dinner and live in a yurt with the KAZAKS. (Hope I'm not the dinner.) Have acquired several lists of Cantonese and Mandarin movies (subtitled in Chinese). Will translate and hopefully Jill will print the lists. They are available (légally?) in Hong Kong. The videotape craze has not fully hit Hong Kong yet. No pirates Valenti! Jim, there are some nice pigs here. Knew you would care. -- David Arends

*Thanks for the postcard Dave. Hope you will feel secure enough to slip back into the country soon.*

Dear Sir:

This letter is a request for assistance in the opening of my Video Specialty Store in the Philadelphia vicinity which will specialize in a full line of video equipment and pre-recorded tapes. I would appreciate any information you can provide me with regard to names and addresses of manufacturers to contact, the purchase of pre-recorded tapes from either movie companies or wholesalers recommended by movie companies as well as any additional guidelines I should follow in opening my business.

Your immediate attention and assistance in this matter is deeply appreciated. -- Michael S. Rubin, 1218 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19107

*We often get requests for advice and business counsel. There is no way that we can respond to them. I should think that a complete set of our back issues would give you a great many contacts worth pursuing in this regard. Oh, and if I were going to open a store in your area, I'd be sure to have plenty of copies of NBC's new tape of the 1980 World Series on hand.*

Dear Jim,

Just finished reading the '79 Annual and saw we had so many common interests I couldn't resist writing. Movies, comics, original comic art, etc. The favorite saying at our house is "The only difference between men and boys is the price of the toys!" ...

I am publisher/editor of a struggling Little Orphan Annie fanzine that the masses want expanded, etc., and that I can't keep up with already (needless to say, your interview made interesting reading). ... Anyhow, no serious messages or requests except keep up the good work and take solace in the fact that a lot of your readers really appreciate your efforts -- especially the pictorial on the origin of your interest in the Beta format!! -- Rich Olson, University of New Orleans, Lake Front, New Orleans, LA 70122

*Thanks for the many kind words, Rich. Will take you up on the portions of your letter not published here. Actually, the reason I publish letters of this type is so that I can subtly plug products like our 1979 Annual, which is still available for the giveaway price of only \$10.*

Jim:

I thought that Videophile was going to come out MONTHLY. Please let me know. -- Jim Boeckmann

*Sorry, Jim, but we continue to consider ourselves fortunate if we are able to get an issue together every other month.*

OK Guys:

I'll renew, but you gotta tell me how you came up with the name "Lubin" for your Robot! -- David Lubin, M.D.

*I'll have to defer to Martin Griem on that one, Doc. I'm still trying to figure out why he chose to put a pig in a super heroes costume. All this stuff about pigs has gotten out of hand. What's it supposed to mean anyhow?*



Dear Jim:

I very seldom write this sort of letter because most magazines have some secretary who glances at the letters and tosses them in the trash.

First of all, I would like to say how very much I like the Videophile. You have done a terrific job in representing and bringing together the serious video enthusiast. However, I am very sad to see you changing from a fellow video collector doing what's best for his fellow videophiles into a magazine mogul doing what will put the most money in his own pocket and to hell with the other video collectors.

You must know how your push to expand the readership and to commercialize the magazine has caused too many people to be involved, causing many rip-offs and spoiling things for everybody. The magazine was much better as a kind of private, little-known club. It won't be long before the mini-ads are gone forever and the Videophile becomes just another slick rag catering to the big money interests.

I don't like any of the new things you are doing, such as allowing non-video ads and raising the prices for ads up up. I know this is great for you, but it is really betraying the fellow videophiles who supported you all these years and made Videophile so successful. It is really a shame that you have gotten so greedy and gone for the big bucks. ...

... if you want to publish a big, fancy, expensive, slick magazine, why not do it under a different name and leave our Videophile's Newsletter alone? You could do this very easily -- put out the newsletter for the serious collectors as you have always done, and put out a slick magazine for the general Bozo public, please? -- John Good, 310 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel CA 91776

*I was going through the trash the other day and came across your letter, John. Sorry that I have had to edit it for this space and leave out the part about how I "stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the superiority of VHS."*

*The point you raise, so delicately, is, indeed, a problem -- how to keep something good to ourselves and enjoy the first budding innocence of it forever. Well, aside from the fact that this may very well not be possible, I will only reply that publication of this mag has been a labor of love from the very beginning. Except for an occasional discount, or free tape, I have not realized a single penny of profit out of it. This is not exactly what most folks would call "greedy". Yes, we do hope to expand our readership. Yes, I do hope sometime to give up my full time paying job and work on this magazine and other projects full time, and do very well at it. I don't think there are too many of you out there who will begrudge me that. Incidentally, nothing would please me more than for you, or anyone else, to begin publication of a magazine that caters to serious video collectors and serves them in a manner that will be more appreciated than is this one.*

Dear Jim:

Does anyone in your organization review, or maintain a listing on soft-core films and tapes? ... You do a fine job of keeping collectors informed about XXX materials, but for some reason, the reviewing of soft-core erotica remains -- you should

excuse the expression -- a virgin field.

The beauty of these early sex epics (eg. "The Ribald Tales of Robin Hood", "Starlet", etc.) was that they offered good raunchy fun without resorting to the cruelty and cynicism that later infected the genre. ... Can you help? Maybe soft-core isn't everybody's bag, but then neither is "Citizen Kane". With the high cost of everything today, it hurts to have to drop the big bucks on a film or tape that may not be what you expect it be at all. Reviews would help. -- Dan Francis, 5225 College View Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90041

*I couldn't agree with you more Dan. One dealer that has a good selection of these titles is Jim Hitt, 300 Rolling Oaks, Apt. 210, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. We can't get Jim to advertise with us or send a catalog, but my recollection is that he has some of the late-60s classics like "Thar She Blows". I'm still looking for "Space Thing" and "The Bushwhackers". We'd love to review this sort of thing, but to date the dealers have not been sending them to us, and we can't afford to buy 'em.*

Dear Mr. Lowe, Miss Hilliard & Staff:

We are interested to study NTSC VHS & Beta programs & TV commercials from USA. Then we can produce similar TV commercials based on USA ideas for hotels, ships an sea, airports (etc.) in Scandinavia. --Issac George Prevette, International Television Cassette, Box 22053, S-104 22 Stockholm, Sweden

*Here's your address. Hope it helps in making some contacts. We're sending you a package of back issues which should help to answer your questions.*

Dear Jim:

Is it true that Ted Reinhart has had a set of blinking lights attached to his saddle to aid him in round ups after dark? -- R.F., Ft. Lee, N.J.

Yes, Richard. We understand that Ted refers to them as his communication saddle-lights.

Dear Mr. Lowe:

I thought your readers who are into history might like to know that I am involved in a project, under the auspices of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, N.Y., to reconstruct, from release issues and out-take newsreel footage, complete film versions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's major public utterances. ... We have completed the 1942 "Day of Infamy" war speech to Congress and we are currently working on FDR's Navy Day Address in October of 1941, as well as his First Inaugural ("... the only thing we have to fear is fear itself...") and the famous "I hate wah!" speech, given at Chautauqua, N.Y., in 1936. Nearly all of these are, or will be, available in U-Matic format and, with certain exceptions, are in the public domain. I can supply more details if any of your readers are interested. -- W.H. Utterback, Jr., P.O. Box 244, Amarillo, TX 79105

Dear Folks:

At the end of July I was down your way and tried my best to get over to see you. But, the people I was with didn't understand why I wanted to drive 200 miles off course. -- Dave Walter, Langley, BC, Canada

*At the present time, we do not offer guided tours of our rather squalid two room suite of offices.*



# The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

The following are unsolicited remarks with respect to the indicated dealers. To be fair, we cannot ordinarily list someone as a bad egg simply on the basis of a single complaint. This policy accounts, in part, for the fact that some of the remarks you may have sent in are not reproduced here. All comments with respect to particular dealers are excerpted from readers' correspondence that we have on file. With respect to Chapter 770, Florida Statutes, relating to civil actions for libel, publication of these excerpts is in the good faith belief that said readers' comments are a true account of their experiences. Also, since it is not practical to repeat everything each issue, new readers may want to pick up copies of TV #19-27, in which the first 9 installments of GB & U appear.

Mr. Lowe,

Recently I purchased a videotape from Projects III in response to an ad place in a recent issue of The Videophile. I'm writing to ask if there have been any complaints about their service. My order is a bit overdue, and there haven't been any replies to my queries. -- D.H., Mt. Vernon OH

Dear Editor,

I saw an ad of a company, Projects Three Inc. in Videophile, April 1980 issue. I contacted them. They answered me "Videos you want are in stock, would you send money to another address." So, I ordered ... and sent a \$130 check. I have not heard from them since then. I then sent two more letters of claim. Because I live in Japan, it is hard to contact them more. -- Massaaki Suga, Nagasaki, Japan

One of these letters we got in mid-June, the other in late August. It looks very much as if we have another "ugly" one on our hands. If any of you can give us more information on Projects Three, or have had satisfactory dealings with them, we will endeavor to look into the matter further.

Dear Mr. Lowe:

I have used the services of the "Triple X Change Service", 3125 W. Burbank Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505 for several months and would like to tell your interested readers of the excellent service I have received!

The X Change Service has the quickest turn around time of ANY company that I have done business with. I receive tapes on the average of only one and a half weeks after I have sent in my exchange tapes. -- J.S., Yakima WA

Thanks for the feedback, Jerr. We've been wondering about them. While they have never (I don't think) advertised in these pages, the \$9.95 exchange has always seemed like a good deal to us.

To whom it may concern,

I have been ripped off by two people who are in Videophile, and was wondering if you can help me get back what I got coming. -- P.B., Milwaukee WI

Joyce,

Thanks for your letter of 9/25. For your information, "the problem" you refer to has not been settled as I have received absolutely nothing from \_\_\_\_\_. I can assure you, if asked, he could not produce a copy of a UPS or USPS insurance receipt (dated) for the tape he told you he sent me. I have decided the only way I am going to get any satisfaction from him is the next time I'm in the N.Y. city area to look him up and personally kick his ass (a matter of principal, you understand). Anyway, I appreciate

your effort (more than it's worth for one blank tape) in this matter. --M.M., Knoxville, TN

We, of course, cannot guarantee that you will be satisfied with the contacts that you make among our 6000 subscribers. However, if you will send us copies of your correspondence, we can sometimes act as an intermediary in resolving these things. Your best bet is not to send any large number of tapes to someone you don't know, certainly without corresponding (preferably speaking to on the phone), and otherwise developing a "feel" for the collectors that you are dealing with.

Dear Jim:

Upon seeing many ads for Video Wholesalers, I called them and requested price information on the Kloss Novabeam Model I. ... (many details) ... I immediately borrowed the money and mailed the check for full payment. ... I didn't want to take a chance of having it damaged in shipping, so we changed our vacation plans from Maine to Fla. so we could pick it up ourselves. ... (many more details) ... I feel I have endured needless stress and personal inconvenience to say nothing of the interest I am paying for a loan on something I do not have. I want a new set at the price I was quoted and paid. -- K.A., Collings Lakes, NJ

Gentlemen:

Enclosed you'll find a Xeroxed copy of the letter I'm sending to VIDEO WHOLESALERS, INC. of Miami, Florida. I've been through a nightmare of paperwork and phone calls, all the more surprising because of the good service rendered by V.W. until recently. (then follows details of an attempt to get a case of tapes which had to be "back ordered"). --J.D., Atlanta, GA

Dear Videophile:

The Video Service Center in Sacramento, CA who advertises in your magazine has to be the GREATEST video supplier in the U.S. and they will get all of my business in the future. I have placed three orders with them during the past month and you would not believe the fast, friendly service I got ... not to mention the LOW prices. -- Mr. B, Seattle

Letters like these last three pretty much speak for themselves. There is such a thing as a high-volume discounter that, while it may satisfy a very large percentage of its customers, is sometimes more interested in sales than in consumer relations. On the other hand, there are also dealers who cater specifically to us videophiles, and who appreciate our business enough to run their operations accordingly. Over the months and years, it has been our experience that the former group drops out as an advertiser in this magazine, and the latter group continues with us in good standing.



# The Videophile Goes to the CES Part II

As you may remember from Issue #26, your tired and weary technical editor stumbled down literally miles of aisles in Chicago's huge McCormick Place, McCormick Inn and the Pick-Congress Hotel in search of anything and everything new and innovative in the world of consumer video. Despite unbelievable catastrophies on everything from having a bag of literature and press releases "permanently borrowed" to enduring the wrath of the surly numbskulls at both the Chicago Hyatt and McCormick Place itself, all of us made it back alive and here once more to continue our tale. So . . . on with the show.

## New VTR's Continued:

Quasar unveiled a number of Matsushita-built decks that appeared to be approximately identical to Panasonic's VHS recorders, including the top-of-the-line 5160, which provides 4 heads and complete "special effects" playback (like the PV-1750), the mid-range 5040 without the special effects but retaining picture search (like the PV-1400), and the low-end 5030 (PV-1250). Magnavox had similar units, along with some attractively styled portapaks mirroring Matsushita's 3000-series, including the 8372 programmable tuner/deck combination, the regular 8371 tuner/deck, and the straight 8370 deck alone.

Sharp displayed a unique deck in the \$7-800 price range, the VC-7400, which matches the earlier front-load design of the VC-6800 but has only 1-day/1-event programming. It sports semi-solenoid-operated transport and a pushbutton tuner, and represents a new trend in relatively inexpensive VTR's designed to compete head-on with videodisc players.

Toshiba unveiled the latest of their new LVR recorders, the production model V-200 unit, which has a slightly different appearance and features compared to previously shown prototypes. The LVR cartridge is still about 5½" square and about 1½" thick, and uses a continuous-loop ½" tape to provide up to 2 hours of playing time on a 400' tape. As discussed in past issues, the LVR system differs from all helical formats (including Beta and VHS) by using extremely minute horizontal tracks recorded by fixed video heads, with the tape moving at over 15 feet per second to provide what the manufacturer claims is a 42 dB video S/N ratio and 230 lines of resolution. The demos we reviewed looked to be no better than half- or one-third-speed Beta or VHS recordings, but may be acceptable for certain applications. Toshiba admits that their consumer marketing efforts for the LVR have been postponed, and they plan on making the unit available strictly to industrial users sometime early next year for around \$1000 (including its integral varactor tuner).



While not seen at the CES, Sony has unveiled their new video format, tentatively called "Video Movie," which combines a 1/8" metal cassette recorder with a CCD (coupled-charge device) solid-state color camera in one micro-miniaturized package. As mentioned last issue, Sony's Akio Morita astonished industry observers by revealing a working prototype of the system an estimated five years before it can be marketed, in an attempt to encourage consumer video and film camera manufacturers to adopt one universal portable video standard and thereby end the current "Video Standards Wars" raging on three or four continents across the world. Alas, the war appears to have continued in spite of Mr. Morita's well-intended demonstration, with reports reaching us at press time that at least two manufacturers, including Hitachi and Technicolor, have essentially refused to consider adopting such a format and will, instead, proceed with their own new, completely incompatible portable formats. Well, you can't say that Sony didn't try to help out these stubborn morons . . .

We'll try to have a hands-on report of the Video Movie System in our next issue, provided it's shown at the Japan Electronics Show in Tokyo, but for now we can tell you that the prototype camera/VTR unit weighs just a hair over 4 pounds (!), has an optical through-the-lens viewfinder, 3-1 power zoom (14mm-42mm), has 250 lines of horizontal resolution, and has a video S/N ratio of 45 dB. It consumes a mere 7 watts, which should allow it to operate for quite some time with its integrated 9 volt battery pack. The tape in the new Video Movie cassette has a pure metal coating similar to that in high-quality audio cassettes, and each cassette records up to 20 minutes. Sony has stressed that the prototype shown may not necessarily be the final marketed version, and that they're more than willing to discuss other approaches with other manufacturers, which sounds like a great idea to us, no matter what Hitachi and Technicolor say.

## New Cameras

Panasonic brought out three new models in their extensive color line, including the low-cost PK-530, which has a 3-1 zoom lens and optical viewfinder, the medium priced PK-700, which adds an electronic viewfinder and a motorized 6-1 zoom lens, and the PK-750, which allows you to mount the viewfinder on either the right or left side and lets you rest the camera on your shoulder. Also shown was the top of the line PK-800, which offers a Saticon tube for extended range low-light shooting and the same basic features as the PK-750. The 530 will list for about \$775, the PK-700/750 costing about \$1,000 and the PK-800 selling for \$1,250, each including an AC adapter.

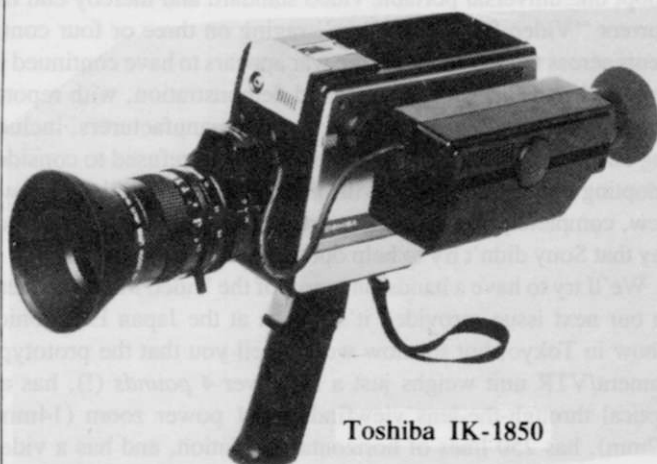




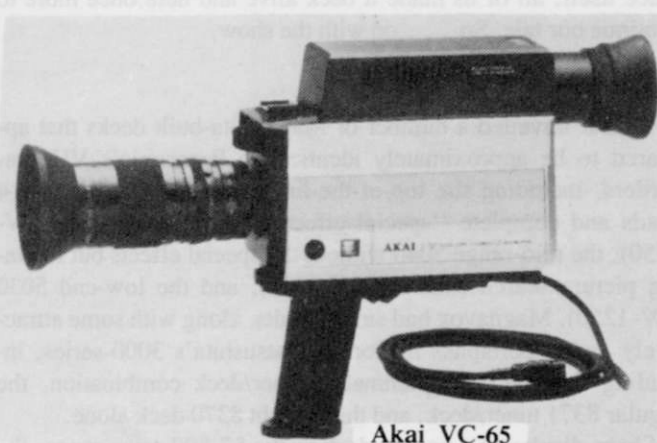
Panasonic PK-700



Panasonic PK-750



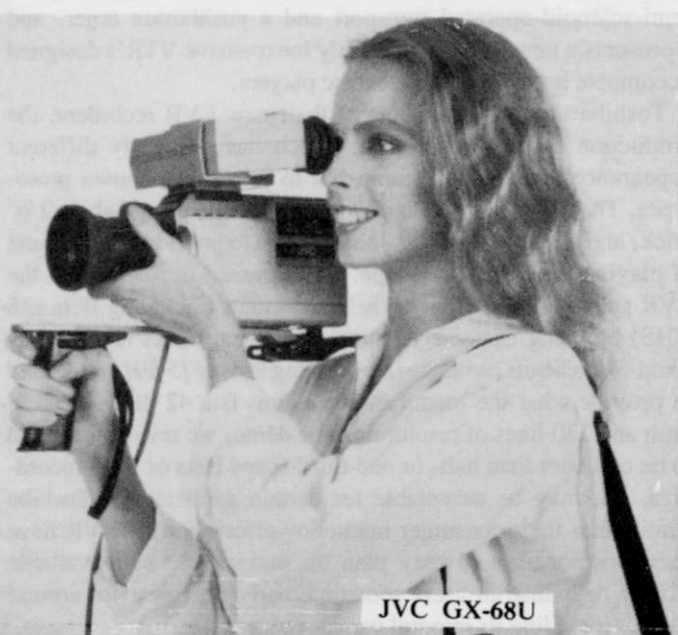
Toshiba IK-1850



Akai VC-65



Sony HVC-2000



JVC GX-68U



Toshiba unveiled their IK-1850 self-focusing color camera, which we're sad to say we never got a chance to evaluate directly but we understand that it actually works adequately under most circumstances. Akai's Jerry Astor demonstrated their new VC-65 color camera, intended as a companion to their two VTR "ActiVideo" line; the camera weighs about 5 lbs. and features a 6-1 electric zoom lens and electronic viewfinder for about \$1000.

One of the best new cameras at the show had to be Sony's HVC-2000 Trinitron portable, which is a completely redesigned version of the HVC-1000, adding a 6-1 electric zoom lens, electronic viewfinder (with displays for focus and exposure), and a unique automatic fade-in/fade-out feature. Also available is the HVC-2010, which deletes the 2000's electronic viewfinder. The HVC-2000 sells for about \$1,250 and the 2010 is roughly \$350 less.

Also shown was JVC's new GX-68U color camera, which has an optional VF-P30U electronic viewfinder and is intended to be used with the firm's HR-2200 portapak. The GX-68 is essentially an updated version of last year's GX-66 and GX-33, using a new updated AGC circuit and auto-iris system, for better exposure control, plus an auto fade-in/fade-out feature like the Sony camera mentioned previously. The GX-68 weighs about 5 lbs. with viewfinder and shoulder mount, and should sell for around \$1,200.

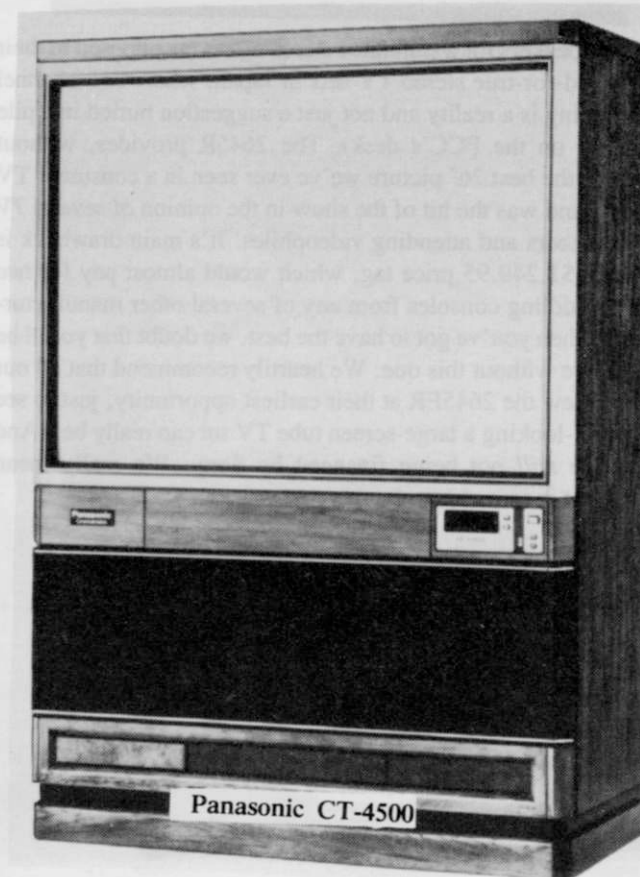
### Large Screen TV

Despite the tremendous sales currently enjoyed by Kloss Video's Novabeam, several manufacturers at the show are still continuing to try to refine the "rear-screen" technique popularized by GE's much-maligned "Widescreen" projector. Quasar's PR-4800 and Panasonic's CT-4500 systems utilize an internal three-gun system displaying a 45" diagonal image on a translucent plastic screen, with what we felt were only fair to poor results. We overheard one industry executive remarking that he strolled by the Panasonic booth, stepped to the side of the CT-4500 and asked a Panasonic rep if he would kindly turn on the unit so he could evaluate it. The salesman coughed and explained that the projector *was* on already. (You guessed it—you could hardly tell the difference standing anywhere but head-on from the center of the screen!) We agreed with this executive that these rear-screen units are a significant step backwards for the industry, and hope against hope that they disappear ASAP, never to darken our video enjoyment again. [On the other hand, a *perfected* rear-screen projection unit would be very welcome.—Ed.]

Magnavox displayed a new 3-tube console with somewhat better picture quality than the aforementioned rear-projection screens, built into a long horizontal home entertainment console they call the "Performing Arts Center," which includes a MagnaVision videodisc player, color camera, VTR, Odyssey 2 video game, "Quadramode" compact receiver/turntable (yeeesh), and, surprisingly, a 19" portable color TV set. An executive from a rival firm opined as how the latter set could be used in the daytime, when the sunlight washes out the image on Magnavox's projector, which makes sense to us as well. The unit is 5 feet tall and a little over 8 feet long. We shudder to imagine the price.



Quasar PR-4800



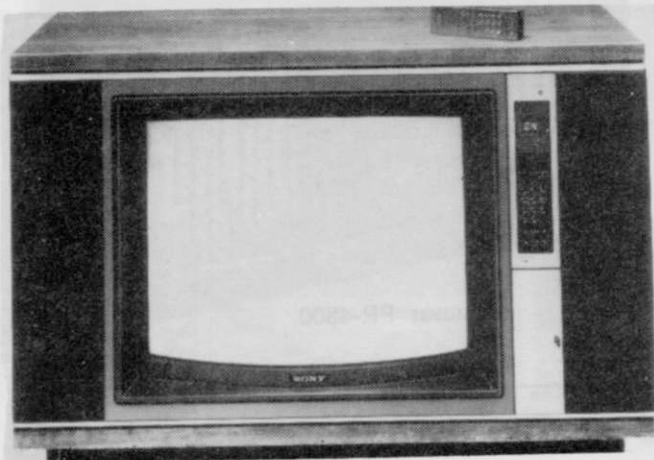
Panasonic CT-4500



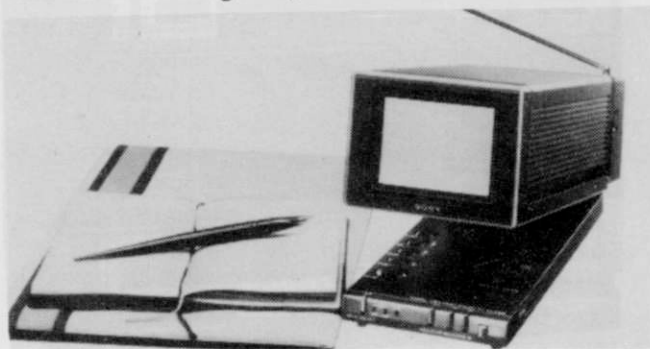


## TV Sets

We'd be less than honest not to admit that the finest set we saw at the show had to be Sony's latest Trinitron, the top-of-the-line KV-2645R 26" console, which boasts an attractive walnut cabinet



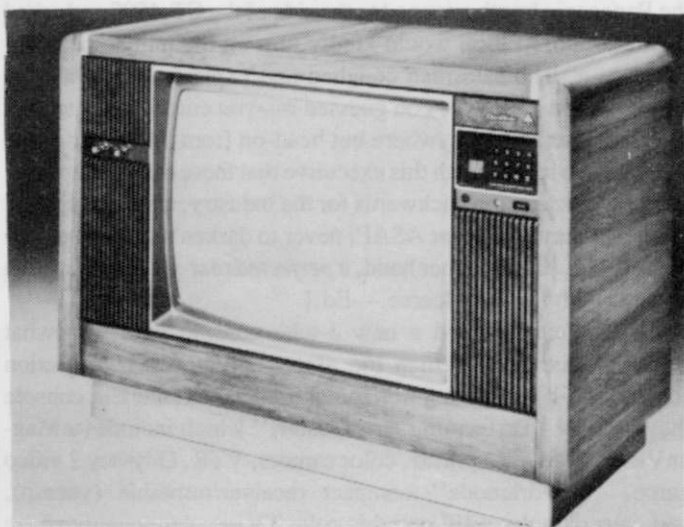
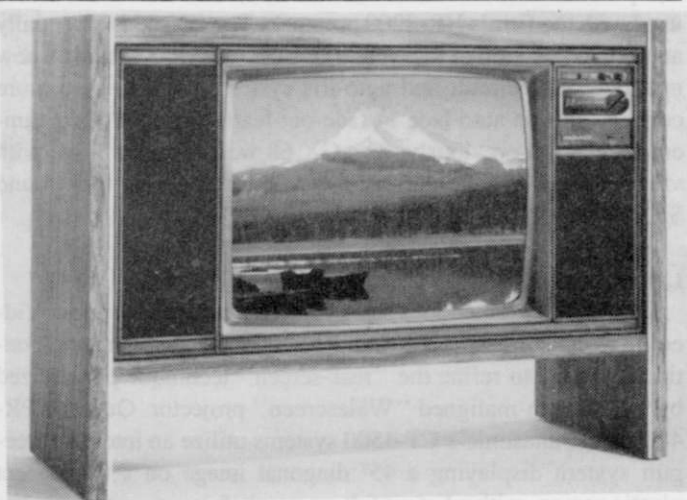
and two speakers for a simulated stereo effect (as opposed to their honest-and-for-true stereo TV sets in Japan, where two-channel broadcasting is a reality and not just a suggestion buried in a pile of papers on the FCC's desk). The 2645R provides, without question, the best 26" picture we've ever seen in a consumer TV product, and was the hit of the show in the opinion of several TV staff members and attending videophiles. It's main drawback is the hefty \$1,249.95 price tag, which would almost pay for two fair-to-middling consoles from any of several other manufacturers; but when you've got to have the best, we doubt that you'll be able to live without this one. We heartily recommend that all our readers view the 2645ER at their earliest opportunity, just to see how good-looking a large-screen tube TV set can really be. (And no, we're *still* not being financed by Sony. We really mean it this set is something else.)



Sony also introduced the *smallest* color TV currently available in America, the ultra-miniature 3.7" KV-4000, a \$549.95 battery operated portable that boasts direct video input and a detachable tuner/base. Elsewhere, JVC showed their small-size portable, the



CX-610, which provides a slightly larger picture than the Sony unit as well as an integral tuner and direct audio/video inputs for about \$100 less.



Magnavox unveiled their top-of-the-line model 4740, which features two speakers for improved audio performance, acclaimed comb filter circuits for extended resolution and a 100 degree in-line picture tube. Quasar's top model is now the TL-9990,



which offers 4 speakers, a 16-function remote control and is said to have increased picture power (?) and resolution over earlier models. Both of these new consoles provide a fairly decent 25" picture, but don't come close to the aforementioned Sony console.

### Programming

This Summer's CES marked the first appearance of MCA Videocassette, one firm on which we'd have bet good money, as little as a year ago, would never get into videotape. . . which just shows you how people can change their minds overnight sometimes. The MCA booth was hidden away on the second level of the sprawling McCormick Place, but we found it without difficulty and looked ahead in the distance to what we presumed was one of Universal's top executives in the center of the display area. As we got closer, we realized that we had mistaken him for Bruce the Shark (from *Jaws*), who was standing a full 6 feet above the floor grinning from ear to ear in a menacing, tooth-filled expression that even at close range was a little reminiscent of some of our friends in Universal City. Be that as it may, we took an hour or so to converse with Al Bergamo, president of the MCA Distributing Corp., and Gene Ciaquinto, president of MCA Videocassette, who informed us that they're out to make the new firm an important force in the home videotape market. There's no doubt that their company has got some of the best titles available, and the first few MCA tapes we've had a chance to review and watch have been excellent in terms of audio and video quality (despite several complaints about *The Deer Hunter*, which we're told has been released on a low-quality brand). Bergamo, in answer to our many questions, informed us that MCA would now be releasing all of their current features on tape within about 90 days after their initial theatrical showings and several months before they'd be released to Pay TV or network television. Both MCA executives continued to express outrage at the number of reports of unauthorized rentals of their programs across the country, though when Bergamo was asked whether they had a lawsuit in the works against any of their dealers he replied that he wasn't aware of any at the present time. We also asked why different titles were being released on MCA DiscoVision discs vs. MCA Videocassette tapes, and they commented that the two formats provide "a separate environment" for their programs and that in some cases, certain titles are more suited to one format than the other. Finally, when asked whether MCA would be giving up their lawsuit against Sony, now that they're offering films on videotape, one spokesman retorted that they'll continue with their appeal to defeat off-air recording, which he felt was a "different matter altogether" from pre-recorded videocassette marketing.

Elsewhere at the show, a number of interesting titles were being introduced from firms like Warner Bros. and Columbia, with the latter finally coming through with their long-awaited *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, which will be the "Special Edition" released this past summer, including \$2,000,000 worth of newly-edited footage added to the existing 1977 science-fiction classic, with approximately 10 minutes of old scenes removed or trimmed to make way for the new ones.

### The Wrap-Up

All told, it was a hell of a show, and most of the TV crew each wore out at least two pairs of shoes stumbling around the crowded corridors of McCormick Place. It's now apparent to even the most stalwart industry expert that slowly but surely, video is taking over the Consumer Electronics Show to the point that I wouldn't be surprised if, someday, a U.S. "Consumer Video Show" is held separately from a "Consumer Audio Show."

Meanwhile, I'm patching up my old sneakers to get ready for October's All-Japan Audio Fair and Japan Electronics Show, as discussed by Ye Editor earlier. But before I do, I'd like to once again submit my candidate for the "Worst CES Product of 1980," which has to be the Criterian Watch Company's "Ronald McDonald Watch," just the thing for telling you what time to have a pig-out at the Golden Arches, and as a close runner-up, McCormick Place's almost-edible \$1.85 hot dogs, which at that price should be made out of Top Sirloin. (And we don't even want to mention their 75¢ Coke machines. Bah—humbug.)\*

—MFW

(Special thanks to ABC-TV's Todd DeBonis for going beyond the call of duty during our stay, and to photographer Bruce Rogers.)

\*[Marc must not have seen Panasonic's "talking" calculator which, after it displays the numbers in the usual fashion, tells you what they are.—Ed.]



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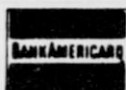
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# The Videophile PROGRAM REVIEWS

Before swallowing these evaluations' hook, line and sinker, please consider these few remarks and admonitions:

1. Lest there be any doubt, and in case your expectations are unrealistically high, the editor of this magazine would like to say that he has seen few, if any, prerecorded tapes of *color* feature films that have a picture quality as good as everyday network broadcast television.
2. Most of the tapes reviewed herein were specifically requested from the mentioned dealer. It is unlikely that they would consciously send us a defective copy to be used for this purpose.
3. Any *reputable* dealer will exchange or otherwise make adjustments for any tape that is defective or fails in some way to be what it is represented to be. Please advise us of any disreputable dealers with whom you may have experience.
4. Unlike audio cassettes, most prerecorded video cassettes are currently being sold on standard length tapes. Often this means that there will be a substantial amount of blank tape left at the end, maybe even enough to use for a 1/2 hour recording, thereby perhaps offsetting the otherwise unjustifiable expense of purchase. If a tape contains a film that runs, oh, say 90 minutes, you can be pretty sure of getting usable blank space along with it (at least in VHS or Beta formats).
5. The source from which we obtain each tape is indicated at the end of each review. Their full addresses are set forth at the end of this entire column.

Reviewers this issue, identified by their initials, are: JH—Joyce Hilliard; JL—Jim Lowe; TR—Ted Reinhart; DS—David See. Their views are not necessarily those of *The Videophile*.

## TAPES

### A\*P\*E

(Jack H. Harris/Worldwide Entertainment Corp.—1976)

**Credits:** Cast—Rod Arrants, Joanna De Varona, Alex Nicol.  
Music performed by The Seoul Symphony.  
Director—Paul Leder.

**Story:** A Korean Kong (man in gorilla suit) spends 90 minutes destroying toy buildings and cars while a brave group of "actors" struggle against him and their dialogue.

**Evaluation:** The movie opens with the following statement:

"The producers wish to thank the United States Army for their co-operation in the making of this film." If this is what our Army is doing with its time, it's no wonder people are disenchanted with it. In all seriousness (if you call this film serious), A\*P\*E was released in the U.S. about the same time as the new

version of *King Kong* to capitalize on the giant ape's publicity. Legal action forced A\*P\*E's ads to read "Not to be confused with *King Kong*." It won't be! This film is so bad it's funny. The acting, direction, photography, and special effects all work together to lower the film to new depths. Highlights include the ape kidnapping a "famous" actress, the ape studying a grazing cow, the ape destroying several toy helicopters, and the ape shooting the finger at the Army. Print quality, video quality, and audio quality are all terrible. **To be avoided.**—DS

**Source:** Video Warehouse, Inc.

★★★

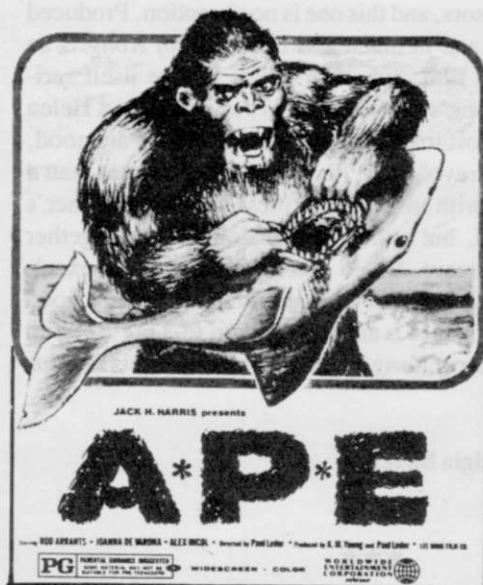
### Encounter with the Unknown (1959)

**Credits:** Producer—Joe Glass. Narrated by—Rod Serling.  
Director—Harry Thomason.

**Format:** Beta X-2

**Content:** Between the years 1949 and 1970, Dr. Jonathan Rankin catalogued hundreds of events relating to psychic phenomena which defied rational explanation. He believes that there is a relationship between events and cemeteries, with 453 people involved in these events being buried in 23 separate cemeteries. *Encounter with the Unknown* involves only one of the cemeteries and three events.

The first episode concerns a mother (who apparently has occult powers) and her revenge on three boys who are indirectly





responsible for the death of her son. The second, a little more interesting, involves a horror which still haunts a small community in southern Missouri—a hole opened up in the earth and is inhabited by “something.” If this one is true, it gives one something to think about. The final episode, “Girl on the Bridge,” takes place in central Arkansas and revolves around a girl who was killed in an automobile accident and is still seen at the scene of her death.

**Evaluation:** As much as I admire Rod Serling, and as interested as I am in psychic phenomena, I can't really say that I enjoyed this particular tape. The acting was *very* amateurish; the quality of the tape ran from poor at the beginning to pretty good relatively early in the film; and the “events” chosen could not have been the most thought-provoking available. Even if you're a real fanatic for this sort of thing, I'd be reluctant to advise you to spend your money on this one.—JH

**Source/Price:** World Television/\$38 (special price)

★★★

**The Kinks: One for the Road** (Time-Life Films—1980)

**Credits:** Producer—Ray Davies. Director—Ken O'Neil.

**Length/Format:** 60 minutes/Beta

**Content:** A home video version of the KINKS' live album currently in release. Videotaped at the Providence, Rhode Island Civic Center, the program contains twelve of the selections from the album, including: *You Really Got Me*, *Lola*, *Superman*, *Low Budget*, *Catch Me Now I'm Falling*, and *Celluloid Heroes*. The onstage footage is intercut with backstage scenes and, during one song, kinescope scenes of the KINKS from the 1960's television show, *Shindig*, complete with Bobby Sherman. Following the closing credits are two encore performances.

**Evaluation:** An excellent example of what a concert tape should be, this well-produced program shows the band performing at its best. The direction is fairly straight-forward, but works in some artsy camera work and some limited special effects scenes. All of this is kept to a minimum, however, and never intrudes on the band or its music. Video quality is excellent, and the audio is some of the best I have heard from a prerecorded tape. Playback through the stereo system is recommended. The retail packaging is designed after the LP jacket and features extensive liner notes on the back. A must-have tape for rock fans,



*The Kinks: One for the Road* holds up well on repeated viewings.—DS

**Sources:** Time-Life Video Club and WCI Home Video

★★★

**Son of Kong** (RKO—1933)

**Credits:** Cast—Robert Armstrong, Helen Mack, Frank Reichter. Special Effects Supervisor—Willis O'Brien. Director—Ernest Shoedsack.

**Story:** When we last saw Carl Denham (Armstrong) in *King Kong*, he was lamenting over the death of his prize catch, Kong. (See review of *King Kong* in TV #20.) Now he's lamenting over the dozens of creditors trying to collect for the damage done by Kong in New York. Along with Captain Englehorn (Reichter), Denham heads for the peace of the South Seas to set up a cargo business. Running across a girl (Helen Mack) whose father was recently murdered, Denham invites her to join them. Information comes their way of a great treasure hidden back on Kong's island, so off they go. Once on the island, the group discovers that things haven't changed much since their last visit, with plenty of dinosaurs and other creatures roaming about. They also come across a 12-foot albino gorilla, obviously a descendant of Kong, who just happens to know where the treasure is located. Little Kong is also pretty good at fighting prehistoric beasts. Just when everything looks rosy, the Skull Island volcano erupts and the island sinks like a rock! Little Kong manages to save Denham and company but not himself, and goes down with his ship . . . make that “island.”

**Evaluation:** It's generally accepted that sequels are rarely as good as their predecessors, and this one is no exception. Produced for much less money and in much less time, *Son of Kong* is an entertaining adventure film, but never seems to take itself seriously. Robert Armstrong's performance is very good, but Helen Mack's heroine is almost irritating. The special effects are good, but Little Kong is portrayed more like a cartoon character than a real gorilla, complete with silly facial expressions. Max Steiner's musical score is good, but uninspired, mainly pieced together from *Kong*'s original score. Video and audio quality are excellent, and the Nostalgia Merchant's 16mm film print is very good also. A cute film that makes a nice companion to *King Kong* in your collection, but *Son of Kong* is certainly not up to his famous father.—DS

**Source:** The Nostalgia Merchant

★★★



**Coal Miner's Daughter** (Universal, 1980)

**Credits:** Cast—Sissy Spacek, Tommy Lee Jones, Beverly D'Angelo and Levon Helm. Director—Michael Apted.

**Format:** Beta X-2

**Viewed on:** Sony Model KV-2643R

**Story:** The film is based on the autobiography of country singer Loretta Lynn and her rise from the poverty of the backwoods coal country to the very top of the country music world. Other Nashville personalities, notably Patsy Kline, are portrayed—including Ernest Tubb, played by the gentleman himself. As a story, *Coal Miner's Daughter* is pretty much of a rags-to-riches tale, with all the pathos that is usually attendant to such journeys.

**Evaluation:** Up front—I'm biased. *Coal Miner's Daughter* is of particular personal interest to me. No, I'm not a coal miner's daughter but, as a big fan of country music, both old and new, and as someone who was born and raised in West Virginia, there is no way that I could approach this film with the same objectivity as, oh say . . . Abolhassan Bani-Sadr. Having said that, I now say that this movie will be nominated for Best Picture of the Year and Miss Spacek will be nominated for Best Actress. Several other performances, notably that of Jones as Loretta's husband and the sensitive portrayal of Miss Lynn's father by former "The Band" member Levon Helm, were outstanding. The film is not flawless. Few are in this "chase the big box office buck" era, but for me, at least, the touching mood established by the first couple of reels sustained itself pretty well throughout.

As a film, the top-notch location shots, super performances and fine music made it a winner in my book. How about as a tape? Well, as Gomer Pyle would say, "Surprise! Surprise!" The color picture of this MCA tape was very good to excellent, one of the better big-studio mass-duplication cassettes I've seen. The insignificant number of dropouts is of particular note; also the fact that even the dark scenes (always a problem) were not as bad as expected. As you may know, I do not have a very positive attitude toward MCA just now (for reasons that we hope to be able to tell in full one of these times), but I must say that this release is well worth the price. I'm especially pleased that MCA has chosen to adopt what we consider to be the most effective anti-piracy approach available—release of feature films on tape within a short period of time after their initial theatrical run.

The flimsy, illustrated, cardboard carton that it comes in also includes a nice little color catalogue of other currently available releases. Oh, and the movie itself is preceded by a very informative little short subject (actually just a prolonged still-shot) which warns the viewer as to the consequences of illegal duplication.—JL

**Source/Price:** Videobrary/\$69.95

★★★

**CES Summer 1980** (Instant Replay)

**Format/Length:** Beta X-2/87 minutes

**Content:** The first hour of this tape is devoted to a tour of the exhibit hall at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago in June 1980, complete with product demonstrations and interviews with the manufacturers' representatives. Nearly the entire 60 minutes concerns video related equipment, although the majority of products at these shows are exhibited by stereo, calculator, and other consumer electronics product manufacturers. Among the products examined were the video disc systems from both RCA and JVC, the new Technicolor ¼" tape format VCR, the Sony HVC 2000 camera, Mattel's "Intellivision," Sony's AD-300 Betamax changer and a satellite ground station. Among those interviewed were Alvin "Future Shock" Toffler and Marilyn "Insatiable" Chambers (no known connection).

The tape also includes a 27-minute feature, "The Link Between Us . . . Electronics," which was produced by the Consumer Electronics folks and is hosted by Eric Severied, among others. It's an interesting little featurette that would be quite informative for children and novices. Segments on micro-electronic chips and Jim Henson's Muppets were of particular interest.

The tape concludes with a series of color bars and other test patterns that I can imagine would come in handy now and then.

**Evaluation:** I've said it before and I'll say it again . . . "Instant Replay" is doing a very fine job of producing material that is of high interest to the very type of person who reads this magazine. Let's face it, in the whole world-wide scheme of things, home video enthusiasts are a pretty narrow audience and, yet, here we have a regular series of professionally produced tapes aimed directly at us.

The beauty of a presentation like this is that "show and tell" just plain has it all over "tell" alone. I had not yet seen Mattel's Intellivision, for instance, and was fascinated by the demonstration of the "baseball game" and "blackjack dealer" cartridges.

Yes, these tapes are somewhat expensive. So are all other prerecorded tapes, but (at the risk of employing another cliché)—a picture is worth a thousand words. If you wanted to go to the CES and couldn't, this tape will take you there. None of the demonstrations go into the full detail that some of you might like (the time spent with Miss Chambers, though extensive, was not as penetrating or in-depth as I would prefer), but the overall presentation is truly a joy.

Where else can you see the \$25,000 Spencer Brothers' auto stereo system, complete with a 3-stage alarm that actually "tells" an intruder to leave the car alone and even pages the owner with a beeper? The parade of other interesting items also includes the Panasonic RLH-1000 hand-held computer, the mouth-watering Sony KV-4000 3.7" color TV, and a brief look at Sony's "Video Movie" camera/VCR combo.

The picture and sound on this tape were very good, especially when you consider that most of it was shot inside the convention hall, with portable equipment, and under less than ideal conditions. The gang at Instant Replay is getting more and more



professional with every new production. I enjoyed this one very much and recommend it to you.—JL

**Source/Price:** Instant Replay/\$39.95

★★★

**After Mein Kampf (1939)**

**Format/Length:** VHS/approx. 70 minutes

**Viewed on:** Sony KV-2643R

**Content:** This is an anti-Nazi British propaganda film, which is a rather unusual combination of newsreel footage, recreated events, and fictional dramatic segments based on fact. The story line more-or-less traces the rise of Hitler in the 1930's and his plundering of Europe, which culminated in the beginning of the second World War. The dramatic sequences may have been lifted from another British film, *Mein Kampf*. My research materials do not confirm this, but they do tell me that Herbert Lom's first film (later of Pink Panther fame) was *Mein Kampf* and the young Mr. Lom definitely appears in *this* film.

The tape also includes *Nuremburg*, a short feature of about 22 minutes, made in 1946 as a report, of sorts, on the famous war trials, illustrated with appropriate films documenting Nazi atrocities. A portion of this footage is devoted to some pretty grisly stuff that I doubt you have seen before.

To help fill out the tape, you'll find a half dozen seldom seen trailers from '30's movies, including one for the serial *Hurricane Express* and two from outrageous exploitation films—*Marihuana* and *Killers All*.

**Evaluation:** I should think that this tape would be fascinating to students of the period. It would certainly make an interesting double feature with the better-known pro-Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. Some of the "staged" events were so well handled as to be almost indistinguishable from the newsreels. (You know it can't be real, because there are no newsreels of Hitler running around a corner in fear.)

The narration was a little odd, with three Englishmen finishing each other's sentences in Huey, Dewey and Louie style. This approach was probably thought to add some punch to the narration, at the time. Other points of interest included the suggestion that Hitler may have been Jewish, and the aforementioned first screen appearance of Herbert Lom. Also, I always love it when the dialogue includes phrases like "swashbuckling perverts."

The overall quality of the print was not bad, considering its age, and the fact that it is scarce in any condition. The print was only slightly contrasty, though it loses perhaps just a little more clarity in the film-to-tape duplication. The soundtrack had the noise you expect from a 40-year-old film, but not nearly enough to be distracting.

The *Nurenborg* short was too contrasty throughout and many shots were fairly difficult to see. Perhaps this is just as well, considering the subject matter. While it is important that these

films be seen, lest we forget the lesson they teach us, there is certainly no entertainment value to them. (Perhaps if you are trying to lose weight you could watch this just before dinner each evening.)

The added bonus of the trailers was a treat, particularly *Marihuana* with its "WEIRD PARTIES" blurbs and even a glimpse of 1930's nudity.

This tape is the first release of Cinemax, a collector-to-collector outfit of the type which we intend to call to your attention at every opportunity. Head man, Peter Kavel, tells me that he has preserved an extensive collection of World War II short subjects that he is in the process of transferring to tape on "a film-chain that meets our critical standards." His efforts deserve our support and, while I cannot in all honesty recommend *After Mein Kampf* to general audiences in the same way that I can *Coal Miner's Daughter*, it should be a welcome addition to any collection of propaganda films, Nazi memorabilia or World War II esoterica.—JL

**Source/Price:** Cinemax/\$49.95 plus \$2.00 postage (VHS only)

★★★

**Super Bowl XIV (NFL Films, 1980)**

**Format/Length:** VHS/22 minutes

**Viewed on:** Sony KV-2643R

**Content:** Highlights of the 14th annual "Super Bowl" football game between the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Los Angeles Rams which was played January 20, 1980. Pittsburgh won 31-19.

Contrary to what I had expected, this was not a play-by-play account of the entire game. Rather it is in the nature of a narrative documentary, reminiscent of the old Movietone News style of reporting. The tape runs only 22 minutes and not all of that is devoted to the field of play. There are a couple of minutes of background on each team, and the game itself includes some press box and other diversionary shots, one of which cut into the middle of an exciting kickoff runback. This is one of a complete set of 14 tapes produced by the NFL itself.

**Evaluation:** Having expected to sit back on the sofa for a couple of hours of football (I even had my drink and pretzels ready), I was somewhat taken aback to discover that this tape was only a drastically reduced "highlights" version of the game. I didn't even get to see the Embraceable Ewes, except for the teaser pre-game dressing room shot with which the tape opened. I'll be straight with you and say that since I never fully recovered from this initial disappointment, my opinion of the tape may be somewhat colored thereby.

The nature of the presentation is such that the feeling of continuity of the game is completely lost. Add to this the fact that the original location soundtrack has been almost completely replaced with voice-over narration and background music (eg. The



William Tell Overture), and you have the ingredients of disappointment for those who are looking for something other than capsulized treatment of the event. Heck, not even all of the scoring plays were shown.

On the plus side, there were some nice replays, such as the two different ones of the Bradshaw to Swann pass that gave the Steelers a 17-13 lead in the second half. There was also one interesting replay with diagrams to show you why a certain play had developed in the way it did. The sound and color picture were plenty good enough so, as long as you know what to expect, you can go ahead and spend your money as you please. Frankly, though, the guy who devoed a blank or two to taping the show off-the-air earlier this year got a better deal.—JL

**Source/Price:** NFL Films/\$34.95

★★★

**Super Bowl IV** (NFL Films, 1980)

**Format/Length:** VHS/23 minutes

**Viewed on:** Sony KV-2643R

**Content:** Highlights of the 4th annual "Super Bowl" football game, between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Minnesota Vikings, which was played January 11, 1970. Kansas City won 23-7.

Presentation is in substantially the same format as *Super Bowl XIV* (reviewed above), except that a great deal of attention is given to sideline remarks by the Kansas City coach, Hank Stramm. Something about the audio of these portions suggests that his words were dubbed in, but they match his lip movements so perfectly that I figure the remarks are actual sound recordings, perhaps "enhanced" somehow for the production.

**Evaluation:** I watched this tape immediately after watching the *Super Bowl XIV* tape, and found it to be much more enjoyable. No longer expecting a lengthy play-by-play, I was able to sit back and be entertained by an account of what, in these fast-changing times, can pass as an historical event. The ten-year-old film had not suffered a bit with the passage of time. Indeed, in overall clarity and picture quality, I found it to be the better of the two tapes. Dropouts were insignificant, if not totally absent. The regular season footage of Viking's quarterback Joe Capp was interesting, as was the general "feeling" of the whole tape, perhaps because after ten years the "highlight" treatment seems more appropriate than it is for a game that was played only a few months ago. What really made it for me was the continuing colorful sideline chatter of Coach Stramm, as when he quizzically asks one of the officials, "How could all six of you guys blow that call?" (Something about his manner kept making me think of Louie on *Taxi*.) Anyhow, for those of you who have an interest in this particular game (I doubt you were able to record it off the air) and whose interest can be expressed to the tune of \$1.50 per minute, I would recommend this one to you. I enjoyed it.—JL

**Source/Price:** NFL Films/\$34.95

★★★

**Star Virgin** (VCX, 1979)

**Credits:** Cast—Kari Klark, Tracy Walton, Pandora Box, and a great many others, whose names would mean about as much to you. Director—Linus Gator.

**Format/Length:** Beta X-2/Not too long and not too short

**Viewed on:** Sony KV2643R

**Story:** First there was *Star Trek*, then *Star Wars*, and now . . . *Star Virgin*. "Star Virgin" (played by "Hustler" magazine centerfold girl Kari Klark) is the last surviving human, having either been preserved by a race of thinking machines or produced by a Xerox protoplasmic duplicator. (I never did figure out that part.) She requests that "Mentor," sort of a poor man's R2-D2, explain to her what "sex" is all about. This format, then, serves as the excuse for presenting the remainder of the film in the "unrelated episodes" manner that is so common to XXX films. Mentor explains that "Sex began in 1950 at Monroe High School." Then follow the five films within a film:

(1) A young 1950's couple go to park (and "make out") in a secluded "Garden of Eden." I will reveal only that a can of peaches never had it so good, and a more unusual banana holder you've never seen;

(2) A black and white (almost) segment in which an unsuspecting young couple stumbles across Dracula's castle. This is a clever and strange encounter, made even more so by the fact that "Igor" is wearing a mask that looks ever so much like one of our much-maligned former presidents;

(3) Dayton Plowboys quarterback, Roger Starstruck, is out cold at a crucial point in the big game against the Los Angeles Hamms. A couple of cheerleaders come up with a way to revive him;

(4) Patrons of a sleazy bar are entertained by a nude dancer whose amazing musculature allows her to perform the seldom-seen "blow out the flame" trick; and

(5) Several customers of the same bar are invited into "the back room" where two ladies turn them every which way but loose in the obligatory orgy scene.

In between episodes our young heroine gets more and more flushed until her well-oiled and writhing finale reaches a somewhat clever albeit ridiculous climax.

The tape also includes ten minutes of previews for the following titles: *Meatball*, *Summer of Laura*, *Expensive Taste*, *Candy Lips*, and *Little Girls Blue*. For some odd reason, these were placed at the beginning of the tape rather than at the end.

**Evaluation:** *Star Virgin*, while by no means one of the best of its genre, has enough variety and relatively high production values to be of interest, particularly to folks who have never seen an XXX movie. Except for the group encounter, which I found to be somewhat dehumanizing (not to mention boring), the first four segments were cleverly constructed and well photographed. The "Dracula" segment, shot in old silent movie style with dialogue cards and in which a really cute girl is used and abused, was

(continued on page 74)





# Ted Reinhart's Western Roundup

As I prepare my copy for this issue's column, I'm also in the midst of preparation for the first National Tom Mix Festival. . . by the time you're reading this page, an event of the past (October 9-12). The festival promoters have "booked" me to do one of my "things". . . sing cowboy songs. I'll also emcee the opening ceremonies. I am genuinely excited about the affair, since it offers me the opportunity to meet a number of persons who had some form of relationship with Mix, the greatest cowboy film star, ever. I'll write a full report, including photos, in the next issue.

I'm pleased that top gun of The Video Connection, John Day, is now providing me with cassette material from his "stable". I look forward to reviewing many unique titles which John offers the consumer.

A big THANK YOU to all who sang the praises on my *Videophile* series of western bests. I really expected more of you to take issue with my personal selections. I sincerely hope these articles have been beneficial to the collector.

My special cassette sales item for this issue is interesting. . . the full-length *Daniel Boone* feature, starring George O'Brien. This title is considered by most as one of O'Brien's best motion pictures. The balance of the tape is filled with assorted vintage cartoons (black and white). I am now establishing a new lower cost figure on these bi-monthly specials. Please see my review and ad, elsewhere in this issue.

Ted Reinhart  
Edgewater Acres Resort  
Alexandria, PA 16611

## VIDEOCASSETTE REVIEWS

★★★

### *Way Out West* (MGM, 1937) B & W

**Credits:** Cast—Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Sharon Lynne, James Finlayson, Rosina Lawrence, Stanley Fields, Chill Wills and The Avalon Boys. Director—James Horne.

**Story:** After assorted troubles along the way, Laurel and Hardy arrive in Brushwood Gulch to deliver the deed to a gold mine intended for the daughter of their deceased friend. But Jimmy Finlayson, owner of the local saloon, learns of their intentions and palms off his girlfriend as the heiress. As Stan and Ollie are about to depart they encounter the genuine daughter, who has been employed as a kitchen maid in the saloon. The boys make futile attempts to regain the deed, and finally their ridiculous efforts are rewarded.

**Evaluation:** I am not alone in choosing *Way Out West* as the very best Laurel and Hardy movie ever made (western or no western). Not a frame is wasted in the presentation of this movie, offering one classic gag after another. This is the definitive western satire. . . there could not be one any better. Besides pulling off their best comedy routines, Stan and Ollie are involved in a delightful dance segment, and warble a couple of enjoyable songs. The visual and sound quality of this cassette is very good. I recommend this as a "must" for every collector.

**Source:** The Nostalgia Merchant.

★★★

### *Call of The Canyon* (Republic, 1942) B & W

**Credits:** Cast—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette, Ruth Terry, Thurston Hall, Joe Strauch, Jr., Cliff Nazarro, Dorthea Kent, Edmund MacDonald, The Sons of The Pioneers. Director—Joseph Santley.

**Story:** Gene Autry and all his neighbor ranchers are being taken advantage of by the local meat packing firm. The agent in charge will not offer the producers a fair market price. He plans to buy all the local cattle for unfair amounts, then sell to his parent company for big profits. Gene takes a trip to the city to confer with the company owner, and advise him of all the "doings" back home. During Autry's absence, his partner, Smiley Burnette, rents their ranch to a female vocalist, so that they will have an income to help keep the operation going. Unsuccessful in his quest to find the meat packing company owner, Gene returns to the now rented ranch. To make matters



even worse, an airplane stampedes his cattle. The company owner later comes to the ranch to arrange for direct radio broadcasts featuring the girl singer (it turns out the meat man also owns radio stations). Finally, Gene Autry exposes the crooked agent, the ranchers are paid a proper price, and a new radio series of western music begins at the ranch with Gene joining the cast.

**Evaluation:** This is the most recent of the "Autry's" being released by Blackhawk, and one of the better ones to date. The plot is mediocre, but the songs are well above par. . . much to the credit of The Sons of The Pioneers (when these boys take on a song, anything sounds good). But there are more than "anything" songs featured in this movie. . . *Somebody Else Is Taking My Place, Boots And Saddles, Call of The Canyon*. . . all first-class melodies. The overall quality of this cassette rates a solid good, but the appeal will fall primarily in the direction of genuine Gene Autry fans.

**Source:** Blackhawk Films, Inc.

★★★

#### A Double Feature

##### *Calling Wild Bill Elliott* (Republic, 1943) B & W

**Credits:** Cast—Bill Elliott, George Hayes, Ann Jeffreys, Herbert Heyes, Robert Henry, Roy Barcroft, Fred Kohler, Jr., Charles King. Director—Spencer G. Bennet.



**Story:** Oldtimer, Gabby (George Hayes), has been bragging about his early exploits with the great Wild Bill Elliott. In reality, Gabby never met Elliott, and when Wild Bill arrives in town the faker is dumbstruck. But Elliott does not expose Gabby's tall tales. While in the area, Wild Bill Elliott is accused of killing a man named Culver. The crooked governor of the territory, played by Herbert Heyes, has Bill arrested and nearly lynched. Our hero goes to the federal judge informing him of the governor's malfeasance of office. Before the judge can take action, he is shot, and again Elliott is falsely accused of murder. Wild Bill is able to prove himself innocent, and with the aid of federal troops, the governor and his gang are brought to justice.

**Evaluation:** This motion picture marked Bill Elliott's first entry under the Republic Pictures banner. It also was the first sound movie that ever incorporated the star's name into its title. Elliott, by far, was one of the better sagebrush performers, and this picture gave him a good beginning with his new studio. Republic invested a healthy budget into the Elliott series, even transferring the best of all sidekicks, George "Gabby" Hayes, from the successful Roy Rogers series to the Elliott's. I have always contended that Roy Rogers' movies thereafter suffered from Hayes' absence. Every B-western fan will enjoy this feature. Sight and sound are excellent.

**Source:** The Nostalgia Merchant

##### *Santa Fe Saddlemates* (Republic, 1945) B & W

**Credits:** Cast—Sunset Carson, Linda Stirling, Olin Howlin, Rex Lease, Roy Barcroft, Bud Geary, Kenne Duncan, George Chesebro. Director—Thomas Carr.

**Story:** Government agent Sunset Carson is sent to Santa Fe to investigate an outbreak of smuggling. Linda Stirling, a newspaper reporter, is working incognito as a saloon belle in hopes of finding a lead to the smuggling story. Linda learns of Sunset's identity, but does not reveal it. Sunset pretends to be outlaw Brazos Kane, works his way into the gang of smugglers, and gains knowledge of its leader, a respected citizen of the town. Later with Linda's help Carson breaks up the entire ring and places its members behind bars.

**Evaluation:** It really is not fair for me to evaluate a Sunset Carson movie. I NEVER could stand his acting (acting??). If the big lug would just have kept his mouth shut, I may have been turned on. . . he was a convincing rider, fighter, and a good looking chap to boot. But that voice, and line reading. . . ugg! Anyway, this B-western was plotted with some intelligence, well set and staged. Linda Sterling is a real plus to any picture. If only Republic would have done a "voice over" dub of Sunset. Oh, well. By the way, the picture and sound of this tape are tops.

**Source:** The Nostalgia Merchant.

★★★

#### A Double Feature

##### *Ride'em Cowgirl* (Grand National, 1939) B & W

**Credits:** Cast—Dorothy Page, Milton Frome, Vince Barnett, Lynn Mayberry, Joseph Girard, Frank Ellis, Harrington Reynolds. Director—Samuel Diege.

**Story:** Dorothy Page's father, Rufe Rickson (Reynolds), is cheated out of \$5,000 in a card game by saloon owner Girard. The \$5,000 is in the form of a note against the Rickson ranch. Dorothy, who plays Helen Rickson, is



later accused of stealing \$5,000 from the rodeo fund, which was kept in the Rickson safe. An open horse race is staged with a grand prize of this same amount, and Dorothy asks new friend Milton Frome, a lineman for a phone company, to enter her horse in this race, even though she is in hiding from the law. The race begins, and out of nowhere rides Page. She wins and immediately gallops away with the sheriff in pursuit. The winnings resolve her father's problems, but Dorothy still is not cleared. We then discover that Frome is really an undercover government agent, and he and his pal Vince Barnett are investigating the crooked Girard who is involved in silver smuggling across the border. They help to prove Dorothy innocent and round up the outlaw gang.

**Evaluation:** I like Dorothy Page. She's a looker with a super singing voice. Too bad she did her only three western movies for poverty row company, Grand National. If Republic had employed her, I feel she may have "caught on." Miss Page was the only female to ever be given the lead or principal part in a western film. And with low, low Grand National budgets this lovely lady never had a chance to put her best boot forward. Milton Frome was assigned a sort of male love interest part for Dorothy, and handled a few duties normally carried out by the stronger gender. But Milton isn't very strong, and does nothing to help our heroine make a cheapie movie look higher grade. Still, if you're a western collector, you should have at least one Dorothy Page in the library. Overall quality is pretty good.

#### ***Hell Fire Austin* (Tiffany, 1932) B & W**

**Credits:** Cast—Ken Maynard, Ivy Merton, Jack Perrin, Charles LeMayne, Lafe McKee, Nat Pendleton, Allan Roscoe. Director—Forrest Sheldon.

**Story:** Ken Maynard and pal Charles LeMayne have just been discharged from the army, and are looking for work. They take jobs as cowhands on Ivy Merton's ranch. Ivy is in deep financial trouble. She has borrowed money from the crooked Nat Pendleton and now Nat wants the most valuable asset the girl owns. . . the magnificent palomino, Tarzan. [Run that by me again, Ted.—Ed.] Ivy planned to race the horse and win the purse which would have bailed her out of debt. Before Pendleton can claim the horse, Ken Maynard takes the animal away and prepares Tarzan for the big race. Ken and Tarzan then enter the contest, and after many attempts to prevent their crossing the finish line, on the part of the Pendleton gang, they win. Ivy now has clear title to the ranch and gets Maynard, besides. Ken gets the best of the deal, Tarzan is now his.

**Evaluation:** Ken Maynard must be considered the very best of all movie western horsemen. Even better than my beloved Tom Mix and Buck Jones. *Hell Fire Austin* proves Maynard to be one hell of a rider. . . close-ups

and all. This makes this tape an item worth owning. In fact, the whole dang movie is quite acceptable from every standpoint. Looks and sounds good, too.

**Source/Price:** The Video Connection/\$35.95

[Note that with The Video Connection you can ask them to put your choice of titles on a western double feature. Thus, you could get either of these titles with some other one instead of together.—Ed.]

★★★

#### ***Daniel Boone* (RKO, 1936) B & W**

**Credits:** Cast—George O'Brien, Heather Angel, John Carradine, Ralph Forbes, Clarence Muse, George Regas, Dickie Jones, Huntley Gordon. Director—David Howard.

**Story:** Daniel Boone (George O'Brien) blazes the trail, as he leads American pioneer settlers to Kentucky in 1775. Along the way Boone and his followers must do battle with hostile Indians, led by the infamous Simon Girty (Carradine). The movie climaxes with the famous attack on the white settlement in which the Indians are defeated after rain causes their underground diggings to collapse.

**Evaluation:** A fellow should not "blow up" his own products, but this is one fine movie. Referred to by some as a "B-western," few of the elements of this genre are discernable. Granted, *Daniel Boone* is a moderately budgeted production, but still comes across as a large scale presentation. O'Brien is most convincing as the title character, while John Carradine has no trouble in really making you detest his villainous role of Simon Girty.

Also on this tape are a couple of vintage black and white cartoons. . . I don't like to sell blank space on a two-hour cassette. You'll find the cartoons quite entertaining. Audio and video quality are quite good.

**Source:** Ted Reinhart Enterprises







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# TV LOOKS AT BOOKS

## THE GOLDEN TURKEY AWARDS

Published by: Perigree Books  
(#399-50463-X)

200 Madison Avenue  
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Price: \$6.95 paperbound 226 pp

Compiled by: Craig T. Norback  
Peter G. Norback

Like last year's original scholarly tome, *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time, Golden Turkey* is right out of *Saturday Night Live*'s "Leonard Pinth-Garnell's Bad Cinema," devoting some serious study to the often hilarious subject of excruciatingly, unbelievably awful feature films. This sequel to the *Fifty Worst* book divides hundreds of films into various categories: "The Worst Title of All Time" (*Rat Fink & Boo-Boo*), "The Worst Casting of All Time" (John Wayne as Genghis Khan in *The Conqueror*), "The Biggest Ripoff in Hollywood History" (the 1976 remake of *King Kong*), and over a dozen others representing the height of Hollywood's frequent excursions into banal and obnoxious filmmaking.

It all culminates in the authors' choices for the top awards: "The Worst Actor of All Time"—Richard Burton, despite his Academy award winning performances, for appearing in a whole slew of exceedingly rotten films (including *Exorcist II*, which was the 1st runner-up as the Worst Film of All Time); "The Worst Actress of All Time"—Raquel Welch, who beat out Candice Bergen (who I never thought was all that bad—sheesh), Vera Ralston, and Mamie Van Doren (one of *Ye Editor's* favorites) for the dubious honor; and finally the ultimate, tallied from some 3,000 votes sent in by people who read the first

book. . . "The Worst Films of All Time," including the aforementioned *Exorcist II* and *King Kong* ('76), *The Swarm*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and several others, 5 out of the 17 listed being from Universal Studios. The nea-plus-ultima, receiving well over 10% of the readers' total votes, was the infamous *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, a film which. . . well, just let me say that it has to be seen to be believed. Or disbelieved. Whatever.

Even though I loved the book almost all the way through, I did have to take exception to several of the author's ideas and choices. A number of films are listed that have no right being in a "worst films" compendium of this type, including *Barbarella*, *Flesh Gordon*, *Head*, *Night of the Living Dead*, and several other halfway decent "cult" films, and far too many films that are merely mediocre but not necessarily "bad," like *Omen II* and *Soylent Green*. I also had a wealth of films I'd like to add to the authors' list, including *Guyana*, *Cult of the Damned*, *Xanadu*, *Condominium*, *Can't Stop the Music*, *Hardly Working*, *Sextette*, *Black Hole*, and many others, votes for which the authors advise can be sent to them directly at 610 S. Venice Blvd. #4094, Venice, CA 90291. (TV readers are likewise welcomed to do the same.)

All things considered, *Golden Turkey* is practically a "laff-riot" from start to finish, easily one of the best and funniest film books I've ever read, and in many ways an improvement over the prior *50 Worst* compilation. I noticed that the first book didn't even list *Plan 9* or several other top vote getters, but there's no doubt that it deserves the top honors—at least right up

there on the list. (Or "down there," depending on how you look at it.) Of course any such ranking, whether it be for the best or the worst, is bound to be disagreed with by any diehard film buff, but I guess it's all part of the game. Hopefully, any of you who purchase the book won't react like John Davidson and Merv Griffin did on their respective talk shows, practically tossing the author(s) off the panel, denigrating their work and becoming extremely miffed that anyone would take glee in putting together this kind of thing. As long as you keep your sense of humor and add a grain of salt here and there, *The Golden Turkey Awards* should be a welcomed, fascinating and insightful look into the sleazy, el-shlockos of the past—without a doubt the definitive work on the subject.

—MFW

## TV MOVIES (1981-82 Revised Edition)

Published by: Signet (The New American Library)

1633 Broadway  
New York, NY 10019

Price: \$3.95 paperback

Edited by: Leonard Maltin

It's always a minor thrill for me when a new edition of Maltin's *TV Movies* hits the bookstores. First because it's just about the handiest one volume TV movie reference book around and, second, because it gives me a chance to nit pick over the changes and additions that have been made since the previous edition. Since it's first appearance in 1969, *TV Movies* has been revised more and more frequently, until it now appears that a new edition will be a



biennial event.

Perhaps the most significant change since the 1979-80 edition is the price. . . up 33% from \$2.95 to \$3.95. [It's worth it, of course, but this child of the '40's still has a little difficulty reckoning with the idea of a \$4 "pocket book".—Ed.] Beyond this, the page count of listings is up from 801 to 886, the number of theatrical films included has jumped by about 1000 and the number of those "made-for-TV" by 500. Thinner paper stock is used, so that the resulting volume is only about 2/3 the thickness of its predecessor. According to the cover blurbs, the *New York Times* still thinks it's "INVALUABLE", and *Harper's Magazine* expresses its opinion in the exact same 25 word-for-word evaluation. (Hmmm.)

I'll resist the temptation to reprint my exact same previous review from *TV #17*, and plunge ahead once more. Apparently that review did not come to the attention of the author, for he has failed to heed my carping on most points. Rather than belabor them here, I commend you to our back issue department.

Several features of the new edition are worth noting, however. Of the titles mysteriously omitted before, *Barbarella* is now included (with a \*\*½ rating), but darned if *Mandingo* isn't still among the missing, even though its sequel (*Drum*) continues to rate mention as "a new and dreadful low in lurid characters and incidents." Speaking of dreadful films, either the past couple of years' releases have been a fairly satisfying crop, or Mr. Maltin has begun to mellow. In any case the "BOMB" rating does not seem to have been bestowed quite as liberally as in the 1979-80 edition. Even *Oliver's Story* survived the ax (at \*½) as did *Convoy* (\*\*) and even the incredibly vacuous *The Gauntlet* which this book rates as \*\*\*. (I promised I wouldn't do this again, but *The Gauntlet* a 3 star movie?! My granny! . . . that means that a respected film critic believes that it is as worthy of your

TV viewing time as is *Norma Rae* and is a better movie than *Alien* or *Being There*, each of which rates only 2½ stars. I won't even mention *The Rose*, which at 2 stars is esteemed to be no better than *Meatballs* or, for that matter, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*.) Among those which did not escape the BOMB rating were: *American Gigolo*, *Moment by Moment*, *Sidney Sheldon's Bloodline* and *The Manitou*.

As are we all, Mr. Maltin, is perplexed over the growing practice of cutting, adding to, combining and otherwise manipulating feature films in such a way as to create a number of versions of the same title. You'll want to read his introductory remarks in this regard.

The book has its minor flaws, but it continues to be a wonderful and impressive undertaking. Nowhere is this reflected more clearly than in its willingness to revisit and reevaluate previously published ratings, in the light of changing times. A dramatic example of this is *The Rocky Picture Show*, rated at \*½ in the 1979-80 edition and described as a film which "fails to excite." The 1981-82 edition doubles the rating to \*\*\* and describes it in glowing terms. [After the first dozen or so viewings, you begin to realize just how well-made this film really is.—Ed.]

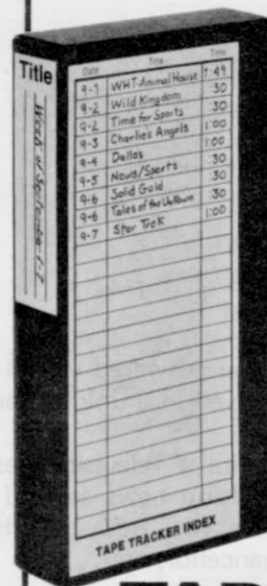
Mr. Maltin has also continued his ambitious effort to give full treatment to the so called made-for-TV "movie." The ready access to capsulized information on over 1300 of these is virtually unavailable from any other single source.

*TV Movies* (1981-82 Revised Edition) is a reference book, yet one which is difficult to turn loose of once you have picked it up. When it's all said and done, you don't really review a book like this one, you simply announce its availability. It's the perfect stocking stuffer for any true videophile.

—JL



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HOW MANY HOURS OF LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS DO YOU WATCH A WEEK? \_\_\_\_\_



—NOTICE—

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



## MINI-ADS

### FOR SALE

Teknika Remote Control - works with any TV - Cost \$150 - Sell for \$75 - incl. shipping. Don Bayer, RD 1, Box 240, Sheffield, MA 01257, (413) 229-8926.

Quasar VR-1000 Video Recorder. Very good condition. Still known for having one of the best pictures in home recording history. Included is 10 2-hr. tapes, timer, and pause. \$400 delivered. Gary Statler, 6320 Platte Ave., Lincoln, NB 68507, (402) 466-4288, (402) 464-4814.

PANASONIC Industrial Portable VHS 1/2" NV-8400 in excellent condition, complete with battery, case, AC charger. \$800 PP. Milton Sandy, Jr., Box 1535, Corinth, MS 38834, (601) 286-6087.

MAGNAVOX VJ-8241 Industrial portable color camera in excellent condition. (Same as JVC G-71US camera, see product report in TV #21), complete with battery case, AC charger, cables. \$800 PP. Milton Sandy, Jr., Box 1535, Corinth, MS 38834, (601) 286-6087.

Prerecorded movies on Beta II, one copy of each, played only once: *Alien*, *Blazing Saddles*, *The Deep*, *Electric Horseman*, *Exorcist*, *Gradu-*

*ate*, *Hitler's Children*, *Murder By Decree*, *Seduction of Joe Tynan*, \$40 each. *Towering Inferno* \$50. The whole lot \$385. Patricia R. Miskelly, 3304 Willoughby Rd., Baltimore, MD 21234, (301) 668-2554.

Modify your video recorder to allow duplication of copyguarded tapes, viewable fast motion speed scan, and ultra fast rewind and fast forward. Send make and model of recorder with a stamped self addressed return envelope for information. Chuck Reed, 1595 Spruce Dr., Columbus, OH 43217.

CARTRIVISION recorder, needs work, \$175, or make offer. Tapes, some prerecorded, \$5 each, plus shipping. Recorder has tuner, RF modulator, cabinet and service manual. F. Hoeck, 114 Columbia St., Lexington Park, MD 20653, (301) 863-8610.

### JUST PLAIN WANTED

Wanted: *Godzilla*, *Rodan*, *Fahrenheit 451*, 1984, *The Crawling Eye*, *Creeping Unknown*, *Giant Claw*, *Monster That Challenged The World*, any *Dr. Mabuse*, *House on Haunted Hill*, *Time Machine*, *Unknown Island*, *20,000,000 Miles to Earth*, *World, Flesh & the Devil*, *The Mouse that*

*Roared*, *Fabulous World of Jules Verne*, *Master of The World*, *M-Squad*, *Highway Patrol*, *Dangerman*, *Zotz*, *The Fly*, *Atlantis*, *27th Day*, *Trinity*, *Jason & The Argonauts*, *7th Voyage of Sinbad*, *Norliss Tapes*, and Sci-fi. Joe Wladas, 1638 W. Nelson St., Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 281-1021.

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

New Videophile would love to read the old issues of *The Videophile's Newsletter*. Will anybody sell me, lend me, or make photo copies of Issues #1 through #11? I can trade cash, tapes, or will tape for you from ON TV or Z Channel. John Good, 310 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, CA 91776.

Old TV series wanted. Desire many shows from the 50's & 60's, including *Patty Duke Show*; *Whirlybirds*; *I Spy*, etc. I currently have: *Private Secretary*; *Garrison's Gorillas*; *Route 66*; *Man From UNCLE*; *Twilight Zone Hour*; *Untouchables*; *Burns & Allen*; *Outer Limits*; *Thriller*; *Dobie Gillis*; *Time Tunnel*; *Fugitive*, more. Michael Burgujian, 15-35 146th Place, White-stone, NY 11357, (212) 746-4473.

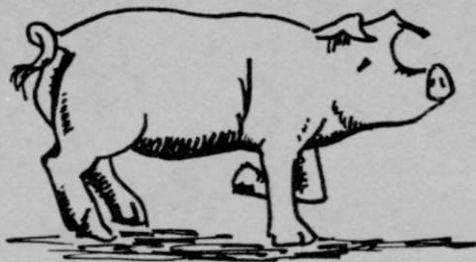
### Important Instructions Re: Advertising

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

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

**DEADLINES:** Ads absolutely **MUST** reach us by the deadline. Please, no more phone calls and speedy express deliveries after the deadline. The deadlines for the next two issues are: Issue #29-December 1 and #30-February 1.





# MINI-ADS

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

Teen films wanted. Desperately need *The Young Rebels*; *Hot Rod Gang*; *Daddy-O*; *The Choppers*; *College Confidential*; *Untamed Youth*; *Teen-Age Crime Wave*, dozens more. Presently have: *Chastity*; *Born Losers*; *Mini-Skirt Mob*, etc. These movies are being shown in several cities so watch out for 'em! Michael Burgujian, (212) 746-4473.

Wanted: VHS or Beta the following horror & S.F. and more: *To The Devil A Daughter*, *Devil's Daughter*, *Night of the Witches*, *Beyond Love and Evil*, *Dark Dreams*, *The Man From Ummo*, etc. Will send my HAVE and WANT list upon receipt of yours. Bob De Francisco, 5927 - S.E. 22 Ave., Portland, OR 97202, (503) 232-7795.

Want to exchange have/want lists for XXX tapes. Use Beta, but may have both formats by the time this ad appears. Will give same day service. E. Brown, 11 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Serials wanted. Looking for *Green Hornet*; *Green Hornet Strikes Again*; *Jungle Queen*; *The Lost Planet*; *Darkest Africa*, etc. Already have: *Tim Tyler's Luck*; *Monster and the Ape*; *The Spider Returns*; *Invisible Monster*; *G-Men Never Forget*, more. Michael Burgujian, (212) 746-4473.

I have HUNDREDS of Family Films to Trade. (Many Rare!) Want to trade for others including: (uncut) *Mr. Superinvisible*, *My Side of the Mountain*, *National Velvet*, Flipper movies, *Rob Roy*, *Red Badge Of Courage* (1951), *Swash-buckler* and western serials, *Sky King*. (TV), *The Gunfighter*. L.D. Armstrong, 451 Moorewood Cir., Dayton, OH 45415.

Cartoon series wanted, especially *Tin Tin*; *Spunky and Tadpole*; *Gumby*; *Colonel Bleep*; *Krazy Kat*, dozens more. I now possess: *Space Angel*; *Top Cat*; *Marine Boy*; *Fireball XL-5*. Michael Burgujian, (212) 746-4473.

Wanted JAMES CAGNEY interview from June 1980 on Good Morning America. Also Cagney's appearance on Hollywood Diamond Jubilee 11-11-78. Have Cagney material to trade. George

Ulrich, 8048 Earl N.W., Seattle, WA 98117, (206) 283-6051.

Wanted - Someone with capability to dub my old Cartrivision tapes to VHS or Beta. A.E. Singleton, 913-16th St., Galveston, TX 77550.

WANTED: Any Toshiro Mifune Samauri films. Also *Soundstage* series--John Prine (both shows), Randy Newman. Also any Nilsson, Beatles, Paul Simon. . . and Georgy Girl. Have lots of films to trade. Bob Borgen, 4802 Hollow Corner Road #218, Culver City, CA 90230, (213) 838-6339.

Wanted someone to trade with in Florida, Louisiana or western Mississippi, Memphis, TN and Kentucky. Have HBO, New York city shows and XXX movies for trade. Kindly send me your TV Guide and I will send you mine. Howard Rogofsky, Box 1102, Linden Hill Station, Flushing, NY 11354.

Rock films wanted, most notably *High School Confidential*; *Six-Five Special*. I've got the following: *Grateful Dead*; *Super Show*; *Head*; *Big TNT Show*, etc. Michael Burgujian, (212) 746-4473.

## BETA

Wanted - Beta II trading partners. Have 72 serials, 200 B-westerns, B-detectives. Looking for more of the same. Write or call, Edilio Mattani, 4701 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361, (212) 631-2966.

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

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

Wanted Beta 2. James Bond - all of them - 007 from *Dr. No* to *Moonraker*. All complete (un-cut) without commercials. E. C. Oiaz, 25 St. S.O. #812, Las Lomas, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico 00921.

WANTED: Clint Eastwood movies - especially,

*Hang Em High*, *Play Misty For Me*, *Joe Kidd*, *Escape From Alcatraz*, *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*. Disney movies - especially, *101 Dalmatians*. Rock concerts: *Jimmy Hendricks*, *Rolling Stones*, *Black Sabbath*, *Led Zeppelin*. Others: *The Cincinatti Kid*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *The Hustler*, *The Sting*, *Woodstock*. I have over 350 titles - HBO, Showtime and Star Channel. Trade lists, guides - will answer. J. Whitlow, 510 N. 12th, VanBuren, AR 72956, (501) 474-0505.

Have over 50 titles on Beta, mostly X rated. I am switching to VHS format. Like to trade my Betas for VHS or sell. Write or send your list to: Robert Santomaurs, 1221 E. 35 St., Brooklyn, NY 11210, (212) 253-9715.

WANTED: Any of John Denver's first seven TV specials, including the *Bighorn* special; *The Tonight Show* with guest host John Denver: 7/29/75, 7/30/75, 9/29/77, 10/3/77. Also Barry Manilow's first TV special (3/2/77) and Olivia Newton-John's first TV special (11/17/76). Also, *Avengers* last episode with Mrs. Peel and any episodes of *The New Avengers*! (Not aired here in Houston!) Can trade or dub. Dennis McGuire, 4400 Memorial Dr. #3024, Houston, TX 77007.

WANTED ON BETA II (with or without commercials) TV movie *Marilyn-The Untold Story*, Steve Martin's *More Wild and Crazy Antics*, TV movie *James Dean-Portrait of a Friend* (starring Stephen McHattie), *The Sex Goddesses* (shown on WHT). Marie Natale, 533 N. Indiana Ave., Lindenhurst, NY 11757.

Have 50 serials, many B-westerns, B-detectives and Charlie Chan movies, in good to very good condition. Looking to trade for more of the same. Edilio Mattani, 47-01 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361, (212) 631-2966.

WANTED IN BETA: the 39 episode series of *The Honeymooners* (from 1955-1956). Also, I'd like to contact anyone with recorded episodes from *The Fugitive* or anyone currently receiving the show on TV in his area. Al Sagall, 9220 Crawford, Skokie, IL 60076, (312) 674-0130.

Desperatly wanted: *John Curry's Ice-Dancing*, a special to be run this fall on the Broadway on Showtime cable series. Will buy or trade. Please help! S. Nierenberg, 771 West End Ave., New York City, NY 10025, (212) 749-3756.

Beta Format Wanted. Does there exist Beta tapes of *Star Wars*, *The Ritz*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show* or *And Now My Love*? . . . ? \*Sub-



# MINI-ADS



titled, original french. Contact Philip Ream, 2868 N. Greenfield, Phoenix, AZ 85006.

Wanted - Beta preferred - any or all Steve Lawrence TV shows; any TV shows including Peter Genero Dancers (Ed Sullivan, Kraft Music Hall). Fred Greenhut, 30 Andrews Dr., Massapequa Pk., NY 11762, (516) 799-5543.

## VHS

The GLITCH MONSTER is alive and well and destroying my collection!!! Is there anyone out there that knows how to make a decent copy without color bars, noise, and glitches??? If so, have I got a trading list for you! I have hundreds of titles for trade only, with other private parties. If you're tired of 13th generation copies, noise, color bars, rolls and glitches and you are a serious collector please forward a copy of your trading list for a copy of mine. Desire a good VHS copy of *My Fair Lady*. Also, you eraserhead people out there with a good copy let me hear from you! Lt. G. McKinney, OIC-Commissary Region Box 44, FPO New York 09521.

WANTED - VHS of 1977 W.S. game #6 (Reggie's 3 hr's). Have VHS 1978 Bos/NY playoff game; 1980 Hou/LA playoff game; 1978, 79, 80 Super Bowls; 1978, 79, 80 NBA champ game; 1978, 79, 80 NCAA champ game; 1978, 79, 80 W.S. champ game; + more! Dave Shafer, 1005 E. Locust, Olney, IL 62450, (618) 395-4953.

VHS Couple - We need someone to tape an occasional show from Select TV or QUBE, etc. Will tape for you from ON TV and Z Channel in return. Does anybody near Los Angeles have a video disc player? I would like to get together and watch a few of my rock discs and you can keep the discs afterwards. John Good, 310 So. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, CA 91776.

Wanted: material on John Denver and Clint Eastwood. Interviews, TV specials and movies. SP and LP speeds only. Kit Snyder, 32850 Aurora Rd., Solon, OH 44139.

New VCR owner looking for video buffs to exchange pre-recorded VHS tapes and recording equipment tips. Interests include all areas, especially XXX-rated, sports, and travel documentaries. Your list gets mine. All letters answered. J.D. Wallace, P.O. Box 288, Lanett, AL 36863.

Volcano - Mt. St. Helens on VHS - I have top quality footage and probably be getting more. I

am shooting from five different locations and getting some aerial stuff also. For sale or trade for video related items - especially Bruce Lee movies. C.R. Palmer, 8108 Sherley Ave., Vancouver, WA 98664, (206) 694-0701.

Wanted *The Bowery* (Raft), *Mayor Of Hell* (Cagney), *The Bitch* (British), *TV Avengers* (black & white with Rigg or Blackman), *The Professionals* (British TV show), *Mr. Moto* movies, old TV shows (pre 1966), *Faster Pusseycat*, *Kill Kill*, Red Foxx 1978 TV show with Playboy Bunnies, sports world with swimsuit fashion show (June 1979), Phil Donahue TV show with Fredricks of Hollywood fashion show (1978), Miss World Beauty Pageant (British, shown May 1980), Sportsworld NFL 1978 Cheerleader Classic (shown Jan. 1979). Have for trade XXX-rated movies, HBO movies, New York City shows including Burns and Allen, etc. Also want someone to trade with with access to Manhattan or Teleprompter cable service. Howard Rogofsky, P.O. Box 1102, Linden Hill Station, Flushing, NY 11354.

Wanted: video recording VHS format of the movie *The Ritz* starring Rita Moreno. I have well over 200 R, PG, G movies as well as over 150 XXX movies. Send your list and I'll send mine. Have HBO and WHT. Write Rudy Pataky, 351 River Road, Bogota, NJ 07603, (201) 489-5679.

Wanted VHS: ABC coverage of Sunday Feb. 24, 1980 Olympic Hockey game between USA and Finland. Call (609) 561-4122. Tape must include post game crowd scenes. Will trade blank tapes or currency.

Wanted in VHS format, the movie *My Fair Lady*. I have a large selection of pre-recorded and home recorded (HBO) movies to offer in trade. Joe Oxhorn, 377 Adams Lane, Paramus, NJ 07652, (201) 265-4919.

Wanted: Animated Pogo TV specials, *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, *Rocky Horror*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Being There*, and other s-f/horror material. What do you need? Also wanted: Kansas City area Videophile with access to Showtime and Channel Z - can provide HBO. Jim Dowdy, 640 Montclair, Olathe, KS 66061, (913) 764-3648.

WANTED: VHS tapes of *Deathmaster*, *The Parallax View*, *The Muppet Show* segment with Mark Hamill, *Project U.F.O.* TV episodes (first 13 only), *Disappearance of Sister Aimee* TV special. Standard or Long Play only. Trudy Howe,

Box 12, Loxley, AL 36551.

WANTED IN VHS FORMAT: 1958 film *A Night To Remember* and 1953 film *Titanic*. Also want 1978 syndicated TV special *Grease Day* about movie *Grease*. Also wanted anything/everything on video of BARBRA STREISAND. All must be uncut. Randy Emerian, 5824 East Hamilton Ave., Fresno, CA 93727, (209) 255-3200.

WANTED: On VHS, the following movie: *Twelve Angry Men*, starring Henry Fonda. David Hittner, 2702 Glen Haven, Houston, TX 77025.

I'm interested in trading for vintage sports events and old movies including *Father of The Bride* and *The Committee*. I have the 1976 Phoenix/Boston 3 overtime playoff game among other sports. Also looking for *I Claudius* and other Masterpiece Theaters. Will trade lists and/or swap TV Guides. David Andrews, 131 Page Rd., Nashville, TN 37205.

WANTED: Linda Ronstadt HBO concert of 8/24/80, SP only. Also any other Ronstadt material. Will pay for your tape or swap blank tape. Jim Capaldi, 921 Green Briar Lane, Springfield, PA 19064, (215) 328-3789.

Wanted on VHS: Live-action *Superheroes* vs. *Supervillains* and *Superheroes Roast* (NBC, 1-79). Also episodes of *Big Foot and Wildboy*, *Laredo*, and *Kit Carson* (with Bill Williams). Will trade (serials and westerns), buy, or swap blank tape. Bob Kaftan, 328 Lathrop, River Forest, IL 60305.

Tired of that Adult XXX tape you bought? Want to expand your library without spending more money? If you have a title that I want I would like to trade or borrow it. I have many titles to offer in return. Write and tell me the titles, manufacturer and quality of your tapes. I'll respond with my proposal and list. No money involved. P. Gordon, P.O. Box 825, Framingham, MA 01701.

Want excellent copies of *Dobie Gillis*, *C.P.O. Sharkey*, *Car 54*, and current movies, have some serials, movies and current shows to trade. Jim Bates, 2716 40th Place, Highland, IN 46322.

Would like to trade VHS tapes with someone in viewing area of KEMO - San Francisco, KMUV - Sacramento, or KAIL - Fresno. Will trade un-cut *Saturday Night Fever*, *Animal House*, *Grease*, *All The President's Men* and others for the shows I want. Please write: Philip Berrier, P.O. Box 283, Wallburg, NC 27373.



# MINI-ADS



WANTED: Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Bob Dylan, other folksingers on VHS. Jim Capaldi, 921 Green Briar Lane, Springfield, PA 19064, (215) 328-3789.

Wanted in VHS - DANIEL BOONE series episodes with Ed Ames as a regular. Also I need 1965 TV musical version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's CINDERELLA starring Lesley Ann Warren and Stuart Damon. Deanie Smith, 1905 Epworth Lane, Ownesboro, KY 42301.

Wanted on VHS: *Ulysses vs. Son of Hercules* (1961 with Marchal and Lane) and *Sandokan* (with Steve Reeves). Will trade (serials and westerns), buy, or swap blank tape. Bob Kaftan, 328 Lathrop, River Forest, IL 60305.

ELVIS FANS - On this 3rd anniversary of his death - local TV station presented *Love Me Tender* interspersed with footage of his Tupelo home, his funeral, etc. Have VHS to trade - especially interested in X-rated tapes. B. Bowers, P.O. Box 28763, Memphis, TN 38128, (901) 372-1892.

Wanted: *Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Fearless Vampire Killers*, *Hellstrom Chronicle*, *Captain Video*, *Sleuth*, *Meatballs*, *The Big Brawl*, *Terror House*, *Quest for Love*, *If...*, *A Place Called Today*, *Walkabout* (uncut!), *Blow UP*, WNET-NY and other PBS stations. Have ON-TV. Will exchange trade lists. Stan Sieger, 8654 Parthenia Pl., Apt. 7, Sepulveda, CA 91343, (213) 894-6943. Note new address!

Having a hard time finding the following TV shows and movies. Can anyone help. Lets make a deal. Television shows: *Feather and Father*, *That's My Mama*, *Dennis The Menace*, *Captain Nice*, *Mr. Terrific*, *Salvage 1*, *Space Angel*, certain ep. of *Longstreet* and *Time Tunnel*. Movies: *Skidoo*, *Solaris*, and *Last House On The Left*. David Truelsen, 1630 Frisbie Ct. #1, Concord, CA 94520.

Can someone with QUBE or the like help me out? There are a few old movies I would like to get uncut when they are shown. I can offer you both ON TV and Z Channel in trade. John Good, 310 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, CA 91776.

## PERSONAL

RALPH GORDON long time of *The Videophile Magazine*, requests the honour of your contact in

regard to trading Beta tapes. P.O. Box 5037, Station F., Ottawa, Canada.

Any one out there interested in exchanging on-camera VHS video tapes, as well as your local TV. Talk on tape, show your hobbies, interests, etc. Develop a whole new concept in video exchange. New York City Area. Thomas Kelsey, 45-48 42nd St., L.I. City, NY 11104, (212) 784-0271.

## DISC

VIDEODISC lending library service has been formed in the Seattle area. We are now expanding nationwide and seeking new members. If you are interested in borrowing videodiscs write for more information to: Service-VED, Box 889, Seattle, WA 98111.



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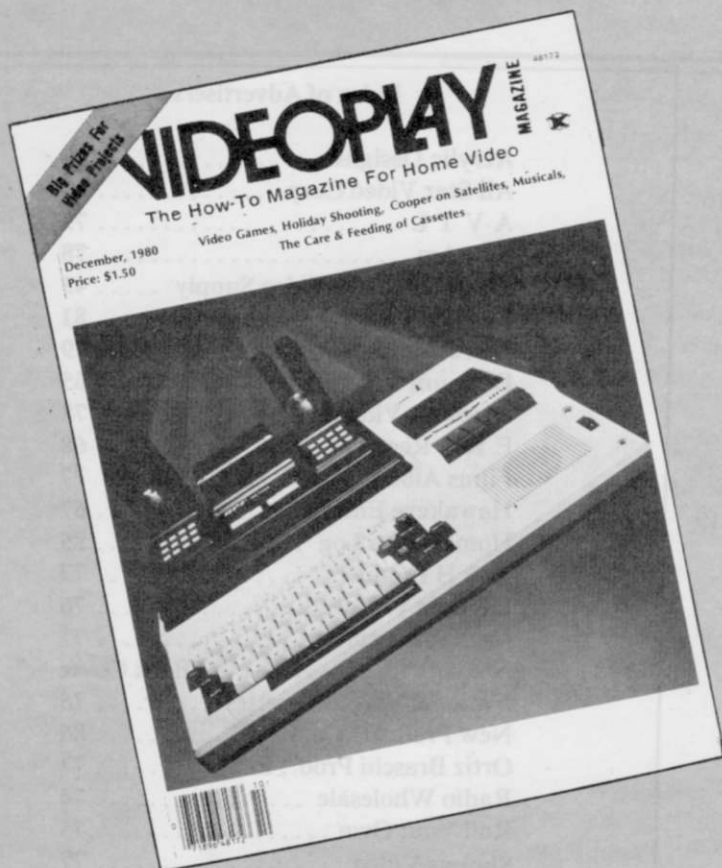
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# BE A WINNER . . .

**Submit an original video construction project to the VIDEOPLAY magazine VIDEO PROJECTS CONTEST . . . and you may win:**



- 1st Prize of \$500 cash
- 2nd Prize of \$250 cash
- 3rd Prize of \$200 in video cassettes

If you've designed and built a video accessory to heighten your enjoyment of videotaping, or an interesting home computer-video interface of any type, photograph and *write it up* and you may win one of the above prizes. First prize will go for the construction article on the most useful, original and economical video accessory. Second and third prizes will go to the next best projects—the decision of the editors of VIDEOPLAY is final. Each entry must be accompanied by the entry form at the bottom of this page. All entries must be postmarked no later than Jan. 15, 1981. If the contestant is under 18, the entry must be co-signed by a parent or guardian.

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  - Latest on Low-Cost Home Satellite Receivers
  - List of videocassettes on Musicals
- and much more.

An annual subscription is only \$6. Use the coupon on the right to order yours, and get the December issue Free.

## **VIDEOPLAY magazine**

### **VIDEO PROJECTS CONTEST**

**51 Sugar Hollow Rd., Danbury, CT 06810**

Enclosed is my entry in the VIDEOPLAY Video Projects Contest. I have built the project and it works as described. I understand that my write-up and pictures become the property of C.S. Tepfer Publishing Co. Inc.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone : Code (     ) Number \_\_\_\_\_

signed: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Send me the December issue of VIDEOPLAY and  
Sign me up for a money-saving 1-year subscription at \$6.



## Tape Reviews (continued from page 61)

particularly well done, if perhaps just a little prolonged (not to mention *very* anti-feminist).

The soundtrack, especially the scenes with Mentor, was somewhat muffled, but the picture quality was quite good. I've seen better, but it was probably above average for prerecorded video tapes. The "original" soundtrack music was passable. There are even some scenes for all of your close-up fans.

Hustler magazine reportedly has called this one the "film of the year." I certainly wouldn't go that far, but it offers enough pretty girls, different situations, and the usual prurient interest to fill the bill if, and when, you're in the mood for one of these things.—JL

**Source/Price:** Video Service Center/\$60 (summer sale price)

## SOURCES:


Videobrary	Video Warehouse, Inc.
3518 W. Cahuenga, Suite 301	500 Highway 36
Hollywood, CA 90068	Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716
The Video Connection	World Television
1920 Sylvania Avenue,	1200 S. LaCienega Blvd.
Suite 101	Los Angeles, CA 90035
Toledo, OH 43613	Time-Life Video Club
	Harrisburg, PA 17105
Ted Reinhart Enterprises	The Nostalgia Merchant
Edgewater Acres Resort	6255 Sunset Blvd., Suite 1019
Alexandria, PA 16611	Hollywood, CA 90028

## Ask The Videophile (continued from page 23)

As far as pre-recorded prices being "unfair," we're well aware of the actual costs incurred in videotape manufacturing and distributing, and it's our personal opinion that most pre-recorded suppliers make an honest profit, certainly, but do not necessarily try to "hold up" prices by any means. True, pre-recorded cassettes *should* cost less (particularly with X-rated titles, many of which cost well over \$90), but it's doubtful that the prices will come down until the market expands enough to warrant widescale mass marketing of videocassettes. Perhaps the most significant drop in tape software prices will come when, and if, videodiscs become popular. This should force the tape suppliers to lower their prices to remain competitive. Only time will tell. (Oh, and how about sending us the name of this unmentioned mail order dealer? Just for curiosity's sake, of course.)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to the unbelievably large volume of mail that's been deluging our P.O. Box lately, our bedraggled Technical Editors have asked that we announce that until further notice, we can no longer offer individual replies to our readers requesting advice on their video problems. We will, however, continue to print as many Q&A's as possible in the pages of *The Videophile* in the issues to come.

Send all your questions, worries, problems, and appeals for assistance to:

ASK THE VIDEOPHILE  
2003 Apalachee Parkway  
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THIRTY NINE STEPS 81 min.  
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SECRET AGENT 83 min.  
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Bette Davis - Leslie Howard 1934

DICK TRACY MEETS GRUESOME 65 min.  
Ralph Byrd, Boris Karloff 1947

DICK TRACY 65 min.  
Morgan Conway battles "Splitface"

TERROR BY NIGHT 60 min.  
1946 Basil Rathbone - Nigel Bruce

SANTA FE TRAIL 110 min.  
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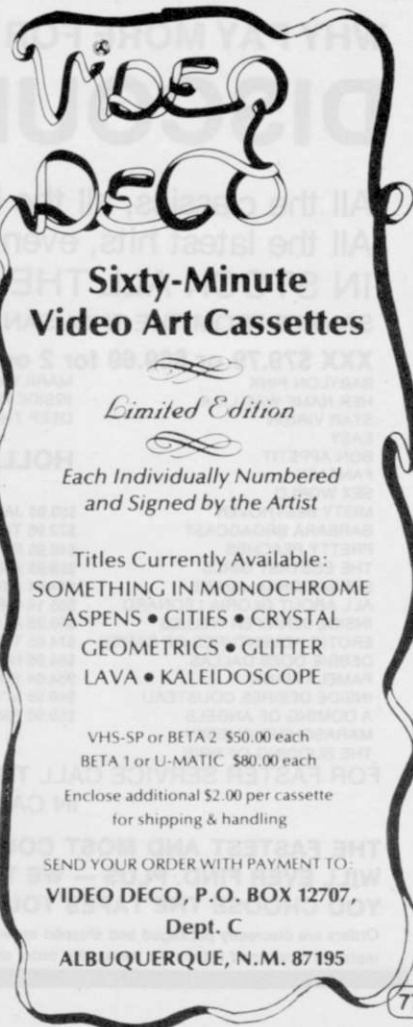
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MEET JOHN DOE - 1941 - Cary Grant, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold, Walter Brennan. Directed by Frank Capra. 123 min.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE - 1946 - James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore. Directed by Frank Capra. 125 min.

OF HUMAN BONDAGE - 1934 - Leslie Howard, Bette Davis. From the famous novel by W. Somerset Maugham. 84 min.

THE LITTLE PRINCESS - 1939, color - great classic with Shirley Temple. 90 min.

A STUDY IN SCARLET - 1939 - Reginald Owen as Sherlock Holmes. 72 min.

THINGS TO COME - 1936 - Raymond Massey, Ralph Richardson. from the H. G. Wells story. 92 min.

A STAR IS BORN - 1937, color - David O. Selznick classic with Janet Gaynor and Fredrick March. 114 min.

THE JUNGLE BOOK - 1942, color-Opulent classic with Sabu. 107 min.

MADE FOR EACH OTHER. 1939 - James Stewart, Carole Lombard. David O. Selznick Production Directed by John Cromwell. 92 min.

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The Devil Horse  
Harry Carey \$69.95  
The Vanishing Legion  
Harry Carey \$69.95  
Undersea Kingdom  
Ray Corrigan \$69.95  
Dick Tracy  
Ralph Byrd \$79.95  
The Painted Stallion  
Ray Corrigan \$69.95  
Zorro Rides Again  
John Carroll \$69.95  
Ace Drummond  
John King \$74.95  
Heroes Of The West  
Noah Berry, Jr. \$79.95  
The Oregon Trail  
Johnny Mack Brown \$79.95  
Drums Of Fu Man Chu  
Harry Brandon \$89.95

#### Serials Of The Month

Winners of the West  
Dick Foran \$64.95  
Shadow of the Eagle  
John Wayne \$59.95  
Fighting Warrior  
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Dick Tracy's G-Men  
Ralph Byrd \$99.95  
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Ralph Byrd \$99.95  
Dick Tracy Returns  
Ralph Byrd \$99.95  
The Three Musketeers  
John Wayne \$69.95  
The Hurricane Express  
John Wayne \$69.95  
Last Of The Mohicans  
Harry Carey \$69.95  
Fighting With Kit Carson  
Johnny Mack Brown \$99.95

#### New Releases

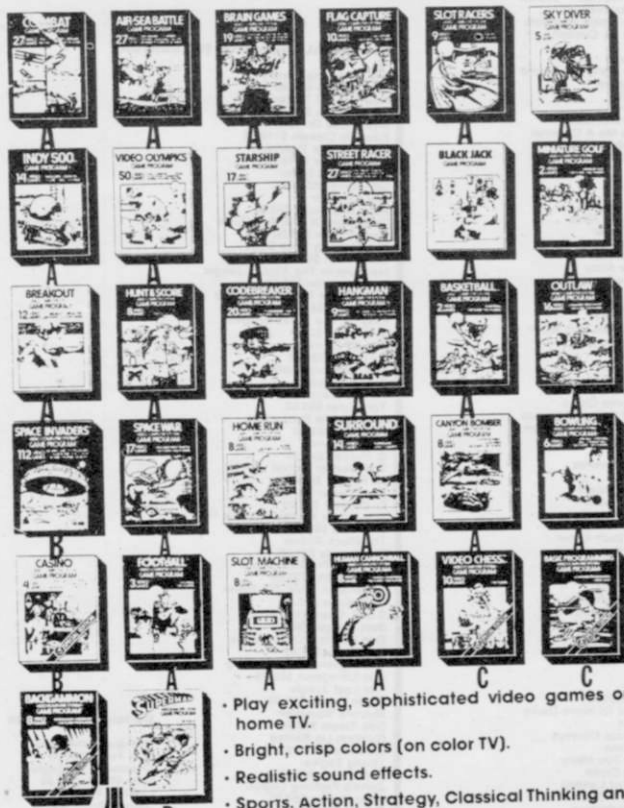
Don Winslow Of The Coast Guard  
Chap. 1, Tim Tyler's Luck Chap. 9  
& VC Previews & Serial Trailers \$39.95  
The Return Of Chandu  
Bela Lugosi \$69.95  
Blake Of Scotland Yard  
Ralph Byrd \$79.95  
Flaming Frontiers  
Johnny Mac Brown \$79.95

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**JUST IN TIME  
FOR  
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BEAMSCOPE represents a new application of technology in T.V. optics. Today Sony, Panasonic, G.E., Advent and Toshiba, to mention only a few, are marketing a large-screen projection T.V. system. These units are dramatic and expensive.

BEAMSCOPE provides a large-screen viewing system that can be used in any room, under normal lighting conditions. Depending on the size T.V. BEAMSCOPE will provide a superb picture, up to 475 sq. inches with a diagonal measure of 30". The cost is not thousands, not even hundreds, but less than \$60.00 retail.

Due to the accuracy and precision required, BEAMSCOPE could not have been produced without the aid of a computer. Simply stated, the BEAMSCOPE lens is constructed with thousands of spiral microgrooves. They are cut with computer accuracy into one side of a specially fabricated, exceptionally hard acrylic. When the BEAMSCOPE is placed in front of your T.V. these grooves will literally explode the picture more than twice its normal size.

BEAMSCOPE has been thoroughly tested and has been in use at the Optometric Center of the Southern College of Optometry, and numerous other low vision clinics, universities and institutes throughout the U.S. Obviously then, BEAMSCOPE is no gimmick, but a scientifically designed, optometrically approved, university endorsed breakthrough, manufactured to the highest standards.

TS-25 \$54.95 TS-30 \$59.95

BEAMSCOPE comes in two sizes. The TS-25 is for 10"-17" T.V.'s. The TS-30 is for 17"-23" T.V.'s. (Note: either screen can be used on the 17" T.V.)  
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13	95.83	TS-25	25	328	343%
15	125.53	TS-25	25	328	261%
17	159.50	TS-25	25	328	206%
19	192	TS-30	30	475	247%
21	235.19	TS-30	30	475	202%
23	310	TS-30	30	475	153%

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## products~



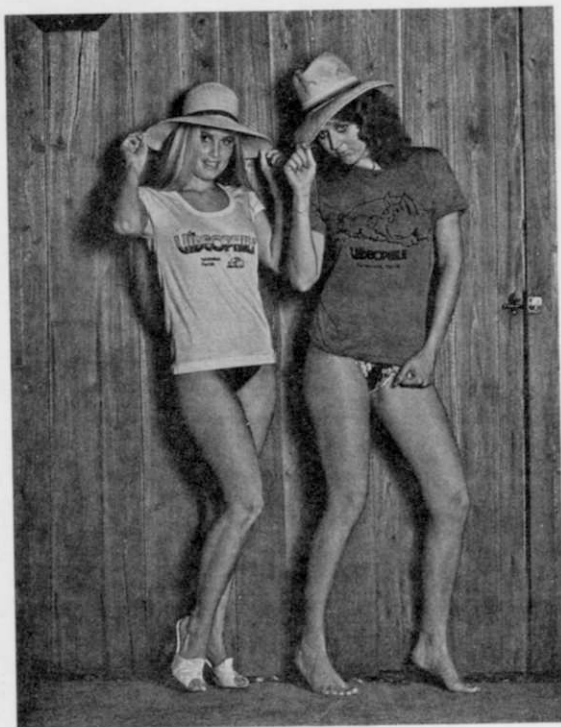
Quantity	Size	Description	Unit Price	Total Price
_____	_____	Men's Blue 'piggie' design t-shirt	\$ 6.00	_____
_____	_____	Women's Blue 'piggie' design t-shirt	\$ 7.00	_____
_____	_____	Men's 'color logo' design t-shirt	\$ 7.00	_____
_____	_____	Women's 'color logo' design t-shirt	\$ 8.00	_____
_____	_____	Beta Cassette Index Cards (2 pads)	\$ 2.50	_____
_____	_____	VHS Cassette Index Cards (2 pads)	\$ 2.50	_____
_____	_____	<i>The Videophile's Annual</i>	\$10.00	_____
_____	_____	Back Issues of <i>The Videophile</i>	\$ 3.00	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
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<input type="checkbox"/> 27				

Florida residents add 4% sales tax.

**TOTAL**



# For a Few Dollars More



## T-shirts

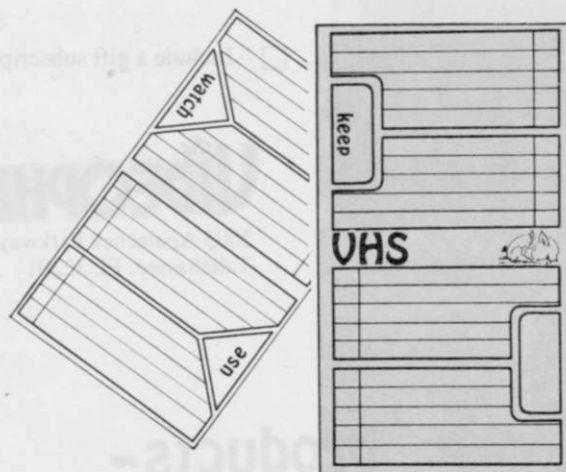
Despite popular demand, we are proud to present *The Videophile* t-shirts! These are not cheap paper "iron on" transfer shirts, nor are they of the rubbery "peel-off-in-the-dryer" type. Rather they are expensive 50% polyester/50% cotton shirts which have been individually hand screened. The shirts are available in two designs, two styles, and three prices, as follows:

Men's Blue "piggie" design	\$6.00
Women's Blue "piggie" design	\$7.00
Men's "color logo" design	\$7.00
Women's "color logo" design	\$8.00

The men's shirts come in sizes S, M, L, and XL. Women's come only in size L (which is, in fact, smaller than a men's S) and are of a higher quality knit. Hey, it's just money! Besides, you'll love 'em.

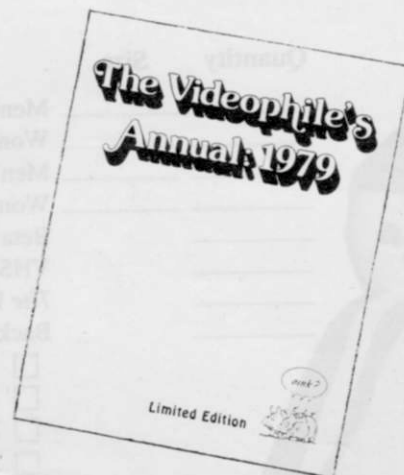
## Cassette index cards

Cassette index cards for both formats! 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 are custom designed to fit into Beta and VHS 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 2 pads for \$2.50.



## The Videophile's Annual 1979

It's about time! *The Videophile's Annual 1979* is finally available. Within its portfolio we have for you facsimile reprints of TVN #7 and #8, an index to the first 19 issues, a complete reprint of the 100 page decision in the famous Universal/Disney/Sony "Betamax" copyright lawsuit, and an exclusive interview with our founder, publisher and editor, which he hopes will put all that talk to rest once and for all. This is a limited edition of only 1,000 copies and will not be reprinted. At \$10, it's no bargain, but collector's items never are.



Use the convenient order form on the inside front of mailing cover.



# For a Fistful of Dollars

## Back issues \$3 each



- #12: First slick cover issue. Includes report on "QUBE" 2-way cable system, Video in Australia, Rambling Marc at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, How to make the most of two recorders, Dealer's Doings; a bunch of letters . . . and the usual typos, etc. (LIMITED SUPPLY)
- #13: How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8200 (or Zenith), Bob Burns' first column for "VHS" folks, Rambling Marc battles Universal attorneys, and reports on pay cable systems, lotsa questions and answers, great America 2Night cover.
- #14: First color cover. Report on new products at Summer Consumer Electronics Show, L-500/Sony SL-8200 counter/index time chart, lots of info re: VHS format including Q's & A's, Report on the Sony SL-8600, TVN goes to two conventions, The Ultimate Video Room, much more!!
- #15: How to clean the heads on a Betamax, QUBE update, How to dub from/to a VHS recorder, First installment of Ted Reinhart's reviews, "Skew Error" explained, We dream of the Betamax future, VHS and Beta formats brashly compared, letters, Q's & A's, etc.
- #16: First issue of THE VIDEOPHILE, featuring our annual roundup of over 80 sources for prerecorded videocassettes, An exclusive interview with video pioneer "Madman" Muntz, Reports on our visits to two video shows, news, letters, much more in 88 pages.
- #17: VHS and Beta Counter/Index time charts, "Time Base Correctors" and dropouts explained, How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8600, lots of tips, advice, letters, questions and answers, book reviews and tape reviews too, 80 pages.
- #18: Our 1st Annual Video Disc Issue, featuring reviews of the Magnavox disc players, The MCA DiscoVision discs, and an Interview with John Findlater, president of MCA's DiscoVision division. Also news of the "Betamax" copyright trial, backyard earth stations, and new products galore.
- #19: Featuring our interview with Harlan Ellison, "The Man Who Hates Television," Reviews of the Betamax Changer & Winegard indoor antennas, more on the copyright lawsuit, Winter Consumer Electronics Show, and an in-depth look at international TV standards. Fat 104 page issue!
- #20: Our "What's Legal?" issue, including an interview with the Chief of the film industry's antipiracy program, Part I of our extensive Summer Consumer Electronics Show report, 5 portable recorders reviewed and compared, and lots more in 88 pages.
- #21: Another big one! Third Anniversary issue, contains our 1980 directory to over 100 models of 1/2" VTR's, product reports on several portable color cameras, Part 2 of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show report, lots of Q's & A's, and (of course) much, much more.
- #22: Featuring our reviews of the new longer-playing VHS and Beta recorders, News about the happy conclusion of the "Betamax" copyright lawsuit, and an unbiased ("hee-hee") evaluation of the other available video publications. Also reviews of home video accessories, and much more.
- #23: Our 3rd annual roundup of over 150 sources for prerecorded videocassettes, Where the video disc went wrong, Exclusive product reports on the 26" Sony console and video editing systems, lots of questions and answers, and much more.
- #24: Features our exclusive 11-page report on the new products at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. How to properly handle and store video tape, book reviews, tape reviews, and our regular columns round out an issue that may very well be our least substantial of the year.
- #25: We tell you which brands of blank tape are best and which to avoid. Exclusive reviews of the new VHS and Beta VCR's from Sony, RCA, and Toshiba and the Betamax AG-200 Changer. Install your own "home cable" distribution system.
- #26: First installment of our subjective "recommended components", seven product reviews, including the KLOSS Novabeam, "Distriavid," Sony and Panasonic industrial 1/2" VCR's, and the Sony CVM-1750 Monitor/Receiver. News from the Summer CES, the Cable News Network 24-hour schedule, our usual tape reviews, and more. (SHORT SUPPLY.)
- #27: Exclusive interview with Ernestine Wade (Sapphire) and Alvin Childress (Amos) of "The Amos 'n' Andy Show." Glossary of terms For Beginners Only, and how to set up your own film chain. Questions, answers, book reviews, tape reviews (but no product reviews this time) round out our 4th Anniversary Issue.

## sub rates

Six issue subscription is \$14 in the US, Canada & Mexico (US funds); or \$20 if you prefer First Class mail. Foreign Subscriptions are \$24 (air printed matter).





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