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OPTOELECTRONICS / SCANSTAR DEBUT NEW TRUNKING TECHNOLOGY

A new product from Optoelectronics and Scanstar permits computer scanning LTR & Motorola trunked systems along with non-trunked radio. New approach to trunk following does not monitor the control channel. Radios supported will include ICOM R10, R7000, R7100, R8500, R9000, AOR AR8000, and Opto OS456/OS535. Other radios to be added in the future.

New feature is "Pass Through" CI-V which embeds ASCII radio commands inside of CI-V message. OptoTrakker strips off the CI-V and sends the radio command out through secondary RS-232C or TTL data port. Pass Through CI-V means that only a single PC Com port is required to communicate with OptoTrakker and non CI-V radio. Discriminator audio connection to the radio is required. Radio modification service is planned via 3rd party service centers.

OptoTrakker is a new version of the DC442 with hardware and firmware changes. DC442 is not ungradable to OptoTrakker. Real time clock calendar has been added. Price is now \$299 including a basic version of ScanStar. ScanStar Commercial and Industrial versions will be available.

ScanStar and Opto Tracker will be shown at ICWE this week and product should begin shipping in mid to late May.

The Urban DX'er

The Urban DX'er is published monthly through the cooperative efforts of Bob Kozlarek, WA2SQQ and Charlie Hargrove, N2NOV

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Contributions of information for future issues is always welcomed and greatly appreciated. Please send your E mail to 4runner@hili.com..

AOR RELEASES DETAILS ON NEW RADIO

The new AOR AR8200 handheld is due out in June. Up to 4000 channels, PL decode, external (clip on) MW antenna, intelligent band scope, and a bunch of other neat features adorn this incredible scanner.

There's a mode called SFM in it. Not sure if it's super wide FM for satellite use or Stereo

Established 1984

FM to the earphone jack or just Standard FM which is a sort of useless too-narrow WFM mode that is in the FT50R.

While no definitive word can be given since the radio has not been released, it is unlikely it will feature any trunk tracking technology.

It does have a built in narrow AM filter and special circuitry for improved SW reception.

Here are other details Strong Signals has been informed of :



***Employs new technology designed to leave the AR8000 way behind!**

*Freq coverage : 500kHz - 2GHz

***Programmable steps down to 50Hz**

*It will have the new 8.3kHz step size that will effect the aero listeners in the UK soon

***Dynamic memory banks; variable from 10 to 90 channels**

*40 search banks

***Comes with 1000 channels; optional memory card extends this to 4000 channels**

*Other slots available for

sound recording chips and others?

***Side-mounted rotary tuner**

*Computer control

***Scratch-resistant case with durable keys**

*Supposedly Scout compatible and may even work with the new OptoTrakker mentioned above

***Has already passed CE(Europe) and FCC(USA) certification**

For more info check out this URL:
<http://www.javiation.co.uk/ar8200.html>

Preliminary details on the computer control aspects of the AR8200 can be found at:

<http://wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/simon.collings/RS-232/AR-8200.htm>

US CUSTOMS CRACK DOWN ON CANADIAN IMPORTS

US Customs is extensively scrutinizing each and every package for illegal contents(including X-ray). Entry for inbound and outbound packages are being routed through only three border points(Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver).

No word on whether or not this action is directed toward radio shipments. But one week deliveries are now taking 3-4 weeks due to the inspection process and limited number of entry points.

RELM

RELM has a modification to its new MS200 mobile radio to help cut down on signal overload interference. Strong Signals has talked to a few owners of these modified radios who report the mods help but don't come close to solving the problem. RELM is reportedly working on a special version of the HS200 for race car fans.

SHORTWAVE UPDATES

HCJB Quito Ecuador is dropping service to N America that airs on 15.295 MHz from 0000-0700.

Radio Japan (NHK) has dropped its English transmissions at 1000 UTC on 6.120. English is available at 1100 UTC on the same frequency. English (via Radio Canada) is also available at 0000 UTC on 11.705 MHz.

Radio Havana Cuba dropping service on 9.830 (USB) airing 0100-0700 UTC effective May 5, 1998. Alternate frequencies may include 13.605 and 13.660 MHz.

SPECIAL SPECIAL

VOA: As of 5/28 at 0000 UTC the Voice of America will discontinue of your favorite programs! Effective on that date VOA will convert to their new "News Now" format, a 24 hour all news outlet via shortwave and satellite. Communications World will either be gone or totally revamped. One proposal is for it to run for 9 minutes every two hours. Stay tuned more to follow!!

Radio Warsaw has dropped its English transmissions on 11.815 MHz to avoid interference from Spanish International Radio in Costa Rica. Reports are that it has moved to 11.820 where it will compete with the

Arabic service of the BBC!

NEWS FROM RS!

Radio Shack is preparing to release a mobile Trunk Tracker this October. Made by Uniden, there is will supposedly be no Uniden equivalent! Model will be PRO-2066(catalog 20-195). Reported to have 150 channels with no CTCSS but covering CB band.

Word is just starting to trickle in about the new Radio Shack PRO-72(catalog 20-513) for NASCAR fans. Word is you enter a car number and can then enter multiple frequencies for that car(up to 100). Keys allow you to scroll through a car's listing to decide what you listen to. Made by Uniden, it has 100 channels and the same footprint/case as the PRO-26/67/91. Price should be \$200. Don't expect any new GRE-made models at Radio Shack either. Seems even RCA is discontinuing their RPA-6150 (rebadged PRO-62). Thanks RCA...I guess it's the thought that counts.

UNIDEN

Word is that Uniden will release no more new scanners in 1998. Appearance of a GE/Ericsson Trunk Trakcer is not likely any time soon. Look to 1999 for new high-end models.

SONY

The new Sony Scanners are reported to have just started shipping from the factory(Phillipines?) on April 20 and are expected in a New Jersey port on May 5.

THE END OF AN ERA

For 52 years it mimicked an inquisitive finger pointing to the skies above suburban Nutley, NJ; an icon of microwave technology built during the cold war when paranoia and suspicion ruled. Built to serve as a test bed for military microwave communication systems, the seemingly immortal life of the ITT Avionics tower ended on April 4, 1996 at 10:07 a.m. as hundreds of spectators watched. Under the skillful hands of Controlled Demolition Inc. real time slurred to slow motion as the 700 ton structure was reduced to a pile of scrap metal in a mere 7 seconds. Many readers may already know CDI as the Phoenix, MD based company who was responsible for the surgical demolition of many buildings, among them the Federal office building in Oklahoma City damaged a few years ago by a terrorist bomb.

Built primarily for research and development, the tower was used until the mid 1970's. ITT planned to demolish the tower last year, but their plans were delayed due to concerns that a 100 year old

underground water main beneath the tower might be damaged. To lessen this possibility it was decided to have the tower fall on the adjacent buildings that were scheduled for demolition rather than to have it implode on itself.

Though the water main wasn't damaged, the force of the explosion triggered car alarms for several blocks. Attending the event with the benefit of a media press pass, I stood shoulder to shoulder with the major networks. Among the toys I brought, a digital camcorder I was field testing for Panasonic, my 35 mm camera and a Yaesu FT-51 HT to act as a scanner. Some research prior to the event revealed that CDI was licensed on 469.500 and 469.550. The research paid off as soon as I turned the FT-51 on. Quickly, word spread throughout the attending media that I had a "natural" audio feed of the demolition crew at work. Within minutes I had about six microphones focused on my radio! Watching the video tape, it's clear that the radio chatter added an extra degree of realism, not to mention that all the local news programs used my audio feed that night!

Tower History

From the earliest days of recorded history, progress has been linked to our ability to communicate. Following World War II it was obvious that better means of communications needed to be developed. With HF bands rapidly being allocated to new emerging services, our government subcontracted several companies to develop communications systems in an as yet undeveloped part of the radio spectrum - microwave. To carry on this research, ITT Federal Laboratories, a division of International Telephone & Telegraph erected a 300 foot microwave tower in suburban Nutley, NJ. In reality, it was an aluminum sheathed spire designed after the campanile or bell tower developed during the 7th -10th Century.

Typically, these towers were used to alert or warn the towns people. The basic design was a simple round tower decorated by means of vertical strips known as "pilaster strips." Most of these structures had an opening at the top. One of the most famous campaniles, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, was used in 1859 by Galileo to investigate the forces of gravity. So as not to have history repeat itself, engineers designing the foundation of the ITT tower anchored it into solid rock, insuring it wouldn't lean! To further strengthen the design, the steel skeleton was covered with aluminum, a material that was in short supply in the mid 1940's. It was truly state of the art - stronger and lighter than its architectural ancestors. And true to form, it carried modern bells, outfitted with state of the art microwave

technology allowing it to function as a lighthouse for navigation information provided to aircraft pilots and seagoing navigators. It was a perfect marriage of architectural simplicity and state of the art microwave technology.

Following the closing of the tower in the mid 1970's, the tower played home to a variety of commercial radio services and paging transmitters. Amateur radio operators working for ITT adopted it as the home of their amateur radio club. It's penthouse office provided a priceless view of the New York skyline and a first class contest site that won the club many VHF and UHF amateur radio contests. The club remained active until four years ago when company downsizing disbanded the club and saw the last of the amateur antennas dismantled. Feelings among local residents were mixed as many literally grew up with the structure in their back yards. A local groups efforts trying to have the tower saved by designated a landmark never materialized. Newcomers to the area were glad to see the tower disappear as concerns of teens trying to enter the vacant structure were always present. Once the remains are cleared away, a local developer will transform the 66 acre site into a community of 600 residential homes.

Editors Note: This article wasto contain a few pictures of the tower, before during and after the demolition. I had some minor problems with my flat bed scanner, so that had to be left out. In the next week or so this story with pictures and possibly audio will be added to my web pages at <http://www.hili.com/~4runner> - Bob, WA2SQQ

PANASONIC DEBUTS NEW CORDLESS PHONES!

(New York) Panasonic surprised the industry yesterday with the introduction of three cordless phones that use the 2.4GHz bandwidth to provide a range of up to 20 times more than a standard 26/29MHz phone, almost eight times the range of current 900MHz analog models, and twice the range of existing 900MHz digital spread-spectrum units.

"Like 900MHz, this creates a whole new category in cordless phones," said John McNenney, Panasonic's national marketing manager for Panasonic telecommunications products. "50MHz is good, 900MHz is better, 900MHz spread spectrum is best, and our new GigaRange technology is even better than that."

"Two out of three households in the U.S. own cordless phones," he added, "so replacement consumers are looking for improved product performance. This is simply the best cordless phone we have ever made in terms of range, in terms of

sound clarity, and in terms of overall performance."

Scheduled to ship in September, the new phones use a combination of 2.4GHz and 900MHz frequencies, transmitting in 2.4GHz from the base to the handset and in 900MHz from the handset to the base. "By using two distinct frequencies, we eliminate any cross-talk interference and are able to increase the power," said McNenney.

In addition, the phones feature Direct Sequence Spread Spectrum Technology (SST) to increase the range and security of the cordless conversations. Another possible area of interference -- microwave ovens that also use the 2.4GHz frequency -- has been eliminated by the circuitry in the new phones.

The new GigaRange phones were developed by Panasonic in conjunction with World Wireless Communications (WWC) of Salt Lake City and Kyushu Matsushita Electric (KME). The new phones will use nickel metal hydride batteries, which offer twice the power capacity of nickel-cadmium batteries used in most cordless phones, giving the phones 14 days of standby and six hours of talk time.

The new phones also feature two antennas in the base (one for 2.4GHz and one for 900MHz) as well as two antennas in the handset. In the handset, one of the antennas is hidden.

The 2.4GHz GigaRange line starts out with the \$199.95-suggested-retail model KX-TG200 and steps up to the \$249.95 KX-TG210 and the \$299.95 KX-TGM240.

All come equipped with a belt clip and headset jack, allowing consumers to use a headset for hands-free conversations. The 210 adds a speaker phone, second keypad in the base, and two-way intercom; the top-of-the-line model 240 adds Panasonic's Digital Duplex Speaker phone as well as an all-digital answering machine with 16 minutes of recording time.

ST HELENA BROADCAST SCHEDULED!

Just received my much-awaited QSL from St. Helena yesterday (5/1/98) along with a very nice letter from Derek Richards explaining the delay in sending them out. According to the letter, this year's broadcast will be on Saturday, October 24, 1998 from 1900 to 2300 hours. So, no more rumors.....the cards are in the mail!!!!

NEW YORK CITY ANTIQUE RADIO OUTLET

<http://www.machineage.com/waves/>

Interested in collecting antique radios and TV's?

Check out Waves Radio, just slightly west of sixth ave. in the Chelsea Antique Building on the 10th floor. Their hours are from 11 - 6 Mon - Fri 10 - 6 Sat & Sun. Proprietors Bruce & Charlotte Mager Waves a shop which buys and sells radios, phonos and lots of other neat stuff.

Waves has globally offered the finest in vintage audio and video, since 1976. Items featured include antique radios, phonographs, microphones, televisions, and telephones.

**110 W. 25 Street,
10th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 989-9284
Fax (201) 461-7121**

WINGS OVER LONG ISLAND AIR SHOW

<http://www.wingsoverli.org/>

In the last issue we mentioned that the Blue Angles were to appear above the skies of Coney Island on June 6-7. It appears that information was in error. I just saw the TV Commercial for the 1998 Wings Over Long Island Air Show.. It will be held on June 6,7 1998 at Frances S. Gabreski Airport, Westhampton Beach

AS IT HAPPENED!

<http://home.earthlink.net/~mikerdoo/suicide/suicide.html>

If you want to see the final moments of that car chase in LA a couple of weeks ago that went out without censorship.

73 Robert de WB6NYC
SKYWARN MARIN COUNTY

FREE TRACKER

<http://autowinnet.com/freetrack.html>

FreeTracker is a Windows95/NT program for interfacing with your Uniden BC895 TrunkTracking scanner. After purchasing my first BC895, I anxiously got on the Internet looking for a computer program. But after a long search, all I found were one-hundred dollar shareware apps that didn't have any features I wanted.

FreeTracker features:

Supports up to 25,000 "Virtual Channels" which are like the radio's normal channels, but add Callsign, Description, Color (for activity log), Alarm, location, hit count, and more. VChannels can be scanned for activity, or stored into your BC895

Descriptions - You can store Descriptions, Callsigns, and Locations for frequencies and Trunk

Talkgroups/ID's. When that freq/talkgroup appears, a description is shown, along with Callsign, City/State, etc.

Alarms - You can assign a Wav file, graphic, .RTF file, speaker beep, or run a script while that freq/group is active. For example, have all local police codes shown during police calls. I just added some Cool bitmaps that appear with local police and fire stations

Colorful charts and graphs show you what frequencies/talk groups are most active

Powerful script language lets you create your own custom scripts, and run when a certain event happens on your scanner.

PerCon database lookups from their web page (stored as html) can be imported. Also imports from Grove, Probe, and PerCon Dbf files!

Drag and Drop channel editing - throw any database entry to a channel, or vice versa. If that frequency is already assigned, it zooms to the channel # to avoid a duplication

Activity Report is color coded - you can assign any color to any specific freq/talk group

Search Ranges - you can store up to 2,000 search ranges, then double-click them to activate an immediate search of that frequency range

All BC895 keys are supported, allowing a virtual radio on your desktop

FreeTracker can be minimized as a Tray Icon, with a feature-rich right-click menu for easy access to popular functions

Database-editing in a simple grid. Click the record you want, and change any value

Communicate with your radio interactively - type any command in, and see the response. Power users can utilize the quick-command box. Simply key in a command word to change frequencies, channels, scan, hold, search, manual, etc.

“X” BAND UPDATES

KKJY-1640-Lake Oswego OR is finally on te air! As I type this at 2045 PDT, they are still on with Rel. programing. However, just saw some info posted that says KKJY-1640-Portland, has been on and off the air lately. Here is some information I got from an Eng. News letter. "Crawford Broadcasting, owners of

KKSL, Lake Oswego and KKPZ, Portland put KKJY, Lake Oswego on the air on Mon May 3rd. They blew up a cap in the 1330 pass/1640 block filter after a few days, but it has been replaced." As I type this they are still off the air. The info didn't say when they would be back. But I presume soon. I thought I would pass that along.

X BAND LOGGINGS

1700 KDSX TX Denison, 5/2 2233-2325 - Weak, at first, with bits of test announcement under much stronger WCMQ, then nothing until 2316 when the signal showed up again much stronger with a clear test announcement mentioning call letters. "Don't Be Cruel" heard after. No code heard here. [JR-NY]

1640 KDIA CA Vallejo, 4/26 0300 - horrible mess of images, local buzing, and occasional bits of oldies music, ID finally heard at 0300. [JR-NY]

1640 WFNM MA Boston, 4/29 0042 - Might have been KDIA, but bits of music seemed strange, possibly non-English, maybe the microbroadcaster that some have heard from the Haitian community. Very tentative. [JR-NY]

1650 KGXL CA Costa Mesa, 4/26 0310-0335 - even worse conditions than1640 prevail here with slop from WJDM, but finally heard show tunes, Sinatra stuff, and a clear ID as "KGIL" at 0335. New. [JR-NY]

1670 WAXP GA Warner Robbins, 5/1 2218 - Strong signal, concluding Atlanta Hawks BKB game, IDing as WNML Warner Robbins and WNML-FM

ON THE LINE

By Mike from Roslyn Heights

Be careful about what you say on the phone—your neighbors might be listening.

According to a survey commissioned by Sony Electronics, 64 percent of 500 Americans surveyed say they take advantage of cross-interference from cordless phones to eavesdrop.

Sony commissioned the study to promote its new digital cordless phones. But the survey suggests Americans are a dishonest bunch who have a lot to hide:

*70 percent say they've snooped in someone's medicine cabinet, drawers or closet;

*42 percent admit to cheating on their partners;

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*34 percent cheat on their taxes;

*13 percent wear underwear designed for the opposite sex;

*And, 5 percent say their deepest, darkest secret is that they've had plastic surgery.

RAMSEY, NJ

Carlos, KB2FUM recently made me aware that Ramsey, NJ police is using 151.475 to cover that part of the town the is obstructed by the hilly terrain of the town. The remainder of the town is covered by their UHF repeater on 460.200

Y107

New York City's Y107 Country and Western station will be increasing its power on or about June 1, 1998. Station owners purchased the frequency's two users previously located in Long Island and Southern NJ. This allowed them to petition the FCC to relocate the transmitters in NYC and increase its power and coverage. Recently the station also announced that it is adding NY DJ **Jim Kerr** to its morning show.

CLOSING COMMENTS

As some of you have may have noticed, the newsletter is a bit late this month. This happened primarily for a lack of material. Many newsletters simply scan the Internet and print what many of us have already found. Charlie and I try to share "breaking" information, most of which has not been available in print at the time I release each issue. The balance of the information is sent in from readers like yourself. We appreciate your input and welcome ideas for future discussions both here and on the weekly net. Typically, the summer months find all of us a bit busier, so the next few issues may be a bit leaner than what you've been accustomed to receiving. Last month I made about twenty copies of the newsletter and left them at the local Radio Shack. I'm told that they went pretty fast. As a result, we now have three new "listeners". Please share a copy with a friend or mention the net and the newsletter at your next local radio club meeting.

Bob, WA2SQQ

Thanks to all those who contributed to this months issue:

"R", Ed-KC2AYC, Charlie- N2NOV, and "Joe" - N2OAD, Keith Knipschild, Bob Sanford - WB6NYC, Carlos - KB2FUM
