


the VIDEOPHILE

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The Magazine for Home Video Enthusiasts

August/September 1981

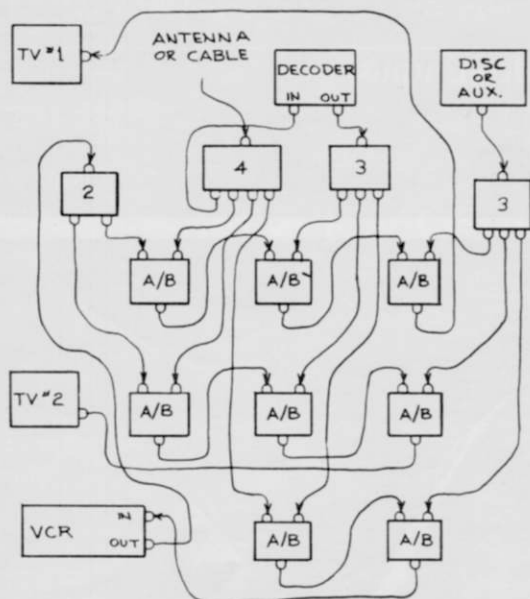
Issue #32 



- TV Censorship and Boycotts: Our View
- Product Reviews: Four Portable VCR's, the New Betamax Changer, and more
- How to Use Filters on Your Video Camera

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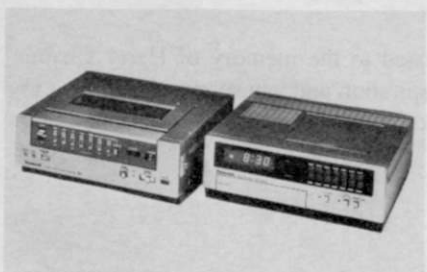
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There is an incessant influx of novelty
in the world and yet we tolerate
incredible dullness.

—H. D. Thoreau (1817-1861)



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the VIDEOPHILE

THE VOICE OF VIDEO FANDOM

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T V WIGGLES

My articles in our previous issue, "What to Collect and Why" and "The Impossible Collection," have generated more response than any other single piece that I have ever done. The earliest letters were used as a springboard for "The Impossible Collection: Part II," which you will find elsewhere. Many others arrived after our deadline for this issue, but the overall response makes two things very clear. (1) The recording of television programs off the air by collectors has been going on for much longer than you might imagine and (2) Not every item in "The Impossible Collection" is as "impossible" as you might suppose.

In the very earliest days of *The Videophile's Newsletter*, when our circulation was less than 100 per issue, a good portion of the readership consisted of hobbyists who had been collecting on ¾" U-Matic or, even, ½" reel-to-reel for many years. I was so enchanted with my new toy (the ½" Betamax cassette recorder) that I never really gave much thought to the possibility that some of these old-timers may have amassed collections from the '60's and early '70's that are every bit as extensive as the "hundreds of tapes" that some of us now have on our shelves.

I've been an incurable collector of popular culture items for as long as I can remember. Back in the '60's, I was such a fan of the *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* that I recorded the "audio" from some of them on reel-to-reel tape with an old Motorola tape deck. I had done the same as early as 1958 on a "just for fun" basis, recording the soundtrack of an *Amos 'n' Andy* rerun, using a cheap 5" reel-to-reel recorder and holding the microphone up to the TV speaker. Those early efforts have long since vanished from my archives, though Tom and Dick may still be around here somewhere.

Well, I was not alone. If nothing else, my mail indicates that there are other incurable collectors out there, "somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic roll on under the night." And, I am encouraged to believe that, in some cases, these collectors may have done a better job of documenting and preserving the wide variety of broadcast television in past years than have the networks themselves. Whether or not these items will ever be generally available is another matter. Private collections are just that—private. Perhaps if broadcast rights and other copy-right provisions could be accommodated, they will someday be released to museums or shown at nostalgia conventions, if not released to the general market. In any case, it is comforting to know that not all has been lost. I salute these pioneer collectors and admonish them to continue maintaining these priceless treasures.

Those of you who know and love *The Videophile* and wish to see it progress will be doing both us and yourself a big favor by purchasing any back issues that you've been intending to buy, without further delay. Economic conditions and other factors are squeezing us somewhat just now. So we could surely use the revenue, and you'll be able to get these valuable collector's items before they are either sold out or repriced, again, beyond the reach of a sane person.

☆☆☆

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Harry Chapin, whose love was an inspiration and whose music will be a joy forever. "He did not know how good it was, it just made him whole."

☆☆☆

Foremost among those who deserve my most gracious thanks this time around are Frank Buxton and the good doctor in Rochester. Thanks are also due to Paul Rayton, Dr. Sidney F. Kahn, Stan Sieger, P. H. Quilter, Dave Barnes, and all the others of you who took the time to send me those long letters and interesting clippings.

☆☆☆

Yes, we are late. We've lots of mumbling excuses, but suffice it to say that the general state of the economy had something to do with it. Where are all those rich Arab sheiks when you really need one?

ALL THE BEST —

Jim



The Videophile's Newsletter



What with all the hoopla over the Rev. Wildmon and his plan to boycott the products of certain television advertisers, I simply cannot resist the urge to interject my two cents worth.

For those of you not in-the-know (perhaps you've just awakened from six months of suspended animation), a brief recap of events is in order:

ITEM: Rev. Donald Wildmon, 43, of Tupelo, Mississippi, announces that, with the help of 4000 "trained monitors", his Coalition for Better Television (CBTV) will identify those sponsors whose commercials most regularly appear on TV's "least constructive" shows.

ITEM: Rev. Wildmon suggests that 5 million Americans (or more) are standing ready to boycott the products of such sponsors.

ITEM: Protectors of the First Amendment and supporters of liberal causes, generally, begin screaming "foul" and charging the CBTV with censorship of the style so well remembered from the 1950's.

ITEM: Proctor and Gamble, TV's largest advertiser (nearly ½ billion dollars last year), announces its withdrawal of advertising from more than 50 network programs "for reasons of taste". Other large advertisers voice concern.

ITEM: The CBTV announces that there will be no boycott.

Now, before we take this discussion a single step further, I want to make two remarks, up front, lest my position be misunderstood.

1. I disagree with the Rev. Wildmon's views as to what should or should not be shown on television.
2. I agree with the Rev. Wildmon's opinion that a boycott of sponsors' products is a legitimate method of objecting to a program supported by the sponsor.

It is essential that these two matters be considered separately and without the bias of emotion. Most, if not all, of the opposition to Rev. Wildmon has been directed not only at his views, but also at the method he has chosen to express (and, if you will, "enforce") those views.

Yet, I contend that the economic boycott is a time-honored method of getting one's point across. It is nothing short of hypocritical for liberal minded advocates to protest this scheme, all the while driving around with bumper stickers urging that we boycott celery on behalf of the farm workers, or boycott products from Japan (Heaven forbid!) in order to save the whales. I need only mention the historic boycott of the buses in Alabama some years ago to illustrate that there

are times when economic deprivation is the only approach that can get the attention of one's adversary.

To deny the legitimacy of a method simply because it is being used for means contrary to our own personal viewpoint, is to lower ourselves to the level of bigots and hypocrites and to jeopardize the trust and faith of those who otherwise admire us for our integrity.

So, I conclude that Rev. Wildmon and Coalition for Better Television have every right to mount a campaign against the sponsors of "objectionable" programming. I wish they would do it. I wish they would put their entire weight and influence into the effort. I further wish that when the result of such a campaign became clear, that they would have the courage to report it forthrightly and without hesitation.

The beauty of the American system, at least in theory, is that ideas are allowed to be given free expression in the marketplace without government interference. The television networks have an "idea" as to what kind of programming people will support. This is reflected by the ratings and other measuring devices.

The CBTV and the Moral Majority have the "idea" that certain objectionable programming either should not be permitted (an anti-American notion by definition) or that those who perpetrate and perpetuate such programming should be identified and held up to the light of human judgment.

If both of these ideas are fully understood, the television viewing public and the product purchasing public will act in such a way as to clearly indicate which idea is the most acceptable.

The whole situation is muddled by several factors:

1. The CBTV is motivated by the desire to "clean up" television. The CBTV monitors were instructed to watch for and record the frequency of "sexually suggestive comments, inside or outside of marriage", of profanity ("hell", "damn"), of crude language ("crap", "horny"), and of "attempts to do bodily harm to a person." The CBTV is not content to merely exercise control over the "on/off" switch. It desires to relieve us of the burden of making these choices for ourselves. Its view of what is objectionable and what is acceptable would be imposed on all of us, without regard to whether a majority of us, in fact, share that view.

This is the historic dilemma of dogmatic religion being incompatible with a free society. Freedom must include the freedom to disagree without retribution or the whole concept becomes a mockery. One need only observe the current situation in Iran to see what happens when fundamentalist religion gains control.

2. The established networks are motivated, for the most part, not by some lofty regard for free expression, but rather by an abiding respect for the coin of the realm, ie. greenbacks, folding money, hard cash, moolah, ... I think you know what I mean. Thus, the imagination runs wild when one considers just what sort of tripe might be offered up to us if the programming executives were certain that it would be a hit.

3. The public airwaves are not presently available to everyone. Consequently, those who are granted the privilege of using them must be subject to restraint of some sort, so that this vast natural resource will be used in a way that at least approaches serving the public interest, lest it be raped and wasted by those to whom we have entrusted its use. Presently, this restraint takes two primary forms, one imposed by the Federal Communications Commission in the form of government regulation, the other in the form of "ratings" which supposedly indicate viewer preference and thereby dictate the fate of individual programs.

4. The viewing public does not ordinarily associate a particular TV program with the products advertised during the commercial breaks in the program. This was not always true. In the early days a single sponsor (or two) made a point of identifying itself with the image projected by the show. Examples that come to mind include boxing (Gillette) and Jack Benny (Lucky Strike and Jello).

Indeed, many sponsors had their name incorporated in the name of the show: Texaco Star Theatre, The Colgate Comedy Hour, Armstrong Circle Theatre, and many others. Today, the demand for air time is so great and its availability so limited that most sponsors cannot afford to carry the expense of an entire program. This also makes it easier for advertisers to duck responsibility for the positioning of their commercials.

While it is true that sponsors who care to go to the effort can place their advertising within programs of their choice, the system is such that they probably should not be held as readily accountable as in the case of open-ended media like magazine publishing. If a company places an ad in Penthouse, National Review, or Video, it cannot so easily explain away the allegation that it supports what those publications advocate.

5. Ratings do not account for the fact that some programs have a small, but dedicated, audience. Even a "small" audience is not really small. I daresay that a low-rated series like Hill Street Blues is seen by more people than will pay to see the typical motion picture in a theatre, which may be regarded as a box office hit. If I were the manufacturer of "Oil of Youth", and also the sponsor of a TV show (let's call it Cellulite Theatre), and I knew that virtually every person who watched that show was a prime candidate for my product, I wouldn't care a whit for the fact that it was low rated. I would be reaching *my* audience. Indeed, I would be doing it for fewer dollars than if I ran the same ads during highly rated pro football broadcasts.

So we have a situation where the motivation of neither party is particularly admirable, and where the charge against the advertisers of guilt by association is not as convincing as it might be. A situation in which a privileged few are granted the right to use the public airwaves for private enrichment. A situation where great sums of money, great political power, and great egos are all at stake. Little wonder that the central figures in this drama are so adept in pontification. No wonder we hear so many self-serving squawks and so little contemplation of the public's interest as a whole.

And just what is that, you may ask? Who is this Jim Lowe person to presume that he can cut through all the heifer dust and identify the public interest, so that the actions of all others can be judged against *his* standard?

Well, I'm just a guy who has enough faith in his fellow man and woman to contend that if competing ideas are allowed to duke it out publically in an atmosphere of free and uninhibited expression, the enlightenment that will follow is worth the death of some of our most cherished fantasies. Information, not suppression, leads to "moral" behavior. The ability to examine and judge information free of prejudice is what leads to happiness, not unquestioning obedience to the opinions of others. The open mind, the open society, not the narrow views of Rev. Wildmon, the network program executives, corporate ad agencies, or government regulations, is the hallmark of a "moral" people. This is the goal that deserves our focused attention. Television programming that is in the public interest can, thus, be described in a single word: *diversity*.

The "moral" "majority" of television viewers desires not uniformity, but diversity. As a self-appointed spokesman for that group, I say that we want the opportunity to watch a diverse choice of programming that represents every significant point of

view. We want to know about communism, we want to know about homosexuality, we want to know about Ayatollah Khomeini, we want to know about the exploration of outer space, we want to know about Jesus Christ, and, yes, we want to know about tight sweaters, bigots, animated cartoons, football, short shorts, gossip, how to play better tennis, how to get personal salvation, and how to make our own fur lined cuffs.

We want the opportunity to be informed, educated, enlightened, entertained, stimulated, titillated, offended, and even outraged. We want to satisfy our thirst for knowledge, our need for relaxation, our prurient interest, our competitive spirit and our curiosity. We want the chance to feel inspired, aroused, patriotic, human, divine, happy, sad, exhilarated and discouraged. In short, we want to feel alive.

If any of these things are unworthy of our attention or respect, sufficient exposure to them will make it clear.

With all of this in mind, I see both a short- and long-term solution to the problem. But before I suggest them, perhaps I should state "the problem". It is not, as imagined by the CBT, too much sex and violence, or an unrealistic portrayal of the family and society in general. The real problem is two-fold:

1. A virtual shared monopoly of the public airwaves by the three commercial broadcasting networks.
2. A lack of backbone on the part of both sponsors and programming executives.

The short-term solution addresses only the second of these. If skittish advertisers and network executives could just bring themselves to ignore vocal minority pressure groups, whatever their ilk, free expression (at least in the somewhat stunted form that we now enjoy it) would not be threatened. An ABC poll has indicated that only about 2.2% of the public would be willing to support a boycott of the type suggested by the CBT. Take my word for it, most of that 2% would fade away after an initial burst of enthusiasm. People are simply not going to go to the trouble. The boycott is an empty threat.

As clumsy and imperfect as it is, the ratings system seems to pretty accurately reflect what the average viewer is interested in seeing. Call it pandering to our weaknesses, call it programming for the lowest common denominator, call it what you will. But the simple truth is that, as a whole society, we are getting from the networks pretty much what we want and deserve, ie. a load of lightly entertaining, sometimes titillating, sometimes informative, escapist fantasy.

The long-term solution, and the only one that is truly satisfying, lies in the proliferation of choice through the development of cable-TV, direct-to-home satellite transmission, pay-TV, and prerecorded video tapes and discs. In this regard, the success of Cable News Network, ESPN, The Christian Broadcasting Network, Home Box Office, and the "superstation" WTBS, Atlanta, is very encouraging.

If each of us had over 100 channels to choose from, programming that was both foreign and domestic, liberal and conservative, cultural and trashy, religious and scientific, enlightening and propagandistic; if each of us could have access to programming not only from networks, but from libraries, special interest groups and even from each other, no one, be it the government, the networks, corporate advertisers, or the Moral Majority, could control either our right or our ability to view, learn, consider, wallow in, cherish or discard whatever we pleased.

I have my own ideas about what is "good" and "bad" television, but I see that I have rambled on much too long already. In our next issue, I hope to continue this line of thought and will fill you in on what I would have my "monitors" looking out for.

-- J.L.

Not much room for the news this time, so let's squeeze in what we can in snippit form:

On the "piracy" front, the FBI has raided the home of a Cincinnati area couple and confiscated 350+ master video tapes described as "illegally made". Robert and Katherine Iuliucci were also relieved of cassette recorders, business records and other electronic equipment. This operation was known as "IF Productions", a firm with which some of you may be familiar. If your name was in their files, guess who has it now? The FBI said that the seizure prevented an economic loss of more than \$100 million to the copyright owners.

Up Canada way, Robert Stern of "Alpha Silver Screens" has been found guilty of fraud in the Supreme Court of Ontario (6/17/81) for distributing "pirated" copies of *Star Wars*. The case is unique since previous prosecutions have primarily been tried under the copyright law, as opposed to the criminal fraud statutes.

* * *

Sony has once again demonstrated its 1125 "high resolution" video system in Japan. The new system is said to have the capability to contain 5-6 times more information than the current NTSC standard color system. The possible pictures are claimed to approach the quality of 35mm film. In addition to the exciting possibilities for broadcast TV, Sony expects so-called "electronic cinematography" to someday change conventional motion picture filmmaking techniques "dramatically." The reduction in raw film, editing and other production costs would be substantial.

* * *

Word has it that a new miniature VHS system will be adopted by most VCR manufacturers in Japan. The 20 minute cassette would be suitable for use in small portable camera/recorder units, in the field and then, via an adaptive shell, could be played back in a standard size VHS format VCR.

* * *

VCR sales in the first half of 1981 climbed to 543,473 units, an increase of nearly 90% over the 286,601 sold in the first 6 months of 1980. Sales in June were over 109,000, up 110% over June 1980.

* * *

Escapade, one of the two satellite distributed "adult" pay-cable services (Private Screenings is the other) has landed an exclusive package of films produced by Radley Metzger. Airing should begin in September 1981. // Escapade has also announced the production of its first "original" program entitled "Everything Goes". The proposed series will be in an adult quiz show format. I'm told that among the penalties for wrong answers will be "classic strip poker" type stuff. The show is scheduled to be on once a month starting in October 1981. Escapade is currently available to over 100,000 subscribers of 125 cable systems. It's also available to you Earth station owners on Comstar D-2, Transponder 4.

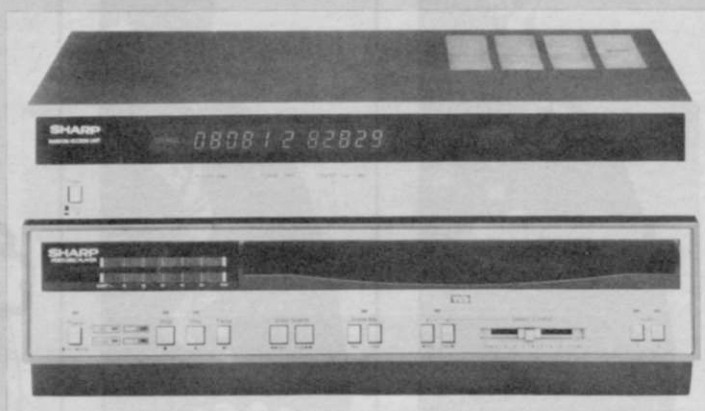
USA Network has announced that it will begin a 24 hour programming schedule in October. The expansion will include 3 new programs: "Better Homes & Gardens Idea Notebook", "Scholastic Sports Academy", and "The Wall Street Journal Evening News". USA is seen by 8,000,000 subscribers on 1400 cable systems and on satellite: Satcom 1, Transponder 9.

Among new RCA discs will be Mel Brooks' "History of the World: Part I", a dog of a movie if ever there was one.

The forthcoming VHD disc system has begun to announce a package of movie titles that it plans to offer. Among them a package of films from ABC Video Enterprises, including: "Cabaret", "They Shoot Horses Don't They?", "Straw Dogs", and three Hitchcock titles -- "Notorious", "Spellbound", and "Rebecca". JVC is expected to introduce the VHD videodisc in Japan in October and in this country after the first of the year.

* * * * *

Speaking of the VHD videodisc, Sharp Electronics, has announced a VHD player which will feature: "video search" at either 9 times or 120 times the normal speed (forward or reverse), still-frame, frame-by-frame advance (forward or reverse), and variable speed control (a choice of speeds over a scale of 1/8th to five times normal. In the picture below, you'll see the optional Random Access unit, which will provide additional search functions, and a full-function wireless remote control unit, which provides access to all functions on both the player and the Random access unit. Pretty snappy, I'd say.



September 21 will see the debut of the syndicated "Saturday Night Live" a series of one-hour programs gleaned from 106 original NBC telecasts. The series has been sold to 96 stations, most of which will be running it "late night" Mondays through Fridays.

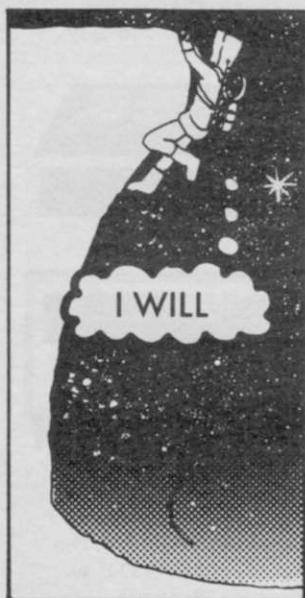
You might also want to be on the lookout for a syndicated package of five Roger Corman "cult classics", which were recently shown on KTLA with Robert Walden (Rossi on "Lou Grant") as host. Other theme film packages are expected to emerge from a library of some 80 American International exploitation films that are being made available to Filmways Enterprises.

* * * * *

Comsat's plans for "DBS" (direct broadcasting from Satellites) continue to develop. A plan has been filed with the FCC, where it has apparently received a warm reception. The system is not expected to be operational before 1985 or so. Comsat is serious, having budgeted \$600 million to the venture, and having booked space on the Space Shuttle for launching of its satellites. Only a 3-foot dish would be required to receive the signals (estimated to cost \$200-\$300) and there would also be a monthly charge to homes which would receive scrambled signals. Two other similar ventures (less ambitious than that of Comsat) are on the drawing board. Of course, prime opposition comes from the National Association of Broadcasters, since its member networks and 5000 local radio and TV outlets would be bypassed.

the QUESTION

ART AND STORY LARRY NIBERT



THE IMPOSSIBLE COLLECTION: Part II

by: Jim Lowe

Last issue, I suggested some items for an "impossible" collection of video tapes, and asked that readers share their fancies with us on these pages. Bill Hyde has sent me quite a long letter on the subject, and since it's just the sort of thing I had in mind, here it is in its entirety:

Dear Jim:

I apologize in advance for the length of this letter. I was so impressed by your *excellent* article **What to Collect and Why**, and your tantalizing **The Impossible Collection**, that I felt compelled to write you.

First of all, let me offer my "short" list of suggestions for the "impossible collection," with a few comments. They are in no particular order of importance. Feel free to print as many or as few as you wish. (In quite a few cases my candidates for nomination are only vaguely identified or described due to a terminal case of fuzzy memory, for which I apologize. Perhaps you or other readers may have a clear recollection.)

1. The Joey Heatherton dance sequence on the very first showing of either (I'm not sure which) "Hullabaloo" or "Shindig." I noticed your reference to her "Let's Take It Slow and Easy" number on a 1970 *Dean Martin Show*, which you claimed might be "the most exotic thing to ever have been shown on network television." Don't count on it. I didn't see that number, but this dance number I'm referring to was just absolutely unbelievable, in both its movements and the zoom-in camera coverage. I'm sure it would be censored today, and there was never anything remotely like it on any of the subsequent "Shindig" or "Hullabaloo" episodes.

2. The "Love, American Style" episode in which Sissy Spacek starred. Sometime in the early 70's.

3. Any episodes from "The Rogues" (late sixties), which featured Gig Young, David Niven, and Charles Boyer.

4. Any episodes from "Adventures in Paradise." This was a series that, as I vaguely recall, ran in the late fifties and/or early sixties, starring some guy whose name (I think) was Gardner McKay. It was about a guy who travelled around on his boat in the South Pacific, and I believe it was loosely based on Michener's South Seas adventure yarns. As a little boy, I *loved* this series. It's always bugged me in later years that no one has done syndicated reruns of this series.

5. Any early episodes (first year or so) from the "Laugh-

In" series. Needless to say, this late sixties weekly comedy offering was a truly great show. Not the least of its many virtues was the weekly "Mad, Mad World" bit, featuring the extremely sexy dancing of a bikini-clad and body-painted Goldie Hawn and Judy Carne. (Imagine what a great cassette it would make to combine all "Mad, Mad World" sequences from the first year or two of "Laugh-In" onto one tape.)

6. The Karen Valentine "Cowgirl" Pilot Movie. (This is what I call it, for lack of more specific identification.) This is one where my lack of clear recollection betrays the fact that I must be heading toward senility at an early age (either that or I smoked too many funny cigarettes in law school). About four or five seasons ago there was a pilot movie for a series that never made it on the air in the fall. It was a western and it starred Karen Valentine and there were lots of touches of humor; she travelled around with a female sidekick. I thought it was marvelous and I was extremely disappointed it never got a chance to become a series. Would you by any chance know what the name of the show was and when it aired?

7. A composite of the "Tonight Show" clips featuring foreign TV advertisements. Once or twice a year for the past 12 years or so, Carson has devoted a roughly 5-minute segment of his show to showing funny or interesting foreign TV commercials. I'd like to see all these segments edited together on one cassette.

8. "Streaking" footage. You remember streaking, that wonderful craze-mania that struck college campuses all across the country in March and April of 1974? Well, as long as you're talking about the "impossible" collection, why not a one-hour or two-hour documentary-style video tape showing some of the streaking antics that went on back in that period (that now seems almost unreal)? Aside from being great fun, the streaking craze was a very strange and peculiar—and short-lived—sociological phenomenon. It's exactly the type of thing that *should* be spliced together and preserved on video tape if footage can be found and edited. Interestingly, if it hasn't all been lost or destroyed, I think a great deal of video tape footage may have been compiled by local television news departments across the country. (I know for a fact that local TV cameramen were on the scene shooting away at some of the streaking follies at St. Louis U. in March of 1974, and that a very brief [rear-view] segment was shown on one of the local 10 o'clock news shows. There's no doubt that brief segment was carefully edited from lengthier and often more explicit

footage.) Some enterprising soul ought to go around and try to locate such footage from such sources, edit it and put it together on a cassette.

9. The Italian "Strip Quiz" Shows. While we're on the subject of nudity, what about this as part of the "impossible" collection? These Italian TV shows were mentioned in the news media a few years back, and I think you may have referred to them once in *The Videophile*, so you probably know what I'm talking about. I presume they're defunct by now. Somebody in Italy must surely have videotaped some of those strip quiz shows.

10. The "Perry Mason" show where Perry lost his case. Although it's hard for me to believe, I was told years ago that there is one episode in the Perry Mason series where Perry actually lost the case—the defendant was found guilty! I was told that viewer reaction was so negative that they ran a subsequent episode in which the defendant won on appeal. If such an episode exists and is on tape, it surely would have to be considered a collectors' item.

11. "Born Innocent." This was the infamous made-for-TV movie shot sometime in the early-to-mid seventies starring Linda Blair, which contained a scene in which Linda was raped with a broom handle by other teenage girls in a juvenile detention facility. Because of the lawsuit it sparked, alleging that the scene incited a similar real-life attack in California, this movie will definitely never be shown again anywhere on television. Anyone who has access to a tape of this movie has a very rare collectors' item.

12. "Liza with a 'Z'." This was a one-hour TV "special" starring Liza Minelli broadcast sometime in the early-to-mid seventies. (I think they even made an album of the soundtrack.) Aside from its extraordinary overall excellence, this special contained an outrageously sexy dance number by Liza, which the network strongly objected to and wanted to censor, and which was included in the broadcast only because Liza insisted on it and threatened to deny approval for any broadcast at all unless it was included.

Those are my twelve modest nominations for the impossible collection.

Let me offer a few suggestions on searching for "impossible collection" items. Number one, sooner or later, someone, some enterprising researcher or archivist, should do some kind of comprehensive survey of just what items are and are not extant in studio and network vaults. They must have some kind of filing system for the material they have stored. We need to know the titles, dates, and rough outline of content, of items that are in existence. We need to know what's still in existence and what's not. Whether it's "Adventures in Paradise," or Nikita Krushchev banging his shoe at the U.N. table, or Joey Heatherton singing "Let's Take It Slow and Easy" on a 1970 *Dean Martin Show*, or Joey Heatherton shaking up a hurricane on the very first episode of "Hullabaloo," we need to know whether it exists in the vaults before we can know if we have any chance of ever seeing it in the future. Someone ought to go into the vaults and start cataloging what exists.

Number two, we should start thinking about possible ways in the future to pry loose some of the material that still exists and make it available to individual consumers. For example, there's a reasonable chance Joey Heatherton's "Let's Take It Slow and Easy" sequence still exists in the vaults, and there's even an off chance her dance sequence that I referred to is in the vaults somewhere. But the painful part is, nevertheless, that the networks are never going to rerun that one 1970 episode of the *Dean Martin Show*, and they're never going to rerun the first show of "Hullabaloo." So how are we going to gain access to that material that's in the vaults? It's there, but how do we get at it? Ideally, by some means or another, everything which was ever broadcast and which still exists in the vaults should be available to interested consumers. After all, what's the point of keeping it stored in a vault if nobody who wants to see it again (or see it for the first time) can ever gain access to it? It's like a library where the books can never be checked out.

Number three, with regard to **The Dodo, the Auk, and the Gong Show**, you should attempt to foster, or encourage the creation of, some kind of central clearinghouse whereby interested videophiles can send in detailed descriptions of odd bits and pieces that they possess that possibly no one else has. This would at least allow these items to be documented, perhaps at some later date it could be set up so videophiles could send in their unique bits and pieces, so that these could be copied (and then the original returned to the owner), indexed, stored and preserved. And thus made available to others who might wish to see them in the future. I'm heavily into recording odd bits and pieces myself. I've got things from specials, commercials, local shows, even the Carson show, that I'd be willing to bet no one else in the country has. I'd be glad to share information with anyone about my odd bits and pieces and special interest shows.

Lastly, as a "non-technical dullard" (a great phrase coined in the Letters section of Issue #31), I just want to commend you on the spirit of your **What to Collect and Why** piece. *The Videophile* is too technically-oriented for my tastes. I'm inclined to feel that your response to Stephen Gerardi's letter, articulate though it was, was less than convincing.

Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,
Bill Hyde
4466 W. Pine Blvd. Apt. 5-F
St. Louis, MO 63108

Many thanks, Bill. You've really started the ball rolling in grand style. The following are some comments on your list that may be of assistance:

1. *Joey Heatherton*. When I first read your letter, I figured this would be the easiest one of all to answer, but, while I am 99% certain that it was *Shindig* (not *Hullabaloo*), none of my

reference books confirm it. I can't even confirm that Miss Heatherton ever appeared on either of these shows. However, I remember the sequence well, and certainly concur that it would be a show well worth having. Incidentally, that first episode of *Shindig*, which was shown on September 16, 1964, featured such guest stars as Sam Cooke and the Everly Brothers. I'm pretty sure that the first *Shindig* was a "live" broadcast, so it may well be among the missing. Still, I have a sneaking suspicion that a copy of it is probably in existence. If you are still of similar temperament (I sense that you are), you really should check out the dancers on the syndicated rock show *Solid Gold*.

2. *Love, American Style*. I can't tell you the episode in which Miss Spacek starred, but I can tell you that this series is still in syndication. Often, WTBS (the Atlanta "Superstation") uses segments from it to fill in odd time slots after the end of movies.

3. *The Rogues*. This series ran on NBC from 9/13/64 until 9/5/65 and featured the gentlemen you mentioned as con men conning con men, not unlike more recent shows such as *Switch* and *Feather and Father*. (This brings to mind a show that I'd love to see again, the daddy of all such shows, *Colonel Flack*, with Alan Mowbray.) Each episode of *The Rogues* featured well known guest stars, examples being "The Stefanini Dowry" (9/27/64), with Fritz Weaver and Susan Strasberg, and "Grave Doubts" (3/28/65), with Jonathan Harris (the evil Dr. Smith of *Lost in Space*) and, my girl, Joycelyn Lane. Other guest stars included: Walter Matthau, Raquel Welch, Broderick Crawford, Barbara Eden, Darren McGavin, Ida Lupino, Everett Sloan, and Telly Savalas. There were 29 episodes (black and white) which were produced on both 16mm and 35mm film. The show is available for syndication from Four Star Entertainment, 400 S. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. You might mention this to one of your local stations. (Let me know when they start running it; now you've got me interested.)



Charles Boyer and Gig Young in *The Rogues*.

4. *Adventures in Paradise*. This series enjoyed a relatively long run on ABC from 10/5/59 until 4/1/62. It was created by James Michener who then sold his rights to TV. Gardiner McKay and his schooner, the "Tiki" sailed through 91 episodes (black and white). These, too, exist on both 16mm and 35mm film. At one time it was listed among the series available for syndication from 20th Century-Fox Television (1021 W. Pico Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90213), but their most recent listing does not include it. One item for you trivia buffs: The episode, "Daughter of Illusion" (12/12/60), features what may well be the only American TV appearance of Barbara Steele, better known for such English horror films as *Black Sunday*, *The Crimson Cult*, and *The Pit and the Pendulum*.



Gardiner McKay in *Adventures in Paradise*.

5. *Laugh-In*. Technically, the show is *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, and was, of course, one of the most popular of all time, running from 1/22/68 to 5/14/73. I feel certain that they all exist in the network vaults and would say that there is a pretty good chance that tapes or discs of the type you suggest will be released someday. One very collectible segment would have to be that in which President Nixon appeared to say "Sock it to me?" The one I would most like to have was aired sometime in 1971 and featured Dinah Shore in a black leather and silver studded "dominatrix" costume. Somewhat out of character for her, you must admit. Burt Reynolds probably talked her into it.

6. *Karen Valentine*. Got your list handy, Bill? The title was *Go West, Young Girl*, a made-for-TV movie with Sandra Will, Stuart Whitman and Richard Jaeckel, that aired on 4/27/78. It's listed in Maltin's TV Movies book (he says it's "average"), so I'd say to just watch for it as a rerun in a local TV movie slot; maybe even as a late night network film someday.

7. *Foreign TV commercials*. I feel certain that these will be offered on a tape or disc, if they have not already been. A few have popped up on releases from *Instant Replay* (reviewed in previous issues) and some were featured on the Steve Martin "All Commercials" special last season.

8. *Streiking*. Another possible tape or disc release someday, I would think. It's true that a great deal of local footage may have since been lost. I know a little about this phenomenon, as Florida State University, here in town, was among those claiming to have invented this diversion. I still have the local student newspaper pictures, but no TV tape since this was in the days before 1/2" VCR's.

9. *Italian "Strip Quiz" Shows*. We did, indeed, mention this in an early issue. I'm afraid I have no information, but can't believe that our European brethren have allowed it to completely pass into extinction.

10. *Perry Mason*. The show you have in mind was entitled "The Case of the Deadly Verdict." It was broadcast 10/3/63 with guest star Julie Adams. Perry got a "guilty" verdict when his client refused to reveal evidence that would save her. (Of course, he saved the day later on.) *Perry Mason* is still in syndication and I would imagine is being shown locally in several areas around the country. Incidentally, did you know that Raymond Burr originally tested for the part of Hamilton Burger and that William Hopper ("Paul Drake") was among those considered for the part of Mason before Burr was finally selected?

11. *Born Innocent*. This film aired on 9/10/74 and edited versions of it have been rerun since then. I'd say there is at least *some* chance that the uncut version will be released if this title ever comes out on tape or disc.

12. *Liza*. The special "Singer Presents Liza with a 'Z'" was produced by Bob ("All that Jazz") Fosse and Fred Ebb. It was broadcast on 9/10/72 and won the Emmy award in the category Outstanding Single Program, Variety or Special. I imagine we'll see it as a disc one of these days.

Whew! Your list has taxed me a bit, Bob, but as you can see, little of it is really in the "impossible" category. Let's hear from the rest of you. This is fun!

What's that? Oh, we *have* heard from some others. Well, then, let's press on.

Mr. Lowe:

This is in reply to your request for reader input on your "The Impossible Collection" column in issue #31 of *The Video-ophile*.

Any Steve Allen "Tonight" shows (I was too young at the time, and obviously missed a timeless classic.

The appearance of all five Marx Brothers on the "Tonight Show" in 1960? 61?

To a lesser extent, any Groucho Marx appearances (excluding the Bill Cosby embarrassment of 1976) especially the

excellent Dick Cavett program appearances.

John Lennon on either the Mike Douglas or Dick Cavett show. Also Lennon-McCartney on the "Tonight Show" (hosted by Joe Gargiola?!).

The ascension of Pope John Paul I to the papacy and his subsequent death. He only served 30-odd days.

Here's one you may want also since your favorite soap opera is "The Young and the Restless." Did you know that the lovely Jamie Lyn Bauer was in an x-rated movie? (Was that coffee you just spilled?) A friend saw it about 4-5 years ago and he doesn't remember the title. He said it was soft core and that she was in it briefly.

The famed near punchout of Gore Vidal by Norman Mailer on the Dick Cavett Show, mmm . . . 10-12 years ago?

The "Tonight Show" where Jack Parr delivered a bitter monologue and promptly walked off the show in a huff.

The same Joey Heatherton "Dean Martin Show" appearance you mentioned. Also her brief show she did with her dad. I don't think it lasted over a year, and can't recall if it was national or syndicated.

News reports on deceased entertainment figures—Groucho, Steve McQueen, Elvis, Lennon, Chaplin, etc.

The Fred Astaire special in the late 50's that won several Emmy's.

How about "off the wall" stuff? Jack Nicholson on the Andy Griffith show (he was accused of stealing a TV set, remember?), Jill Clayburgh (a hooker) on "Maude," Jimmy Carter on "What's My Line," etc., etc.

Recently the 3-part "Today" interview with Oscar winner Robert De Niro and director Martin Scorsese.

Any of "Your Show of Shows."

This can go on and on, but these were off the top of my head. I enjoyed it. Who knows, maybe one day . . .

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Jimmy McNamara
Richmond, VA

The *Tonight Show* deserves a book of its own. (There is at least one. Indeed, I picked up a copy of *Tonight*, by Terry Galaney on the sale table at Walden Books for only \$1.00 a couple of years ago.) My sources are weak on detail, but I can tell you a little.

—Jack Parr walked off the show at 11:41 p.m., Eastern Time, February 11, 1960. It is my understanding that this show was taped, so it is possible that it still exists.

—Yes, Joe Gargiola was guest host on the night that Lennon and McCartney appeared, as evidenced by the picture.

—Groucho? I'd say a prime collectible would be *The Tonight Show* (shows?) on which he served as substitute host. This occurred between Jack Parr's departure (March 1962) and the arrival of Johnny Carson in October 1962.

As for Groucho's own show, the syndicated version of *You*



John Lennon and Paul McCartney
with Joe Garagiola and Ed McMahon

Bet Your Life, entitled *The Best of Groucho*, is still being run on a few local stations around the country.

Thanks for the tip re: Jamie Lyn Baur of "The Young and the Restless." Perhaps, you would be interested to know that the same young lady was once featured in an 8-page color spread (?) in *Penthouse* magazine, under the name "Jessica Len." It's the May 1974 issue. (I could probably scare up an extra copy or two from the closet, for you wealthy traders.)

Joey Heatherton's fans do not appear to be in short supply. Her series *Joey & Dad* ran for only four weeks in July 1975 as a summer replacement for *Cher* on CBS. According to a United Press International story (9/30/75), CBS was unwilling to let Joey strut her stuff on that show. UPI stated that "Joey's blonde pixie visage was approved by network blue noses. But her long, slender legs and generous bosom were taboo." Quoting the lady herself: "They made me wear blouses with necklines up to here," Joey said, drawing an imaginary line at her neck.

Joey was a regular on the summer replacement series *Dean Martin Presents the Golddiggers* in 1968. Other television credits that you might still find on the rerun circuit are: *I Spy*



(episodes of 11/23/66 and 11/30/66), *It Takes a Thief* (episodes of 2/4/69 and 2/11/69 entitled "A Matter of Grey Matter"), and the *Love American Style* episode of 1/30/70, entitled "Love and the Nervous Ex." She's also been on a number of Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethons, appearances that may well be in the "next to impossible" category.

"An Evening with Fred Astaire" was, indeed, a very highly acclaimed special. At the Emmy awards ceremony for the 1958-59 season (presented May 6, 1959) it took the honors for "Most Outstanding Single Program of the Year" as well as four others. It was broadcast October 17, 1958 and also featured Barrie Chase.

"Off the wall stuff," you say? I love it. Especially roles such as those you mention in which later-to-be big names appeared. I'm pretty sure that Jack Nicholson appeared on *The Andy Griffith Show* twice. One was broadcast on 11/21/66, the other I'm not sure about, but I have one that is different from the one you describe.

I can't say when Miss Clayburgh was on *Maude*, but I do know that she appeared on *The Rockford Files* (10/25/74). This one should be easy to watch for in syndicated reruns.

As for the Jimmy Carter appearance on *What's My Line*, that is truly a classic. This was when he was Governor of Georgia. The panel wasn't blindfolded, and yet Mr. Carter was so obscure a personality that he completely stumped them. I've seen this segment repeated somewhere in the past couple of years. I imagine it will become available on tape or disc one of these days.

There is a way to ferret out information about old series episodes with special guest stars and also a way to collect them, but it requires having some reference books and a fairly extensive back-issue collection of *TV Guide*. I'll try to do a write up on it one of these times.

As for *Your Show of Shows*, you will be pleased to know that a 92-minute feature film entitled *Ten From Your Show of Shows* was released in 1973. It consists of 10 of the all-time funniest skits compiled from kinescopes of the original broadcasts. These include the well remembered takeoff on *This Is Your Life*. I can tell you as an absolute certainty that this film has been available for broadcast on local channels in the past. It would seem to be a prime candidate for release on tape. Indeed, *The Video Source Book* tells me that Reel Images (495 Monroe Turnpike, Monroe CT 06468) has two 25-minute episodes, from 1950, for sale. (When you inquire of them, advise them in diplomatic, but no uncertain, terms that it is high time they began advertising in these pages. Also, of course, that we would love to review copies of these tapes.)

Well, I see by the old clock on the wall that . . . What? There's one more? A shortie? OK, let's squeeze it in.

Dear Jim Lowe:

I would like to comment on your article "The Impossible Collection."

I was only 13 years old when I started watching Steve Allen and his show, and I would stay up on school nights just to watch him. I agree with you that it would be great to see the show again.

Continued on p. 56

The Use of Filters

by: Kerry K. Decker

When using a video camera, many have said, "This picture lacks something, but what is it?" Perhaps you need a filter.



The human eye has an amazing ability to correct for different light sources. If we look at a white piece of paper outdoors then slowly bring it inside, it may look reddish for a moment, but it will slowly regain its original whiteness. Even if we look

at it through colored glasses, the white paper looks normal to us. Unfortunately, color video cameras do not work the same way. We must often correct or enhance a certain view to make it appear "normal."

What size of filter will a video camera accept? The instruction booklet from your camera often shows this as an accessory size and is expressed in millimeters. (Do not confuse this with the focal length of your lens!) The millimeters measured here are those of the actual diameter across the front of your lens. If you are not sure of this size, take your lens to your local camera shop where it can be properly sized and fitted with the filters we are about to describe. In fact, if you own a 35mm still camera, you may already own a selection of filters that can be adapted for video use with the addition of a "stepping ring," which will convert one size of lens to another.

Filters for Color Cameras

Skylight 1A or Haze UV—Either of these filters is a must for all videographers for color or black and white use. Although technically these filters absorb ultraviolet light and correct for excessive bluishness in open shade, they are nearly clear and are generally used to protect the lens while shooting. Be it blowing sand, dirt, fingerprints or grease, the use of this filter will protect your lens against the elements. In case of damage, it's better to crack a filter than the glass of your lens!

Polarizing Filters—Here is a favorite if you shoot often outdoors. This neutral toned filter is often referred to as a cloud filter because it deepens a blue sky while letting the clouds stand out. It cuts down on the light in very bright situations and also effectively reduces the reflections from glass and other shiny surfaces. This type filter is adjustable, so you can view the effect in your viewfinder. The Polarizer works best under sunny conditions; take it off otherwise.

#85 Filter—Some color cameras without a white light control (such as some JVC models) require this orange filter to correct the internal indoor setting for use outdoors.

Filters for Black & White Cameras

Here we have a much greater selection of filters, as the many colors of filters will not tint the scene as they do on a color camera.

Yellow (K2) Filters—If you do not use the Skylight or Haze filters for lens protection, mentioned above, the use of at least

a yellow filter is recommended. This filter slightly increases the overall contrast of a scene. It is particularly nice for a scene with foreground and a blue sky. It lightens yellow and darkens blues. Great for distant scenes as it slightly reduces haze (more than the UV).

Orange (G) Filter—Similar to the yellow filter, but with greater effect. Darkens skies, sunsets, seascapes, etc.

Red (25A) Filter—Similar to the Orange filter but with the greatest effect. Darkens blue skies almost to black. Greatly increases contrast.

Green (X1) Filter—Emphasizes flesh tones; darkens red and lightens greens.

Neutral Density (ND) Filter—Neutral in color but contains no properties like the Polarizer. It merely reduces the amount of light striking your lens in bright situations such as a beach scene. The higher the number of "X's" (ie. 3X, 6X, 8X), the darker the filter.

Special Effects Filters


These can be used on either color or black and white cameras for exciting results.

Cross-Star/Cross-Screen Filter—Probably one of the most common special effects filters. This filter adds an "X" flare to any point source of light. It will make a candle light flare with excitement. The 6-pointed Star Filter is now most popular. [Of course, you wouldn't want to point your video camera directly at the sun or another *extremely* bright source.—Ed]

Multi-Image Filter—An old favorite that reproduces up to six like-images in a circular pattern. It is usually in a rotating mount so you may spin the filter while taping. This will result in a stationary center with images spinning around it. Works great on fireworks!

Close-Up Diopter Filters—These filters are usually sold in a set of three (+1, +2, +4) and can be used singly or in combination for extreme close-up or macro use. They allow your lens to be focused to within inches of your subject. Let an ant be the star of your next science fiction tape! You can also copy photos or typewritten cards for use as titles.

Diffuser Filters—These will cut down the sharpness of your lens and give soft-focus results. Some are clear in the center only (Spot Filters) and some have excessive diffusion (Fog Filters) and are great for dream sequences.

Filters for use on your video camera are not all that confusing or unusual. They enhance many a scene while protecting your lens. Filters are generally double-threaded, allowing several to be used at the same time (too many will cut down on sharpness). Don't be reluctant to experiment. Good filter use can give your tapes the snappy distinctive look that will set them apart from the all too well known "home movie" (yawn) variety. 

The Videophile PRODUCT REPORT

PANASONIC PV-3100/3200 and 4100/4500 PORTABLE VHS DECKS

Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.,
1006 Kadoma, Kadoma-city, Osaka, Japan
(distributed by Panasonic Company, 1
Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094)

Serial Nos.: J0SA56438 (PV-3200) and C1SA51433
(PV-4500)

Source: Reader loan and dealer loan (Video Network,
326 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91207)

Cost: PV-3100 \$1095.00 (includes VJPS0003
microphone adapter, VSQ0109 remote pause
unit, LCR-1812P battery pack, VYC0040
shoulder strap, VJA0148 aux. battery cable,
VBES0001 earphone, VJP1164 audio input
attenuator, miscellaneous antenna cables and
transformers, PV-A30 AC adapter, and sam-
ple T-60 videocassette)

PV-3200 \$1295.00 (includes all the above
and PV-A32E 1-day/1-event tuner/timer in-
stead of standard AC adapter)

PV-4100 \$1195.00 (includes same accesso-
ries as PV-3100, plus remote picture search/
pause control and PV-A40 AC adapter)

PV-4500 \$1400.00 (includes same accesso-
ries as above and PV-A35P 14-day/8-event
tuner/timer instead of standard AC adapter)

Accessories for above include: \$39.95 PK-
R70 camera-mounted remote VTR Control,
\$399.95 PV-A35P 14-day/8-event tuner/
timer, the PV-H34 carrying case, \$22.00 PV-
C34 car battery cord, and \$42.50 additional
LCR-1812P lead-acid battery pack.

Panasonic's present-day portable VHS deck line up, as presented above, looks pretty complicated, but actually, it's quite simple. The original PV-3100/3200 systems are actually built around the standard PV-3000 VTR, which was Matsushita's answer to Hitachi's ultra-light VT-7500A first released two years ago. After picture-search became an important feature for consumer VTR's early in 1980, Matsushita's engi-

neers figured out a way to modify the existing PV-3000's transport enough to provide this feature, at a slight sacrifice in weight (less than ½ pound) and winding speeds (an additional 30 seconds). Since all four versions are currently available from most Panasonic dealers, we're going to review all of them as part of this special *Product Report*.

Appearance: Both the PV-3000 and PV-4000 decks are practically identical, each measuring about 4-1/2" x 12" x 9-3/4", and weighing about 13 pounds with battery. Each closely



resembles RCA's VEP-150 and VFT-170 (the latter reviewed last issue) with seven light-touch solenoid transport controls designed in the standard Rewind/Stop/Fast-Forward/Play/Record/Audio Dub and Pause configuration. Also provided is a mechanical lever for Eject, a small light-touch button for frame-by-frame advance, a four-digit index counter with memory rewind, mini-phone jacks for Remote control and Earphone, a knurled Tracking knob, and switches for Speed (SP/LP/SLP) and Power on/off. In addition, both decks feature a small meter with a scale for Battery power condition, and an LED indicator for the internal Dew sensor. The only physical difference between the front panels of the two decks is a mysterious switch marked "Camera Remote," which the instruction manual notes may need to be turned on when used with certain cameras.

The right side of the PV-3000 and PV-4000 decks contain all the input and output jacks, including three phono jacks for

Audio out, Video in and Video out, an F jack for RF out, a standard 10-pin DIN jack for connecting a camera or the accessory tuner/timer, a mini-phone jack for an external microphone, and a 5-pin jack for an external 12VDC power supply (or the PV-A30/40 AC adaptor). You'll note that neither deck provides a line-level audio input. Instead, the mike-level input is used with the special input attenuator cable provided to supply the correct impedance—a rather backwards approach to our way of thinking, but perhaps one way of keeping costs down.

The PV-A32E and PV-A35P tuner/timers resemble each other very closely, both attractive silver and grey plastic units about 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x11 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Fourteen channel preset buttons are provided, with the tuning controls hidden underneath a hinged compartment on the top right side. Like the PV-1750's tuner section (discussed in #30), these tuners have a pop-out panel that opens to allow punching in all the appropriate timer data—1 day/1-event for the PV-A32E, and 14-day/8-event for the PV-A35P. Also provided are light-touch buttons for the TV/VTR RF output selector, Timer recording switch, and the on/off power switch. The back of each unit contains two attached cables that are connected to the VTR's "Camera/Tuner" and "DC In" jacks, respectively. Also included are the usual F jacks for VHF in/out and terminal posts for UHF in/out.



Features/Operation: The biggest difference between the 3000- and 4000-series portables is the picture search feature offered in the latter, which can only be engaged with its remote control, not with the controls on the deck itself. Unlike the Hitachi-built decks (including RCA's VFT-170), the PV-4100/4500 provides still-frame and picture-search capability at all three speeds. That's the good news; the bad news is that these effects look pretty awful in SP and LP, and only adequate at SLP. This is understandable since all four models employ only a single pair of 30-micron video heads, unlike the super-deluxe four-head VHS machines that offer high-quality special effects in both SP and SLP. With these portables, the

picture-search is almost unwatchable at SP, and the still-frame isn't much better, with large noise-bars filling almost half the screen. At LP, they fill about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the screen. At SLP, the still-frame is not quite noiseless, but adequate for most purposes.

Like several past VHS decks we've evaluated, both the PV-3000 and the PV-4000 exhibited some sluggishness during quick mode changes, particularly during picture search in the latter deck. Once in awhile, during extremely rapid tape jockeying, the 4500 simply reverted to the stop mode, unable to take any more of our use and abuse. We wouldn't have minded this problem so much except for the fact that the extremely limited remote control provided with the PV-4500 doesn't allow you to re-initiate the play mode, nor can it engage the record mode. There's no question that what we really need in a VTR of this kind is a full-function remote, providing all of the same modes found on the deck itself—not unlike the RCA VFT-170 and the Hitachi VT-6500A. Unfortunately, none of the current Panasonic portables measure up to this competition.

Another annoying thing about both the PV-3000 and the 4000 is their fast-forward and rewind time, which is agonizingly sl-o-o-o-w-w-w-w. The 3000 takes just about 5:00 minutes to get from one end of a T-120 to the other, and the 4000 takes about 26 seconds longer, apparently due to its modified picture-search transport. This is abnormally high, in view of the 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -4 minute average among most other VHS decks, including JVC's HR-2200 portable (reviewed elsewhere in this issue).

Also, we attempted to use the PV-4000 deck with a JVC GX-68U color camera, to try to test the Camera Remote switch. Strangely enough, no matter which position we tried, the camera was still unable to place the deck into pause during the record mode. We're at a loss to understand exactly why, since most of JVC's previous 10-pin cameras are at least semi-compatible with most VHS portables, except for the fact that the LED viewfinder pause indicators show in reverse—green for stop and red for run. We advise prospective purchasers to be sure to try out any camera you're about to purchase with your portable to be sure they're compatible, and if they're not, ask your dealer to provide you with an adaptor cable, available either from the manufacturer or firms like The Cable Works, 4228 Santa Ana St., South Gate, CA 90280.

Performance: Despite the fact that we were a little disappointed with the lack of features found with the PV-3000/4000 series decks, we were pleased to find that Matsushita hasn't been idle in making subtle improvements in picture quality with their newest VTR's, even these portables. While the SP mode wasn't really anything to write home about, the LP and SLP modes are about as good as any such recordings we've ever seen, including those from most AC decks. In particular, the SLP mode seems considerably improved over the first-generation 6-hour decks from two years ago (including Panasonic's PV-1600 and RCA's VDT-600).

Apparently, Matsushita has incorporated some new kind of noise reduction/enhancement circuitry in these new decks, designed to extract every iota of video quality out of slow-speed recordings. This would explain why they tend to outperform the earlier PV-2600 and 2200 VTR's from several years ago. Still, they don't hold a candle to industrial decks like JVC's HR-2200 or Panasonic's own NV-8310 (both reviewed elsewhere this issue).

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal resolution: 230 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 40 dB (B&W)

Audio Frequency Response: 100-8,000 Hz (SP); 100-6,000 Hz (LP); 150-5,000 Hz (SLP)

Audio S/N Ratio: 42 dB (SP); 40 dB (LP/SLP)

Power Consumption: 9 watts at 12VDC

Any diehard audiophiles will no doubt throw up at reading the above sound specs, and we have to admit that they look pretty poor on paper. But as we often point out, they aren't all that much worse than the quality of most TV broadcasts—horrible though that may be to admit—and at SP, should be adequate for all but the most demanding musical programs. As usual, we noted a lot more wow and flutter at the slowest speeds, making them useful mainly for delay purposes only.

In addition to this performance shortcoming, all of the Panasonic portables offer the same "pseudo-backspace" editing feature found in most new 6-hour decks. This circuit automatically backs up the tape a second or two whenever the pause button is depressed during the record mode, to provide improved edit performance. Unfortunately, this can be somewhat of an annoyance in that it makes tight, accurate editing almost impossible, particularly when the tape is re-cued during a commercial break. We can only hope that future portapaks will eliminate this problem and provide the same editing performance and accuracy found with Panasonic's older models and Sony's newer 5000-series Beta decks, neither of which had to resort to backing up the tape for adequate editing performance.

Conclusion: As much as we think that the Panasonic decks are well-constructed and represent some fairly impressive technology in a pint-sized package, none of them provide the best combination of features and picture quality for the money. For consumer purposes, the RCA VFT-170/Hitachi VT-6500A decks provide almost the exact same picture quality with full-function remote, and each is roughly 10% smaller and lighter than the equivalent Panasonics. Considering that their price is roughly the same, we'd cast our vote for the RCA/Hitachi portables instead of the Panasonic PV-3000/4000 recorders. And for diehard videophile users, nothing can touch JVC's excellent HR-2200, not only for picture quality but also for features.

We know that Matsushita's R & D geniuses back in Japan can do better than this. It's expected that Panasonic will ultimately meet this challenge from their competition, and we'll look forward to reporting on whatever they come up with

in the months ahead. For now, we'd recommend buying the PV-3100, 3200, 4100 or 4500 only if their price is an offer too good to refuse.—MFW

(Special thanks to local videophile D. S. and Scott Dundee of Glendale's Video Network for providing the Panasonic portables used in this *Product Report*.)

Editor's Note: As a service to our readers, below is a list showing how these Panasonic portables are identical to a number of decks available from several other manufacturers:

PV-3100/3200 - Magnavox VR-8370/8371, Quasar VH-5300 (now being discontinued)

PV-4100/4500 - GE ICVP2020X, Magnavox VR-8376/8377, Philco V-1715, Sylvania VC-4515, Quasar VH-5410.

It should be noted that of all the above manufacturers, only Quasar offers a total of *three* different tuner/timers for their VH-5410 portable: the VA-512 1-day/1-event unit for \$310, the VA-520 14-day/8-event at \$370, and the deluxe VA-530 14-day/8-event *cable-ready* tuner/timer for \$440. The latter is the only separate tuner that we know of, capable of receiving all mid- and super-band cable channels as well as the standard 83 UHF/VHF channels.

HITACHI VT-8500A VHS VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER

Manufacturer: Hitachi, Ltd., 2-6-2 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan (distributed by Hitachi Sales Corp. of America, 401 West Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90220)

Source: Dealer loan (Hobbit's Fantasy Shoppe, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

Cost: \$1395.00 (includes wired full-function remote control, miscellaneous antenna cables and adapters, and a sample T-60 videocassette)

Hitachi is one Japanese manufacturer that has quietly been carving a special niche for itself in the all-too-competitive VHS marketplace for the past few years. After their original JVC-built deck back in 1978 (the VT-5000), they've released a variety of unique and original recorders unlike any produced by The Big Boys (Matsushita and JVC). In the recent past, their recorders have been characterized by a tendency toward ultra-miniaturization. As a matter of fact, Hitachi's portables have been beating out Matsushita's portables in the area of size and weight for years, which is one reason why RCA's battery-operated decks are made by Hitachi and not Matsushita. GE,

too, has been impressed enough with Hitachi's engineering to sell this machine under the GE brand-name, as the 1VCR1012W, for a few dollars less than the 8500A.



Appearance: The new Hitachi deck is remarkably lightweight at just a tad over 24 lbs, and is equally compact, measuring about 5-3/4" x 17-1/8" x 13". It's nicely finished in simulated woodgrain-brown plastic and chrome, and its profile is a pleasant departure from the usual boxy shape common to most other VTR's—it's high in the back with a slight sloping front and a slanted control panel. All of its controls except for the timer are mounted on the front panel, and most of these are illuminated.

Most of the major controls are clustered on the left hand side, each having a silver push button. The power on/off button and timer switch are set apart at the extreme left edge. Immediately to their right are the three largest buttons, horizontally arranged as "Record", "Play" and "Stop", each mode confirmed by a red status light. Immediately beneath these three main controls is a row of six smaller buttons arranged from left to right: "Still/Pause", "Dub", "Visual Search", "Rewind", and "Fast Forward". The visual search feature has two separate buttons. The left button has small left-facing arrows indicating reverse search, while the right button has right-facing arrows indicating forward search. Below this middle row of buttons there is yet a third row of controls, with still smaller buttons. These are marked "frame", "slow" and "quick", and are used for the SLP special-effects modes.

Beneath all of these controls is a well-concealed hinged door that contains the counter Memory switch and the Speed selector switch. Above the record button are three red status lights, one for each of the three VHS speeds. These are illuminated during both record and playback functions. All twelve of the deck's functions are duplicated on the wired remote control, which also has a remote channel change capability (up only).

The blue LED clock face is mounted in the middle of the front face of the deck and provides good visibility from a variety of vantage points around the room. It has a conventional twelve hour AM/PM readout and displays the current day of the week as well. Set inside the clock face are two lettered indicator lights, a capital "R" in red which glows when the machine is in the record mode and a green "P" for when it's in playback, as well as a dew light warning lamp. Immediately to the right of the clock is the varactor tuner section, itself consisting of two rows of six light-touch silver buttons, each of which lights up as it is selected.

As with many of the decks that come from Japan, the twelve principal VHF channels from 2 to 13 come pre-tuned. Should you want to re-arrange the line up or tune in some other frequency, the tuner door located immediately below the channel indicators and behind the Hitachi logo can be opened to reveal a long horizontal row of twelve tuning rods. These are recessed quite snugly inside their compartments, so Hitachi has thoughtfully provided a small plastic tuning tool which stores in a niche attached to the inside of the door. This tool lets you re-select the basic tuning range of each of the twelve positions, as well as fine-tuning each one within its selected range.

The VT-8500A has only a three-digit mechanical counter which is located right in the middle of the front face of the deck, along with its reset button and the cassette eject key. Hidden somewhat inconveniently along the lower left edge of the chassis is the socket for the remote control unit (a tidy 1/8" stereo mini-phone jack rather than the more usual DIN multi-pin connector), a standard 1/4" phone jack for an external microphone, two phono jacks for audio and video inputs, the Slow and Normal Tracking controls, a TV/VCR RF output selector, and, for the first time on any consumer VTR, a Sharpness control knob, with its two ranges marked "soft" and "hard." Plugging a source into the audio/video inputs automatically switches the deck from the tuner to these inputs, rather than using the manual switch approach found on most other VTR's.

Audio and video output jacks, also phono types, are located at the back of the machine, along with the usual array of 75 ohm VHF inputs and outputs and 300 ohm UHF terminal posts. The switch for the channel 3/4 RF modulator is located underneath a rubber stopper inside the timer compartment, which is the only major control located on the top side of the deck, under a hinged compartment to the right of the cassette hatch.

Features/Operation: The Hitachi 8500A is a programmable recorder and can be preset to tape five different programs over a one-week period, or any shorter interval. Unlike some other programmable decks, the Hitachi's timer can be set using only one finger. First you select one of the five program events (A, B, C, D or Repeat) and then tell the unit the "day" it is to turn on. A series of descending lights prompt you to enter the information in the proper sequence which is "Day", "Time On", "Time Off" and "Channel". All of this data is

displayed on the clock face as you program the timer. After entering everything in the correct order, the microprocessor accepts the program and the normal clock time reappears. A program check procedure is also provided to verify if you've made multiple entries correctly. If something has been entered in the timer memory for any of the five events a status light comes on adjacent to that letter. Depressing the button next to each light will call back the programmed information for that event.

Like many other "deluxe" decks now appearing in both the Beta and VHS formats, the Hitachi VT-8500A offers full-function remote control. The lightweight remote control unit, measuring about 4 inches high by 2 inches wide, is connected to the deck via a thin two lead wire which plugs into the deck via a conventional stereo mini-phone plug. Compared to the heavy cords that dangle from the remote control units of most competing units, this lightweight Hitachi design came as a pleasant surprise. Because of the construction of the cord itself, it would be a simple matter to extend it beyond its normal twelve-foot range just by using an "earphone" extension cord, provided you could obtain the special 2-channel mini-plug and jack required (available from most Radio Shack Stores).

The remote control itself has thirteen separate functions on it, including remote channel change. Unfortunately, not all of them work at all three VHS speeds available on this deck. Hitachi has deliberately engineered this VCR as a "six hour" recorder and that's the speed at which all of the special effects operate. Play, Stop, Record, Fast Forward, Rewind, Channel Change and pause work at all three speeds. But the *visible* special effects—forward and reverse 10X picture search, still frame, frame advance, fast motion and slow motion—function only with tapes made at the six-hour "extended play" setting. Instead of letting the tape shuttle through the machine with a muted picture at any of the other speeds, the Hitachi locks out these functions completely. If you are playing back a pre-recorded tape, for example, you can't resort to using the reverse search function to back up the tape for another "look see". Instead you must rewind the tape a bit in the unthreaded mode and then go back into play.

Hitachi calls its function controls "feather-touch buttons" and, in fact, very little effort is needed to activate any of them. Hitachi is careful not to use the word "solenoid" in classifying their controls, since it is apparent that some new microprocessor-assisted circuitry is really at work here. Many other "solenoid" decks will let you change functions directly without going through the stop mode. To an extent that's also possible with the Hitachi, but don't expect to rush the controls. Once you select a function all of the other controls are locked out until that function has been completed. While it is possible on many other push button decks (such as the Mitsubishi HS-300, JVC HR-2200 and the Panasonic PV-1750) to press one function and then immediately select another and at the same time keep the tape from unthreading (for example, from Play to Stop and then, quickly, Record), this type of "rapid-

fire" procedure isn't possible with the Hitachi.

Like many other VHS decks now on the market, the VT-8500A has backspace editing, a feature ostensibly designed to eliminate much of the picture break-up that occurs whenever the tape is stopped momentarily during the record mode. I have found that this technique makes it very difficult to edit tapes precisely since you have to allow for about one or two seconds of erased program when the new segment being recorded gets "dove-tailed" over the old one. If that isn't inconvenient enough, I find that edits on the 8500A are flawed by an audio problem where the old audio track drifts into the new audio at the edit point, creating an odd "voice-over" effect that is often totally unrelated to the new picture on the screen. This is similar to the design drawback found with early Beta decks like Sony's SL-7200A.

On the positive side, I liked the fact that the Hitachi's picture search buttons are locking. A light touch is all that's needed to initiate either search mode. To stop searching, you just select another function, such as "play". On the other hand, I found that for short search "bursts" like speeding past commercials I had a tendency to "overshoot". Most other decks with picture search (such as the original Sony's with Betascan) require you to keep your finger on the button to hold the search mode. Between these two designs there must be a compromise. How about non-locking search buttons that can be switched to locking for extended high speed scanning? [If you want that feature on your present non-locking VCR try holding the search button down with a clothespin. It works great and doesn't scratch the remote control].

While all of the functions on the deck are illuminated with various status lights, no similar lights are found on the remote control unit. Although they are all well-marked, in subdued light finding the right one is difficult unless you have a good memory.* This Hitachi also features automatic end of tape rewind, whether in the play or record mode. This function is automatic and can't be shut off.

With its six hour record capability, the Hitachi offers electronic program indexing to assist in finding any of a number of different recorded segments that might be contained on one tape. The unique thing about this feature is that it can be shut off when not wanted. It works by placing an electronic reference on the tape whenever the deck goes into the record mode, a similar procedure to most other indexing features found on competing VHS and Beta models. But while other decks let you shut off the feature for playback purposes (as in rewinding a tape completely, without having it stop every few seconds when it hits a cue mark) the Hitachi's switch lets you shut it off completely. That makes it easier to use when assembling different segments of other tapes in an edited sequence and where the automatic index signal can sometimes interfere with the quality of the edits. On some decks, you can actually see the electronic video pulse placed on the tape with this auto-search feature. Lastly did I mention that this deck

*[Or, perhaps, you are one of the few to have been to South America and received the new owl eye transplant.—Ed.]

will override copyguard? I didn't? Well, forget I said anything!

Performance: While the Hitachi VT-8500A offers three-speed recording, its single set of 30-micron video heads and the emphasis on the EP/6-hour speed as the only mode at which the special effects operate limit its usefulness somewhat. This is especially true for those videophiles who buy or trade tapes recorded at the SP speed, where no effects are available—not even picture search.

On the other hand, Hitachi's unique sharpness control and video playback enhancement circuitry combine to give this deck the best six-hour VHS picture quality I've ever seen. This is obviously a subjective opinion, and you're free to form your own when you examine this deck at your local dealer. But my impressions of six-hour VHS picture quality has never been that favorable, with most of the machines that offer this speed delivering what I would consider to be, at best, noisy and grainy pictures. Hitachi's enhancement circuits really make this mode quite watchable, and the best part of the good news is that the process is designed to work only in *playback*. That means that you can play SLP tapes made on other six-hour VHS decks, where they might look pretty lackluster, and find that they look much better on the Hitachi.

Completing the picture is the addition of a "sharpness" control on the front of the deck. I have seen comparable controls on projection TV sets and some Sony TV sets, where they work quite well in letting viewers adjust picture detail to suit their personal preferences, depending on the type of program being broadcast (film vs. tape, etc.) For the most part, I left the control set at its normal midrange position, but others might prefer to set it to the "hard" position, which delivers almost an over-enhanced "herringbone" effect, or in the opposite direction to "Soft," where the picture tends to blur somewhat. All things considered, it's good to have this kind of extra control over your VTR without having to spend a dime on accessory processors or black boxes.

The picture quality is quite acceptable at all three speeds and surprisingly good (compared to other VHS EP/SLP recordings) at the six hour speed, but only because of the enhancement circuit built into the deck to "cure" deficiencies at this slow speed. Tapes made on the Hitachi at the EP speed and played on other VHS decks are not nearly as clear as they are when played on the Hitachi itself, again, because of the playback enhancement process.

Here are the manufacturer's specifications:

Horizontal resolution: SP: 240 lines; LP: 230 lines; EP: 230 lines.

Video S/N Ratio: SP: 46 dB; LP: 43 dB; EP: 40 dB.

Audio Frequency Range: SP: 50-10,000 Hz.

LP: 50-7,000 Hz.

EP: 50-6,000 Hz.

Wattage: 38 watts @ 120 VAC

While the 8500A does offer full-function remote control (if only at the SLP/6-hour mode), not all of these special effects

are on a par with what is presently available on machines made by other manufacturers. The major disappointments here are the slow-motion and still-frame. The slow-motion image, while relatively noiseless, is really only a half-speed skip-field technique that offers no variable speed adjustment. It's really a reverse of the procedure used to obtain a "quick" picture (3 times normal speed) in which the video heads skip two fields of video and display every third field, for fast action. The still-frame mode, which produces just a muted (dark screen) picture if activated with an SP or LP tape, is not completely noiseless. A trace of residual noise appears at the bottom of the picture, marring an otherwise adequate image. The frame-advance control rolls two horizontal noise-bars through the picture to the next frame. It's a "one-shot" frame advance; holding it down will only tire out your thumb. You have to keep pumping it to repeat the function.

Other than these drawbacks, I was impressed with the overall design and quality of the Hitachi, and feel it sets the new standard for at least the 6-hour mode. Whether this makes it useful for the hard-core videophile is another question.

Conclusion: I'm a little reluctant to offer any major recommendation on the VT-8500A in view of the fact that Hitachi is reported to be readying an infrared wireless remote-control deck with four video heads for introduction this coming winter. GE's low-profile 1VCR2014, made by Hitachi, already has all these features plus a 14-day/8-event timer section, which would tend to indicate that an equivalent Hitachi deck will be out fairly soon.

If you've adopted the six-hour/SLP mode as your main format, or if you're into extensive time-shifting, you'll need look no further for the best six-hour machine on the market. About the only one I've examined that comes close, without the enhancement circuitry, is the JVC HR-6700, which uses separate 19.3 micron heads for the six-hour speed. Still, for all of the 8500A's claimed technical superiority, like its four direct-drive motors and extensive use of LSI's (large-scale integrated circuits), I would really have preferred for them to concentrate on offering a greater range of special effects at the other two VHS speeds, especially SP. When playing back SP tapes, this deck is about as versatile as any of the stripped-down units now selling for around \$600, discounted.

In spite of its very good EP six-hour picture quality, a videophile looking for more versatility in tape playback will probably be better off investing in one of the four-headed machines made by Matsushita and sold under any of the usual brand names (Panasonic, RCA, etc.); the best example of this is the NV-8320 or the consumer PV-1750/VET-650. Or, if you don't mind waiting a few months or so, hold off on your purchase until Hitachi introduces its own four-headed machine.—JF

PANASONIC NV-8410 PORTABLE VHS DECK

Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.,
1006 Kadoma, Osaka, Japan (Distributed by
Panasonic's Video Systems Division, 1
Panasonic Way, Secacus, NJ 07094)

Serial No.: HOHA10904

Source: Reviewer purchase

Cost: \$1250.00 (includes NV-B55 AC adaptor/
battery charger, VBE-022 earphone, VSQ-
0130 remote pause control, LCR-1812 bat-
tery pack, VFC-0001 plastic carrying case,
VJP-1164 audio input attenuator cable,
VJA-0148 aux. battery cable, and miscella-
neous antenna cables and adaptors)

Optional accessories include: \$22.00 NV-
C34 car battery cord; \$325.00 NV-V240 1-
day/1-event tuner/timer; \$395.00 DE-1103
multi-battery charger; \$135.00 PC-840 hard
shell shipping case; \$47.50 LCR-3012VBP
external battery pack; and \$42.50 additional
LCR-1812 battery packs.

Panasonic's NV-8410 is the current flagship of the Matsushita-built portable VHS line. It's a true second generation industrial portapak, replacing the earlier cumbersome though excellent NV-8400 (reviewed in #20), and is essentially a SP/2-hour-only version of the multi-speed consumer portable like the PV-3200, reviewed elsewhere this issue.



Appearance: The NV-8410 is a handsome, compact charcoal gray unit measuring about 10½"x11½"x4½", and weighing about 13½ pounds. All of its transport controls are slim

silver buttons located on its front panel, from left to right: Rewind, Stop, Fast-Forward, Play, Record, Audio Dub and Pause/Still. This last button is connected graphically and electronically to an adjacent silver pushbutton labeled "Frame Advance/Slow." Next to these controls is a 4-digit index counter with memory rewind, and on the other side, a mechanical eject lever for popping up the cassette compartment. Below the eject lever on the right front of the unit is a pair of jacks for the supplied remote pause control and an earphone. Next is a Tracking knob with a center detent position and a "dew" warning light. On the left side under the Pause control is a sliding Power on/off switch and a color-coded battery power meter. Across the base of the front panel is a swiveling metal carrying handle, which hinges out for mobile use.

A recessed jack panel on the right side of the NV-8410 has seven connectors for Audio Out (phono), Video Out and In (BNC), RF out (F), Camera/Tuner (10-pin DIN), Microphone (mini-phono), and a 4-pin 12VDC connector for an external battery pack or AC adaptor. Note that unlike most consumer units, the 8410 uses industrial-grade BNC jacks, which require a special connector that twists on to lock firmly in place, unlike the push-on/pull-off phono plugs normally used for video. We definitely prefer the BNC's for heavy-duty videophile use, since phono jacks are notorious for breaking down under any kind of abuse.

The only other controls on this deck are a channel 3/4 switch on its bottom side, used to select either frequency for the built-in RF modulator, and a V-lock screw adjustment for stabilizing the freeze-frame image. A small slide-off door on the back of the 8410 hides its lightweight LCR-1812 lead-acid battery pack.

The cosmetically-matching NVB 55 AC power supply included measures 4½"x4½"x11½" and is designed to sit alongside the deck. Its front panel has a DC jack for charging up an external battery and it can also simultaneously charge the VTR's internal pack. Battery charge and power indicator lamps are located next to the on/off switch. Also provided is a handy recessed pop-up handle on the top of the unit and an attached 4-pin cable that mates with the deck's DC In jack.

The 8410's remote pause control is a small, slim black plastic box with a locking pause/still switch and a spring-activated pushbutton for single frame advance/slow-motion. This remote is connected to the deck's front panel jack via a 20' cable.

Features/Operation: We found the NV-8410 to be a simple, straight-forward unit to operate. Its all-solenoid transport is a departure from the earlier NV-8400, which was considerably larger and heavier (by more than 6 lbs.). Despite the fact that the new 8410 is a completely redesigned machine, its features and basic operation are almost identical to the former portable, with the exception of its remote pause/pseudo-slow-motion feature.

The light-touch transport controls were an improvement over the earlier mechanical levers, but were still judged to be

only adequate since they responded only when proper pressure was applied. Also, it's easy to miss hitting the right button since all of them are the exact same size and distance apart, with no tactile difference in them. It would've been nice, especially in a portable, not to have to look at the transport panel to find the correct buttons to push. Making the most important buttons slightly larger than the rest would have solved this problem nicely. I also occasionally had a problem getting the machine into the record mode, which requires holding down the record button and simultaneously hitting the play button. This can be a little tricky and doesn't always work, with sometimes only Play engaging.

Another problem is the recessed jack panel—there just isn't enough room to get some average-sized American fingers in there. Even connecting the relatively large 10-pin camera connector is a pain. Plugging in a BNC video out cable between the video in and audio jacks is nearly impossible. Since there's plenty of room elsewhere on that side of the deck, my suggestion would be to spread out these jacks for quicker and less problematic connecting.

I'd like to give the *Videophile* "Strange Feature" award to Panasonic for the 8410's curious VJP-1164 audio input attenuator cable, which allows you to use its microphone jack to accept a normal high-impedance auxiliary audio signal. Obviously, the intelligent thing to do would have been to provide a separate audio in jack, just like Hitachi, JVC, and most other manufacturers, which isn't an unreasonable request considering the cost of this top-of-the-line industrial VTR.

Connecting any standard 10-pin DIN plug camera to the deck's jack automatically switches its input from the BNC line input jacks. We'd prefer a manual switch to be provided instead of this automatic changeover, if only to make permanent in-home connections a little more convenient.

The 8410 comes complete with an attractive and rugged brown vinyl carrying case which includes a clip-on external battery pocket. The LCR-1812 battery pack will power the deck alone for roughly 65 minutes, though this will go down considerably when used with a color camera, usually to around 45 minutes, depending on the model. By piggybacking the deck's internal battery with a slightly larger external pack, this recording time should be approximately doubled.

Performance: Like all single-speed VHS decks with 58-micron heads, the NV-8410 performs substantially better than most multi-speed VTR's at their fastest speeds. It really does a terrific job, and I found its quality and stability to be very impressive, even when compared to larger industrial decks like the Panasonic NV-8200. What this boils down to is that you just can't get a better SP recording on any other deck, period.

Also impressive is the quality of the 8410's freeze-frame, which is unusually free from the noise and excessive jitter usually found in most VHS decks. I found this deck's freeze-frame to be rock-steady, with only a miniscule trace of jitter on the extreme edge of the picture. However, as good as the

freeze-frame is, that's about how bad we found the so-called slow-motion to be. This feature really amounts to nothing more than a continuous frame-by-frame advance mode, and I found it useless for anything except advancing to an edit point. Forget about using it for instant replays of a questionable football fumble, since you'll never see the details through all the noise bars.

Other than this annoying drawback, I'd say that the NV-8410 does at least as good a job at recording and playing back 2-hour VHS tapes as any deck I've ever seen, and better than most. The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 45 dB

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

Audio S/N Ratio: 45 dB

Power Consumption: 5.6 watts at 12VDC

While the regular overall performance was excellent, I found that it's nearly impossible to get a totally clean edit in and out of pause, either while using a camera or when making a dub. Each edit is flawed by a rainbow moiré pattern that crawls down the screen for several long, annoying seconds. No amount of experimentation could eliminate this problem. It's hoped that future versions of this deck will feature some kind of time-phase edit circuit to get rid of this nasty glitch, thus matching the capability of most new AC-operated decks.

Another annoying idiosyncrasy of the 8410 is its extremely slow winding speed, which takes 5 excruciating minutes to rewind a standard T-120. Apparently, the FF/Rewind motors suffered in the miniaturization process—one of the prices we have to pay for progress. Still, I was impressed with the almost-total silence of these transport motors. I don't know if this is good or bad, even though silence is supposed to be golden, but I've often found myself looking in the cassette compartment window to make sure the deck is following my orders.

Conclusion: With all of the above complaints, I may have given the impression I don't like the NV-8410. On the contrary, I found it to be a very competent no-frills VHS portapak of exceptional quality, one that does what it promises and does it well. Still, it doesn't have several of the deluxe "special effects" features found on most competing units, chief among these being visual search, which has now become almost mandatory for any VTR. Since this feature wasn't commonly available when the 8410 was first released a year or so ago, I can't really fault Matsushita for not having the foresight to include this capability. Still, it's a feature most of us have become addictively dependent on, and it's sorely missed on this unit. Another nice added touch would have been automatic end-of-tape rewind, which helps during unattended dubbing sessions. The final feature I'd like to have is full-function remote, preferably wireless, which shouldn't be that hard to come up with considering the 8410 already has an all-electronic transport.

You can bet that we look forward to the arrival of its replacement later this year.—F.C.

MFW Comments: I, too, like the 8410 a lot, and think it's by-and-large the best-quality ½" portable on the market with the exception of the JVC HR-2200, reviewed elsewhere this issue. However, if you don't need all of the whiz-bang features of the JVC (full-function remote, slow-motion and picture search), and need to save a few dollars, the Panasonic is roughly just about as good in terms of overall quality. To be honest, I think the 8410 seems to be a little sturdier, with a more metallic feel than the somewhat "plastic" 2200, although I'm sure both will put up with a sizeable amount of use and abuse.

Astute readers will note a very close similarity between the 8410 and the PV-3000/4000 VTR's also reviewed in this issue. All of these Matsushita-built machines share almost identical specifications for size and weight, and appear to be built on the same chassis, differing only with internal changes like the industrial 58-micron heads on the 8410, and the PV-4000's special visual-search transport. Most of Fred's comments on how the 8410 operates, particularly on its sometimes-stubborn solenoid transport buttons, also apply to these other decks.

I couldn't really tell the difference between the two in direct A/B comparisons, either in record or playback, so that makes your final choice solely a matter of features and price. For the videophile on the budget, the 8410 is probably unbeatable, selling for well under \$1000 from most discount dealers, although the 2200's not that much more expensive in some areas. Either way, both are currently the best ½" portable VTR's on the market.

JVC HR-2200 PORTABLE VHS DECK

Manufacturer: Victor Company of Japan, Ltd., 14-chome, Nihonbashi Honcho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103, Japan (distributed by U.S. JVC Corp., 41 Slater Drive, Elmond Park NJ 07407)

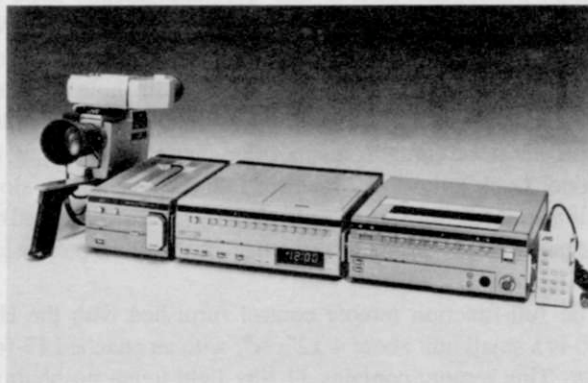
Serial No.: 096K1880

Source: Manufacturer loan

Cost: \$1100.00 (includes remote control unit, carrying handle, shoulder strap, earphone, NB-P1 battery pack, and miscellaneous antenna cables and adaptors). Optional accessories include TU-22U 1-day/1-event tuner/timer (\$320), AA-P2U AC Adaptor/Battery Charger (\$160), CB-P22 carrying case (\$70, available in brown or silver), AP-P2U car battery power cord (\$13), SC-P2U Shoulder Cart (\$160), and additional NB-P1 Ni-Cad

battery pack (\$78).

For a long time, we've been looking for a light-weight, super-deluxe, top-of-the-line portable that represents the ultimate in features, convenience, and picture quality, and does it all at an affordable price. Well, folks, the wait has been worth it. JVC's new HR-2200, which has been available in the U.S. since Spring of this year, appears to meet all these requirements and then some. It's the first ½" portable that provides excellent recording and playback plus full-function remote control with special effects (!). It represents such a tremendous technological leap forward that we understand through several sources that JVC caught several manufacturers (including Sony and Panasonic) with their pants down, so to speak, causing their competitors to scurry back to their drawing boards in an attempt to catch up with JVC, and that's not going to be an easy feat.



Appearance: The HR-2200 is an attractive, sleek silver-plastic unit about 4"x11¼"x10½", and weighs less than 11½ pounds with its battery pack. This is considerably smaller and lighter than almost any current ½" deck, with the exception of the newest generation of the Beta portables due out later on this year. The front side of the 2200 contains a whole bunch of small, light-touch silver buttons as transport controls, including: Pause/Still, Audio Dub, Record, Reverse Shuttle-Search, Play, Forward Shuttle Search, Fast-Forward, Stop, and Rewind. The buttons are illuminated with small red LED's just above them, and are clustered together by means of small plastic dividers to aid in operating it by touch. To the right is a large knob for mechanically ejecting the tape from the heavily-damped cassette compartment. Below is a 10-pin DIN jack for a color camera, an 8-pin jack for the remote control, and two mini-phone jacks for an earphone and an internal microphone. Underneath a ledge at the base of the deck are two knurled tracking knobs, one standard and the other for slow-motion. The left side of the deck contains a unique 4-digit LCD index counter, which reads from "--1999" to "1999" and features buttons for reset and memory rewind. Below are three tiny red

LED indicators, for Tape Run, Low Battery, and Dew sensor, respectively. The Tape Run light flashes during recording and playback, stays on continuously during wind modes, and turns off when the tape is stopped. Just to the left are two locking pushbuttons, one for Power on/off, and the other designated Record Lock; the latter keeps the deck threaded up and cued for editing even when the power is turned off, to help conserve power when used with a camera.

The back of the deck contains a hinged flap that opens to reveal a complete array of input and output jacks, including four phono jacks for audio/video in/out, RF channel 3/4 out, and an 8-pin jack for connecting a tuner/timer or AC adaptor. Also provided is a switch to select between recording from the Line inputs or the separate Tuner, and a channel 3/4 RF modulator selector.

The right side of the 2200 has an empty slot into which the NB-P1 battery pack can be locked into place. No extra wiring or connecting is needed; you simply slide it in and that's that. A small pushbutton next to this slot automatically pops the battery out via a spring-loaded catch for easy replacement. We have a small quarrel with this feature in that JVC provides only a super-flimsy little black plug to stop-up this hole when the deck is used without a battery—a minor drawback. The underside of the deck contains a small flap that covers a screw for Vertical Lock adjustment (to help reduce jitter during slow-motion and still-frame) and a plastic plug that can be pulled out by a serviceman to adjust the range of the front panel slow tracking control.

The full-function remote control furnished with the HR-2200 is a small unit about 4"x2"x3/4", with an attached 17-foot cable. This remote contains 11 tiny light-touch pushbuttons which duplicate all the functions found on the deck, as well as providing Frame-by-frame advance and variable Slow-motion by means of a sliding plastic knob on the side of the unit. This remote is unique in that it's the first we've seen that provides everything, even the audio dub mode, making the 2200 the most fully-featured 1/2" portable in the world (at the time of this writing).

The companion TU-22U Tuner/Timer adaptor matches the size and weight of the deck pretty closely at 4"x12"x10 3/4", and tips the scales at 11 pounds. It features 12 silver buttons for selecting different channels, which are preset via controls under a panel on the top, along with an additional button for Channel Lock, which prevents changing the station when it's engaged. Below are three silver pushbuttons grouped together, for Off, On, and Timer recording, respectively, plus two adjacent buttons for Charge Start (used to charge the battery inside the deck) and TV/VTR RF output selection. On the right side are six controls for the large green LED readout, used to set the internal clock and preset the 7-day/1-event microprocessor timer. Unlike most current VHS tuner/timers, the TU-22U has only this limited one-event recording capacity. Considering that the HR-2200 deck is limited to two-hour recording, a result of its industrial/SP design, this was judged to be only a minor drawback.

The back of the TU-22U features the usual antenna inputs and outputs, along with a master Power switch (for turning everything off when you're on a vacation), an RF In F jack for connection to the VTR's RF output, an attached 7-pin cable for the VTR's Tuner In jack, and a socket for a 2 amp fuse.

The accessory AA-P22U AC Power Adaptor also matches the sleek styling of the JVC deck, and features a slot on its front side made to accept a NB-P1 battery pack (labeled "Battery 2," with battery 1 inside the recorder). Buttons are provided for turning this adaptor on, selecting between the rear-panel antenna or VTR/RF outputs, and also for starting the charge mode. The back of the adaptor contains an attached 7-pin cable for connection to the deck's adaptor jack, as well as F jacks for RF in, Antenna in, and RF out.

Features/Operation: The HR-2200 is the first 1/2" portable to offer forward and reverse picture search, at up to 10 times normal speed. Another first is its handy 12-function remote in a portable with 2-hour special effects playback.

In order to provide better editing performance, the HR-2200 automatically aligns the start of the segment being recorded with the end of the one preceeding it, essentially keeping the control track pulses on the edge of the tape spaced properly to avoid glitches and sync problems. JVC calls this feature "ESC" (for Edit Start Control), and we have to admit that it results in as good a 1/2" crash edit as we've ever seen. As a bonus, this feature doesn't require backing up the tape and erasing the last bit of program, as with most of the current Matsushita and RCA decks, thus allowing uncompromised tight video edits.

Although we generally liked the control layout and the lighting-fast reactions of the transport, the functions themselves took a great deal of getting used to. For example: to initiate the record mode, you depress the Record and Play buttons simultaneously—no problem there. To make a Pause edit, you hit the Pause button—again, no quarrel with that. Now, take a guess as to how you go back into the record mode. Hit the Pause button again, you say? It has no effect. Press the Record button? Nope—try again. Hit both the Record and Pause buttons at the same time? *Forget* about it. Give up? You press the Play button. (!) Nope, we don't understand the logic behind this either. Here's another example: you're recording an off-air show. The commercial suddenly comes up. You hit stop, rewind, then play the last segment up to the point at which the show fades to black, then hit the Pause button to freeze the black frame. Now, how do you get back into the Record/Pause mode? If you hit the Record button, nothing happens. If you depress both the Record and Play buttons, it immediately starts rolling in the record mode. The answer is to hold the Record button down and again hit the Pause button; the machine will light up both the Record and Pause buttons and will start rolling in the record mode the moment you depress the Play button (heaven help us!) again.

If this sounds confusing in print, imagine how much fun we had figuring all this out. When you've used some 50-odd 1/2"

and ¾" recorders in your lifetime, it becomes very hard to try to change your entire thought-structure in order to work with the bizarre logic circuitry incorporated in the 2200. Once you understand the basic rules, of course, it's smooth sailing—although I must confess I still have to consciously think my way through the controls before trying to press any of them by instinct.

Another minor, though annoying, drawback is the chrome handle provided for the HR-2200. When the deck and tuner/timer are stacked horizontally, with the handle folded down flush with the front of the VTR, it's almost impossible to fit your fingers into the narrow ledge to adjust the tracking controls. While we were able to solve this problem by removing the handle by means of clips on either side of the deck, we do wish that JVC had placed these controls about a half-inch higher to make them a little more accessible. On the positive side, we noted that, with the exception of the tuner/line input switch (placed conveniently on the back), all of the 2200's operating controls are available on the front panel, which makes it great for portable use. Another nice touch is the flashing "Tape Run" indicator, which solves the age-old problem of having to peek through the cassette slot to discover whether the tape is running when out on location.

One added plus found in the JVC deck is its lightweight NB-P1 rechargeable Ni-Cad battery pack, which measures about 10"x2¼"x1" and weighs about 2 pounds. JVC's unique quick-charge circuitry allows charging this battery in less than 90 minutes, compared with 6-8 hours for the lead-acid batteries used in most other comparable portable VTR's. The AA-P22U AC adaptor has the ability to charge two batteries, one right after the other—first, the battery in the recorder, and later, one placed into its front panel slot. By using the latter accessory, you can easily charge two or three packs for a full day's shooting (depending on the power requirements of your camera).

All told, the HR-2200 has as many features as any portable VTR we can think of, and even beats out a surprising number of so-called "deluxe" AC decks as well. About the only feature it doesn't offer is stereo sound, and this will no doubt be added once stereo broadcasts are available in the U.S.



Performance: We expected the HR-2200 to perform well, by virtue of its wide-gap 58-micron video heads, and we weren't disappointed. Like most industrial VHS decks (including Panasonic's NV-8200 and JVC's new BR-6400), these wider heads made the difference between merely "good" recordings and very good ones. The unit is clearly superior to any 3-speed consumer ½" portable on the market. Color quality and overall image sharpness and definition were judged very good to excellent, and compared very favorably to the SP quality of top-of-the-line 4-headed consumer decks like RCA's VET-650 and Panasonic's PV-1750. We'd prefer the JVC over the latter two decks, however, on the basis of its editing quality and operational convenience (aside from the bizarre logic design of the transport controls).

During slow-motion and freeze-frame, the images from the 2200 were quite stable and noise-free, although we'd prefer a range slightly greater than the 1/6 to 1/30 speeds provided. The Shuttle Search mode exhibited very few noise-bars on the screen when used with tapes recorded on wide-gap recorders, though it naturally worsened when used with tapes made on 2- or 3-speed two-headed VTR's.

The manufacturer's specifications include:

Horizontal Resolution: 240 lines (color)

Video S/N Ratio: 45 dB (B&W)

Audio Frequency Response: 100-10,000 Hz (no reference given)

Audio S/N Ratio: 40 dB

Power Consumption: 9.6 watts @ 12VDC

We had been advised previously that some early 2200's performed quite poorly as far as audio goes, but the particular sample we evaluated (as well as the two owned by J.F. in Canada) did as well as any we've ever heard from a ½" VTR, with very little wow and flutter and an acceptable response and S/N ratio. In addition, we received a number of complaints regarding several dozen 2200's that first came into the country early this year, most of which suffered from an unusual sensitivity to static, which resulted in burning out several IC chips in the deck's transport-logic circuitry. A JVC spokesman acknowledged the problems with the early machines, but emphasized that all of these units were recalled and modified to eliminate any malfunctions. Of course, we had no such trouble with our 2200, even after it was accidentally dropped three feet onto a carpeted floor. It seems to be as sturdy as a lightweight portable can be, though we hasten to point out that given its fiber-reinforced plastic case, it probably wouldn't be able to withstand a fall onto concrete or hard pavement—but, then, neither would just about any other video product that we can recall off-hand.

The only other complaint we've had is from local videophile Mark Phillips, who cited several instances in which he's encountered defective Ni-Cad battery packs with his HR-2200. We've already charged and recharged our sample battery more than 10 times with nary a problem, so we're going to hope that Phillips' experience is an isolated one. He did point out that he was able to exchange these batteries for new ones

from his local dealer, with no questions asked.

Conclusion: You can take it from us, JVC's HR-2200 is a winner all the way, and is currently the best quality ½" portable money can buy. Its nearest competitor, Panasonic's NV-8410 (reviewed elsewhere this issue), is also an excellent performer, but lacks the convenience of full-function remote and picture search, making it somewhat less preferable.

The only objection some may have about the 2200 is its admittedly limited 2-hour SP recording capacity. Our answer to this is simple: for most consumers, we wouldn't recommend the HR-2200 as their first deck, nor would we suggest that it makes an ideal compromise as an "only" deck for the home and the great outdoors. However, it's definitely the best all-around choice as a *second* VHS deck we can think of, offering not only superior picture quality but also a wealth of convenient features. For Beta users thinking about buying a VHS deck for dubbing compatability and video tape and movie rentals, it's an ideal unit in every way. And for those who want the best possible picture quality in ½" portable VTR, you need look no further.—MFW

JF Comments: I was likewise impressed with the HR-2200, particularly by its excellent internal construction (which is, unfortunately, somewhat cramped for servicing) and four-motor design. I did want to mention that some early decks had a habit of over-pulling the tapes during rewind, leaving the tape protruding out of the cassette slightly and damaging it during the eject mode. This problem hasn't surfaced in the newer 2200's I've examined, however, including the two I recently purchased.

I was also a little disappointed with the V-Lock adjustment on the bottom of the deck, which makes tweaking it somewhat difficult. In addition, I found that you can't adjust the tracking controls when the deck is in its carrying case, and that the case also tends to cover up the all-important "Tape Run" LED light.

One interesting thing is that when you put a blank tape into the machine, you can shuttle-search it from one end to the other very quickly—roughly as fast as the regular 4-minute fast-forward/rewind mode. This is considerably faster than the regular Shuttle Search mode, which works (once the tape has been recorded) at only 10X normal speed. This might indicate a future variable-search capability that JVC may ultimately offer in some newer models later on. A competent serviceman might be able to tap into the control circuitry to speed things up without having the picture lose its horizontal sync.

SONY AG-300 "BETA-STACK" VIDEOCASSETTE AUTO-CHANGER

Manufacturer: Sony Corporation, 7-25 Kitashinagawa, 60-chome, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan
(distributed by Sony Consumer Products Company, 9 W. 57th Street, New York, NY 10019)

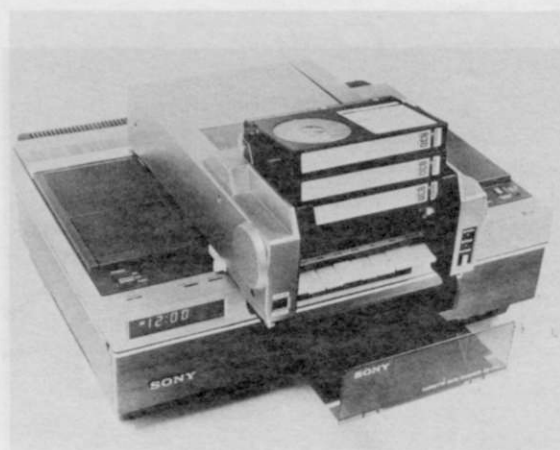
Serial No.: 012354

Source: Dealer loan (Video Network, 326 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, CA 91207)

Cost: \$200.00 (includes adaptor plate, Phillips-head screwdriver, detachable cassette holder, 7.5VDC power supply, and auto-changer control cable)

For those of you who have been keeping up with our reviews of Sony's past Beta cassette changers (the prototype AG-120, reviewed in #19, and the AG-200, reviewed in #25), you're already aware that Sony has been quietly moving heaven and earth in the process of perfecting these Rube-Goldbergian devices for some time. These changers have promised the ability to stack several videocassettes on top of each other and automatically eject a finished tape and drop in a new one, not unlike an automatic turntable and a stack of records. The two earlier models weren't always particularly dependable and often jammed up or malfunctioned—the first because of a troublesome spring-wound mechanism, the second because of an inadequate rubber drive wheel used to slide the cassettes into the VCR.

Well, it's been a long struggle, but our hats go off to those amazing R&D guys back at Sony's labs in Japan. They've conquered the unconquerable, they've gone where the brave dare not go . . . they've made the goddam thing *work*, ending a four-year battle to win the Time War against the competition. And, aside from just a few minor drawbacks, it's as perfected a video accessory as we've ever seen. But enough digressing; on with the review.



Appearance: The AG-300 is a very attractive, low-profile grey and smoke-plastic unit about 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ "x5 $\frac{1}{8}$ "x13 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", noticeably thinner than the earlier AG-200, but somewhat deeper, and weighing just a hair over 5 pounds. The front of the unit provides eight piano keys that duplicate the transport controls on Sony's 5000-series Beta decks and Zenith's VR-9000, 9700, and 9750. These functions include, from left to right, Pause, Eject, Rewind, Stop, Play, Fast-Forward, Record, and Audio Dub. A small two-position switch on the left side allows setting up the unit to change tapes either at the end of a timer event ("Event End") or when the tape runs out ("Tape End"). Two red LED's on the right side indicate either "Ready" (when the unit is in a standby mode) or "Run/Alarm" (when it's in use, or when a malfunction has occurred). A "Reset" button is provided to revert the changer to normal in the event of a malfunction. The back of the changer has a DC socket for the external 7.5VDC power supply, and a unique Sony jack made to accept a special sub-mini-sized plug that connects the control cable to a similar jack on the back of a programmable Sony or Zenith VTR.

The front top part of the changer contains a smoked-clear plastic compartment into which three cassettes can be stacked. With a fourth cassette already placed inside the VCR, this gives you a capability of up to 20 hours of recording at X-3 on L-830's. Although the manufacturer doesn't recommend it, in some of our unofficial tests, we determined that a make-shift funnel box can be attached to the changer's cassette compartment to add as many as a dozen additional tapes to this number, although our final results were inconclusive and the procedure did not always work.

Installation/Operation: Sony's 24-page instruction manual provided with the AG-300 clearly spells out exactly how to attach it to any compatible Beta deck, using the two existing screws at the front of the VTR and a special metal bracket that allows the changer to slide on and click into place. Two levers on the top sides of the changer allow it to be quickly removed for normal use.

Like the earlier AG-200, the 300 runs off a small DC transformer, which can be plugged into the AC jack found on the back of most compatible Beta decks. Near this same AC jack is a smaller one marked "Auto-Changer Control Jack," into which you attach the short cable (supplied) and run it to the changer directly. All that's left now is to clip on the black plastic cassette holder to the bottom front side of the changer, which flips open to catch the used cassettes as they slide out from the front of the VTR, and it's ready to go.

To operate the changer, you begin by sliding the first cassette into the front slot, towards the VCR's cassette compartment (which is, of course, in the "up" position). The changer will automatically pull the cassette out of your hands and into the VTR and push down the cassette compartment. Next, you depress the Record button, and allow the VTR to go into the Record mode. Finally, you stack up to three videocassettes into the recessed compartment on top of the changer. When the

first tape ends, or when you depress the stop button, the changer springs into action: it immediately ejects the first tape, which rolls forward and falls down into the black cassette holder, and drops down one of the stacked cassettes, which then rolls back into the VTR's cassette compartment. Once again, this compartment slams shut automatically, and the record key will be depressed by the changer, placing the VTR into record. This procedure will repeat until all the cassettes have been used. The last tape will remain inside the machine; with the SL-5800 (and VR-9750), it will automatically rewind before the machine shuts off.

One nice addition to the AG-300, compared to the previous models, is that it has the capability of changer-*playback*, automatically replacing a stack of tapes and playing them one at a time—perfect for insomniacs or marathon movie lovers. It's main design, however, is for recording lengthy programs with the aid of the 14-day/4-event timers found in most programmable Beta machines. As discussed in the in-depth instruction manual, you can set the changer to replace tapes either at the end of each programmed event, or when the tape runs out, whichever you prefer. Since the total changing process takes only about 15 seconds—actually closer to 14 seconds with our particular 5800-AG300 combination—it is roughly equivalent to doing the same thing by hand . . . perhaps a second or two slower, depending on the skill of the user. Purists will no doubt want to avoid having tapes change in the middle of a program, and will no doubt opt for using the Event End mode for those programs running under 5 hours (again, on one L-830 at X-3). This mode would also be useful for recording up to four separate two-hour movies, each on a different cassette, at X-2. [Imagine leaving on a two-week vacation and coming back to find four HBO movies all neatly recorded for you on individual cassettes.—Ed.] On the other hand, for those of you whose tastes run to all-night telethons or archival recording, the Tape End mode might be preferable. At any rate, it's nice to have the option to go with either mode.

Performance: The good news with the AG-300 is that it *really* works, honest-and-for-true. In more than 50 separate tests, it never failed, not even once . . . except when the operator (that is, *ahem*, your all-thumbs technical editor) managed to bump the changer just before it did its thing, causing one of the tapes to drop a second early and resulting in a multiple-tape collision, with the "Run/Alarm" light blinking wildly to alert me to my incompetence. In short, it appears to work fine as long as you keep your cotton-pickin' fingers away from it once it's all set.

After studying the changer for a while, we realized that the main reason it works, and why the earlier AG-120 and 200 didn't, is due to an additional rubber drive wheel (making a total of five) used to slide the tapes into or out of the VTR's cassette compartment. With the old changers, the tapes had a habit of hanging up or stopping somewhere in the middle of the unit, lacking enough momentum to carry them all the way through. The AG-300 solves this problem by using this extra

drive wheel to give the cassette just a little extra "push" to make it go all the way to the VTR's cassette compartment and, like I say, it seems to work every time.

That's not to say that the new changer doesn't have any faults. Aside from the sheer bulkiness of the unit (which really isn't all that bad, adding only about 4" to the height of most Beta decks), the detachable cassette holder has a nasty habit of falling off when you least expect it. This is particularly irksome when it happens to hit a hard floor and shatter into pieces, which has happened to at least two changers we know of (including one at a recent trade show). Reader Linda Bushyager of Prospect Park, PA commented that when this happened with her AG-300, she was chagrined to discover that her local Sony service center was unable to provide her with a replacement cassette holder, and told her that she would have to wait months for a new part to be ordered from Sony's parts center in Kansas City. She also added: "The really annoying thing is that Sony's design engineers obviously spent a lot of time crafting this [changer] with care for use in their 5400, 5600 and 5800 machines, so why did the dummies only put a 4-event timer on the 5800? Here one can tape up to 20 hours of material with the aid of a 14-day timer, but only 4 different events can be programmed." She goes on to mention that given the 7-day/7-event and 14-day/8-event capability of many competing machines, Sony would have been wiser to offer this feature in the 5800. Of course, this is obviously a case of hindsight being the better part of valor, but we agree with Linda's point. It's hoped that the next generation of Beta VTR's will offer extended programmability, as well as equivalent changers to provide as-yet unimaginable recording capability.

Conclusion: I guess the main question that remains is, "Do we really need the ability to record 20 straight hours at a crack?" I don't know about you, but there really have been times when I've needed to timer-delay at least two separate lengthy movies in a single evening, and aside from resorting to using multiple machines, perhaps the best answer to this is the AG-300. Conceivably, one could even timer-dub with an AG-300, making multiple copies of X-2 tapes with two decks, each equipped with a changer. And, of course, with the additional capacity added by the cardboard funnel discussed previously, the sky's the limit—30, 40, even 60 total hours of almost uninterrupted recording. The mind boggles.

Each of you will have to make up your own mind as to whether this is something you'll really use very often. Given the extremely low cost of the changer (discounted to as little as \$99 by firms like Video Service Center in Sacramento), and the fact that most Pay TV firms, including HBO and Showtime, are planning to increase their schedules to 24 hour-programming before the end of the year, my personal opinion is that any Beta owner who doesn't get a changer is only cheating himself.—MFW

JF Comments: I've had a chance to experiment with the AG-300 myself over the past few months, and have pretty much come to the same conclusion Marc did in the above review. I was able to successfully mount the changer on a Zenith VR-9750 with great results, and noted that Zenith does provide an auto-changer jack on the backs of both the 9700 and the 9750, designed to trip the "Event End" sensor. It's interesting to note that Zenith makes almost no mention of this feature in any of their literature or instruction manuals, and that they've chosen not to offer the changer as an accessory to their existing Beta VTR's. This may be due in part to the new series of Zenith decks about to be unveiled this Fall.

AUDIO VISUAL SYSTEMS PB-289G PATCHBAY

Manufacturer: Audio Visual Systems, 725 Lorraine Blvd.,
Los Angeles, CA 90005

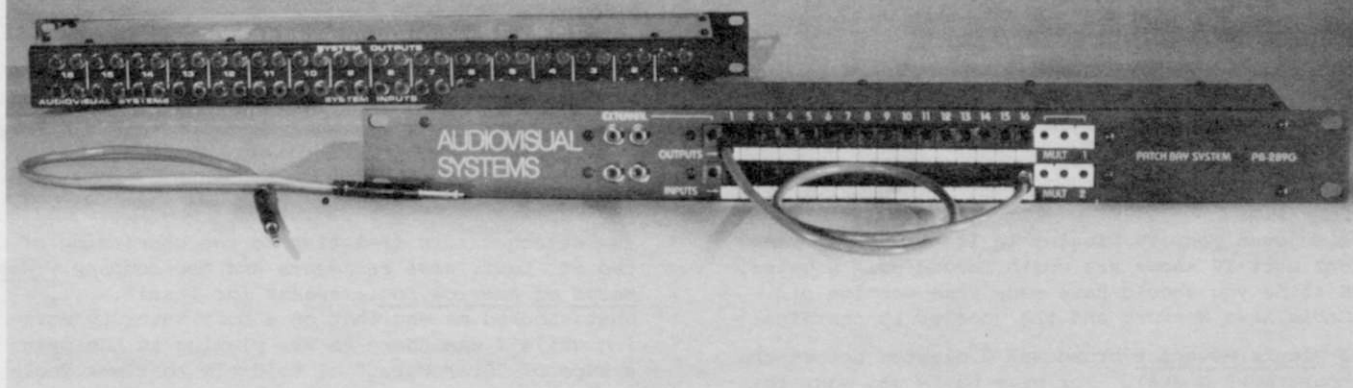
Serial No.: 0084

Source: Reviewer purchase

Cost: \$650.00 (includes two 18" PJ-713 patch cables; optional accessories include \$12.00 additional PJ-713 patch cables and \$25.00 PJ-713G gold-plated patch cables)

The Audio Visual Systems patchbay is capable of solving one of the videophile's most common and annoying dilemmas: how to hook up several VTR's, monitors, and external accessories so that going from one source to the other can be accomplished with as little rewiring as possible. I had been tearing my hair out by the roots, wrestling with this very problem for some time, and was delighted to get my hands on this, the first audio/video patch bay expressly designed for the consumer and semi-professional user.

Appearance/Features: This slickly-designed, slimline 19"×1¾"×5¼" unit is made to fit a standard 19" EIA rack, like most professional audio and video products. The entire cabinet is a dark greenish-brown, and the front is labeled with the manufacturer's logo in attractive gold lettering. Like most patchbays, the PB-289G acts totally passively, needing no external electricity for operation. The front panel is simply designed, logically laid out and clearly labeled. On the left side are four phono jacks labeled "External," graphically and electrically connected to the first two of the 20 pairs of ADC Bantam-type patch jacks which form the heart of the connection system. These patch jacks are in two rows, with the upper one labeled "Outputs" and the lower one "Inputs." The last three pairs are designated "Mult 1" and "Mult 2," which allow you to derive two additional outputs from a single audio line. These are not designed for video signals, for reasons we'll get



to in a minute. Between the "External" and "Mult" connectors are the 16 pairs of input and output jacks, connected to the rear panel sockets. Below each row is a plastic-covered designation strip for permanently labeling your system as needed.

The rear panel of the unit matches the layout of the front, with two rows of gold-plated phono jacks. As on the front, the upper row is labeled "Outputs" and the lower "Inputs." There are four jacks—two outputs and two inputs—that correspond with each front panel number, 1-16, for a total of 64 rear-panel jacks. Each front panel jack is made to accept a stereo audio signal or a combined audio/video signal, so there are two separate rear-panel phono jacks for each front-panel Bantam jack. Most consumer video equipment would be attached to the rear-panel jacks using, for example, a set of two upper jacks for the audio and video output, and two lower jacks for audio and video input. Obviously, once you decide which part of these jacks will be used for video, and which for audio, you'll need to stick to this set-up for all of your patching to avoid confusion. If you have industrial or consumer VTR's or disc players with stereo audio inputs or outputs, you'll need to assign the stereo audio completely separately from the video for the entire system. This will be explained in more detail later on.

All VTR's, disc players, monitors, video stabilizers, commercial killers, image enhancers, cameras, audio equalizers, and other accessories are assigned input and output positions and plugged into the back panel. You may need to purchase or make up special cables to adapt all of your audio and video cables to the phono plugs required by the patch bay. Shielded 75 ohm cables, such as those sold by firms like The Cable Works, are recommended for lowest loss and freedom from interference. Once the equipment is hooked up, you'll want to keep the cables connected to the phono jacks and minimize any constant plugging and unplugging, since they won't stand this kind of abuse. The Bantam jacks on the *front* patch panel, of course, are designed for much more heavy-duty use.

Operation: Once your equipment is connected to the rear panel jacks and the front panel designated strips are correspondingly labeled, you're home free. For our tests, I con-

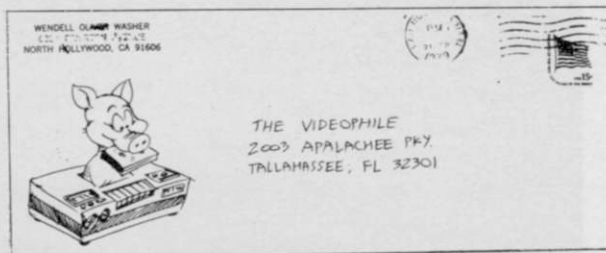
nected a variety of equipment to the patchbay, including a Sony SL-5600, an SLO-323 (with stereo audio), a 3/4" VP-2010 player (stereo), a Panasonic NV-8410 VHS portapak, the Magnavox VP-8000 LaserVision disc player (stereo), two JVC CX-1610 color monitors, a Mod Box video stabilizer, a Video Services color commercial "Killer," a Nikko EQ-1 audio equalizer, a Nikko pre-amp, a GAS "Ampzilla" amplifier, and a Nikko Gamma V FM tuner. Since my main monitor is a Kloss Novabeam Model One, I simply monitor any VTR desired by selecting it on an adjacent RF switcher. I should mention here that the PB-689G patchbay isn't capable of handling any RF frequencies from channel 3/4 modulators, which is perfectly understandable since it wasn't designed for this purpose.

The PB-289G patchbay has two unique features that set it apart from most other professional units (like the Trompeter system discussed in our "build-your-own" patch bay article last issue): first, each patch cable carries *two* signals—i.e., one video source and one audio channel. If your present system is mono, as with most U.S. consumer video products, you can combine audio and video on one cable. For my particular system, which is stereo, I opted to keep video separately on one jack and use an adjacent one for two-channel audio. The second unique feature is its internal "programming" switches, which can automatically connect any of the top "Output" jacks to the "Input" jack directly underneath it without the aid of any external patch cables. These switches are located inside the box, and are easily accessible after removing the nine screws that hold the top metal panel in place. By carefully thinking out exactly how you normally dub from one machine to another, you can leave all your machines "normalled," with, say, VTR #1 feeding VTR #2, VTR #2 feeding VTR #3, and so on, simply by selecting the appropriate internal switches. Later, if you need to dub from VTR #1 to VTR #3, you can go ahead and use the regular patch cables.

This capability comes in very handy by doing away with the tangled mess that usually occurs with professional patchbays that lack "look-through" function. If you set up your inputs and outputs carefully, you should be able to get away with using only one or two cables for all but the most complex

Continued on p. 52

Letters:



Dear Jim:

I enjoyed your TV Wiggles in issue #30 pointing out what TV shows are worth recording. However, I think you should have made some mention of Cable News Network and the goodies it contains:

2 Minute Newscast (broadcast 2 minutes before the hour, most hours). For news buffs who want to collect something of history passing by, ... this little gem is perfect. It's also nice for filling up leftover spaces at the end of cassettes.

People Tonight (1:00 a.m. EST live) This show is usually not worth watching, but I try to always catch the opening when they announce who is going to be on. ... I have taped nice interviews with Melanie Chartoff and Darrow Igus of Fridays, and "Laura" and "Scorpio" from General Hospital.

Freeman Reports (10:00 p.m. EST live) This one hour topical interview show also gets my attention at the opening, just to see who is going to be on.

Kathleen Sullivan -- The most lovable anchorwoman this videomaniac has ever seen. ...

All in all, there is some great material on CNN for any videophile who takes a little time to look for it. -- Bruce Long, Los Angeles, CA

I couldn't agree more, Bruce, especially with respect to Ms. Sullivan. I often watch part of the 2-hour prime time evening newscast. CNN is one of the best things ever to hit the air. // As an addendum to that article, those of you who have not watched the syndicated Richard Simmons Show, should do so, at least once.

Dear Editor:

... Dr. Edelman's article (Satellite TV: An innocent ventures forth, Issue #31) was interesting, but it should be noted that in the 2 years that have passed since his installation, there have been many, many changes. OEM's and suppliers are now numerous, electronics have vastly improved, and prices have come down. Completely installed systems for well under \$10,000 are now found all over the United States. -- Fred Staal, KLM Electronics, 17025 Laurel Road, Morgan Hill, CA 95037

What you say is certainly true. It is also true that many systems are being peddled for under \$5000 which simply will not meet the quality standards demanded by a critical videophile. We expect the new RCA satellite (operational in December) to improve things for people with marginal systems. We cannot afford to install and test earth stations like we do VCRs, so must leave the field to others for the most part. We do, however, expect to have more articles of interest to novices, and will not hesitate to recommend a system, once we find one at the right price that will deliver a "good" signal in a marginal reception area of the country, such as our own area of North Florida.

Dear Jim:

The attached clip (relating to the conviction of two St. Louis area residents and the company Video World of America, Inc.) speaks for itself. ... What shocked me was that on a busy Saturday morning while I was there he was playing in the open a tape of "Star Wars." I told him that was foolish and inviting trouble. A month later I read that his place was raided by the FBI. Keep alerting your readers to the dangers of fooling with pirated tapes.

Incidentally, I subscribe to TV at home and although from an editor's viewpoint the copy could stand some closer scrutiny, your heart is in the right place and you have a fine magazine. -- Laszlo K. Domjan, Bureau Manager, United Press International, St. Louis, MO

Dear Jim:

... There's an ad in the May 13, 1981 edition of Variety, on page 364, placed by the Video Corporation of America, which includes a quote from one of your product reviews, complete with one of your logos. If this is a rip, looks like you've got another fight on your hands. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I do feel I have the duty to tip you off to this. -- Roy Veldboom, Cedar Grove, WI

I've seen the same ad, Roy. We have granted permission to a couple of folks to reprint product reports (notably FUJI and Kloss Video), but VCA has not sought our permission. This seems like a good place to mention, once again, that we also have nothing to do with the "Videophile Edition" of products being hawked by the BIB company.

Hi, Jim:

Gavin Mayeaux's letter in Issue #31 indicates the need for an annual review of the service and repair records of currently available video equipment. If a valid national survey confirms his claim that Beta machines present a greater repair risk than VHS machines due to the difference in transport systems, the public should be made aware of the evidence.

My own experience in shopping for audio and video equipment in Minneapolis suggests that Sony products have a reputation for being the most difficult and expensive to repair if they breakdown, but I am not aware of any statistical proof that Beta VTRs in general, or Sony in particular, are greater repair risks than VHS machines. ...

The following firm specializes in mail-order sales of Sony products and will provide price and shipping quotations: Tokyo AVIC Corporation, Daini Toranomon Denki Bldg - 3rd floor, 3-1-10 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105, Japan. -- Bob Pratt, Minneapolis, MN

(Thanks for the clipping, Bob. Oink!)

Dear Jim:

Enclosed is my time chart for an RCA VDT-625. It seems TV has so many readers who need this information, I thought I would forward my rendition. The tape was a FUJI T-120 and the time shown is time elapsed. I, as any vidiot would do, sat with a watch in one hand and a legal pad in the other. ... Of course, machines vary and no two counters are equal, but it does appear that my numbers can be used as a standard by which other machines judge their own increments.

COUNTER	SP	LP	SLP
67	5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes
124	10	20	30
176	15	30	45
223	20	40	60
267	25	50	75
308	30	60	90
347	35	70	105
384	40	80	120
420	45	90	135
454	50	100	150
486	55	110	165
517	60	120	180
548	65	130	195
577	70	140	210
605	75	150	225
633	80	160	240
660	85	170	255
686	90	180	270
712	95	190	285
737	100	200	300
761	105	210	315
785	110	220	330
809	115	230	345
832	120	240	360
849(TAPE)	124	248	372

-- Mark Sheldon, Fairfax, VA

Thanks Mark, and especially so for your kind efforts on behalf of our circulation.

Dear Jim,

... I have found that most video hobbists are not only honest but will go beyond the expected to accomodate fellow videophiles. ... Of course, none of us are perfect, If any of this letter is printed I would like to publicly apologize to Mr. Robert Grunert of Park City, IL for leaving him with the impression of a bad trade. ... Lesson: Never offer anything for trade without first viewing it, or at least mentioning the particulars, ie. not viewed since recorded; expected in trade, but not yet arrived; presently loaned out, etc.
-- George LaFreniere, Leicester, MA

Dear Jim & Sharon et al.

You should mention to your readers that the IEEE (Institute for Electrical & Electronics Engineers) frequently has really excellent articles on the technical aspects of television. For example, in the July Spectrum there is a neat 3 page article on HDTV (high definition TV) - 1100 scanning

lines. On the cover are two pictures -- one of an 1100 scan line display (really excellent) and one of current TV technology (dreadful quality in comparison). ... I have been wondering for some time why everyone says that current TVs have 240 or 250 horizontal(resolution) scan lines, when there are 525 lines on the screen. Is each line doubled or what? -- John Roach

While it is true that our NTSC system broadcasts 525 horizontal lines, the "resolution" (ie. how many separate and distinct lines you can actually count on your screen) varies widely. I'm going to simplify this more than Marc would, but in general expensive studio monitors may deliver most of those lines in a sharp distinct manner, but consumer model TVs, and in particular $\frac{1}{2}$ " VCRs, while delivering the entire broadcast signal, only distinguish about 240 "lines" in a color picture. The rest just merge in.

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly

The following are unsolicited remarks with respect to the indicated dealers. To be fair, we cannot list someone as "bad" on the basis of one complaint. With respect to Chapter 770, Florida Statutes, relating to civil actions for libel, publication of these excerpts from reader's letters is in the good faith belief that said comments are a true account of their experiences. New readers may want to pick up copies of TV #19-31, in which the first 13 installments of GB & U appear.

Dear Jim:

... I lucked out by discovering PRECISION VIDEO TECHNOLOGIES in downtown Los Angeles. They are open EVERY DAY from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM. They are FAST (3 days turnaround!!), and truly care about the machines they service. -- R.E.D., Los Angeles, CA

Gentlemen,

Although he probably doesn't need the plug, I feel that Earl Muntz' Muntz Electronics in Van Nuys deserves a mention as a "good guy". His prices are very competitive on equipment and just about unbeatable on blank tape. ... The service department is also excellent.
-- R.L.A., Valencia, CA

Dear Jim,

... I ordered two blooper tapes from Reel Images, also known as Video Images, of Monroe, CT. It took about three months to get the material I ordered, and it wasn't because I used a personal check. I sent them a MasterCard number. Anyway, I ordered two separate tapes and I was charged for two tapes, but they sent me both programs on one L-500. ... When I played the tape I found it had an uncontrollable roll that the vertical hold would not correct, and could not be removed with my ... stabilizer. Needless to say I feel ripped off ...

On the other hand, the people at Video Values of Gaithersburg, MD who advertised in a previous issue have done a very fine job of turning out tape labels for me. The 40¢ each price is a little high, but it sure gives the old library a very professional look.
-- C.W., Victorville, CA

Over the years I have gotten the impression that Reel Images is such a large operation that they are more concerned with volume business with the general public than with catering to the custom needs of the serious videophile. They have a nice catalog, and many satisfied customers, I am sure, but they are not generally known for the high quality of their duplications, nor the promptness of their service. Refunds? No problem.

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For Beginners Only



by: Jim Lowe

Up until a couple of years ago it was virtually unheard of for a consumer to have his own color TV camera. Prices in the tens of thousands of dollars pretty much limited the potential buying audience to broadcasting and production studios and educational/industrial institutions. But thanks to the same electronics technology revolution that has brought us the \$10 hand-held calculator, it is now possible for the avid home video hobbyist to purchase a television camera of his very own at a price that, while still not cheap, can at least be reckoned with.

For those who enjoy making home movies, or perhaps even amateur film productions, the advantages of video tape over 8mm film are many. Consider the following:

- Video tape is ready to be watched the moment you finish shooting it. There's no delay and no costly processing.

- Video tape can be used over and over again. If you don't like what you've got, just erase it and try again.

- Several hours of action can be captured on a single inexpensive cassette. You're not limited to just several *minutes* as with a 50-foot 8mm film cartridge.

- You can play back the tape on *any* television set. There's no need to lug the projector and screen out of the hall closet.

Okay, you're convinced. You probably already own a videocassette recorder. Maybe you've been taping your favorite shows off-the-air and wishing you had a camera so that you could make tapes of the family to send Grandma. Yet, faced with a dizzying array of choices, you don't have the slightest idea what you should do. You're especially wary when you discover that even though prices have declined dramatically, a color TV camera can still cost about as much as you've already shelled out for your recorder.

What to do? Our best advice is to familiarize yourself with the options and then, equipped with your new-found knowledge, do a little comparison shopping for a camera that has the features you want at a price you're willing to pay.

Please keep in mind that a video camera is of absolutely no use whatsoever except when used in connection with a video tape recorder. A camera without a recorder is worse than a day without sunshine. It's just plain useless, except perhaps as a rich man's paperweight or aquarium ornament.*

Assuming that you *do* have a recorder and that your recorder is *not* a portable, your ability to make your own television tapes will be limited by the length of the cable connecting the

camera to the recorder. In a pinch you could also use a couple of extension cords between the recorder and the electrical outlet. On the other hand, a portable (battery operated) recorder and camera ("portapak") will give you the ability to go to the beach, the mountains, the bushes across the street from your estranged spouse's apartment, or anywhere you desire, and run the camera/recorder to your heart's content. Most portapaks will serve you for at least 60-90 minutes, until the battery runs out.

Home video camera technology is advancing so rapidly that it is difficult to advise you as to the best buy. New models are being introduced every few months. We'll do our best in the **Product Report** section to keep you up to date, but for all you beginners, the following few questions and answers should help you to understand the nature of the beast and be in the position of making an informed decision of your own.

Q. Do consumer model TV cameras take pictures in color?

A. Yes, *if* you buy a color camera. Black and white cameras are far less expensive (you may find one for \$150), but, unlike 8mm film or still cameras, the camera itself, not the film or tape, determines whether or not the pictures will be in color. A color TV camera takes *only* color pictures. Of course, you *could* play back the tape on a black and white TV set if, for some reason, you wanted to see it in black and white.

Q. How do video cameras compare to movie cameras in other respects?

A. Well, for starters, all video cameras are capable of recording both the picture and the *sound*. All of your "home tapes" can also be "talkies." Some video cameras offer zoom lenses. Some feature automatic aperture settings. Some do not.

Q. How about the viewfinder?

A. This is important. Two types are available—the through-the-lens viewfinder, which is similar to those found in 35mm and movie cameras, and the "electronic" viewfinder. The latter is, in reality, a miniature TV picture tube. When you look into it, you actually see a small video display of the picture that the camera is taking. The electronic viewfinder is much to be desired, because it can also be used to play back the pictures that you have just taken—instant replay in the field, rather than waiting to get home before you discover how badly you messed up.

Some of the very least expensive models (you might run into one at a garage sale) offer neither through-the-lens nor electronic viewfinders, being of the fundamental "point-and-

*This is not strictly true. You *could* attach the camera directly to your television set and use it for security purposes or possibly for entertainment of some sort, but, without a recorder, you would not be able to preserve and play back the pictures in the future. Also, when the camera rusts it might be hazardous to the health of your fish.

shoot" variety.

Q. What other features might be unfamiliar to someone who has never used a television camera?

A. Virtually every camera has a "pause" switch on the "pistol-grip" handle, which means that you can stop the tape (stop taking pictures) without fumbling around with the controls on the recorder while trying to hold the camera steady. It helps if the viewfinder has a little light to indicate whether or not the camera is recording or in "pause." Many viewfinders also have a "low-light" indicator.

Many video cameras have an indoor/outdoor light switch. Some even have three positions—outdoor/incandescent/flourescent. Some cameras have provision for adjusting the red and blue color balance. These and other features are often designated by unfamiliar names, such as "color temperature," "white level," or "backlight" control. Keep in mind that a video camera is not really "taking a picture" in the old familiar sense of exposing a film to the image that the lens sees. A television picture is formed by an electronic signal being imposed on magnetic tape. Consequently, it is possible to adjust or process that electronic signal in a number of ways. You can ignore these adjustments if mastery of them appears to be overwhelming, but they are available to make it possible for the user to produce the best results of which the camera is capable.

Q. How different is TV camera "technique" from what I'm used to with my movie camera?

A. You can probably take half-way decent TV pictures the first time you try. There are somewhat different techniques, however which only experience (or a longer article than this) can bring to light. Two points we *can* mention. Never point your video camera at the sun or any other extremely bright light source. If you do, your camera's tube may be a goner. Also, you'll have to learn to cope with video "lag" or "smear," the phenomena with which all low-cost cameras are cursed, wherein an after-image or trailing line appears when the camera is shifted too rapidly from one scene to another.

Q. Does my camera have to be the same brand as my recorder?

A. No, not at all, but you may prefer that it be. Unlike the recorders, there is nothing inherently incompatible about Sony and RCA cameras. However, the cables and recorder input jacks are not always compatible between different brands. This doesn't mean that you couldn't get perfectly good pictures with a mismatched camera and recorder, but you *may* have to buy an adaptor in order to connect the two together. As you might suspect, the adaptors are sometimes expensive.

Q. How much should I expect to spend on a color video camera?

A. List prices on consumer model color cameras range from about \$700 to \$1400, but discounts of 20% can be found if you shop for them. Check the ads in this very issue. If you're bargain hunting, consider a model which is being discon-

tinued. We've seen the lightweight RCA model C003 (which lists for \$900, has 4:1 zoom and other features) offered for as little as \$495.

Q. Do the optional features have much effect on the price.

A. Definitely, yes. Many combinations are available. You will even find several choices under the same brand name. Often, the zoom lens and electronic viewfinder are found only in the "step up" model.

Q. Should I buy a video camera now or should I wait? What future developments are just around the corner?

A. Two years ago it probably would have been a good idea to wait. Today? . . . it depends. More improvements are coming, maybe even at lower prices, but surprisingly good color cameras are available right now at prices that many videophiles consider attractive.

In the immediate future, watch for automatic-focusing TV cameras. There's already at least one such model (from Hitachi) which utilizes technology recently introduced in certain 35mm still cameras. Under development for introduction a couple of years from now are models which utilize the storage capability of micro-electronic chips (rather than a tube) to produce an image.


Perhaps the most exciting camera of the future is the combination camera/recorder, a compact hand-held unit that incorporates a miniaturized video tape recorder into the handle of the camera itself, thus eliminating the necessity of hauling around a separate portable recorder. Sony and Matsushita have already publicly demonstrated such a unit. Kodak and others are known to have similar cameras under development, but it is not likely that they will be on dealers' shelves within the next year or two. By then your family will be older, you'll have taken a vacation or two and several other special occasions may have come and gone.

Should you wait? Only you can answer that one.

Recent installments of **For Beginners Only** have appeared in the following back issues:

#27—Glossary of home video terms. Learn the secret code!

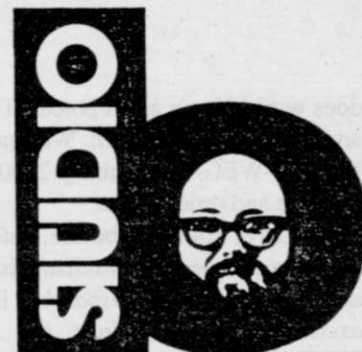
#28—Which format (Beta or VHS) is best for your particular needs?

#29—Tips on maintaining a collector-to-collector relationship. 



TELE-COMMUNICATION

The Videosponding Column



by: Gary Bourgois

Without a doubt, ours is just about the most exciting and fast moving hobby/lifestyle that exists on the face of the earth. I mean, what other avocation allows you the privilege of ordering the newest, latest piece of gear in the field, only to have it obsoleted by a newer model before you manage to get it out of the box! There are many hard core videophiles, the old timers if you will, who will fondly recall the good old days of the fabled 7200 Betamax. A few lucky white whiskered videophiles still possess one of these antiques. They were an elite few, the early videophiles . . . their friends considered them to be idiosyncratic wizards who could make the TV do their bidding. These were the early days, in the bygone 1970's, when a few hearty enthusiasts banded together to exchange ideas, technical notes and stories of how their families didn't understand them. Out of this loosely-knit order came a modest, painstakingly-assembled, xeroxed, hand-stapled, newsletter, which has evolved into the magazine you are now reading. When video became big business, the bandwagon found itself crowded with other magazines, newsletters, swapsheets and the like . . . but there is still one place where the dedicated amongst us can find a soapbox from whence to air a viewpoint, and also a place to find the most reasonably unbiased product and movie reviews in the industry.

It is from this soapbox, then, that I, your humble servant, would like to continue my quest of promoting a hobby that should have hundreds more adherents than it does . . . namely *videosponding* . . . the hobby of using video as a means of communication. What more natural way for those of us really into the hobby to talk to one another than via this little miracle that makes us one—the videocassette. Admittedly, postage is making even the telephone seem inexpensive (I just spent \$15 on *one* package) but until Ma Bell can give us color picture-phone service, the best way we videophiles can talk and see one another at a distance is by video correspondence. To this end, I am attempting to organize a group of dedicated enthusiasts to help extend video recording to new bounds. If you fancy yourself to be such a pioneering spirit, read on.

The mail here continues to be mildly encouraging, but slightly less than my own expectations. But those who do write are just the type of committed enthusiasts we are looking for. Dave Herring, of 483 Beacon St. #83, in Boston, MA 02115, is one who got into the video hobby in the very early days. His first machine was a *reel-to-reel* (a what?), and now he uses industrial VHS gear to produce interesting programs including

satires, video animation and other creative journeys into video. Dave wants to hear from others into video creativity. Mr. Y. Takahashi has written from 12 7 Motofuna Machi, Nagasaki 850 Japan, and is seeking videospondents in Germany, France, Holland, Sweden, and England. I notice from his list of equipment, however, that Mr. Takahashi can only play and record in NTSC video (the U.S. system of 525 lines, 60 frames). This would mean that anyone in those countries interested in an exchange with him should possess U.S. type equipment (Japan uses the same NTSC system). The only alternative would be for Mr. Takahashi to obtain a complete PAL/SECAM system, consisting of a recorder and monitor for the 625/50 system used in Europe (and most of the rest of the world).

There is another solution to the international correspondence problem, and that is STANDARDS CONVERSION. Digital Standards Conversion is used every day to bring you the pictures the rest of the planet is watching on their TV sets—such as news pictures, or those compelling British programs on PBS. Digital Standards Converters use computer storage techniques to change standards from NTSC to PAL or SECAM in any combination. If you can locate an available Digital Standards Converter, be prepared to pay more than one hundred dollars per hour to have your tape converted. As I have often said, this video habit can get rather expensive.

But wait, there is another alternative offered by Wolfgang Schulz of Germany. Wolfgang is offering a service which, while not as sophisticated as Digital Standards Conversion, is certainly much cheaper. For \$9.75 he will "SCAN CONVERT" a one hour program from PAL or SECAM to NTSC. The service also converts NTSC back to PAL so that a two-way exchange between international videofriends can be arranged. To my knowledge, this is the first time such a service has been offered to the video enthusiast. The process is quite simple—a camera of the standard to be recorded is focused upon the screen of a monitor of the standard to be played—the result is a viewable tape in full color. I have used this service and, while it is not perfect, it is the only way at present for international correspondence to take place between incompatible television systems. Owing to the difference in field rate between the systems, you get a ten Hz "flicker" on the image. Depending on your level of finickiness, and the amount of luminance in the picture, you may interpret the results as anything from "quite viewable" to "headache city." But it

does work! If you and a potential international videospondent are interested, contact: Wolfgang R. Schulz, Theodor-Koerner-WEG-5, Hamburg 2000, West Germany D-61. He has info and order forms.

As I have often said before, *videosponding* is different from video-exchange. The exchangers swap TV shows, movies, and the like—the *videospondent* is a different breed, one who exchanges ideas, feelings, and sights and sounds that are uniquely personal. To this end, being somewhat impractical (as all good videophiles are), I recently acquired a portable VHS system—the Panasonic (PV-3100/WV-3100)—what fun! After a couple of months of using the outfit, I can heartily recommend it (and other Matsushita clones).^{*} Having owned four generations of video equipment, it is interesting to see how this stuff keeps getting better n' better. Of course, they could make it a lot better by giving us 60 micro heads at the SP speed and flying erase heads to make the edits perfect instead of merely near-perfect. But to my eye, the images I get on location are excellent—certainly as good as a lot of the ENG stuff running on the local and even network stations. Just about everybody I now exchange videoletters with has gone portable, and being able to take the camera outside really adds a new dimension to an already exciting hobby. On a couple of the round robin tapes in which I participate, there is a sort of "competition" to try and come up with new and creative material. It's kind of fun making like a TV director and using music and creative editing to produce unique openings and transitions. Of course, the on-camera ramblings and show-and-tell are really what *videosponding* is about. It's helpful to see a piece of equipment you've been considering actually in action, and fun to show a production technique or new hookup method to your other video correspondents.

There's a big difference between "home tapes" and good video production. As always happens, somebody steals my thunder when it comes to something I plan to write about—this time my friend Art Vuolo did it in the last issue. But let me expand—there are two competing trains of thought when it comes to using a video camera. The first is what I call the "eight-millimeter-syndrome." You remember the eight millimeter movie camera . . . you had three minutes of film to capture your whole vacation, so you were always afraid to shoot anything. Thus you have three seconds of The Grand Canyon and four of The Painted Desert. Oops, you blinked and missed the Golden Gate Bridge. Well, give a video camera to someone born and raised on eight millimeter and you get a choppy hodgepodge of unrelated material just filled with "jump cuts" that are disconcerting to the brain. The other equally distressing type of "home tapes" are what I call the "Let-it-roll" syndrome. This is just the opposite of our previous tape. Here, the machine is started at noon and the first shot goes until 1:30, or until the battery runs out. What you see is focusing, framing, and interminable still or barely moving pictures.

The rule for good video (for your own stuff as well as *videosponding*) is to *keep it interesting*. Focus before you shoot, and plan out your shots. Look for interesting aspects of your subject, and keep the shots reasonably short and varied. The watchword is really *continuity*. Try and remember what the last thing you shot was, and how you can tie it in with what you want to shoot next. Look for what the professionals call "cutaway" or "insert" shots. Use "reaction" shots where you can. (Example: at a sporting event—shots of the audience.) This makes the whole tape look more professional.


Always include an element of time passage. If you are going from one location to another, shoot a little bit of the trip from point A to point B (hopefully you have someone else to do the driving). This eliminates the "jump cut." Be mindful of the sound track, also. If someone is talking, let the camera roll until their thought is completed and remember what was said on the shot, so that you can maintain continuity. These tips will make your tapes more interesting, especially if you are sending them to *videospondents*.

Video is a way of life, not just a hobby. It helps when you are with someone who understands your dedication. I can justify all these expensive toys because I make my living with them, but *you* know the real reason I get them is to have *fun*. It's heartening that my lady now actually encourages me to take the video camera along when we go sightseeing. And while she was wary of the lens at first, I now have some shots of her playing in the water of several northern lakes. Her only adverse comment upon playback was that I have been feeding her too well, but then . . . you know that *video* adds about 10 pounds anyway, right?

Recently I've received a few tapes where other family members participate, or are at least seen. A few "better halves" take an active part, holding the camera or carrying some of the equipment, and providing some of the commentary. Admittedly, I have seen a few less than eager participants, but for the most part it can be a fun family affair. Already I have come to consider several of my *videospondents* as friends . . . and after hours of seeing their towns, homes, and lives, it is hard to remember that we have never met in the flesh.

If you would like to try your hand at *videosponding*, I'm still filing names of interested folks. As you read this I should be caught up on my video correspondence, so drop a line or a T-60. If you'd like to be on the someday to be distributed list of correspondents, send your data (format of equipment, interests, etc.) to:

VIDEOSPONDING: c/o Gary Bourgois
Studio B
135 Washington Street
Marquette, MI 49855

Warning: This aspect of the hobby can be addictive. It takes a lot more time to make a 2-hour personal tape than it does to dub a movie, so be prepared. But personal *videosponding* is a great deal more rewarding on the human level. Hope to hear from you and SEE you soon. 

^{*}You'll enjoy (?) Marc's review elsewhere in this issue, Gary.—Ed.

STATE OF THE ART

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

Holy cow! There goes another summer! Seems like I've said that before. My summer was punctuated by a number of talk shows and a lot of traveling. If I got paid for all the talk shows alone, this writer would be a lot better off. Since the last issue, Rick Redoutey (ace Betamax Serviceman) and I made an encore appearance (if such a thing is possible on radio) on WRIF (FM) in Detroit. Last year we were supposed to be on the air from 10 p.m. til midnight and response was so good they insisted that we stay until 1 a.m. This year the phones were even hotter so we went all the way (I didn't think you could say that on the air) til 2 a.m. Boy, has home video become popular.

Interestingly enough, the host of the program, Buzz Luttrell (now at WXYZ), read a letter from an avid listener who had several comments and criticisms of the program. Toward the end of the lengthy analysis he got to us, saying, "... and about your show last week with those same two boring guys you had on a year ago—they were just as bad this year. That damn Art Vuolo never shut up for the full four hours." Buzz then added personal commentary stating, "Now wait a minute—I'm not gonna let you get away with that. Art Vuolo and Rick Redoutey know more about home video than any two guys I've ever met. Our phone lines were jammed for the entire program. We only gave out the phone numbers as a courtesy—they were very popular and they WILL be back!" I was very flattered.

Back in June I was on a talk show on WIFE in Indianapolis and when host Steve Cooper asked me which format was best, VHS or Beta, I had to answer carefully. In a city "half owned" by RCA, I had better not mention Sony too often. It was a fast sixty minutes on a station which just switched to an all news/talk format. The most memorable moment was when a guy called up complaining about the quality of his copies of *Star Wars* and *Empire Strikes Back* wanting to know if there was anything on the market to help make his "fuzzy" VHS dubs look better. Wonder if the boys in blue were listening—I told him the FBI is looking for him and he had best not advertise what he had.

I also appeared visually on AM Magazine, with Paul W. Smith on WDHO-TV in Toledo. It was my second appearance on Channel 24. It's amazing how fast time flies when you're having fun—the TV interview was eight minutes and seemed like three.



RCA has brought out a new product which I feel is worthy of your attention and possession. It's the RCA Wireless Microphone, designed for those of you with cameras. I wish they had made the mike unpluggable so you could use various types with the unit, but it comes factory sealed. Trying to keep 'em simple for the average consumer, I guess. It works from up to about 200 feet away! The less interference from obstacles, the better the range—like being in the auditorium balcony and having talent on the stage, or being in the press box while talent is down on the edge of the football field or in the stands. It's not good in very noisy areas. So don't stand next to a rock band and expect good results. Walking through a crowd, if they're not too loud, can be very successful. One AA battery powers the transmitter and a single 9 volt battery keeps the receiver tuned in. Two frequency settings can be selected for interference-free operation. It retails at about \$189 and seems to be well worth the price.

The most amazing part of it all (and hold on to your pace-maker for this bit of news) is that this RCA wireless microphone is actually compatible with Sony cameras HVC-2000 and 2200! The receiving unit is designed to snap right onto the RCA camera, like the new CC-011, which, by the way, has finally licked the lag. Open flames don't even linger on the tube! But even though they prefer you to use it with an RCA camera, the unit pops right into the optional boom mic. clip on top of the Sony cameras! NO modifications are needed either—Such a deal!

Boy do I hate Sony! What? Are you kidding? No—the thing I dislike is their showing us things at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show that won't be available 'til this fall, like the SL-2000, 10.4 lb. BetaPak portable VCR. What a great machine. It has a few negatives, but a whole ton of positives that make me very impatient for its arrival. It does just about everything, but I'll leave the "tech-talk" to MFW. A couple of things I didn't like were the jacks on the back of the unit behind a little door—shades of Toshiba. You can't, therefore, have the unit connected and standing on end. The RF output switch (ch. 3 or 4) can't be changed without a screwdriver or sharp tool—and, of course, in the tradition of Sony, just about everything is optional. The real test will come after I lay my hands on one and give you a personal evaluation.

Scotch has a winner in its new head cleaner tape. So easy to work, the most un-technical person can master it in only seconds. Check it out soon. When the heads are clean it tells you so right on your TV screen! It's also a "tape" rather than a

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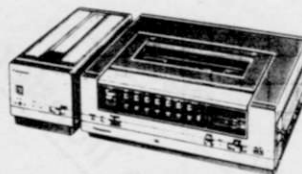
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**** INQUIRIES WELCOME ****

TV Looks at Books

TV EPISODE GUIDES: Science Fiction, Adventure and Super-Heroes

Published by: Starlog Press, Inc., 475
Park Avenue South, New
York, NY 10016

Price: \$7.95 softbound (1981)

Editors: David Hirsch and Suzanne
Weyn (with nine additional
contributors)

Fans of science-fiction, fantasy and horror TV shows have been among the most prolific when it comes to listing their favorite series, episode-by-episode—particularly in the case of ever-popular syndicated classics like *Star Trek*, *Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*. Unfortunately, most of these lists exist only as small-circulation magazines known, appropriately enough, as “fanzines,” and are almost impossible to obtain by the general public.

The editors of *Starlog* magazine, which has been for years the most successful mass-market SF publication in the world, have come up with an ideal solution: an index of no less than a dozen such series, including *Outer Limits*, *Dr. Who*, *The Prisoner*, *Wonder Woman*, *Thunderbirds*, *Man from Atlantis*, *Star Trek* (the animated NBC version, not to be confused with the earlier live-action show), *Battlestar Galactica*, *Galactica: 1980*, *Logan's Run*, *Lost in Space* and *The Starlost* (the latter not one of Harlan Ellison's favorite shows). Each one is thoroughly researched, has a profusion of color and black and white photos, and includes a description of the show's overall basic premise as well as an individual synopsis, cast and crew listing for each episode, along with the original network air dates. In addition, a short “mini-history” background is given to explain how the show got on the air, fascinating behind-the-scenes info, and its ultimate fate in the weekly Nielsen battles. Also provided is a thorough listing of each show's “major characters,” giving each one a fictional biography in keeping with the main premise.

While the book is very well done, matching the size and format of the excellent monthly issue of *Starlog* magazine, I had a number of complaints with this particular volume, the first of a prospective series. Despite the legions of *Dr. Who* fans in this country, I myself would have preferred not having to flip through seven large pages of Who-info; ditto with *Cattle-car Galaxitive* and other, even more putrid programs.

On the other hand, I rejoiced to discover David Hirsch's extremely well-done piece on Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's excellent *Thunderbirds* show—the only such listing I've ever heard of, as a matter of fact. Well done, too, are the synopses on *Outer Limits* and *Lost in Space* (although the latter can hardly qualify as honest-and-for-true science fiction). But *Logan's Run*? *The Starlost*? And *Wonder Woman*, for God's sake? All three are listings that just about anyone could easily have lived without.

I would much rather have seen in-depth listings on such greats as *The Twilight Zone*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Wild Wild West*, *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Avengers* (and *The New Avengers*), and other quality shows of this genre. Some of these have already been covered in past books (including *Fantastic Television*, \$5.95 from Harmony Books, 1 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016), but still deserve thorough coverage in an all-inclusive work of this type. It's hoped that future editions will cover these additional older programs. Other than this drawback, plus the overly inflated pricetag (\$7.95 for a mere 100 pages), *Starlog's TV Episode Guide* series is a must-have for any TV fan's bookshelf. We'll definitely look forward to reviewing other volumes in the near future.—MFW

MAKING HOME VIDEO


Published by: Wideview Books

Price: \$7.95, softbound (1980)

Authors: John and Naomi Bishop

Up to now, no one has attempted a book specifically designed to assist and instruct would-be videophiles interested in producing their own programs on tape. Charles Bessinger's excellent *Video Guild* (discussed in TV #12 and #14) came close, but wasn't really intended for beginners, being designed more for the industrial user.

The husband-and-wife team of John and Naomi Bishop, both of whom use videotape for producing scientific and documentary programs, have come up with a good beginning treatise for the neo-video buff, devoting considerable space to topics like lighting, framing, how to zoom, and other general information of this sort. It's probably the most un-technical video book I've ever seen. But that also brings up its chief problem: for videophile purposes, it's a little *too* simple, leaving out a great deal of info on details like editing and titling for low-budget video productions. In addition, it lacks a much-needed index, which is an absolute necessity for any textbook of this type.

In addition, although it isn't the kind of thing that upsets me, I also found the book's typestyle to be extremely small and hard to read, and found the overall layout somewhat bland and boring. (This is what's known as the pot calling the kettle black.) Also, the chapters have a habit of skipping around somewhat confusingly, going from, say, how to buy equipment, to how to set up a TV monitor, to how a lens works, in just a few scant pages. This is really nit-picking, however; the authors obviously know their stuff, and manage to impart it in a way that's very unique and informative, with a very down-to-earth style that's a relief from the weighty language usually found in works of this kind. Aside from its lack of an index and the other criticisms mentioned above, *Making Home Video* is a pretty decent book for beginners looking for an introduction to the mysteries of portable ½" systems.—MFW 

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 very 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 here 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 have experience.
4. Unlike audio cassettes, most prerecorded videocassettes 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 ½-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: JC—James Camner; IL—Irv Lipscomb; JL—Jim Lowe; and DS—David See. Their views are not necessarily those of *The Videophile*.

Rocketship X-M (Lippert Pictures/1950)

Credits: Cast—Lloyd Bridges, Osa Massen, John Emery, Noah Beery, Jr., and Hugh O'Brien. Produced, Directed and Written by—Kurt Neumann.

Format: VHS

Story: At a press conference, it is announced that a rocketship is to be sent to the moon for primarily scientific reasons. In fact, Rocketship eXpedition Moon is sitting on the pad, ready to be launched within minutes. During the rocket's flight, a miscalculation in fuel mixture sends the rocket hurtling towards Mars. At this point, the science theme is transformed more specifically into fantasy, and the ship lands on Mars. There the crew discovers ruins of a civilization destroyed by atomic warfare. Some Martians survive, but they are discovered to have digressed to cave dwellers. Ah, the irony of civilization's history.

Two of the crew are lost on Mars, but the other three are able to contact Earth just before their return flight ends in tragedy.

Evaluation: What is it that makes *Rocketship X-M* a mystique film? A budget of \$90,000? A shooting schedule of two weeks? A cast of virtual unknowns, most of whom became well-known eventually?

Yes, at least partially, on all counts. Budget and schedule because the finished product effectively masks these limits. Cast because Lloyd Bridges, Hugh O'Brien and Noah Beery, Jr. were just beginning their careers, and all became successful.

But there are other considerations. *Rocketship X-M* brought together some Hollywood talents who obviously "jelled" on the project. Kurt Neuman, who scripted, produced and directed; Karl Struss, a leader in the industry for director of



photography and the *piece de resistance*, Ferde Grofe, prominent American composer, to write the score.

And then there is the lovely Osa Massen, an almost unknown talented Danish character actress, who brings even more class to the production. Her role requires her to be an independent female astronaut, whose vulnerabilities are exposed during the story's development. And with a woman aboard, there is poetic romantic dialogue during this trip in space. See the film before you fastidiously put it down.

The fact that all of this comes off believably is probably due most to Neuman's direction, which keeps the actors naturally restrained while handling his script. The score is beautiful and innovative—Grofe should have written more film scores.

The end result of the united talents of Neuman and Grofe, combined with the talent of the actors, is a setting of an empathic mood few sci-fi films attain. And it beat *Destination*

Moon to the box office!

Video quality is generally good. There is a problem with the sound during the first seconds of the main title, but this is corrected. The original red tint of the Martian sequences comes off well, adds atmosphere and is a welcome contrast to the black and white photography.—IL

Source/Price: Starlog Video/\$51.95

JL runs off the mouth:

I asked Irv to review this tape, knowing full well that he has a love affair with *Rocketship X-M*, and could not possibly say anything bad about it. For those who are not familiar with it, the film is a low budget effort that was rushed out to the box office ahead of the big studio, full-color production *Destination Moon* in an attempt to cash in on all the publicity surrounding the production of the first realistic trip-to-the-moon movie. I'm told that *Moon* was in post-production before shooting even began on *RXM*. Now, with 30 years of hindsight, *RXM* seems, to many fans, to be the better of the two . . . indeed, it is a cult classic in the view of some.

I don't really share that view. For me it is the type of film that you like, if at all, because you first saw it as an impressionable age. In this regard I would put it in a class with such movies as *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* or *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*. I doubt that any of these would become a favorite of a 30-year-old person seeing them for the first time in 1981. In contrast, I can easily imagine such films as the original versions of *King Kong*, *The Thing*, or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* appealing to new generations of young fans for a long time to come.

The production crew did its best to anticipate the science of the space age, but two failures in this regard struck me as particularly amusing. The crew didn't even get aboard the space craft until there were fewer than five minutes left in the countdown. Also, a major portion of the film revolves around the fact that a fuel mixture computation has to be worked out *by hand* over a period of six hours. The on-board computer had apparently not been foreseen. Also the usual 1950's sexist treatment of four guys and a gal will not go over too big with all audiences today.

I'm not saying I dislike it. It's always fun to see early performances by folks who went on to be stars. I especially enjoyed seeing Noah Beery, Jr., who we know today as "Rocky," James Garner's father in *The Rockford Files*. Also the unexpected ending and philosophical implications still have a degree of the impact that was present in 1950. On the whole, however, I would say that this tape is for fans who already know that they want a copy.

For those of you interested in a lengthy treatment of the subject, I recommend the July/August 1979 issue of *American Screen Classics* magazine, which includes an interview with Hugh O'Brien.

The print itself is a pretty good one, though I noticed some unobtrusive static in the soundtrack from time to time. Also more than one of the reels had some "lines" in them. This minor flaw is not so noticeable in black and white films on a

26" screen. As a bonus the tape includes a number of great trailers (some in color) including: *The Hideous Sun Demon*, *Flight to Mars*, *Invaders From Mars* and *Destination Moon*. If you need *Rocketship X-M* in your collection, this Starlog Video release is probably your best bet. I think you can even buy the soundtrack album from the gang at Starlog.

★★★

Invaders from Mars (Fox, 1953/Wade Williams, 1976)

Credits: Cast—Arthur Franz, Helena Carter, Jimmy Hunt, Leif Erikson, Norris Ankrum. Director—William Cameron Menzies.

Length/Format: 78 min./Beta

Story: A young boy (Jimmy Hunt) is awakened by a violent thunderstorm and, looking out his window, sees a flying saucer land in the sand pit behind his house. The next day his father (Erikson), a government scientist, is sucked under the sand where the saucer landed. He later reappears with a changed personality. As this also occurs to his mother and other townspeople, young David begins to suspect them of being possessed by the aliens. David convinces the local astronomer and a police psychiatrist of the aliens' existence, and leads them and the army to the location. David and the psychiatrist (Helena Carter) are sucked underground as well. Just as she is about to become a slave, they are rescued by the army and the saucer is blown up. Suddenly David wakes up and realizes that it has all been a bad dream. But, just as he starts to fall asleep again he sees a strange light outside his window and looks out to see a flying saucer land in the sand pit behind his house.

Evaluation: An enjoyable Saturday-matinee feature full of 50's cliches and characters. The production values are more than adequate for this kind of film as is Menzies' direction. Most of the film, including exteriors, was filmed in the studio, which gives the feature an even more fantastic look. The production was designed by Menzies as well. The acting is on the level usually associated with 1950's science fiction, and the cast is sprinkled with quite a few now-veteran TV performers, including Hillary Brooke, Barbara Billingsley, and Milburn Stone. The videocassette quality is quite acceptable, and the film print quality is very nice. This tape (and all the Starlog Video releases) has the added bonus of theatrical trailers from a number of classic "B" films, including *Robot Monster*, *Rocketship X-M*, *Flight to Mars*, *Kronos*, and others also in release or in preparation by Starlog. There are also humorous animated sequences at the beginning and end of the tape which showcase the feature and trailers nicely.—DS

Source: Starlog Video.

★★★

H.M.S. Pinafore (D'Oyly Carte, 1979)

Credits: Cast—The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company featuring John Reed.

Format/Length: VHS/66 minutes

Content: This is the most famous of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas. When this operetta first came to America in 1878, it set off a craze that we can hardly imagine today and in one year Broadway saw over 14 productions of it given in every possible variation. There were all-girl, all-children, all-black productions as well as the original production brought over a year later by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Evaluation: This video tape deserves only the highest accolades. The performance is admirable and captures a live performance that is amazingly faithful to the original production first staged by Gilbert. The popular D'Oyly Carte veteran John Reed leads the cast in a very good performance. If, as is rumored, the D'Oyly company disbands, this will be a priceless treasure. The picture quality and sound is excellent.—JC

Source: Magnetic Video

★★★

Yeoman of the Guard (London Festival, 1979)

Credits: Cast—Tommy Steele stars in a production filmed at the Tower of London.

Format/Length: VHS/120 minutes.

Content: One of most beautiful of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas *Yeoman* is also one of the most operatic. Never as popular as *Pinafore*, *Pirates* or *The Mikado*, it is still a classic which is often the favorite of the Savoyards.

Evaluation: A disaster. The British Musical comedy star Tommy Steele is a joke in the crucial role of Jack Point. He has neither the voice nor the style and he looks wrong. The rest of the cast is all right, but undistinguished. As if the performance wasn't bad enough, the sound track on my tape was miserable. It was recorded at a very low level and I had to boost the loudness control on my set. Consequently, tape hiss was at a very high level. The lip-sync process that was used was painfully evident. My suggestion is to wait for the excellent BBC performance featuring Valerie Masterson.—JC

Source: Magnetic Video.

★★★

I Led 2 Lives (1931)

Credits: Cast—Bela Lugosi (sort of), Lyle Talbot and Daniel Davis. (The names should have been changed to protect the innocent.) Director—the inimitable Edward Wood, Jr.

Format/Length: Beta X-2/64 minutes

Story: As best I could determine, this is the story of a police detective who, upon investigating the suicide of a transvestite,

seeks the expertise of a psychiatrist to help him understand the private agony that would drive such a person to self-destruction. The doctor then tells the tale of two poor souls Glen/Glenda and Alan/Ann who suffered from similar sexual dysfunctions, but who resolved them in ways best suited to their particular aberrations.

You may ask: "Which part does Bela Lugosi play?" I'm still trying to figure that one out, myself. Poor old Mr. Lugosi doesn't really play any part in the story itself, but he pops up every so often (sort of like the man with no neck in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*) to make some unintelligible pronouncement, designed, I suspect, to lend an air of chastisement to the whole affair. In truth, I rather doubt that, when these scenes were shot, Lugosi knew what movie he was appearing in.

The other "known" actor, Lyle Talbot, has a throwaway part, too. As the police inspector he appears briefly at the opening and close. Whenever Mr. Talbot recounts his career, he may well mention that he has made over 100 films; he may well mention that he appeared in *Three on a Match*, *Oil for the Lamps of China* and, even *High School Confidential*; he may well mention that he played Joe Randolph on *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* for 11 seasons; but you can be sure that his resum will make no mention of his "starring" role in what has been described as "the freakiest movie of all time"—*I Led 2 Lives*.

The film is better known under the title *Glen or Glenda*, and is also known as *I Changed My Sex*. Director Wood went on to fame a few years later with *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, generally regarded as the worst film of all time. From a film scholar's viewpoint, it is interesting to view his earlier work and gain some measure of recognition as to where he sharpened his skills.

Evaluation: This is either one of the hokiest, most bewildering, and pseudo-exploitative pieces of nonsense that I have ever seen, or a work of true surrealistic genius, a forerunner of such films as *Eraserhead*, I'm not sure which. The story is told through an incredible mish-mash of outrageous narration, weirdo Lugosi interludes, atrocious scripting and acting, "modern" psychiatry, satanic nightmares, melodramatic music and feminine attire, all held together by inexplicable shots of the Los Angeles freeway, steel mill footage that looks like it was borrowed from *Industry on Parade*, and ridiculous thunder and lightning effects. (I won't mention the Defense Department file footage.)

Seemingly made on a budget in excess of three figures, *I Led 2 Lives* is a curiosity by any standard. Possibly produced for the purpose of cashing in on the publicity surrounding the Christine Jorgensen affair, it fails on every level, and yet is so bizarre that I was spellbound by it throughout. Glen's problems begin when, against his father's wishes, he wears his sister's dress to a Halloween party. (His mother assures him that he "always did look better as a girl" anyway.) The story never really advances very much, and the disjointed "message" of the narration and doctor's office sequences is so far removed from today's reality that it is difficult to understand even in terms that were supposedly meaningful in 1953.

Continued on p. 51



Ted Reinhart's

Western Roundup

The popularity of western film conventions is certainly on the rise. Two major events will have occurred by the time this edition of *The Videophile* is in readiness for reading . . . one in Charlotte, NC, and the other in Memphis, TN. Both have been staged in these respective cities previously, but I am reliably advised that attendance will be significantly larger and overall contents much expanded . . . more guest stars, films to screen, special entertainment, and capacity dealer merchandising (including video tape sales). Your cowboy columnist happily continues what seems to be a never-ending convention performance spree by appearing at the largest of them all, The Western Film Fair in Charlotte. A full report next time around. The second Tom Mix National Festival is slated for DuBois, PA, September 17, 18, and 19, and we'll also be returning to Tifton, GA in February for the second Western Film Roundup.

I contend that video has played a vital part in the surprising surge of success with these festivals, fairs, conventions (call them what you wish). The old time cowboy pictures are winning many new fans through their availability on cassettes. In turn, the collector is more readily enticed to attend these affairs. Hope to meet some of you videophiles along my melody trail.

My "special" sales cassette for this issue is a super double feature—*Three Texas Steers* with The Three Mesquiteers, and *Hopalong Cassidy Enters*, with William Boyd. Please check my ad elsewhere in this publication.



Videocassette Reviews

The Arizona Raiders (Paramount, 1936) B&W

Credits: Cast—Larry "Buster" Crabbe, Raymond Hatton, Marsha Hunt, Jane Rhodes, Johnny Downs, Grant Withers, Don Rowan, Arthur Aylesworth. Director—James Hogan.

Story: Buster Crabbe, wrongly accused of horse stealing, escapes the hangman's noose seconds before he "swings." After making a getaway, he comes upon another hanging party. This time Raymond Hatton is the victim, guilty of a petty crime, but not deserving of his fate. Crabbe rescues Ray, and both ride off together to another territory. Later

Johnny Downs joins the twosome. Johnny has been run off The Spanish Peaks Ranch for courting Jane Rhodes, sister of Marsha Hunt who owns this large horse ranch. Marsha took over the operation after her father died, and is having problems with outlaws stealing her prized animals. It so happens that Grant Withers, attorney and administrator of the estate, is behind all the troubles. Withers wants control of the ranch, and resorts to these underhanded doings. Buster Crabbe and Raymond Hatton hire on at the Spanish Peaks and hide Johnny Downs away in the stable. In no time at all Crabbe becomes aware of Withers' scheme, and he and his pals aid the girls and save the ranch. Buster gets Marsha, and Johnny finally wins Jane.

Evaluation: The scenario of this movie was based on the Zane Gray story, *Raiders of Spanish Peaks*, and other than a few overly silly comedy bits involving Johnny Downs, the movie holds up quite well. I have always maintained that Buster Crabbe (or as he was billed in this entry, "Larry Crabbe") made his best pictures during his initial acting years with Paramount. These pictures far outclassed his later P.R.C. products when he played Billy the Kid and Billy Carson. There is one particularly hilarious sequence where Hatton uses a kicking horse (set off to do so by a whistle) to great advantage in subduing the badies. I recommend this oater to all fans of the movie west. Picture and sound quality are quite good.

Source: Video Communications, Inc.



High Noon (United Artists, 1952) B&W

Credits: Cast—Gary Cooper, Grace Kelly, Thomas Mitchell, Lloyd Bridges, Katy Jurado, Otto Kruger, Lon Chaney, Jr., Ian MacDonald, Harry Shannon, Lee Van Cleef, Bob Wilke, Sheb Wooley, Harry Morgan, Tom London. Director—Fred Zinneman.

Story: Gary Cooper and his new bride prepare to leave Hadleyville for a new life together. An hour away, a steam engine train chugs relentlessly towards its daily noon stop. On the train is ex-convict Frank Miller. His three gunmen lounge around the hot dusty train depot waiting. They plan to gun down Cooper, who sent Miller to prison. With little more than an hour to spare, Cooper decides to remain and see

justice done. If he leaves, the town will be at the mercy of the cutthroats. In staying, he finds that one by one, fear and self-interest cause decent citizens to desert him, meaning he will have to wage a fight single-handedly—a fight which is theirs as well as his. A conclusion finds Cooper triumphing with the last minute help of his pacifist wife.

Evaluation: For those of you who read my column of many issues back regarding your writer's choice of the "all time best of the movie west," it may be recalled that *High Noon* rated the top position. My fondness for Cooper, in all candor, did influence this choice. This *IS* Cooper's movie . . . perhaps the finest of a long and successful acting career. But there's more to the picture than just Gary. As strong a supporting cast as one will ever find, coupled with an academy-award musical score and a gripping story of one man's courage all establish *High Noon* as a "classic" . . . an unforgettable experience. The overall quality of this videocassette is perfect in every respect.

Source: The Nostalgia Merchant.



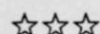
South of the Border (Republic, 1939) B&W

Credits: Cast—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnett, June Storey, Lupita Tovar, Mary Lee, Duncan Renaldo, Frank Reicher, Alan Edwards, William Farnum. Director—George Sherman.

Story: Gene Autry and his pal Smiley Burnette, U.S. Secret Agents, are on assignment south of the border to prevent a potential Mexican revolution. The trouble is being stirred by members of a group of subversives from an enemy nation which plans to gain control of rich oil fields in Mexico. While there, Autry falls in love with Delores (Lupita Tovar). Romancing becomes an almost impossible task when Gene learns that the revolutionists are being led by Delores' brother, Andreo (Duncan Renaldo), who is not aware he is being used as a dupe. Too late, Andreo wakens to the fact that his cause will not benefit his country, and is killed in a final showdown. Shame has been brought to Delores and her family. She feels the only way to atone for her brother's deeds is to join a convent and become a nun. Autry then realizes there cannot be a future for the two and rides away.

Evaluation: This is the movie inspired by a song . . . "South of the Border." And director George Sherman just couldn't pull it off. The picture's only asset is the song itself (when sung), and the fact that this melody became a hit sensation resulted in its motion picture offspring being a big money-maker—one of Autry's biggest. Plainly speaking, the whole damn feature "stinks" . . . everything seems "forced," the acting "uncomfortable." I read Gene's mind as he rides Champion away from his lost love as thinking, "Am I ever glad to get this mess in the can. Hope Republic does better by me next film." Audio and video quality rate as pretty good, but don't order, you'll regret it.

Source: Blackhawk Films.



Six Shootin' Sheriff (Grand National, 1938) B&W

Credits: Cast—Ken Maynard, Marjorie Reynolds, Lafe McKee, Harry Harvey, Jane Keckley, Walter Long, Bob Terry, Tom London, Warner Richmond, Dick Alexander. Director—Harry Fraser.

Story: Ken Maynard, unjustly framed for a bank robbery, returns to town to settle the score with Warner Richmond, the man responsible for the frame. In no time Ken completes his mission and clears himself. The townsfolk are impressed with Maynard's actions and make him sheriff. Ken's old pals, members of an outlaw gang, plan on using their friendship to advantage in pulling a robbery. Ken refuses to protect these men, even after learning that his own brother, Chuck (Walter Long), is now a member of the outlaw gang. The crooks go through with their plans and Sheriff Maynard sets out to track them down. He finds Chuck and a bitter struggle ensues. Ken recovers the stolen loot and returns it to town, allowing his brother to go free. Later though, Chuck is captured by the posse and Ken must jail him. Marjorie Reynolds, who has grown fond of Ken, releases his kid brother after learning that he plans on quitting his job as lawman and leaving the country. Ken then decides to remain and not pursue his fleeing kin.

Evaluation: This is a nicely done western, with above average production value. Marjorie Reynolds (later to become television's Mrs. Chester Riley—*Life of Riley*—William Bendix) is one of the best B-western leading ladies. The plot is an overworked one, but there is enough action to hold one's interest. The appeal of this item would be more directed to a Maynard follower. Sight and sound quality are very good.

Source: Video Communications, Inc.



A Double Feature

Three Texas Steers (Republic, 1939) B&W

Credits: Cast—John Wayne, Ray Corrigan, Max Terhune, Carole Landis, Dave Sharpe, Roscoe Ates, Ralph Graves, Collette Lyons, Billy Curtis. Director—George Sherman.

Story: Circus owner Carole Landis, who also has possession of a ranch which, unknown to her, is a future site for a dam, begins to be subjected to all forms of damage to her "big top." Wild animals are released, and the tent and much equipment are destroyed by fire. Being forced out of business, Carole heads to her ranch. She mistakes her neighboring ranch, owned by the Three Mesquiteers (Wayne, Corrigan, Terhune) as hers. The boys do not have the heart to tell her differently since the girl's property is quite run down and non-productive. The Mesquiteers become aware of Carole's position, and later learn that her business manager, Ralph Graves, holds a mortgage on the Landis ranch in hopes of

getting complete title to the land and reaping the benefits of selling to the dam construction people. The girl is able to pay off the mortgage after Max Terhune drives a former circus horse in a trotting race and wins first money.

Evaluation: When Duke Wayne was playing Mesquiteer, Stony Brooke, there was not a bad picture in the series. I cannot understand the significance of this movie's title—you never encounter *one* Texas steer, let alone *three*.^{*} But the story line is fresh and entertaining. The concluding trotting race is a real delight. Picture quality is pretty good, sound is good.


^{*}Maybe it should have been "Three Texas Studs."—Ed.

Hopalong Cassidy Enters (Paramount, 1935) B&W

Credits: Cast—William Boyd, Jimmy Ellison, George Hayes, Paula Stone, Robert Warwick, Charles Middleton, Frank McGlynn, Jr., Kenneth Thompson. Director—Howard Bretherton.


Story: Range war between the Bar-20 and H-Two ranches is brewing. Kenneth Thompson is stealing cattle from one spread and driving them to the other. The respective owners then blame one another. William Boyd, absent from his former place of employment, The Bar-20, returns in time to figure out that Thompson is behind the whole scheme. The outlaw and his gang hope that both ranches will destroy one another, making it easier for him to take over the complete control of each operation. Boyd and his Bar-20 crowd thwart the crook's efforts, and peace is restored to the range.

Evaluation: This movie introduced the world to one of the most successful B-western series in motion picture history . . . The Hopalong Cassidy pictures. A high budget permitted lavish settings, a large cast, and an overall class product to become an excellent initial Hoppy picture. Boyd had not yet had an opportunity to "develop" his role as the Hopalong Cassidy who won a legion of fans of all ages, but it's interesting to see the "original" characterization. This is a must for all western collectors. Visual and audio quality are quite good for a film of this vintage.

Source: Ted Reinhart. 

The quality of the tape is "acceptable," nothing more. The picture is a bit muddy and indistinct, though possibly the best available print of this rarity. The sound is a tad muffled at times, especially during the Lugosi scenes. There is also an occasional lingering after-image in the tape transfer, whenever camera angles change. On the whole, the tape quality is good enough for those of us who are more interested in the content than the clarity. I've seen a lot worse.

But is it a "good" movie? Heavens no! It's atrocious. One of the worst. Yet, I will undoubtedly watch it several more times for that very reason. For fans of "Z" movies, this one is a must! Among the *creme de la merde*, as it were. For those of you who don't have the slightest idea what I'm talking about, you had best give this one a wide berth. I thought it was fascinating.—JL.

Source: Thunderbird Films, 

SOURCES

Starlog Video
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Video Communications
6555 E. Skelly Drive
Tulsa, OK 74145

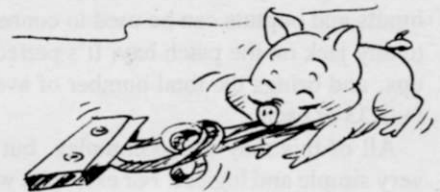
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dubbing situations, though of course there will always be times when you'll need a half-dozen cables in certain extremely involved sessions.

As you add more VTR's, disc players and accessories to your system, you need only plug each new unit into the vacant jack in the patchbay's back panel without disturbing your existing set-up. Since the PB-289G can handle up to 16 different two-channel audio and video inputs and outputs—that is, 32 sets of mono inputs and 32 sets of mono outputs—you should have more than enough room to expand in the years to come.

To add more flexibility to the system, the manufacturer has provided a set of "External" phono jacks on the front panel (not the rear) for emergency situations, like when a friend brings over an additional deck and you don't have time to pull the whole unit out and attach it in back. A special pair of Bantam patch jacks immediately to the right of these external inputs and outputs can be used to connect the external signals to any jack on the patch bay. It's perfect for temporary hook-ups, and brings the total number of available inputs and outputs 33 of each.

All of this may sound complex, but in actual practice it's very simple and logical. For example, with the test set-up used for evaluation, I wired the system as follows:

OUTPUTS: Beta II Sync VHS etc.
INPUTS: Sync VHS Monitor #1 etc.

With the external programming switches turned on, I could dub immediately from my Beta deck through a stabilizer to VHS and monitor its output *without using any cables*. Of course, to dub from Beta to VHS would require using one cable—or two, if the sync stabilizer was employed.

Performance: No amount of feeding one machine to another, either by cable or by the direct internal switches, could produce any perceptible losses or "bleed-overs." In a number of A/B comparison tests, we recorded signals directly from the ¾" player to the Beta deck without the patchbay, then with it, and neither MFW nor myself could discern any difference. The results looked equally clean on the 6½" Novabeam, which is normally quite sensitive and unforgiving to even the slightest presence of interference in a video signal. The audio, too, was as noise- and hum-free as it was before it went into the patchbay. In short, it's as if the patchbay didn't exist except as another well-shielded, highly-isolated wire between one input and an output. I don't think anyone could ask for anything more than that.

Conclusion: The PG-289G makes it incredibly simple to record FM/TV simulcasts, or to audio dub from records or other sources, or to put together practically any combination a videophile's mind is capable of conjuring up. As mentioned earlier, my sound processing unit can be placed between video

units to improve sound quality, like Dolby noise reducers, equalizers, and so on. The same can be done for the video, with an image enhancer, stabilizer, processing amplifier, or other accessory attached as needed, putting an end to the "rats' nest" of wires that usually hides behind most complicated audio and video systems.

This isn't to say that I don't have any criticisms of the patchbay. I was disappointed with its instruction manual, which had a heavy emphasis on the audio-only applications of the patchbay and barely scratched the surface on video. This is understandable, since the product evolved first as an audio product and then to its present form, but more information should be provided on video systems in future editions. In all honesty, the manufacturer was extremely helpful in discussing solutions to particular audio/video problems over the phone, which proved to me that they're extremely knowledgeable about their products, even if their manual doesn't show it.

Another minor irritation was that only two Bantam patch-cables were provided, which is far short of the number most video users will require. Considering that most people buying a product like this will most likely have a larger-than-average home system, it would seem that at least 5 or 6 cables would be closer to the average required by these users. I finally ended up with 10 cables for my system, but this was partially due to my splitting up the stereo audio sources from the video as mentioned.

In addition, I feel that the Audio-Visual Systems' patch-cables themselves are a little long at 18" each. Given the relatively small size of the patchbay, a 12" cable would be sufficient and wouldn't clutter it up as much. I should point out that the cables *are* extremely well-made. I found that you could rapidly push and pull out the plugs as needed without fear of ripping the cable out of the plug. The manufacturer gives a life expectancy of 10,000 cycles, which should make it durable enough to last for at least five years before either the jacks or the cables need replacement. The only other complaint I have is the color of the front panel—an admittedly minor criticism. Since most audio rack equipment these days is "high-tech black," I think basic black would be a better choice than the dark greenish-brown color provided. The manufacturer commented that they're currently using a double-anodizing process which actually dyes the metal, making it almost impervious to scratches. That's all well and good, but I'd still prefer it black.

These considerations, as I said, have nothing to do with the PB-289G's fine performance and simplicity of operation. With all those jacks and patch-holes, the unit may at first seem too large for the average videophile owning perhaps two VTR's and a disc player or video game. Keep in mind that by separating audio and video, which entails halving the available inputs and outputs, you can allow for total versatility and stereo dubbing. Stereo videodiscs are here today, some consumer VTR's (like Sony's J9 and the new model from Akai) are starting to appear, and stereo broadcast TV is only a couple of years away. With the ever-expanding video accessory

market, you'll undoubtedly be adding a few devices to your system sooner or later. All things considered, the PB-289G would seem to be a state-of-the-art answer to the perennial problem of how to hook-up a good-sized audio/video system. Even better, it's ideally suited to the leisurely-expanding home entertainment center, and should be capable of handling a goodly number of additional VTR's as your system changes over the years.

—F.C.

MFW Comments: In my own evaluation of the AVS patchbay, I came to many of the same conclusions. However, I do have a number of additional objections and complaints. First, the patch jack labeling strips are too damned narrow. Although the manufacturer advises use of a special finepoint pen or pencil to letter it, there simply isn't enough space on the paper strip for, say, "SL-5600 Audio In." You might want to simply number your VTR's "#1, #2," and so on, so that you could label the patch panel "VTR #1 Aud. In," or the equivalent. I am also concerned about the potential problem involved in combining both an audio signal and a video signal on a single three-conductor plug and jack. After several exhaustive tests, I came upon only one or two instances where this was a problem, mostly due to a ground-loop situation between a 3/4" deck and an older Beta recorder. Separating the two did away with the hum. I noted that the video didn't seem affected at all. Apparently, only the audio was affected—and, again, this was just one isolated case out of many successful hook-ups.

I also wasn't particularly keen on the "Mult" jacks included in the patchbay, there being the possibility of someone mistakenly trying to use them as a "poor man's video DA." As most audio buffs are aware, a Mult is simply a series of *multiple* audio jacks soldered together so that you can plug the output of one source into one jack and get two (or more) additional outputs. As the instruction manual mentions, it is essentially the patchbay equivalent of a "Y" cable. Needless to say, trying this effect with video just doesn't work, the result being two video signals with only half of their normal sync and video levels—quite a mess. A better solution would be to employ a conventional video distribution amplifier (like those offered by Showtime Video Ventures, Vidicraft, HMS, and several other suppliers) and hook up its four outputs to four jacks on the patchbay as required.

I'm also not real keen on the idea of using phono jacks—even gold-plated ones—for any patchbay-type device. The manufacturer explained that since the PB-289G was originally designed for the perfectionist audiophile and semi-professional user, the phono jacks were provided as being the standard connector found in most consumer audio products. Due to the patch bay's high isolation between signal paths, the designers later discovered that the patchbay could be used with video devices. Still, phono jacks have proven time and time again to be undependable and prone to breaking down after

much heavy use. For this reason, I'd like to emphasize that once your patchbay is set up, you should avoid plugging or unplugging the rear panel jacks unless it's absolutely necessary. In addition, the patchbay shouldn't be moved once the cables are attached, to avoid bumping or damaging the rear panel connections. During one of my tests, I accidentally committed the latter bungling error, and placed a massive glitch in a recording I was making at the time. Beware!

Perhaps my key concern about the PB-289G is its high price tag. I spoke at length with Orrin Charm, the amiable president of Audio Visual Systems as to whether omitting the gold-plating on the phono jacks would significantly lower the price. No such luck. I also asked whether using professional BNC jacks for video would affect the price much. It would—raising it considerably. So much for keeping costs down.

As for how the PB-289G compares to the Trompeter patchbay discussed in last issue's **How-2** column, we couldn't discern any difference in performance between the two, aside from their substantially different price tags and appearances. The Trompeter is admittedly a little uglier and more "militaristic" than the smaller AVS unit, but then you pay at least \$150 more for the latter's improved looks. The Trompeter also requires a little soldering on the audio connections, making it a little more difficult to install. Still, it's been the choice of most TV networks and broadcast stations for many years, and might be preferable to the diehard purist. However, all things considered, and especially since the PB-289G will fit into most people's homes a little better, I wouldn't be surprised if it were to be preferred by the majority of our readers.

Further thoughts on the SL-5800 (#28): Since around March of this year, all of the newest versions of Sony's SL-5800 have been updated to provide an additional control knob on the right side, labeled "Brightness Balance." This new knob, resembling the two tracking knobs on the opposite side of the Beta deck, help reduce the flickering field effect during still-frame and slow-motion playback. Since previous versions of the SL-5800 did not have this feature, we're going to refer to the new modified decks as the "SL-5800A," to avoid confusion. We also advise any and all prospective 5800 purchasers to inspect the VTR before purchase to make sure that you are getting the unit with the Brightness Balance control. Also, according to J.F., these new "5800A's" have some minor internal changes over the earlier units, essentially improving the transport hub-drive mechanisms and resulting in better BetaScan performance. There may be other updates and modifications as well, but these are all that we're aware of at press time.

And on the same topic of the SL-5800: we were contacted by a reader in the Chicago area who was convinced that his particular 5800 did not perform as well as his older SL-8200,

and asked why this might be so. We were at a loss to answer this at first, and decided to once again A/B a 5800 and a Sony 8200, along with the Zenith equivalent of the latter (the JR-9000). As expected, the video performance of both machines was exceeded by the SL-5800, not only in terms of resolution and noise, but also in overall color quality and detail. The only problem with this comparison is the fact that both the 8200 and 9000 used in the comparison were far from being pristine machines, having a minimum of several hundred hours of use on them. If a brand-new SL-8200 were available, however, we really doubt that there would be all that much of a change in the results of this comparison. MFW, JF, and MC are all in agreement on this issue of Beta performance.

On the other hand, JM has often complained about Sony's altered noise-reduction and image-processing circuitry in their 5000-series VTR's, and has said more than once that he prefers the less "smeary" image from 8200's. MFW and JF are somewhat more enamoured of the new processing, and disagree with JM's assertion that it makes the tapes tend to resemble VHS' overall "look." We plan to take a more in-depth look at these subtle differences in video quality in a future issue, and would be glad to consider any additional comments from our readers on the subject.

Further thoughts on the Sony Profeel KX-27HF1 (#30):

Since our review was first published in #30, we've received a wide variety of queries and interest from readers, even a couple from some Other Video Magazines (!). We've had time to further streamline and clarify the opinions discussed in that original review. For one, the problematic "white/black transition glitch" still occurs, though with no lesser or greater frequency than before. We had a chance to examine the new U.S. versions at two trade shows recently, and found that this minor design drawback is still present with these units (the KX-2501 and KX-1901, respectively), but to a less annoying degree. The U.S. models also provide two separate sets of audio/video inputs via the companion VTX-1000R tuner unit, and also provide a small gain pot for each video input, for adjusting overall level. In addition, home computer buffs will be pleased to note that the Profeels have a special multi-pin jack designed for direct RGB connection to most color computers, for use as a high-resolution graphics display. None of these latter features are presently offered on the comparable Japanese models.

Meanwhile, a Sony representative disagreed with our calling the KX-27HF1 a "26 inch" set, since the U.S. equivalent, the KV-2501, is being designated as a 25 inch model. When asked whether the picture tubes in Sony's popular 26" sets were identical to those used in the Profeel, the answer came back as a resounding "NO." Apparently, these picture tubes may be more similar to those used in Sony's industrial 25" monitor than the ones used in any of their U.S. consumer sets. This may be due partially to the fact that all of Sony's monitors, including professional, industrial, and Profeel, are

still being manufactured in Japan, whereas most of their U.S. consumer products are built in San Diego. Anyhoo, we'll go along with Sony on this one, and agree that the picture tube in the larger Profeel is a 25"—despite the fact that all of their Japanese consumer TV consoles are called 27" in Japan and 26" in the U.S., and that the large-screen Profeel in Japan is likewise designated as a 27" set.

Further thoughts on the VFT-170 (#31): We made a brief mention of the fact that all of the 1/2" Hitachi and RCA portables released so far have used lead-acid (alkaline) battery packs. As a further comment on the subject, we should add that, in general, Ni-Cad (nickel-cadmium) batteries are preferable as far as quick recharging goes, but that alkaline batteries will generally be able to power equipment for a slightly greater length of time. Also, alkaline batteries are almost always less expensive than an equivalent Ni-cad battery. In the long run, however, Ni-cad batteries are usually a better idea since they can be recharged and used more often than alkalines. The alkalines can only be charged a few times before they simply won't recharge any more.

Officials from both RCA and Hitachi have commented that so far they've held back on providing any Ni-cad batteries for use with their portables for fear of obsoleting all the other alkaline batteries now in stock by most of their dealers. It's hoped that a similar-sized Ni-cad replacement may be offered in the future to replace the older alkalines.

Further thoughts on the Sony RM-440 Edit Control Unit (#31):

Last issue, we had a notation to the effect that the RM-440 works very poorly with Sony's older SLO-320 and SLP-300 Beta industrial decks. For some reason, when the editor is connected to these decks, their video output is filled with dozens of horizontal lines that resemble dropouts. Apparently, like some computers that generate RF interference, the RM-440 is not very well shielded and radiates waves of electrical impulses that can foul up some VTR's within a distance of 5 or 10 feet. Although we were unable to get rid of all of the interference in the 320's regardless of the distance between the devices, we found that newer SLO-323's aren't quite as sensitive, and the newest SLO-383's work fine unless they are operated less than a foot away from an RM-440. While we appreciate Sony's creativity in coming up with this otherwise excellent, low-cost, full-featured editing unit, we'd like to kick whoever was in charge of shielding its RF interference. As a matter of fact, we wouldn't be surprised if this interference was bad enough to warrant an FCC investigation.

In addition, the 440 does indeed operate very poorly with some SLO-320's. With a newer deck (serial number 12353), we noted that hooking the editor up to the VTR gave it a nervous breakdown, causing it to switch rapidly between Play, Fast-Forward and Stop. However, with an older 320 (serial number 10067), it seemed to work fine except for the interference problem discussed above. There was still a major difficulty with editing on the 320, however, since the 440 kept

attempting to jam the 320 into the record mode after a standard 5-second playback pre-roll, resulting in an extremely poor quality edit. We hit upon a solution to this problem by holding down the deck's record button throughout the pre-roll sequence, which usually resulted in an acceptable edit. Of course, this technique prevents actually seeing the edit take place, since your monitor will show only the picture playing back from the playback source. SLO-323's and 383's work fine with the RM-440, however since their servo-circuitry automatically locks to their video inputs in the playback mode, allowing a punch-in "flying-start" edit.

We have also discovered an additional drawback with the RM-440 that has to do with its use with Sony's VO-2860A editing U-Matic deck. While this recorder is quite expensive (\$6600) and is therefore out of league for most discussions in this magazine, we still want to note that we found it extremely annoying to be unable to place the 2860 into high-speed search or even twice-normal speed, which should have been child's play for the 440's designers to include in this product. We approached a local Sony spokesman for comment about this problem, as well as the interference and edit malfunctions with SLO-320's, and his only comment was that we'd be better off using their old RM-400 or 430 editors (the latter reviewed in #23) instead of the new one—not a very good solution, to our way of thinking.

The last comment we have to make on the 440 is a minor error made by MFW in his mention that "any 2000-series Sony 3/4" decks with "floating control track heads" can be used with this editor, since most other 3/4" decks pull the tape away from this head during the fast-forward and rewind modes, and won't work for accurate editing. Sony 3/4" decks compatible with the 440 include the VO-2611 recorder/player (reviewed in #26), the VP-2011 player, the VO-2800 editor/recorder, the VO-2850 and 2850A editors (both discontinued), the VO-2860 and 2860A editors, and the VP-2260 player.

Further thoughts on Sony SL-5000-series Beta Decks: TV reader M. O'C. brought to our attention yet another amusing quirk found in all of Sony's newest VTR's—their "Camera Pause" jack, which we have always assumed was merely a standard sub-miniature phone jack. Actually, the technical whizzes back in Tokyo have designed a unique jack that is just a tiny bit different than a sub-mini one, altering the latter to place a locking tip on it and thereby making it very difficult to use this remote pause jack with any non-Sony camera. Sneaky, eh?

Well, M. O'C. checked and checked and found that Sony's Kansas City parts center was unable or unwilling to sell him just this special plug by itself, but managed to get ahold of part #1-551-529-00, which is a cable with a Sony sub-mini plug at one end and a regular sub-mini plug at the other. You can remove the Sony plug and rewire it to your camera pause cable, and it'll work fine. Of course, as we pointed out to this reader, you could also simply use the deck's separate

BetaScan pause control, placing it near your camera during indoors shooting. But this still doesn't excuse Sony's stubbornness and insensitivity in providing this kind of deliberate "planned obsolescence" design.


STATE OF THE ART

Continued from p. 41

piece of fabric. This is not to say the Allsop head cleaner is bad—it's not. In fact, the Allsop is quite good. The Allsop Beta cleaner, however, is a bit complicated for some to figure out, while the Scotch cleaner by 3M is as easy to pop into the machine as a regular cassette. One day I was playing a tape in my SL-5400 Beta deck and just the audio suddenly got very dull and "muddy"—all bass, no treble. So I inserted the 3M head cleaner for about 5 seconds, and the tape played perfectly, bright and clear sound. They're about \$15 in most video stores.

The Summer CES in Chicago was a killer again this year. A transit strike could have brought the Windy City to its knees, but it never happened. Marc and I stayed at what we called the "Roach Motel"—ya check in, but ya don't check out! Amazingly, we both escaped with little damage to our health. I'll spare MFW any embarrassment about how long it took him to reimburse me for the room at that AAA disapproved rat trap.

An observation on the lower mall level of the show where all of the XXX movies were for sale: At least 18 or 20 software companies were in the porn business. They should do a talk show on KOB in Albuquerque—they could call it "Porn on the Kob." Booo, OK no more of that. One company, Video Tape Exchange in L.A., was showing smartly packaged all-male movies for the gay market. After the release of so many straight XXX features, many of which contain at least one, if not multiple lesbian sequences, it stands to reason that the all-male market is the next to be tapped. If a dollar can be made and a sect of the population served, it's gonna happen. Marilyn Chambers was on hand, in person, signing autographs. Had there been a piano available, she probably would have tickled the "ivory's."

Better quit now before the rating on the column changes. We'll talk at least one more time before the year's over. So keep 'em clean (with 3M), stay legal (the FBI is still watching us all), and most of all, IN TOUCH! 

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The one show that I would really like to see again is "The Corner Bar." It was a summer replacement show on ABC in the summers of 1972-73. To me it was a riot! Short lived shows like this are part of "The Impossible Collection."

Others would include Red Skelton, Jack Benny, Ernie Kovacs, and others.

Perhaps the owners of the long lost material will realize that there is a market for the shows and will transfer the shows onto videotape. They will realize a profit for the effort and we video-nuts will once again see our favorites.

Thanks,
Robert Olimski


Yes, Robert, *The Corner Bar* is a good example of a short-lived series that is unlikely to turn up again. In the summer of '72, the neighborhood tavern, "Grant's Tomb," was run by Harry Grant played by Gabriel Dell (formerly of the Bowery Boys and *The Steve Allen Show*). In '73 Ann Meara (now of the not dissimilar *Archie Bunker's Place*) and Eugene Roche took over. One of the regular patrons was played by Ron Casey, now known as Officer Carl Levitt on *Barney Miller*. Little wonder that the show was funny; it was produced by Alan King and Howard Morris.

Other short-lived series that I consider collectible (and which I expect are in the collection of 1/2" cassette-tape buffs somewhere) include *Fay* (Sept. and Oct. 1975; repeated May and June 76), the troubled series about a 40-ish divorcee (Lee

Grant) and her "ex" (Joe Silver), and *The Associates*. Of particular interest is the episode in which John Housman, in the role of Professor Kingsfield from *The Paper Chase*, was the guest star. His encounter with Wilfred Hyde-White is an example of snappy situation comedy repartee at its very best.

As for *Jack Benny* and *Ernie Kovacs*, many episodes of their shows still exist. Benny's are probably running in syndication somewhere right now. Several of the Kovacs shows were rerun on PBS just a couple of years ago and are undoubtedly in the collections of a number of our readers.

Red Skelton is another story. Following 10 years on radio, Red logged 20 more on television (9/30/51-8/29/71), and is, without question, one of the most popular performers of all time. His show finished in the #4 spot in its first season and seldom fell from the top twenty. It was #12 for the 58-59 season, with 7 of the 11 shows ahead of it being westerns. After 15 years on the tube, Red's show held down the #2 spot for the 1966-67 season, trailing only *Bonanza*. It was still the 7th most popular show in its next to the last season. And yet, for reasons that deserve a fuller treatment elsewhere, Red Skelton is often overlooked when the all-time greats are discussed. He was . . . well, . . . different. Many of his shows undoubtedly exist on tape, but there is some controversy as to whether he will ever allow them to be seen again. In the past year or two, Red has shown up on a couple of pay-cable specials, where his fans have found him to be as delightful as ever.

Pant, pant. Please, no more, not until next time anyway. Send me your hopes and dreams. I'll try to give them the care that they deserve. 

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MINI-ADS

FOR SALE

PANASONIC Industrial Portable VHS 1/2" NV-8400 in excellent condition, complete with battery, case, AC charger. (See review in TV #20, recommended component in TV #26). \$700 PP. 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. \$750 PP. Milton Sandy, Jr., Box 1535, Corinth, MS 38834. (601) 286-6087.

CARTRIVISION VTR's—5 each, with service tools/manuals, spare parts, 50 each 100-minute tapes, B/W camera, 2 cabinets—All for \$350 less shipping. Detailer II Image Enhancer \$160. All-sop Automatic VHS head cleaning cassette \$19. Jim Foster, 2033 Arrowhead Dr., Oakland, CA 94611. (415) 399-2932 after 5:30.

I have a large number of Nostalgia Merchant (VHS & Beta) for sale. Write for a complete list of titles and prices. Send a check quickly and get these VHS for \$40 each: *Best of Amos & Andy, Vol. 1, The Lone Ranger, The Origin of the Lone Ranger*. These Beta for \$40 each: *The Thing, The Lone Ranger, Tall in the Saddle*. Dwight Lindley, P.O. Box 3211, Wilson, NC 27893.

Buy brand new prerecorded Beta and VHS titles

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BETA

Wanted in Beta II format—*The Lost Horizon* (orig.) Fog Island, *The Nutty Professor* (uncut) *Dr. No* (uncut) *Tales of Tomorrow* TV shows, *Behind that Curtain* (first Charlie Chan movie w/Warner Oland), *Charlie Chan Carries On*, *Charlie Chan's Chance*, *Charlie Chan's Greatest Case*, *Charlie Chan's Courage*. Only interested in sharp quality. Have much to trade, including Laurel and Hardy, Amos and Andy, Charlie Chan, Sherlock Holmes and action serials. Bob Wachtel, 1354 E. 64th St., Brooklyn, NY 11234. (212) 763-1490.

Wanted, preferably in Beta II: *Deadman's Curve* (Richard Hatch), *The Jericho Mile* (1980, Peter Strauss), *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951, Audie Murphy), *The Lady's Not for Burning* (PBS, 1975, Richard Chamberlin). Also wanted, preferably in Beta I: *Horrible Conspiracies*, the fourth episode in PBS's series *Elizabeth R.* J. A. Hargrove, 3652 Overton St., Colorado Springs, CO 80910. (303) 597-9392.

I am looking for the following movies if they indeed exist: *Camelot*, *The Last House on the*

Left, *Battlestar Galactica* (the movie Pt. II *Pegasus*). Also any U.S. Coast Guard movie in print. Much to trade in Beta. Ed Kane, 22 Central Ave., Chicopee, MA 01020. (413) 594-4626.

Tired of that XXX prerecorded tape? Want to trade? No money involved. Write and list your titles, I'll respond with my offer and long list. E. Brown, 411 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Wanted: Boston Celtics vs. LA Lakers aired 2-11-81 for Beta system. Write or call Bill Amberry, 3833 Pacific Ave., Long Beach, CA 90807. (213) 424-2511.

Wanted on Beta II: Any and all *Sea Hunt* episodes, also certain *Superman* episodes. Recordings must be first generation; no dubs, no second generation (or worse). Commercials can be left in. Will reply to anyone who answers, provided the recordings offered are first generation. I apologize to those who responded to my ad in issue #27 from last year. I got into an unexpected money pinch at that time and therefore couldn't do any trading. Jim O'Toole, 123 N. 4th St., Apt. 308, Mankato, MN 56001. (507) 387-3616.

VHS

I love the Redskins but their games are seldom

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carried here. I do get to view most of the Buccaneer's games though. So I am looking for someone with access to Redskin football games who'd like to trade LP recorded games on a regular basis. Mark Klafter, 501 116th Ave., No. #133, St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

Looking for 1965 TV musical special of *Cinderella* with Lesley Ann Warren. Also need certain episodes of *The Champions*, *Space: 1999*, *Starlost* and *Daniel Boone*. Also looking for British movies *Million Pound Bank Note* (1970) and *Black Beauty* (1973). Deanie Smith, 1905 Epworth Lane, Owensboro, KY 42301.

Wanted on VHS—*One Touch of Venus* with Ava Gardner. Dave Hitner, 2702 Glen Haven, Houston, TX 77025.

Would like to trade my collection of XXX rated tapes with other videophiles. Have both masters and first generation dubs. Also interested in old serials and Charlie Chan movies. John Devine, Box 487, Humphrey Road, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925. VHS only.

Wanted desperately! Good VHS copies of the first six episodes of Winston Graham's *Poldark* series Part One (PBS Series). Gail Selinger, 13921 Bessemer St., Apt. #4, Van Nuys, CA 91401.

Interested in contacting collectors of horror, gore and unusual. Also looking for old TV shows, especially Jack Benny, Bilko, Honeymooners. Lots to trade. Also willing to trade B&W commercial killer for blank tape. Will exchange trade lists and TV Guides. Harold Balde, 145 Marlee Ave., Apt. 1808, Toronto, Ont., Canada M6B 3H3. (416) 783-4111 after 10 p.m.

Wanted VHS: *Big Doll House*, *Detention Girls*, *Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS*, *Invitation to a Ruin*, *Maitresse*, *Mark of the Devil I*, *Ninety-nine Women*, *Olga's Girls*, *Poor Cecily*, *Slaves in Cages* and other R and X oldies with SM themes. Will trade. Write T.H. P.O. Box 8392, Emeryville, CA 94662.

For trade: *Last House on the Left* (B+ copy). Also cable, long list. Wanted: Cable quality masters (or first dub) full-length uncut: *Start the Revolution Without Me*, *Paths of Glory*, *Tropic of Cancer*, *The Last Waltz*, *Dorian Gray* (1945). Harry J. Patrick, 6754 Pennywell Dr., Nashville, TN 37205.

Tired of that XXX prerecorded tape? Want to trade? No money involved. Write and list your titles, I'll respond with my offer and long list. E. Brown, 411 Jefferson St., Martins Ferry, OH 43935.

Is there some gentle soul out there who might have anything with or about Maria Callas on VHS, notably the PBS special of a year or two ago? Or the CBS special by Charles Kurland on the death of Jack Benny? Or the movies *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *Berkeley Square*, *All Creatures Great and Small* (Anthony Hopkins/Simon Ward) or *The Time Machine* (Rod Taylor)? Can offer some hard-to-get Hitchcock movies and other curiosities, all on VHS. George Fowler, Box 254, Woodinville, WA 98072.

Country music videotapes. Large collection available on VHS or Quasar VR 1000. Will trade for country music or other interesting things. Would like *Payday* starring Rip Torn. Bruce, Box 113, Pembroke, MA 02359. (617) 826-2132.

Paraplegic with much video space to fill needs video pal with Showtime, The Movie Channel, ON, (other) for trades, loans, correspondence. Also wants Kung-Fu, Martial arts, Russ Meyer adult flicks. Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Tyrone Power's *Nightmare Alley*, Lee Martin's *The Iceman Cometh*. D. C. Taylor, 915 Birdie Dr., Independence, KS 67301.

Desperately want *Car 54* shows. Also On TV, cable contacts and other rare, funny and exciting movies and programs. Have much to trade. Jim Bates, 2716 40th Place, Highland, IN 46322.

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Can tape following TV shows: (edited, excellent reception) *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Kojak*, *Three Stooges*, *Little Rascals*, *Big Valley*, *Gomer Pyle*, *Hogan's Heroes*, *Mr. Rogers*, *Victory Garden*, *McHale's Navy*, *Dr. Who*, *Mission Impossible*, *Nova*. Will trade for adventure, adult or blanks. (301) 256-5885. Avis, 10018 Gunridge, Kingsville, MD 21087.

Wanted—anyone with access to Movie Channel or Showtime, Beta or VHS to trade tapes. I have Spotlight Movie Channel only in 51 cities. Will send you my monthly guide for yours. Will probably want 3 movies from Movie Channel and Showtime each month. Delbert Sigmon, 61 Ruth Ct., Springfield, IL 62704.

Wanted Beta II: PBS series *Quilting* produced by WBGU-TV, Bowling Green, OH. Any format: *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1968), *Exo-man* (1977), *Seduction of Mimi*, *Easy Rider* (uncut), *Stardust Memories*, *Time Tunnel* (series) *Casino Royal*, *Devil's Bride* (*Devil Rides Out*). Lee Amirault, 21 Westside Dr., Exeter, NH 03833. (603) 778-7106.

Needed Beta or VHS: Old sports footage. Jerry West 60 foot shot in championship game against New York Knicks. Boston-Phoenix 3 overtimes 1976 playoff game. Old Los Angeles Rams game clips 1966-81, especially the 21-19 playoff victory over Dallas Cowboys. John Harrington, 519 Hartman, Waterloo, IA 50701. (319) 232-8721.

Help! No cable available here, so am anxious to obtain movies, shows, etc. off any and all cable/pay systems. VHS only. Send program guides. In exchange I can tape for you (will send TV Guide) or you suggest? L. Carlin, 262 Salem St., Lynnfield, MA 01940.

Wanted: PBS series *The Life of Leonardo* (RAI-WGBH) and *The Search for the Nile* (BBC-Time/Life). Also looking for the Phil Donohue Show with Dr. Donald Bitzer and PLATO. B. J. Livingston, 4003C Brittany Circle, Bridgeton, MO 63044.

Wanted desperately: any roller derby or roller games from 1965-1975. Any format, including reel-to-reel OK. Can copy and return original. Also any hockey fights. Have 25 hours to trade. Shows wanted: *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *One Step Beyond*, last two-part *Fugitive*, Alfred Hitchcock, *Supercar*, *The Immortal*, one-hour *Twilight Zones*, *Super Bowl XI*, anything from 1968, 1972, 1976 Olympics. Uncut movies wanted: *Bad News Bears* and sequels, *The Graduate*, *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*. Mark Topaz, 320 Beach 100 St., Rockaway Park, NY 11694. (212) 634-1774.

Wanted prerecorded XXX tapes. If you're into this material and are finally tired of seeing the same old faces, etc., why not contact me and we'll see if we can't work out a trade to spice up both of our lives. Tell me your titles and brand such as VCX, TVX, etc. Jack Laydon, 1427 S. 9th St., St. Charles, IL 60174.

Wanted on Beta or VHS—a complete copy of the Miss Texas-USA Beauty Pageant, telecast August 18, 1980 from El Paso, Texas. Believe that it was carried by a Texas cable affiliate. Will trade or buy. Paul Marsello, 8240 Otero Ave., NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. (505) 821-2763.

Wanted: 1981 Oscars. Also anyone who can record hockey games from all leagues. Also any hockey fights VHS, Beta, film. Also need VHS good quality preferred, uncut versions movies—*Maniac*, *Caligula*, *Freaks*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Dawn of the Dead*, any Mario Lanza movies, commercials from 1960's early seventies, Ali/Frazier first fight, *The Car*, *Indestructible Man*. I have movies from HBO, Cinemax, *Twilight Zone*, *Three Stooges*, Laurel & Hardy shorts, *Outer Limits*, sporting events. XXX rated, and 24 hours of hockey fights to trade. Sandy Vigilante, Jr., 94 Passaic Ave., Nutley, NJ 07110. (201) 661-3341 or 661-0652.

Wanted on Beta or VHS—a complete copy of the Miss Texas-USA Beauty Pageant, telecast August 18, 1980 from El Paso, Texas. Believe that it was carried by a Texas cable affiliate. Will trade or buy. Paul Marsello, 8240 Otero Ave., NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. (505) 821-2763.

Wanted: The Moody Blues on video, including Don Kirshner's Rock Concert, Midnight Special, or any interviews. I am interested in any and all Moody Blues you may have recorded. I have 100 movies and many many various musical artists, any of which I am willing to trade. Bob Steele, 1334 Downing St., Denver, CO 80218. (303) 832-4969.

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Video correspondents. Not a club, no fee. Send name and interests with format. Exchange personal tapes recorded on your own equipment with other videophiles with similar hobbies and interests. Write Gary Bourgeois, Studio B, 135 Washington St., Marquette, MI 49855.



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1933: "The Kingfish Feels A Gun" When the Kingfish tries to hook a gun he finds, he mistakes for a hot-rod man.
1934: "Andy Buys A House" To save his real estate job, the Kingfish has to sell a house that stands on property designated for a new highway. Guess who he decides to sell the house to?

100 MINUTES

BLACK AND WHITE

405 MYSTERY AND ESPIONAGE

OVERSEAS ADVENTURES (1953). James Daly stars as a newspaper correspondent in search of action and adventure.

SECRET FILE, U.S.A. (1955). This cold war spy show stars Robert Alda (Alan's father) as the head of Army Intelligence.

WATERFRONT (1955) stars Preston Foster as Captain John Herrick, commander of the tugboat Cherry-Ams.

DR. HUSOBY'S SECRET JOURNAL (1956). This dramatic, suspense-filled show stars John Howard, who plays a neurosurgeon at Center Hospital. Now find out just what goes on while the patients rest!

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210 TROUBLE WITH FATHER

Stu Erwin stars as one of America's famous bumbling fathers in this classic comedy series. Stu Erwin stars as one of America's famous bumbling fathers in this classic comedy series. Two complete episodes are featured on this one-hour tape!

1934: "Yvette" Stu wants to surprise June with an unusual anniversary gift — a female namesake.
1935: "What Paper Do You Read?" In order to be as politically informed as Stu, June enrolls in his evening government class.

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308 VINTAGE SITCOMS

THE LIFE OF ALEK stars a young, thin Jackie Gleason in his first TV outing, circa 1949.

MY LITTLE NABOB (1951). Charles Farrell and Gale Storm appear in the classic comedy series as father and daughter.

THE BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (1952). Another classic episode from the hit comedy series involves Gracie's party plans.

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE (1955). Jackie Cooper stars in this series, along with his dog Odo who "comments" during the show.

100 MINUTES

BLACK AND WHITE

503 OUTTAKES, II

See Soupy Sales, Richard Thomas, Jon Wamley, Wil Geer, Sonny and Cher, Richard Pryor, Frankie Avalon, Curtis Leachman, John Ritter, Suzanne Somers, Joyce DeWitt, Ronald Reagan, Mickey Rooney, Jayne Mansfield, Paul Michael Gleason, David Soul, Ernest Borgnine, Tim Conway, Joe Flynn, and many more!

NOTE: Portions of this program contain glitches and tracking problems. However, material has been obtained from the best masters we could find.

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406 SATURDAY SERIALS

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD. This British-made series stars Richard Greene as the man who robbed the rich and gave to the poor. The entire band of merry men are seen in this episode (1953).

CAPTAIN GALLANT OF THE FOREIGN LEGION (1955) stars Buster Crabbe as the commander of the North African headquarters of the French Foreign Legion. Also stars Al "Fuzzy" Knight.

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303 THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET, I

Four classic episodes from the long-running series. Watch David and Ricky grow up in just two short hours. All with original commercials and ABC-TV ID.

1953. A first season episode in which Ricky schemes to make a mint on a pancake mix company's double your money tape offer.

1955. Ozzie tries to get the boys to share each other's musical interests. A 13-year-old Harry Tyler Moore does the commercials.

1958. Dave and Harriet Italy via for the affections of a pretty girl at her birthday party. Ricky sings, "You Tear Me Up."

1964. Ricky wants to surprise his wife with a dog for her birthday. Ricky sings, "Your Love and Kisses."

115 MINUTES

BLACK AND WHITE

401 LIVE TELEVISION

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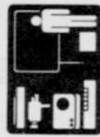
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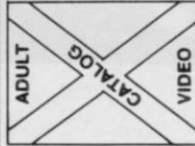
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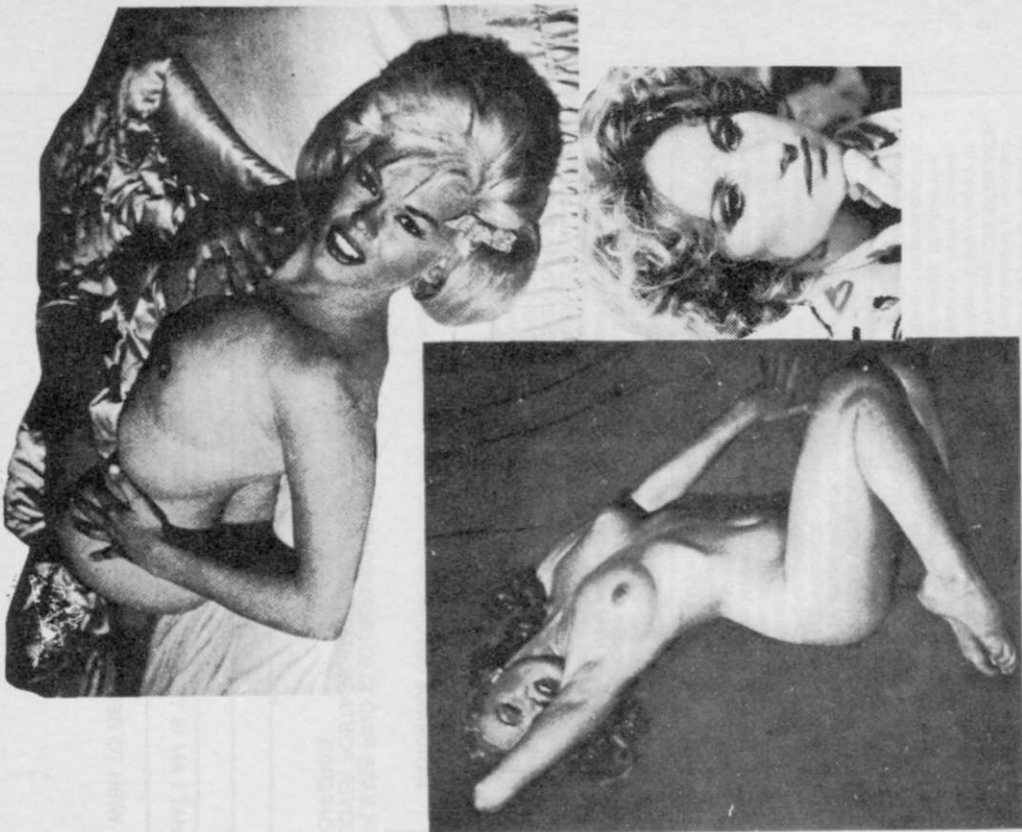
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- #15: How to clean the heads on a Betamax, QUBE update, How to dub from/to a VHS recorder, First installment of Ted Reinhart's reviews, "Skew Error" explained, We dream of the Betamax future, VHS and Beta formats brashly compared, letters, Q's & A's, 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.
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- #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.
- #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.
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- #28: Exclusive test reports of the 1981 VCR's from Sony and RCA, our editor tells you whether VHS or Beta is best for your particular needs, Part II of our report on the Summer 1980 CES Show, plus more than six full pages of questions and answers.
- #29: This is our special "We wheedled a free trip to Japan out of the JVC Corporation" issue. Follow Marc Wielage as he takes you along to all the places that you wish you could go. Tips on porta-packing, and maintaining a collector-to-collector relationship, the first installment of our Videosponding column, and our usual news, and reviews round it out.
- #30: Ten product reports, including the RCA and Pioneer Disc Players, the 1/4" format Technicolor VCR, the SLO-383 "editing" Betamax and three image enhancers headline this issue. Also: updates of our blank tape survey and the recommended components list, lots of book reviews, the Winter CES, and much more.
- #31: What to collect and why, plus the first installment of **The Impossible Collection**, report on low power TV stations, a beginner's look at earth stations, using different lenses on your video camera, how to build your own audio/video patch bay, the video disc systems compared, and our usual Product Reports, Tape Reviews and more.

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- #13: How to defeat the muting circuit in the Betamax SL-8200 (or Zenith). Bob Burns' first column for "VHS" folks. Rambling Marc battles Universal attorneys, and reports on pay cable systems, lotsa questions and answers, great America 2Night cover.
- #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!
- #26: First installment of our subjective "recommended components", 7 product reviews, including the KLOSS Novabeam, "Distrivid," Sony and Panasonic industrial 1/2" VCR's, and the Sony CVM-1750 Monitor/Receiver. News from the Summer CES, the Cable News Network 24-hour schedule, our usual tape reviews, and more.

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- #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.

Remarkably few copies of issue #11 and #12 available to completists for \$10.00 each.

The Videophile's Annual 1979

The Videophile's Annual 1979 is still available. Within its portfolio we have for you facsimile reprints of *The Videophile's Newsletter* #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 \$10.00, it's no bargain, but collector's items never are.



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