

Hardware Hints from Videoball

JOE REPAIRBEAR SAYS:

Tired of that cable mess? Try Lowel clips for your cables. They're reusable - no gummy tape residue. It keeps your cables coiled neatly. Treat them kindly and they won't need fixing. Clips are available from: Lowel-Light Photo Engineering, 421 W. 54th St., New York, N.Y., 10019 for \$3.50.

Headcleaning: If you want to be sure that that head is clean, get a 50x magniview. It is usually used to inspect phonograph needles for wear. Watch for a greyish deposit on the head. It takes a little practice to hold it steady enough to see through clearly, but keep on trying.

Those little metric screws for the 3400 are hard to find when they get lost. So I found a place to get metric-screws. Try: Capital Screw and Nut, Co., Box 1061, 611 Bergman St., York, Pa., 17405. They can order for you if your size isn't in stock. Sizes are listed in the back of the service manual.

Them Sony mike cables have a notorious reputation for shorting out just when you need them. So we changed our system over to a heavier cable -- 2 conductor shield with Cannon ends. They seem to be able to take a real beating and not break. You use a Cannon female to a male mini to get into the deck.

Mikes: A good unidirectional is the Shure Unisphere dynamic 210 SD. A better one is the unidirectional Beyers M260N. It needs a windscreen outside and cannot be blown into - that can break the little metal ribbons. Both range from \$60-\$70.

A cheap headphone that we've had pretty good results with is the Telex 610 D, 600 ohms. It costs about \$7.50.

As for braces, we've tried almost everyone on the market: Arri, Leopold Ugli Pod, Camera Mart, Preznal double shoulder, Universal shoulder pod from Cine 60. The two we like best are: the Preznal double shoulder brace (it is a little heavy, but well-liked by women), and the Universal shoulder pod (good all round uses, light, but not too enclosing). Both have camera mounts modi-

fied for the Sony portapak camera. Available from: CINE 60, 630 Ninth Ave., New York, N.Y., 10036. Price is \$198.00.

Batteries: WARNING!!! THE BP-30 IS DANGEROUS!!! We had three explode. The battery paks were charging. After they were unplugged, they started exploding. One of the cells was driven through a sheet metal shelf! Watch out for overcharging!



I had a BP-30 that read o.k. on a volt meter but burned out the power board on a portapak. The BP-30's have become a pretty frustrating problem for us. Any suggestions???

Question: How can you tell how much to charge them?

Answer: You can't.

An Alternative: the CINE 60 Belt.

This belt is more expensive than the BP-30 but seems to be more reliable. The only problem is overcharging. One way to check the belt for overcharge is to put the deck in standby/record mode and watch the needle on the battery level meter. If it goes past the silver into the black, leave the deck in the standby/record mode until

From 1/2 inch to 2 inch

the needle goes back to the silver. The higher current level fucks up the playback servo on the portapak, but doesn't affect the record circuits.

The belt gives you approximately three hours of standby time. We've had one belt for two and a half years and it still works o.k., but has a little less life per charge. Available from: Cine 60, Inc., New York City. Price is \$265.00.

Tape: In general, we've stayed with Sony. We get it at \$10.50 per roll plus shipping. We bought a 100 rolls of Memorex at one time and we didn't like it. Bulky cases, seemingly higher drop-out rate, and inconvenient to thread because the reels are over-loaded with tape. On one of the reels the tape was reversed half way into the roll.

WARNING: Some gun detectors used by airline security guards erase your tape! This is especially true of the International Airlines. So make sure you don't walk through them with tape in your possession.

Editing: We got a Panasonic NV-3130 about five months ago. We've had no problems yet except getting the controls down pat and keeping it clean, especially the capstan and roller.

Wanted: a medium-sized monitor (light and portable), and a good (stable and smooth pan and tilt) cheap tripod.

If you have any suggestions/comments, technical or otherwise, write:

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Until recently half- to two-inch transfer had been impossible due to the basic time base instability of half-inch equipment. Earlier this year, however, Ampex introduced its model AVR-1 which has extensive digital processing circuits to correct for time-base error. Their intention was to provide an all-purpose quad machine which would render any two-inch tape playable. In the process, they built a VTR which can make (black-and-white) half-inch tape broadcast standard.

Our experience was via Westinghouse which bought our two one-hour TVTV tapes and ran them as a ninety-minute special. Rather than dub our originals and re-edit them from two-inch to two-inch (which would have been prohibitive in both money and time--our two hour shows average about three edits a minute) we decided to dub our one-inch master edits (made on a Sony 320F at the Egg Store) directly to quad via the AVR-1 and then edit from quad to quad.

The AVR-1 was able to do this and in some cases even corrected instability which was on our master tape. Thus, it is now demonstrably possible to dub edited half-inch tapes to quad, not just camera original. This is extremely important, it seems, because two-inch editing time is terribly expensive (\$100 an hour), while one-inch equipment is relatively easy to come by.

In short, as far as black-and-white is concerned, it's now possible to do direct electronic transfer of half-inch tape to broadcast standard. If there are some diehard broadcasters who don't believe this have them write us and we'll put them in touch with the engineers at Westinghouse.

Michael Shamberg