

DECEMBER 1989 / \$2.95

# HAM RADIO

NEW



Season's Greetings



 ICOMIC-735 HF Transceiver  
With One  
Year Warranty!

# ROCK SOLID

"The seven IC-735's used at P40V performed well. Their excellent dynamic range contributed to our victory at P40V. The IC-735 is a true champion!"

Dale Green, VE7SV

ICOM's IC-735 is the world's most popular HF transceiver for three simple reasons: **Performance, Size and Reliability.** With the highest performance, smallest size, and best customer satisfaction of any HF transceiver, the IC-735 is the undisputed champion for fixed, portable or mobile operations.

- **Field Proven 100W Transmitter** with 100% duty cycle. Proudly backed with ICOM's full one-year warranty.
- **105dB Dynamic Range Receiver** includes passband tuning, IF notch, adjustable noise blanker, and semi or full CW QSK.



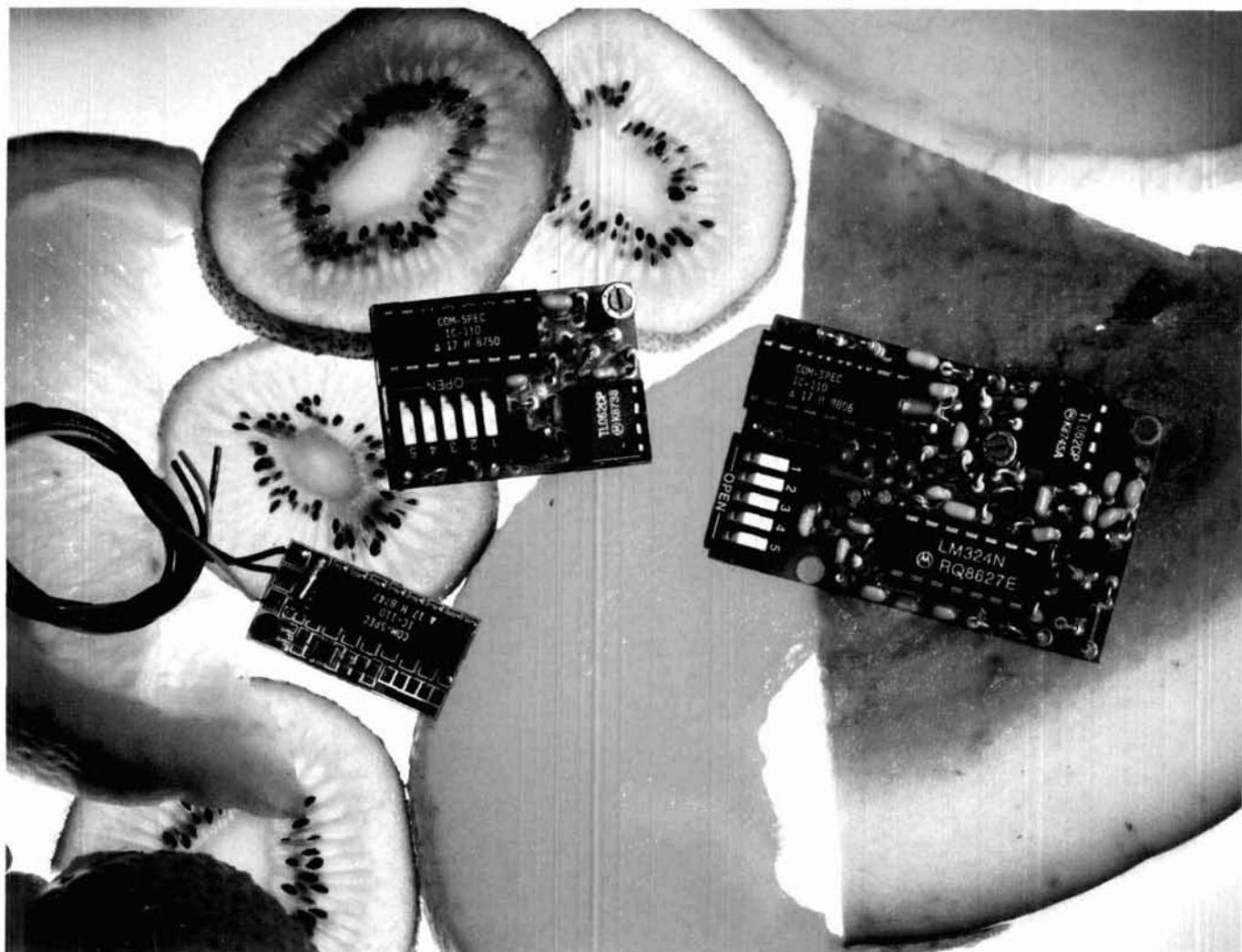
- **Conveniently Designed.** Measures only 3.7"H by 9.5"W by 9"D. Great for mobiling or portable operation!
- **Optional AH-2 Automatic Tuning Mobile Antenna System** covers 3.5MHz-30MHz.
- **All HF Amateur Bands and Modes** transmits all U.S. HF amateur bands. General coverage receiver.
- **12 Tunable Memories** operate and reprogram like 12 separate VFO's. Supreme flexibility!

**Additional Options:** SM-8 or SM-6 desk mic, PS-55 AC power supply, AT-150 automatic antenna tuner for base operation.

**ICOM's IC-735...** the radio with the rock solid reputation! See it today at your local ICOM dealer.

ICOM America, Inc.  
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1777 Phoenix Parkway, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30349  
ICOM CANADA, A Division of ICOM America, Inc.,  
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All stated specifications subject to change without notice or obligation. All ICOM radios significantly exceed FCC regulations limiting spurious emissions. 735989

 ICOM  
First in Communications



## Choice Selection.

Now you can have it all! Take all the qualities you've come to depend on in our programmable CTCSS tone equipment: Astonishing Accuracy; Instant Programming; Unequaled Reliability; and add full spectrum tone versatility multi-tone capability without diodes, a reprogrammable memory...It's our new harvest of CTCSS tone equipment.

The choice is yours! If standard CTCSS EIA tones do not suit your taste, select any 32 tones of your liking from 15.0Hz to 255.0Hz. And if you change your mind, no problem; the memory can be changed in your shop with our HHP-1 programmer, or at our factory for free. Your working tone is accessed by a simple DIP switch, so there's no fussing with counters or other test equipment.

Call today toll-free and find out more about this fresh new flexibility in tone signalling, and don't forget to ask about multi-tone switching without cumbersome diode networks or binary switches.

It's all brought to market by the people who introduce the freshest ideas in tone signalling, and of course our customary same day shipping and one year warranty apply.

**TS-32P CTCSS ENCODER-DECODER** Based on the time proven TS-32, the industry standard for over a decade. The TS-32P gives you the added versatility of a custom, changeable memory base. A low price of \$57.95 makes it an even sweeter deal.

**SS-32P ENCODER** Based on the equally popular SS-32 encoder. Available for CTCSS, or audible burst tones up to 6550.0Hz. Price is \$28.95.

**SS-32SMP SUB-MINIATURE ENCODER** Our smallest encoder for handheld applications. Now you can satisfy that customer that needs to access multiple repeater sites with a radio that has precious little space inside. At \$27.95, the price is small too.

**HHP-1 HANDHELD PROGRAMMER** For programming the 32 memory locations in any of our new programmable products, including our SD-1000 Two-Tone Sequential decoder. The HHP-1 is battery operated for field use, and will program ANY 32 tones from 15.0 to 6550.0Hz in .1Hz. increments. Price is \$199.95.



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# KENWOOD

## TM-731A/631A 144/450 and 144/220 MHz FM Dual Banders

- Extended receiver range (136.000 – 173.995 MHz) on 2 m; 70 cm coverage is 438.000 – 449.995 MHz; 1-1/4 m coverage is 215 – 229.995 MHz. (Specifications guaranteed on Amateur bands only. Two meter transmit range is 144 – 148 MHz. Modifiable for MARS/CAP. Permits required.)
- Separate frequency display for "main" and "sub-band."
- Versatile scanning functions. Dual scan, and carrier and time operated scan stop.
- 30 memory channels. Stores everything you need to make operating easier. Two channels for "odd splits."
- 50 Watts on 2 m, 35 watts on 70 cm, 25 watts on 1-1/4 m. Approx. 5 watts low power.
- Automatic offset selection.
- Dual antenna ports.
- Automatic Band Change (A.B.C.) Automatically changes between main and sub-band when a signal is present.
- Dual watch function allows VHF and UHF receive simultaneously.
- CTCSS encode/decode selectable from front panel or UP/DWN keys on microphone. (Encode built-in, optional TSU-6 needed for decode.)
- Balance control and separate squelch controls for each band.

- Full duplex operation.
- Dimmer switch.
- 16 key DTMF/control mic. included.
- Frequency (dial) lock.

### Optional Accessories:

- **PG-4H** Extra interface cable for IF-20 (for three to four radios)
- **PG-4J** Extension cable kit for IF-20 DC and audio
- **PS-430** Power supply
- **TSU-6** CTCSS decode unit
- **SWT-1** 2 m antenna tuner
- **SWT-2** 70 cm antenna tuner
- **SP-41** Compact mobile speaker
- **SP-50B** Deluxe mobile speaker
- **PG-2N** DC cable
- **PG-3B** DC line noise filter
- **MC-60A, MC-80, MC-85** Base station mics.
- **MA-700** Dual band 2 m/70 cm mobile antenna (mount not supplied)
- **MB-11** Mobile bracket
- **MC-43S** UP/DWN hand mic.
- **MC-48B** 16-key DTMF hand mic.

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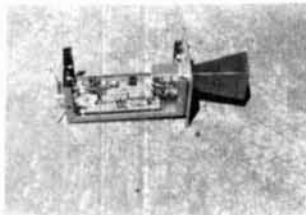
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... pacesetter in Amateur Radio

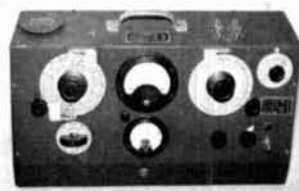
# "Dynamic Duals"



# HAM RADIO



N6GN, page 9



W3QOM, page 49

DECEMBER 1989  
Volume 22, Number 12

## FEATURES

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### INEXPENSIVE MULTI-MEGABAUD MICROWAVE DATA LINK

Glenn Elmore, N6GN, and Kevin Rowett, N6RCE

9

### The Weekender: ULTRA LOW POWER FOUR-DIGIT SEQUENCE TOUCH TONE DECODER

Carl Lyster, WA4ADG

30

### Practically Speaking: GETTING TO KNOW THE LOGIC FAMILIES, PART 1: TTL

Joseph J. Carr, K4IPV

34

### THE FIVE-BAND JUNKBOX TRANSMITTER

Charlie Tiemeyer, W3RMD

42

### Q METERS

Keats A. Pullen, Jr., W3QOM

49

### Ham Radio Techniques: ANTENNAS, GFI, CAPACITORS, AND FUNDAMENTALS

Bill Orr, W6SAI

57

### AN AUDIO PATCH PANEL FOR THE MULTIMODE STATION

Lewis F. McIntyre, KB6IC

65

### The Weekender: A NEW ADDITION FOR YOUR TNC

Joel Eschmann, K9MLD

72

### IDENTIFYING KERCHUNKERS AND OTHER INTERFERENCE

Richard R. Regent, K9GDF

74

### INTRODUCTION TO WAVEFORM GENERATORS — PART 2

Joseph J. Carr, K4IPV

82

### Elmer's Notebook: EXPLORING MAGNETISM

Tom McMullen, W1SL

98

## DEPARTMENTS

|                        |     |                          |     |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| <b>PUBLISHER'S LOG</b> | 4   | <b>HAM MART</b>          | 102 |
| <b>COMMENTS</b>        | 6   | <b>FLEA MARKET</b>       | 105 |
| <b>HAM NOTEBOOK</b>    | 38  | <b>ADVERTISERS INDEX</b> | 106 |
| <b>DX FORECASTER</b>   | 78  | <b>READER SERVICE</b>    | 106 |
| <b>SHORT CIRCUIT</b>   | 101 |                          |     |

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## One of *Ham Radio's* Unsung Heroes

Most readers think of the staff at *Ham Radio* as editors, publishers, or staff members they may have met at Dayton or some other show. But it takes many more important people to complete the team that puts the magazine in your hands each month.

One of our "unsung heroes" is planning to retire at the end of this month, after 17 years in our circulation department giving outstanding assistance to both the magazine and its readers. Therese Bourgault is second in length of service only to myself.

Sue Shorrock, our circulation manager, has written a piece that not only pays tribute to "T", but also demonstrates the dedication that all of us at *Ham Radio* try to exhibit in bringing you the finest magazine that we can.

**W1NLB**

It seems like only yesterday that I started working with Therese Bourgault in the circulation department. Except that yesterday was in 1977.

My first day, 12 years ago, was memorable. After introductions all around I remember thinking, "They aren't really going to leave me alone in the same room with this female storm trooper, are they?"

But they did. Everyone else went back to work, and we were on our own. Because self-preservation is at the core of most human beings, I became an attentive student and a quick learner.

The first lesson was that there is only one way of doing things — T's way. I also learned that her way was the right way. Some more rules: As our subscriber you are number one. You are all to be treated equally and fairly. Your orders are to be processed quickly and carefully. If there is a problem we find out what happened, why it happened, and then correct the matter to your satisfaction.

Regardless of how busy or how frustrating things were, she always continued to do her work tirelessly. With time, humor, and our combined efforts to keep *Ham Radio* the best *Amateur Radio* magazine around, we became a good team and friends to boot.

Therese has devoted nearly 17 years of her career to making sure that you get the best possible service. During these years there have been some significant changes. One thing that never changed was her dedication to do the job and do it well. She has always been on your side.

I'm really going to miss working with T; she's been a good friend. But then, she always said if we're ever in a pinch....

**Sue Shorrock**

# KENWOOD



## TS-950SD

"DX-clusive" HF Transceiver

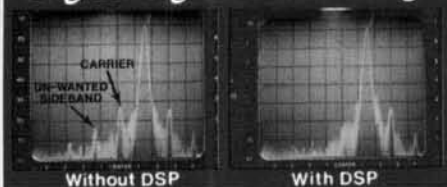
The new TS-950SD is the first Amateur Radio transceiver to utilize Digital Signal Processing (DSP), a high voltage final amplifier, dual fluorescent tube digital display and digital meter with a peak-hold function.

- **Dual Frequency Receive Function.** The TS-950SD can receive two frequencies simultaneously. The sub-receiver has independent controls for frequency step size, noise blanker, and AF gain and its own digital display!
- **New! Digital AF filter.** Synchronized with SSB IF slope tuning, the digital AF filter provides sharp characteristics for optimum filter response.
- **New high voltage final amplifier.** 50 V power transistors in the 150-watt final section, results in minimum distortion and higher efficiency. Full-power key-down time exceeds one hour.
- **New! Built-in microprocessor controlled automatic antenna tuner.** The new antenna tuner is faster and you can store the settings in memory! (Manual override is also possible.)
- **Outstanding general coverage receiver performance and sensitivity.** Kenwood's Dyna-Mix™ high sensitivity direct mixing system provides from 100 kHz to 30 MHz. The Intermodulation dynamic range is 105 dB.

Optional Accessories  
• VS-2 Voice synthesizer  
• SP-950 External speaker w/AF filter  
• SM-230 Sta-

tion monitor w/pan display  
• SW-2100 SWR/power meter  
• TL-922A Linear amplifier (not for QSK)

## The Ultimate Signal.



- **Digital Signal Processor.** DSP is a state-of-the-art technique that maximizes your transmitted RF energy. Your signal stands out because it is much more pure than your competition! You can even tailor your transmitted CW or voice signal waveshape!
- **High performance IF filters built-in.** Select various filter combinations from the front panel. For CW: 250 and 500 Hz, 2.4 kHz for SSB, and 6 kHz for AM. Filter selections can be stored in memory!

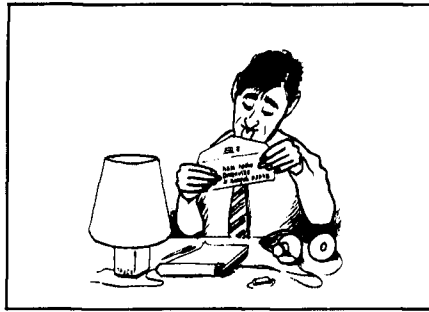
- **Multi-Drive Band Pass Filter (BPF)** circuitry. Fifteen band pass filters are available in the front end to enhance performance.
  - **Famous Kenwood interference reduction circuits.** SSB Slope Tuning, CW VBT (Variable Bandwidth Tuning), CW AF tune, IF notch filter, dual-mode noise blanker with level control, 4-step RF attenuator (10, 20, or 30 dB), switchable AGC circuit, and all-mode squelch.
  - **Built-in TCXO** for highest stability.
  - **Built-in electronic keyer circuit.**
  - **100 memory channels.** Store independent transmit and receive frequencies, mode, filter data, auto-tuner data and CTCSS frequency.
  - **Digital bar meter.**
- Additional Features:** • Built-in interface for computer control • Programmable tone encoder • Optional VS-2 voice synthesizer • Built-in heavy duty AC power supply and speaker • Adjustable VFO tuning torque • Multiple scanning functions • MC-43S hand microphone supplied

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# Comments



## Author update

Dear HR

This letter is to clarify some points in my article, "A Simple DC Amplifier for Your Meter," *Ham Radio*, June 1989, page 10.

Figure 3 carries the note "Ground all unused pins of U1." The intent is to prevent feedback due to stray coupling with unused op amp units. In a letter I received from Robert A. Pease of the National Semiconductor Corporation, he agrees with grounding the unused input terminals, but recommends leaving the unused output terminals (numbers 7, 8 and 14) unconnected to save needless battery drain. I find that by disconnecting these terminals I save about 10 mA per terminal.

The type of pilot light used in Figures 3 and 4 was not identified. I used light emitting diodes, and the series resistors RL are needed to limit the currents. Both should be 2.2 k. Resistor RL is shown incorrectly shorted out in Figure 4.

**Yardley Beers, W0JF,  
Boulder, Colorado**

On the other hand, even if user fees collected by the FCC from Amateur Radio operators went directly into the FCC's budget, there is no assurance that the fees would be used for the benefit of Amateur Radio. The Commission has many other responsibilities and many other ways to spend money.

I think you are right in saying that "Amateur Radio will derive little or no benefit if the monies simply go into the General Fund." But you're wrong in thinking that Amateur Radio would necessarily derive any benefit if the fees were paid to the FCC directly.

**Hugh Aitken, W1PN,  
Amherst, Massachusetts**

## A "Taxing" decision

Dear HR

Your "Backscatter" in the October issue will probably cause severe "Reflections" — and it should!

I was deeply upset after learning of the House Energy and Commerce Committee vote to levy fees for Amateur Radio licenses and several commercial ventures.

This is to reduce the federal deficit?

It's amazing that the esteemed committee would resort to "taxing" a group of voluntary hobbyists that have been, ever since the beginnings of Amateur (experimental) Radio, a national resource of self-trained and skilled individuals.

We have always been available, providing a public service without any compensation, in times of emergency — whether it be local, national, or inter-

national. In addition, we provide our government with a source of trained individuals, should the need arise, for the defense of our country. This has been proven a few times in this century.

The lack of growth (and even a decline) in Amateur numbers that occurred in the sixties was not due to the fees imposed at that time, but because of a general *deterioration of values* that swayed a generation of youth.

One has only to look back to a time when our country was in, and recovering from, an economic depression to see that the Amateur population was growing — although slowly at first. In those days of hardships, with more problems for our government than one could comprehend, an effective Commission was affordable and functioning well for its task — without Amateur Radio fees.

I can well understand the justification for fees on commercial interests in view of the fact that the profits obtained offset the costs.

In closing, I must express my disappointment in your willingness to accept this "tax" as stated in the article — even with your proposals.

**Alex Hellman, W2OEQ,  
Woodhaven, New York**

## Fair share

Dear HR

I'm writing in regards to your editorial "Amateur Radio Licensing Fees — The 'Non-Tax' Tax," (October 1989). I think you are too pessimistic in one respect, but not pessimistic enough in another.

You are right — any "user fees" collected by the FCC have to, by law, go into the General Fund and do not accrue to the FCC itself. But any statute passed by Congress can be amended by Congress. In seeking such an amendment, ham radio operators would have important allies. The National Park Service, for example, would very much like to have user fees collected at park entrances to be used to support and maintain the parks.

## Where's the missing band?

Dear HR

Just received my October *Ham Radio* and read with interest the review of the Kenwood TS-950S. I feel that they would do better if they included the 20-meter band (Oops!) in the engineering specs on page 29.

Thanks for the article in any case!

**Robert A. Du Brul, WB0RJR,  
Everton, Missouri**

*Whoops, our error! The 20-meter band is 14.0 to 14.35 MHz. Ed.*

*Do you have something you'd like to say? Address your comments to Dear HR, Ham Radio Magazine, Main Street, Greenville, NH 03055. Ed.*



# KENWOOD

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All New Compact HF!

## “DX-citing!”

### TS-440S Compact high performance HF transceiver with general coverage receiver

**Kenwood's advanced digital know-how brings Amateurs world-wide "big-rig" performance in a compact package. We call it "Digital DX-citement"—that special feeling you get every time you turn the power on!**

- Covers All Amateur bands  
General coverage receiver tunes from 100 kHz—30 MHz. Easily modified for HF MARS operation.
- Direct keyboard entry of frequency
- All modes built-in  
USB, LSB, CW, AM, FM, and AFSK. Mode selection is verified in Morse Code.
- VS-1 voice synthesizer (optional)

- Superior receiver dynamic range  
Kenwood DynaMix™ high sensitivity direct mixing system ensures true 102 dB receiver dynamic range. (500Hz bandwidth on 20m)
- 100% duty cycle transmitter  
Super efficient cooling permits continuous key-down for periods exceeding one hour. RF input power is rated at 200 W PEP on SSB, 200 W DC on CW, AFSK, FM, and 110 W DC AM. (The PS-50 power supply is needed for continuous duty.)
- Built-in automatic antenna tuner (optional). Covers 80–10 meters.
- 5 IF filter functions
- VOX, full or semi break-in CW

- Dual SSB IF filtering  
A built-in SSB filter is standard. When an optional SSB filter (YK-88S or YK-88SN) is installed, **dual** filtering is provided.
- AMTOR compatible
- Adjustable dial torque
- 100 memory channels  
Frequency and mode may be stored in 10 groups of 10 channels each. Split frequencies may be stored in 10 channels for repeater operation.
- TU-8 CTCSS unit (optional)
- Superb interference reduction  
IF shift, tuneable notch filter, noise blanker, all-mode squelch, RF attenuator, RIT/XIT, and optional filters fight QRM.
- MC-43S UP/DOWN mic. included
- Computer Interface port



#### Optional accessories:

- AT-440 internal auto. antenna tuner (80 m – 10 m)
- AT-250 external auto. tuner (160 – 10 m)
- AT-130 compact mobile antenna tuner (160 m –

- 88SN 2.4 kHz/1.8 kHz SSB filters • MC-60A/80/85 desk microphones • MC-55 (8P) mobile microphone • HS-4/5/6/7 headphones • SP-41/50/50

**Kenwood takes you from HF to OSCAR!**



- 10 m) • IF-232C/IC-10 level translator and modem IC kit • PS-50 heavy duty power supply • PS-430/PS-3D DC power supply • SP-430 external speaker • MB-430 mobile mounting bracket • YK-88C/88CN 500 Hz/270 Hz CW filters • YK-88S-

- mobile speakers • MA-5/VP-1 HF 5 band mobile helical antenna and bumper mount • TL-922A 2 kw PEP linear amplifier • SM-220 station monitor (no pan display) • VS-1 voice synthesizer • TU-8 CTCSS tone unit • PG-2C extra DC cable.

Complete service manuals are available for all Kenwood transceivers and most accessories. Specifications and prices are subject to change without notice or obligation.

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# MFJ gives you *all 9* digital modes and *keeps on* bringing you state-of-the-art advances . . . while others offer you *some* digital modes using 3 year old technology

MFJ-1278

**\$279<sup>95</sup>**



No 3 year old technology at MFJ!

Using the latest advances, MFJ brings you 9 exciting digital modes and *keeps on* bringing you state-of-the-art advances.

You get tons of features other multi-modes just don't have.

## Only MFJ gives you *all 9* modes

Count 'em -- you get 9 fun modes -- Packet, AMTOR, RTTY, ASCII, CW, FAX, SSTV, Navtex and full featured Contest Memory Keyer.

You can't get all 9 modes in *any* other multi-mode at *any* price. Nobody gives you modes the MFJ-1278 doesn't have.

## The best modem you can get

Extensive tests in *Packet Radio Magazine* prove the modem used in the MFJ-1278 copies HF packet more accurately than all other modems tested.

The MFJ-1278 is the *only* multi-mode with a *true* DCD circuit for HF. This dramatically reduces sensitivity to noise and dramatically increases completed QSOs.

## Exclusive Built in Printer Port

Only the MFJ-1278 has a dedicated printer port that lets you plug in your Epson or IBM compatible printer.

You don't need to buy an optional \$40 cable just to plug in your printer.

## 20 LED Precision Tuning Indicator

MFJ's unequalled tuning indicator makes it really easy to work HF packet. Unlike others, you use it the same for all modes -- not different for each mode. Just tune your radio to center a single LED and you're *precisely tuned in to within 10 Hz* -- and it

## MFJ Packet Radio



MFJ-1274  
**\$159<sup>95</sup>**  
MFJ-1270B  
**\$139<sup>95</sup>**

MFJ-1270B super clone of TAPR's TNC-2 gives you more features than any other packet controller -- for \$139.95

You can double your fun by operating VHF and HF because you get *high performance* switchable VHF/HF modems.

You get the Easy Mail™ Personal Mailbox with soft-partitioned memory so you and your ham buddies can leave messages for each other 24 hours a day.

In MFJ's new WeFAX mode you can print full-fledged weather maps to screen or printer and save to disk using an IBM compatible, C-64/128 or Macintosh.

A new KISS interface lets you run TCP/IP. They also come *NET ROM* compatible.

You also get 32K RAM and a free 110 VAC power supply (or use 12 VDC).

For dependable HF packet tuning, the

shows you which way to tune!

## New Easy Mail™ Personal Mailbox

You get MFJ's new Easy Mail™ Personal Mailbox with soft-partitioned memory so you and your ham buddies can leave messages for each other 24 hours a day.

## Multi-Gray Level FAX/SSTV Modem

You'll see tomorrow's news photos with crisp clear details. MFJ-1278 is the *only* multi-mode with a built-in multi-gray level modem. It lets you transmit and receive multi-gray level FAX/ SSTV pictures with an appropriate terminal program.

## Only MFJ can transmit FAX . . .

Most packet stations can *receive* FAX. But only the MFJ-1278 lets you *transmit* FAX without internal modifications that disable other modes.

So now you can send your own pictures, maps and diagrams by FAX to stations throughout the world.

Too bad they can't send theirs to you . . . unless they disable other modes

## One FREE Upgrade!

When you buy your MFJ-1278 *today*, you don't have to miss new modes and features that come out *tomorrow*.

Why? Because your MFJ-1278 comes with a coupon good for one *free* eeprom upgrade exchange that'll add new features.

## Plus More . . .

Plus you get . . . 32K RAM (not 16K), *free* AC power supply, Host mode that lets MFJ-1278 serve as a KISS interface or dumb modem, fast throughput anti-collision technology, independent transmit level for

## MFJ Video Digitizer

Here's Aimee. This unretouched picture was shot directly from a VGA monitor. We digitized Aimee with a camcorder, MFJ-1292 "Picture Perfect" Video Digitizer and IBM compatible computer.



Create fascinating digitized snapshots to transmit with your MFJ-1278 of *anything* you can point your camcorder at!

The new MFJ-1292 "Picture Perfect" Video Digitizer connects your video camera to your IBM compatible computer so you can capture digitized video snapshots on disks.

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# INEXPENSIVE MULTI-MEGABAUD MICROWAVE DATA LINK

*By Glenn Elmore, N6GN, 550 Willowside Road, Santa Rosa, California 95401 and Kevin Rowett, N6RCE, 1134 Steeplechase Lane, Cupertino, California 95014*

**W**e'd like to tell you about some inexpensive antenna, radio, and computer interface hardware which allows communication of digital data at rates up to 2 megabaud (1 megabaud = 1 million bits per second) on an Amateur Radio band. In addition to the data link, an analog voice channel is provided. It requires only an external microphone and speaker for simultaneous full duplex audio communication. The link operates in the 10-GHz Amateur band and uses an inexpensive commercial parabolic antenna along with a Doppler radar transceiver module to provide medium range communications at low cost. We'll discuss modifications to surplus networking interface cards that let you use this high speed data in Amateur Radio service with IBM-style personal computers.

The Amateur accustomed to conventional AX.25 packet operation might wonder why anyone would want to go to the trouble of building a digital radio approximately 1000 times as fast as the 1200-baud systems prevalent on the VHF bands. Although many metropolitan areas are experiencing severe congestion on some of the packet channels, it's also true that many keyboard-to-keyboard QSOs are taking place. A great deal of traffic is also being handled on the worldwide bulletin board systems using today's equipment. The success of AX.25 packet radio has suggested the need for faster systems to improve current performance and has spawned some fundamentally new ideas for Amateur Radio.

A whole spectrum of new user applications and the possibility of a nationwide or even worldwide digital Amateur network are two major areas made possible by faster hardware.

## **New applications**

Packet has been regarded as a way for two stations' computers to communicate, allowing keyboard-to-keyboard QSOs, but the potential for far greater applications exists. Almost any information which can be transmitted by analog means can also be transmitted digitally, making digital audio, facsimile, graphics, and even digital TV feasible on the Amateur bands once sufficient data speed is available. The concept of repeaters for a variety of modes is conceivable, when combined with the ability of each Amateur station to serve as a relay of data to and from other stations.

Amateurs will also be able to share resources. A station with an interesting database will be able to make it available to others. On-line call directories, QSL information, and technical data — not to mention computer programs and even the computers themselves — can be shared. It's possible for one Amateur to actually run programs and applications on someone else's computer as though it were located in his own shack. Remote control of equipment and remote sensing are other possibilities. Remote digital control of repeaters or even complete stations, including audio or video uplinks and downlinks, can be supported. Conventional voice repeaters (analog) may be replaced by digital hardware for completely digital round tables. Since this data can be transmitted anywhere the network permits, there can be multistate, national, or even worldwide voice nets. If the data rate permits, all of these different applications could conceivably be going on at the same time!

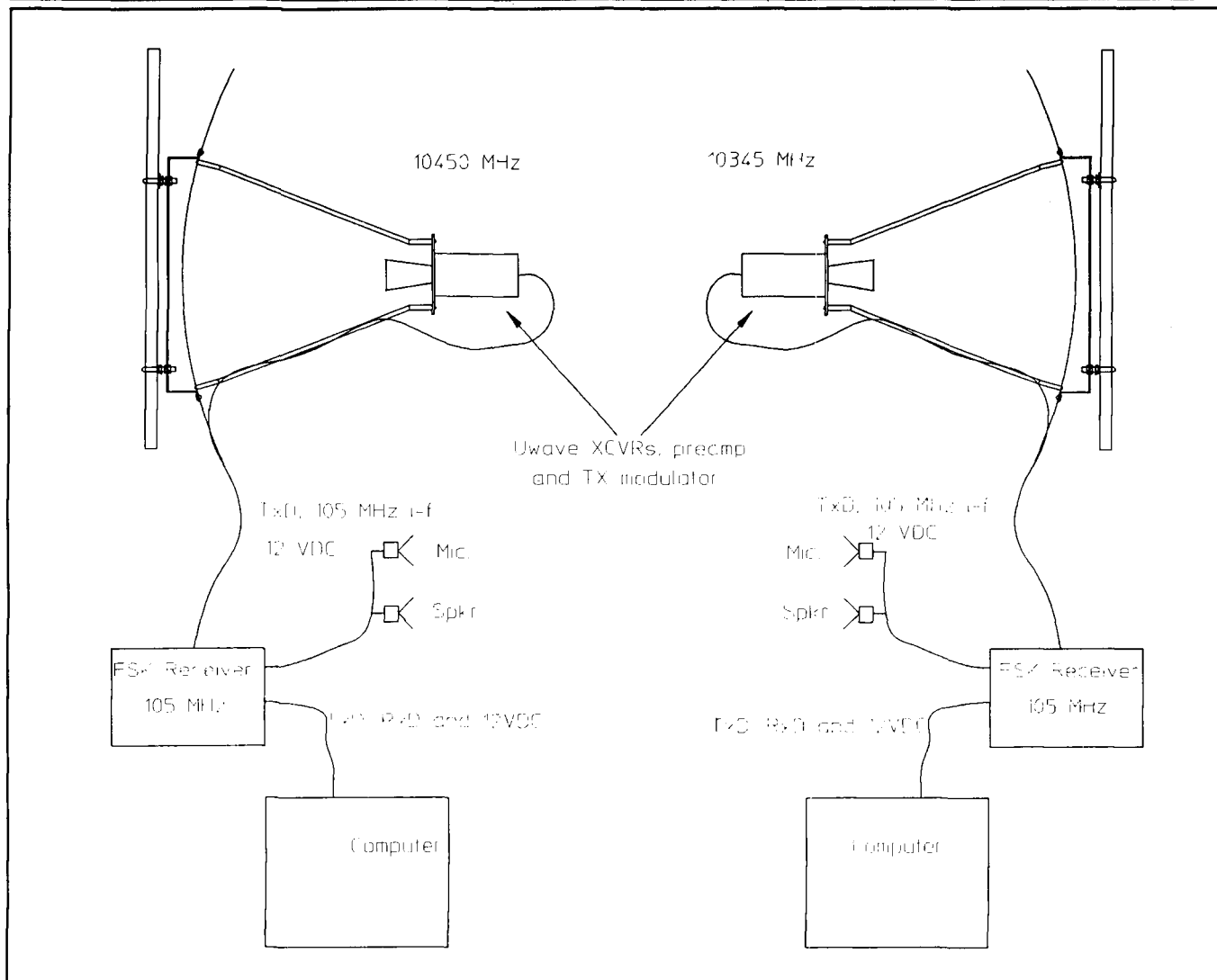
## **An Amateur Radio network**

The possibility of an Amateur network is just as exciting as the variety of applications that high data rates can support. To date, groups of Amateurs have used limited networks for traffic handling and sharing information among members. A high speed digital network can provide these same services, as well as new applications, over very broad geographical areas on a full-time basis. A nationwide network capable of transmitting data quickly and with little delay could be beneficial to Amateur Radio public service and emergency operations. Data and resource sharing on a nationwide or worldwide network offers great potential in ushering the information age into Amateur Radio. The diversity of Amateur interests — DX, ragchewing, technical, and public service — could all be greatly enhanced by such a network. A network might also entice a great many potential and computer literate candidates into getting their tickets.

## **Goals**

The link we'll describe was designed to help further the applications and networking made possible by high speed data exchange. It was built as an initial step in providing a moderate speed digital Amateur network in northern California to be used with a fledgling TCP/IP radio network.

FIGURE 1



**System block diagram of the microwave high speed data link.**

This was necessary to support some of the applications previously described. It was also built to help advance Amateur use of the microwave spectrum.

Fortunately, microwaves and high speed communication fit together very well. In fact, if the data rate is increased significantly it is absolutely necessary that wider and wider bands be used. As frequency is increased, antennas of reasonable physical size are better able to focus the transmitted beam without wasting signal in different directions. The Amateur microwave bands, through 24 GHz, offer the best available performance and cost for such communication. In order to be widely useful our link needed several attributes:

- To be inexpensive — competitive with present TNC/radio combinations
- Moderate speed — significantly faster than current alternatives of 1200 to 56,000 baud
- Medium range — at least 20 miles to be effective
- To use readily available parts
- To be simple to build and maintain
- To be reliable — a variety of applications may depend upon it

## Problems

In addition to the problem of building radio hardware which the average Amateur could feel comfortable installing and maintaining, there are problems with the digital interface hardware portion of such a link.

At these speeds the data is too fast for normal serial ports on most computers, for the internal bus operations of many computers, and for TNCs. Similarly, the software to process data at these speeds can no longer operate on a character-by-character basis. Any solution we developed for these problems also needed to work with commonly available hardware, most notably the IBM PC and its clones.

Microwave hardware, propagation, and high speed data are new ground for many Amateurs. This means that any high speed link hardware needs to be relatively easy to work with.

## What we built

Previous successes using 10-GHz Gunn diode oscillators as local oscillators and transceivers for narrowband weak signal work, brought to mind the possibility of using these

inexpensive units for higher speed digital data transmission. In addition to being inexpensive, these units — which are commonly used for motion detection (door openers and burglar alarms), speed measurement (police radar guns), and microwave receivers (radar detectors) — have all of the microwave circuitry self-contained. This is important because it makes the equipment more attractive to non-microwave users. The system block diagram in Figure 1 shows the operating principles.

The two ends of a link operate "split." One transceiver oscillator typically operates on 10,450 MHz while the other end is 105 MHz lower, on 10,345 MHz. The difference between the two transmitter frequencies corresponds to the receiver first IF frequency. The receiver first IF on each end is generated when the remotely transmitted signal (frequency modulated by the data to be transmitted) is mixed with the local transmitter. Each end uses its own transmitter as a receiver local oscillator, and each unit transmits continuously. Therefore, each receiver sees the same IF. This is the same full duplex arrangement used for many years by Amateur microwave enthusiasts. The transmitters run 5 to 10 mW of output power. The transmitter is frequency modulated as its bias supply is varied and the frequency-voltage dependency of the transceivers is used for tuning. This same technique was used previously to phase lock such oscillators.<sup>1</sup> The 2-foot dish shown here has a gain of about 33 dB, or 2000 times at 10.5 GHz. When driven by the microwave transceiver, the effective radiated power (ERP) is about the same as that of a 10-watt 2-meter radio driving a quarter-wave whip. We selected 105 MHz for the receiver first IF, with provision for tuning  $\pm 10$  MHz to accommodate differential frequency drift with time or temperature of the free-running microwave transceivers. Using an IF in this range also lets you do some simple troubleshooting and testing with commonly available commercial FM broadcast receivers. No correction is necessary if both ends drift in the same direction because the IF doesn't change. Automatic Frequency Control (AFC), implemented by tuning the second LO nominally at 150 MHz, is provided to keep the receiver tuned correctly. This conversion produces the second IF at the point where detection takes place at 45 MHz in a Motorola MC13055 FSK receiver chip. This chip is specified to operate at data rates up to 2 megabytes per second (Mbps), but has actually been used as high as 10 Mbps.

Automatic frequency control circuits keep each receiver correctly tuned, even when the first IF deviates from 105 MHz. A search oscillator is also provided to allow the receiver to "find" the incoming signal when the link is first powered up, or if you lose signals temporarily. The searching is controlled by the Data Carrier Detect (DCD) circuitry. Once the signal is found, the oscillator is shut off and the AFC tunes the receiver correctly. Because the data is digital, an appropriate offset is introduced to the tuning depending on whether the data is a "0" or a "1." We added the audio channel as an afterthought. It provides for human communication, particularly while debugging the link and operating it with digital data the first time. An electret microphone produces the transmit audio signal. This is amplified and limited by high and low pass filters before modulating the transmitter. Levels were selected to provide only small deviation compared with that of the digital channel. This allows the audio channel to operate without significantly interfer-

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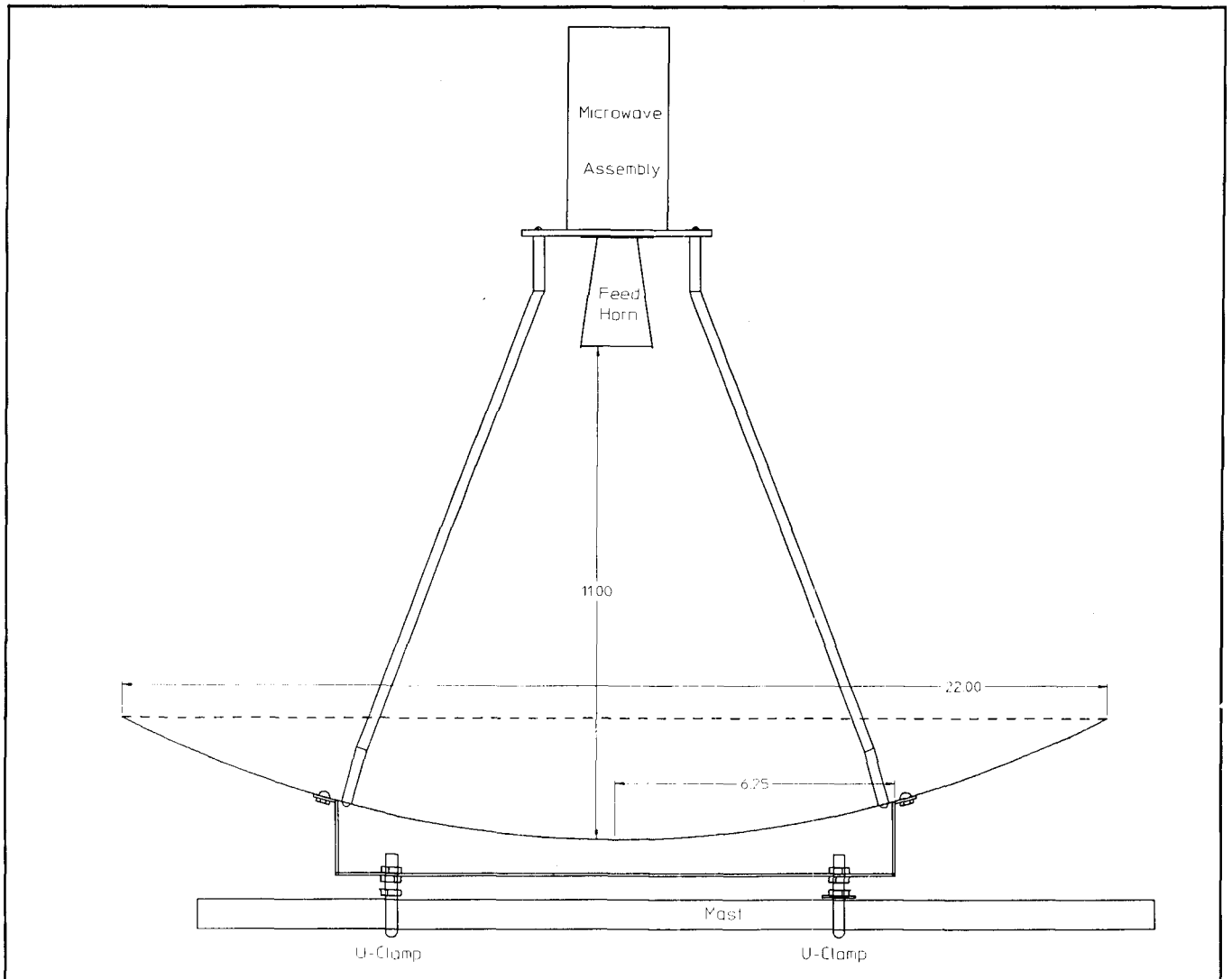
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FIGURE 2A



Mechanical layout of the 10-GHz dish feed and mounting system.

ing or degrading the digital data. A volume control and speaker amplifier sufficient for driving headphones or a small speaker are provided on receive.

An analog meter displays strength as carrier-to-noise (C/N) ratio or discriminator output to aid when manual frequency control (MFC) is used. The MC13055 FSK receiver chip has a built-in logarithmic amplifier which can give a pretty accurate measure of C/N. A switch lets you select manual or automatic frequency control.

The microwave transceiver, modulator, and receive preamplifier are mounted together in a box located at the prime focus of the parabolic antenna. A horn antenna was designed to illuminate the dish antenna efficiently so that near maximum gain could be obtained. The rest of the receiver, as well as circuits for the audio channel, are located in a separate enclosure. This lets you place the antenna and microwave hardware a considerable distance from the receiver for tower or mast mounting.

We used Emitter Coupled Logic (ECL) for incoming and

outgoing data. These are differential lines and can be used even when there is considerable line length — for example, when the microwave portion is high on a tower or the receiver is located some distance from the host computer. A standard 15-pin connector is used as the interface to the radio hardware. Those familiar with Local Area Networks (LANs) may recognize this connector and pinout as identical to that of a Media Access Unit (MAU), the device used to link a computer to a coaxial cable connecting a building or area wide network. You need just 12 volts DC at approximately 350-mA data input and data output to operate all the radio link hardware.

## Antenna

The antenna is mounted to a mast with a rear mounting bracket. This plate is cut from sheet aluminum and folded to produce four "feet" which attach to the dish. Mount the plate to the mast with U clamps. For minor elevation steering of the antenna, add two extra sets of nuts to the clamps.

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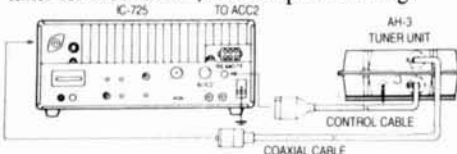
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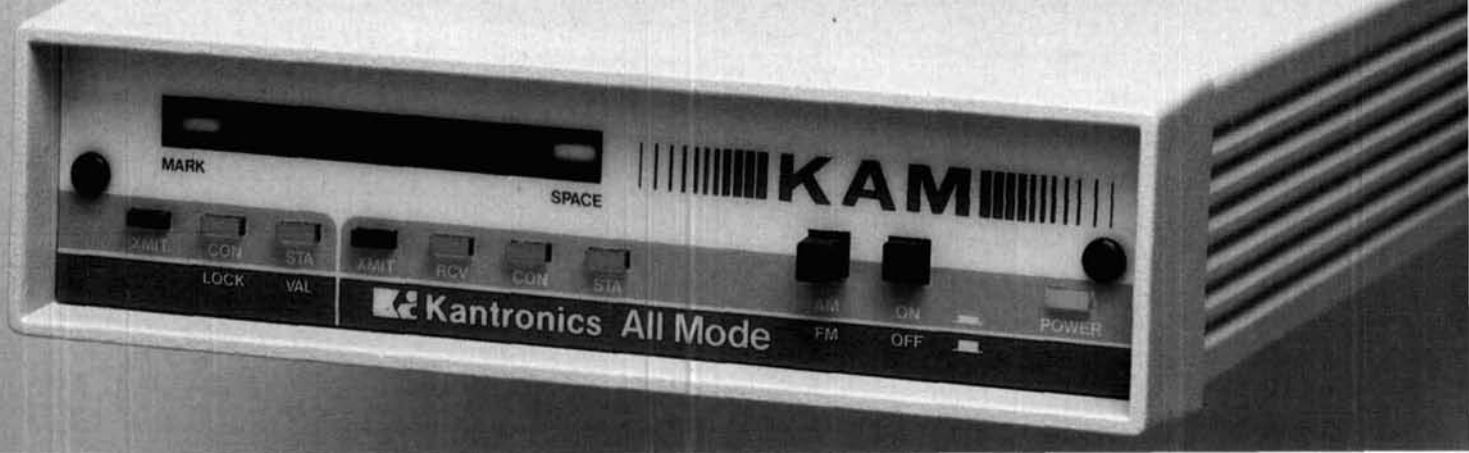
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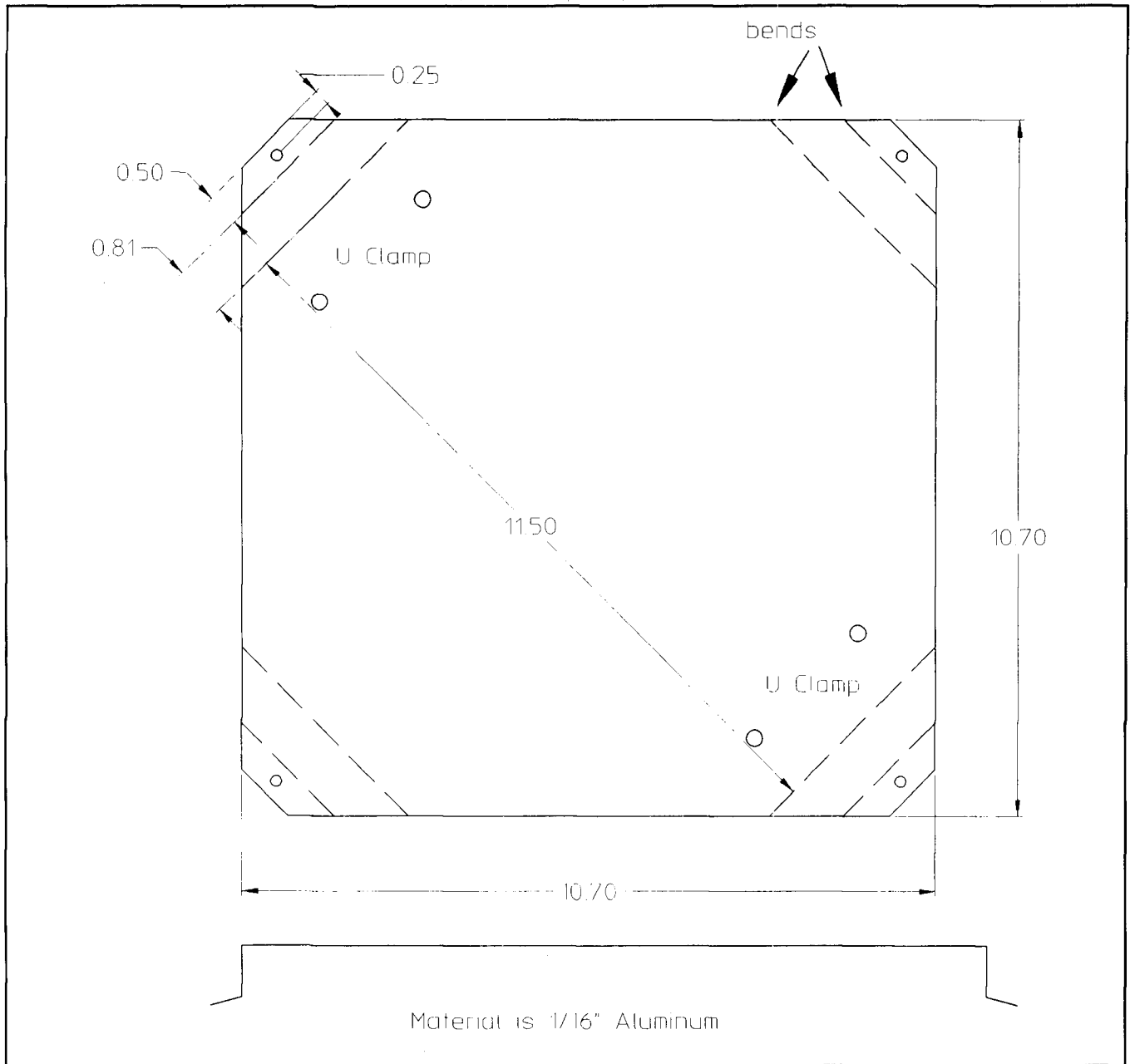
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FIGURE 2B



**Dimensions of the feed support struts.**

This lets you adjust the spacing between the mast and plate. Less spacing on the top than on the bottom clamp points the dish upward; more spacing points it downward. Because the antenna has less than a 4-degree half-power beamwidth, you may need to make this adjustment — particularly when the two ends of the link are at different elevations and not very far apart.

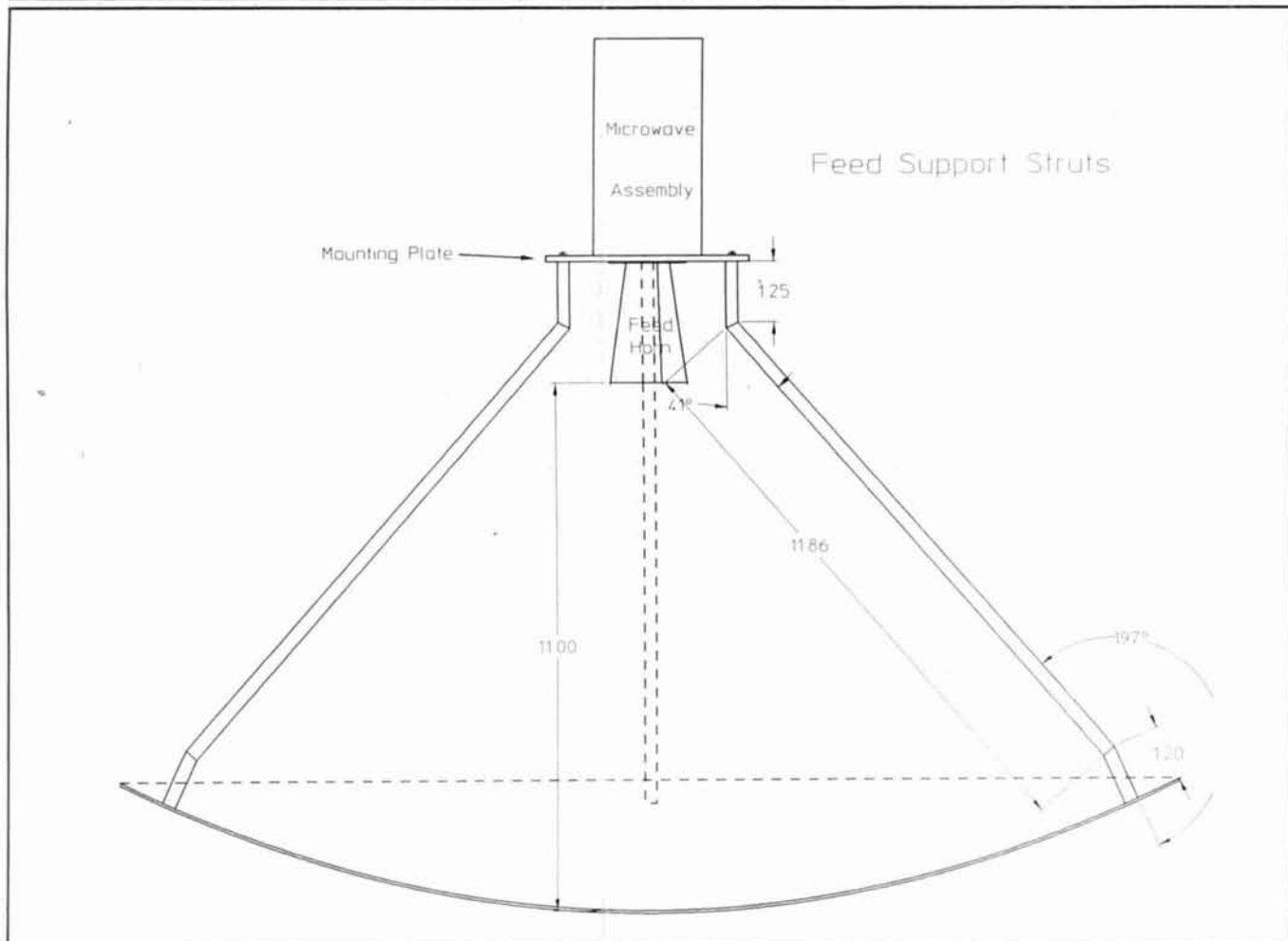
The horn feed and microwave assembly attach to a plate and are held at the dish focal point by four 1/4-inch diameter struts made from soft aluminum rod. We found this material at a local home supply store. First cut the aluminum rod to length; then drill and tap it at each end. Use a tubing bender to shape the rod properly. **Figures 2A, 2B and 3** show the mounting bracket and feed support struts, respectively.

**Feedhorn**

To construct the feedhorn, first cut the sides and flange from copper or brass shim stock as shown in **Figure 4**. Because the material is so thin, you may want to begin by tacking the whole assembly together using a medium sized soldering iron and complete your soldering after everything is in place.

The feed/microwave assembly is shown in **Photo A**. The mounting plate has a short section of waveguide at its center. The feedhorn and transceiver mount on opposite sides and a small Bud box encloses the electronics. Make the waveguide section by milling (or drilling) and filing a 0.40 by 0.90-inch rectangle in the plate. Great precision of construction for either the feed or the mounting plate isn't

FIGURE 3



**Dimensions of the feed support struts.**

necessary to obtain good performance. Figure 5 shows the feed mounting plate.

**Microwave assembly**

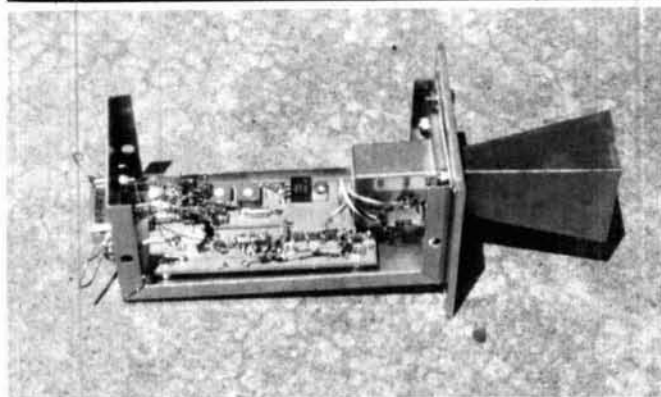
Because the microwave transceiver is self-contained, the RF electronics aren't particularly critical or difficult to assemble.

The receive preamplifier is probably the only sensitive circuitry, and because this uses MMICs, short lead length and good grounding are the only prerequisites. If you use pc board material, you can make the entire board using a file and small hobby knife. Fifty-ohm transmission line is used to connect to and from the MMICs. Try making this line by filing 0.005 to 0.010-inch slots 0.1 inch apart. The line can then be cut into short sections and the components soldered directly to it. Holes drilled in the board allow the MMIC packages to sit flush with the lines. Holes are also drilled for all component ground leads, and the leads are soldered on the top and bottom of the board. The regulator and modulator circuits aren't critical and the ECL IC may be "dead bug" mounted on top of the board. You can mount the board to the aluminum box with short spacers. Use a twisted pair made from hookup wire to connect to the mixer diode on the transceiver. Figure 6 shows an approximate board layout. (See Figure 7 for enclosure dimensions.)

**Receiver assembly**

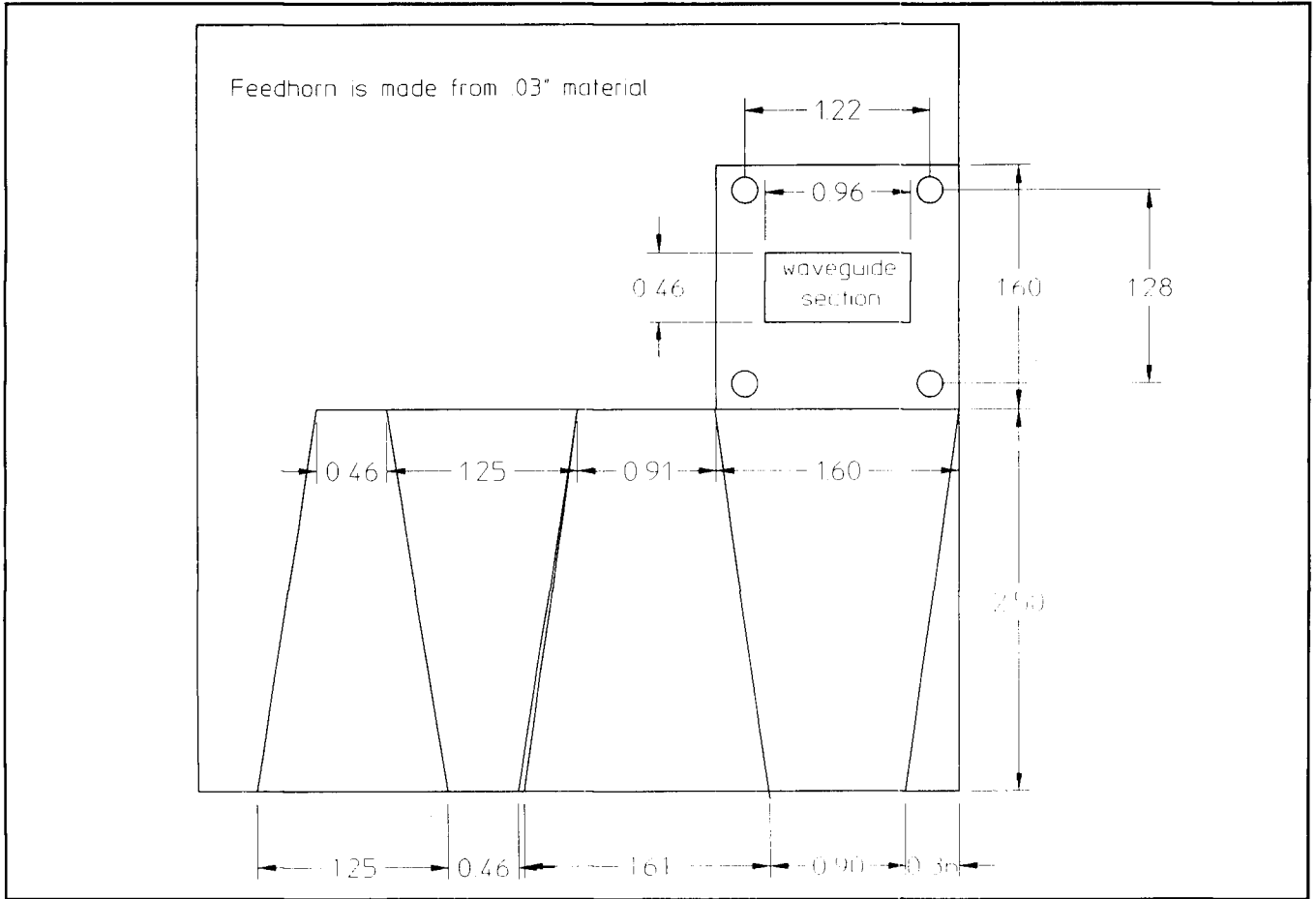
Receiver assembly construction also isn't critical. See Figures 8A through 8C for details. Use ground plane as much as possible on the component side of the board and keep traces to the 45-MHz filter and discriminator reasonably short. Otherwise, no special precautions need be

PHOTO A



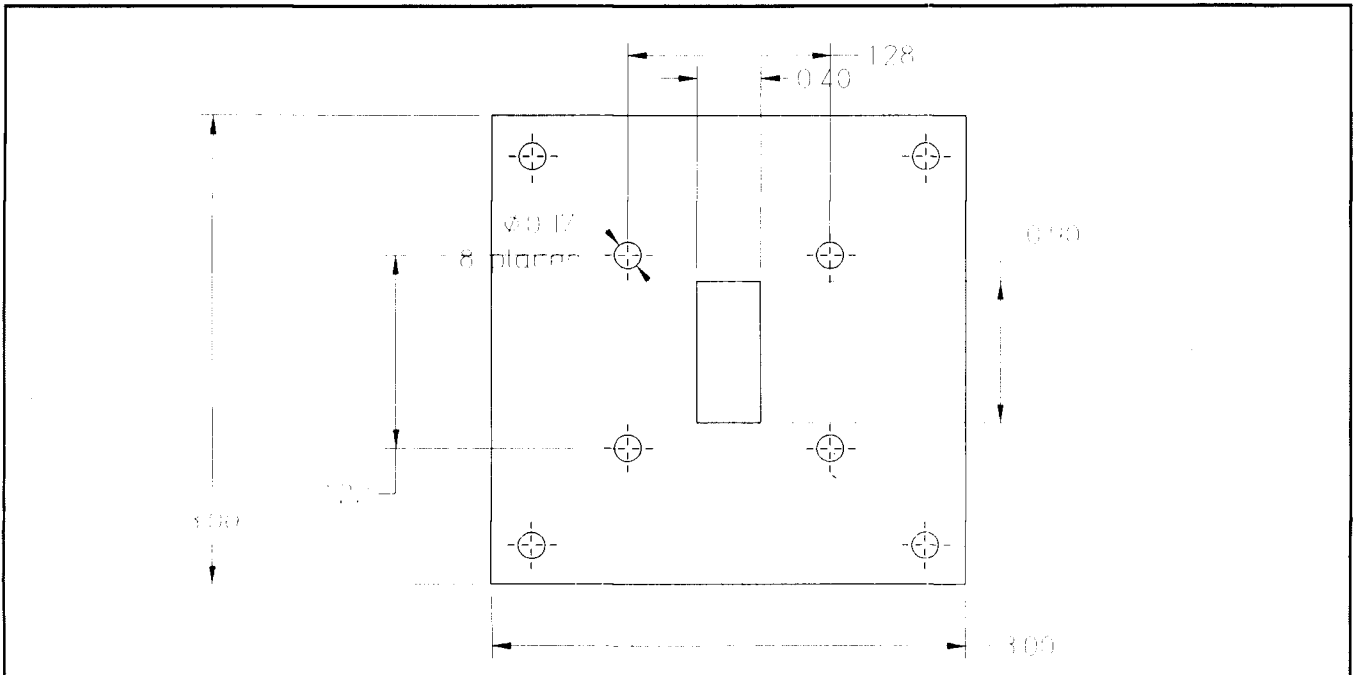
Feed/microwave assembly.

FIGURE 4



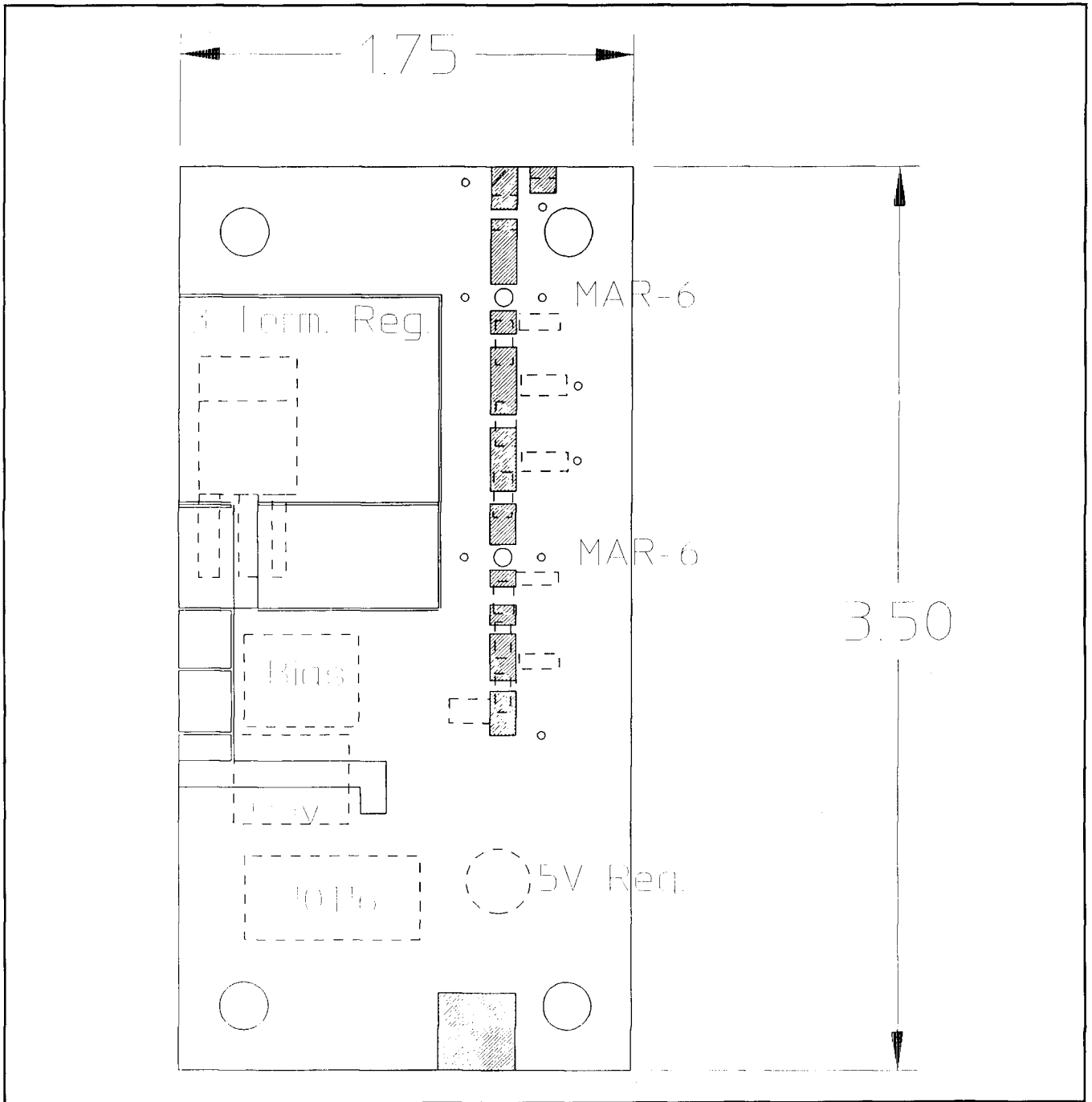
Dimensions for feedhorn construction.

FIGURE 5



Microwave assembly/feed mounting plate.

FIGURE 6



**Preamplifier/Tx modulator board component layout.**

taken. All ICs may be socketed for convenience. (PC layout or circuit boards may be available by press time. Contact the authors for further information. Ed.)

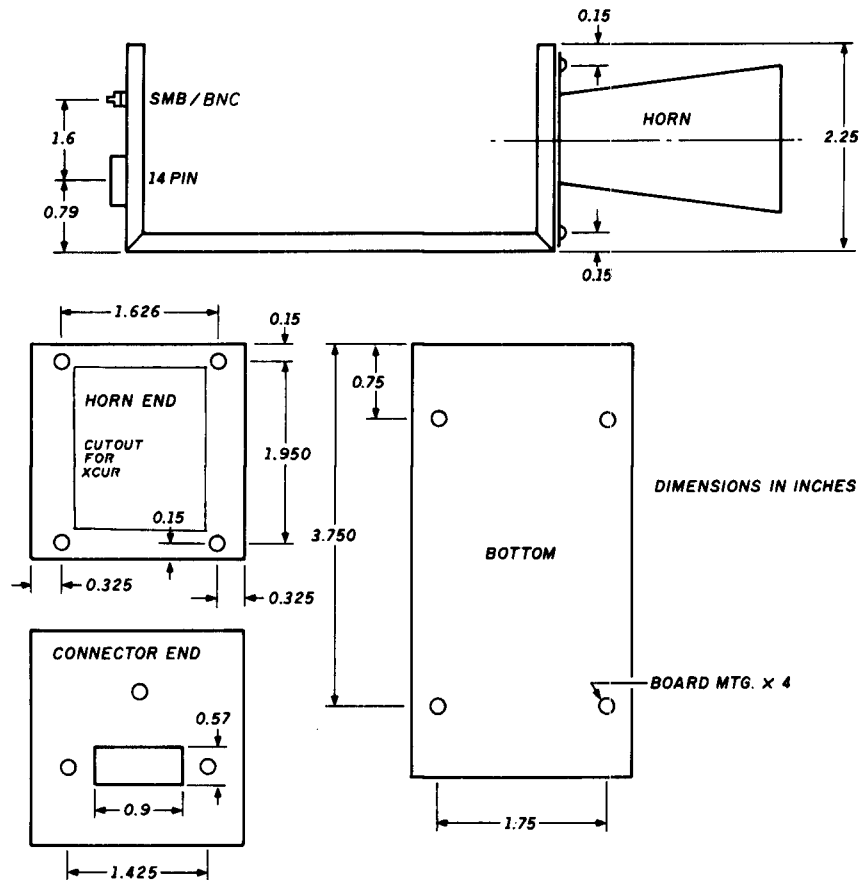
**Computer interface**

We chose the IBM PC as the initial platform for developing and testing faster packet hardware. The IBM PC is generally available and affordable, with sufficient capability and adaptability. The IBM PC is the defacto standard for people pursuing higher speed packet. The bus architecture is well known, and there are a large number of experts to consult should you encounter problems.

The original system design called for standard off-the-shelf Ethernet™ adapter cards. Normally Ethernet lets a number of computers intercommunicate within a local area at a data rate of 10 Mbps. N3EUA suggested we use the same widely available cards and the associated IEEE 802.3 protocol with the adapter card clocks slowed to 1 Mbps. Using a standard Ethernet adapter gives you access to an existing range of networking software, including NetBios/PC Network and TCP/IP implementations. It's an interface familiar to the general ham community, one that the advanced packeteer probably already knows and works with.

Stock Ethernet cards can't be slowed from 10 to 1 Mbps

FIGURE 7



Dimensions of the box to house the microwave circuitry.

without extensive reworking. The serial data interface portion of the cards must produce a clock rate within 0.001 percent of 10 Mbps to conform to the IEEE 802.3 specification. By the time we discovered this we had working "RF bit pumps," but found ourselves without a suitable digital interface.

Several years ago IBM produced a digital communications adapter known as the PCLANA or SYTEK 6120. This adapter was designed to communicate using FSK signals transmitted on a coaxial cable at a 1-Mbps rate. The card implemented Ethernet framing with a NetBios interface directly on the card. The card consists of a local  $\mu$ P (80186), an Ethernet chip (82586), custom 802.3 serial data interface, RAM, ROM, PC bus interface, and an RF modem. While the RF modem is interesting, it was unnecessary for this project and was disconnected.

We discovered that this card had all the right pieces: 1-Mbps Ethernet frames, defined PC interface, and because 10-Mbps Ethernet was displacing these cards, good availability on the surplus market — sometimes just for the asking.

To use the PCLANA card, we needed to gain access to the TTL signals directly (before modulating the RF modem), build an adapter card onto the PCLANA for converting TTL to differential ECL, generate DCD, and route Transmit Data (TxD) and Receive Data (RxD). You'll need a software driver if you want something other than a NetBios interface. A schematic of the card is shown in the *IBM PC Technical Reference Manual*, "Options and Adapters" section.

## How the adapter card works

A "daughter" adapter (Figure 9) is fitted to the PCLANA to take the TTL TxD, RxD, DCD, and RTS. It produces a valid interface to the microwave RF modem, including power and differential ECL interface.

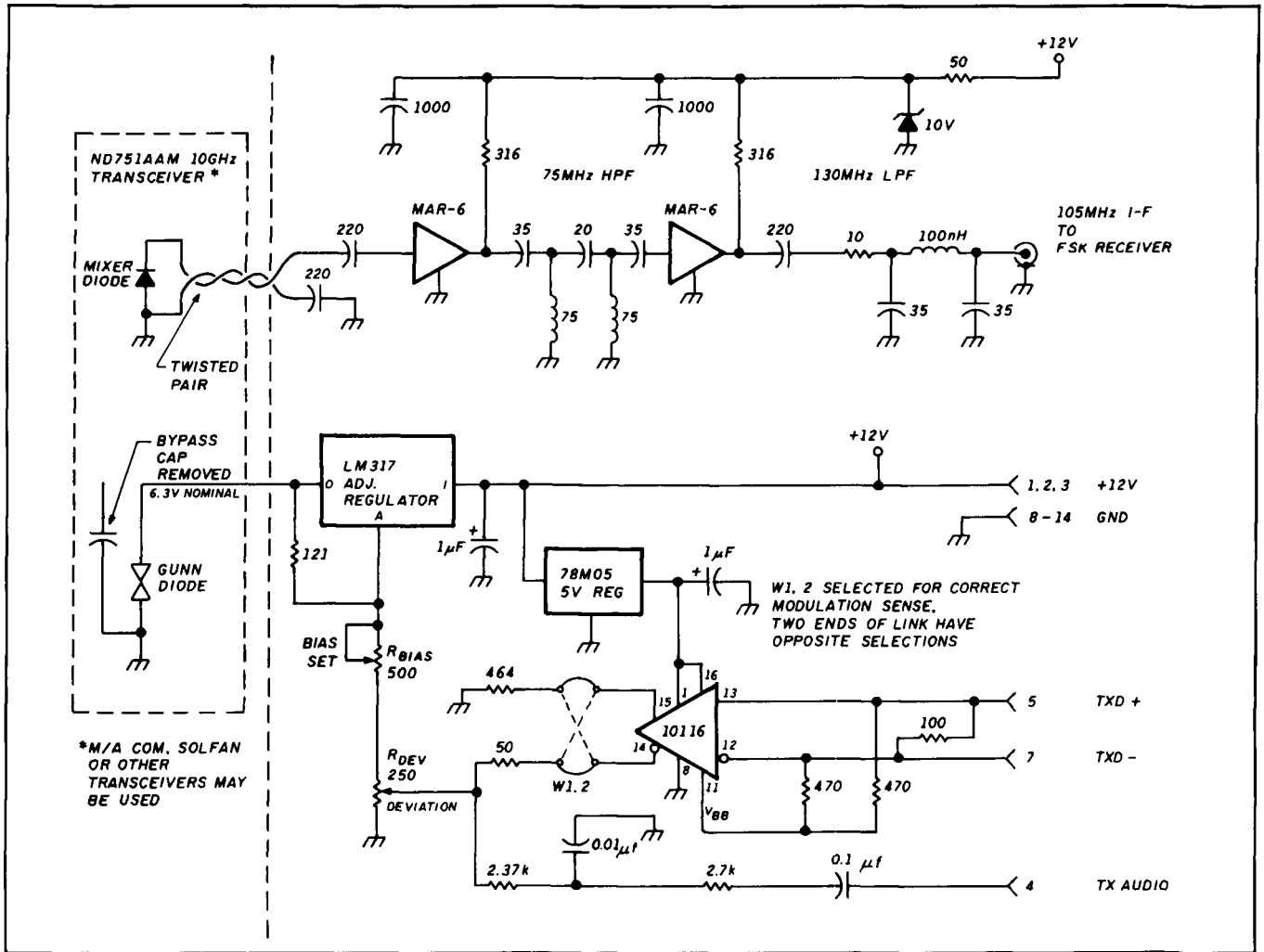
The microwave modem interface closely matches the IEEE 802.3 MAU which normally connects the digital interface to a coaxial cable. A MAU is also known as an Ethernet transceiver (XCVR). We chose this interface because it allows long (120 foot) cable runs, good common mode noise immunity (0.6 volts), and a standard interface.

TxD is converted to differential ECL levels with an open collector (OC) NAND gate and a resistor totem pole. This produces the right voltage level for one end of an MC10116 differential line driver input. The other differential input is tied to the MC10116 V<sub>bb</sub>. The output of the MC10116 is differential ECL. Because the ECL drivers are open ended, each line is pulled to ground with a 470-ohm resistor. The polarity of ECL lines to the pins of the DB15 connector is important. Switching these lines will result in a bit sense inversion.

RxD is converted from differential ECL to TTL using the differential drive from an MC10116 biasing the base emitter junction of a 2N3906 PNP transistor. This drives a standard TTL NAND input.

TxD is qualified by Ready to Send (RTS) from the

FIGURE 8A



The schematic for preamplifier bias and modulation.

PCLANA (U1b). This is necessary because the SYTEK SIC doesn't clamp the TxD line to logical zero when RTS goes false.

The SYTEK SIC interface chip is designed to work on a cable with multiple stations. It monitors the DCD line, and if it finds that it has been true too long, the SIC declares the cable jammed. Because the microwave RF modem provides continuous DCD with or without data, we used a retriggerable one shot (U2a) connected to the incoming RxD signal to generate an appropriate noncontinuous DCD. On the first low-to-high transition, DCD will be asserted and the one shot will start timing. Each low-to-high transition in the incoming data will retrigger the one shot and keep it from expiring. When data stops and the RxD line clamps to a low, the DCD will fall to a zero when the one shot expires. Because each end of the link expects to hear itself, the DCD is ORed with the local RTS (U1a).

### Building the interface adapter and PCLAN adapter modification

Adapter card construction is straightforward and can be completed quickly with IC sockets, perfboard, and point-to-point wiring. The entire circuit runs at baseband speed,

so layout isn't important. (Contact the authors if you want a pc board layout.)

The PCLANA modification can be simple or time consuming, depending upon how elegant you want the finished project to be. The adapter daughter board must be mounted on the PCLANA. The best place to do this is over the long metal cover housing the actual RF modem. Decide on a place and prepare your mount.

You might consider removing enough of the RF modem components to make room for the daughter adapter board. If you do, be aware that the RF modem reports to the onboard  $\mu$ P (80188) as to the validity of the -12 volt DC power line (for historical reasons). If you remove the RF modem without connecting this signal, the  $\mu$ P will report an error whenever you attempt any operation. Locate Q20 and R121 on the left side of the pc board next to the lower left corner of the RF modem cover (if it's still installed). The left end of R121 is tied to the base of Q20. Cut the trace to the right end (or unsolder R121) and reconnect it directly to -12 volts DC on the board (bus pin B7).

You need four signal lines to connect the daughter card to the PCLANA. They are: TxD, RxD, DCD, and RTS. You also need three power lines: +5 volts, +12 volts, and GND.



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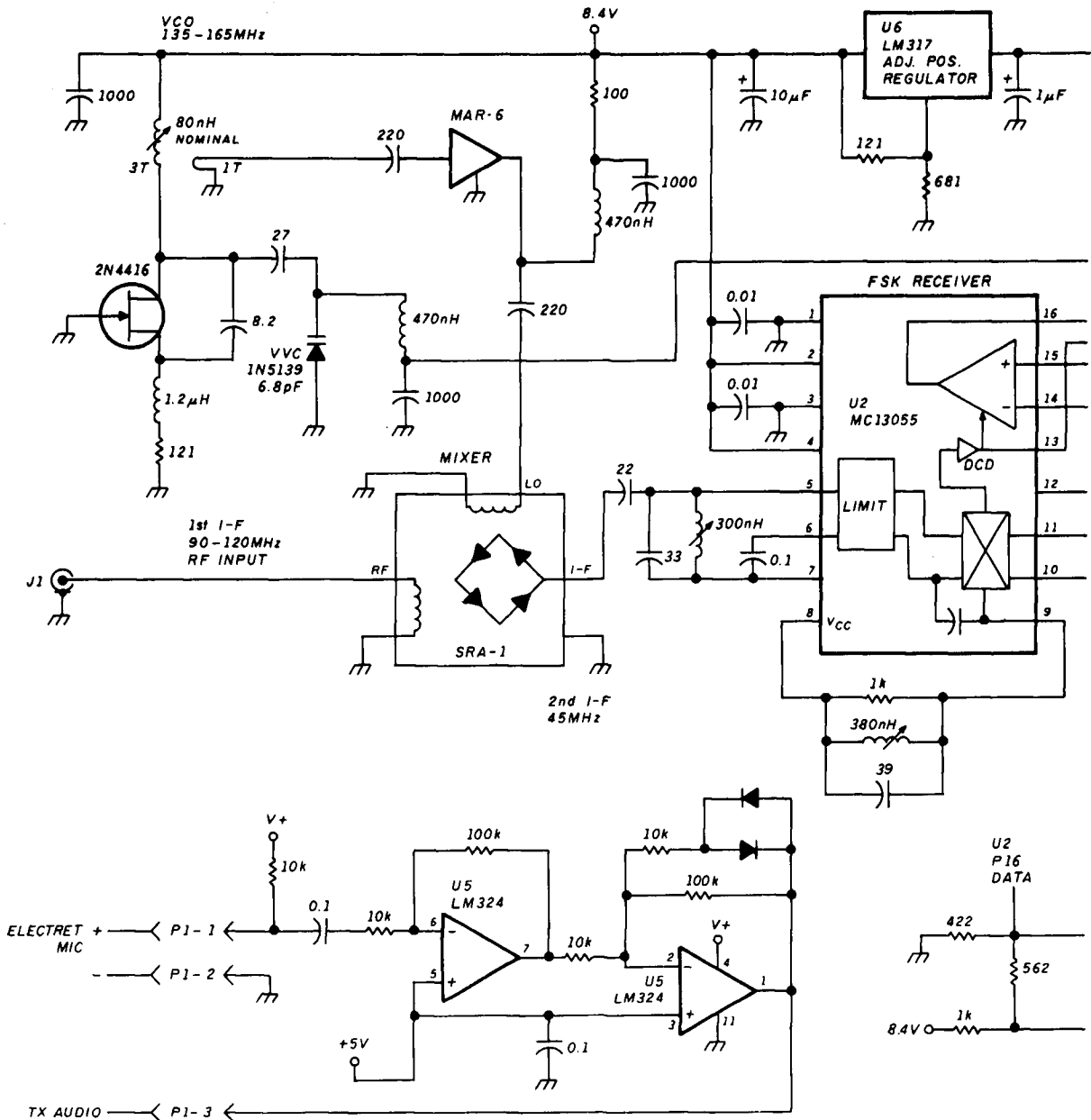
- |                 |                             |                 |                              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
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| 2K CLASSIC X    | Export Console              | 5K CLASSIC RF   | RF Deck only                 |
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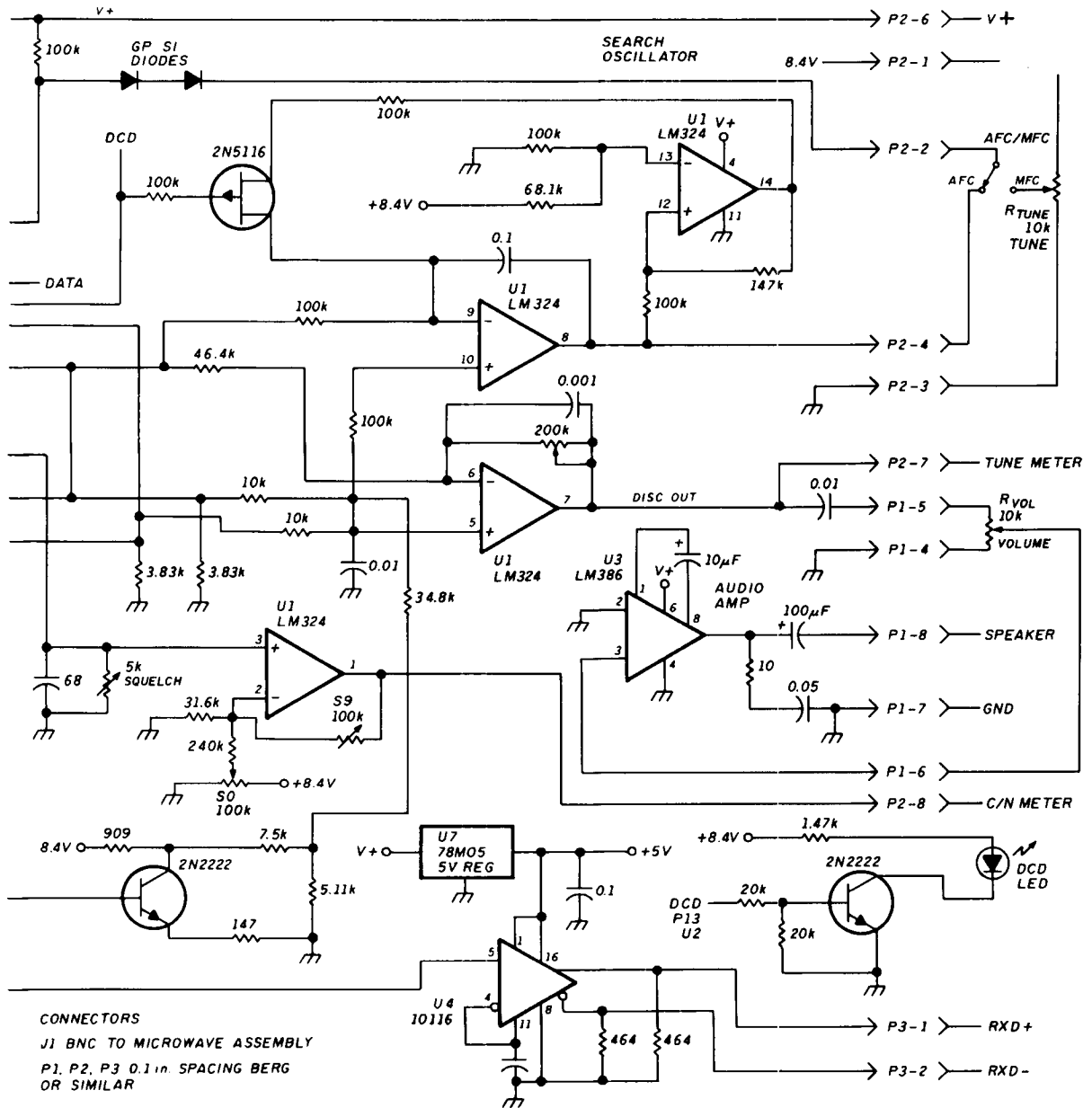
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FIGURE 8B



The receiver portion of the transceiver.

FIGURE 8B



You'll find the connection to ground underneath the screw holding the mounting bracket to the rear of the card. Positive 5 volts DC is taken from a trace leading to edge connector A1 (component side of the card, on the right). Positive 12 volts DC is also taken from a trace leading from B9 (solder side of the card, on the left). This trace also "comes through" to the component side of the card and is easier to solder to. The current demand is low, so you can make contact by cleaning a portion of a wide trace, tinning it, and soldering to it.

Make signal connections to the SYTEK SIC chip by bending pins up out of the socket and soldering to them. Find IC U16 in the upper left of the board. It's designated SIC and is a wide 28-pin device. Pin 1 should have a red dot and be on the lower left. Remove the device carefully; you probably won't be able to find a replacement easily. Bend pins 12, 13, 17, and 18 up so they won't make contact with the socket when the IC is reinserted, and so you can solder to them. Reinsert the IC. Connect the daughter board signal leads directly to the exposed leads. Pin 12 is Rx/D, 13 is DCD, 17 is RTS, and 18 is Tx/D. It's a good idea to use shrink tubing on each lead. Be careful not to heat the device unnecessarily while soldering.

With the daughter card mounted on the PCLANA and all seven interface lines hooked up, measure the resistance from the +5 and +12 lines to GND. Find the cause of any reading less than 700 ohms before installing the card in the PC.

If everything checks out, install the board in a PC bus slot and power up the computer. If the microwave hardware isn't attached to the 15-pin daughter board connector, the

PC will delay for about 15 to 45 seconds during the boot cycle. It may display an error 3015.

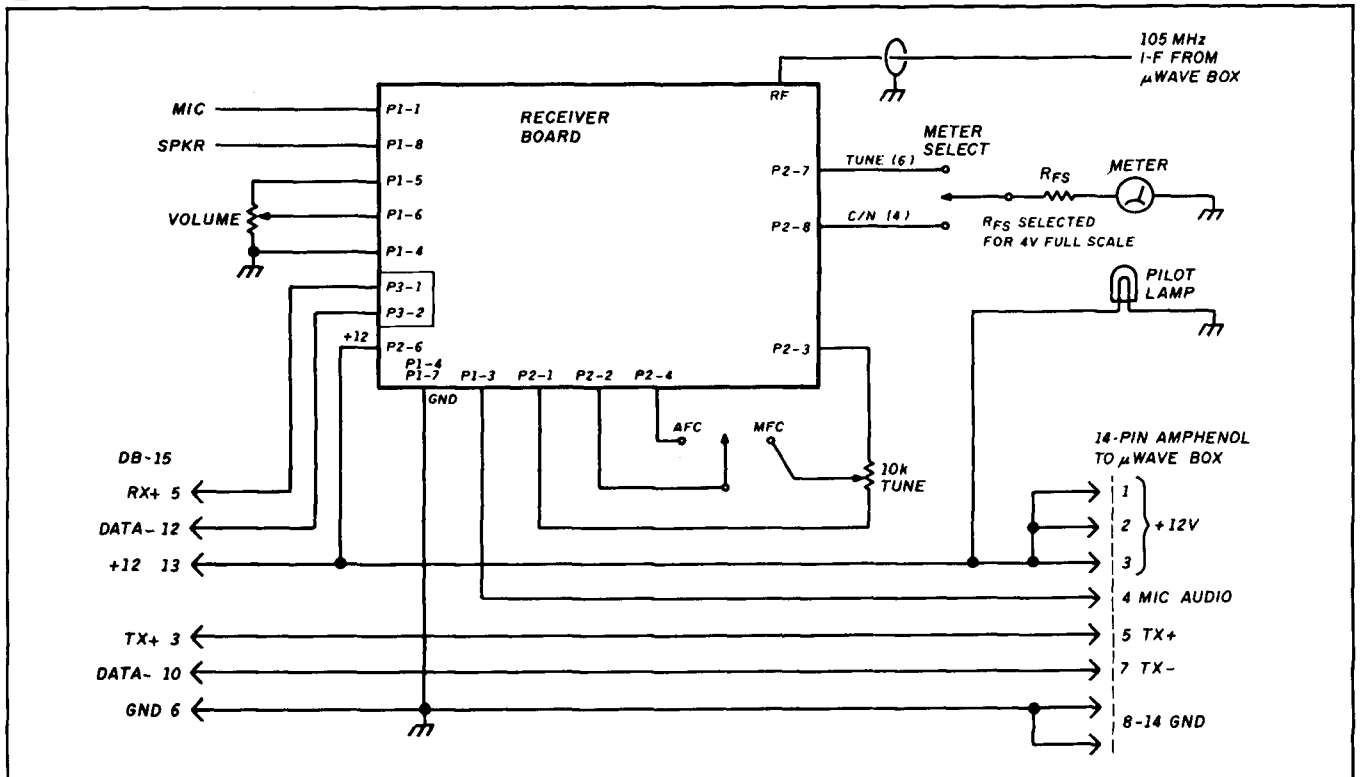
To complete testing, install a similarly modified card in another PC, connect the microwave hardware, power up both computers, and check to see that both FSK receivers show DCD. It may be necessary to reboot the PC by selecting *ctl-alt-del* after DCD has been established. When the PC is booted, the PCLANA runs through a series of diagnostics which include frame loopback. The loopback will fail if the microwave hardware doesn't have DCD. Depending on the PC, the PCLANA card will declare itself inoperative until you run diagnostics again.

If you have a copy of the IBM PC network program, you can now start it on both machines and share disks. Playing with the network can provide lots of creative fun. With the link running to a fellow ham, you can access each other's hard disks. Suppose you just finished some nice graphics and you want to show them off. Instead of reaching for your ATV camera, bit dump the screen image to disk and do a DOS copy file from your disk to your friend's. Your friend will be able to see your work in seconds. A driver is also available to provide packet interface support for Phil Karn's (KA9Q) TCP/IP package for the PC. (Contact the authors for further information.)

## Tune-up and testing

Unless you have a 10-GHz microwave signal generator available, you should build these units as a pair — although two dishes aren't necessary for short range use or testing. You should build the microwave assembly and set the bias voltage from the three-terminal regulator to approximately

FIGURE 8C



The transceiver interconnect layout.

6.3 volts before connecting to the transceiver. Verify that the deviation control can be set to give 0.25 to 0.5-volt variation when the ECL line receiver is toggled between states. Once the biases are correct, hook up the transceiver. Most transceivers as shipped will be close to 10,525 MHz. With two transceiver/horn assemblies pointed at each other and separated a few feet, hook a frequency counter or general coverage receiver to the preamplifier output. Leaving one unit's tuning unchanged, tune the second unit while monitoring the IF frequency with a counter or listening for it in a general coverage receiver. Turning the mechanical tuning screw further into the cavity will reduce frequency. As the unit is tuned 70 MHz (or more) lower, you should be able to read the difference in frequency with a counter. You should be able to "walk" the two units lower in frequency into the hamband using this technique and space them 105 MHz apart. If you get "lost" and don't know the absolute frequency, try using a local supermarket door opener as an approximate 10525-MHz reference. If a microwave frequency indicator is available, adjustment is trivial.

Once the two ends are operating 105 MHz apart, you can align the receivers. Select MFC and midrange control setting, and use a counter or 2-meter receiver to monitor the VCO frequency. Set it to 148 to 150 MHz at midrange. You should be able to tune several MHz on either side of this center with the manual tuning control. You can use AFC to tune it even further once the other circuits are operating. Tune the VCO to 45 MHz above the previously measured frequency of the microwave IF and adjust the 45-MHz band-pass coil for maximum C/N reading. It may be necessary

to separate the units or use conductive foam material to keep the signal strength reading on scale. Once the receiver is peaked on a 45-MHz IF, tune the discriminator coil to center the detector output voltage on pin 10 or 11 of the MC13055. With the squelch control set to maximum resistance of 5 k, a 0.35-volt change on pin 12 corresponds to 10-dB change in signal strength. Keeping the receiver tuned to center with MFC, adjust the position and absorbers to produce about 10 dB of C/N. Then adjust the squelch control so the DCD light just extinguishes. Measure the squelch control resistance again and calibrate your C/N reading by calculating sensitivity:

$$V(p12) = 0.070 * R_{squelch} \quad (1)$$

$R_{squelch}$  = squelch resistance in kilohms.

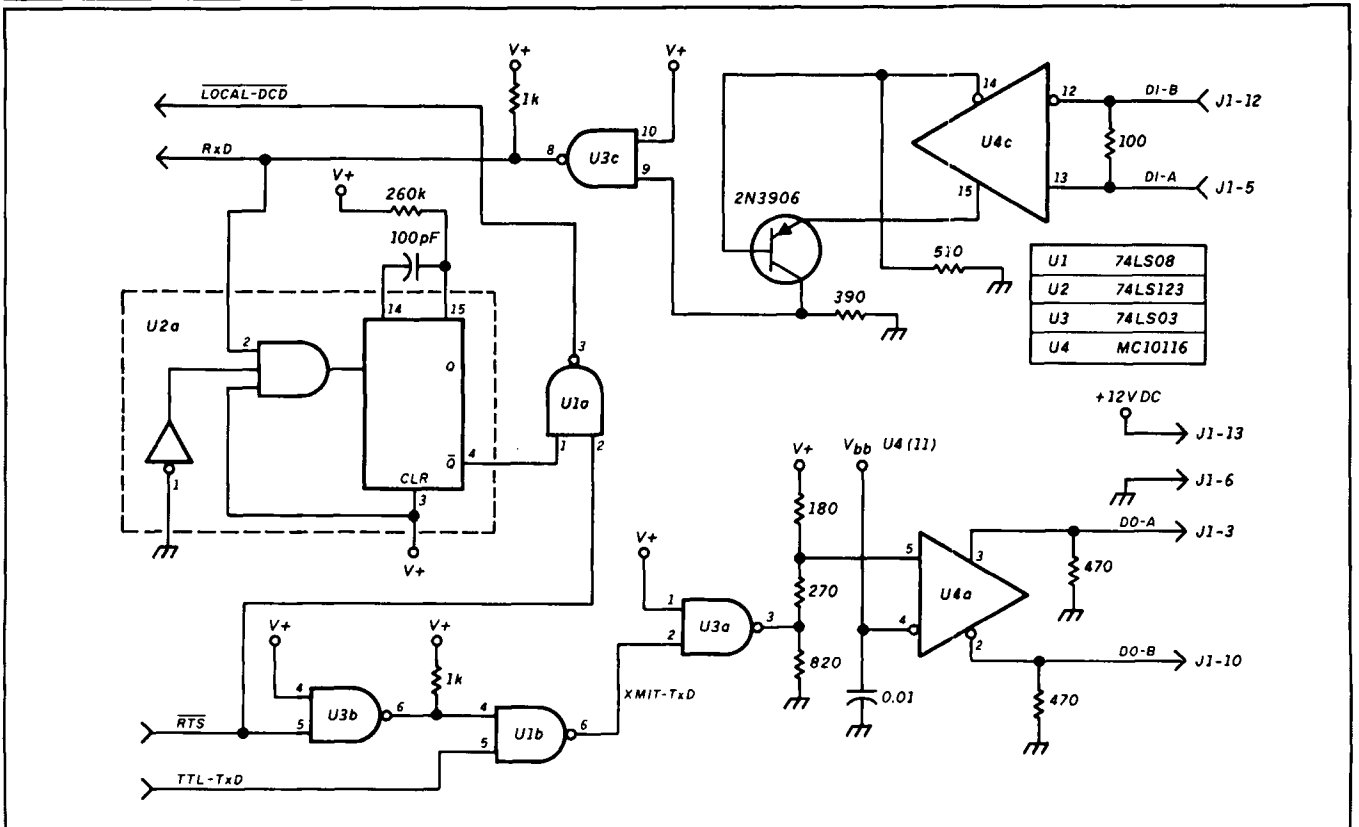
$V(p12)$  = voltage change at MC13055 pin 12 in volts for 10-dB change in signal.

Adjust the discriminator output sensitivity to give full scale on your meter as you use the MFC to tune across the incoming signal. Finally, verify that the search oscillator runs when you select AFC and that there's no incoming 105-MHz IF signal. This should appear as a sawtooth oscillation on the VCO tuning line.

The audio channel should work without further adjustment. Some background noise may be audible even when signal strength is high due to the phase noise of the microwave oscillators, but the level shouldn't be objectionable.

Use an oscilloscope to verify data throughput and correct transmitter deviation setting. Monitor the discriminator out-

FIGURE 9



Adapter board for the PCLANA card.

put with the scope and set the scope sensitivity to give full screen display as you use the MFC to tune through a signal. When you reach this stage, the transmitter may be modulated with data and the deviation adjustment may be used to set the discriminator output to slightly less than full screen. It may be necessary to iterate with the bias setting to keep the transceiver bias centered on 6.25 volts.

At this point, both the transmitter and receiver should be functioning properly and may be used for audio or digital communications. When units are separated by a great distance, or signals are otherwise weak, it may be beneficial to monitor the audio channel as an aid to link adjustment. Audio communication will be possible even when noise is causing excessive errors on a data channel.

## Performance, results, and remaining problems

Getting data to flow on the bench led to a couple of surprises. While debugging the software drivers, we learned new elements of timing relationships. Since this is point to point, and the only start-up delay is software latency (no hardware TXDELAY), data frame ACKs arrived from the other end before we'd finished processing the send request. Pieces of software that were just fine at lower speeds had to be rethought and streamlined to achieve throughput.

Aligning the microwave dishes requires some skill. If you haven't done this before, allow plenty of time for alignment, have solid mounts, and don't expect it to be like 2-meter work. Use the audio channel to listen for receiver quieting and get a feel for the narrow beamwidth. Don't try to hand hold the antennas at both ends; both must be pointed correctly before either end hears anything. It may be useful to use manual frequency control at first. If you can put one end of the link at a high elevation temporarily, you can power the other end from 12 volts DC in your car and drive around to see what microwave communication feels like. The experience you gain doing this will help to make you a good judge of final locations for the digital link. Because these are low budget systems, line-of-sight transmission is probably necessary for anything other than fairly short links. An exception would be if a good planar reflector were located close to one end and used as an efficient mirror. You can try this technique to keep the hardware at ground level using a mast or tower-mounted "billboard" reflector. This has environmental advantages for the hardware, too.

Measurements indicate that the unit passes data with a low bit error rate (BER) down to signal strengths below 15-dB C/N. It's important to use direct paths; severe distortion can occur when multiple paths exist between the ends of the link. Such multipath conditions can cause link failure, even with very large C/N. This sensitivity should provide low error data transmission on a line-of-sight path of more than 40 miles with well-stirred air. In many locales, marine air layers and other causes of fading and ducting may require shortening the path to guarantee high linkup time.

With the link installed at two locations 13.5 miles apart in northern California, C/N measurements show that there is at least 10 to 15 dB more signal strength than the minimum necessary. This indicates that more than 40 miles should be possible with this hardware as shown. However, because longer paths are more likely to experience propagation anomalies and heavy rain could decrease signal

strength temporarily, it's desirable to use slightly larger dishes for longer paths. The audio link has proved useful in system troubleshooting too.

As with any ham project, there's certainly room for improvement. Because the original RF design was for a 2-Mbaud link, you should be able to improve DX by optimizing the receiver detector bandwidth. If you operate with a mast, the equipment needs to be waterproofed for all-weather use. As an alternative, you could mount a coax waveguide adapter to the feedhorn and locate the microwave circuitry remotely in a more protected environment. Use low loss semi-rigid coax cable for connecting to the antenna if you do so. A suitable coax waveguide adapter was described in an earlier article.<sup>2</sup>

If you want to use them, almost any of the surplus radar detector, motion detector, or burglar alarm Gunn transceivers should work well. M/A-COM Gunnplexers™, although somewhat more expensive, will work too. They have built-in electronic tuning that permits modulating at higher rates for full 10-Mbaud data links or ATV uses. It should be possible to frequency modulate them by driving the electronic tuning input from the ECL output, properly scaled and offset with a resistor network.


The first prototype of this link was built using 24-GHz radar transceivers and metal lamp reflectors for antennas. This arrangement works very well. Because of the modular system design, you may substitute these microwave assemblies for the 10-GHz ones described here without making any other adjustments. The higher gain available for a given dish antenna size at 24 GHz can actually provide better performance over some paths.

You can use a larger antenna for greater DX or more difficult paths. If you use something other than a 0.5 F/D reflector, you'll need to design a new feedhorn to produce maximum performance. Other diameters are available from the indicated supplier.

## Where to go from here

Ham radio has often made use of surplus and obsolete gear. Many have designed and built their own equipment. This project is no exception. By the time you read this, there will be a PC card (designed primarily by K3MC) capable of two-channel, full-duplex 2.5-Mbps operation. You'll be able to split the channels into four half duplex if you wish. The card will have a V40  $\mu$ P, RAM, and Zilog 85C30 SCC devices, plus the usual glue logic. Bit rate will be software selectable. The card will have enough capacity to run as an IP router, allowing the PC to perform other functions while continuing to provide network access.

We are also working to build inexpensive 250 to 500-Kbaud 900 and 1200-MHz radios to give the individual user access to other hams and to a "backbone," using this higher speed microwave hardware. We hope to have a fledgling moderate speed network in place in northern California and Colorado by the time this article goes to press. As the hardware is put into place, the platform for some really exciting applications and a whole new era of Amateur Radio becomes a reality.

The authors would like to thank WN6I, N3EUA, K3MC, and N6TTO for their encouragement and perseverance during testing. We'd also like to thank our XYLs, Sharon and Lynn. 

## Suppliers

Most of the components for this project should be available from:

Digi-Key Corporation  
701 Brooks Avenue South  
Thief River Falls, Minnesota 56701, 0677

The antennas are available from:

The Antenna Center  
505 Oak Street  
Calumet, Michigan 49913 (906)337-5062

The microwave transceivers shown are NEC ND751AAM, which may be available from:

California Eastern Labs  
3260 Jay Street  
Santa Clara, California 95054  
(408)980-3500

You should be able to substitute many other transceivers, like those made by M/A-COM or Solfan and various types available at flea markets.

## REFERENCES

1. Glenn Elmore, N6GN, "Designing A Station For The Microwave Bands, Parts 1-3," *Ham Radio Magazine*, February, June, and October 1988
2. Glen Elmore, N6GN, "Designing A Station For The Microwave Bands, Part 2," *Ham Radio*, June 1988, page 35-37.

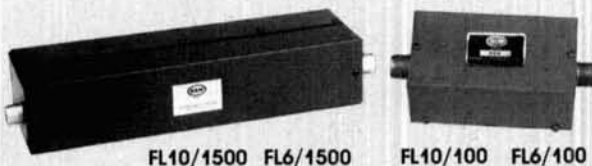
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# ULTRA LOW POWER FOUR-DIGIT SEQUENCE TOUCH TONE DECODER

By Carl Lyster, WA4ADG, 4412 Damas Road, Knoxville, Tennessee 37921

**F**or some time now Radio Shack has been selling a very useful Touch Tone™ decoder IC for about \$12. The all-CMOS IC incorporates the following: on-chip preamp, bandpass filters, voltage regulators, clock generators, and output decoders. All you need to decode a Touch Tone signal is a quartz crystal, a resistor and one capacitor, and 5 volts DC. The performance and reliability of this chip are amazing. By adding a few inexpensive shift registers and comparators, you can build a four-digit sequence decoder for less than \$20. **Figure 1** shows the pc board; **Figure 2** is the schematic diagram.

I've built several of these units and used them for applications like repeater autopatch and control link decoders. The response time of the decoder is very fast (specs. = 40 ms), much faster than you can move your finger from one button to another. The power consumption is an unbelievable 6 mA at 5 volts DC.

## Hardware description

AC-coupled audio enters the decoder on pin 9. To prevent falsing, this level shouldn't exceed 1 volt p-p. Pins 11 and 12 are connected to a "color-burst" 3.58 MHz crystal, also available from Radio Shack. In this circuit, the decoder is configured to detect all 16 standard Touch Tone digits and produce a hexadecimal output corresponding to the digit decoded. Pin 14 is the "valid digit" flag and goes high each time a digit is decoded. The rising edge of each valid digit flag pulse is used to clock the hex data from the

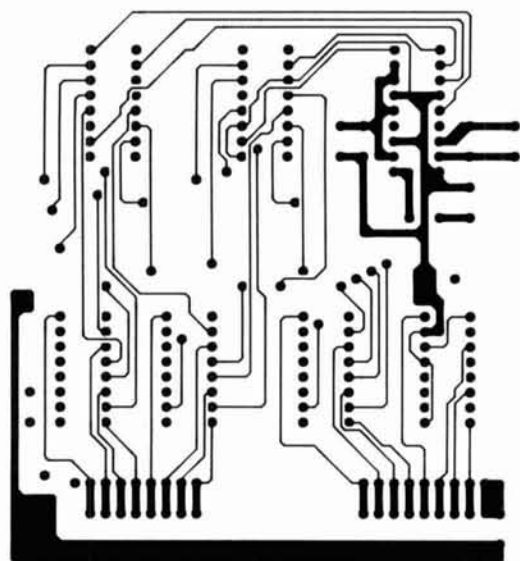
decoder into a pair of CD4015 dual four-bit shift registers. The shift registers store the hex data for the last four digits detected. IC1 stores binary bits A and B of the hex code while IC2 stores bits C and D. The corresponding two bits of each shift register position go together to form four, four-bit hex digits. The DCBA data for each digit is sent to a CD4063 magnitude comparator chip. Each CD4063 compares the binary number from the shift register to a binary

TABLE 1

| Digit | Binary coding chart. |          |          |          |
|-------|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|       | D<br>(8)             | C<br>(4) | B<br>(2) | A<br>(1) |
| 1     | 0                    | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| 2     | 0                    | 0        | 1        | 0        |
| 3     | 0                    | 0        | 1        | 1        |
| 4     | 0                    | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| 5     | 0                    | 1        | 0        | 1        |
| 6     | 0                    | 1        | 1        | 0        |
| 7     | 0                    | 1        | 1        | 1        |
| 8     | 1                    | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| 9     | 1                    | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| 0     | 1                    | 0        | 1        | 0        |
| *     | 1                    | 0        | 1        | 1        |
| #     | 1                    | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| A     | 1                    | 1        | 0        | 1        |
| B     | 1                    | 1        | 1        | 0        |
| C     | 1                    | 1        | 1        | 1        |
| D     | 0                    | 0        | 0        | 0        |



FIGURE 1



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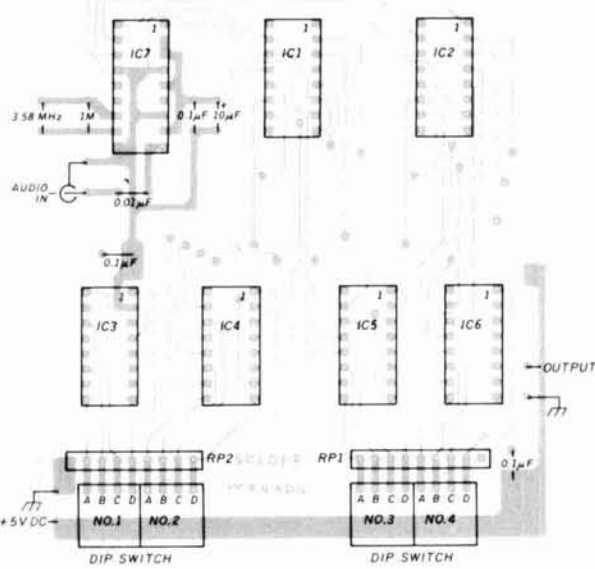
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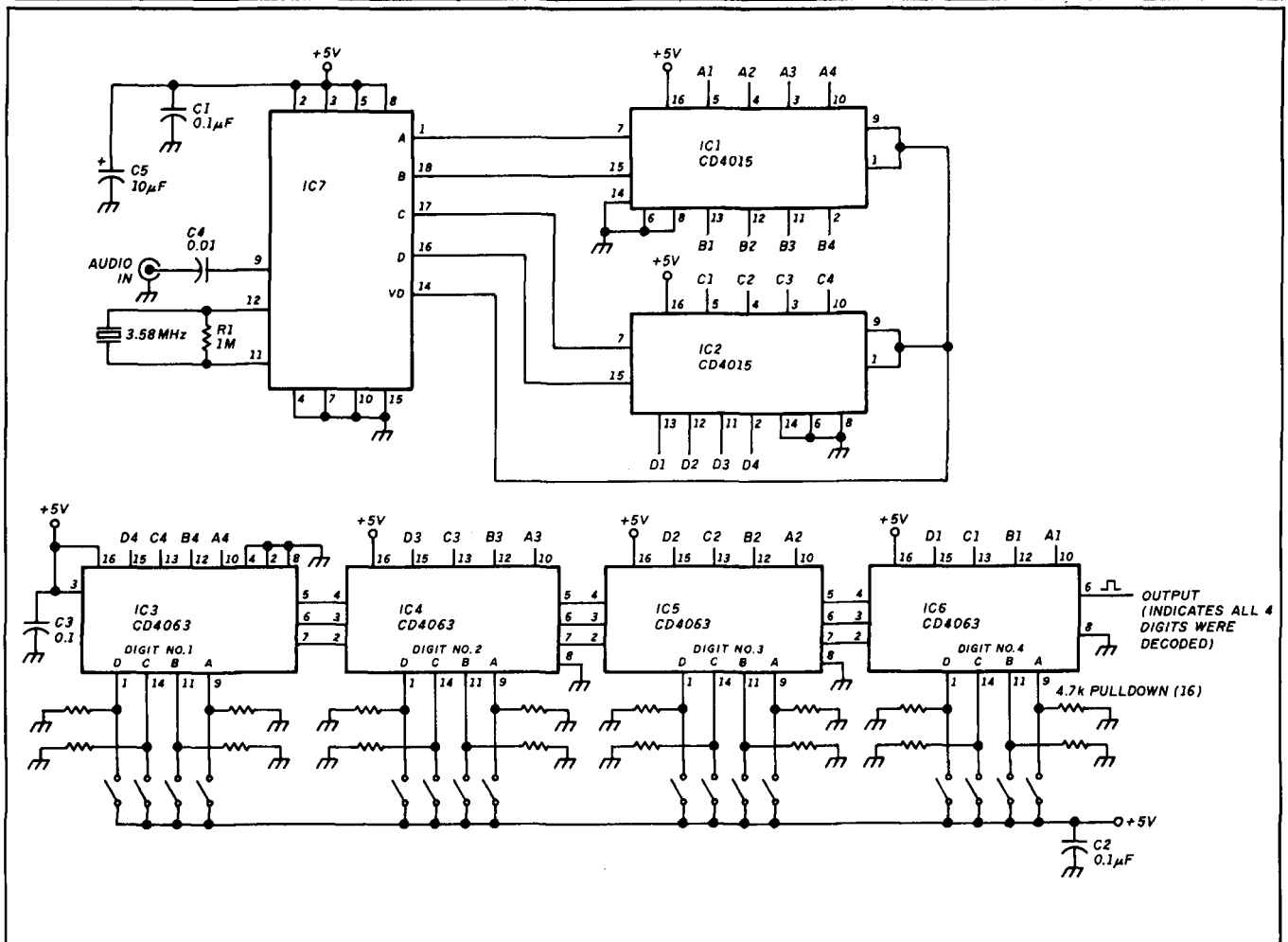
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FIGURE 2



Low power Touch Tone decoder.

PARTS LIST


|           |          |   |
|-----------|----------|---|
| C1,2,3    | 0.1µF    | ceramic or monolithic bypass            |
| C4        | 0.01µF   | ceramic                                 |
| C5        | 10 µF    | 16-volt electrolytic                    |
| IC1,2     | CD4015   | dual four-bit shift register            |
| IC3,4,5,6 | CD4063   | or 74HC85 magnitude comparator          |
| IC7       | 276-1301 | Touch Tone™ decoder (Radio Shack)       |
| R1        | 1 meg    | 1/4 watt                                |
| Crystal   | 272-1310 | color burst 3.58 MHz (Radio Shack)      |
| RP1,2     | 8 x 47 k | pull-down resistors                     |
| SW1,2     | 275-1301 | eight-position dip switch (Radio Shack) |

number programmed by a dip switch for each corresponding digit position. When the two numbers are equal the CD4063 generates an "=" flag. As each successive CD4063 receives its correct digit from the shift register matching the programmed digit from the switches, the "=" flag is propagated to the next stage. When all four stages are equal, a high is generated on pin 6 of IC6. This is the final decoded output, and will remain high until

another digit is detected and entered into the shift registers. The output can latch an external flip-flop or be connected to whatever logic you desire.

The dip switches I chose contain eight switches per package. This provides two digit positions per package. The DCBA pattern of the switches is equivalent to the more commonly used method of presenting binary data as 8421. Regardless of how you consider the four-bit data, if a dip switch is closed, then that bit is equal to a binary 1, or high. If a switch is open, that bit is a 0, or low. The Touch Tone decoder has a slightly different hexadecimal output than is expected, but you can simply refer to the chart in Table 1 for the bit pattern of each digit.

After choosing the four-digit sequence you wish to decode, enter the hex data from the chart for the appropriate digit position.

To save space, I used two single in-line 47-k resistor packs for the pull-down resistors on the dip switches. These packs each contain eight 47-k resistors all tied to a common pin. You can replace these packs with individual resistors if you wish. The 47-k value of the pull-down resistors is not critical; however, a lower value for these resistors will result in a higher current draw from the 5-volt supply. 



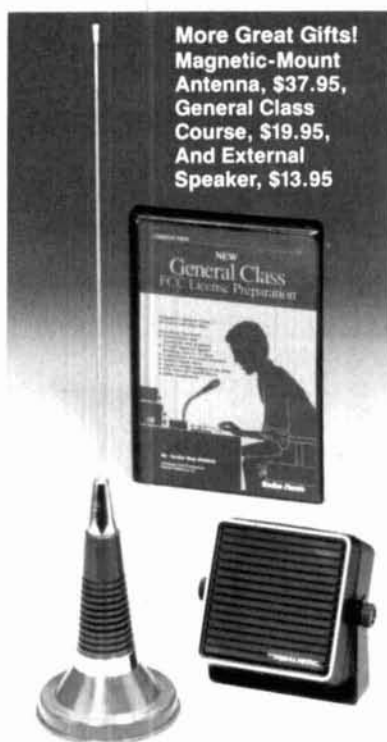
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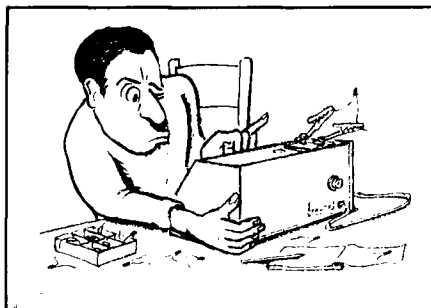
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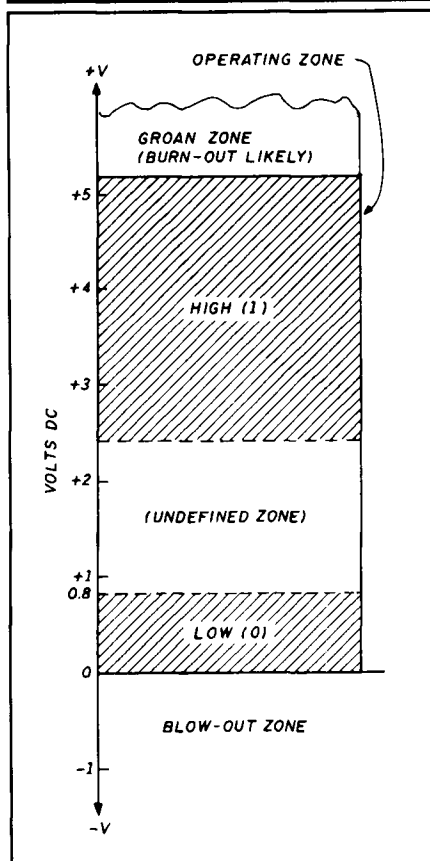
Joseph J. Carr, K4IPV

## GETTING TO KNOW THE LOGIC FAMILIES, PART 1: TTL

Of all the IC digital logic families that have been on the market over the past 20 years or so, the *transistor transistor logic* (TTL, or T<sup>2</sup>L) is probably the most successful. TTL devices require more current than CMOS, but also operate at much faster speeds. Although most TTL devices operate in the 18 to 25-MHz region, special types are available to speeds of 80 MHz. TTL devices are designated by type numbers in the 74xx and 74xxx series (54xx and 54xxx devices are military grade TTL devices). For example, a 7402 is a quad two-input NOR gate and a 5402 is its MIL-SPEC cousin. The principal difference between the 54 series and 74 series is the temperature range. The 74 series is commercial grade and is designed to operate over the range 0 to +70 degrees Celcius; the 54 series operates over -55 to +125 degrees Celcius.

Figure 1 shows the operating regions for logic levels and operating potentials for TTL. The DC power supply must be +4.7 to +5.2 volts, and must be regulated. Although these "official" limits are well publicized, it isn't recommended that you try to operate close to the edges of the range. For example, at +5.2 volts DC the reliability of the devices may be compromised. At the other end of the range, +4.7 volts, some complex function devices may become flaky in their operation — especially in noisy environments. As a result, it's probably best to keep the DC power supply in

FIGURE 1



Voltage ranges for a valid "logical 0" or a valid "logical 1".

the +4.9 to +5.1 volts range all of the time. The standard TTL DC power supply is voltage regulated.

The logic levels for TTL are as follows:

**HIGH** (logical-1): +2.4 volts to +5 volts

**LOW** (logical-0): 0 to +0.8 volts

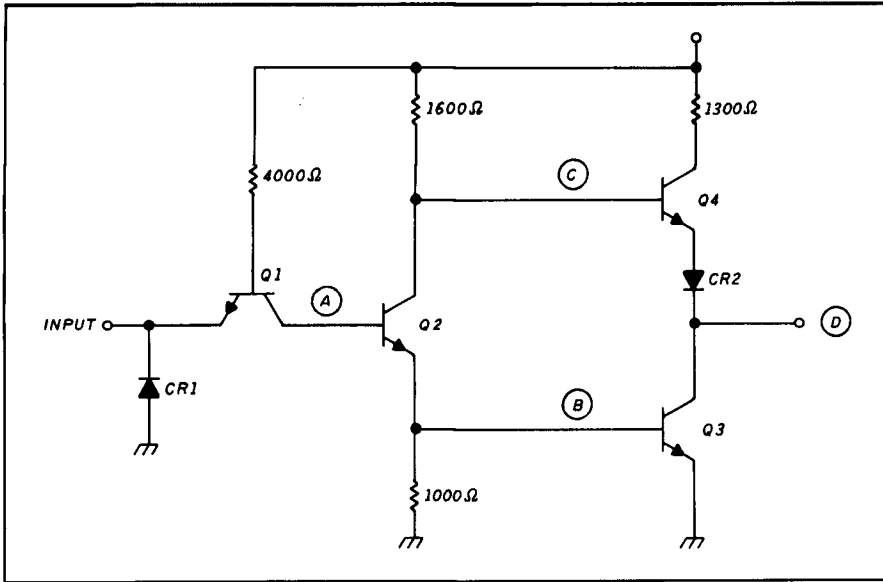
### TTL output circuits

The output circuit for a TTL device forms a current sink. That is, the output will accept a current from a TTL input (a current source) and route it to ground. Figure 2 shows two popular forms of TTL output. In Figure 2A, a TTL inverter, you see a regular TTL output circuit consisting of Q3 and Q4. This is the approximate circuit in almost all TTL devices. Transistors Q3 and Q4 are an identical pair, and form a "totem pole" circuit; Q4 is a current regulator and Q3 is the output switch. The series diode CR2 prevents current flow in the wrong direction. When the output is HIGH, transistor Q3 is turned off, so the current from the next stage isn't able to find a path to ground. But when the output is LOW, the transistor is biased hard on (it is in saturation), so the output terminal is grounded.

Figure 2B is an "open collector" TTL output. There's no current regulator in this circuit. That function is taken over by an external *pull-up* resistor (R1). Depending upon the type of open collector TTL device, the V+ voltage can be either +5 volts, or anything up to either +15 or +30 volts. Open collector inverters can be used for interfacing to other logic families, other digital devices, or nondigital output devices (relays, LEDs, lamps). Most open collector devices are hex inverters.

The TTL output is rated according to the number of standard (1.8 mA) TTL inputs it will drive. This number is called the *fan-out* of the device. Thus, a fan-out of ten (the usual number for standard devices) means that it will drive

FIGURE 2A



A regular TTL output circuit consisting of Q3 and Q4. In this "totem-pole" circuit, Q3 is the output switch and Q4 is the current regulator.

delay is on the order of 10 ns. The other TTL subfamilies include: low power TTL, high power TTL, Schottky TTL, and low power Schottky TTL. The type numbers for these devices are modified as follows:

| Series                 | Typical Type Numbers |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Regular TTL            | 74xx/74xxx           |
| Low power TTL          | 74Lxx/74Lxxx         |
| High power TTL         | 74Hxx/74Hxxx         |
| Schottky TTL           | 74Sxx/74Sxxx         |
| Low power Schottky TTL | 74LSxx/74LSxxx       |

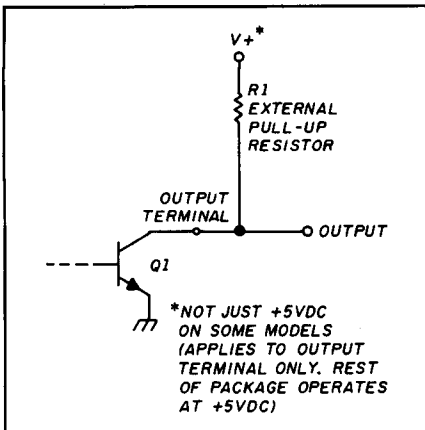
The operating speeds of the various subfamilies are radically different from each other. Typically, the 74xx device operates to 25 to 35 MHz (with some older samples being limited to 18 MHz); 74Lxx operates to 3 MHz; 74Hxx operates to 50 MHz; 74Sxx operates to 125 MHz; and the 74LSxx device operates to 45 MHz.

The fan-out and fan-in requirements also differ between the families:

| Series | Output sinks (mA) | Input sources (mA) |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 74xx   | 16                | 1.6                |
| 74Lxx  | 3.6               | 0.18               |
| 74Hxx  | 20                | 2.0                |
| 74Sxx  | 20                | 2.0                |
| 74LSxx | 8                 | 0.4                |

Table 1 is a chart showing how many of which kind of inputs each subfamily drives.

FIGURE 2B



An "open collector" TTL output is shown here. Current regulation is provided by an external pull-up resistor.

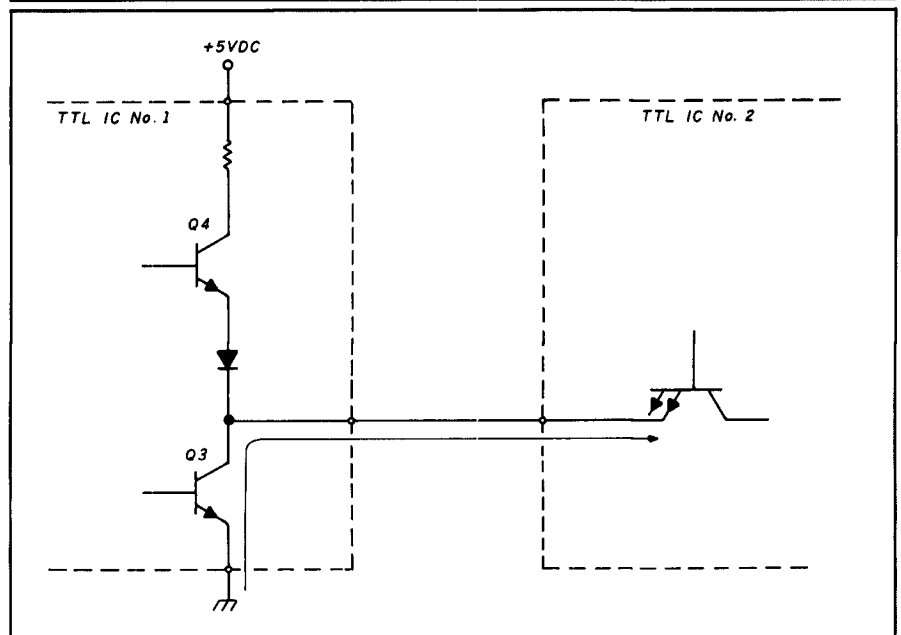
up to ten standard TTL inputs. The standard TTL input represents a load, or fan-in, of one.

Figure 3 shows the relationship between the TTL input and the related TTL output circuit of the previous stage. The input may be a single emitter, as in the case of an inverter, or a multiple emitter. The inputs shown are dual inputs as might be found on a 7400 two-input NAND gate or 7402 two-input NOR gate. The TTL input is a current source and the TTL output is a current sink. It's important to keep these distinctions in mind when attempting to interface TTL with non-TTL digital and other circuits.

### TTL subfamilies

The overall class of devices called TTL is divided into several subfamilies that are tailored to specified types of applications by differences in operating power, speed, and propagation delay. The ordinary TTL device is called regular TTL. It's typified by power consumptions of about 10 mW per gate and operates to speeds in the 25 to 35-MHz region. Propagation

FIGURE 3



The relationship between TTL input and related TTL output circuitry is shown here.

  
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**TABLE 1**

This chart shows different input and output requirements in the TTL device families.

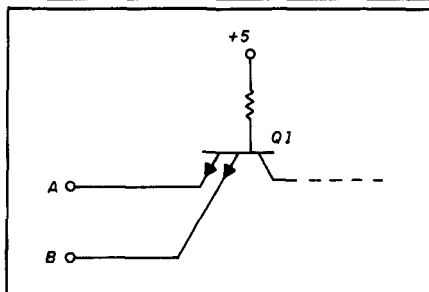
| This output | Will drive this many inputs |       |        |       |       |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
|             | 74xx                        | 74Lxx | 74LSxx | 74Hxx | 74Sxx |
| 74xx        | 10                          | 40    | 20     | 6     | 6     |
| 74Lxx       | 2                           | 10    | 10     | 1     | 1     |
| 74LS        | 5                           | 20    | 10     | 4     | 4     |
| 74H         | 12                          | 40    | 40     | 10    | 10    |
| 74Sxx       | 12                          | 40    | 40     | 10    | 10    |

The principal differences between certain of these families can be seen in Figure 4. In all three cases a two-input circuit is assumed. The standard "regular" TTL input is shown in Figure 4A. The regular input consists of an NPN transistor with two emitter terminals. The Schottky TTL device is similar, except that a pair of Schottky diodes are shunted across the inputs (see Figure 4B). Finally, in the LS series TTL a set of four Schottky diodes are used (see Figure 4C). In each input, one is in series with the input line and the other is shunted to ground.

### Tri-state logic

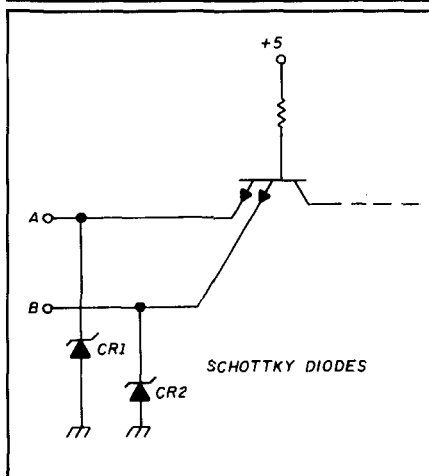
Many TTL and CMOS digital devices are called "tri-state" logic devices. Normal digital devices are two-state types. That is, they are *binary* in nature. This designation means that an output can be only HIGH or LOW — there's no in-between state. But a *tri-state* logic device has a third state in which the output terminal is effectively disconnected from the output circuits. Figure 5 shows an equivalent circuit for the tri-state device. Switch S1 represents the normal binary operation of any TTL device (in this case an "inverter"). When the input is LOW, the output is HIGH, so switch S1 is connected to the +5 volt source. Alternatively, when the input is HIGH, the output is LOW, so S1 is connected to ground. The tri-state condition is provided by switch S2. When the *chip select* (CS) line is LOW, then switch S2 is closed so the output is connected directly to the inverter output (the S1 pole). But when CS is HIGH, switch S2 is open, so the output terminal is connected to the output

**FIGURE 4A**



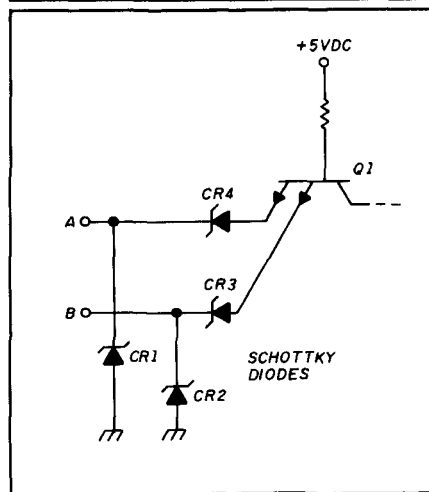
A standard TTL input.

**FIGURE 4B**



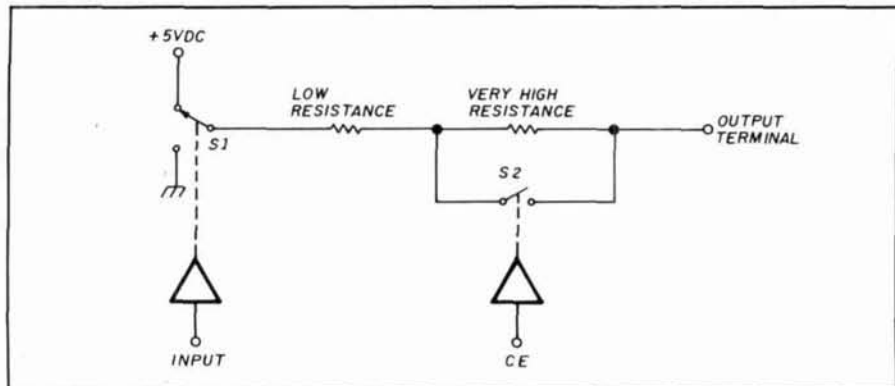
A Schottky TTL device input.

**FIGURE 4C**



A low power Schottky TTL input with both series and shunt Schottky diodes.

FIGURE 5



Equivalent circuit for a tri-state TTL device.

of the inverter through a very high resistance. This action has the effect of disconnecting the internal circuitry of the device from the output terminal. Tri-state logic devices are mainly used in computer and other digital applications where several devices must share a common bus or line.

### Power supply decoupling

There are several general rules for placing power supply bypassing capacitors in TTL circuits. One of two protocols are generally used:

- a single 0.001- $\mu$ F capacitor at each TTL package, or
- a single 0.01 to 0.1- $\mu$ F capacitor every second or third device, or every 3 inches — whichever is spaced closest.

These capacitors are connected between the +5 volts DC terminal of the device and ground. The capacitors should be located close to the device.

On large projects it's advisable to place a 50 to 200- $\mu$ F capacitor at the power supply connection for the printed wiring board, and 4.7  $\mu$ F every

10 to 12 inches along the +5 volt bus.

If you build a really large project, one that draws 4 to 10 A from the +5 volt line, you might want to consider one of two power supply schemes. In the first, you use a voltage regulator with a sense line. That type of DC power supply has a reference voltage sensing line connected at the point where you want the voltage to be +5 volts. The DC resistance of the power supply bus causes a voltage drop that can hurt the operation of the circuits. The second uses distributed regulation. In this scheme, the main DC power bus is +8 volts. Each printed wiring board, or several sections of the same board, has its own three-terminal IC voltage regulator. The S-100 microcomputer (the original microcomputer) used this system. Each S-100 plug-in card had one to five 7805, LM-340T-05, LM-340K-05, or LM-309 voltage regulators.

### Conclusion

Transistor transistor logic devices are inexpensive and are, for the most part, well behaved in practical circuits. You should be able to use them easily in both published construction projects or custom-designed projects of your own.



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### Setting up the rig

With the unmodified QF-1A filter in circuit but switched to OFF (BYPASS), experiment with the RF gain control of your rig while listening to a weak (just above the noise) SSB signal. Concentrate on finding the setting that gives you the best signal-to-noise ratio and intelligibility. This will *not* be the setting



the background noise in the absence of a signal, a receivable signal will be audible above it." This applies especially if you have a lot of local manmade noise.

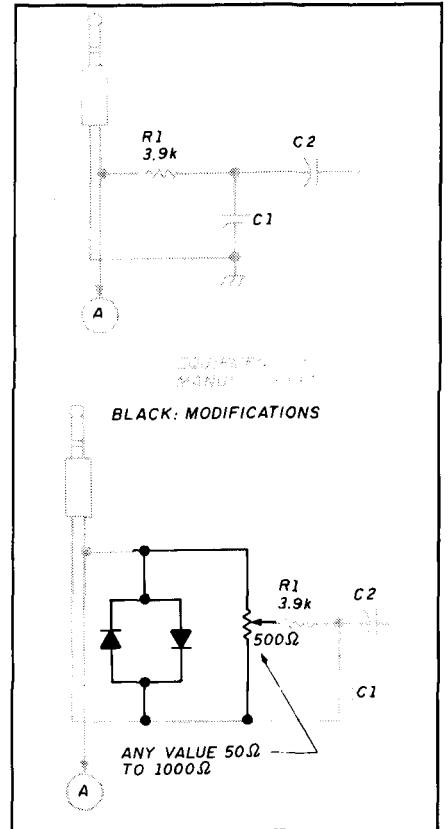
After you've found the best place for the RF gain, adjust the AF gain to a comfortable listening level. (If you're using headphones, and the comfortable audio level is near minimum AF control setting, you might consider putting a series resistor in the headset plug.)

Now switch on the QF-1A with the function switch on LOWPASS and all the other controls fully counterclockwise. If the audio is louder than it was before, you need the modification shown in **Figure 1**. (If it's not, you may still need it when you increase the filter gain by turning the selectivity control up.)

The next test is done more easily on CW. With the filter switched OFF find a CW signal, or (preferably) a constant audio tone from a calibrator or WWV, and select a comfortable audio level. Switch on the filter, put the QF-1A function switch at PEAK, the selectivity control at half scale or more, and swing the frequency control above and below the peak frequency. Note the approximate width of the peak. There's no need to be precise; just get the feel of it.

Reduce the setting of the AF gain on the rig and swing the frequency control again. If it's sharper than it was before, the output from the rig was overloading the filter and you need the modification shown in **Figure 2**. The back-to-back silicon diodes in **Figure 2** are included mainly to protect your ears from the sudden arrival of a huge signal or the Woodpecker.

FIGURE 2

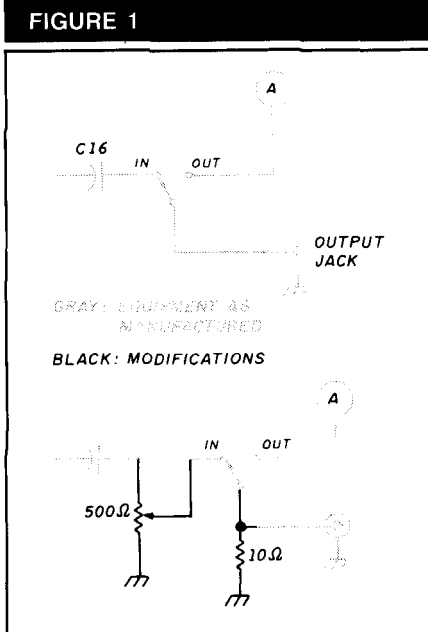


Change to input

### The modifications

It's convenient to run the QF-1A from one of the 12-volt accessory sockets of the rig if the supply line is 12 volts positive (it only takes a fraction of a watt). **Figure 3** shows a suitable point to make the connection. A silicon diode in series protects the filter if it's plugged into a 12-volt negative line accidentally. There's plenty of room on the back wall of the filter enclosure for the two new potentiometers and an RCA-type socket. Physically, the pots can be as small as you like and the value isn't critical — somewhere between 50 and 500 ohms is ideal.

The 10-ohm resistor in **Figure 1** presents a reasonably low impedance load to the filter, even if you use high impedance headphones.



Change to output.

that gives the *loudest* signal. You may be surprised to find how far back you have to turn the RF gain — especially if you're an old-timer brought up on the "full RF gain for fone, retarded for CW" rule popular in the old days of AM and diode detectors. The rule for SSB and product detectors is, "If you can hear



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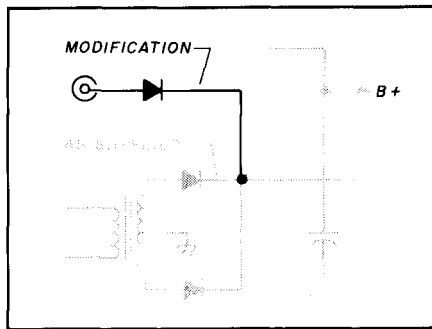
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## Adjusting the pots

After you've completed the modifications, turn both pots to maximum. The output should sound just as it did before. Make the CW test again. But after switching the filter on, reduce the input pot until the signal no longer saturates the filter. Then adjust the output pot until the audio level is about the same, whether the filter is ON or OFF.

FIGURE 3



+12 volts dc from rig. Diode is to protect QF1-A against accidental connection to -12 volt supply.

## Adjusting the filter

You may prefer to make adjustments based on your own methods. For what it's worth, this is what I do on SSB. (I find the rig itself copes pretty well most of the time on CW.)

I set the function switch on LOW-PASS and the selectivity and frequency controls fully counterclockwise. Then, with a signal that has some noise on it I turn the frequency control until the high frequency components of the voice just begin to be attenuated. This usually results in a vast reduction of the noise. I leave the controls at this setting most of the time. I may, however, turn the frequency control a bit to the right on CW, "roofing" the noise somewhere just above the CW tone.

It often helps to adjust the AUX NOTCH control to about 10 o'clock on a particularly noisy SSB signal, leaving the selectivity control at minimum to give a broad notch. That's about it. The QF-1A is an excellent filter just the way it is, but adding these two controls lets you customize it to give optimum performance on your rig.

**Bob Eldridge, VE7BS**

## Using The ICOM IC-32AT As A Crossband "Mini-Repeater"

Here's a simple modification that lets you use your IC-32AT as a crossband repeater. All you need to do as far as the hardware is concerned is clip diode D912 on the logic unit. Once you've done this and reassembled the radio, use the keypad to place the radio into crossband repeat mode:

- Push and hold the FUNCTION switch on the side of the radio.
- Push the [C] key.
- Push the [6] key.
- Push the [D] key.
- Release the FUNCTION switch.

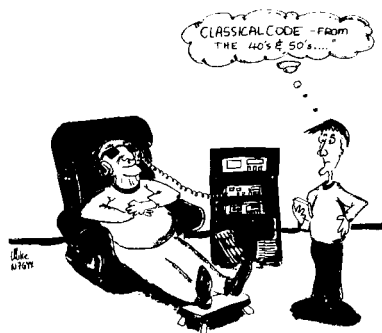
To cancel the repeater function, enter the following on the keypad:

- Push and hold the FUNCTION switch on the side of the radio.
- Push the [D] key.
- Push the [C] key.
- Release the FUNCTION switch.

When the radio is in repeater mode, you'll note that it scans between the VHF and UHF frequencies last programmed into the VFOs. The radio will continue to scan between these two frequencies until a signal breaks the squelch or you stop the scan manually. When the scanning has stopped, the transmit frequency will be displayed until the incoming signal terminates. If the incoming signal was in the VHF/VFO, it will be retransmitted automatically on the UHF/VFO, and vice versa.

I think you'll find this feature useful if you're ever in an emergency situation, or communicating with someone who has VHF or UHF capabilities only.

**Russell Dudley, KW5O**



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# THE FIVE-BAND JUNKBOX TRANSMITTER

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By Charlie Tiemeyer, W3RMD, RD 2, Box 427-C,  
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**M**any Amateurs wonder how they can pursue their hobby inexpensively. Some are fortunate enough to have a sizable junkbox or an Elmer who's happy to contribute parts. Of course, there are probably plenty of old TV or radio sets around which contain the parts we need.

## Transmitter

Figure 1 shows the schematic of my junkbox rig. The oscillator is a 6AQ5 tube and the final amplifier a 6DQ6. I chose these tubes because I have quite a few on hand. Any tube that renders reasonable output will work. I suggest that you select a final amplifier tube that can handle the output voltage of the power transformer you intend to use. My transformer is a 730-volt center-tapped unit I built about 35 years ago for a homebrew AM modulator. You may have one that delivers higher voltage which will let you use a 6146 or 807 in the final, allowing more power output.

## Construction

All components were mounted and installed on an aluminum chassis, 13" x 7" x 2". I suggest you mount the components logically and keep all leads as short as possible when soldering. I salvaged my tunable oscillator coil and the input and output variable capacitors of the pi-network final from a defunct Globe Chief transmitter. The tank coil was resurrected from a cannibalized Drake 2-NT transmitter, but any final coil from an old Globe Chief, DX-40, or DX-60 will suffice. If you can't find these particular parts, refer to Tables 1 and 2 for coil data for both the tunable oscillator and the final tank circuit.

I prefer to operate 80 and 40 meters. If you want other bands, you'll need a switching arrangement to short circuit the unnecessary parts of the coils. I have used the 40-meter taps successfully to work 30 meters with 5-MHz crystals. Both oscillator and final tank coils are wound on 1" diameter forms (see Tables 1 and 2).

Although I didn't try it, I think you could use 12 meters with either the 15 or 10-meter band coil positions and the

appropriate crystals. You'll need to experiment. I also think it's possible to use *one* wire size instead of the three indicated. Because I've listed a maximum of 35 turns of wire, you can use one longer 1" diameter coil form with taps at the appropriate bands. You'll need all 35 turns for 80 meters. For 40 meters, the tap would be up twelve turns. Twenty meters would be up from this tap at thirteen turns, 15 meters at four turns, 10 meters up at one turn, and 15 and 10 meters would be space wound.

The same arrangement used with the oscillator coil(s) applies for 12 meters on the final tank coil(s). Use a 1" coil form with 30 turns for 80 meters. For 40 meters, the tap would be up 13 turns. Twenty meters would be up from this tap at 11 turns, 15 meters up 2 turns, and 10 meters up 1 turn and space wound.

Because I operate this rig on 80 and 40 meters only, I use copper alligator clips to short wanted turns on both the

TABLE 1

### Oscillator coil(s).

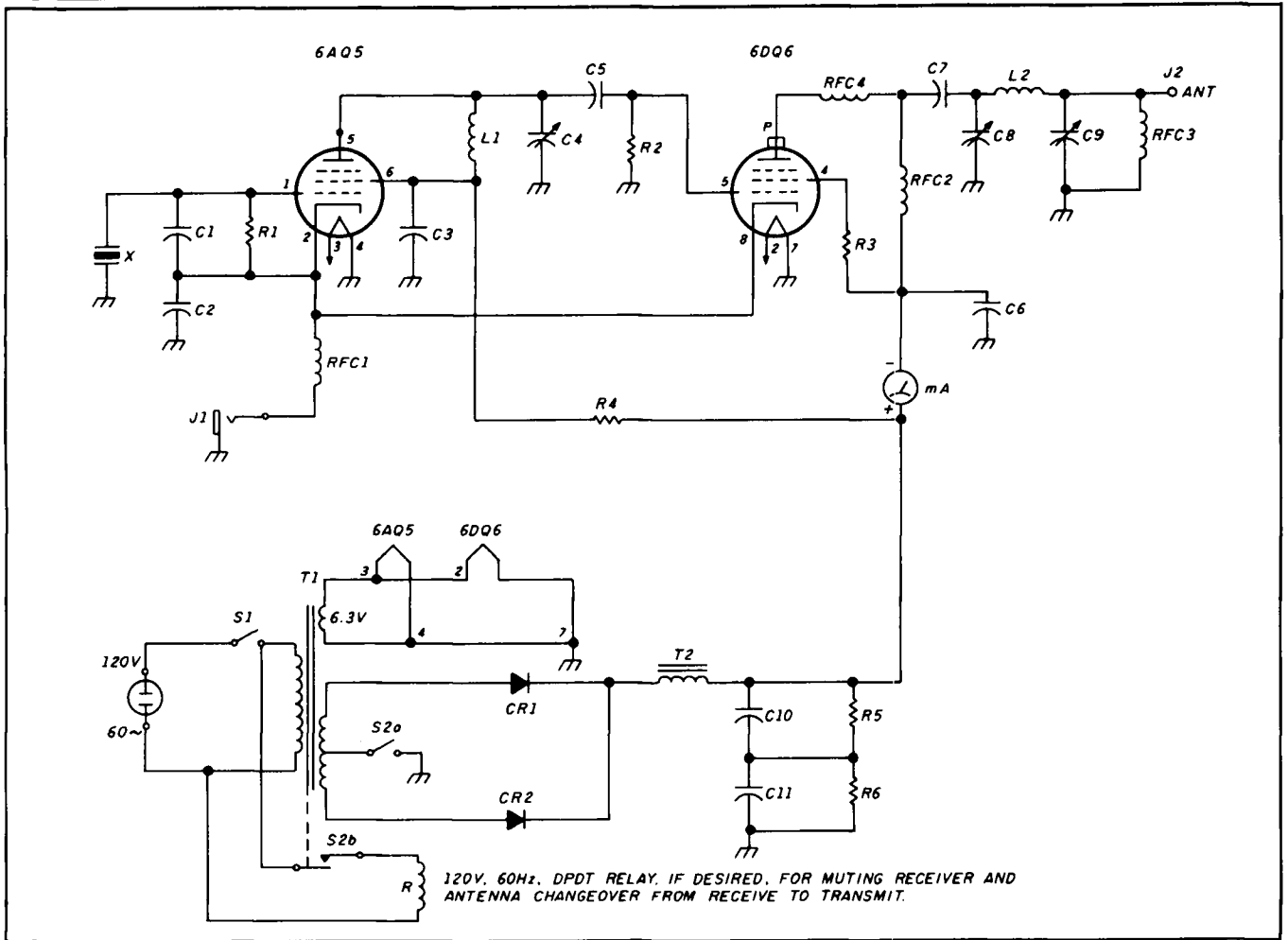
80 meters, 35 turns no. 22 enamel wire close wound  
40 meters, 23 turns no. 22 enamel wire close wound  
20 meters, 10 turns no. 22 enamel wire close wound  
15 meters, 6 turns no. 18 enamel wire space wound by wire diameter  
10 meters, 5 turns no. 16 enamel wire space wound by wire diameter

TABLE 2

### Final (tank) coil(s).

80 meters, 30 turns no. 14, 16, or 18 enamel wire close wound  
40 meters, 17 turns no. 14, 16, or 18 enamel wire close wound  
20 meters, 6 turns no. 14, 16, or 18 enamel wire space wound by wire diameter  
15 meters, 4 turns no. 14, 16, or 18 enamel wire double spaced by wire diameter  
10 meters, 3 turns no. 14, 16, or 18 enamel wire double spaced by wire diameter

FIGURE 1



Schematic of the five-band junkbox transmitter.

**PARTS LIST**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| C1         | 22-pF or 0 to 30-pF trimmer capacitor  |
| C2,C5      | 100-pF disc ceramic capacitors or mica   |
| C3         | 0.01- $\mu$ F 1 kV $\pm$ disc ceramic or mica capacitors                               |
| C4         | 100-pF variable capacitor, broadcast type okay   |
| C6,C7      | 0.001 to 0.005- $\mu$ F 1 kV $\pm$ disc ceramic or mica capacitors                     |
| C8         | 350 to 450-pF variable tuning capacitor, broadcast type okay                           |
| C9         | 1200-pF variable tuning capacitor (usually 3 gang $\pm$ 400 pF, each gang in parallel) |
| C10,C11    | 80 or 100- $\mu$ F 450-volt electrolytic capacitors in series                          |
| R1         | 47-k, 1/2 or 1-watt carbon resistor  |
| R2         | 27-k, 1/2 or 1-watt carbon resistor  |
| R3         | 4-k, 10-watt wire-wound resistor   |
| R4         | 1.5-k, 10-watt wire-wound resistor (may not need if 300 volts not exceeded)            |
| R5,R6      | 330-k, 1-watt carbon equalizing resistors (470 k okay)                                 |
| X          | Any 80 or 40-meter crystal   |
| RFC1,RFC2, | 2.5-mH (1 mH okay) 125 to 150-mA RF chokes   |
| RFC3       | 7 turns no. 20 wire space wound on 47-ohm, 1-watt carbon resistor                      |
| RFC4       | 125 turns no. 20 wire space wound on 47-ohm, 1-watt carbon resistor                    |
| T1         | See text (any voltage from about 350 to 450 each side of center)                       |
| T2         | Any choke from 5 to 10 H, 100 to 200 mA  |
| CR1,CR2    | 1000-PIV, 400-mA or more silicon diodes  |
| S1         | SPST toggle switch   |
| S2         | DPDT toggle switch (if relay is used, otherwise same as S1)                            |
| J1         | Open or closed-circuit phone jack for key  |
| J2         | Coaxial receptacle, no. SO-239   |
| MA         | 0 to 200-mA milliammeter for loading PA  |
| R          | Relay for muting receiver and antenna changeover (optional)                            |

oscillator and final tank coils. If you can obtain these coils from old discarded transmitters, you'll find that the proper tap points for each band are indented on the forms or may still have leads extending from them. If they aren't available, you'll need to follow the steps for winding your own.

**Recommended voltages and currents**

My rig has voltages and currents based on the power transformer I'm using. These are shown in Table 3. I don't know the transformer's current rating, but I think that any reasonable unit capable of at least 150 mA (preferably around 200 mA) would be adequate. If you have a transformer capable of 400 or 500-volts output, you might need to use a different power amplifier tube. You'll also need appropriate screen-dropping resistors for the final tube and for the plate and screen of the oscillator tube to avoid overload.

This rig uses choke input for better regulation, but you can use capacitor input and get more output voltage. My transformer is rated around 365-0-365 volts at choke input and resolves to 365 volts  $\times$  0.90, or approximately 328 volts. For capacitor input, 365 volts  $\times$  1.2 = 438 volts output; for no load, 365 volts  $\times$  1.4 = 511 volts. However, I assume my transformer is 365-0-365 volts; hence I arrived at the data in Table 3 taken on both 40 and 80 meters.

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## Tuneup

Tuning up is simple. Put all three variable capacitors at maximum capacitance (plates fully meshed). Don't forget to use a dummy load to tune up before attaching an antenna. While listening to your receiver around your crystal frequency, close switch S2, depress the key, and quickly tune C4 for the loudest signal. Then tune C8 for minimum

TABLE 3

No load voltages, 470 volts choke input.

305 volts at 100 mA = 32 watts input, 235 volts to 6AQ5,  
200 volts to 6DQ6 screen

300 volts at 125 mA = 38 watts input, 230 volts to 6AQ5,  
210 volts to 6DQ6 screen

295 volts at 150 mA = 44 watts input, 220 volts to 6AQ5,  
230 volts to 6DQ6 screen

dip in plate current; this should be less than 100 mA. Increase C9 a little at a time, redipping C8 until you've loaded between 100 and 150 mA after each try. Actually, 125 mA is best. Now you're ready to operate.

## Some closing thoughts

There you have it. I'm still having fun with this little rig and getting excellent results and reports. I haven't tried my old Heathkit VF-1 VFO with it yet, but feel it would give me more versatility — assuming it works okay in place of my crystals. I have a "rock pile" accumulated through many years in Amateur radio; however, I prefer crystal control for the obvious stability.

I think you'll not only enjoy building and experimenting with this rig, but will have many enjoyable hours on the air.



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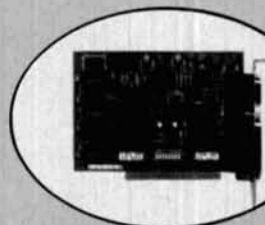
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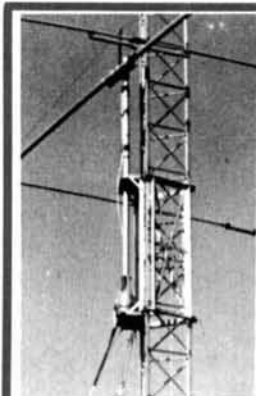
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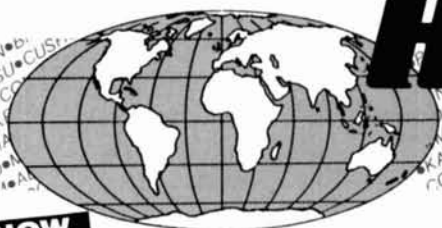
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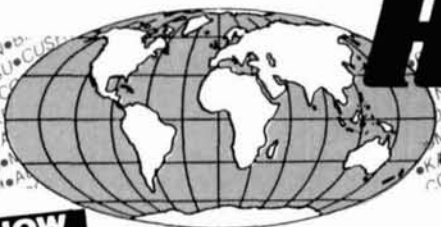


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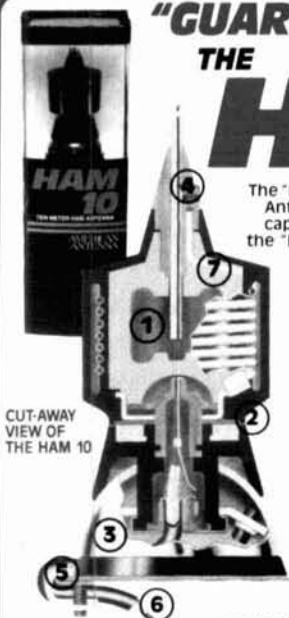
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# Q METERS

By Keats A. Pullen, Jr., W3QOM,  
2807 Jerusalem Road, Kingsville, Maryland 21087

**K**ee your eyes open at the next hamfest you attend. You may see a Q meter at a good price (under \$50). Once you know how to use it, you'll find it's one of the most useful test instruments to own.

However, there's a problem with Q meters today. Units like the Boonton type 160-A model 1 are full of antiquated tubes. The 160-A uses tubes with 2.5-volt filaments (types 45 and 2A6, a dual diode triode with a grid lead on the top). The unit I picked up didn't respond to Q measurements, so I decided to replace these tubes with more modern 6-volt types — like the 6Y6GT or 6AR6 in place of the 45, or a 6J6 in place of the 2A6. Get spares, and test them to be sure they work!

## How does it work?

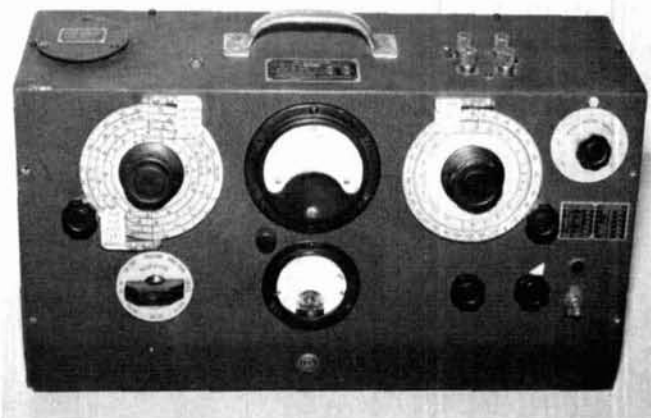
Q is measured using a fundamental characteristic of series LC circuits. At resonance, the magnitude of the voltage appearing across either reactance is equal to the voltage induced in the circuit, multiplied by the "circuit" Q. Through careful test instrument design, the circuit Q is essentially the same as the Q of the component under test.

A brief description of the type 160-A Q meter is in order. The meter consists of two sections, an oscillator and a voltmeter. The oscillator uses a type 45 triode to provide the required RF current to the exciting circuit, which consists of a resistive ribbon with a value of 40 milliohms. The coil to be measured is connected from the ungrounded end of this resistance to the stator terminal of a built-in variable capacitor to provide the series test circuit. This resistance must have enough current running through it to give about a 10-mV drop at the test frequency. The amount of RF current in the exciting resistor must be of sufficient magnitude that the resonant current due to the Q multiplication won't make a significant change in the resistor current.

I selected the 6J6 tube, a dual diode triode unit, for its extremely high "mu" or amplification factor. A 12BZ7 triode has similar properties and adequate gm, but the 6J6 can be made to work. Whatever tube you choose, it's used in a circuit called an "infinite impedance" detector circuit; it's biased nearly at cutoff, and the positive swing of the signal causes the tube to draw current. The voltage change across the cathode resistance is measured by a simple DC voltmeter.

Because of this, there's a frequency-range changing switch and a tuning circuit on the left side of the instrument which selects the desired operating frequency (see **Photo**

PHOTO A



Front panel view of a Q meter.

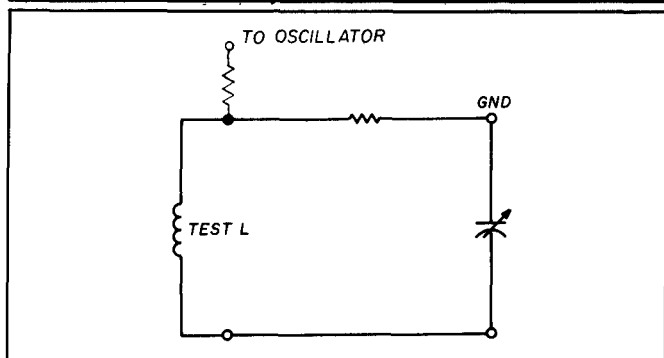
A). The amplitude of the applied current to the test circuit is set by the smaller meter and the two knobs to its right. The left knob is the coarse adjustment; the right is the fine.

The meter that indicates the value of Q measures the voltage generated across the cathode resistor of the infinite impedance detector. The detector senses the RF voltage across the tuned circuit, consisting of the coil and the variable capacitor which is calibrated from 30 to 450 pF. This capacitor is just to the right of the Q measuring meter. The small knob below the meter is used for adjusting the zero setting of the meter. This setting may be somewhat sensitive to the level of current in the tuned circuit, as the knobs that control the RF current act by varying the output supply voltage to the oscillator tube. The zero set should be done after the signal amplitude has been set in the current meter.

The layout for the coil connections is indicated by the binding posts on the top of the instrument (see **Figure 1**). There's one terminal for ground, one for the injection resistance, and two for the ungrounded end of the capacitor — which also connects to the grid of the detector tube. I'll describe the various ways to use these connections later.

The 45/6Y6GT/6AR6 tube operates as a power oscillator and provides up to 1 A of RF current to the measurement circuit. This current level must be much higher than the circulating current that flows in the test circuit at the highest possible Q factor. This current flows through a thermocouple, and perhaps some additional resistance, in addition to the injection resistance that excites the tuned circuit under test. The thermocouple provides metering current to a panel meter that indicates the magnitude of current flow, thereby giving a multiplicative factor for the Q reading. It's very

FIGURE 1



Binding post placement on the instrument.

important that the thermocouple current be limited to a maximum indicated value of 1 on the multiplier meter; too much current can easily burn out the thermocouple. The thermocouple is very delicate and can't tolerate any overshoot.

The metering circuit uses only the triode section of the 2A6. The diodes would load the circuit and keep it from operating properly. There's a small resistance in series with the filament in this arrangement to minimize the zero-bias grid current and make the unit work more effectively. Using the infinite impedance detector configuration further reduces the loading. In addition, the relation between the plate current and the bias is very nonlinear. This lets it suppress the negative half cycle of the applied signal, and gives an output current that rises rapidly with the increase in applied signal.

Don't be surprised if you haven't heard of the infinite impedance detector. I learned of its existence before World War II, and haven't seen any use of this unique circuit since — except for this Q meter application. The advantage of this detector is that it doesn't load a circuit that it's coupled to, and lets you measure the output voltage of the tuned circuit without degrading it, as would a diode. The "output" obtained with this detector is taken across a cathode resistor, and the circuit behaves like a cathode or an emitter follower. I'll give more information about the process for setting the bias current level on this tube later.

There are several different definitions of Q, but as long as the measured Q exceeds 10, the definitions are, for practical purposes, more or less equivalent. A good discussion of Q appears on page 110 of the September 1988 issue of *Ham Radio*.<sup>1</sup> It's usually defined as the ratio of the reactance of the capacitor, divided by the effective internal resistance of the overall tuned circuit. (This is usually greater than the DC resistance.) The best definition involves the ratio of the stored energy in the coil or the capacitor per cycle, divided by the dissipated energy per cycle. This may occur at a slightly different frequency, but gives essentially the same value of Q.

### Possibly useful changes

If the unit is working reliably with the existing tubes (or tubes you bought at a hamfest) don't change anything, but do acquire tubes that you can use to modernize your meter at a later date. If the Q voltmeter doesn't seem to function reliably on RF (mine didn't), you may find my changes useful. Incidentally, the "AC hum" technique used to make a

rough test of the detector circuit may not be a valid test for the unit's high frequency operation. The detector requires a 5-volt signal for full-scale deflection, but its operation at 60 Hz indicates only that the circuit should be okay. Check to be sure that the lower "calibration" meter deflects upscale as the left knob to the right of the meter is turned slowly clockwise. When testing, **always** be sure to turn these knobs counterclockwise before turning the instrument on. Protect that thermocouple!

A need to change to 6-volt tubes may be indicated if either tube is inoperative and you can't find spares. (You may not be able to test the original tubes with present-day tube testers.) If the lower meter fails to deflect on one or two ranges only, the problem is certainly an oscillator tube. If it doesn't deflect on any range, it could be either the tube or the thermocouple. Be careful: the thermocouple is inside the oscillator box, and is hard to get to. You may be able to get a hint of what's causing the problem by disconnecting the leads on the lower meter and measuring the resistance through the leads. (That will indicate continuity in the thermocouple itself.) If the thermocouple is burned out, there's a good possibility that the metering circuit to the meter is also open.

I used a 6-volt, 2-A transformer like the one sold by Radio Shack for my new filament transformer. A center tap isn't necessary. One end of the filament winding connects to ground and the other goes in place of the ungrounded end of the 2.5-volt winding which is, of course, disconnected. These are on the tie-point strip near the variable capacitor.

You must take apart the oscillator assembly to change the tube socket from four pin to octal — preferably a low loss socket. Move the heater leads from the larger pins on the four-prong socket to pins 2 and 7 on the octal socket (6Y6GT only). Ground the cathode, pin 8. Attach the grid connection to pin 5, the plate to pin 3.

Pin 4 is now the screen grid lead. It must be bypassed to cathode at the socket, and brought out of the oscillator shield. (To minimize leakage, mount a small resistance just inside the shield at the point of exit. About 100 ohms should work.) Bypass the lead at the point of exit to keep RF from leaking out. A 0.01- $\mu$ F ceramic should be fine. You can back it up with a larger capacitor if you wish. This lead shouldn't be connected directly to the plate supply, but should have a resistor in series to the supply. I brought it out to a dropping resistance that connects to the center terminal of the large, high wattage potentiometer found just to the right of the lower meter. Start with a resistance of about 25,000 ohms and decrease it until the multiplier meter reads unity, with the potentiometers set near maximum clockwise setting. Adjust both the plate and screen voltages by these resistances.

I replaced the 2A6 tube with a 6J6 tube. My old (1973) ARRL handbook lists the 2A6 and gives the basing connections, but it doesn't indicate the characteristics otherwise. My (older) RCA tube handbook implies that the tube is essentially similar to the 6SQ7 (or 6Q7), and that it requires very little negative bias between cathode and grid to stop current flow. The 6J6 requires significantly more bias, and gave me some problems initially. Two zener diodes and a few spare resistors straightened things out. A 6T8A is another possibility.

I put my 6J6 tube on a small metal "outrigger" that I could attach to the frame of the main variable capacitor.

A 100-meg resistor runs across the stator of the capacitor to its frame. I left it in the circuit connected to the grid. I put a capacitor from the stator to the 6J6 grids. This blocks the detector's 60-Hz sensitivity. I also put a small (51 ohm) resistor between the two grids to minimize the possibility of parasitics in the 6J6.

To limit the plate voltage on the 6J6 to 100 volts, I added a gaseous voltage regulator (OA2). This improved the stability of the detector significantly when I corrected other problems. Stabilizing the plate voltage on the 6J6 stabilizes its operating point, because of the cathode degeneration in the infinite impedance detector.

I had to bias the cathode of the 6J6 to a point that would place it in the nonlinear operating region. This required about 5 volts of forward bias on the cathode. The best way to get this was by using a zener diode. The bias point varies from tube to tube, so check the bias point of the tube you choose. I made a little voltage divider (see Figure 2) to vary the cathode potential, and adjusted the forward bias until there was only about 1/10-volt bias across the cathode resistor — about 10,000 ohms. Then I found a zener diode with that forward drop at about 5 to 10 mA current, and inserted a resistance to the 100 volts from the OA2 to draw that much current (see Figure 3).

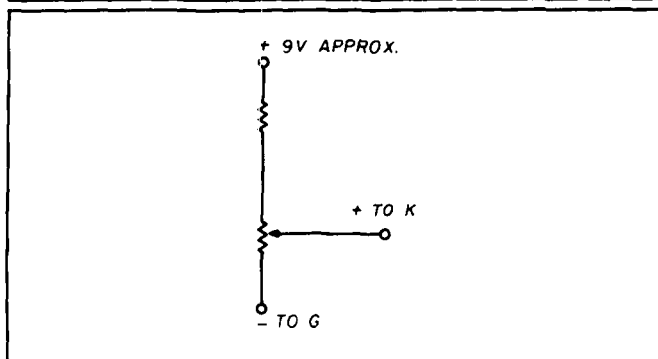
There are a number of high wattage power resistors (at least 5 watts) behind the rectifier tube on the lower sub-chassis. The lower ends of some of these resistors are connected together, and are also connected to ground. The smallest of these is the cathode resistor for the 2A6. I disconnected the cathode resistor's lower connection from its neighbor and installed the zener diode between the two, so the cathode resistor had its return end about 5 volts above ground. As I mentioned before, I attached a resistance from the bottom lead of the cathode resistor to the stabilized 100 volts. To assure proper operation, the zener diode current should be about 10 mA, and the quiescent voltage across the cathode return resistor shouldn't exceed 0.1 volts.

I returned the cathode lead on the 6J6 to the cathode lead on the bottom of the 2A6 socket, pin 5. There are several bypasses on this point and also continuity to the top of the smaller of the power resistors. I bypassed this lead to ground on the 6J6 socket, and bypassed the plates to ground. (The plates return to the 100 volts from the regulator; refer to Figure 3).

I installed a 2-ohm power resistor in series with the ungrounded end of the 6J6's heater lead to reduce the heater voltage and the emission energy of the electrons leaving the cathode. This helps keep the input impedance of the grid circuit very high. Boonton had such a resistance in the 2A6 filament lead.

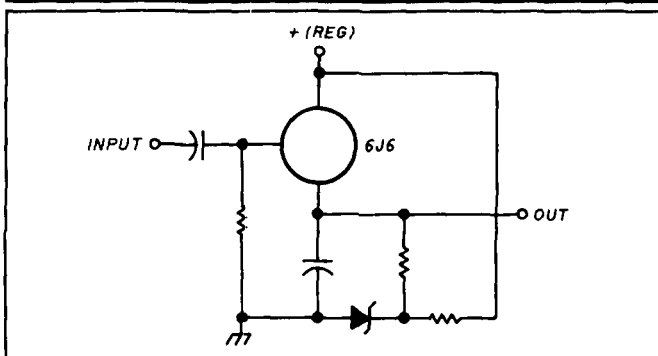
At this point, everything was working well, but the zero point on the Q measuring meter was changing with the power setting. It turned out that the voltage regulation of the high voltage supply was changing with oscillator loading. Once again, I solved my problem with a zener diode. For best all-around operation, two zener diodes here may be better than one. One diode connects from ground to the fourth tie-point from the filament ground. (The resistance between the two points should be taken out.) The second diode (perhaps about 7 volts) goes from ground to the "high" end of the Q meter adjustment potentiometer. With both ends stabilized, the reading is no longer a function

FIGURE 2



Simple bias divider.

FIGURE 3



Bias setup for the 6J6.

of power level in the oscillator. The problem was one of DC shift all along!

Now, test your unit with a coil from your junkbox. It should work with no problems.

## Using the Q meter

The overall scope of these instruments is really quite remarkable. I'll touch on the more common applications. Q meters can be used to measure the inductance of a coil, what its Q may be at a desired operating frequency, and what capacitance it should be used with. For instance, I may want to know if I can use a certain coil, or I may want to make a coil for operation at a selected frequency. I place the coil between the low and high terminals and start searching — first in the neighborhood of the desired operating frequency. Then I set the selected frequency with the range and tuning controls on the left side of the instrument, and tune the right-hand capacitor over its full range. I may get a peak. If so, I read the capacitance and see if it's close to what I want. If I don't get a peak, I have to start searching. If I think the inductance may be too small, I move the range switch to a higher frequency range and repeat the process, readjusting the power setting as necessary to protect the thermocouple. Once I get a peak, I can calculate the inductance and read the Q at that frequency.

Perhaps I want to know the operating frequency of a coil with a given capacitance. The connections are the same; I set the capacitance and vary the frequency of the oscillator until I find it. Then I can go to a desired frequency and measure its Q.

There are reasons why I may not wish to measure a coil at its chosen operating frequency. One of the most important ones is that the minimum capacitance on the tuning capacitor is only about 30 pF and the maximum is approximately 450 pF. My design may tell me I need over 1000 pF, or less than 10, for example. I then measure at a frequency that fits the range of the instrument.

A Q meter can also be used to measure inductance. Simply find some set frequencies at which to make the measurements and make a calibration for the capacitor dial to read inductances. The calibration is based on an assumption of an inductance that is a multiple of 10 when the capacitor is set at 450 pF. Set the frequency at one frequency first and then move to another, until you find a resonance on the meter. Read the capacitance and select the correct inductance.

You aren't limited to a top capacitance of 500 pF. You can parallel a silver-mica capacitor across the internal capacitor and continue as before. The equations you need are:

$$L = 1 / ((2 \times \pi \times f) \times C) = 1 / (39.5 \times C \times f^2) \quad (1)$$

where (f<sup>2</sup>) is f squared and C is the total capacitance, f is frequency in cycles per second, L is inductance in henries, C is capacitance in farads.

Note that if L is in microhenries and C in microfarads, then f is in megacycles (MHz).

$$XL = 6.3 \times f \times L \quad (2)$$

$$R_{eff} = 6.3 \times f \times L / Q = XL / Q \quad (3)$$

$$Z_{tuned} = 6.3 \times f \times L \times Q = Q \times XL \quad (4)$$

These numbers are all important, but you can learn more.

Suppose you want to test a circuit using an untuned coupling link to drive the tuned circuit. In this case, you'd connect the untuned link from the low terminal to ground, and the tuned coil from the high terminal to ground. You can use this combination to test the combination circuit; it will give a test of effective Q (here the product of coupling and Q). Test a double-tuned circuit in a similar fashion. Use a fixed capacitor from the "high" end of the injection tuned circuit, and place the second coil from ground to high on the tuning capacitor. Adjust the tuning so both coils peak, vary your coupling as needed, and observe the behavior of the coupled circuit as the frequency changes.

Why do you need the value of a tuned impedance? Amplifier stability is a function of voltage gain, not current gain. Beta and triode mu can't be used to find the voltage gain — only transconductance can. The gain K<sub>v</sub> is:

$$K_v = g_m \times R_L \quad (5)$$

where R<sub>L</sub> is the tuned impedance.

Voltage gain *must* be limited to assure stable operation; values under 10 are usually desirable.

You say you don't normally know g<sub>m</sub> or transconductance for solid-state devices? That's not a problem. It's approximately 39×I<sub>c</sub> with a bipolar transistor, where I<sub>c</sub> is the collector current. (q/kT has a value of 39!) The transconductance has similar form with FETs and electron tubes, but needs an efficiency factor which I call kappa, that must be multiplied by 39 and the output current. This is particularly important with transmitters, where large blocks of power must be handled.


Note that:

$$q \text{ (charge on an electron)} = 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \text{ coulombs}$$

$$k \text{ (Boltzman constant)} = 1.38 \times 10^{-23} \text{ joules/Kelvin}$$




$$T \text{ (absolute temperature)} = 296^\circ$$

You can measure kappa easily for any operating conditions you desire. Select an output current that is 2/3 of the desired operating current, and one that is 4/3 of the present operating current. Read the change in input voltage required to switch the output current from one value to the other with a voltmeter, and divide that voltage change into 0.018, which is kT/q times the natural logarithm of 2. The resulting value of kappa varies slowly, so you're in business! Multiply this quotient by the value of output current in amperes and by 39 to get the device transconductance at that value of current. The product of this number and the load impedance gives the voltage gain. Incidentally, if you multiply the reciprocal of kappa by 3 you'll have a measure of the maximum output supply voltage that can be applied to the device in question. There are other ramifications of this, too detailed to examine here.

Once you get your Q meter running, you can have all kinds of fun building RF circuits, amplifiers, and filters. Have a good time! 

#### REFERENCES

1. Tom McMullen, W1SL, "Elmer's Notebook," *Ham Radio*, September 1988, page 110.

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# Ham Radio Techniques

Bill Orr, W6SAI

## ANTENNAS, GFI, CAPACITORS, AND FUNDAMENTALS

It was a so-so year for DX. The high MUF provided DX openings on 10 meters (sometimes), but the irregular outbursts of the sun wiped out the HF bands for days at a time. The 6-meter DXers were happy because when the HF bands pooped out, often as not the 6-meter band was open for long-haul DX. It was truly a mixed bag of propagation for 1989. Let's hope Old Sol settles down and provides some good stable HF/DX conditions in the coming year!

### KØBIT's 40-meter "Death Ray"

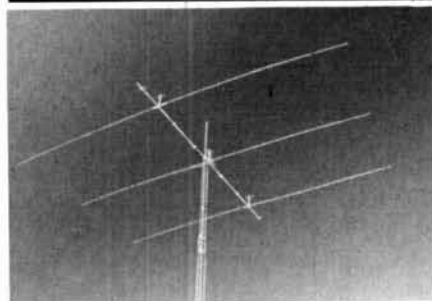
Pete, KØBIT, decided he would build a 40-meter Yagi the "right" way (see Photo A). The three-element monster is constructed on a 48-foot boom consisting of two 24-foot sections of 3-inch OD by 0.125-inch wall aluminum tubing. A 12-foot long sleeve connects them together and provides additional strength at the center of the boom. The spacing between elements is 18 feet, and the extra 6 feet on each end of the boom are used for side guys on the elements.

The elements are made of 1.5-inch tubing telescoping to 1 inch, providing a mild taper ratio. Each element is guyed overhead to one 30-inch vertical post centered on the boom and is also guyed in the horizontal plane back to the boom on each side. This provides a sagless element. The guys are made of Phillystran Kevlar™ rope and are electrically transparent. Element dimensions are taken from the *Radio Handbook*.<sup>1</sup>

Pete says, "This beam is not something you can whip up in your garage, since a great deal of custom machine work and heli-arc welding has to be done for the special fittings. The effort was worth it. Forty meters is a whole new



PHOTO A



KØBIT's 40-meter beam is built on a 48-foot boom. No element sag here!

band with this beam. I can work Europe consistently and can break through the East Coast on difficult contacts!"

### W0SVM's 17-meter "Rabbit Ears"

No big beam for you? Well then, how about the "Rabbit Ears" antenna built by Jack, W0SVM. The design of the center-loaded V dipole is shown in Figure 1. Jack cuts a half-wave copper (or aluminum) tubing dipole in half and mounts it as shown. This particular model is cut for the 17-meter band. A framework of 1 by 2-inch lumber holds the tubing in position. A tapped coil connects the dipole halves and a small link coil is adjusted to frequency with a dip oscillator. The final step is to apply power to the antenna and adjust the coil coupling and antenna tap for lowest SWR on the line. Jack adjusted his antenna at 18.120 kHz; it covers the narrow band nicely.

### GFI interference

A while back I reported cases of Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI) interference and queried readers about this

problem. Here are some of the replies I've received:

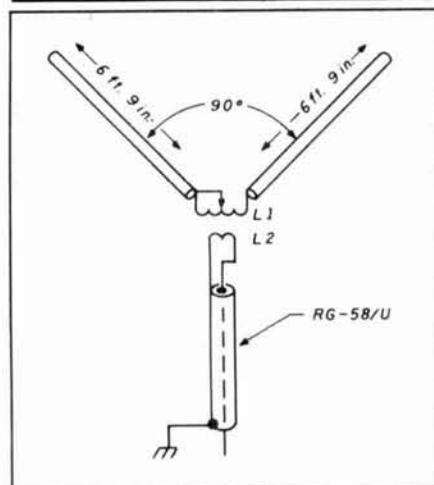
Ralph Dieter, K1RD, "I solved the GFI problem in my house by placing a ferrite tube (the equivalent of about 15 cores) on the neutral line to the GFI device. This appears to place enough impedance in the line to stop rectified signals from unbalancing the neutral circuit."

Bob Paine, W7RX, "The GFI indicator operates on an imbalance of about 5 mA between positive and neutral, and is very sensitive to RF. My cure was to place 0.003  $\mu\text{F}$ , 1.6-kV (AC rated) ceramic capacitors from positive and neutral to ground. The capacitors are mounted in a two-wire plug inserted into the GFI unit."

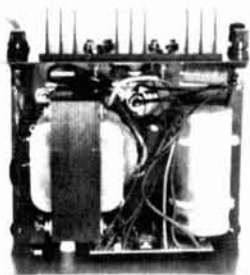
Mike Schultz, KSØT, "The GFI unit is very susceptible to RF in the power line. I use a center-fed dipole antenna, 51 feet on a leg, fed with ladder line. When I use it as a dipole, I don't encounter any trouble. But when I short the feedline together and use the antenna as an end-fed wire on 160 meters, the GFI pops as soon as I press the key."

Mike's solutions include using a

FIGURE 1



W0SVM's "Rabbit Ears" antenna. Dimensions are for the 17-meter band. L1: 20 turns no. 12, 2-1/2" diameter, 6 turns per inch. Alligator clip adjusts coil to resonance. L2: 5 turns of hookup wire over the center of L1.



INSIDE VIEW — RS-12A

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| RM-12A                         | 9                      | 12          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 8 1/4  | 16                  |
| RM-35A                         | 25                     | 35          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 38                  |
| RM-50A                         | 37                     | 50          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 50                  |
| • Separate Volt and Amp Meters |                        |             |                     |                     |
| RM-12M                         | 9                      | 12          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 8 1/4  | 16                  |
| RM-35M                         | 25                     | 35          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 38                  |
| RM-50M                         | 37                     | 50          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 50                  |

### RS-A SERIES



MODEL RS-7A

| MODEL  | Continuous Duty (Amps) | ICS* (Amps) | Size (IN) H x W x D   | Shipping Wt. (lbs.) |
|--------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| RS-3A  | 2.5                    | 3           | 3 x 4 1/4 x 5 3/4     | 4                   |
| RS-4A  | 3                      | 4           | 3 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 9     | 5                   |
| RS-5A  | 4                      | 5           | 3 1/2 x 6 1/4 x 7 1/4 | 7                   |
| RS-7A  | 5                      | 7           | 3 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 9     | 9                   |
| RS-7B  | 5                      | 7           | 4 x 7 1/2 x 10 1/4    | 10                  |
| RS-10A | 7.5                    | 10          | 4 x 7 1/2 x 10 1/4    | 11                  |
| RS-12A | 9                      | 12          | 4 1/2 x 8 x 9         | 13                  |
| RS-12B | 9                      | 12          | 4 x 7 1/2 x 10 1/4    | 13                  |
| RS-20A | 16                     | 20          | 5 x 9 x 10 1/2        | 18                  |
| RS-35A | 25                     | 35          | 5 x 11 x 11           | 27                  |
| RS-50A | 37                     | 50          | 6 x 13 3/4 x 11       | 46                  |

### RS-M SERIES



MODEL RS-35M

| MODEL                           | Continuous Duty (Amps) | ICS* (Amps) | Size (IN) H x W x D | Shipping Wt. (lbs.) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Switchable volt and Amp meter |                        |             |                     |                     |
| RS-12M                          | 9                      | 12          | 4 1/2 x 8 x 9       | 13                  |
| • Separate volt and Amp meters  |                        |             |                     |                     |
| RS-20M                          | 16                     | 20          | 5 x 9 x 10 1/2      | 18                  |
| RS-35M                          | 25                     | 35          | 5 x 11 x 11         | 27                  |
| RS-50M                          | 37                     | 50          | 6 x 13 3/4 x 11     | 46                  |

### VS-M AND VRM-M SERIES



MODEL VS-35M

| MODEL                                | Continuous Duty (Amps) |        |       | ICS* (Amps) | Size (IN) H x W x D | Shipping Wt. (lbs.) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                                      | @13.8VDC               | @10VDC | @5VDC | @13.8V      |                     |                     |
| VS-12M                               | 9                      | 5      | 2     | 12          | 4 1/2 x 8 x 9       | 13                  |
| VS-20M                               | 16                     | 9      | 4     | 20          | 5 x 9 x 10 1/2      | 20                  |
| VS-35M                               | 25                     | 15     | 7     | 35          | 5 x 11 x 11         | 29                  |
| VS-50M                               | 37                     | 22     | 10    | 50          | 6 x 13 3/4 x 11     | 46                  |
| • Variable rack mount power supplies |                        |        |       |             |                     |                     |
| VRM-35M                              | 25                     | 15     | 7     | 35          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 38                  |
| VRM-50M                              | 37                     | 22     | 10    | 50          | 5 1/4 x 19 x 12 1/2 | 50                  |

### RS-S SERIES



MODEL RS-12S

| MODEL              | Continuous Duty (Amps) | ICS* Amps | Size (IN) H x W x D | Shipping Wt. (lbs.) |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Built in speaker |                        |           |                     |                     |
| RS-7S              | 5                      | 7         | 4 x 7 1/2 x 10 3/4  | 10                  |
| RS-10S             | 7.5                    | 10        | 4 x 7 1/2 x 10 3/4  | 12                  |
| RS-12S             | 9                      | 12        | 4 1/2 x 8 x 9       | 13                  |
| RS-20S             | 16                     | 20        | 5 x 9 x 10 1/2      | 18                  |

balanced antenna, using ground radials or counterpoise wires plus a good electrical ground connection for an end-fed antenna (or vertical), and avoiding expensive GFI breakers built into the panel. He recommends GFI receptacles with minimum wiring on their load side instead.

Mike notes that those who live in trailer parks or marinas should experiment with different types of RF grounds or counterpoises. He also suggests you avoid a resonant length of extension cord to feed AC power to your vehicle or craft.

### The 1-farad capacitor

It's not hard to buy a 120,000- $\mu$ F capacitor. (See any large distributor's catalog.) But how about a 1-F capacitor (1,000,000  $\mu$ F)? There is one made by Nippon Electric that costs just a few dollars. My friend Joe, W8IIP, dropped one in the mail for me. This super capacitor can store enough charge to enable it to serve as a backup power source for memory and processor circuits in computers.

The construction of the super capacitor is unusual, but quite simple. The charge is stored in layers of activated charcoal with a very large surface area. The layers are separated by a porous plastic film. The electrolyte is sulfuric acid. A single capacitor has a maximum breakdown voltage of about 1.2, so units are stacked in series to provide higher working potentials. The capacitor isn't polarized.

I don't know what to do with my 1-F capacitor, so I keep it on the operating desk to overawe the humble.

### All about electricity

The no-code license scheme, which includes a beefed-up technical quiz, is on the horizon. It looks as if we should pay attention to electrical fundamentals. Gadgets like 1-F capacitors seem to indicate that life is getting complicated. Attention to fundamentals — that's the secret path to knowledge!

Joe, K1REC, pays plenty of attention. Here are his remarks, condensed from the May issue of *World Radio* magazine. Joe and I will be pleased if the following technical information helps some would-be Novice achieve his license.

Joe says, "I've been fiddling with electricity for 50 years! I'd like to pass along some of my vast knowledge about this stuff.

"Electricity is manufactured in power

plants where it is fed into wires wrapped around large drums. Some electricity, like that used for lightning does not need to go through wires. This kind of electricity isn't manufactured, but just hangs around loose in the air.

"Electricity makes a low humming noise. This noise may be pitched differently for doorbells, telephones, etc.

"Electricity must be grounded before it can function — except in airplanes, which have their own arrangements.

"Although electricity doesn't leak out of an empty socket, you can stick your finger in it and tell that it's there. Electricity is made out of two ingredients, positive and negative. One travels along a wire covered with white plastic, the other along a wire covered with black plastic. The wires connect to a device called a plug, in which the ingredients are mixed to form electricity.

"The electric switch contains a vise grip that squeezes the wire very hard so the electricity can't get through. Opening the switch releases the grip and lets the electricity flow.

"Electricity goes into a light bulb where we can actually see it! It is enlarged many times by the curvature of the bulb, which acts as a magnifying glass.

"Finally, electricity may be stored in boxes called batteries. In big batteries the electricity is shoveled in, while in small batteries it is packed in flat."

This concludes Joe's "Lessons on Electricity," part 1; I'm sure we're all looking forward to part 2.

### All about vacuum tube logic

No kidding. Folks are building high class stereo amplifiers with *tubes*! Amplifiers ranging from 45 to 500 watts are available. The itty-bitty amplifiers use 6CA7s or 6550s. Bigger jobs use 6L6GCs or 807s. The number one amplifier uses a pair of class A carbon plate 845s. Wow! Music lovers seem to be the major buyers. The manufacturer is: Vacuum Tube Logic, 4709 Brooks Street, Montclair, California 91763. Too bad the days of amplitude modulation are past — it sounds as if the 845 amplifier would make a good modulator for a pair of 203As!

### The Measurements Corporation dip meter

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dip meter is a rare find at swap meets or flea markets. The device has an indicating meter and a compact power supply in a metal cabinet, plus a remote dip meter head. Seven plug-in coils cover the range from 2.5 to 420 MHz. The advantage of this unit over the conventional Millen dip meter is its compact remote head, which will fit into areas too small to permit the use of the Millen device. You're lucky indeed if you can pick up the Measurements Corporation unit (as I did a year or so ago).

One unfortunate aspect of the remote head is that the cable connecting it to the power supply is "hot," and moving the cable (or even the power supply) can affect the frequency of the tiny oscillator. The cure is to wrap the cable from the supply to the head through a ferrite core. I used one of the snap-apart cores, with six turns of the cable wound through it. That decoupled the RF head from the power supply, and provided more accurate readings that were less affected by the position of the user and the supply relative to the circuit being examined.

It's possible to remove the knob, the front of the housing, and the dial in order to reach the variable capacitor. If your unit is like mine, the rear capacitor bearing is caked with dried lubricant. Remove this with a small screwdriver or pin; then coat the bearing liberally with Lubriplate® or some other electrical grease. This will improve the stability of the oscillator.

### Intermittent operation

On occasion you'll find that the dip oscillator stops operating. That is, the meter reading gradually drops to zero, or even goes negative. Tapping the oscillator head usually starts things going again. In my case, this annoying symptom was caused by poor connections in the plug-in coil. The coil wires are attached to the plugs by means of rivets, and electrical continuity is achieved through the riveted connection. Clean the soldering lug inside the form and the plug arm on the outside and solder a very short jumper between them, making an electrical short across the rivet.

After you've done these simple

maintenance chores, your oscillator will be as good as new.

### The Dead Band contests


Answers have been trickling in to the various little quizzes given in this column. Here are more "winners" who are heads up in quiz solving:

The five-resistor black box: WD6DUD, W0HJI, K0AS, W5ECB, W2LYH, K3TX, N3GDE, WB0TCZ, W8MQW, W8FBH, WA6JTD, N9DEO, KA2ZGW, K3GCM, N2JHS, W3LOY, K3GCM.

The jar of transistors (419 transistors in the jar):

W3DZH, W0HJI, K3TX, N3GDE, W8MQW, WA6JTD, N9DEO, K3GCM.

The bridge of multiple resistors (1,579 ohms): WD9FAQ, WB8WTS, W2TT, AA5AN, KB2WN, K4SE, W4EHU.

The coax cable puzzle: W6SIV, W2TT. Congratulations, people! 

### REFERENCES

1. Bill Orr, W6SAI, *Radio Handbook*, 23rd edition, 1986, pages 24.27. Available from the **HAM RADIO** Bookstore for \$26.95, plus \$3.75 shipping and handling.

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- FULL FEATURES**
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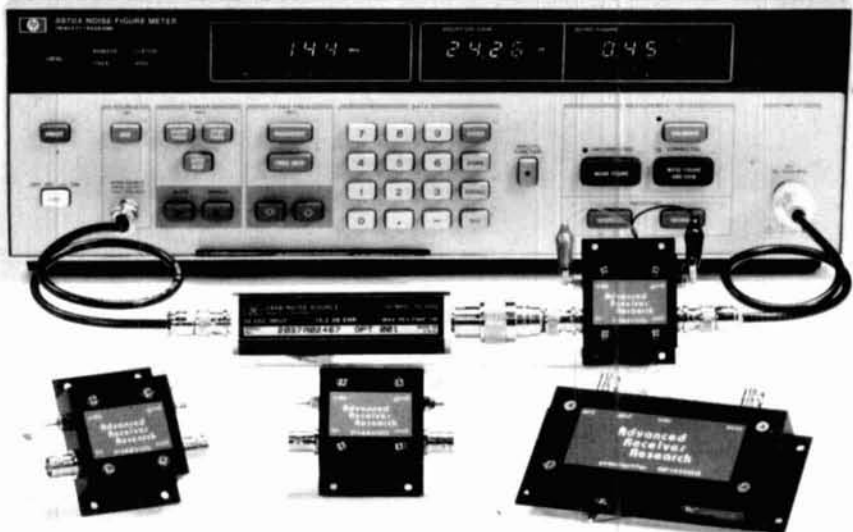


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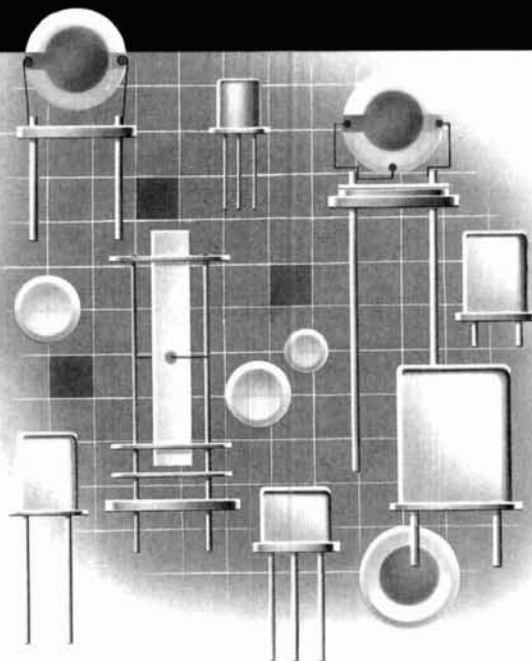
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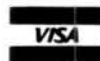
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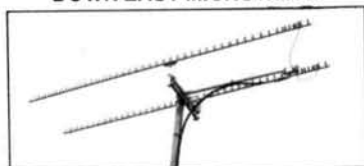
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# AN AUDIO PATCH PANEL FOR THE MULTIMODE STATION

By Lewis F. McIntyre, KB6IC, 3711 Gayle Avenue,  
Omaha, Nebraska 68123

I began operating teletype six years ago and discovered quickly that switching from RTTY back to SSB could be a real nuisance. My mic connectors weren't really made to stand up to frequent changes and the speaker connections on the back of my rig were inaccessible. These problems became worse as I added VHF packet capability.

A number of solutions have been proposed. However, most address only the RTTY/packet problem and limit their solutions to a choice of two transceivers.<sup>1</sup>

My solution was a simple, but extremely useful, addition to my shack called an audio patch panel. This unit lets you connect any audio source to any audio load in the shack. It controls the HF and VHF keylines so the HF and VHF transceivers can be keyed by any of the available microphones, CW key, toggle switches, or computer PTT lines — depending on your operating mode. I also gained some new capabilities along the way.

## How it works

The patch panel design is very basic. It's a simple switch matrix made up of eight 12-pole rotary switches. You can find all the parts at Radio Shack; the total cost is about \$30. The circuit diagram for the switch matrix is shown in **Figure 1**. For simplicity, I've shown only four of the eight switches. Audio loads (mic jacks of the HF and VHF sets, speakers, inputs to modems and patches) are connected to the arms of the switches; audio sources (output of the HF and VHF sets, microphones, outputs of modems and patches) are connected to the contacts of the rotary switches. With this arrangement, only a single source can ever be connected to any load — although all eight loads can be connected to any source. This is important because most sources don't like to be connected in parallel with others.

All audio connections run through two 2x4 phono jack panels on the back of the unit. My unit is wired with the sources on the top row and the loads on the bottom row. To accommodate standard connectors and reduce the

number of wires in the shack, I've added five microphone four-pin jacks. The three mic jacks on the back accommodate the HF and VHF mic lines, and the AEA PakRatt audio output; the two on the front accommodate both mics. These are connected internally in parallel with their corresponding phono jacks on the back.

The speaker lines go through a normally closed stereo headphone jack, in series with the line to the phono jack. I used the right and left-most load jacks for the speakers. This way, I can use headphones without interrupting other accessories — like the PakRatt.

Besides the audio switch matrix, two more rotaries (S9 and S10) control the keylines (see **Figure 2**). Because my HF transceiver keys differently from the VHF transceiver, I use a double pole six-position rotary for keyline switches. One pole is connected to mic PTT and the other to the CW key jack. Two positions on S9 and S10 connect to either side of an SPDT toggle, S11. This switch is useful for handling VHF to HF relay operations. (More on that mode later.)

Two diodes, CR1 and CR2, prevent the HF and VHF rigs from interacting when they are connected to the same keyline. Depending on your rig, it may be necessary to reverse their polarity or eliminate them entirely.

You may wish to review your station setup to see if you want to add or alter some of these "customizing" features. I tried to keep the order of connections to the back panel as general as possible so I could add or change equipment without having to rewire.

## Assembly

This audio patch panel was built into a Radio Shack 3" x 8" x 6" project box. The audio bundles run down both sides of the cabinet, left-side jacks to left-side switches and right-side jacks to right-side switches.

Wiring the audio switch array is the most tedious part of the construction. Use short lengths of single conductor wire to connect each switch contact to its corresponding contact on all the other switches. You need to connect only nine contacts — eight loads and ground. When this is done,

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  - 1.8 MHz will not tune on some antennas.
- **(3) Modes** — Peak Average and Peak and Hold with a unique non-drift Sample & Hold Analog memory circuit.
- **(2) Ranges** — Automatically switched power scales to 5 KW.
- **Fully Automatic SWR** — Full time meter displays ratios directly without drift.
- **Built-in ALO** — Protect your amplifier tube investment with this fast acting lockout.
- **Remote Couplers** — Six feet remotes the interchangeable calibrated couplers.
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- **Rugged Construction** — Heavy gauge aluminum construction. Top quality glass epoxy PCB. This meter is built to last.
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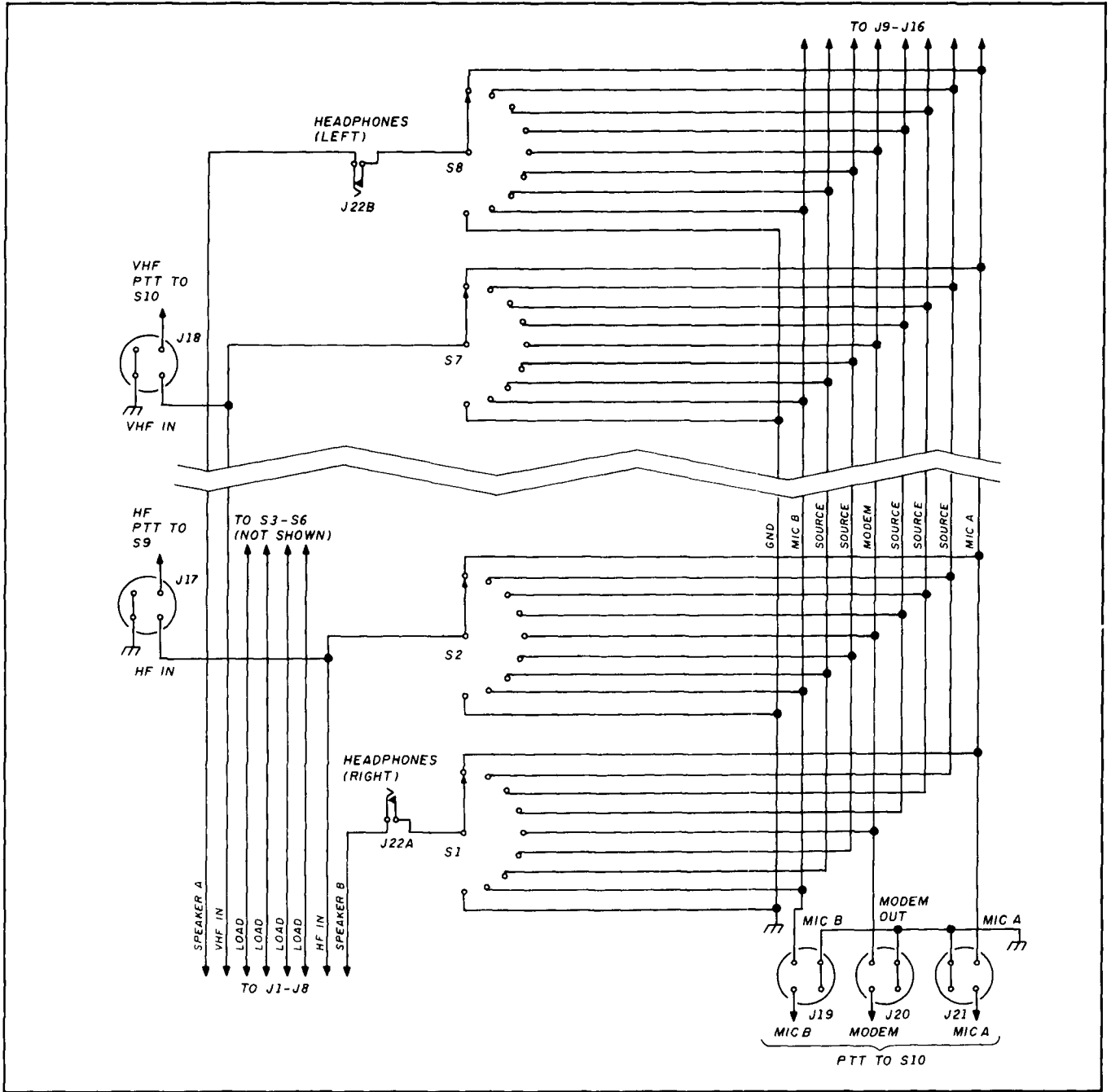
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FIGURE 1



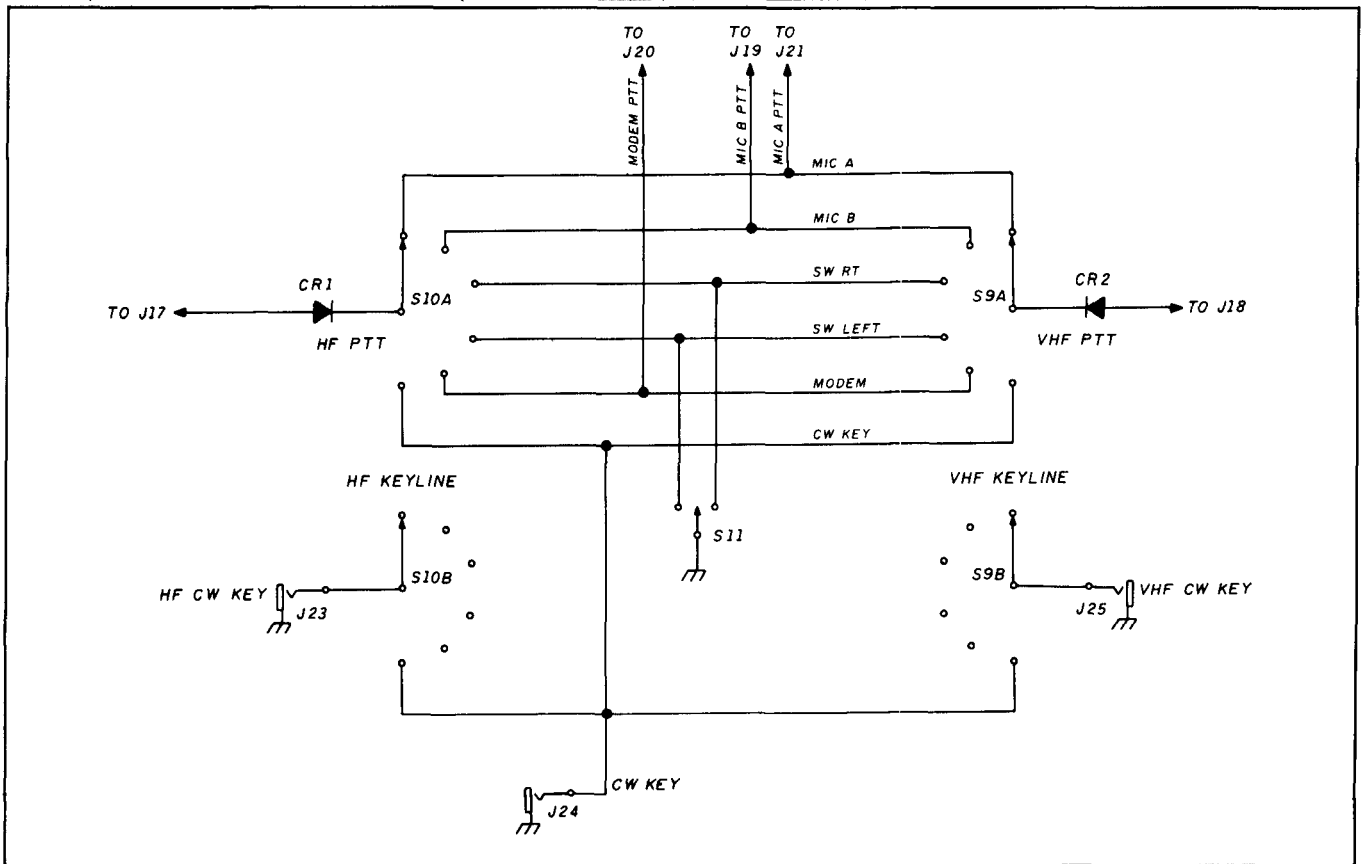
Schematic of the audio switch matrix.

check all connections for shorts and opens. Then, using two-conductor shielded audio cable, connect one conductor to the left-hand audio source on the upper row of phono jacks on the rear chassis and the other conductor to the audio load jack directly below. Route this cable to the switch where the source will be connected. Solder the source line to switch position no. 1 and the load to the normally closed contact to the stereo headset jack. Route a short length of single conductor cable from the jack to the switch contact.

**PARTS LIST**

|         |                         |                        |
|---------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Cabinet | 3x8x6-inch aluminum     | (Radio Shack 270-274A) |
| J1-J8   | 2x4 phono jacks         | (Radio Shack 274-370)  |
| J9-J14  | four-pin mic jacks      | (Radio Shack 274-002)  |
| J15-J17 | one-conductor NO jack   | (Radio Shack 274-255A) |
| J18     | two-conductor NC jack   | (Radio Shack 274-250)  |
| S1-S8   | one-pole 12-pos rotary  | (Radio Shack 275-1385) |
| S9-S10  | two-pole six-pos rotary | (Radio Shack 275-1386) |
| S11     | SPDT toggle             | (Radio Shack 275-620)  |

**FIGURE 2**



**Schematic of the HF/VHF keyline control.**

Do likewise on the other side of the box for the right-hand jacks. This completes the special speaker wiring.

For the remaining pairs of source and load plugs, connect the two conductor cables from the plug pair to the switch rotor and contact points. Ground the shield at the phono plug block and at the ninth (ground) switch contact. Because all switch contacts are connected together, this accomplishes all the wiring for this source/load pair. The result is a single cable connected to each switch. When you've finished, check carefully for shorts and continuity, and then bundle the cable runs together with cable ties. Add the special connections to the modem, HF, VHF, and mic jacks.

Wire the keylines when the audio wiring is complete. You can do this with single conductor cable; the process is fairly self-explanatory. After you've completed this step, check again for shorts and continuity.

### Wiring the station

I tied the following items together: HF transceiver, VHF transceiver, Heath SB-634 phone patch, AEA PK-232 digital data converter, and three speakers. I used to have a stereo tape recorder on the patch so I could record two channels. Because I added a third HF receiver and speaker, one channel (record and play) had to go. You also might want to add audio CW filters and VU meters.

Use a good grade of audio cable to tie everything together. I purchased new cable in 6-foot lengths. It was surprisingly inexpensive, considering that it came with

installed connectors. This cable is available with either double-ended phono, or phono to miniature phone plug connectors. I ran the cables together in bundles behind the station console. Avoid bundling them with antenna coaxial cable or power lines, however; that's asking for hum and RF problems!

I used a small stereo amplifier (Radio Shack SA-10) between the speaker terminals on the patch and the speakers. This lets me keep volume at a comfortable level, independent of what level the various loads might want.

The keylines require PTT connections to each transceiver. This is handled through the special mic connectors on the rear panel for HF and VHF transceivers. You may require connections to each rig's CW key. Some transceivers key CW separately from the mic PTT (mine did) and need this connection. Others key in parallel with mic PTT and won't need it. Check your rig to make sure.

### Using the patch panel

Each transceiver requires three switch selections:

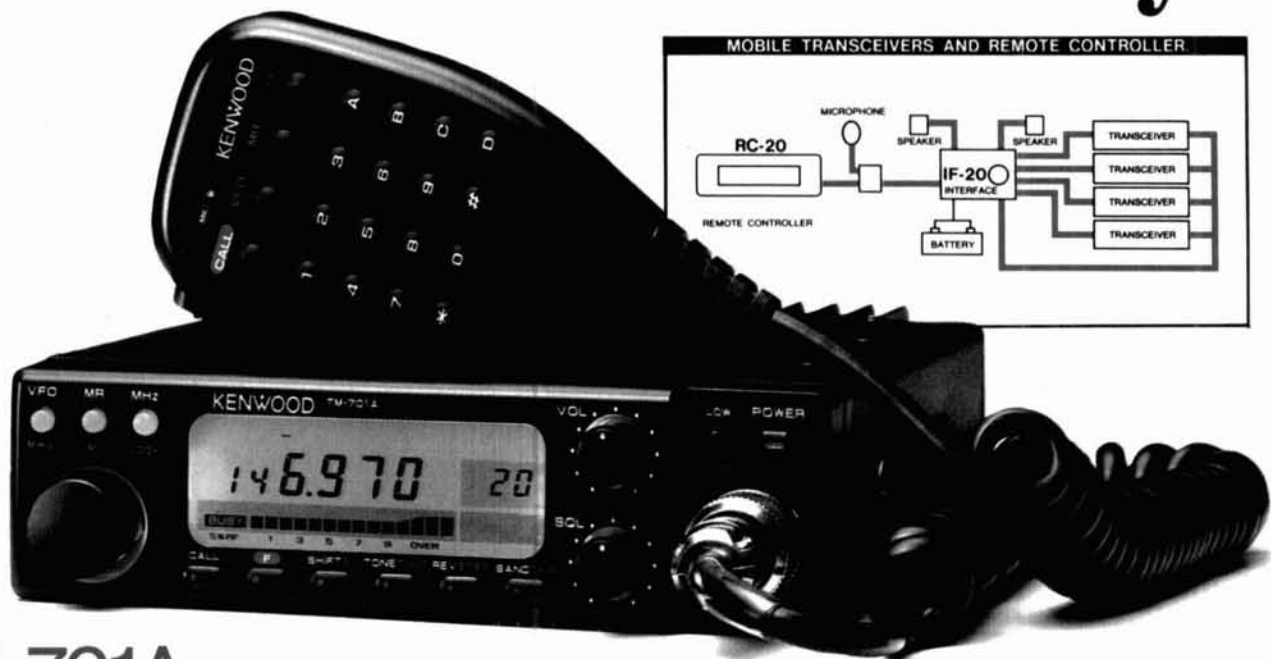
- Connect an audio source to the transceiver's input. Do this by locating the switch corresponding to the transceiver input and rotate it to one of eight sources. For my configuration that can be mic A or B, phone patch output, modem output, HF or VHF output. With this configuration it's impossible to connect two sources to the same load.
- Connect the transceiver's audio output to one or more loads. Do this by selecting a switch corresponding to

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- **25W on 2m and 70cm.**
- **Selectable full duplex-cross band (Telephone style) operation.**
- **Easy-to-operate front panel layout.**
- **Multi-function DTMF mic. supplied.** Controls are provided on the microphone for CALL (Call Channel), VFO, MR (Memory Call) or to change the memory channel) and a programmable function key. The programmable key can be used to control one of the following functions on the radio: MHz, T. ALT, TONE, REV, BAND, or LOW power.
- **Easy-to-operate illuminated keys.** A functionally designed control panel with individually backlit keys increases the convenience and ease of operation during night-time use.

- **Optional full-function remote controller (RC-20).**

A full-function remote controller using the Kenwood bus line may be easily connected to the TM-701A and mounted in any convenient location. The new controller is capable of operating all front panel functions.

- **Built-in dual digital VFO's.**

a) Frequency step selection (5, 10, 15, 20, 12.5, 25kHz)

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- **Programmable call channel function.**

The call channel key allows instant recall of your most commonly used frequency data.

- **Programmable tone encoder built-in.**

- **Tone alert system—for true quiet monitoring.**

When activated this function will cause a distinct beeper tone to be emitted from the transceiver for approximately 10 seconds to signal the presence of an incoming signal.

- **Easy-to-operate multi-mode scanning.**

a) **VFO scan**

Band scan, Programmable band scan.

b) **Memory scan plus programmable memory channel lock-out**

c) **Dual scan**

Dual call channel scan  
Dual memory scan  
Dual VFO scan

d) **Scan stop modes**

Time operated scan (TO)  
Carrier operated scan (CO)

e) **Scan direction**

f) **Alert**

When the AL switch is depressed memory channel 1 is scanned for activity at approximately 5 second intervals.

- **MHz switch.**
- **Lock function.**
- **Repeater reverse switch.**

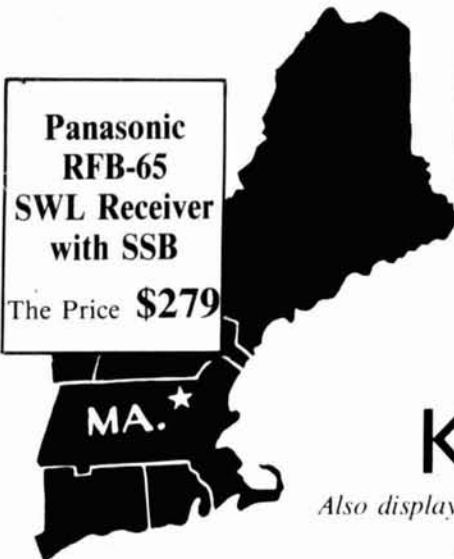
#### Optional Accessories

- **RC-20** Full-function remote controller
- **RC-10** Multi-function remote controller
- **IF-20** Interface unit handset
- **MC-44** Multi-function hand mic.
- **MC-44DM** Multi-function hand mic. with auto-patch
- **MC-48B** 16-key DTMF hand mic.
- **MC-55** 8-pin mobile mic.
- **MC-60A/80/85** Desk-top mics.
- **MA-700** Dual band (2m/70cm) mobile antenna (mount not supplied)
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- **SP-50B** Mobile speaker
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- **PS-50** Heavy-duty power supply
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- **PG-3B** DC line noise filter
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the load you wish to connect (speaker A or B, HF or VHF input, phone patch, or modem input). You may connect as many loads as you need, usually the speaker plus one more.

- Connect the transceiver's keyline to a keying source. This can be mic A or B PTT, SW11 left, SW11 right, modem PTT, or CW key.

## Results

I expected numerous headaches with this arrangement — like crosstalk between the different lines, RF pickup, and 60-Hz hum. To my amazement, I had only some minor RF pickup by the SA-10 amp while operating on 40 meters. You should have the same results if you use a good grade of audio cable to tie it all together and have a good ground at both ends of the audio cables inside the box.


I have used this unit for:

- HF/VHF relay. In this mode VHF out is connected to HF in, VHF in to HF out, HF keyline to the left side of the toggle S11, and VHF keyline to the right side of S11. When S11 is placed in the left-most position, all signals received on VHF are relayed onto HF; when it's in the right-most position, HF is relayed to VHF. This lets you use your station as an HF/VHF repeater under manual control. While this isn't as sophisticated as some systems described in other articles,<sup>2</sup> it does provide a powerful capability to link local VHF stations into long-haul HF circuits.
- VHF phone patch. Phone patches, like the Heathkit SB-634 that I use, are easy to place on line with HF equipment. However, I found that VHF patches are extremely useful as well. When the "Connie" operated off San Diego, I could easily raise my home QTH via simplex frequencies or wide area repeaters in San Diego which didn't have autopatch. The audio quality is vastly superior to HF.
- RTTY and packet. My preferred mode is RTTY. I also do a lot of RTTY and FAX SWLing using a vintage Hammarlund HQ-180. That unit lives on position 5 on my patch panel, and I can switch easily to that receiver when I need more frequencies than my ham-bands-only TS-830S can provide. Switching between two HF receivers and the VHF rig is a breeze with this patch panel.

## Future growth

I have considered expanding this unit beyond the eight switches, adding some internal VU meters, and moving the speaker amplifier into the unit. A bank of 1-of-10 (not BCD!) thumbwheel switches might make for a more compact panel. But this unit has worked so well as is, that I haven't made the move to transfer these thoughts off the drawing board.

## Summary

This audio patch panel has added to the flexibility of my multimode station enormously and has eliminated the rat's nest of different connectors to get all the equipment to work together. Why not make one of your own? It's inexpensive and easy to build. 

## REFERENCES

1. William Schreiber, NH6N, "Going Digital," *Ham Radio*, January 1989, pages 20-23
2. David P. Allen, W1VKZ, "Breakthrough in Boston, The Birth of Crosslinking," 73, January 1984, pages 10-14



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## A NEW ADDITION FOR YOUR TNC

By Joel Eschmann, K9MLD, 6964 Meadowdale Drive, Hartford, Wisconsin 53027

Over the last few years I've become very active on packet. I have a number of TNCs and use them at home, at my summer place, and in my camper. I use a number of terminals and computers available to me and I find the big sore spot with many of them is the "connect bell."

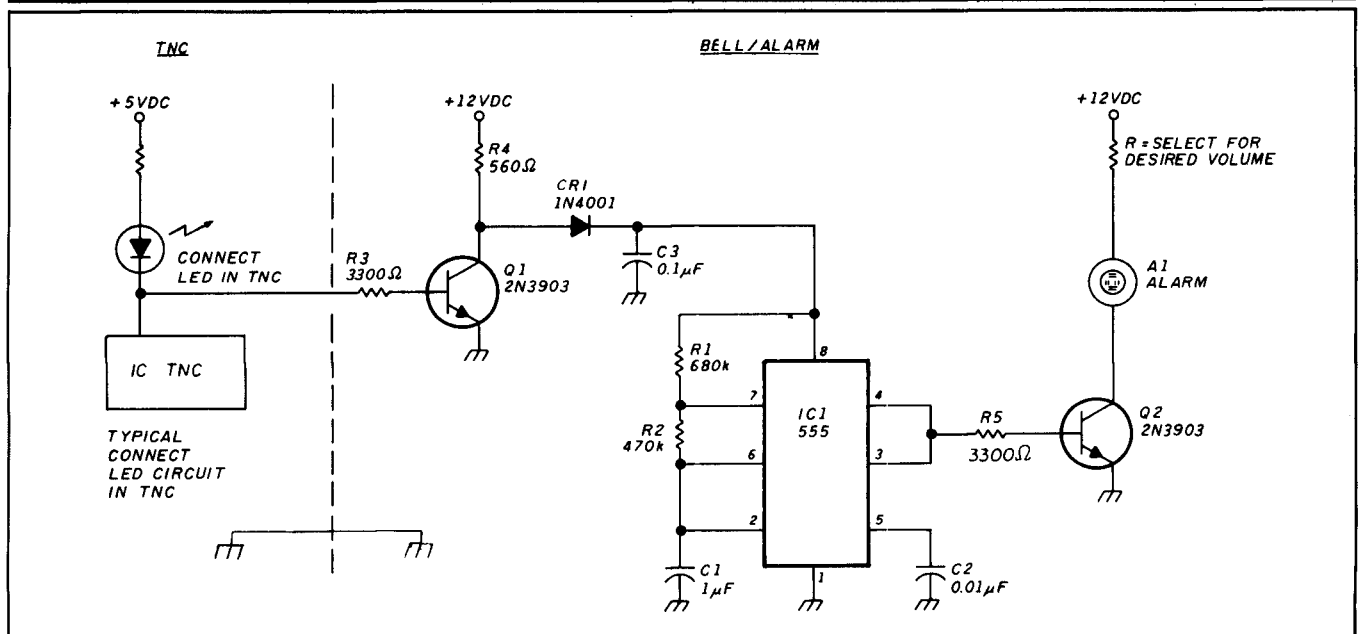
The bell is either too quiet or doesn't exist. When the packet equipment takes over after a connect, I want it to let me know someone is there so I can respond. I hope those of you with similar problems will find this article of interest.

Most current TNCs have a connect light or indicator. To make use of this element of the TNC and the existing cir-

### PARTS LIST

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| IC1   | NE555 Radio Shack 276-1723              |
| R1    | 680-k 1/8 watt resistor                 |
| R2    | 470-k 1/8 watt resistor                 |
| R3,R5 | 3300-ohm 1/8 watt resistor              |
| R4    | 560-ohm 1/8 watt resistor               |
| C1    | 1- $\mu$ F capacitor 15 volt minimum    |
| C2    | 0.01- $\mu$ F capacitor 15 volt minimum |
| C3    | 0.1- $\mu$ F capacitor 15 volt minimum  |
| A1    | Alarm Radio Shack 273-066               |
| RY1   | Relay 12-volt Radio Shack 275-248       |
| CR1   | Diode 1N4004 Radio Shack 276-1103       |
| Q1,Q2 | NPN 2N3053 Radio Shack 276-2030         |

FIGURE 1



Schematic of the connect buzzer circuit.


cuits, I've developed a very simple device which adds an accessory the TNC manufacturers forgot. The circuit is very basic and uses the popular 555 timer available from Radio Shack (which also carries a choice of bells, alarms, and breadboard items).

As Figure 1 shows, the circuit can fit into the TNC. The bell, because of its size, is best mounted on the outside of the cabinet or in a separate box. You may want to provide a switch to select different bells at other locations. Exercise a little caution if you use bells not compatible with the one mentioned here; the current drain may be in excess of the capabilities of the 555 and could damage it.

### Circuit description

Q1 is a DC switch which controls the 555 timer (IC1). When voltage is present at the base of Q1, the transistor conducts and the voltage at the collector goes to zero. At the time of the connect, the internal circuits of the TNC cause current to flow in the CONNECT LED. The voltage at the base of Q1 goes to zero and the transistor turns off. This causes the collector voltage to rise to the supply voltage. The supply voltage then applied to the 555 timer causes it to start, and also sounds the bell. After a time determined by R1, R2, and C1, the 555 timer times out and the bell stops. The 555 timer allows for a timed alert that's long enough to attract your attention. If you wish to change the timing, alter the values of R1, R2, and C1. Note that this circuit won't function if R2 is greater than one-half R1. The circuit has an automatic reset that triggers when the TNC disconnects and returns the circuit to an off state.

I've used the basic internal connect circuit from my AEA PK-88 for this illustration. This circuit may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, but understanding the operation of this optional circuit will enable you to install it in your TNC.

I have found this circuit very useful and I hope you will too. *Note: Making modifications to your TNC may void your warranty. Check with the TNC manufacturer. Ed. *

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# IDENTIFYING KERCHUNKERS AND OTHER INTERFERENCE

## Finding the fingerprints of unknown signal sources

By Richard R. Regent, K9GDF, 5003 South 26th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53221

**A** *kerchunker* is a person who turns on a repeater's transmitter briefly without identifying himself. He will sometimes do this to see if he can reach a repeater from various locations, or at random times to ensure that the repeater and his transceiver are working. However, transmitting a signal without identifying is illegal.

Kerchunkers are difficult to pin down because their transmissions are short. A method for identifying momentary signals should make it easy to determine the origin of longer duration signals, ranging from accidental keyups to blatant jamming.

Warren Schall, K9IZV, told the Milwaukee Repeater Club about a technological tool that can identify kerchunkers on 2-meter repeaters. The detective equipment consists of a Micro Control Specialties receiver (Model MR4), a Heathkit® Model 4850 digital memory oscilloscope, and an IBM PC compatible computer.

Receiver selection for this setup isn't critical. Most repeater receivers have test connections for the points that have the two signals you need to track down kerchunkers — the discriminator and signal strength alignment. Some receivers have convenient external outputs with two BNC coaxial cable connections.

The digital memory oscilloscope (DMO) turns your PC into a powerful dual trace 50-MHz digital storage oscilloscope. Scope settings are controlled from the DMO front panel and identified by LED indicators. Once you've fed the proper signals from the receiver into the DMO, and connected it to the computer via its RS-232 port, the signal-handling magic takes place.

The computer monitor gives a visual display of the signals, taking the place of the old familiar bench scope display screen. You can display two channels on graphic 8 × 10 division graticules to obtain readouts of voltage, time, and frequency automatically at any point on a waveform. Your computer should have at least 128K of RAM and a graphics card. This configuration of equipment can measure signals

with timebases ranging from 20 seconds to 10 milliseconds per division; 50 milliseconds per division works well for studying kerchunkers.

The DMO, set for one-shot triggering on a rising signal, is ready to capture and store data to memory. It stores an entire waveform as digital numbers, using 256 amplitude and time coordinates. A transmission a fraction of a second long gives you enough time to get a complete file on a kerchunker.

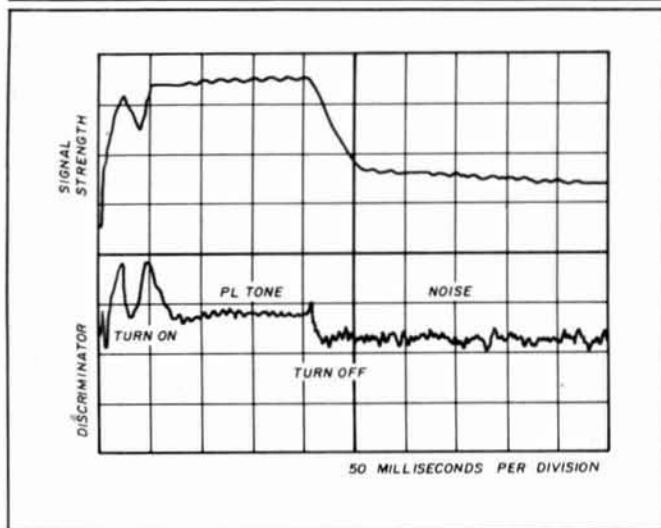
A freeze display of the signal on the monitor shows the unidentified transmitter's fingerprint (see **Figure 1**). The system can eventually be programmed to match the signal from a kerchunker, or other unidentified source, with records in a database of characteristic waveforms of transmitters in the area. Warren explains, "Each transmitter has a characteristic set of parameters, sometimes called a signature."

There are a few key factors to look for when analyzing waveform signatures:

- **Initial transient waveforms.** The momentary frequency changes a transmitter undergoes as it stabilizes after being turned on produce a unique blip on the monitor screen. The phase lock loop time constants used in most modern FM transmitters generate fairly similar signatures from a given unit each time it's keyed.
- **Frequency calibration accuracy.** The difference between the transceiver-transmit and the repeater-receive frequencies, in cycles per second, as indicated by the receiver discriminator output DC level.
- **Frequency and amplitude of a Private Line (PL), subaudible tone, or an extraneous hum.** The frequency of the subaudible tone can be found easily by expanding the waveform on the computer screen. Count the cycles in a given time period, or find the time period for a number of full cycles, and then take its reciprocal to get the frequency of the tone. The tone may match one of several used in the area, but could be off frequency enough or have such an unusual amplitude that it provides positive identification.
- **Audio deviation level.** This level is normally around 4.0 to 5.5 kHz.
- **Absolute strength of the signal.**

These are the five main factors of identification, but there are also a few special considerations. By monitoring the signal strength on the second limiter output of the receiver, it's sometimes possible to determine if the transmitter is mobile or fixed. This shows up as a wavering strength indication. Even certain transmitters designed with turn-on

FIGURE 1



An example of a freeze display of a signal on the monitor showing an unidentified transmitter's fingerprint.

Y1: DC (normal)  
500 mV/div  
Offset: +2.38 volts


Y2: DC (normal)  
1.0 volts/div  
Offset: +3.24 volts

Timebase: <->  
50 ms/div

Trig source: Y1  
Trig slope: (+)  
Trig level: +0.34 volt  
Trig mode: single manual trigger  
2lim = 500 mV; 50 ms  
disc = 1.0 volt; 50 ms  
F5:Memory F6:Average F7:Exit to system F8:Next menu

delays that may mask part of the initial transient use different time delays which give clues for identification. Again, time and waveform shapes reveal interesting particulars.

Various units of the same model transmitter may have similar waveforms; however, they can usually be distinguished from one another by analysis of their signatures. The detective work takes time, but once a signal is captured it can be documented by unique waveforms which are stored on floppy disk and printed out for later analysis or comparison. With more refinement, you could apply this digital technology to the HF bands to track down jamming and intentional interference. For the time being, however, the research continues on VHF repeater frequencies.

The signals for our club meeting demonstration traveled from the digital scope to the computer with RS-232 cable, but signals could be transmitted over packet radio to distant monitoring control operators. Control commands could then arm or disarm the scope system and request waveform data. 

Note: This technology has the potential to identify many types of interference. Future units of this sort may be mobile and used to track down CATV, power line, and other types of interference. Ed.



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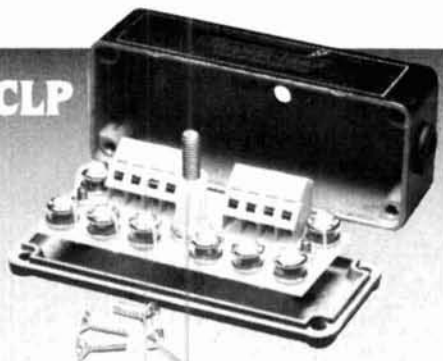
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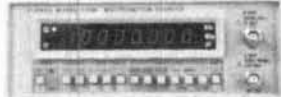


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# DX Forecaster



Garth Stonehocker, KØRYW

## DXING FROM WINTER ANOMALIES

Winter is the enhanced DX season because it usually has higher signal strengths and lower thunderstorm noise than the summer. This is particularly true on the lower bands. The anomaly of this ordinarily improved wintertime signal is the five to six day period of 20 to 40-dB weaker signals (more like summertime) through the mid-to-high latitude paths which provide our communication links to European, Asian, and Japanese Amateurs. I've discussed the reasons for this anomaly in previous December columns; it affects those latitudes in 90-degree increments of longitude. The longitudes directly opposite (180 degrees) each other have higher than normal winter signals. Those longitudes in between (90 degrees), but again across from each other, have lower than normal winter signals. During the five to six days (or longer) of the anomalous absorption event, the areas rotate in unison 30 degrees (two time zones) per day. At the same time, they decrease from 65 at day zero to 30 degrees latitude (ending) in the five days of rotation of 7 degrees latitude per day.

To take advantage of the decreased absorption providing the strong DX signals on east, west, and transpolar paths, check WWV at 18 minutes after the hour, WWVH at 45 minutes after the hour, or the bulletin board to keep track of the daily geomagnetic A value during the winter (mainly January). When you hear an A value of 15 or higher, continue to listen daily until a STRATWARM and its location is given. Next, consult your maps to find the 90-degree position between the location given for the STRATWARM and its 180-degree com-

panion. Coordinate your beam bearings and the DX path control points (1200 miles from the QTHs "on" the great circle) with the areas of lower absorption on both, or at least one, end of the path. If that area isn't right for your DX at this time, you can forecast — at shifts of 30 degrees of longitude to the west and 7 degrees lower latitude per day — when better conditions will prevail.

The occurrence of higher wintertime maximum usable frequencies (MUFs) is another geophysical winter effect that seems like an anomaly. While the D, E, and lower F regions have larger electron densities in summer, the daily maximum density of the F-region (which usually sets the day's MUF) peaks during the winter. This peak isn't as broad (measured by hours of the day) as it is in the summer, but it's narrower and higher. You have to be right there when the band opens (on 10 meters, for example) to catch these few hours. This same effect makes the one long hop transequatorial propagation (TE) possible in the evenings. But again, you must be watching and jump on fast. Remember, a raised geomagnetic A level increases the probability of TE openings.

### Last-minute forecast

The first, second, and last weeks of December should have excellent higher frequency (10 to 30 meter) DX band openings. Look for both long skip and extra DX transequatorial openings from high MUF build-up during the day and evenings. Some short skip sporadic E openings might even help your DX. The lower bands should

be best the second and third weeks of the month.

The Geminids meteor shower, which peaks on December 13th and 14th, will provide rates of 60 to 70 per hour. Optical observations may be difficult or impossible to make during periods of poor December weather, so determine the actual numbers by radio reception. A smaller version of the shower will occur on December 22nd. The full moon appears on the 12th, lunar perigee is on the 10th. Winter solstice is on December 21st at 2100 UTC.

### Band-by-band summary

Ten, 12, 15, and 17 meters will be open from morning until early evening most days to most areas of the world. The higher band openings will be shorter and occur closer to local noon. Transequatorial propagation on the higher bands will probably occur toward evening, during times of high solar flux and disturbed geomagnetic field conditions.

You may find 20, 30, and 40 meters useful almost 24 hours a day. Skip distances and signal strengths may decrease during midday on days coinciding with these higher solar flux values. Expect good nighttime DX, except after days of high MUF conditions and during geomagnetic disturbances. Look for DX from unusual locations on eastern, northern, and western paths during this time. The usable distance on the lower bands should be somewhat less than 20 in the daytime and greater than on 80 at night.

Eighty and 160 meters will exhibit short skip propagation during daylight hours and lengthen for DX at dusk. These bands follow the darkness regions opening to the east just before your sunset, swinging more to the south around midnight, and ending up in the Pacific areas an hour or so before dawn. **hp**



**WESTERN USA**

| GMT  | PST   | N   | NE | E  | SE | S  | SW | W  | NW |
|------|-------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 0000 | 4:00  | 17  | 30 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| 0100 | 5:00  | 15  | 30 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| 0200 | 6:00  | 17* | 30 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| 0300 | 7:00  | 20  | 30 | 17 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 17 |
| 0400 | 8:00  | 30  | 30 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 20 |
| 0500 | 9:00  | 30  | 30 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 15 | 15 | 20 |
| 0600 | 10:00 | 30  | 30 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| 0700 | 11:00 | 30  | 30 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 30 |
| 0800 | 12:00 | 30  | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 0900 | 1:00  | 30  | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 1000 | 2:00  | 30  | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 1100 | 3:00  | 30  | 30 | 20 | 17 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 1200 | 4:00  | 30  | 30 | 17 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 1300 | 5:00  | 30  | 20 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 1400 | 6:00  | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 20 | 15 | 30 |
| 1500 | 7:00  | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 15 | 30 |
| 1600 | 8:00  | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 30 |
| 1700 | 9:00  | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 30 |
| 1800 | 10:00 | 30  | 17 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 30 |
| 1900 | 11:00 | 30  | 20 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 30 |
| 2000 | 12:00 | 30  | 30 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 2100 | 1:00  | 30  | 30 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| 2200 | 2:00  | 30  | 30 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| 2300 | 3:00  | 30  | 30 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 |

**DECEMBER**

**MID USA**

| MST   | N  | NE | E  | SE | S  | SW | W  | NW |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 5:00  | 17 | 30 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 6:00  | 15 | 30 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 7:00  | 15 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 15 | 15 |
| 8:00  | 20 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 17 |
| 9:00  | 30 | 30 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 15 | 20 |
| 10:00 | 30 | 30 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 20 |
| 11:00 | 30 | 30 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 30 |
| 12:00 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 1:00  | 30 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 2:00  | 30 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 3:00  | 30 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 20 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 4:00  | 30 | 20 | 17 | 20 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 5:00  | 30 | 17 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 30 |
| 6:00  | 30 | 15 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 20 | 20 | 30 |
| 7:00  | 20 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 17 | 30 |
| 8:00  | 17 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| 9:00  | 20 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 30 |
| 10:00 | 30 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 30 |
| 11:00 | 30 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 30 |
| 12:00 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 1:00  | 30 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 2:00  | 30 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 3:00  | 30 | 30 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| 4:00  | 30 | 30 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15 |

**EASTERN USA**

| EST   | N  | NE  | E  | SE | S  | SW  | W   | NW |
|-------|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|
| 7:00  | 30 | 30  | 17 | 12 | 12 | 10  | 10  | 20 |
| 8:00  | 30 | 30  | 17 | 12 | 12 | 15  | 15  | 20 |
| 9:00  | 30 | 30  | 17 | 15 | 12 | 15  | 15  | 30 |
| 10:00 | 30 | 30  | 17 | 15 | 15 | 15  | 17  | 30 |
| 11:00 | 30 | 30  | 17 | 15 | 15 | 17* | 17  | 30 |
| 12:00 | 30 | 30  | 17 | 15 | 15 | 17  | 17  | 30 |
| 1:00  | 30 | 30  | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17  | 17  | 30 |
| 2:00  | 30 | 30  | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17  | 20  | 30 |
| 3:00  | 30 | 30  | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17  | 20  | 30 |
| 4:00  | 30 | 30  | 20 | 17 | 17 | 17  | 20  | 30 |
| 5:00  | 30 | 17  | 10 | 12 | 17 | 20  | 20  | 30 |
| 6:00  | 17 | 15  | 10 | 12 | 20 | 20  | 20  | 30 |
| 7:00  | 17 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 15 | 15  | 17  | 30 |
| 8:00  | 20 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 12 | 15  | 12  | 30 |
| 9:00  | 30 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15  | 12  | 30 |
| 10:00 | 30 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 17  | 15  | 30 |
| 11:00 | 30 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 15  | 15  | 30 |
| 12:00 | 30 | 15  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12  | 17* | 30 |
| 1:00  | 30 | 17* | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 15  | 30 |
| 2:00  | 30 | 20  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 12  | 30 |
| 3:00  | 30 | 30  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10  | 17 |
| 4:00  | 30 | 30  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10  | 15 |
| 5:00  | 30 | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10  | 15 |
| 6:00  | 30 | 30  | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10  | 15 |

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# INTRODUCTION TO WAVEFORM GENERATORS PART 2

## Astable (free running) multivibrator circuits

By Joseph J. Carr, K4IPV, P.O.B. 1099, Falls Church,  
Virginia 22041-0099

The circuits discussed in part 1 of this three-part series were aperiodic, meaning that an output pulse occurs just once in response to an input stimulus or trigger. Such circuits are said to be monostable because they possess only one stable state. An astable multivibrator (AMV) is free running. The output of the AMV is a periodic pulse or wave train. In a periodic signal, the wave repeats itself indefinitely until the circuit is either turned off or otherwise inhibited.

Astable multivibrators are oscillators. Waveforms available from the AMV include square, triangle, and sawtooth waves. Sine waves are also available from oscillator circuits. But because those circuits operate differently from the others, I won't discuss them here.

The nonsinusoidal AMV circuits will produce square, triangle, or sawtooth waves. When they are used as a clock to drive a very short duration monostable multivibrator (MMV), a pulse generator results. I'll begin my discussion of AMV circuits with square waves because the square wave generator is the most basic form of AMV.

### Square wave generators

Figure 1A shows a square wave. Each time interval of the wave is quasi-stable, so you may conclude that the square wave generator has no stable states (is astable). The waveform snaps back and forth between  $-V$  and  $+V$ , dwelling on each level a duration of time ( $t_a$  or  $t_b$ ). The period,  $T$ , is:

$$T = t_a + t_b \quad (1)$$

Where:

$T$  is the period of the square wave ( $t_1$  to  $t_3$ )

$t_a$  is the interval  $t_1$  to  $t_2$

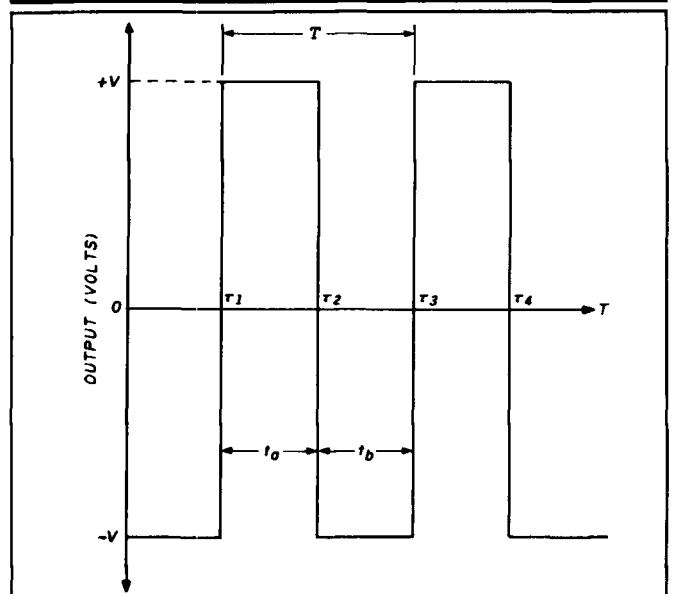
$t_b$  is the interval  $t_2$  to  $t_3$

The frequency of oscillation ( $F$ ) is the reciprocal of  $T$ :

$$F = \frac{1}{T} \quad (2)$$

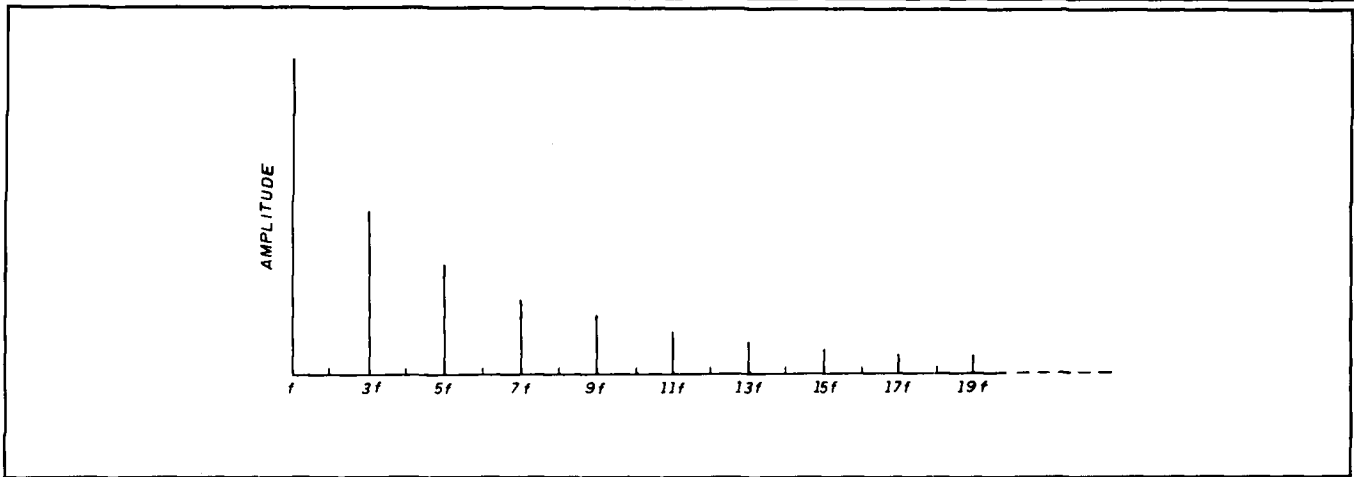
The ideal square wave is both base line and time line symmetrical. That means that  $|+V| = |-V|$  and  $t_a = t_b$ . Under time line symmetry  $t_a = t_b = t$ , so  $T = 2t$  and  $f = 1/2t$ .

FIGURE 1A



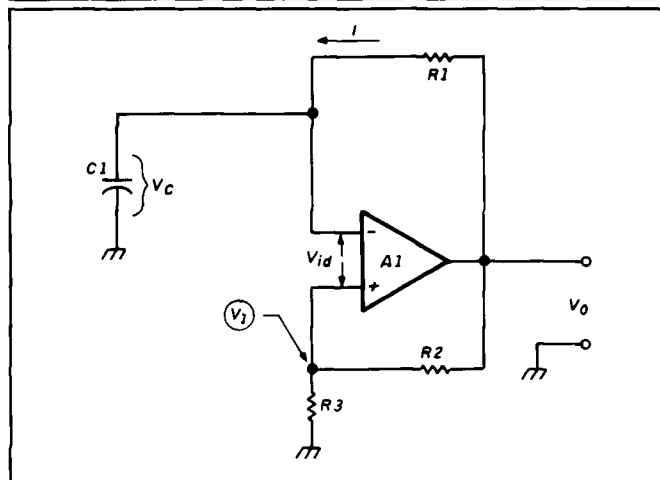
Representation of a typical square wave.

FIGURE 1B



Bar graph depicting the Fourier series spectrum of a true square wave.

FIGURE 2A

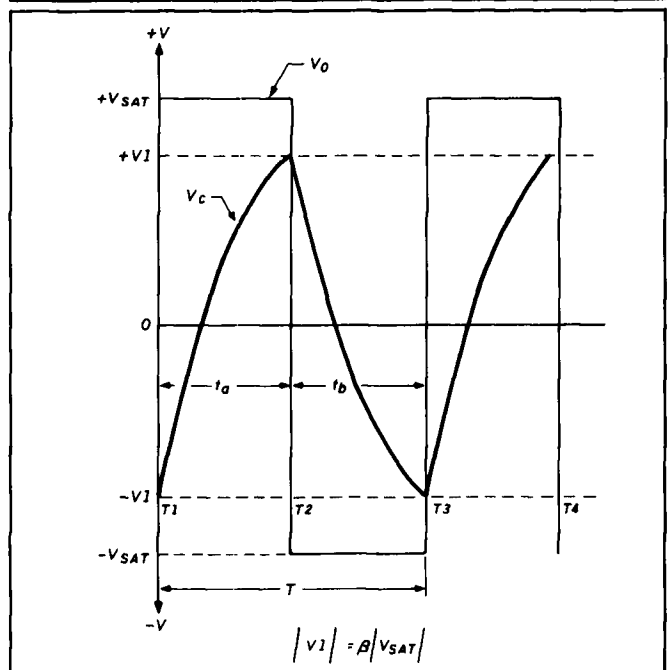


A simple square wave generator circuit using an op amp.

All continuous mathematical functions (including voltage functions of time) can be constructed from a fundamental frequency sine wave ( $f$ ) added to a series of sine and cosine harmonics ( $2f, 3f, 4f, \dots, nf$ ). The mathematical expression of which harmonics are present, and their respective amplitudes and phase relationships, is called the *Fourier series* or *Fourier spectrum* of the waveform. The Fourier series is usually depicted as a bar graph spectrum as shown in **Figure 1B**.

In the ideal symmetrical square wave, the Fourier spectrum (**Figure 1B**) consists of the fundamental frequency ( $f$ ) plus the *odd order* harmonics ( $3f, 5f, 7f$ , and so on). Furthermore, the harmonics are in phase with the fundamental. Theoretically, an infinite number of odd number harmonics are present in the ideal square wave. However, in practical square waves, the "ideal" is considered satisfied with harmonics to about  $999f$ . That ideal is almost never reached due to the normal bandwidth limitations of the circuit. The rise time of the square waves is an indicator of harmonic content. The faster the rise time, the higher the number of harmonics.

FIGURE 2B



Timing chart for the circuit in **Figure 2A**.

The circuit for an operational amplifier square wave generator is shown in **Figure 2A**. The basic circuit is similar to the simple voltage comparator and the MMV. Like the MMV, AMV operation depends upon the relationship between  $V(-in)$  and  $V(+in)$ . In the circuit of **Figure 2A** the voltage applied to the noninverting input ( $V(+in)$ ) is determined by a resistor voltage divider,  $R2$  and  $R3$ . This voltage is called  $V1$  in **Figure 2A** and is:

$$V1 = \frac{V_0 R3}{R2 + R3} \quad (3)$$

or when  $V_o$  is saturated:

$$V1 = \frac{V_{sat} R3}{R2 + R3} \quad (4)$$

Because  $R3/(R2+R3)$  is always a fraction,  $V1 < V_{sat}$ , and  $V1$  is of the same polarity as  $V_{sat}$ .

The voltage applied to the inverting input  $V(-in)$  is the voltage across capacitor  $C1$ ; i.e.,  $V(C1)$ . This voltage is created when  $C1$  charges under the influence of current  $I$ , which is a function of  $V_o$  and the time constant of  $R1C1$ .

**Figure 2B** shows the timing operation of the circuit.

At turn-on,  $V_{C1} = 0$  volts and  $V_o = +V_{sat}$ , so  $V1 = +V1 = B(+V_{sat})$ . Because  $V_{C1} < V1$ , the op amp sees a negative differential input voltage, so the output remains at  $+V_{sat}$ . During this time, however,  $V_{C1}$  is charging towards  $+V_{sat}$  at a rate of:

$$V(C1) = V_{sat} \left[ 1 - e^{-\frac{t}{R1C1}} \right] \quad (5)$$

When  $V_{C1}$  reaches  $+V1$ , the op amp sees  $V_{C1} = V1$ , so  $V_{id} = 0$ . The output now snaps from  $+V_{sat}$  to  $-V_{sat}$  (time  $t_2$  in **Figure 2B**). The capacitor now begins to discharge from  $+V1$  towards zero, and then recharges towards  $-V_{sat}$ . When it reaches  $-V1$ , the inputs are zero once again, so the output snaps to  $+V_{sat}$ . The output snaps back and forth continuously between  $-V_{sat}$  and  $+V_{sat}$ , producing a square wave output signal.

Using **Equation 4** from part 1, the time constant required to charge from an initial voltage  $V_{C1}$  to an end voltage  $V_{C2}$  in time  $t$  is defined by:

$$RC = \frac{-T}{\ln \left[ \frac{V - V(C2)}{V - V(C1)} \right]} \quad (6)$$

In **Figure 6A** the RC time constant is  $R1C1$ . From **Figure 6B** it's apparent that  $V_{C1} = -BV_{sat}$ ,  $V_{C2} = +BV_{sat}$ , and  $V = V_{sat}$  for interval  $t_a$ . To calculate the period  $T$ :

$$2 R1C1 = \frac{-T}{\ln \left[ \frac{V_{sat} - BV_{sat}}{V_{sat} - (-BV_{sat})} \right]} \quad (7)$$

or rearranging **Equation 7**:

$$-T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{V_{sat} - BV_{sat}}{V_{sat} - (-BV_{sat})} \right] \quad (8)$$

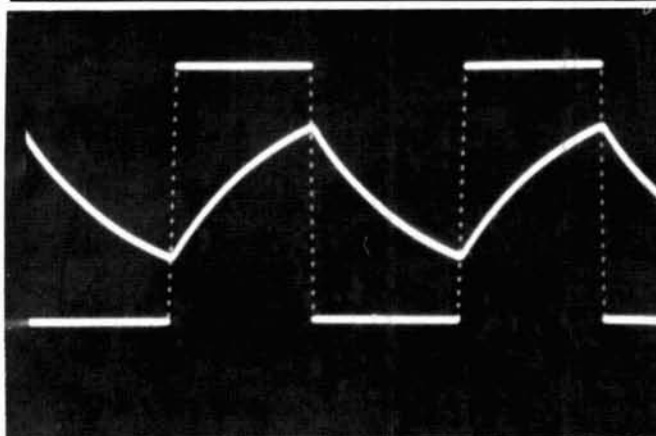
$$-T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{1 - B}{1 + B} \right] \quad (9)$$

$$T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{1 + B}{1 - B} \right] \quad (10)$$

Because  $B = R3/(R2+R3)$ :

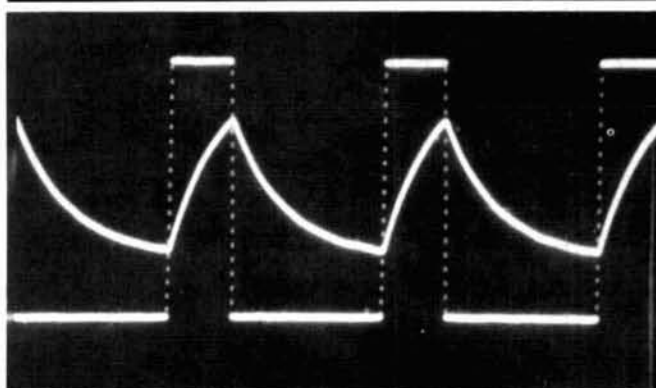
$$T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{1 + (R3/(R2 + R3))}{1 - (R3/(R2 + R3))} \right] \quad (11)$$

**PHOTO A**



$V_{out}$  of a 741 op amp square wave generator superimposed on  $V_c$ .

**PHOTO B**



$V_a = +v$ .

which reduces to:

$$T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] \quad (12)$$

**Equation 12** defines the frequency of oscillation for any combination of  $R1$ ,  $R2$ ,  $R3$ , and  $C1$ . In the special case  $R2 = R3$ ,  $B = 0.5$  so:

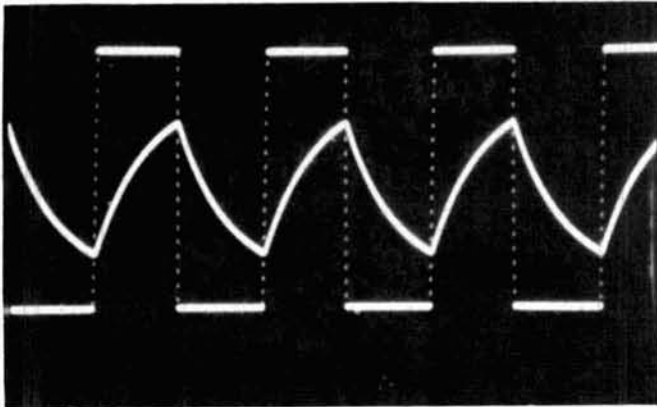
$$T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{1 + 0.5}{1 - 0.5} \right] \quad (13)$$

$$T = 2R1C1 \ln \left[ \frac{1.5}{0.5} \right] \quad (14)$$

$$T = 2R1C1 \ln [1.09] = 2.2R1C1 \quad (15)$$

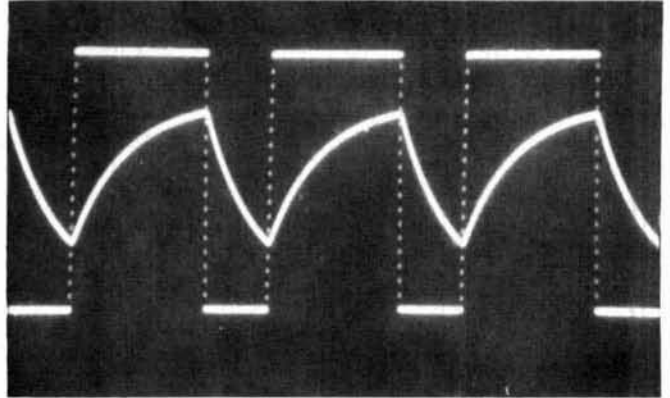
The circuit in **Figure 2A** produces time line symmetrical square waves ( $t_a = t_b$ ). **Photo A** shows the output square wave superimposed on  $V_c$  for a 741 op amp square wave generator. If time line asymmetrical square waves are required, then you'll need a circuit like **Figure 3** or **4**. The circuit in **Figure 3** uses a potentiometer ( $R4$ ) and a fixed resistor ( $R5$ ) to establish a variable duty cycle asymmetry. The circuit is similar to **Figure 2A**, but an offset circuit ( $R4/R5$ ) has been added. The assumptions are that  $R5 = R1$ , and  $R4 \ll R1$ . If  $V_a$  is the potentiometer output volt-

PHOTO C



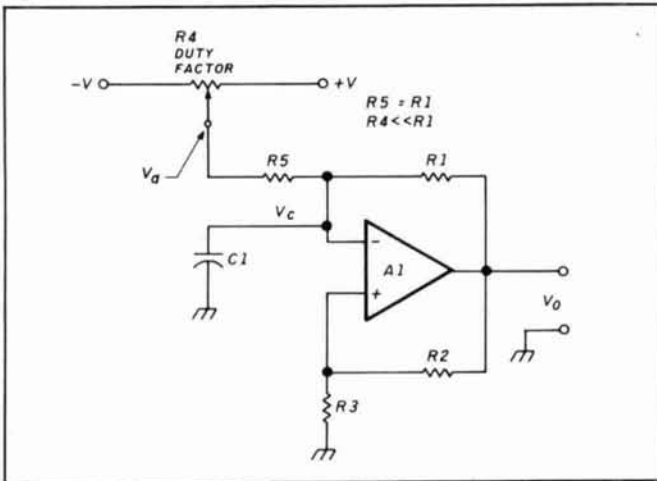
$V_a = 0$  volts.

PHOTO D



$V_a = -V$ .

FIGURE 3



A circuit for generating asymmetrical square waves with a variable duty cycle.

age, C1 charges at a rate of  $(R1/2)C1$  towards a potential of  $V_a + V_{sat}$ . However, after output transition the capacitor discharges at the same  $(R1/2)C1$  rate towards  $V_a - V_{sat}$ . The two interval times are therefore different;  $t_a$  and  $t_b$  are no longer equal. Photos B, C, and D show three extremes of  $V_a$ . They are:  $V_a = +V$  (Photo B),  $V_a = 0$  (Photo C), and  $V_a = -V$  (Photo D). These traces represent very long, equal, and very short duty cycles, respectively.

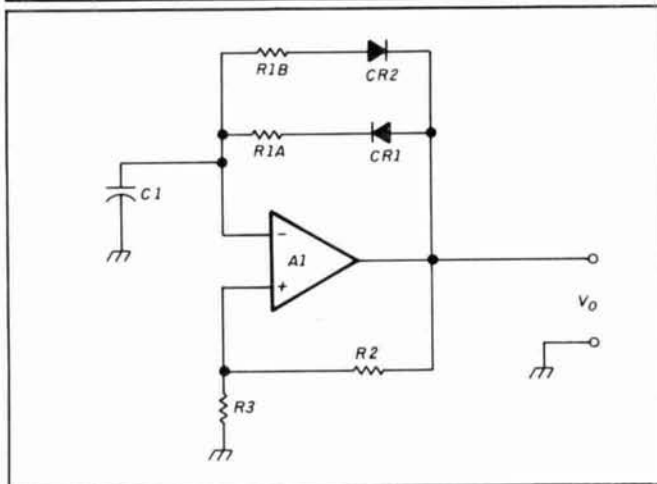
The circuit of Figure 4 also produces asymmetrical square waves, but the duty cycle is fixed instead of variable. Once again, the basic circuit is like Figure 2A, but with added components. In Figure 4 the RC timing network is altered so the resistors are different on each swing of the output signal. During  $t_a$ ,  $V_a = +V_{sat}$ , so diode CR1 is forward biased and CR2 is reverse biased. For this interval:

$$t_a = (R1A) (C1) \ln \left[ 1 + \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] \quad (16)$$

During the alternate half cycle ( $t_b$ ), the output voltage  $V_o$  is at  $-V_{sat}$ , so CR1 is reverse biased and CR2 is forward biased. During this interval R1B is the timing resistor, while R1A is effectively out of the circuit. The timing equation is:

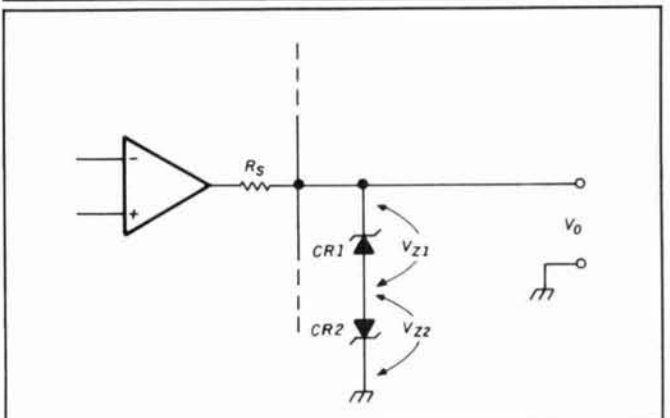
$$t_b = (R1B) (C1) \ln \left[ 1 + \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] \quad (17)$$

FIGURE 4



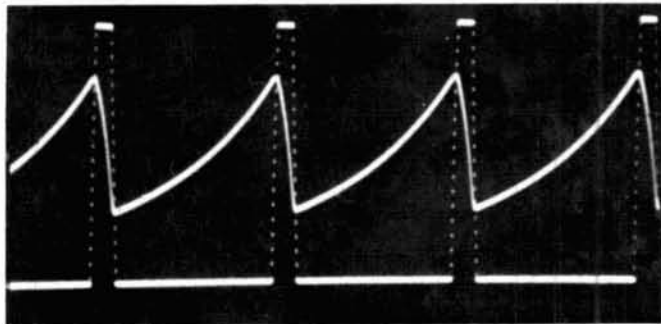
Another asymmetrical wave producer with a fixed duty cycle.

FIGURE 5



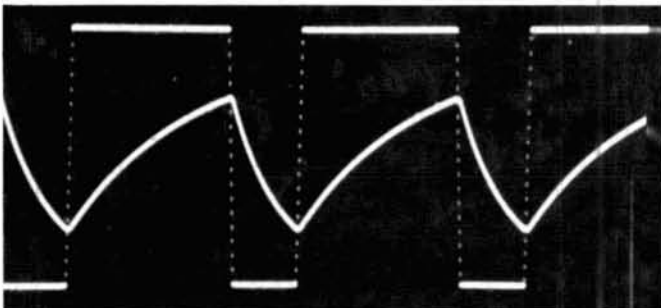
Using back-to-back zener diodes to clean up the square wave generator output.

PHOTO E



R1A/R1B = 10:1.

PHOTO F



R1A/R1B = 2.6:1.

the total period,  $T$ , is  $t_a + t_b$ , so:

$$T = (R1A) (C1) \ln \left[ 1 + \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] + (R1B) (C1) \ln \left[ 1 + \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] \quad (18)$$

Collecting terms:

$$T = (R1A + R1B) (C1) \ln \left[ 1 + \frac{2 R2}{R3} \right] \quad (19)$$

Equation 19 defines the oscillation frequency of the circuit in Figure 4. Photos E and F show the effects of two values of the R1A/R1B ratio. In Photo E the ratio R1A/R1B = 10:1; in Photo F R1A/R1B = 2.6:1.

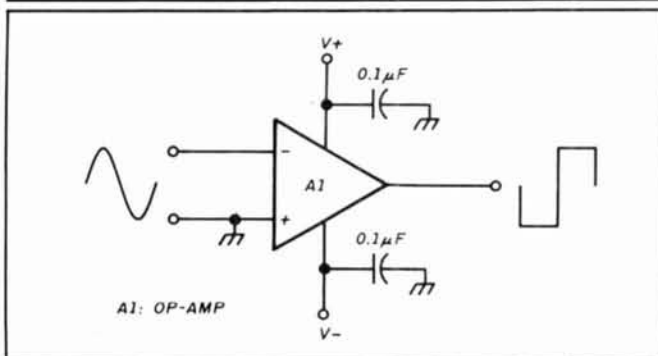
### Output voltage limiting

The standard op amp MMV or AMV circuit sometimes produces a relatively sloppy square output wave. You can clean up the signal by adding a pair of back-to-back zener diodes (Figure 5) across the output. For each polarity the output signal sees one forward biased and one reverse biased zener diode. On the positive swing, the output voltage is clamped at  $[VZ1 + 0.7]$  volts. The 0.7-volts factor represents the normal junction potential across the forward biased diode CR2. The situation reverses on negative swings of the output signal. The output signal is clamped to  $[-(VZ2 + 0.7)]$  volts.

### Square waves from sine waves

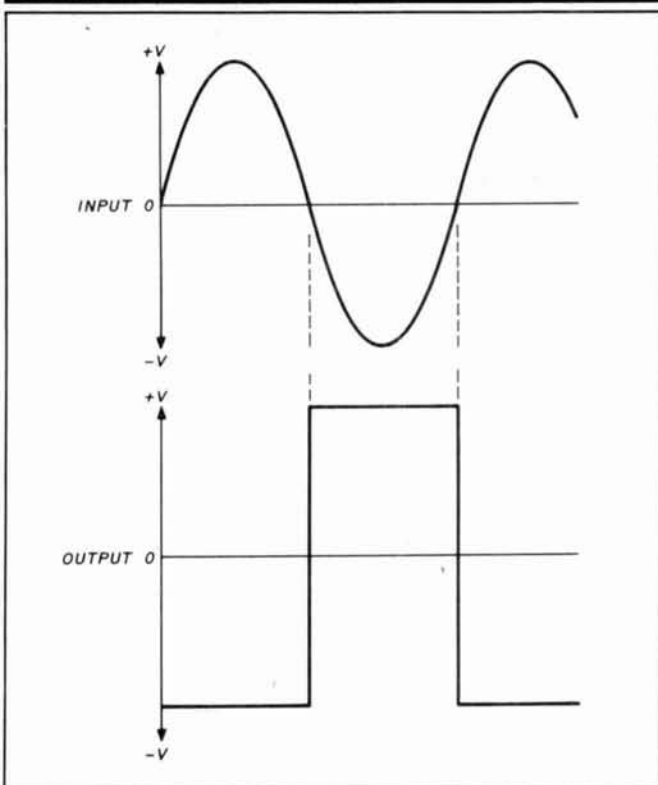
Figure 6 shows a method for converting sine waves to square waves. The circuit is shown in Figure 6A, while the

FIGURE 6A




Sine to square wave circuit.

FIGURE 6B



Graphical representation of the waveforms.

waveforms are shown in Figure 6B. The circuit is an operational amplifier connected as a comparator. Because the op amp has no negative feedback path, the gain is very high ( $A_{vol}$ ). In typical op amps, gains of 20,000 to 2,000,000 are found. Thus, a voltage difference across the input terminals of only a few millivolts will saturate the output. From this behavior you can understand the operation of the circuit, and the waveform in Figure 6B.

The input waveform is a sine wave. Because the noninverting input is grounded (Figure 6A), the output of the op amp is zero only when the input signal voltage is also zero. When the sine wave is positive, the output signal will be at  $-V_o$ ; when the sine wave is negative, the output signal will be at  $+V_o$ . The output signal will be a square wave at the sine wave frequency, with a peak-to-peak amplitude of  $[(+V_o) - (-V_o)]$ . 



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Practically Speaking: RF Wattmeters and Antenna VSWR Meters  
K4IPV p 75, Mar 89

Remote Control Switching System  
VK2WD p 62, Oct 89

Remote Driver/Controller for a Two-antenna System  
NH6N p 79, Apr 89

Secrets of successful low-band operation: part 1  
K2RR p 16, May 86

Secrets of successful low-band operation: part 2  
K2RR p 17, Jun 86

7/8-inch hardline coax connectors—construct at your own low cost  
WA5FAC p 95, Sept 88

VHF/UHF world  
W1JR p 77, Sep 86

Yagi design program  
W6NBI p 6, May 87

Yagis, stacking is a science  
K1FO p 18, May 85

Yagi vs Quad-part 1  
K2SS p 68, May 88

Yagi vs Quad-part 2  
K2SS p 78, June 88

### hf antennas

Active antenna, 0.5-30 MHz  
K1ZJH p 37, May 85

Comments, Hansen, RC  
p 10, Jul 85

Adding 10 MHz to the HyGain HyTower  
W5UOJ p 38, May 89

Analyzing 80-meter delta loop arrays  
K1GQ p 10, Sep 86

Collapsible Quad for 10-Meter Hilltopping  
W4RNL p 70 Nov 89

Convolution Loop, The  
W5QJR p 89, Apr 89

Delta loop, the reduced-size, full-performance, corner-fed  
G3TKN p 67, Jan 85

Designing trap antennas: a new approach  
W0JF p 60, Aug 87

Designing Yagis with the Commodore 64  
N6CAO p 107, Jan 86

Easy Antenna Access for Urban Apartment Dwellers, The Weekender:  
NU1N p 18, Apr 89

Elmer's notebook: ten-meter skyware  
W1SL p 90, July 88

End-fed 8JK; switchable vertical array  
W1JF p 53, May 85

Five-band dipole  
W6HPH p 76, Sept 88

Fold wire Fed Top-Loaded Grounded Vertical  
K3OQF p 32, May 89

Ham Radio Techniques:  
W6SAI p 55, Dec 85

Ham Radio techniques: time and frequency station WWVS, minibeam design, "white noise"  
W6SAI p 37 June 87

Ham Radio techniques: 80-meter antenna, 160-meter discone antenna  
W6SAI p 57 July 87

Ham Radio techniques: antennas  
W6SAI p 57 Sept 87

Ham Radio techniques: "radio ground" on 160 meters  
W6SAI p 53, Mar 88

Ham Radio techniques: why not a two-element Yagi  
W6SAI p 36, May 88

Ham Radio techniques: a nifty bi-square a beam for 10 or 12 meters  
W6SAI p 68, June 88

HAM Radio Techniques: The Log  
Periodic  
Antenna Family  
W6SAI p 20, Sept 89

HF Mobile Antenna  
NC0B p 9, Sept 89

High Performance Duoband Yagi for 15 and 20 meters  
KN2M p 41, Aug 89

How high should your HF antenna be  
W5QJR p 89, May 86

JR vari-lobe antenna, control your take-off angle  
W1JF p 46, May 85

K4EF Long Wire Antenna Designs  
K4EF p 32, Sept 89

Matching dipoles (letter)  
W5XW p 8, Aug 85

New class of directive antennas  
W4MB p 107, Apr 86

Comment, AG4R  
p 9, Jul 86

N5NBU "Nice Bul Ugly \$1.29 Antenna"  
N5NBU p 39, May 89

No-compromise, multiband, low VSWR dipole  
GM3HAT p 69 May 87

NO5H All-Band Dipole  
NOSH p 82, Jun 89

Odd antennas, comments  
W9RXC p 9, Aug 86

Offset drooper: an improved ground plane  
W6BCX p 43, Feb 86

Old antennas, comments  
W6MBP p 9, Feb 86

Optimizing gain on Yagi antennas  
K2SS p 21, Mar 88

Phased arrays, feeding:  
KB8I p 58, May 85

Short circuit  
p 74, Jul 85

Practically Speaking: High Frequency  
Dipole Antenna-pt 1  
K4IPV p 92, May 89

Practically Speaking: High-Frequency  
Dipole Antenna-pt 2  
K4IPV p 53, Jun 89

Practically Speaking: Vertically Polarized  
HF Antennas-pt 1  
K4IPV p 71, Aug 89

Practically Speaking: Vertically Polarized  
Antennas-pt 2  
K4IPV p 45, Sept 89

Practically Speaking: Vertically Polarized  
HF Antennas-Pt 3  
K4IPV p 81, Oct 89

PV-4 on Your Commodore  
WA3EKL p 64, Oct 89

Quad antenna: part 1-general concepts  
W4MB p 43, May 88

Quad antenna: part 2-circular and octagonal loops  
W4MB p 54, June 88

Quad antenna: part 3-circular loop and octagonal arrays  
W4MB p 34, Aug 88

Rhombics, controlled vertical radiation, part 1: designing for high performance  
N4UH p 100, Mar 85

Rhombics, controlled vertical radiation, part 2: antenna erection and performance  
N4UH p 99, Apr 85

Secrets of successful low-band operation: part 1  
K2RR p 16, May 86

Secrets of successful low-band operation: part 2  
K2RR p 17, Jun 86

Shortened 40-meter four-element sloping dipole array  
OE5CWL p 74, May 88

Structural evaluation of Yagi elements  
K5IU p 29, Dec 88

Tapered vertical, calculating the input impedance of  
K3OQF p 24, Aug 85

Short circuit  
p 78, Oct 85

Terminated vee beam, sloping  
Ross, Robert p 71, May 85

Three-band sloper for 7, 18 and 24 MHz (HN)  
W5FG p 58, May 88

Three Element Vertical Driven Array  
For 10 Meters  
WB5IRI p 22, Oct 89

Transmission line antenna, 160-meter  
N9NB p 87, May 85

12-meter "Garage Plane" Antenna  
W8PDV p 32, Mar 89

Two-element hf beams  
G6XN p 8 May 87

Two single 80-meter radiators for short and long skip (HN)  
YO4WU p 98, Nov 88

Vibration Induced Yagi Fatigue Failures  
K5IU p 9, Aug 89

W2PV 80-meter quad  
K1GQ p 56, May 86

W8JK antenna for 40, 30 and 20 meters  
N6YC p 9, May 88

Yagis, stacking is a science  
K1FO p 18, May 85

Short circuit  
p 8, Feb 85

Colagi antenna, The  
VE3BFM p 61, May 86

Computer-aided design of long VHF  
Yagi antennas  
VK4ZF p 28, May 86

Cylindrical feedhorns revisited  
WA9HUV p 29, Feb 86

Efficiently launch-VHF/UHF wave  
W3HWC p 63, Oct 88

Ham notebook: a 2-meter halo antenna  
NR5A p 63, May 87

High-performance Yagis for 432 MHz  
K1FO p 8, July 87

Short Circuit  
Comments: KLM balun  
W M Scott p 6, Sept 87

Improved High-Performance Yagis for 432 MHz  
K1FO p 9, May 89

Long 2-meter collinear—a simple way to achieve gain (HN)  
WB3AYW p 95, May 86

VHF/UHF Antennas  
NH6N p 84, Jul 89

VHF/UHF World: stacking antennas, part 1  
W1JR p 129, Apr 85

VHF/UHF World: stacking antennas, part 2  
W1JR p 95, May 85

VHF/UHF world  
W1JR p 85, Dec 85

VHF/UHF world: Designing and building loop Yagis  
W1JR p 56, Sep 86

Short circuit  
p 54, Jan 86

VHF Yagi CAD on the C-64  
W4PFZ p 70, Sep 86

VHF/UHF world: Yagi facts and fallacies  
W1JR p 103, May 86

VHF/UHF world: optimized 2- and 6-meter Yagis  
W1JR p 92, May 87

Short circuit  
p 41, Aug 87

Short circuit  
p 49, July 87

VHF/UHF world: minimum requirements for 2-meter EME-part 1  
W1JR p 39, Aug 87

Yagi triangular array  
W2IKP p 42, May 87

Yagi trigon reflector, Optimizing  
WB3BGU p 84, Jan 86

Yagi, a high-gain 70-cm  
W1JR p 75, Dec 86

Short circuit:  
p 68, Feb 87

Yagis, stacking is a science  
K1FO p 18, May 85

Comments, K2WWT,  
KD8JB p 8, Feb 85

Comments, DJ0TR/OE8AK p 8, Nov 85

### matching and tuning

Broadband RF transformers  
K2LB p 75, Jan 86

Designing trap antennas: a new approach  
W0JF p 60 Aug 87

Elmer's notebook: antenna tuner  
W1SL p 83, Apr 88

Elmer's notebook: antenna tuner  
W1SL p 102, May 88

Gamma matching, basic  
WB0IKN p 29, Jan 85

Gamma matching programs for the C-64/128  
N6CAO p 87, May 87

Ham Radio techniques: "radio ground" on 160 meters  
W6SAI p 53, Mar 88

Ham Radio Techniques: The Gamma Match An Update  
W6SAI p 56, Aug 89

Ham Radio Techniques: Interesting Antenna Fed Systems  
W6SAI p 39, Oct 89

Ham radio techniques: Antenna Matching Systems  
W6SAI p 54 Nov 89

Impedance Matching Transformers and Ladder Line  
KZ3K p 49, May 89

Improving operation with the MFJ 989 transmatch (Weekender)  
W4RNL p 24, Nov 88

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Comments, W5XW   | p 12, Apr 85  |
| L-Match, A Useful Tool for Improving Your SWR                                  | p 29, Feb 89  |
| W3VT   | p 29, Feb 89  |
| Phased arrays, feeding: an alternative method                                  |               |
| KB8I   | p 58, May 85  |
| Short circuit  | p 74, Jul 85  |
| Pi network equations   |               |
| K4MT   | p 109, Oct 88 |
| Practically speaking: impedance matching                                       |               |
| K4IPV  | p 27, Aug 88  |
| Practically Speaking: Parts for Antenna Tuners and Linears...Plus a Correction |               |
| K4IPV  | p 83, Jan 89  |
| Remote tuner for 75-meter mobiles (weekender)                                  |               |
| K9MLD  | p 36, Oct 88  |
| Simple 75-ohm Hardline to 50-ohm   |               |
| Match  |               |
| K9EYY  | p 63, Jun 89  |
| VHF/UHF Antennas   |               |
| NH6N   | p 84 Jul 89   |

## towers and rotators

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Antenna tower, fixed, tilt-over conversion  |               |
| PA9SE   | p 125, May 85 |
| Automatic Rotor Brake Delay, The  |               |
| Weekender:  |               |
| WA1SPI  | p 89, Aug 89  |
| AUTOTRAK, a simple rotor interface board for the C-64, VIC-20 and applicable to other popular computers |               |
| K7NH  | p 10, Dec 87  |
| Ham notebook: simple tower guides   |               |
| K1ZJH   | p 39, Sept 88 |
| Ham Notebook: Crank-up Tower Cable Guides   |               |
| A Bachelor  | p 54, Feb 89  |
| Turning that big array  |               |
| VE3AIA  | p 10, Jun 86  |

## transmission lines

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Artificial Transmission lines   |               |
| K8OBL   | p 21, Jul 86  |
| Elmer's notebook: transmission lines                                    |               |
| W1SL  | p 90, Mar 88  |
| General purpose line transformers                                       |               |
| W8IOJ   | p 94, Aug 86  |
| Ham Radio Techniques: A Balun for 10 Meters                             |               |
| W6SAI   | p 103, Jan 89 |
| Ham Radio Techniques: Coax Revisited                                    |               |
| W6SAI   | p 21, Jun 89  |
| Impedance Matching Transformers and Ladder Line                         |               |
| KZ3K  | p 49 May 89   |
| Measuring transmission line parameters                                  |               |
| OE2APM/AA3K   | p 22, Sept 88 |
| Novel Method for Measuring Cable Attenuation                            |               |
| OE2APM  | p 65, May 89  |
| Open-wire line for 2 meters   |               |
| N4UH  | p 94, Jan 87  |
| Practically speaking: transmission lines and their typical AC responses |               |
| K4IPV   | p 34, Sept 88 |
| Practically speaking: standing waves-a review                           |               |
| K4IPV   | p 85, Oct 88  |
| Real coax: impedance and phase relationships                            |               |
| K2BT  | p 8, Apr 87   |
| Short circuit   | p 91, July 87 |
| RF transmission cable, microwave applications                           |               |
| K3HW  | p 106, May 85 |
| Solving transmission line problems on your Commodore 64                 |               |
| K9CZB   | p 74, May 86  |
| Short circuit   | p 87, Jul 86  |
| VHF/UHF World-transmission lines  |               |
| W1JR  | p 83, Oct 85  |
| Comments W9ICZ  | p 9, Apr 86   |
| VHF/UHF World   |               |
| W1JR  | p 85, Dec 85  |

## AUDIO

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Advanced CW processor                |               |
| W6NRW                                | p 25, Dec 86  |
| An Improved AGC Circuit              |               |
| WBWFFH                               | p 72, Sept 89 |
| Audio Filter design, computer-aided  |               |
| KE2J                                 | p 15, Oct 85  |
| Aural vco provides relative metering |               |
| K1ZJH                                | p 97, Jan 87  |

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Build a QSO "beeper"   |               |
| KF6CU  | p 38, Jan 88  |
| Code practice oscillator (weekender)                               |               |
| N2DCH  | p 65, Oct 88  |
| Converting mobile microphones for handheld VHF transceivers        |               |
| KD8KZ, WB3JCC  | p 79, Mar 86  |
| Extended-range VU meter  |               |
| WB6JNN   | p 59, Sep 86  |
| Ham Notebook: Mobile HT Audio-The Near Ultimate Solution           |               |
| W9PXP  | p 68, Aug 89  |
| Improving the audio on the ICOM IC-27                              |               |
| KD8KZ  | p 61, Feb 88  |
| Modifying microphones  |               |
| VE7CBW6  | p 81, Jan 87  |
| Multiband Speech Processor   |               |
| KL7ISA   | p 32, Apr 89  |
| Passive audio filter design, part 2: highpass and bandpass filters |               |
| Niewiadomski, S  | p 41, Oct 85  |
| Comments, W3NQN  | p 8, Nov 85   |
| Passive audio filter design: part 3                                |               |
| Stefan Niewiadomski  | p 29, Jan 86  |
| Phone patches, building and using                                  |               |
| N6ARE  | p 34, Oct 85  |
| Power speaker enhances mobile operation                            |               |
| K1ZJH  | p 83, Jan 88  |
| Processor for code tapes   |               |
| W4ULD  | p 61, Sept 88 |
| Sight and sound CW   |               |
| W6NRW  | p 10, Jan 88  |
| Solo-16 Acoustic CW Speaker:The Weekender,                         |               |
| K1BOT  | p 12, Mar 89  |
| Understanding telephones   |               |
| N6ARE  | p 39, Sep 85  |
| Comments, KD7WL  | p 9, Apr 86   |

## COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| An Improved AGC Circuit                                 |               |
| WBWFFH  | p 72, Sept 89 |
| An Exclusive Look At Kenwood's                          |               |
| TS-950S   |               |
| NX1G  | p 28 Oct 89   |
| Annunciator bell for the Kantronics KPC-2               |               |
| K1ZJH   | p 22, Aug 86  |
| C-64 and GLB PK-1 interface circuit                     |               |
| W2EHD   | p 87, Mar 87  |
| CAT control system for the Yaesu                        |               |
| FT-757GX  |               |
| SM8CPI  | p 26, Nov 87  |
| Computer control of ICOM R-71, 271, 471, and 751 radios |               |
| NG6Q  | p 47, Apr 86  |
| Extending receive coverage for the IC-02 and IC-04      |               |
| WB6GTM  | p 77, Jul 86  |
| Comments: WB6GTM  | p 6, May 87   |
| Ham Radio Techniques: "white noise" revisited           |               |
| W6SAI   | p 79, Oct 87  |
| ICOM's newest transceiver                               |               |
| N1ACH   | p 17, Mar 88  |
| Improved gain distribution for the Yaesu                |               |
| FT-726R   |               |
| K1ZJH   | p 53, July 87 |
| Comments: Kudos for Kantronics                          |               |
| WB3EXR  | p 6, June 87  |
| Improving the audio on the ICOM IC-27                   |               |
| KD8KZ   | p 29, Jan 86  |
| Modifying the Trio-Kenwood TS-930S                      |               |
| WB9BXT  | p 67, Apr 86  |
| Modifying the Yaesu FT-301 for 30-meter coverage        |               |
| AF9Q  | p 42, Mar 86  |
| More fixes for the IC22S VHF radio                      |               |
| VE6ZS   | p 91, Oct 88  |
| More optional notes on the TS-930S                      |               |
| W6FR  | p 23, Apr 88  |
| Practically speaking: now that the warranty has expired |               |
| K4IPV   | p 67, Sep 85  |
| Comments, W5QJM   | p 8, Nov 85   |
| RDF, An improved  |               |
| K9OV  | p 67, July 87 |
| Simple IC-735 to C-64 interface                         |               |
| N7ICW   | p 39, Mar 87  |
| Simple modifications and adjustments for the TS-930S    |               |
| W6FR  | p 19, Apr 87  |
| Technology of commercial television part 2: hardware    |               |
| KL7AJ   | p 54, Jan 88  |
| Thumbwheel frequency selector for the Yaesu FT-757GX    |               |
| KA9SNF  | p 33, Nov 87  |
| TR-2500/2600 2-channel programming (HN)                 |               |
| K9MLD   | p 128, Oct 85 |

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| TS-930S headset audio, increased undistorted (HN)        |               |
| W6FR   | p 128, Oct 85 |
| Using an RTTY terminal unit with the Heathkit HD4040 TNC |               |
| AA8V   | p 59, Aug 86  |

## COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Bandpass filter design, interdigital, computer-aided         |               |
| N6JH, Monemzadeh   | p 12, Jan 85  |
| Short circuit  | p 117, Jun 85 |
| Computer-aided design of long VHF                            |               |
| Yagi antennas  |               |
| VK4ZF  | p 28, May 86  |
| Design a no-tune amplifier with your personal computer       |               |
| W7DHD  | p 8, Sep 87   |
| Designing Yagis with the Commodore 64                        |               |
| N9CAO  | p 107, Jan 86 |
| Diagnostic serial data latch                                 |               |
| KA9SNF   | p 56, Apr 88  |
| Direct currents reduce core permeability                     |               |
| K5BVM  | p 58, Jul 86  |
| Short circuit  | p 87, Jul 86  |
| Elmer's notebook: modems and RS-232                          |               |
| W1SL   | p 113, Oct 88 |
| Gamma matching programs for the                              |               |
| C-64/128   |               |
| N9CAO  | p 87, May 87  |
| Ham notebook: rebuild your C-64 keyboard with C-16 parts     |               |
| AF8B   | p 74, Feb 88  |
| Linear design by computer                                    |               |
| W4MB   | p 37, Feb 87  |
| Low-cost pc board layout software                            |               |
| Freeman, Eva   | p 8, Oct 87   |
| Remote repeater programming using a computer and a telephone |               |
| KD9BC  | p 89, Mar 86  |
| RF filters, Build narrowband                                 |               |
| WB4EHS   | p 10, Mar 86  |
| Short circuit  | p 36, Jun 86  |
| Solving transmission line problems on your Commodore 64      |               |
| K9CZB  | p 74, May 86  |
| Top-down filter design                                       |               |
| VE5FP  | p 41, Jan 87  |
| VHF Yagi CAD on the C-64                                     |               |
| W4PFZ  | p 74, May 86  |
| Comments: Yagi design program                                |               |
| W6NBI  | p 6, May 87   |
| Yagis, designing with the Commodore 64                       |               |
| WA3EKL   | p 59, Jun 85  |

## CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Advanced CW processor                                      |               |
| W6NRW  | p 25, Dec 86  |
| An NE602-based QRP Transceiver for 20-meter CW             |               |
| K1BOT  | p 9, Jan 89   |
| An RTTY Converter  |               |
| W1VO   | p 76, Jun 89  |
| Analog Panel Meters  |               |
| W6WTU  | p 39 Apr 89   |
| An Audio Patch Panel for the Multimode Station             |               |
| KB6IC  | p 65 Dec 89   |
| A New Addition for Your TNC                                |               |
| K9MLD  | p 72 Dec 89   |
| Automatic Rotor Brake Delay                                |               |
| WA1SPI   | p 89 Aug 89   |
| Battery charger, NiCd, constant current, a pulsed          |               |
| K2MWU  | p 67, Aug 85  |
| Build narrowband RF filters, Comments                      |               |
| WB4EHS   | p 9, Sep 86   |
| Bulkhead connector (HN)                                    |               |
| K9CZB  | p 78, Apr 85  |
| Short circuit  | p 74, Jul 85  |
| Carpet samples in the ham shack                            |               |
| K1ZJH  | p 82, Sep 87  |
| Code practice oscillator                                   |               |
| N2DCH  | p 65, Oct 88  |
| Collector Matching Networks                                |               |
| KZ9J   | p 34, Jan 89  |
| Common-point Grounding: Lightning Protection for Repeaters |               |
| K1ZJH  | p 24 Jul 89   |
| Construction techniques using PVC pipe to make antennas    |               |
| W2OQI  | p 98, Sept 88 |
| Design an amplifier around the                             |               |
| 3CX1200A7  |               |
| W7DHD  | p 33, Dec 87  |
| Digi-Keyer   |               |
| AB4DP  | p 68, Oct 89  |

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| DTMF tone signaling circuit   |                |
| WV6A  | p 42, Sept 88  |
| Dummy load, DC  |                |
| W4MLE   | p 91, Apr 85   |
| Elevation indicator, inexpensive  |                |
| W5JTL   | p 67, Jun 85   |
| Elmer's notebook: the mysterious "Q"  |                |
| W1SL  | p 110, Sept 88 |
| Elmer's Notebook: Transistors and How They Work   |                |
| W1SL  | p 62, Jan 89   |
| Elmer's Notebook: FETs-The Other Transistors  |                |
| W1SL  | p 104 Feb 89   |
| Elmer's Notebook: Voltage-variable Capacitors   |                |
| W1SL  | p 100 Apr 89   |
| Elmer's Notebook: Visual Aids-Liquid Crystal Displays                                       |                |
| W1SL  | p 81 Aug 89    |
| Elmer's Notebook: Simple Instruments  |                |
| RF Output Monitor   |                |
| W1SL  | p 91 Nov 89    |
| Extend Your DVM's Measurement Capabilities  |                |
| N6YC  | p 72 Oct 89    |
| Five-band Junkbox Transmitter   |                |
| W3RMD   | p 42 Dec 89    |
| Get the most from your NiCds (Weekender)  |                |
| K3OF  | p 88, Dec 88   |
| Ham notes: Waterproofing fittings   |                |
| W4MLE   | p 101, Nov 86  |
| Homebrew Neutralizing Capacitor   |                |
| N4LC  | p 38 May 89    |
| Homebrew tuning dial  |                |
| N2DCH   | p 75, Dec 88   |
| Homebrewing equipment from parts to metal work  |                |
| W7KBE   | p 26, Mar 88   |
| Keeping an Eye on Your Sideband PEP   |                |
| GW4NAH  | p 17 Sept 89   |
| Linear tuning with War Surplus  |                |
| Capacitor   |                |
| N2DCH   | p 40 Jun 89    |
| Low-cost pc board layout software   |                |
| Freeman, Eva  | p 8, Oct 87    |
| Make a homebrew sheet metal brake for chassis construction projects                         |                |
| WB6BIH  | p 43, Jun 86   |
| Motorized Agitator for Your Printed Circuit Boards  |                |
| K3QF  | p 68 Jun 89    |
| NE5205 wideband amplifier   |                |
| Gruchalla   | p 30, Sep 86   |
| Short circuit   | p 72, Jan 87   |
| New uses for old tuners   |                |
| W6WTU   | p 25 Jan 88    |
| Passive audio filter design, part 1: development and analysis                               |                |
| Niewiadomski, S   | p 17, Sep 85   |
| PEP Wattmeter   |                |
| WA1SPI  | p 76 Oct 89    |
| Practically speaking: Keep it cool  |                |
| K4IPV   | p 75, Apr 86   |
| Practically speaking: parts sources   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 78, Nov 86   |
| Practically speaking: grounding and shielding, pt 1   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 47, Apr 87   |
| Practically speaking: grounding and shielding, pt 2   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 81, May 87   |
| Comments: grounding and shielding   |                |
| KA8DKT  | p 6, Aug 87    |
| Practically speaking: drift and shift   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 75, Jan 88   |
| Practically speaking: noise, signals and amplifiers   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 77, Feb 88   |
| Practically speaking: feedback  |                |
| K4IPV   | p 80, May 88   |
| Practically speaking: "ferriting" out the problem   |                |
| K4IPV   | p 72, Jun 88   |
| Practically speaking: non-ideal linear IC amplifiers typical problems and how to solve them |                |
| K4IPV   | p 72, Jul 88   |
| Practically speaking: Overview of op amps-part 1  |                |
| K4IPV   | p 100, Nov 88  |
| Practically speaking: Overview of op amps-part 2  |                |
| K4IPV   | p 83, Dec 88   |
| Practically Speaking: Light Metal and Other Topics  |                |
| K4IPV   | p 23, Apr 89   |
| Precision high-voltage dc regulator   |                |
| AG6K  | p 75, Aug 88   |
| Protect Your Amateur Station from Lightning   |                |
| KY9L  | p 25, Sept 89  |
| Remote base/simplex phone patch controller  |                |

AA4NX and KK4LA p 54, Aug 88  
 Remote Control Switching System  
 VK2WD p 62 Oct 89  
 Remote Driver/Controller for a  
 Two-antenna System  
 NH6N p 79 Apr 89  
 Rewinding transformers with  
 CAD W6WTU p 74, Mar 87  
 RF filters, Build narrowband  
 WB4EHS p 10, Mar 86  
 Short circuit p 36, Jun 86  
 Silverplating, safe, sensible  
 K9EYY p 29, Feb 85  
 Simple DC Amplifier for Your Meter  
 W0JF p 10, Jun 89  
 Simple Infrared Detector, A (HN)  
 K1ZJH p 27, Jun 89  
 Simple low-cost comb generator frequen-  
 cy calibrator  
 Martin, Larry p 78, Jul 88  
 Simple receivers from complex ICs  
 W6VEH p 10, Nov 88  
 Structural evaluation of Yagi elements  
 K5IU p 29, Dec 88  
 The Guerri report: pc boards  
 W6MGI p 109, Sep 86  
 Transmit Control for Mobile Operation  
 G4CLF p 24 Nov 89  
 Tuning indicator for RTTY and packet  
 radio  
 W0HZR p 65, Sept 88  
 Two in one: trace doubler for CRO, and  
 square wave and pulse generator (HN)  
 Tseng Liao p 26, Dec 88  
 2-meter monitor  
 WA3ENK p 64, Jul 88  
 Ultra Low Power Four-digit Sequence  
 Touch Tone Decoder  
 WA4ADG p 30 Dec 89  
 Understanding and using 723 Voltage  
 Regulators  
 K3OF p 42, Mar 89  
 Universal analog breadboard, A  
 Gruchella, M p 85, Jun 86  
 Variable Gain 160-Meter Preamp  
 KD9SV p 46, Oct 89  
 Wideband Frequency Analyzer  
 AA4FB p 9 Nov 89  
 ZX-81/TS1000 controller: new use for old  
 computers  
 N9NB p 31, Dec 86

## DIGITAL TECHNIQUES

A New Addition for your TNC  
 K9MLD p 72 Dec 89  
 Add a digital readout to the "poor man's  
 spectrum analyzer"  
 WA2PZO p 84, Sept 88  
 Amateur FSK: A spectral analysis  
 WA6NCX p 42 Dec 86  
 AMTOR, AX25, and HERMES: a perfor-  
 mance analysis of three systems  
 W9JD p 63, Dec 85  
 Comments, G3PLX p 9, May 86  
 Annunciator bell for the Kantronics  
 KPC-2  
 K1ZJH p 22, Aug 86  
 Artificial Intelligence Applications  
 In Amateur Radio  
 NU1N p 30, Oct 89  
 Audio filter design, computer-aided  
 KE2J p 15, Oct 85  
 AUTOTRAK, simple rotor interface board  
 for the C-64, VIC-20 and applicable to  
 other popular computers  
 K7NH p 10, Dec 87  
 Build a QSO "beeper"  
 KF6CU p 38, Jan 88  
 Building a Digital Filter  
 NB9K p 9, Apr 89  
 CAT control system for the Yaesu  
 FT-757GX  
 SM6CPI p 26, Nov 87  
 Commodore 64, \$100 printer (HN)  
 W2QLI p 86, Aug 85  
 Computer control of ICOM R-71, 271,  
 471, and 751 radios  
 NG8Q p 47, Apr 86  
 Comments: Continuous phase tones  
 G3VMR p 6, Aug 87  
 Decoding data signals  
 WB4GCS p 60, Dec 88  
 Deluxe logic probe  
 M Wilde p 74, Jan 87  
 Digi-Keyer  
 AB4DP p 68 Oct 89  
 Digital can do more, Comments  
 KA4JFO p 9, Mar 86  
 Digital clock, build a fail-safe  
 K1MC p 54, Oct 85

Digital frequency readout using the Com-  
 modore 64  
 W3NNL p 83, Nov 85  
 Digital HF radio: a sampling of tech-  
 niques  
 KA2WEU/DJ2LR p 19, Apr 85  
 Short circuit p 121, May 85  
 Direct synthesis VFO  
 W7SX p 10, Sept 88  
 DTMF controller for repeaters  
 WB4FXD p 47, Sep 85  
 DTMF tone signaling circuit  
 W6VA p 42, Sept 88  
 DTMF Group Call Decoder  
 AA4NX p 53, Mar 89  
 Electro-Braille Transducers and their Ap-  
 plication  
 I4MK p 59, Mar 89  
 Elmer's notebook: An introduction to digi-  
 tal communications  
 W1SL p92, Jul 87  
 Elmer's notebook: An introduction to  
 AMTOR  
 W1SL p 101, Sept 87  
 Elmer's notebook: packet radio  
 W1SL p 100, Oct 87  
 Finding the Source of Computer-  
 generated interference  
 K8TM p 30, Sept 89  
 \$40 Digital Voice Storage I/O'er  
 WA4ADG p 10, Feb 89  
 Frequency synthesis up to 2 GHz  
 WA6DYW p 22, Apr 88  
 Get on SSTV-with the C-64  
 I2CAB and I2AED, edited by K9EI  
 p 43, Oct 86  
 p 97, Oct 87  
 Short Circuit  
 Going Digital  
 NH6N p 20, Jan 89  
 Improving the WB3CEH programmable  
 call sign identifier (hn)  
 KL7XO p 82, Sept 87  
 Comments: Packet board update  
 VE3LNY p 6, Jan 87  
 Packet radio, automatic frequency and  
 deviation tester  
 WB2OSZ p 41, Dec 85  
 Packet radio primer  
 WA1FHB p 30, Dec 85  
 Packet radio TNC for the IBM PC  
 VE3LNY p 10, Aug 86  
 Practically speaking: using the digital  
 frequency counter-some pitfalls  
 K4IPV p 47, Apr 88  
 K4IPV p 34 Dec 89  
 RAM Drive for Packet Radio  
 AD1B p 44, Dec 87  
 Run RTTY on your Timex  
 NU4V p 110, Apr 85  
 Run RTTY on your VIC-20  
 W5TRS p 120, Apr 85  
 Satellite tracker, digitally-controlled  
 KA8OBL p 102, Sep 85  
 Simple PROM Programmer, A  
 WV6A p 81, Mar 89  
 Spread spectrum and digital communica-  
 tion techniques: a primer  
 N9NB p 13, Dec 85  
 Station Control Node Expand Your Ver-  
 satility with SCN  
 WA0RJT p 23, Mar 89  
 The Guerri report  
 W6MGI p 124, Jan 86  
 The Guerri report  
 W6MGI p 125, Apr 86  
 Thumbwheel frequency selector for the  
 Yaesu FT-757GX  
 KA9SNF p 33, Nov 87  
 True frequency digital readout for the  
 HW-101 A  
 NU4F p 8, Jan 87  
 Short circuit: p 41, Aug 87  
 220-MHz 9600-Baud Data Radio System  
 for Packet  
 W2DUC p 67, Feb 89  
 Two-Loop 10-Hz Step 40-70 MHz Syn-  
 thesizer  
 PY1LL&C Mathias p 24 Jan 89  
 Ultra Low Power Four-digit Sequence  
 Touch Tone Decoder  
 WA4ADG p 30 Dec 89  
 Using an RTTY terminal unit with the  
 Heathkit HD 4040 TNC  
 AABV p 59, Aug 86

## FEATURES AND FICTION

Automatic Packet Beacon Tracker  
 and Monitor  
 W4GBB p 66 Aug 89

Backscatter: Glasnost and Amateur Radio  
 N1ACH p 4 Feb 89  
 Backscatter: No-Code Revisited  
 N1ACH p 4 Mar 89  
 Backscatter: No-Code Survey Results  
 N1ACH p 4 Jun 89  
 Backscatter: The More Things Change...  
 N1ACH p 4 Jul 89  
 Backscatter: Ode to the Death of FRB-3  
 N1ACH p 4 Aug  
 Backscatter: More cause for Thought  
 NX1G p 4 Sept 89  
 Backscatter: Amateur Radio Licensing  
 Fees  
 NX1G p 6 Oct 89  
 Backscatter: Juxtaposition of Tech-  
 nologies  
 NX1G p 4 Nov 89  
 Electromagnetic jargon generator, state-  
 of-the-art  
 N6TX p 75, Apr 85  
 Ham radio techniques: Ever work a W10  
 W6SAI p 43, Feb 87  
 Short circuit: p 50, Apr 87  
 Ham radio techniques: Xingiang  
 Province the last frontier  
 W6SAI p 55, Apr 87  
 Ham Radio techniques: the year was  
 1923 ..  
 W6SAI p 89, Jan 88  
 Ham Radio techniques: "the greatest lit-  
 tle magazine in the world"  
 W6SAI p 68, Feb 88  
 Ham Radio Techniques: The "Invention  
 of Radio"  
 W6SAI p 17 Mar 89  
 One hundred years of electric waves  
 KR6A p 22, Aug 88  
 Radio addiction: case history of an en-  
 thusiast  
 W7SX p 52, Jan 88  
 Reflections: Returning the spectrum to  
 chaos...courtesy of the FCC (General  
 docket 87-389)  
 W9JUV p 6, Feb 88  
 Reflections: Novice enhancement and  
 the future of amateur radio  
 W9JUV p 6, Jun 88  
 Writing the Technical Article  
 K4IPV p 43 Jan 89

## FILTERS

Automatically switched half-octave filters:  
 part 1  
 WB3JZO and Watkins, Lee R. p 10  
 Feb 88  
 Automatically switched half-octave filters:  
 part 2  
 WB3JZO and Watkins, Lee R. p 29  
 Mar 88  
 Building A Digital Station  
 NB9K p 9 Apr 89  
 Ham Radio Techniques: "Son of Wood-  
 pecker"  
 W6SAI p 18 Feb 89  
 Optimizing the QF-1A Audio Filter  
 VE7BS p 38 Dec 89  
 Simple VHF/UHF Multiple Quarter-wave  
 Filters  
 WA3EWT p 37 Sept 87  
 Top-down filter design  
 VE5FP p 41, Jan 87

## FM AND REPEATERS

DTMF controller for repeaters  
 WB4FXD p 47, Sep 85  
 FM repeater separation 20 kHz. Yes, 15  
 kHz, No  
 WD5IBS p 12, Aug 85  
 Improved repeater/transmitter noise per-  
 formance (HN)  
 K1ZJH p 104, Apr 86  
 Remote repeater programming using a  
 computer and a telephone  
 KD9BC p 89, Mar 86  
 Repeater, high-tech: designing and  
 building an FM translator  
 WA6CAY p 82, Feb 85  
 Tone burst generator for European  
 repeaters, A  
 WA3EEC p 88, Jul 86  
 ZIA connection: a multi-state 2-meter  
 repeater link  
 K5XY p 30, Oct 86

## HAZARDS

AC line transient protection  
 N6JH p 59, Apr 86

Common-point Grounding: Lightning Pro-  
 tection for Repeater  
 K1ZJH p 24 Jul 89  
 Protect Your Amateur Station from  
 Lightning  
 KY9L p 25 Sept 89

## INTEGRATED CIRCUITS

Low-pass filter, integrated circuit  
 WB2KTG p 59, Jan 85  
 Practically Speaking: Getting to Know  
 the  
 Logic Families-pt 1 TTL  
 K4IPV p 34 Dec 89  
 The Guerri Report: superchips come of  
 age  
 W6MGI p 126, Feb 85  
 The Guerri report:  
 W6MGI p 124, Jan 86  
 The Guerri report: microchips  
 W6MGI p 109, Jul 86

## KEYING AND CONTROL

Call sign identifier: programmable  
 WB3CEH p 33, Feb 85  
 Improving the WB3CEH programmable  
 call sign identifier  
 KL7XO p 82, Sep 87  
 Micros and VHF beacons transmit mes-  
 sages automatically  
 K9EI p 51, Jul 85  
 Morse Code tutor  
 N3SE p 45, Jun 85  
 Remotely controlled stations: a look at a  
 successful remote base  
 WA6EJO p 48, Sep 86

## MEASURE-MENTS AND TEST EQUIPMENT

Add a digital readout to the "poor man's  
 spectrum analyzer"  
 WA2PZO p 84, Sept 88  
 An i-f sweep generator  
 W2ZUC p 101, Jan 87  
 An rf voltmeter  
 G4COL p 65, Nov 87  
 Build this simple L-C checker  
 W5FG p 19, Dec 88  
 Calibrating series-resistance capacitance  
 bridges (HN)  
 Caron p 27, Dec 88  
 Continuity tester, simple  
 WD6GMB p 130, Sep 85  
 Deluxe logic probe, A  
 M Wilde p 74, Jan 87  
 Detailed look at probes  
 Martin, and Davis p 75, Sep 85  
 Detector, logarithmic, wideband  
 PA0CX/DJ0SA p 75, Jul 85  
 Dual wattmeter, 50-500 MHz  
 WB4EHS p 67, Jul 85  
 Elmer's notebook: power measurements  
 W1SL p 100, Jan 88  
 Elmer's notebook: standing wave ratio-  
 what does it mean?  
 W1SL p 98, Feb 88  
 Elmer's Notebook: Visual Aids-  
 Oscilloscopes  
 W1SL p 92 Jun 89  
 Elmer's Notebook: Test Equipment-Easy  
 and Useful  
 W1SL p 86 Oct 89  
 Elmer's Notebook: Simple  
 Instruments RF Output Monitor  
 W1SL p 91 Nov 89  
 Extend Your DVMS Measurement Capa-  
 bilities  
 N6YC p 72 Oct 89  
 Extended-range VU meter  
 WB6JNN p 59, Sep 86  
 Field strength meter, sensitive  
 K4KI p 51, Jan 85  
 Frequency calibration using 60 kHz  
 WWVB  
 W4ZPS p 45, Mar 88  
 Short circuit  
 p 126, Apr 85  
 Frequency and level standard  
 PA0CX p 10, Jan 86  
 Comments, WA8LLY p 9, Jun 86

Ham radio techniques: time and frequency station WWVS  
W6SAI p37, Jun 87

High-impedance Rotary Step Attenuator  
N2DCH p 24 Feb 89

IF sweep generator, compact  
PA0CX/DJ0SA p 35, Jun 85

Introduction to Waveform Generators-pt 1  
K4IPV p 62 Sept 89

Introduction to Waveform Generators-pt 2  
K4IPV p 82 Dec 89

Keeping an Eye on Your Sideband PEP-The Weekender  
GW4NAH p 17 Sept 89

Low-cost spectrum analyzer with Kilo-buck features  
W4UCH p 82, Sep 86

Microfarad Counter, The  
PA0CX p 85 May 89

Multi-featured function generator  
WA7IRY p 9 Apr 88

NBS time and frequency survey  
NBS p 45, Jun 87

Novel Methods for Measuring Cable Attenuation  
OE2APM p 65 May 89

Ode to older oscilloscopes  
KR6A p 69, Jan 88

PEP Wattmeter  
WA1SPI p 76 Oct 89

Practically speaking  
K4IPV p 79, Dec 85

Practically speaking: using the right multimeter  
K4IPV p 95, Jun 86

Practically speaking: using the multimeter  
K4IPV p 43, Jul 86

Practically speaking: using antenna noise bridge  
K4IPV p 69, May 86

Practically speaking: function generator circuits-part 2  
K4IPV p 89, Jan 87

Practically speaking: testing diodes  
K4IPV p 65, Feb 87

Practically speaking: building "the poor man's spectrum analyzer"  
K4IPV p 99, Mar 87

Practically speaking: build your own time-domain reflectometer  
K4IPV p 69, Jun 87

Practically speaking: revisiting "the poor man's spectrum analyzer"  
K4IPV p 49, Sep 87

Practically speaking: troubleshooting dc power supplies with an oscilloscope  
K4IPV p 57, Oct 87

Practically speaking: using voltage comparators  
K4IPV p 49, Nov 87

Practically speaking: generating low i-f frequencies  
K4IPV p 49, Dec 87

Practically speaking: using the digital frequency counter-some pitfalls  
K4IPV p 47, Apr 88

Practically Speaking: Antenna System Instruments  
K4IPV p 82, Feb 89

Practically Speaking: RF Wattmeters and Antenna VSWR Meters  
K4IPV p 75 Mar 89

Practically Speaking: More Digitally Generated Sawtooth Plus Triangle Waves  
K4IPV p 78 Jul 89

Practically Speaking: Test Equipment for Digital Electronics  
K4IPV p 76 Nov 89

Q Meters  
W3QOM p 49 Dec 89

Sensitive LF or HF field-strength meter  
K1RGO p 67, Sep 86

Sensitive RF Voltmeter, The Weekender:  
N2DCH p 62 Jul 89

Simple DC Amplifier for Your Meter  
W6JF p 10 Jun 89

Simple low-cost comb generator frequency calibrator  
Martin, Larry p 78 Jul 88

Test DBMs for diode leakage  
WB6BIH p 86, Jun 87

Transistor Lead Identification with a DVM  
K0GSS p 62 Oct 89

Two in one: Trace doubler for CRO, and square wave and pulse generator (HN)  
Tseng Liao p 26, Dec 88

Two-tone signal generator  
YB9ATA/WA7AQN p 25, Feb 86

Short circuit p 45, Apr 86

Short circuit p 36, Jun 86

23 GHz prescaler  
N6JH p 21, Jan 87

Understanding noise figure  
Gruchalla, M p 89, Apr 87

VHF noise bridge, a  
OE2APM/AA3K p 10, Jul 86

SWR bridges  
K2LB p 37, Mar 86

Wideband Frequency Analyzer  
AA4FB p 9 Nov 89

Wide-range RF power meter  
KA8OBL p 24, Apr 86

Versatile Transistor/Diode Tester  
W5JQE & W2YM p 30 Aug 89

## MISCELLANEOUS TECHNICAL

Amateur FSK: A spectral analysis  
WA6NCX p 42, Dec 86

An Audio Patch Panel for The Multimode Station  
KB6IC p 65 Dec 89

An Inexpensive VFO for the Yaesu FT-102  
VE3RF p 62 Nov 89

Broadband amplifier-attenuator  
W7SX p 59, Jul 86

Build a 1-1000 MHz amplifier using  
MAR-4 MMICs  
WB6BIH p 33, Jul 87

Build a QSO "beeper"  
KF6CU p 38, Jan 88

Buying topo maps, Comments:  
K3SKE p 9, Dec 86

Can I patent it?  
K2LZ p 8, Mar 87

Comments: changing fundamental constants of science  
W4SXX p 6, Oct 87

Communicating on 474,083 GHz (light wave communications)  
WA6EJO p 10, Dec 86

Control By Tones  
ZL2SX p 42 Nov 89

Decibel, defining the  
Gruchalla, M p 51, Feb 85

Elmer's notebook: The mysterious "Q"  
W1SL p 110, Sept 88

Function Generator: circuits from your signal generator-part 1  
K4IPV p 67, Dec 86

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 75, Jan 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 59, Feb 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 83, Mar 85

Ham Radio techniques: electron-hole theory exposed as fraud  
W6SAI p 67, Apr 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 66, May 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 51, Jun 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 59, Jul 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 90, Aug 85

Ham Radio techniques: I have seen the future and it works  
W6SAI p 91, Sep 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 75, Oct 85

Ham Radio techniques  
W6SAI p 67, Nov 85

Ham Radio techniques: 9CX revisited  
W6SAI p 83, Dec 87

Ham Radio techniques: line voltage and power tube life  
W6SAI p 60, Jul 88

Ham Radio techniques: the joys of TVI or, were you on the air last night?  
W6SAI p 70, Aug 88

Ham Radio Techniques: Antennas, GFI Capacitors and Fundamentals  
W6SAI p 57 Dec 89

Harmonics, Trapping stubborn  
N1RC p 99, Jan 86

Identifying Kerchunkers and Other Interference  
K9GDF p 74 Dec 89

Intermittent reception due to lightning (HN)  
W2YYW p 39, Sept 88

Introduction to Waveform Generators  
K4IPV p 82 Dec 89

Lightning location and detection  
VY1CW p 25, Sep 87

Low-pass filter, integrated circuit  
WB2KTG p 59, Jan 85

Mobile theft deterrent: The Weekender

W6WTU p81, Feb 87

Modifying the Trio-Kenwood TS930S  
WB9BXT p 67, Apr 86

Monolithic RF amplifiers  
N6JH p 22, Mar 86

NE5205 wideband RF amplifier  
Gruchalla, Michael p 30, Sep 86

Short circuit: p 72, Jan 87

New uses for old tuners  
W6WTU p 25, Jan 88

Phase modulator, PLL (HN)  
VE3FHM p 117, Jun 85

Power speaker enhances mobile operation (weekender)  
K1ZJH p 83, Jan 88

Practically speaking: repairing flood damage  
K4IPV p 95, Oct 85

Practically speaking: intermittents, pt 1  
K4IPV p 75, Nov 85

Practically speaking: intermittents, pt 2  
K4IPV p 79, Dec 85

Practically speaking: battery problems, pt 1  
K4IPV p 62, Jul 87

Practically speaking: feedback  
K4IPV p 60, May 88

Practically speaking: Overview of op amps-part 1  
K4IPV p 100, Nov 88

Practically speaking: overview of op amps-part 2  
K4IPV p 83, Dec 88

Quartz crystal resonators  
Boddaert, Peter p 85, Feb 86

Remedy for RFI (comment)  
K6WX p 9, Jul 88

RFI filters, Build narrowband  
WB4EHS p 10, Mar 86

Short circuit p 36, Jun 86

Short circuit p 145, Mar 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Jan 85

The Guerri report: superchips come of age  
W6MGI p 126, Feb 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 158, Mar 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 157, Apr 85

The Guerri report: a busy signal from space  
W6MGI p 165, May 85

The Guerri report predicting equipment failure  
W6MGI p 125, Jun 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Jul 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Aug 85

The Guerri report: RF power supplies achieve high efficiency  
W6MGI p 157, Sep 85

The Guerri report: RF effects the good and the bad  
W6MGI p 142, Oct 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 140, Nov 85

Two-tone signal generator  
YB9ATA/WA7AQN p 25, Feb 86

Short circuit p 45, Apr 86

Short circuit p 36, Jun 86

Comments: "Using the Spectrum Monitor"  
K16DW p 9, Nov 86

Using CAD to rewind transformers  
W6WTU p 83, Dec 86

Using ICOM IC-32AT As a Crossband Mini-Repeater  
KW5O p 41 Dec 89

Using spreadsheet programs  
AD1B p 95, Dec 86

Very sensitive LF or HF field-strength meter  
K1RGO p 67, Sep 86

VHF noise bridge  
OE2APM/AA3K p 10, Jul 86

VSWR bridges  
K2LB p 37, Mar 86

Wide-range RF power meter  
KA8OBL p 24, Apr 86

W6WTU p81, Feb 87

Modifying the Trio-Kenwood TS930S  
WB9BXT p 67, Apr 86

Monolithic RF amplifiers  
N6JH p 22, Mar 86

NE5205 wideband RF amplifier  
Gruchalla, Michael p 30, Sep 86

Short circuit: p 72, Jan 87

New uses for old tuners  
W6WTU p 25, Jan 88

Phase modulator, PLL (HN)  
VE3FHM p 117, Jun 85

Power speaker enhances mobile operation (weekender)  
K1ZJH p 83, Jan 88

Practically speaking: repairing flood damage  
K4IPV p 95, Oct 85

Practically speaking: intermittents, pt 1  
K4IPV p 75, Nov 85

Practically speaking: intermittents, pt 2  
K4IPV p 79, Dec 85

Practically speaking: battery problems, pt 1  
K4IPV p 62, Jul 87

Practically speaking: feedback  
K4IPV p 60, May 88

Practically speaking: Overview of op amps-part 1  
K4IPV p 100, Nov 88

Practically speaking: overview of op amps-part 2  
K4IPV p 83, Dec 88

Quartz crystal resonators  
Boddaert, Peter p 85, Feb 86

Remedy for RFI (comment)  
K6WX p 9, Jul 88

RFI filters, Build narrowband  
WB4EHS p 10, Mar 86

Short circuit p 36, Jun 86

Short circuit p 145, Mar 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Jan 85

The Guerri report: superchips come of age  
W6MGI p 126, Feb 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 158, Mar 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 157, Apr 85

The Guerri report: a busy signal from space  
W6MGI p 165, May 85

The Guerri report predicting equipment failure  
W6MGI p 125, Jun 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Jul 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 124, Aug 85

The Guerri report: RF power supplies achieve high efficiency  
W6MGI p 157, Sep 85

The Guerri report: RF effects the good and the bad  
W6MGI p 142, Oct 85

The Guerri report  
W6MGI p 140, Nov 85

Two-tone signal generator  
YB9ATA/WA7AQN p 25, Feb 86

Short circuit p 45, Apr 86

Short circuit p 36, Jun 86

Comments: "Using the Spectrum Monitor"  
K16DW p 9, Nov 86

Using CAD to rewind transformers  
W6WTU p 83, Dec 86

Using ICOM IC-32AT As a Crossband Mini-Repeater  
KW5O p 41 Dec 89

Using spreadsheet programs  
AD1B p 95, Dec 86

Very sensitive LF or HF field-strength meter  
K1RGO p 67, Sep 86

VHF noise bridge  
OE2APM/AA3K p 10, Jul 86

VSWR bridges  
K2LB p 37, Mar 86

Wide-range RF power meter  
KA8OBL p 24, Apr 86

Elmer's notebook: 220 MHz  
W1SL p 91, Aug 87

Elmer's notebook: an introduction to AMTOR  
W1SL p 101, Sep 87

Elmer's notebook: packet radio  
W1SL p 100, Oct 87

Five-band Junkbox Transmitter  
W3RMD p 42 Dec 89

HAM Radio Techniques: MacGyver of the 30s  
W6SAI p 59 Dec 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Antennas, GFI Capacitors and Fundamentals  
W6SAI p 57 Dec 89

Introduction to Waveform Generators  
K4IPV p 82 Dec 89

Morse code computer tutor  
N3SE p 45, Jun 85

New band privileges for Novice operators (letter)  
KA0DOE p 15, Sep 85

Comments, W3YBF p 9, Jan 86

Comments, KD0EV p 9, Jan 86

Comments, WD5H p 9, Jun 86

Novice privileges (letter)  
WB9JVR p 9, Oct 85

Practically speaking  
K4IPV p 79, Dec 85

Practically Speaking: Test Equipment for Digital Electronics  
K4IPV p 76 Nov 89

Practically Speaking: Getting to Know the Logic Families-pt 1: TTL  
K4IPV p 34 Dec 89

Radiotelegraph codes: there's not just one  
KR6A p 82, Sept 88

Reflections: Novice enhancement and the 220 MHz band  
W9JUV p 4, Apr 87

## OPERATING

Buying topo maps, Comments:  
K3SKE p 9, Dec 86

Carrier complaint (comment)  
W0P p 9, Jul 88

Carrier-operated CW reception limiter  
W6NRW p 113, Sep 85

Comments: DARC awards information  
K1RH p 6, Jul 87

Elmer's notebook: 220 MHz  
W1SL p 91, Aug 87

Short circuit p95, Aug 87

Elmer's notebook: an introduction to AMTOR  
W1SL p 101, Sep 87

Elmer's notebook: packet radio  
W1SL p 100, Oct 87

Elmer's notebook: "Q" signals  
W1SL p 95, Jun 88

Field Day-preparedness or party time? (Backscatter)  
W9JUV and N1ACH p 6, Sept 88

Generation gap in Amateur Radio (comment)  
N3CCW p 94, Aug 88

Ham bands under siege (Backscatter)  
N1ACH p 4, Oct 88

Ham Radio Techniques: Phasing SSB System...Born Again!  
W6SAI p 67, Jan 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Quad falling apart?  
W6SAI p 65, Feb 86

Ham Radio Techniques: More on the G5RV Antenna  
W6SAI p 63, Mar 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Surface-wave OTH Radar More QRM  
W6SAI p 42, Apr 86

Ham Radio Techniques: The Greatest Contest Ever Staged  
W6SAI p 39, May 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Wrangle Over Wrengeff (Island)  
W6SAI p 30, Jun 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Summer Miscellany (Antennas)  
W6SAI p 66, Jul 86

Ham Radio Techniques: 50th Anniversary of Tube that Changed Everything  
W6SAI p 43, Aug 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Grounded-grid Amplifier  
W6SAI p 42, Sep 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Grounded-grid Amplifier-pt 2  
W6SAI p 38, Oct 86

Ham Radio Techniques: Super-cathode Driven Amplifier  
W6SAI p 73, Nov 86

Ham Radio Techniques: MacGyver of the 30s

## NOVICE READING

Cheers from down under, Comments:  
VK4QA p 9, Dec 86

Elmer's Notebook: Simple Instruments RF Output Monitor  
W1SL p 91 Nov 89

Elmer's notebook: novice enhancement  
W1SL p 95, Jun 87

Short circuit p 95, Aug 87

W6SAI p 59, Dec 86  
 Ham Radio techniques: BY0AA revisited  
 W6SAI p 53, Aug 87  
 Ham Radio techniques: a new country  
 for you  
 W6SAI p 41, Nov 87  
 Ham Radio techniques: the joys of TVI  
 or, were you on the air last night?  
 W6SAI p 70, Aug 88  
 Ham Radio techniques: The radio boys  
 in the Pacific,  
 or, working DX for Uncle Sam  
 W6SAI p 26, Nov 88  
 INUS system (comment)  
 XE1MD p 9, Jan 88  
 Legal usefulness of Amateur Radio  
 (comment)  
 WA7AQN p 9, Aug 88  
 Locator field list  
 SM5AGM p 74, Jul 87  
 Locator field list  
 SM5AGM p 89, Oct 87  
 Market survey of amateurs a good idea  
 (comment)  
 W1FB p 9, 94 Aug 88  
 More information needed (comment)  
 W3QQM p 9, Sept 88  
 Potential danger (Backscatter)  
 N1ACH p 4, Nov 88  
 Re-discovering ham radio (comment)  
 KC1JG p 9, Aug 88  
 Service not hobby (letter)  
 W5VSR p 8, Aug, 85  
 VHF/UHF world: operating a VHF/UHF  
 micro-wave station  
 W1JR p 38, Jul 87  
 Short circuit p 97, Oct 87  
 VHF/UHF World: Loose ends  
 W1JR p 53, Sept 88

## OSCILLATORS

Better frequency stability for the Drake  
 TR7  
 HB9ABO p 21, Aug 87  
 Direct synthesis VFO  
 W7SX p 10, Sept 88  
 Elmer's Notebook: Oscillators  
 W1SL p 44, May 89  
 Frequency synthesis up to 2 GHz  
 WA6DYW p 33, Apr 88  
 High-stability BFO for receiver appli-  
 cations  
 K1ZJH p 28, Jun 85  
 Introduction to Waveform Generators-pt 1  
 K4IPV p 62, Sept 89  
 Local oscillators, high stability for micro-  
 wave receivers and other applications  
 WB3JZO p 29, Nov 85  
 Low-noise phase-locked UHF VFO part  
 1: the noise problem  
 WA9HUV p 33, Jul 86  
 Short circuit: Low-noise UHF VFO  
 WA9HUV p 9, Dec 86  
 Low-noise phase-locked UHF VCO part  
 2: construction and testing  
 WA9HUV p 25, Aug 86  
 Oscillator, voltage controlled, uses cer-  
 amic resonators  
 K2BLA p 18, Jun 85  
 Short Circuit p 27, Aug 85  
 Practically speaking: drift and shift  
 K4IPV p 75, Jan 88  
 Practically Speaking: More Digitally Gen-  
 erated Sawtooth Plus Triangle Waves  
 K4IPV p 78, Jul 89  
 Universal oscillator circuit  
 VE6RF p 38, Apr 86  
 VCO, 1800-2600 MHz  
 W0DTV p 21, Jul 85

## PACKET

Amateur packet radio networking  
 and protocols, part 1  
 KR3T p 33, Feb 88  
 Amateur packet radio networking and  
 protocols, part 2  
 KR3T p 56, Mar 88  
 Amateur packet radio networking and  
 protocols, part 3  
 KR3T p 41, Apr 88  
 C-64 and GIB PK-1 interface circuit  
 W2EHD p 87, Mar 87  
 Comments: packet board  
 update p 6, Jan 87  
 Automatic Packet Beacon Tracker and  
 Monitor (HN)  
 W4GGB p 66, Aug 89  
 Elmer's notebook: packet radio  
 W1SL p 100, Oct 87

Elmer's Notebook: Packet Radio for the  
 First Timer  
 W1SL p 96, Mar 89  
 Exploring packet radio with KISS  
 WA8BXN p 9, Oct 88  
 Formatted display of packet using KISS  
 WA8BXN p 51, Dec 88  
 4800 baud modem for VHF/UHF packet  
 radio  
 VE3DNL, VE3DNM, VE3DVL &  
 VE3LNY p 10, Aug 88  
 New Addition for Your TNC  
 K9MLD p 72, Dec 89  
 Packetimer for the PK-1  
 W2EHD/exW8KGN p 93, Mar 87  
 Packet radio conference bridge  
 WDSHJP p 24, Apr 87  
 Packet radio PSK modem for  
 JAS-1/F0-12  
 G3RUH p 8, Feb 87  
 RAM drive for packet radio  
 AD1B p 44, Dec 87  
 Station Control Node Expand Your Ver-  
 satility with SCN  
 WA0RJT p 23, Mar 89  
 TEXNET packet-switching network-pt 1  
 system definition and design  
 WB5PUC & N5EG p 29, Mar 87  
 TEXNET packet-switching network-pt 2  
 hardware design  
 WB5PUC & N5EG p 29, Apr 87  
 TEXNET packet-switching network-pt 3  
 software overview  
 WB5PUC & N5EG p 53, Jun 87  
 Transmit Timer for the KPC-2, The  
 Weekender  
 K1ZJH p 94, Feb 89  
 220-MHz 9600-Baud Data  
 Radio System for Packet  
 W2DUC p 67, Feb 89  
 Using macros with packet (HN)  
 AD1B p 82, Oct 88  
 Video Monitor for Packet Demonstra-  
 tions, A Big  
 WA1FHB p 27, Jun 89

## POWER SUPPLIES

An easy-to-build NiCd pulse charger  
 (weekender)  
 AG6K p 18, Sept 88  
 Battery-backed master power system  
 K9ES p 17, Jan 88  
 Battery charger, NiCd, constant current,  
 a pulsed  
 K2MWU p 67, Aug 85  
 Battery storage (comment)  
 W5JHJ p 6, May 88  
 Get the most from your NiCds  
 (Weekender)  
 K3OF p 88, Dec 88  
 Low-voltage power supplies, designing  
 W4MLE p 46, Mar 85  
 Short Circuit p 121, May 85  
 Precision high-voltage dc regulator  
 AG6K p 75, Aug 88  
 Practically speaking: bench power  
 supply  
 K4IPV p 55, Mar 86  
 Practically speaking: battery problems  
 pt 1  
 K4IPV p 62, July 87  
 Practically speaking: battery problems  
 pt 2  
 K4IPV p 73, Aug 87  
 Pulse width modulated dc-to-dc converters  
 W3CZ p 65, Oct 87  
 Regulated screen grid power supply, A  
 AG6K p 51, Jun 86  
 Storing lead-acid batteries (comment)  
 N5OP p 9, Sept 88  
 Batteries on concrete (comment)  
 N5OP p 101, Sept 88  
 Temperature control, automatic  
 WB5IRI p 75, Jun 85  
 The Guerri report: RF power supplies  
 achieve high efficiency  
 W6MGI p 157, Sep 85  
 Transformers, wind your own inexpensively  
 W4GDW p 96, Jun 85  
 Understanding and Using 723 Voltage  
 Regulators  
 K3OF p 42, Mar 89  
 Variable Voltage Regulator, The  
 Weekender  
 K3HW p 20, Jul 89

## PROPAGATION

Achieve polarization diversity through  
 variable power splitting  
 W3NGJ p 10, Feb 86

DX forecaster: Ionosphere Matching  
 K0RYW p 92, Jan 85  
 DX Forecaster: More on Ionosphere  
 Matching  
 K0RYW p 75, Feb 85  
 Short circuit p 117, Jun 85  
 DX Forecaster: Vernal Equinox DX  
 K0RYW p 120, Mar 85  
 DX Forecaster: Sunspot cycle views  
 K0RYW p 84, Apr 85  
 DX Forecaster: What's this Sporadic E?  
 K0RYW p 79, May 85  
 DX Forecaster: Sporadic E Propagation  
 K0RYW p 102, Jun 85  
 DX Forecaster: Summertime DX  
 K0RYW p 100, Jul 85  
 DX Forecaster: Signal Levels During  
 Summer Months  
 K0RYW p 100, Aug 85  
 DX Forecaster: Equinoctial DX Propaga-  
 tion Brings Change  
 K0RYW p 122, Sep 85  
 DX Forecaster: Sunspot Cycle Update  
 K0RYW p 105, Oct 85  
 DX Forecaster: Winter DX Season  
 K0RYW p 92, Nov 85  
 DX Forecaster: MUF Forecasting  
 K0RYW p 98, Dec 85  
 DX Forecaster: MUF Patterns and  
 Trends  
 K0RYW p 112, Jan 86  
 DX Forecaster: Sunspots and MUFs  
 K0RYW p 78, Feb 86  
 DX Forecaster: Springtime QRN  
 K0RYW p 97, Mar 86  
 DX Forecaster: 1985 Review  
 K0RYW p 99, Apr 86  
 DX Forecaster: Sporadic-E Propagation  
 K0RYW p 118, May 86  
 DX Forecaster: Sporadic-E DX  
 K0RYW p 101, Jun 86  
 DX Forecaster: A Geomagnetic  
 Ionosphere Disturbance  
 K0RYW p 91, Jul 86  
 DX Forecaster: Summer Propagation  
 K0RYW p 90, Aug 86  
 DX Forecaster: Equinox Season DX  
 K0RYW p 98, Sep 86  
 DX Forecaster: Antenna-to-Ionosphere  
 Path Match  
 K0RYW p 92, Oct 86  
 DX Forecaster: Sunspot Minimum  
 K0RYW p 84, Nov 86  
 Short circuit: HORANT program,  
 p 92, Oct 86  
 p 9, Nov 86  
 p 84, Dec 86  
 DX forecaster: Winter anomalous ab-  
 sorption  
 K0RYW p 101, Dec 86  
 DX forecaster: DX propagation  
 K0RYW p 108, Jan 87  
 Comment: HORANT for CP/M  
 K4GIO p 6, Feb 87  
 DX forecaster: More DX propagation tips  
 K0RYW p 88, Feb 87  
 DX forecaster: Equinox problems  
 K0RYW p 106, Mar 87  
 DX forecaster: A spring DX solution  
 K0RYW p 97, Apr 87  
 DX forecaster: 1986 propagation review  
 K0RYW p 105, May 87  
 DX forecaster: Sporadic-E season  
 K0RYW p 66, Jun 87  
 DX forecaster: Summer thunderstorm  
 noise  
 K0RYW p 78, Jul 87  
 DX forecaster: Summertime DX  
 K0RYW p 82, Aug 87  
 DX forecaster: More sporadic-E  
 K0RYW p 85, Sep 87  
 DX forecaster: Equinox season DX  
 K0RYW p 85, Oct 87  
 DX forecaster: Winter DX  
 K0RYW p 57, Nov 87  
 DX forecaster: DXing via the winter  
 anomaly  
 K0RYW p 91, Oct 87  
 Comments: Low band DXing  
 W0SII p 6, Apr 87  
 DX forecaster: Solar cycle update  
 K0RYW p 96, Jan 88  
 DX forecaster: transequatorial DX update  
 K0RYW p 90, Feb 88  
 DX forecaster: the ultimate antipode DX  
 K0RYW p 78, Mar 88  
 DX forecaster: DX signal quality  
 K0RYW p 80, Apr 88  
 DX forecaster: 1987 propagation  
 summary  
 K0RYW p 92, May 88  
 DX forecaster: Sporadic E season-1988  
 K0RYW p 88, Jun 88  
 DX forecaster: Summer thunderstorm  
 noise

K0RYW p 83, Jul 88  
 DX forecaster: summer signal levels  
 K0RYW p 88, Aug 88  
 DX forecaster: high sunspot propagation  
 problems-part 1  
 K0RYW p 104, Sept 88  
 DX forecaster: high sunspot propagation  
 problems-part 2  
 K0RYW p 96, Oct 88  
 DX forecaster: Winter DX season  
 K0RYW p 108, Nov 88  
 DX forecaster: Winter DX anomalies  
 K0RYW p 110, Dec 88  
 DX Forecaster: Better DXing in 1989  
 K0RYW p 96, Jan 89  
 DX Forecaster: More New Cycle 22 DX  
 K0RYW p 91, Feb 89  
 DX Forecaster: Equinox DX Conditions  
 K0RYW p 102, Mar 89  
 DX Forecaster: Spring Thunderstorm  
 Noise  
 K0RYW p 110, Apr 89  
 DX Forecaster: 1988 Propagation  
 Summary  
 K0RYW p 109, May 89  
 DX Forecaster: Sporadic-E Basics for  
 1989  
 K0RYW p 88, Jun 89  
 DX Forecaster: Know Sporadic-E Skip  
 K0RYW p 96, Jul 89  
 DX Forecaster: DXing During the Sum-  
 mer QRN Season  
 K0RYW p 96, Aug 89  
 DX Forecaster: Equinox Season DXing  
 K0RYW p 96, Sept 89  
 DX Forecaster: More on Equinox Propa-  
 gation  
 K0RYW p 96, Oct 89  
 DX Forecaster: Winter DX Season  
 K0RYW p 96, Nov 89  
 DX Forecaster: DXing From Winter  
 Anomalies  
 K0RYW p 78, Dec 89  
 Elmer's notebook: propagation basics  
 W1SL p 81, Aug 88  
 EME link calculator program  
 KE6ZE p 9, Feb 86  
 Comments, KC8OH p 70, Apr 86  
 Ham Radio techniques: Dx is getting  
 better and better! Here's why!  
 W6SAI p 28, Apr 88  
 Ham Radio techniques: On our way up!  
 W6SAI p 26, Sept 88  
 Ham Radio techniques: New Zealand,  
 Maui, and the solar cycle  
 W6SAI p 22, Dec 88  
 Ham Radio Techniques: Have You Met  
 SID?  
 W6SAI p 31, Jul 89  
 HF ground wave propagation  
 WA9GFR p 81, May 86  
 How to plot great circles on your favorite  
 map  
 W4BW p 81, Aug 86  
 L-band ground wave propagation  
 program  
 WA9GFR and Joseph R Hannel  
 p 103, Jan 86  
 Comment, WA9GFR p 9, Apr 86  
 Moon coordinates, determining basic  
 W2WD p 38, Jan 85  
 Pathfinder—part two  
 K3FR p 47, Oct 88  
 Radio astronomy and the search for ex-  
 tra terrestrial intelligence  
 WB3JZO p 10, Mar 85  
 Return to the 360-degree propagation  
 prediction  
 N4UH p 41, Oct 87  
 Solar activity and the earth's mag-  
 netosphere  
 KR7L p 8, Aug 87  
 Solar outages, predicting  
 VE7ABK p 75, Mar 85  
 Sporadic E and 50-MHz transatlantic  
 propagation during 1987  
 G3NAQ p 10, Jul 88  
 360-degree MINIMUM propagation  
 prediction  
 N4UH p 25, Feb 87  
 VHF/UHF World: propagation update  
 W1JR p 86, Jul 85  
 VHF/UHF World  
 W1JR p 85, Dec 85  
 VHF/UHF world: meteor scatter com-  
 munications  
 W1JR p 68, Jun 86  
 Short circuit p 87, Jul 86  
 VHF/UHF world:  $\mu$ W and mm-wave  
 propagation: part 2  
 W1JR p 69, Aug 86  
 VHF/UHF world: propagation update-part 2  
 W1JR p 39, Jun 88  
 VHF/UHF world: propagation update-part 3  
 W1JR p 38, Jul 88

# RECEIVERS AND CONVERTERS

## general

CB to 10-meter conversions, scanner  
W2FMV, KB2GA p 98, Nov 85

Compact 75-meter monoband transceiver  
K1BQT p 13, Nov 85  
Short circuit p 66, Jan 86

Digital frequency readout using the Commodore 64  
W3NNL p 83, Nov 85

Elmer's notebook: receiver buzzwords  
W1SL p 100, Nov 87

Extending receive coverage for the IC-02 and IC-04  
WB6GTM p 77, Jul 86

External product detector improves receiver performance  
W6GB p 107, Nov 85

Famous Equipment of Yesteryear  
K4KJ p 43, Nov 89

Frequency calibration using 60 kHz WWVB  
W4ZPS p 45, Mar 88

Ham radio techniques: "white noise" technology bites back  
W6SAI p 55, Jan 87

Ham radio techniques: "white noise" revisited  
W6SAI p 79, Oct 87

High dynamic range mixing with the Si 8901  
KB6QJ p 11, Mar 88

High-stability BFO for receiver applications  
K1ZJH p 28, Jun 85

Linear Tuning with a War Surplus Capacitor  
N2DCH p 40, Jun 89

Low-noise Design Primer  
WB4EHS p 80, Nov 89

Mixer frequencies, graphical selection  
W2HVN p 41, Jun 85

Noise, understanding and handling  
DJ2LR p 10, Nov 86

Optimizing the QF-1A Audio Filter  
VE7BS p 38, Dec 89

Receiver input temperature (letter)  
WA6JTD p 13, Apr 85

Receiver tuning mechanism selection  
PY2PEIC p 31, Nov 86

Receiver, 10 through 80-meter home brew  
N1BFV p 40, Nov 85

S-meter, a calibrated  
W7SX p 23, Jan 86  
Short circuit p 45, Apr 86

Ten-Tec Argosy, Upgrade  
WB3JZO p 38, Nov 86

True frequency digital readout for the HW-101  
NU4F p 8, Jan 87  
Short circuit p 41, Aug 87

TS-930S headset audio, increase undistorted (HN)  
W6FR p 128, Oct 85  
Short circuit p 103, Jan 85

Two-Loop 10 Hz Step 40-70 MHz Synthesizer  
PY1LL&C Mathias p 24, Jan 89

VHF/UHF world: broadband amplifiers in receiver design  
W1JR p 91, Nov 86

VHF/UHF World: low-noise receiver update part 1  
W1JR p 77, Nov 87

## hf

Better frequency stability for the Drake TR7  
HB9ABO p 21, Aug 87

Card File station for 40 Meters, The Weekender  
W6XM p 56, Sept 89

CAT control system for the Yaesu FT-757CX  
SM6CPI p 26, Nov 87

Compact 20-meter CW receiver, A  
K1BQT p 18, Jun 87  
Short circuit: p 6, Jul 87  
Short circuit: p 81, Sep 87

Converter Tunes 4 to 18 MHz with No Bandswitch  
W5FG p 26, May 89

Designing a state-of-the-art receiver  
KA2WEU/DJ2LR p 119, Nov 87

Digital HF radio: a sampling of techniques  
KA2WEU/DJ2LR p 19, Apr 85  
Short circuit p 121, May 85

Frequency calibration using 60 kHz  
WWVB  
W4ZPS p 45, Mar 88

HF superhet, 20-meter  
N3ECZ p 65, Nov 86

High dynamic range mixing with the Si 8901  
KB6QJ p 11, Mar 88

Pepperdine receiver  
W6QIF p 33, Nov 88

Receiver, Pocket-portable SSB  
WB6BIH p 55, Nov 86

Simple direct conversion receiver  
WA3ENK p 9, Dec 88

Simple receivers from complex ICs  
W6VEH p 10, Nov 88

Solid-state 75A-4 receiver  
KF7M p 67, Nov 88

Thumbwheel frequency selector for the Yaesu FT-757-GX  
KA9SNF p 33, Nov 87

Tomorrow's receivers: what will the next 20 years bring  
W7SX p 8, Nov 87

80-meter receiver, simple  
WB2EAV p 25, Nov 86

Variable Gain 160-meter Preamp  
KD9SV p 46, Oct 89

## vhf

Extending receive coverage for the IC-02 and IC-04  
WB6GTM p 77, Jul 86

Modular transmit and receive converters for 902 MHz  
N6JH p 17, Mar 87

2-Meter Converter with Q Multiplier  
WA9HUV p 33, Nov 89

VHF/UHF World: low noise receiver update-part 1  
W1JR p 77, Nov 87

VHF/UHF World: low noise receiver update-part 2  
W1JR p 72, Dec 87

## RTTY

An RTTY Converter  
W1UO p 76, Jun 89

Run RTTY on your Timex  
NU4V p 110, Apr 85

Run RTTY on your VIC-20  
W5TRS p 120, Apr 85

Tuning indicator for RTTY and packet radio  
W0HZR p 65, Sept 88

## SATELLITES

Demodulator, telemetry, PSK, for OSCAR 10  
G3RUH p 50, Apr 85

Elevation indicator, inexpensive  
W5JTL p 67, Jun 85

Introducing satellite communications  
G3CZC p10, Apr 86

Packet radio PSK modem for JAS-1/FO-12  
G3RUH p 8, Feb 87

Satellite tracker, digitally-controlled  
KA8OBL p 102, Sep 85

The Guerri report communication satellites  
W6MGI p 109, Oct 86

The Guerri report: communication satellites  
W6MGI p 108, Jun 86

Comments: update on ACSSB level-one adapter, project OSCAR (Oct 86)  
WB6JNN p 9, Nov 86

## SEMI-CONDUCTORS

Collector Matching Networks  
KZ9J p 34, Jan 89

Elmer's Notebook: FETs-The Other Transistors  
W1SL p 104, Feb 89

Elmer's Notebook: Visual Aids-Light Emitting Diodes  
W1SL p 56, Jul 89

Elmer's Notebook: Visual Aids-Liquid Crystal Displays  
W1SL p 81, Aug 89

High dynamic range mixing with the Si 8901  
KB6QJ p 11, Mar 88

Practically speaking: solid state rectifiers  
K4IPV p 51, Aug 86

Practically speaking: substituting transistors-part 1  
K4IPV p 92, Sep 86

Practically speaking: substituting transistors-part 2  
K4IPV p 66, Oct 86

Practically speaking: non-ideal linear IC amplifiers typical problems and how to solve them  
K4IPV p 72, Jul 88

Simple Infrared Detector, A (HN)  
K1ZJH p 27, Jun 89

Solid-state Switching The Midland 13-509,  
The Weekender:  
VE2HOT p 17, Jun 89

The Guerri report: super speed semiconductors  
W6MGI p 109, Oct 86

Transistor lead identification With a DVM  
K0GSS p 62, Oct 89

Understanding and Using 723 Voltage Regulators  
K3OF p 42, Mar 89

Versatile Transistor/Diode Tester  
W5JE and W2YM p 30, Aug 89

VHF/UHF world: the ubiquitous diode  
W1JR p 51, Feb 87

VHF/UHF WORLD: The ubiquitous diode part 2  
W1JR p 55, Mar 87

## SINGLE SIDEBAND

ACSSB: a level-one adapter  
WB6JNN p10, Oct 86

Adjusting SSB amplifiers  
AG6K p 33, Sep 85

Elmer's notebook: power measurements  
W1SL p 100, Jan 88

Elmer's notebook: SSB basics-generating the signal  
W1SL p 117, Nov 88

Elmer's notebook: SSB basics-receiving the signal  
W1SL p 117, Dec 88

Linear amplifier, HF solid-state kilowatt, mobile  
WA7SPR p 67, Feb 85

Weaver modulation, 2-meter transmitter  
N1COX p 12, Jul 85

## SOFTWARE

Artificial Intelligence Application in Amateur Radio  
NU1N p 30, Oct 89

BASIC program analyzes simple ladder networks  
W3NQN p 32, Aug 87  
Short circuit p 97, Oct 87

Design a no-tune amplifier with your personal computer  
W7DHD p8, Sep 87

Design program for the grounded-grid 3-500Z  
W7DHD p 8, Jun 88

EME link calculator program  
KE6ZE p 70, Feb 86

Comments, KC8OH p 9, Apr 86

Get on SSTV-with the C-64  
I2CAB and I2AED, edited by K9EI  
Short circuit p 43, Oct 86

Great circle computations using LOTUS 1-2-3  
AD1B p 31, Sept 88

L-band ground wave propagation program  
WA9GRF and Joseph R Hönell p 103, Jan 86

Morse code teaching tools for the C-64 and 128  
KB8CS p 35, Jan 88

Pathfinder: improved MINIMUF program  
K3FR p 26, May 88

Pathfinder-part 2  
K3FR p 47, Oct 88

PV-4 on Your Commodore, The  
WA3EKL p 64, Oct 89

Using macros with packet  
AD1B p 82, Oct 88

Using spreadsheet programs for amateur radio projects  
AD1B p 95, Dec 86

# TELEVISION

A tour through an NTSC TV station-part 1 (historical aspects)  
KL7AJ p 57, Dec 87

Clean ATV The Modern Way  
WA1IAO p 32, Jan 89

Get on SSTV with the C-64  
K9EI p 43, Oct 86  
Short Circuit p 97, Oct 87

Helium Balloon ATV Launched Over Indiana  
WB8ELK p 72, Jun 89

Remarks on television series (comment)  
KB9FO p 6, May 88

Technology of commercial television-part 2: hardware  
KL7AJ p 54, Jan 88

# TRANSMITTERS AND POWER SUPPLIES

## general

Adjusting SSB amplifiers  
AG6K p 33, Sep 85

Aural vco provides relative metering  
K1ZJH p 97, Jan 87

Collector Matching Networks  
KZ9J p 34, Jan 89

Design a no-tune amplifier with your personal computer  
W7DHD p8, Sep 87

Grounded-grid amplifier parasitics  
AG6K p 31, Apr 86

Comment, NJ0G p 9, Jul 86

Comment, W2YW p 6, Jul 86

Ham radio techniques: super cathode driven amplifier  
W6SAI p 73, Nov 86

Ham radio techniques: "white noise" technology bites back  
W6SAI p 55, Jan 87

Ham radio techniques: "white noise" revisited  
W6SAI p 79, Oct 87

Homebrew Neutralizing Capacitor  
N4LC p 38, May 89

Linear Tuning with a War Surplus Capacitor  
N2DCH p 40, Jun 89

MC1496, improved carrier suppression (HN)  
K1ZJH p 78, Apr 85  
Short circuit p 74, Jul 85

MMIC multiplier chains for the 902 MHz band  
N6JH p 72, Feb 87  
Short circuit p 64, May 87

Practically speaking: noise, signals and amplifiers  
K4IPV p 77, Feb 88

Practically Speaking: Parts for Antenna Tuners and Linears...Plus a Correction  
K4IPV p 83, Jan 89

QSK Modification for the Trio-Kenwood TL-922 Amplifier  
AG6K p 35, Mar 89

RF switching, high power with pin diodes  
KN8Z p 82, Jan 85

Three-tube 4CX250B linear amplifier  
YU1AW p 63, Apr 87

True frequency digital readout for the HW-101  
NU4F p 8, Jan 87  
Short circuit p 41, Aug 87

Two-Loop 10-Hz Step 40-70 MHz Synthesizer  
PY1LL and C Mathias p 24, Jan 89

## hf

Amplifier, 3CX1200A7 10 to 80 meter  
KB8RA p 75, Aug 85

An NE602-based QRP Transceiver for 20-meter CW  
K1BQT p 9, Jan 89

Better frequency stability for the Drake TR7  
HB9ABO p 21, Aug 87

Card File Station for 40 Meters, The Weekender:  
W6XM p 56, Sept 89

CAT control system for the Yaesu FT-757GX  
SM6CPI p 26, Nov 87

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- Reverse Autopatch, two types: auto-answer or ring tone on the air.
- DTMF CONTROL: over 45 functions can be controlled by touch-tone. Separate 4-digit control code for each function, plus extra 4-digit owner password.
- Owner can inhibit autopatch or repeater, enable either open- or closed-access for repeater or autopatch, and enable toll calls, reverse patch, kerchunk filter, site alarm, aux rcvr, and other options, including two auxiliary external circuits.
- The cwid message, dtmf command codes, and owner-specified default parameters for cor and cwid timers and tones are burned into the eeprom at the factory.
- Cw speed and tone, courtesy beep and tail timers, and courtesy beep type can all be changed at any time by owner-password-protected dtmf commands.
- Many built-in diagnostic & testing functions using microprocessor.
- Color coded led's indicate status of all major functions.
- Welded partitions for exciter, pa, receiver, and controller. PEM nuts for covers.
- 3-1/2 inch aluminum rack panel, finished in eggshell white and black.
- Auxiliary receiver input for independent control or cross linking repeaters.

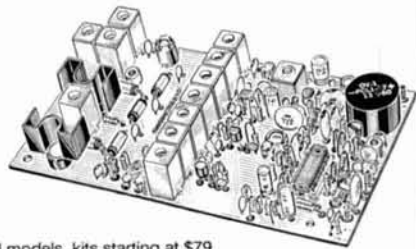
There are many other features, too numerous to mention. Request catalog for full details.

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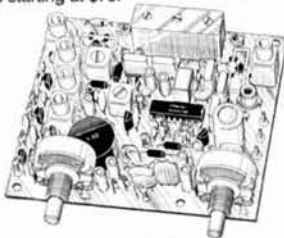
- TA51 for 10M, 6M, 2M, 150-174, 220MHz.
- TA451 for uhf.
- TA901 for 902-928MHz, 0.5W out (w/t only, \$169).
- VHF & UHF AMPLIFIERS. For fm, ssb, atv. Output from 10W to 100W. Several models, kits starting at \$79.



### FM RECEIVERS:

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- R144/R220 FM RECEIVERS for 2M, 150-174, or 220MHz. GaAs FET front end, 0.15uV sensitivity! Both crystal & ceramic if filters plus helical resonator front end for exceptional selectivity: > 100dB at ±12kHz (best available anywhere!) Flutter-proof hysteresis squelch; afc tracks drift.
- R451 UHF FM RCVR, similar to above
- R901 902-928MHz FM RCVR. Triple-conversion, GaAs FET front end.
- R76 ECONOMY FM RCVR for 10M, 6M, 2M, 220MHz, w/o helical res. or afc. Kits \$129.
- Weather satellite & AM aircraft rcvrs also available.



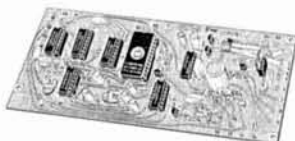
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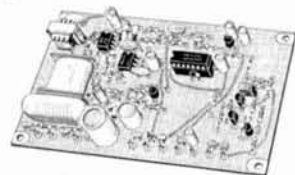


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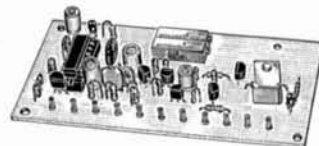
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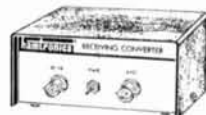
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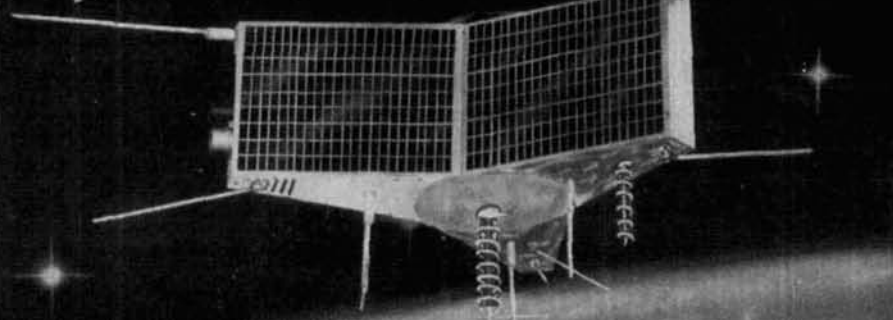


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- Case kit CORP \$12.95

### AIRCRAFT RECEIVER KIT

Here's exciting aircraft communications...picks up planes up to 100 miles away. Receives TD-136 MHz AM air band, variable tuned superheterodyne design with AGC, ceramic filter and adjustable squelch. Runs on 9V battery, 50 mw audio output. 1 uV sensitivity. Optional matching ABS plastic case lets you take it anywhere. Features screened graphics and machined aluminum knobs for a real professional look. Compact...great for airplanes or for just plain hanging around the airport.

- Complete kit AR-1 \$24.95
- Receiver case kit CAR-1 \$12.95

### SHORTWAVE RECEIVER KIT

A fantastic receiver that captures the world with just a 12' antenna! Receives 4-7.1 MHz bands, variable tuned, superhet design with AGC, RF gain control, runs on 9V battery. Uses new Superics mixer chip for less than a microvolt sensitivity of fun even to the most serious DX'er. Add the optional case kit and you have a real nice looking shortwave set.

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- Receiver case kit CSR-1 \$12.95

### PACKET RADIO I

Commodore 64/128 packet radio interface. Uses famous German Digicom software. Features EXAR IC chip set for reliable operation—runs HF or VHF tones. Includes FREE disk software, PC board, all necessary parts and full documentation.

- Complete kit PC-1 \$49.95

### FM COMMUNICATIONS/ 2 MTR, 10 MTR & 220 RECEIVERS

Sensitive superhet FM receiver, tunes any 5 MHz segment of band. Listen to ham operations, high band police calls, weather or mobile phone calls! Easy to build receiver features variable tuning, IC mixer stage, ceramic IF filters and dual conversion design with adjustable squelch. Less than 1 uV sensitivity, runs on 9 V battery, with 50 mw audio output. Optional ABS case with screened graphics and machined aluminum knobs provide a nice professional look.

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- 10 MTR REC KIT FR-10 \$29.95
- 220 MHz REC KIT FR-20 \$29.95
- Receiver case kit CFR-7 \$12.95

## NEW MINIKITS—NEW MINIKITS

### BROADBAND PREAMP

A sensitive all purpose preamp ideal for scanners, TV sets, VHF/UHF rigs, counters, etc. Features low noise 4 db NF, 20 db gain, 100 kHz to 1.5 GHz operation. Runs on 9-12 VDC, 50 ohm input.

### LIGHT BEAM COMMUNICATORS

Transmits modulated infrared light up to 30 feet without lenses. Uses 30 kHz carrier for hum-free operation. Transmits thru windows, etc. Ideal for bugs or listening to IR remote controls. Transmitter has sensitive microwave input receiver uses PIN detector and drives speaker output. Units operates on 9-12 VDC.

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- Transmitter kit LB-6 \$8.95
- Receiver kit LB-5 \$9.95

- FM kit \$12.95
- Sensitive microphone cartridge \$2.95

## Quality Test Gear & Electronic Kits for Professionals and Hobbyists

### PR-2 COUNTER PREAMP

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PR-2 kit \$39.95

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wired includes AC adapter

## COM-3



**\$2795.00** THE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE MONITOR THAT WORKS HARDER FOR LESS.

Introducing COM-3...the new service monitor designed by service technicians for service technicians. It works harder for less...giving you advanced testing capabilities at a very affordable price.

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## MINI KITS—EASY TO ASSEMBLE—FUN TO USE

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <h3>tone decoder</h3> <p>A complete tone decoder on a single PC board. Features 400-5000 Hz adjustable range via 20 turn pot, volt age regulation, 562 IC. Useful for touch-tone/bus/detection. FSK, etc. Can also be used as a stable tone encoder. Runs on 5 to 12 volts.</p> <p>Complete kit TD-1 <b>\$5.95</b></p>         | <h3>COLOR ORGAN</h3> <p>See music come alive! 3 different lights flicker with music. One light each for high, mid range and lows. Each individually adjustable and drives up to 300 W rms on 10VAC.</p> <p>ML-1 kit <b>\$8.95</b></p>     | <h3>VIDEO MODULATOR</h3> <p>Super stable, tunable over ch 4-6. Runs on 5-15V, accepts 150 video signal. Best unit on the market! Complete kit JM-7 <b>\$12.95</b></p>     | <h3>FM WIRELESS MIKE</h3> <p>Transmits up to 300' to any FM broadcast radio. Uses any type of mike. Runs on 3 to 9V. Type I M-2 has added sensitive mike preamp stage.</p> <p>FM-1 kit <b>\$5.95</b><br/>FM-2 kit <b>\$7.95</b></p> |
| <h3>40 WATT 2 mtr PWR AMP</h3> <p>Single Class C power amp features 8 times power gain 1W in for 8 out 2 W in for 16 out 3 W in for 40 W out. Max output of 50 W incredible value. Complete with all parts, test cable and 1 relay.</p> <p>PA-1 40 W per amp kit <b>\$27.95</b><br/>TR-1 RF sensed 1-Relay kit <b>6.95</b></p> | <h3>VOICE ACTIVATED SWITCH</h3> <p>Voice activated switch kit provides switched output with current capability up to 300 mA. Can drive relays, lights, LED or even a tape recorder motor. Runs on 9VDC.</p> <p>VS-1 kit <b>\$6.95</b></p> | <h3>LED BLINKY KIT</h3> <p>Alter-natty flashes 2 jumbo LEDs. Use for name badges, buttons, warning panel lights. Runs on 3 to 15 volts.</p> <p>BL-1 kit <b>\$3.95</b></p> | <h3>MAD BLASTER</h3> <p>Produces LOUD ear shattering and attention getting tones like sound. Can supply up to 15 watts of obnoxious audio. Runs on 6-15 VDC.</p> <p>MB-1 kit <b>\$4.95</b></p>                                      |
| <h3>UNIVERSAL TIMER</h3> <p>Provides the basic parts and PC board required to provide a source of relays, lights, LED or even a tape recorder motor. Uses 555 timer IC and includes a range of parts for most timing needs.</p> <p>UT-5 kit <b>\$5.95</b></p>  | <h3>WHISPER LIGHT</h3> <p>An interesting kit, small mike picks up sounds and converts them to light. The louder the sound, the brighter the light. Includes mike, controls up to 300 W, runs on 10 VDC.</p> <p>WL-1 kit <b>\$6.95</b></p> | <h3>SIREN</h3> <p>Produces upward and downward wailing peak audio output, runs on 3-15 volts, uses 1-45 ohm speaker.</p> <p>Complete kit SM-3 <b>\$3.95</b></p>           |   |

|  |   |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| <h3>SUPER SLEUTH</h3> <p>A super sensitive amplifier which will pick up a pin drop at 16 feet! Great for monitoring baby's room or as general all purpose amplifier. Full 2W rms output, runs on 6 to 12 volts, uses 8-45 ohm speaker.</p> <p>SN-3 kit <b>\$5.95</b></p> | <h3>TELEPHONE TRANSMITTER</h3> <p>Low cost with professional performance. Features include: self phone powered, tunable from 76 to 100 MHz, polarity antiseismic compact size (1" x 1.5").</p> <p>easy to install anywhere on the phone line or inside the instrument.</p> <p>PT-1 kit <b>\$14.95</b></p> | <h3>FM RECEIVER</h3> <p>For use in applications or hobby experimentation. Full fledged super heterodyne receiver, microvolt sensitivity, 10.7 MHz IF. Integrated circuit detector. 50 mw audio amplifier. 9V external power source operation on standard FM broadcast band as well as large portions on each side compact 1/2 square inch for bug detection or reception.</p> <p>FR-1 kit <b>\$14.95</b></p> | <h3>FM MINI MIKE</h3> <p>A super high performance FM wireless mike kit. Transmits a stable signal up to 300 yards with exceptional audio quality by means of its built in electret mike. Kit includes case, mike, on-off switch, antenna, battery and super instructions. This is the finest unit available.</p> <p>FM-3 kit <b>\$16.95</b><br/>FM-3 kit wired and tested <b>19.95</b></p> | <h3>MICROWAVE INTRUSION ALARM</h3> <p>A real microwave doppler sensor that will detect a human as far as 10 feet away. Operates on 13 GHz and is not affected by heat, light or vibrations. Drives up to 100 ma output, normally open or closed, runs on 12 VDC.</p> <p>Complete kit MD-3 <b>\$16.95</b></p> | <h3>SPEECH SCRAMBLER</h3> <p>Communicate in total privacy over your telephone or radio. This scrambler kit features full duplex operation using frequency inversion. Runs on a 9 volt battery. Both mike and line or speaker output/inputs. Easy to connect to any radio—telephone use requires no direct connection! Easy to build, uses IC, DMM circuitry. Can also be used to describe most com. scramblers.</p> <p>Complete kit SS-7 <b>\$29.95</b><br/>Case kit, CSS-7 <b>12.95</b></p> |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|

## FREQUENCY COUNTERS

Ramsey Electronics has been manufacturing electronic test gear for over 10 years and is recognized for its top quality products at break through prices. All of our counters carry a full one year warranty on parts and labor. We take great pride in being the largest manufacturer of low cost counters in the entire USA. Compare specifications. Our counters are full featured, from audio to UHF, with FEI high impedance input, proper wave shaping circuitry and durable high quality epoxy glass, plated thru PC Board construction. All units are 100% manufactured in the USA.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <h3>CT-70 7 DIGIT 525 MHz</h3> <p><b>\$139.95</b> WIRE INCLUDES AC ADAPTER</p> | <h3>CT-90 9 DIGIT 600 MHz</h3> <p><b>\$169.95</b> WIRE INCLUDES AC ADAPTER</p>  |
| <h3>CT-50 8 DIGIT 600 MHz</h3> <p><b>\$189.95</b> WIRE INCLUDES AC ADAPTER</p> | <h3>CT-125 9 DIGIT 1.2 GHz</h3> <p><b>\$189.95</b> WIRE INCLUDES AC ADAPTER</p> |

| MODEL                  | FREQ RANGE     | SENSITIVITY  | ACCURACY | DIGITS | RESOLUTION            | PRICE  |
|------------------------|----------------|--|----------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| CT-70                  | 20 Hz-550 MHz  | < 50 mV to 150 MHz                                       | 1 PPM    | 7      | 1 Hz, 10 Hz, 100 Hz   | 139.95 |
| CT-90                  | 10 Hz-600 MHz  | < 10mV to 150 MHz<br>< 50mV to 600 MHz                   | 1 PPM    | 9      | 0.1 Hz, 10 Hz, 100 Hz | 169.95 |
| CT-50                  | 5 Hz-600 MHz   | LESS THAN 25 mV  | 1 PPM    | 8      | 1 Hz, 10 Hz           | 189.95 |
| CT-125                 | 10 Hz-1.25 GHz | < 25mV @ 50 MHz<br>< 15mV @ 500 MHz<br>< 100mV @ 800 MHz | 1 PPM    | 9      | 0.1 Hz, 10 Hz, 100 Hz | 189.95 |
| CT-90 WITH 0V-1 OPTION | 10 Hz-600 MHz  | < 10mV to 150 MHz<br>< 50mV to 600 MHz                   | 0.1 PPM  | 9      | 0.1 Hz, 10 Hz, 100 Hz | 229.90 |

TERMS: • satisfaction guaranteed • examine for 10 days, if not pleased, return in original form for refund • add 6% for shipping and insurance for a maximum of \$10.00 • foreign add 15% for surface mail • CDD add \$2.75 (CDD in USA only) • orders under \$20.00 add \$1.50 • NY residents add 7% sales tax • 90 days parts warranty on all kits • 1 year parts & labor warranty on all wired units.

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(continued from page 92)

K1BQT p 13, Nov 85  
 Convert a \$25 CB HT for 6 meters  
 K1ZJH p 79, Aug 87  
 Design an amplifier around the  
 3CX1200A7  
 W7DHD p 33, Dec 87  
 Five-band Junkbox Transmitter  
 W3RMD p 42 Dec 89  
 Ham notebook:curing FT-1012D key  
 clicks  
 N5RM p 74, Feb 88  
 Ham radio techniques: 160-meter  
 equipment  
 W6SAI p 77, Mar 87  
 High dynamic range mixing with the Si  
 8901  
 KB7QJ p 11, Mar 88  
 Linear amplifier, HF, solid-state kilowatt,  
 mobile  
 WA7SPR p 67, Feb 85  
 Thumbwheel frequency selector for the  
 Yaesu FT-757GC  
 KA9SNF p 33, Nov 87  
 TS-440 interface for keying linears with  
 high voltage biasing (HN)  
 W6WTU p 98, Nov 88  
 Vacuum tube amplifier, design a toroidal  
 tank circuit for  
 W6YUY p 29, Aug 85  
 Short circuit p 66, Jan 86

## TROUBLE-SHOOTING

GLA-1000 amplifier, stop blowing finals  
 G4CFY, G3ROG p 59, Aug 85  
 Grounded-grid amplifier parasitics  
 AG6K p 31, Apr 86  
 Comment, NJ0G p 9, Jul 86  
 Comment, W2YW p 6, Jul 86  
 Practically speaking: coax velocity factor  
 K4IPV p 78, Nov 86  
 Practically speaking: using the mul-  
 timeter  
 K4IPV p 43, Jul 86  
 Practically speaking: using the right mul-  
 timeter  
 K4IPV p 95, Jun 86  
 Practically speaking  
 K4IPV p 35, Feb 86  
 Practically speaking  
 K4IPV p 59, Jan 86  
 TVI problem, solving a difficult (HN)  
 W2YW p 152, Sep 85

## VHF AND UHF general

ATV power amplifier, fast-scan  
 WB0ZJP p 67, Mar 85  
 Bandpass filter design, interdigital,  
 computer-aided  
 N6JH, Monemzadeh p 12, Jan 85  
 Short circuit p 117, Jun 85  
 Bicycle mobile  
 NH6N p 38, Sept 88  
 Converting mobile microphones for  
 hand-held VHF transceiver  
 KD8KZ and WB3JCC p 79, Mar 86  
 Designing a microwave amplifier  
 Domanski, S p 30, Sep 87  
 Dual wattmeter, 50-500 Hz  
 WB4EHS p 67, Jul 85  
 Duplexer, six cavity, home-brewed  
 K9EYY p 12, Feb 85  
 EME link calculator program  
 KE6ZE p 70, Feb 86  
 Elevation indicator, inexpensive  
 W5JTL p 87, Jun 85  
 Elmer's notebook: 220 MHz  
 W1SL p91, Aug 87  
 Elmer's notebook: 1200 MHz band  
 W1SL p 113, Dec 87  
 50-MHz RF Bridge  
 G8CJM p 53 Jul 89  
 Get on 6 meters the inexpensive way  
 KB1KJ p 91, Mar 85  
 Homebrew Diplexer (HN)  
 G8MWR p 30 Sept 89  
 L-band ground wave propagation  
 program  
 WA9GFR and Joseph R Hennel  
 p 103, Jan 86  
 Local oscillators, high stability for micro-  
 wave receivers and other applications  
 WB3JZO p 29, Nov 85  
 Low Cost Battery Pack for Your Ken-  
 wood TH-25AT Handheld  
 KE6WF p 40 Nov 89

Micros and VHF beacons transmit mes-  
 sages automatically  
 K9EI p 51, Jul 85  
 MMIC multiplier chains for the 902 MHz  
 band  
 N6JH p 72, Feb 87  
 Modular transmit and receive converters  
 for 902 MHz  
 N6JH p 17, Mar 87  
 Monolithic RF amplifiers  
 N6JH p 22, Mar 86  
 Moon coordinates, determining basic  
 W2WD p 38, Jan 85  
 Novice enhancement and the 220 MHz  
 band, Reflections:  
 W9JUV p 4, Apr 87  
 Practically speaking: parametric am-  
 plifiers  
 K4IPV p 65, Mar 88  
 Remote base/simplex phone patch con-  
 troller  
 AA4NX & KK4LA p 54, Aug 88  
 RF transmission cable, microwave appli-  
 cations  
 K3HW p 106, May 85  
 Silverplating, safe, sensible  
 K9EYY p 29, Feb 85  
 Simple VHF/UHF multiple quarter-wave  
 filters  
 WA3EWT p 37, Sep 87  
 Solid-state Switching The Midland  
 13-509,  
 The Weekender  
 VEHOT p 17 Jun 89  
 Sporadic E and 50-MHz transatlantic  
 propagation during 1987  
 G3NAQ p 10, Jul 88  
 The Guerri report: mm waves, part 1  
 W6MGI p 109, Feb 86  
 The Guerri report: mm waves, part 2  
 W6MGI p 117, Mar 86  
 The Guerri report: fiber optics  
 W6MGI p 141, May 86  
 Trade off power for antenna gain at VHF  
 WA9GFR, Hennel p 32, Jul 85  
 Comment, WA9GFR p 9, Apr 86  
 23 GHz prescaler  
 N6JH p 21, Jan 87  
 VHF amplifiers, carrier-operated relay  
 WB3JCC, KD8KZ p 45, Apr 85  
 VHF noise bridge  
 OE2APM/AA3K p 10, Jul 86  
 VHF signal generation, harmonic mixer  
 K1ZJH p 40, Mar 85  
 Short circuit p 121, May 85  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave bands  
 W1JR p 44, Jan 86  
 VHF/UHF world: high power amplifiers:  
 part 1  
 W1JR p 97, Jan 85  
 VHF/UHF world: high power amplifiers:  
 part 2  
 W1JR p 38, Feb 85  
 VHF/UHF world: keeping VHF/UHFers  
 up-to-date  
 W1JR p 126, Mar 85  
 VHF/UHF world: protecting equipment  
 W1JR p 83, Jun 85  
 VHF/UHF world: propagation update  
 W1JR p 86, Jul 85  
 VHF/UHF world: designing and building  
 loop Yagis  
 W1JR p 56, Sep 85  
 VHF/UHF world transmission lines  
 W1JR p 83, Oct 85  
 Comment, W9ICZ p 9, Apr 86  
 VHF/UHF world  
 W1JR p 54, Nov 85  
 VHF/UHF world  
 W1JR p 85, Dec 85  
 VHF/UHF world:  $\mu$ w and mm-wave  
 propagation, part 2  
 W1JR p 69, Aug 86  
 VHF/UHF world: meteor scatter commu-  
 nications  
 W1JR p 68, Jun 86  
 Short circuit p 87, Jul 86  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave bands  
 W1JR p 44, Jan 86  
 VHF/UHF world: 33 cm-our newest band  
 W1JR p 83, Apr 86  
 Short circuit (p 87, July 86)  
 p 9, Aug 86  
 VHF/UHF world: rf connectors, part 1  
 W1JR p 77, Sep 86  
 VHF/UHF world: rf connectors, part 2  
 W1JR p 59, Oct 86  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave and  
 millimeter-wave update  
 W1JR p 63, Jan 87  
 VHF/UHF world: 33 cm update  
 W1JR p 74, Apr 87  
 Short circuit p 81, Sep 87  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave portable  
 operation

W1JR p 75, Jun 87  
 Short circuit p 81, Sep 87  
 VHF/UHF world: minimum requirements  
 for 2-meter EME-pt 2  
 W1JR p 65, Sep 87  
 VHF/UHF world: Operating a VHF/UHF  
 microwave station  
 W1JR p 38, Jul 87  
 Short circuit p 81, Sep 87  
 Short circuit p 97, Oct 87  
 VHF/UHF world: minimum requirements  
 for 2-meter EME-pt 1  
 W1JR p39, Aug 87  
 Comments, W7WRQ p 9, Dec 87  
 VHF/UHF world: impedance matching  
 techniques  
 W1JR p 27, Oct 87  
 VHF/UHF world: loose ends  
 W1JR p 82, Feb 88  
 VHF/UHF world: power splitters and  
 summers  
 W1JR p 80, May 88  
 VHF/UHF world:: IMD and splatter  
 W1JR p 71, Oct 88  
 VHF/UHF World: DX Records on 50  
 MHz and Above  
 W1JR p 48 Jan 89  
 VHF/UHF World: DX Records on 50  
 MHz and Above-pt 2  
 W1JR p 42 Feb 89  
 23 GHz prescaler  
 N6JH p 21, Jan 87

## antennas

Antenna insulators, PTFE VHF  
 W5JTL p 98, Oct 85  
 Cheap and dirty 6-meter beam  
 W5UOJ p 56, Jul 88  
 Convert an inexpensive CB mag-mount  
 antenna into a superb 2-meter whip  
 K7DBA p 52, Oct 86  
 Colagi antenna, The  
 VE3BFM p 61, May 86  
 Computer-aided design of long VHF  
 Yagi antennas  
 VK4ZF p 28, May 86  
 Cylindrical feedhorns revisited  
 WA9HU p 20, Feb 86  
 Direction-finding tool, the fox box  
 K1ZJH p 25, Oct 85  
 Ham notebook: 2-meter halo antenna  
 NR5A p 63, May 87  
 High-performance Yagis for 432 MHz  
 K1FO p 8, Jul 87  
 Comments: KLM balun  
 Scott, W p 6, Sep 87  
 Short circuit p 97, Oct 87  
 Long 2-meter collinears a simple way to  
 achieve gain (HN)  
 WB3AYW p 95, May 86  
 Open-wire line for 2-meters  
 N4UH p 94, Jan 87  
 Short circuit p 54, Jan 86  
 VHF/UHF world: stacking antennas, part 1  
 W1JR p 129, Apr 85  
 VHF/UHF world: stacking antennas, part 2  
 W1JR p 95, May 85  
 VHF/UHF world  
 W1JR p 85, Dec 85  
 VHF Yagi CAD on the C-64  
 W4PFZ p 70, Sep 85  
 VHF/UHF world: Yagi facts and fallacies  
 W1JR p 103, May 86  
 VHF/UHF world: reflector antennas, part 1  
 W1JR p 51, Feb 86  
 Short circuit p 45, Apr 86  
 VHF/UHF world: reflector antennas, part 2  
 W1JR p 68, Mar 86  
 Yagi, a high-gain 70-cm  
 W1JR p 75, Dec 86  
 Short circuit p 68, Feb 87  
 VHF/UHF world: Optimized 2- and  
 6-meter Yagi  
 W1JR p92, May 87  
 Short circuit p 26, Jun 87  
 Short circuit p 49, Jul 87  
 Short circuit p 41, Aug 87  
 Short circuit p 81 Sep 87  
 Yagi trigon reflector, Optimizing  
 WB3BGU p 84, Jan 86  
 2-meter beam, portable  
 KB5QJ p 113, Oct 85  
 6-meter kilowatt amplifier  
 KX0O p 50, Jul 86

WA2FTK and  
 K1JUL p 9 Jul 89  
 High Performance 2-Qeter Transverter  
 WB4EHS p 68 Jul 89  
 Local oscillators, high stability for micro-  
 wave receivers and other applications  
 WB3JZO p 29, Nov 85  
 3456-MHz Linear Transverter  
 WA3JUF p 68 Jan 89  
 TR-2500/2600 2-channel programming  
 (HN)  
 K9MLD p 128, Oct 85  
 2-Meter Converter with Q Multiplier  
 WA9HUV p 33 Nov 89  
 220-MHz 9600-Baud Data Radio  
 System for Packet  
 W2DUC p 67 Feb 89  
 UHF GaAsFET Doubler, The  
 Weekender:  
 WA9HUV p 65 Apr 89  
 VHF/UHF world  
 W1JR p 54, Nov 85  
 VHF/UHF World: low noise update, part 2  
 W1JR p 72, Dec 87  
 Yaesu's latest VHF/UHF receiver, add  
 general coverage  
 W6MGI p 67, Oct 85  
 Short circuit p 97, Oct 87  
 2-meter monitor  
 WA3ENK p 64, Jul 88  
 220-MHz 9600-Baud Data Radio  
 System for Packet  
 W2DUC p 67 Feb 89  
 1296-MHz low noise amplifier  
 (Weekender)  
 WA9HUV p 60, Nov 88

## transmitters

Amplifier, 432-MHz, 1500-watt  
 W2GN p 40, Jul 85  
 Heathkit Seneca As A 2-meter FM Am-  
 plifier  
 W3NNL p 8 Mar 89  
 Low-noise phase-locked UHF VCO part  
 1: the noise problem  
 WA9HUV p 33, Jul 86  
 Short circuit p 9, Dec 86  
 Low-noise phase-locked UHF VCO part  
 2: construction and testing  
 WA9HUV p 25, Aug 86  
 Simple Signal Source for 903 MHz,  
 The Weekender:  
 N6JH p 88 Jan 89  
 Temperature control, automatic  
 WBSIRI p 75, Jun 85  
 TR-2500/2600 2-channel programming  
 (HN)  
 K9MLD p 128, Oct 85  
 VCO, 1800-2600 MHz  
 W0DTV p 21, Jul 85  
 VHF/UHF world: medium power am-  
 plifiers  
 W1JR p 39, Aug 85  
 Weaver modulation, 2-meter transmitter  
 N1COX p 12, Jul 85  
 X-band beacons  
 WA6EJO p 29, Jan 87

## microwave techniques

Designing a station  
 for the microwave bands: part 1  
 N6GN p 41, Feb 88  
 Designing a station for the microwave  
 bands: part 2  
 N6GN p 19 Jun 88  
 Short circuit: p 35, Oct 88  
 Designing a station for the microwave  
 bands: part 3  
 N6GN p 17, Oct 88  
 Inexpensive Multi-megabaud Microwave  
 Data Link  
 N6GN p 9 Dec 89  
 Radial line stub design  
 N1BEP p 65, Feb 88  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave components  
 and terminology-part 1  
 W1JR p 71, Mar 88  
 VHF/UHF world: microwave components  
 and terminology-part 2  
 W1JR p 67, Apr 88  
 Waveguide Flange Drilling Guide  
 WA4WDL p 53 Jul 89

## receivers and converters

Easy Monitor Receiver for 2 Meters  
 WA5SNZ p 28 Apr 89  
 435-MHz Low-noise GaAsFET Pream-  
 plifier

# Elmer's Notebook



Tom McMullen, W1SL

## EXPLORING MAGNETISM

In last month's column I mentioned an experiment using bell wire, a compass, and a battery in connection with magnetic fields. It occurred to me later that perhaps some of you had never performed this experiment, or had never heard of it. It's sometimes good to go back to basics and look at the principles that make our world of electronics possible.

### The equipment

The equipment list for this experiment isn't very long, and the cost involved is small. If you're a good scrounger or pack rat, you may not need to spend a cent.

You'll need some wire — about 5 or 6 feet of bell wire will do. (Bell wire is sometimes used to wire up door bells, hence its name.) If you buy it, you'll probably have to purchase a roll of 25 or 30 feet. You might have better luck in a hardware or electrical store than at an electronics shop. Bell wire is solid copper covered with insulation. If you can't find bell wire, use solid copper wire of approximately 20 or 22 gauge, with either an enamel coating or plastic insulation. (Twenty-gauge wire is approximately the same diameter as the lead in a common mechanical pencil.)

Next, you'll need a power source. A C-size flashlight cell will do nicely. Be sure it's fresh — this experiment soaks up current quickly. You can use an alkaline, carbon zinc, or mercury cell.

**CAUTION:** Do not use NiCd cells or any storage battery! The high current capacity of these batteries will cause the wire to overheat quickly and may cause burns.

The last item on the list is a compass. Any simple, inexpensive compass, like

the wire along the side away from the battery. This stiff wire sometimes tends to flop around a bit, so use a couple of pieces of tape to hold it down.

If you have a battery holder that the C cell will slip into, use it. Otherwise, you'll have to hold a wire on one end of the cell. Touch the other end of the wire to the positive cap of the cell while you watch the compass. It should swing quickly to a right angle from the wire. Don't hold the wire on the cell any longer than necessary to see what the compass does.

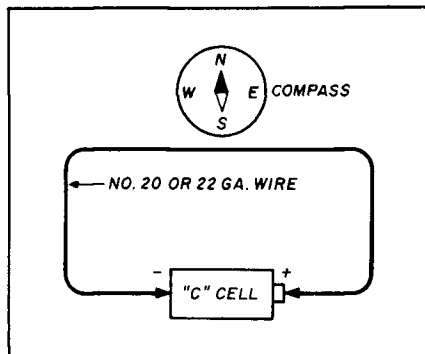
### What did that?

When you completed the circuit from one end of the cell to the other, a heavy current started flowing through the wire. Current flow (electron movement) creates a magnetic field and the lines of magnetic force go around the wire. The compass needle aligns with them, just as it does with the earth's magnetic field.

Try it again; but this time reverse the battery. Which way did the compass point? This demonstrates another rule. If you reverse the direction of electron flow, the magnetic field also reverses. Move the compass away from the wire a little bit at a time, and note how far away it is before the field doesn't affect it. Make a note of the distance; I'll refer to it later on.

Now let's see what happens when the wire is coiled up, with several turns next to each other. Use a 1/4-inch wooden dowel or stick as a form. Wind 20 or so turns of wire on the dowel, making the turns close to each other. Place this coil on the table, and tape the wires down as before. Put the compass right next to the coil, perhaps on top of it, (see Figure 2). Touch the wires to the cells and watch the compass. Which way did it point? It seems to point along the coil, right? Look closely at the coil. If the compass is pointing along the coil, then it's also pointing at right angles to each individual wire in the coil. Perhaps it moved more quickly

FIGURE 1



**The basic experiment requires a C cell, a piece of wire, and a compass. Tape the wire in place to hold it still, and place a small compass on top of the wire or beside it. Be sure the wire is placed North and South as shown.**

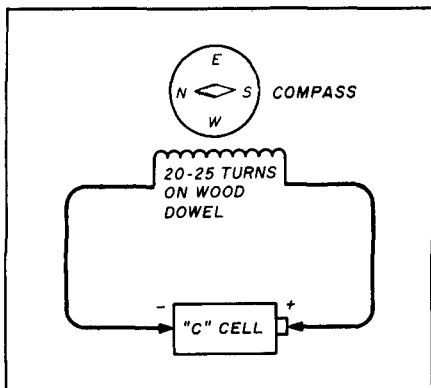
those used by Scouts or sold by camping outfitters, should work.

After you've collected all the parts, clear a space on a wood (not metal) work surface and try some experiments.

Cut off about 2 feet of wire, and bare the ends for approximately half an inch. If you have enamel insulated wire, you'll need a bit of sandpaper to clean the insulation off.

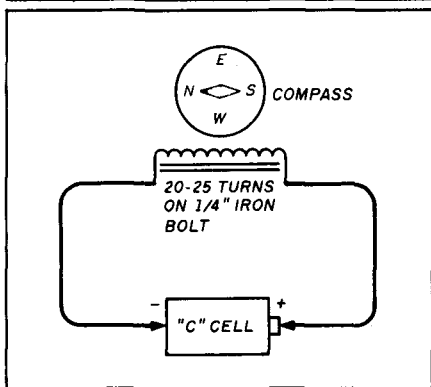
Place the wire on the table in an oval or rectangle, as shown in Figure 1. Place the compass either under or over

**FIGURE 2**



Wind the wire into a coil around a wooden dowel and place the compass beside it or on top of it. Note the position of the N and S markings and the coil for this experiment.

**FIGURE 3**



Replace the wooden dowel with an iron bolt and note how much stronger the field is. You may have to move the compass more than a foot away before the field no longer affects it.

this time than it did with the single wire you started with. This tells you that the magnetic field is stronger. How can this be? The current capability of the C cell is still the same, so the answer must be that the lines of force are more concentrated by the wires being so close together.

Next, put some metal in the field and see what it will do. Replace the wooden dowel with a 1/4-inch bolt, (see Figure 3). A plain, hardware store soft iron bolt will do (don't use hardened steel). Tape the wires in place, with the compass beside the coil, and touch the wires to the battery. That compass snapped around smartly, didn't it? Move the compass near one end of the bolt and try again. The compass is telling you that the bolt is a magnet. (Even a soft iron bolt will stay magnetized to some extent after the current stops flowing in the coil, so the com-

pass will still point toward the bolt.)

Move the compass away again, and see how far the field makes it move. Compare this with the results of the first experiment. Not only is the field more intense near the coil, but it affects the compass from farther away. Iron or steel concentrates and intensifies the magnetic field. This is one principle that makes electric motors, loudspeakers, power transformers, and hundreds of other devices work.

Another experiment comes to mind, but we'll have to cheat a bit on the equipment list. The compass isn't fast enough to show what will happen. I'll explain why in a moment.

Instead of using the compass as an indicator, get an LED. A plain LED without any resistor in the base will do the trick. Wind a layer of wire on top of the previous winding. If you had 20 turns on the first winding, make this second one twice as large — 40 turns. Remove the insulation from the ends of the wire and connect the LED to the bare ends. Clip lead connections are fine; there's no need to solder them on.

Tape the wires down to hold things steady, and touch the wires to the battery. Watch the LED closely; note whether it flashes when you touch the wire, or when you remove the wire from the battery. Reverse the connections to the LED and try again. What happened this time? Which flash was brighter? Why didn't the LED stay on? Here's what's going on. This is a very crude transformer (see Figure 4). The original winding is the primary; the extra winding you added is the secondary. The bolt serves as the core of the transformer to concentrate the magnetic field.

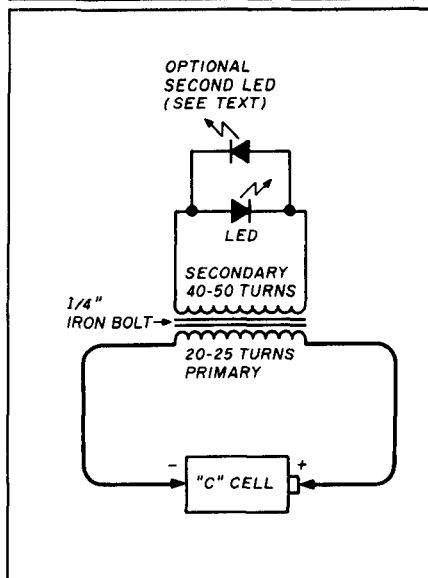
Current flows when you touch the wires to the battery, generating a magnetic field. This magnetic field cuts across the secondary wires, causing a current flow in that circuit.

The LED is a diode which conducts in only one direction. Depending on the way it was connected in the circuit, it may have flashed when you touched the wire to the battery, or when you removed the wire. When you reverse the diode connections, the effect is the opposite of the first try. If you have two LEDs, you can connect them both in the circuit in parallel, but with opposite polarity. One will flash when you touch the wires, the other when you remove the wires.

A magnetic field induces current flow in wires only when it's moving

across the wire (or when the wire is moving through the field). Because the power source is DC, the field builds up and then stabilizes, so you'll see the LED flash while the field is building up. There's no current flow in the secondary after the field stabilizes, so the LED isn't on. When you remove the wire from the battery, the field collapses because there's no electron flow to sustain it. As it collapses, it cuts

**FIGURE 4**



A simple transformer is made by placing another winding on top of the first one. The second winding has more turns than the first one. You can use one or two LEDs, as explained in the text.

across the secondary wires again. This creates current flow, and the diode will flash (if its polarity is right). By using two LEDs, you can demonstrate that the current flows in one direction as the field builds up and the other direction when the field collapses. The rule that's confirmed here is that the direction of current flow depends upon the direction of movement of the magnetic field relative to the wire.

Now, why is the flash brighter when the wire is removed from the battery? It's a matter of stored energy. The current flow is sustaining the magnetic field as long as the wire is connected to the battery. This is energy being used to keep the field in place, so you can say that some energy is stored in the magnetic field. It's a bit like pressing against a strong spring. As long as you're pushing against the spring,

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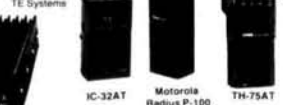
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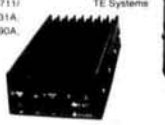
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you're using energy to hold it in place. When you stop pushing, the spring rebounds, and the energy you "stored" there while pushing against it is released by the spring when it returns to the original position.

The stored energy in the magnetic field induces a greater current flow in the secondary winding of the transformer, causing the LED to flash brighter. This is what makes automotive ignition systems work — the stored energy in the coil's magnetic field creates a very large spark when the points open. This is why you'll see a diode connected across the winding of relays used in transistorized equipment. The pulse generated by the relay coil when the circuit is turned off can ruin a sensitive transistor in a microsecond. The diode absorbs most of the energy and saves the transistor.

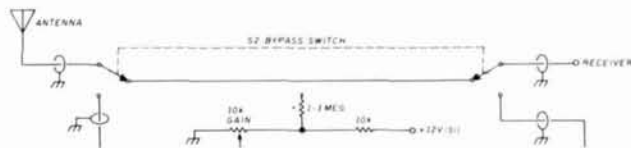
As I mentioned earlier, the compass isn't useful as an indicator in this experiment. The pulse that lights the LED is so brief that the compass needle doesn't have time to move before the pulse dies out. I had you wind more turns for the secondary of the transformer so the voltage across the winding would be increased. Because the primary winding gets its power from a 1.5-volt cell, and there are always losses in a transformer, a secondary winding of the same number of turns produces much less than 1.5 volts in the pulse. If you have an oscilloscope or can borrow one, you can measure it. But with the inefficient iron bolt transformer core, I'd expect less than 1/2-volt output from a 1:1 winding ratio. By making the secondary winding twice as big, you increase the voltage enough that the LEDs will flash easily — perhaps somewhere near 1 volt peak.

We've just looked at some basic magnetic field principles, using a DC power source. Things work much the same way with AC magnetic fields, but the fields keep changing direction with the frequency of the power source. This is the basis for Amateur Radio communications. The end result of all the circuitry in your transmitter is that an alternating current (radio frequency) in your antenna creates a magnetic field that intercepts another antenna and generates a minute current flow in it. The receiver circuitry attached to that antenna lets the other person hear what you say. It's almost like magic, isn't it? **hr**

# short circuit

## Art Correction

In the October issue the DPDT switches at the top of Figure 1 on page 47 of KD9SV's article "Variable Gain 160-Meter Preamp" were shown incorrectly. They should have appeared as shown in the corrected drawing below.



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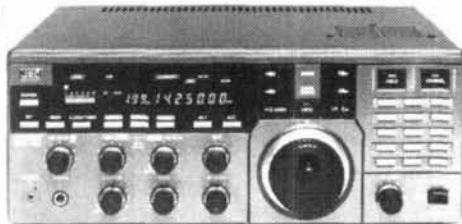
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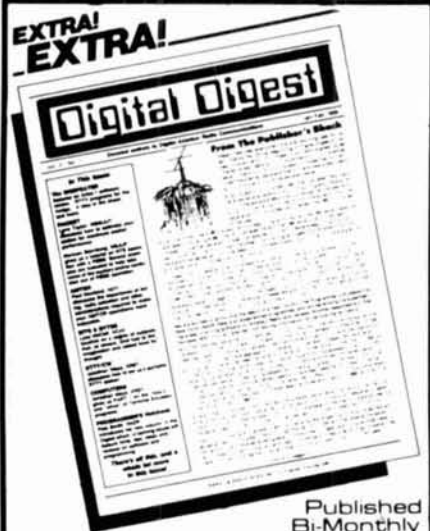
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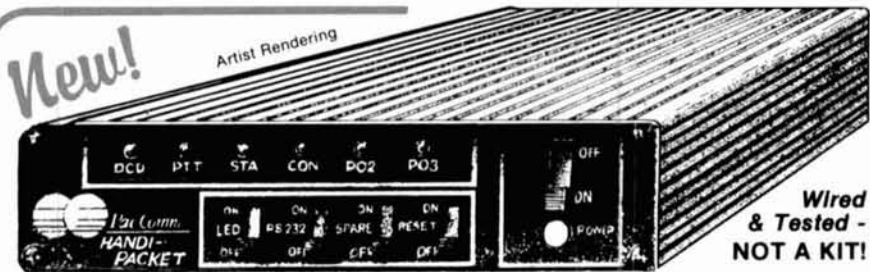
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## COMING EVENTS

Activities — "Places to go . . ."

**INDIANA:** December 31. South Bend. Hamfest Swap & Shop, December 31, last day of 1989 BEFORE New Year's Day at CENTURY CENTER downtown on U.S. 33 ONEWAY North between Trustcorp Bank Building and river. Four lane highways to door from all directions. Tables: \$5/5 ft. Round; \$15/8x2.5 rectangular; \$20/8 ft. Wall locations. Over half acre on carpeted floor. Electric NO charge—Bring long cord. Talk in 52, 39, 09, 94, 145.29. Call 219-233-5307, write Wayne Werts, K9IXU, 1889 Riverside Drive, South Bend, IN 46616.

**WISCONSIN:** January 13. The 18th annual Midwinter Swapfest, sponsored by the West Allis Radio Amateur Club, Waukesha County Expo Center Forum. 8 AM to 3 PM. Admission \$2/advance; \$3/donor. Amateur exams. Great food. For tickets or information SASE to WARAC Swapfest, PO Box 1072, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

## OPERATING EVENTS

"Things to do . . ."

**December 20:** The Providence, Rhode Island, Radio Association, W1OP, will operate from 0000-0500Z on 1.825 mcw to celebrate its 70th anniversary. A 400 cycle AC note will simulate the spark signal from the PRA in 1919. For a commemorative certificate SASE to PRA, W1OP, 1 Ludlow Court, Johnston, RI 02199.

**December 30-January 1: The Relay Repeater ARC will operate KE6PE 1800Z-0400Z each day, to commemorate the 101th anniversary of the Tournament of Roses, 101 years of the Rose Parade and 76 years of the Rose Bowl Game.** Sugg Freq: 14.260, 21.335 and 28.450 Novice/Tech. For certificate send QSL and 9x12 SASE to Relay Repeater Club, PO Box 81, Arcadia, CA 91006-5019.

**YOUTH LINK NET.** Open to all Hams under age 18. Saturdays at 2000 UTC. 28.425 MHz. For more information contact Net Control, George Manning, WB5NMH, 602 Glendale St, Burkburnett, TX 76354.

**FREE 1989-90 Florida** two meter repeater directories are currently being distributed by the Hernando County Amateur Radio Assn. of Brooksville, FL. Ask for one at any official Florida Welcome Center or SASE to Repeater Directory, Hernando County ARA, POB 1721, Brooksville, FL 34605-1721.

**LICENSE EXAMS:** Middlesex Amateur Radio Society (MARS) has scheduled the following exams: December 12- United Methodist Church, 381 Main Street, Portland, CT. 6:45 to 9 PM. To pre-register call Ed Kerns, KN9Y (203) 342-3400. Walk-ins allowed. The Middlesex ARS meets every Tuesday evening at 7 PM at the United Methodist Church. All are welcome.

**LAUREL ARC** monthly (except December) Amateur exam sessions for all license classes. No fee is charged. Pre-registration is required. Call (301) 725-1212, Maryland Radio Center, 8576 Laureldale Drive, Laurel, MD 20707.

**NORTH COAST ARC 1989 LICENSE EXAMS.** 12:30 PM, Saturdays December 9. N. Olmsted Community Cabin, S of Lorain on W. Park. Novice thru Extra. Walk-ins allowed. Talk in 145.29 repeater. For information Dan Sarana, KB8A, 15591 Rademaker Blvd, Brookpark, Ohio 44142. 267-5083 or Pauline Wells, KA8FOE, Rick Wells, K8SC1, 777-9480/779-8999.

**AMATEUR RADIO CLASSES:** For those people interested in obtaining a Novice (basic level) Ham license or upgrading to Tech/General, the Chelsea Civil Defense, in cooperation with QRA Radio Club, will sponsor Amateur Radio Communications classes evenings at Chelsea High School starting MARCH 7, 1989. For more information write Frank Masucci, K1BPN, 136 Grove Street, Chelsea, MA 02150. Please enclose your telephone number.

**THE MIT UHF REPEATER ASSOCIATION** and the MIT Radio Society offer monthly HAM EXAMS. All classes Novice to Extra. Wednesday, DECEMBER 20, 7 PM, MIT Room 1-150, 77 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA. Reservations requested 2 days in advance. Contact Ron Hoffmann at (617) 484-2098. Exam fee \$4.50. Bring a copy of your current license (if any), two forms of picture ID, and a completed form 610 availab' from the FCC in Quincy, MA (617) 770-4023.

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| ___186 - Ace Systems.....                     | 37                     | ___194 - ICOM America, Inc.....                  | 15               |
| ___166 - Ace Systems.....                     | 62                     | * - ICM.....                                     | 63               |
| ___169 - Advanced Receiver Research.....      | 62                     | ___148 - Jun's Electronics.....                  | 95               |
| ___196 - AEA.....                             | 13                     | ___190 - KComm, The Ham Center.....              | 36               |
| ___189 - Aerospace.....                       | 36                     | ___136 - Kantronics.....                         | 16               |
| ___140 - AIE Corporation.....                 | 100                    | * - Kenwood USA Corporation.....                 | 2, 5, 7, 69, CIV |
| ___171 - Alinco Electronics Inc.....          | 61                     | ___165 - Madison Electronics Supply.....         | 63               |
| ___152 - Alpha Delta Communications Inc.....  | 76                     | ___179 - Glen Martin Engineering, Inc.....       | 45               |
| ___145 - Aluma Tower Co.....                  | 95                     | ___198 - MFJ Enterprises.....                    | 8                |
| * - Amateur Television Quarterly.....         | 71                     | ___183 - Micro Control Specialties.....          | 40               |
| ___180 - AMC Sales, Inc.....                  | 45                     | ___129 - Missouri Radio Center.....              | 107              |
| ___176 - American Antenna.....                | 48                     | ___155 - Monitoring Times.....                   | 75               |
| ___144 - AMSAT.....                           | 94                     | ___133 - NCG.....                                | 104              |
| ___172 - Antennas West.....                   | 59, 62, 94             | * - Nema Electronics.....                        | 60               |
| ___187 - Antique Radio Classified.....        | 37                     | ___157 - Nuts & Volts.....                       | 70               |
| ___197 - ARE Communications.....              | 11                     | ___159 - Wm. M. Nye Co. Inc.....                 | 66               |
| ___174 - Astron Corp.....                     | 58                     | ___170 - Omega Electronics.....                  | 60               |
| * - Barker & Williamson.....                  | 29                     | ___143 - Omega Electronics.....                  | 94               |
| * - Barry Electronics.....                    | 100                    | ___126 - OPTOelectronics.....                    | 108              |
| ___134 - Bilal Company.....                   | 52                     | * - Orlando Hamcation.....                       | 56               |
| * - Brian Beezley, K6STI.....                 | 94                     | ___192 - P.C. Electronics.....                   | 29               |
| * - Buckmaster Publishing.....                | 45                     | ___132 - Pac-Comm Packet Radio Systems, Inc..... | 104              |
| ___160 - Buckmaster Publishing.....           | 64                     | ___131 - Palomar Engineers.....                  | 104              |
| ___147 - Buckmaster Publishing.....           | 95                     | ___163 - Periphex Inc.....                       | 64               |
| ___130 - Buckmaster Publishing.....           | 104                    | ___191 - Radio Shack.....                        | 33               |
| ___175 - Burghardt Amateur Center.....        | 56                     | ___141 - Ramsey Electronics, Inc.....            | 96               |
| ___153 - C&S Sales.....                       | 77                     | ___162 - The RF Connection.....                  | 64               |
| ___168 - Communication Concepts, Inc.....     | 62                     | ___188 - Rutland Arrays.....                     | 37               |
| ___199 - Communications Specialists.....      | 1                      | * - Sherwood Engineering Inc.....                | 59               |
| ___149 - Computerradio.....                   | 76                     | * - Silicon Solutions Inc.....                   | 76               |
| ___164 - Crystek Crystals.....                | 64                     | ___139 - Software Systems.....                   | 103              |
| ___146 - Cygnus-Quasar Books.....             | 95                     | ___128 - Software Systems.....                   | 106              |
| * - Digital Digest.....                       | 104                    | ___167 - Stridsburg Engineering Co.....          | 62               |
| ___138 - Doug Hall Electronics.....           | 103                    | ___182 - STV/OnSat.....                          | 44               |
| ___161 - Down East Microwave.....             | 64                     | ___202 - SV Products.....                        | 101              |
| ___181 - DRSI.....                            | 45                     | ___173 - Synthetic Textiles, Inc.....            | 59               |
| * - Engineering Consulting.....               | 31                     | ___127 - TD Systems.....                         | 106              |
| ___184 - Franklin-Belle Publishers.....       | 41                     | ___158 - Tel-Com.....                            | 70               |
| ___201 - The Grapevine Group Inc.....         | 36                     | * - Tropical Hamboree.....                       | 101              |
| ___137 - GTI Electronics.....                 | 103                    | * - Universal Radio.....                         | 101              |
| ___178 - Ham Radio Outlet.....                | 46, 47                 | ___150 - Vanguard Labs.....                      | 76               |
| * - Ham Radio's Bookstore.....                | 31, 71, 73, 75, 80, 81 | ___135 - VHF Communications.....                 | 52               |
| * - The Ham Station.....                      | 40                     | ___177 - W & W Associates.....                   | 48               |
| ___154 - Hamtronics, NY.....                  | 93                     | * - W5YI Marketing.....                          | 44               |
| * - Hamtronics, PA.....                       | 73                     | ___142 - W9INN Antennas.....                     | 94               |
| * - Heath Company.....                        | 53                     | ___151 - Wi-Comm Electronics Inc.....            | 76               |
| ___193 - Henry Radio.....                     | 23                     | * - Yaesu USA.....                               | 54, 55           |
| ___200 - ICOM America, Inc.....               | CII                    | * - Yaesu USA.....                               | CIII             |

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| 1 KHz          | < 5 mv                             | NA               | NA                | NA                | NA                |
| 100 MHz        | < 3 mv                             | < 1 mv           | < 3 mv            | < .5 mv           | < 5 mv            |
| 450 MHz        | < 3 mv                             | < 5 mv           | < 3 mv            | < 1 mv            | < 5 mv            |
| 850 MHz        | < 3 mv                             | < 20 mv          | < 5 mv            | NA                | < 5 mv            |
| 1.3 GHz        | < 7 mv                             | < 100 mv         | < 7 mv            | NA                | < 10 mv           |
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| <b>2 METER HANDHELD SPECIFICATIONS</b>                  | <b>YAESU FT-411/811</b> | <b>ICOM IC-2SAT/IC-4SAT</b> | <b>KENWOOD TH-215/TH-415</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Memory Channels   | 49                      | 48                          | 10                           |
| VFOs  | 2                       | 1                           | 1                            |
| Memory Channels Store Any Offset                        | 49                      | 10                          | 10                           |
| Wide Receiver Frequency Range (MHz)—VHF                 | 140-173                 | 138-174                     | 141-163                      |
| Wide Receiver Frequency Range (MHz)—UHF                 | 430-450                 | 440-450                     | 438-450                      |
| Built-in CTCSS Encode/Decode                            | Included                | Option                      | Encode Only                  |
| Memory DTMF Autodialer                                  | 10                      | None                        | None                         |
| CTCSS Paging  | ✓                       | Option                      | —                            |
| Programmable Battery Saver                              | ✓                       | ✓                           | ✓                            |
| Backlit LCD Display                                     | ✓                       | ✓                           | ✓                            |
| Backlit DTMF Keypad                                     | ✓                       | —                           | —                            |
| APO, Automatic Power Off                                | ✓                       | ✓                           | —                            |
| 1 MHz Up/Down Stepping                                  | ✓                       | ✓                           | ✓                            |
| Vinyl Case  | ✓                       | Option                      | Option                       |
| Scan For CTCSS Tone                                     | ✓                       | —                           | —                            |
| Built In VOX  | ✓                       | —                           | —                            |
| Clock   | —                       | ✓                           | —                            |
| Odd Split, Any Tx Or Rx Frequency In Any Memory Channel | 49                      | 10                          | 1                            |
| Suggested Retail Price                                  | \$406.00*               | \$439.95*                   | \$349.95*                    |

| <b>DUAL-BAND HANDHELD SPECIFICATIONS</b>                 | <b>YAESU FT-470</b> | <b>ICOM IC-32AT</b> | <b>KENWOOD TH-75A</b> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Memory Channels  | 42                  | 20                  | 20                    |
| VFOs Per Band  | 2                   | 1                   | 1                     |
| Wide Receiver Frequency Range (MHz)—VHF                  | 130-180             | 138-174             | 140-164               |
| Wide Receiver Frequency Range (MHz)—UHF                  | 430-450             | 440-450             | 438-450               |
| Built-in CTCSS Encode/Decode                             | Included            | Option              | Encode Only           |
| Memory DTMF Autodialer                                   | 10                  | None                | None                  |
| Dual Receive With Balance Control                        | ✓                   | —                   | ✓                     |
| CTCSS Paging   | ✓                   | —                   | ✓                     |
| Cross Band Full Duplex                                   | ✓                   | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Programmable Battery Saver                               | ✓                   | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Backlit LCD Display                                      | ✓                   | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Backlit DTMF Keypad                                      | ✓                   | —                   | —                     |
| Alternating Band Scan                                    | ✓                   | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Cross Band Repeater                                      | ✓                   | —                   | —                     |
| Power Output on 2 Meter and 440                          | 2.3W                | 5.0W                | 1.5W                  |
| APO, Automatic Power Off                                 | ✓                   | —                   | ✓                     |
| 1 MHz Up/Down Stepping                                   | ✓                   | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| Memory Channels Store Any Offset                         | 42                  | 20                  | 20                    |
| Vinyl Case   | ✓                   | Option              | Option                |
| Odd Split, Tx Or Rx, Any Frequency In Any Memory Channel | 42                  | 20                  | 2                     |
| Suggested Retail Price                                   | \$576.00            | \$629.00            | \$549.00              |

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Looking for a compact transceiver for your mobile VHF and UHF operations? KENWOOD has a compact rig for each of the most popular VHF/UHF bands.

- 20 multi-function memory channels.
- High performance — high power! 50W (TM-231A), 35W (TM-431A) with a 3 position power switch.
- Optional full-function remote controller (RC-20).

A full-function remote controller can be mounted in any convenient location. Using the IF-20 interface the RC-20 may be connected to four mobile transceivers. (TM-231A/431A/531A or the TM-701A).

- Multi-function microphone supplied. Various controls are provided on the mic. for increased utility.
- Auto repeater offset on 144 and 220 MHz.
- Built-in digital VFO allows selection of the frequency step. (5, 10, 15, 20, 12.5, 25kHz; TM-531A: 10, 20, 12.5, 25kHz.)
- Selectable CTCSS tone built-in.
- Tone alert system — for true "quiet monitoring"! When enabled this function will activate a tone when squelch opens.
- DRS (Digital recording system). The optional DRU-1 can store received and transmitted messages for up to 32 seconds, allowing the operator to check or return any call using the tone alert system.
- Automatic lock tuning function (TM-531A).
- Repeater reverse switch.

#### Optional Accessories:

- RC-20 Full-function remote controller
- RC-10 Handset
- IF-20 Interface unit handset
- DRU-1 Digital recording unit
- MC-44 Multi-function hand mic.
- MC-44DM Multi-function hand mic. with auto-patch
- MC-48B 16-key DTMF hand mic.
- MC-55 8-pin mobile mic.
- MC-60A/80/85 Desktop mics.
- MA-700 Dual band (2m/70cm) mobile antenna (mount not supplied)
- SP-41 Compact mobile speaker
- SP-50B Mobile speaker
- PS-430 Power supply
- MB-201 Mobile mount
- PG-2N Power cable
- PG-3B DC line noise filter

- PG-4H Interface connecting cable
- PG-4J Extension cable kit
- TSU-6 CTCSS unit

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