Nifty New Scanner Mini-Manuals

For over ten years now, Bernard Lafreniere, N6FN, has been developing and producing the Nifty series of ham radio guides and books. He has produced guides for over 100 different transceivers and other products, as well as a number of other amateur radio guides and books of a more general nature. They have even authored three books in their Nifty E-Z Guide series – one each for EchoLink, D-STAR and PSK operation.

Now for the first time Bernard has released two new mini-manuals for the Uniden BCD996XT/996XT digital trunk trackers. Most owners of these two fine radios will tell you that understanding and operating these complex scanners can be a challenge. If you are looking for some short, clear and concise programming and operating instructions for these two radios, look no further than the N6FN Nifty! Ham Accessories.

Their two new mini-manuals for the Uniden 396XT/996XT scanners are indexed and organized for quick access to whatever you need to do. Measuring 4.5 x 8 inch, these spiral bound manuals are fully laminated for durability.

Uniden scanners have a lot of capability, and these guides cover all of it. They include information for programming systems and for operating all controls and set-up menus. They are indexed for quick access to areas of interest and provide step-by-step instructions, augmented with hints and explanations. The Nifty guides are understandable, fast and easy to use, and compact, small and rugged enough to be kept with the scanner – so it’s always there when you need it. I found these guides much easier to use than on-line manuals from Uniden.

The Uniden BCD396XT combo guide sells for $25.95 each. The combo includes a full-featured 24-page spiral-bound instructional mini-manual, plus a tri-fold quick reference card for your wallet. The 3-page foldout pocket guide is the size of a credit card and contains short-form instructions for operating the scanner.

If you own a Uniden BCD996XT, the Nifty mini-manual for this unit sells also for $25.95. This guide is a full featured, 26 page spiral-bound instructional manual, covering all aspects of this very capable scanner.

These new mini-manuals are an invaluable aid for understanding and operating these complex scanners! If you own a Nifty mini-manual you will never again be without a ready reference when operating your scanner.

To learn more about these two great products and the complete line of Nifty! Ham Accessories, point your browser to the N6FN Nifty Accessories website at www.niftyaccessories.com.

Epic Emergency AM/FM Wx Radio

The Epic Center in Eugene, Oregon has a little item for the camper, hiker or backpacker: a solar and hand-crank powered AM/FM Weatherband Radio.

This small radio uses two self-contained power sources, a hand-crank generator and solar panels to power the unit. One minute of hand cranking powers the radio for over 20 minutes of use, and a fully charged radio will run for over seven hours. When you use the sun to power the radio, five hours of sunlight powers the radio for over 30 minutes. The radio is powered by a 300 Mah/2.4V Ni-Mh rechargeable battery that is included.

The Epic AM/FM Weatherband radio includes an extendable antenna for better reception, an adjustable volume dial, and a built-in speaker/ear phone jack for audio output.

The Epic Center (384 Wallis #2, Eugene, OR 97402) solar and hand crank powered AM/FM Weatherband radio sells for $19.95. You can more information online at http://TheEpicenter.com, via email at bjnelson@theepicenter.com or via telephone (541) 684-0717 Voice or (541) 338-9050 Fax.

2012 World Radio TV Handbook

The 2012 World Radio TV Handbook, the ultimate and most comprehensive reference book for broadcast radio hobbyists, is now available from Grove Enterprises and other Monitoring Times advertisers.

This year’s 66th edition begins with receiver reviews for the Alinco DX-R8E, Pappradio (a software-defined radio), Reuter Elektronik RDR54C, WinRadio Excalibur Pro, and two portable receivers, Sangean ATS-909X and the Tecsun PL-660. There is also a one-page guide to HF radios currently available in the marketplace that gives an objective comparison for each receiver, based on size, selectivity, dynamic range and overall value. WRTH also includes a Receiver Testing feature that explains the technical terms used in their equipment reviews, and how they apply when testing receivers.

Radio & the Arab Spring by Chris Greenway explains how radio played only a limited role in last year’s uprising, and the preferred source of information may surprise you.

Tristan da Cunha, one of the remotest inhabited places on earth, was at one time the most sought-after station on shortwave radio. Very few DXers own the elusive verification from now silent Tristan Radio. Manfred Ripich takes readers on a fascinating journey of the island’s history, the role of radio and what the settlement’s future may hold.

Freelance writer Hans Johnson returns to Radio Bulgaria with a behind-the-scenes look at the people who produce the English language service of Radio Bulgaria.

As in past editions of the WRTH, George Jacobs reprises his annual expertise, this year featuring HF Broadcasting Over 50 Years and 2012 Reception Characteristics, followed by an analysis of Most Suitable Frequencies for 2012.

The national radio section of the WRTH covers domestic radio services which are broadcast to a national listening audience on medium wave, shortwave, and FM. Listings in this section are arranged by country and include contact information and a website for each station on the Internet.

The international radio section contains listings of stations broadcasting to an international audience in the shortwave and medium wave bands. Information on each station includes station name, contact information, broadcast schedules, email and websites. This year, WRTH has included (where possible) languages available only via webcast.

The clandestine and other target broadcast section includes stations broadcasting politically motivated programming or those targeted at zones of regional or local conflict, followed by a one-page listing of Religious Broadcasters Cross Reference Table.

The by-frequency section of the WRTH covers medium wave and shortwave frequencies in this year’s list, plus by-hour listings for transmissions in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

For the Digital Radio Mondiale monitoring enthusiasts, the DRM International Broadcast section provides by-hour schedules of stations broadcasting in this digital broadcast mode.

The by-country terrestrial television sec-
Klingenfuss 2012 Shortwave Frequency Guide

The 16th Edition of the 2012 Shortwave Frequency Guide – one of several annual radio reference books and CDs available from Klingenfuss Publications – has recently been released.

This year’s 408-page book starts out with a general overview of radio observations by Joerg Klingenfuss (author/publisher), followed by a section devoted to monitoring utility stations. This chapter will be of special interest to utility listeners and includes a basic explanation of the various aspects of utility monitoring and a by-frequency listing of stations with call signs, station name, mode and details.

The heart of this book and its primary focus is on shortwave broadcast stations, frequencies, and schedules. The 2012 Shortwave Frequency Guide covers the latest 2012 schedules for all clandestine, domestic, and international broadcast stations worldwide, which is derived from the Klingenfuss 2012 Super Frequency List on CD.

In the broadcast by frequency section there is some introductory material and a segment devoted to Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) that includes a comprehensive list of DRM schedules. It also includes a brief look to the future of shortwave and the continuing debate over its decline. The by-frequency list starts at 2310 kHz and goes to 26060 kHz. Each frequency listing includes the station name, location, start and end times of each broadcast, language, target area, and selected remarks.

If focusing on a particular country of interest is useful to you, then the by-country section of the book, labeled the “Alphabetical List of Broadcast Radio Stations” in the Table of Contents, will be of particular interest.

Frequency information for international broadcast stations, clandestine, and domestic stations are accurate at time of publication and does include seasonal frequency adjustments. Klingenfuss uses a volunteer staff of radio listeners and broadcasters worldwide who contribute information to this publication and keep its information accurate and up-to-date.

The easy-to-read book is a real asset in the radio shack, regardless of whether you monitor the utility bands or enjoy transmissions from shortwave broadcast stations. The 2012 Shortwave Frequency Guide is an excellent annual publication for the beginner or experienced radio hobbyist who wants a complete HF spectrum reference book (utility plus broadcast station listings). This is a basic no-frills radio reference guide and it will definitely complement your monitoring time at the dials.

To order the 2012 Klingenfuss Shortwave Frequency Guide book, go to the Klingenfuss website at www.klingenfuss.org or order from U.S. source Universal Radio at www.universal-radio.com. From Universal, it is book number # 5799 selling for $49.95 plus shipping and handling. You can also order from Universal via phone 1-800-431-3939 or Fax at 1-614-866-2339 (Universal Radio, Inc., 6830 Americana Parkway, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-4113 USA). – Gayle Van Horn, W4GVH

Comtek W2FMI Series Baluns

DX Engineering has announced the release of the Comtek W2FMI Series baluns that are engineered to provide an efficient match between unbalanced coax and balanced antennas. They’re inspired by designs from antenna expert Jerry Sveick W2MFL, with modern improvements by DX Engineering’s balun R&D department.

Comtek current baluns force current to flow through your antenna and prevent high values of common mode feedline current – eliminating pattern distortion, unpredictable performance, RFI, and noise pickup from nearby sources like TV sets and computers.

Typical insertion loss is less than 0.2 dB, with power handling ranging from 3 kW continuous to 5 kW intermittent to 8 kW/54 MHz, with reduced power ratings at 54 MHz.

Comtek Baluns are sealed in a weatherproof 4 x 4 x 2 inch NEMA box. They’re constructed with durable stainless steel hardware, including 1/4 inch studs, star washers for lasting electrical connections, and large fender washers which distribute fastener loading to preserve case integrity. SO-239 connectors are silver plated, with Teflon® insulation.

The baluns are available in 1:1 and 4:1 versions, with several different configurations: side studs, top studs, side eyebolts, plus side and top eyebolts. An optional DXE-BMB-4P bracket lets you mount the balun on a boom or pipe.

Priced from $49.95 to $69.95, you can get more information or order one by visiting www.dxengineering.com calling 800-777-0703 or writing DX Engineering at PO Box 1491, Akron, OH 44309-1491.

Descrition brings readers up to date on terrestrial TV stations and accompanying radio programs also broadcast on those systems.

Finally, there is an extensive reference section that includes global transmitting sites, radio clubs, standard time and frequency transmission schedules, and selected Internet Resources.

The World Radio TV Handbook continues to set the gold standard in broadcast reference information. It remains the very best, most authoritative, and comprehensive reference book in the broadcast world. Quite simply, there is no rival. It is an exceptional annual guide that should be in every radio hobbyist’s listening post.

The 2012 World Radio and TV Handbook (BOK03-12) is available from Grove Enterprises www.grove-ent.com for $29.95 plus S/H. To place an order, call 1-800-438-8155, email order@grove-ent.com, or mail Grove Enterprises, 7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902 USA. – Gayle Van Horn, W4GVH

Upgrades for Legendary AR8200D

Security professionals, government agencies and monitoring enthusiasts will welcome the new digital upgrade to AOR’s legendary AR8200D handheld receiver. In addition to its many standard operating modes, this new version includes APCO 25, USB connectors and a micro SD memory chip for audio recording. The 8200D offers frequency coverage from 500 kHz to 3 GHz*, 1,000 alphanumeric memory channels, two VFOs, 40 search banks and all mode reception. No optional CTCSS slot card is required. The special government version, AR8200D, also includes voice inversion capabilities and continuous unblocked frequency coverage.

Existing owners of US versions of the AR8200 MkIII can purchase upgrade service for their units directly from AOR USA, Inc. The upgrade fee for an existing AR8200 MkIII unit includes adding the capabilities of the new D model, and the receiver will be thoroughly tested and certified to its new specs before being returned. The upgrade fee includes parts, labor and return shipping via UPS ground for continental US addresses only.

You can get more information on this and all of the other fine AOR products from their website at www.aorusa.com.

* Cellular blocked for US consumer version.

Monitors on the dials? Be sure to let us know. Please mail your comments or stories to What’s New, c/o Monitoring Times, 7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902. Please include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Comments and stories may be sent to What’s New, c/o Monitoring Times, 7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902. Monitoring Times is written by Gayle Van Horn, W4GVH.