to the editors

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60 Years of Lafayette Radio (*MT* cover story, December 2012)

Mario Filippi N3HUN writes:

Re: December issue of *MT* and the article on Lafayette Radio. What a great retrospective look at a company that many of us grew up with. In my hometown of New Rochelle, New York we had a Lafayette Radio in the 1960s through to the 1970s. One of my most memorable purchases was a green-burst-colored electric guitar and case for about 30 bucks, and it was a decent buy; it had three pickups, tremolo bar, similar to a Fender.

We had an even bigger one in Yonkers, New York, where I got my first AM/high band VHF radio. That started my interest in police/fire/utility monitoring. Back then the National Weather Service was just starting up the VHF weather channels on 162.55 MHz. I remember hearing KWO-35 from Rockefeller Center in New York City for local weather. And, being near Long Island sound, I would occasionally hear boats on the VHF band. Ah yes, all the great memories of Lafayette Electronics.

Kudos to Dan Veenaman's Scanning Report "Scanner Terminology" (MT December 2012)

John Razmus N5WMT writes:

Many thanks for your article in the December issue (Scanner Terminology"), it sure cleared up a lot of questions for me. Another GOOD reason to read MT!

More Running Linux on SDRs (MT cover story, November 2012)

Jerald Brodkey KB8KIW writes:

In answer to Dan Ramos [*see MT Letters December 2012 – Editor*], I run Linux and with it use the WiNRADiO WR-G313e happily. The method is to run the standard WiNRADiO software in a virtual Windows XP machine. For the virtual machine I have Vmware but if I was just starting out I would give Xen a try first since it is free. Wine or Crossover seem to install such programs but I think the problem is that there are no suitable drivers for the radios under Linux. The advantage of running XP this way is that there are many ham programs for Windows that work very nicely with this system as well as other programs that one would like to use but don't, as it would require dual booting.

MT's *Digital Digest* columnist, Mike Chase-Ortiz also writes:

Just read the comments in the recent issue about SDRs on Ubuntu and Windows. You forgot to mention stuff that runs on Mac OS X too.

There's both CuteSDR and SDRDX (an enhanced offshoot of Cute) that run natively on that operating system. I bought an RFSpace NetSDR since, being an Ethernet-connected device, it will shoot data to anything without all the proprietary USB driver hassles you find with Windows software in particular.

TV Accessories for Scanner or SWL

Mike Hoblinski N6IMF writes:

I enjoyed Kent Britain's column in the November 2012 issue (page 52) on "TV Accessories you can use with your Scanner or SWL Receiver." I have three scanners and was going to try one antenna and feed a four way splitter. Should I terminate the unused terminal on the splitter with a 75 ohm termination cap? I was also wondering about feeding two antennas into a splitter. I was considering a wide range discone and a second antenna that was more suited for low band monitoring for California Highway Partrol (CHP) frequencies.

Kent Britain WA5VJB responds:

In an analog TV system where multiple TV's are fed with long lines after the split, the reflection from the unterminated port could cause a ghost on the picture. For this application, I don't think it would be worth the effort to terminate that last port. You are welcome to try of course. Plan B, our local Dollar Tree sells 3-way splitters for $1. And yes, you can go the other way and have two antennas on one radio. I would usually use an A-B switch myself, but it does depend on which services you are monitoring.

Pizza Pan 150 MHz Antenna

Joe Wdowiak writes:

Regarding Kent Britain's antenna column from June 2011 titled, "Construct Super-Wideband Antennas." Just wanted to let you know that I've made up a pizza pan antenna, mounted it in the attic and it has been performing beyond my expectations. As you say, it is a serious item. When the weather is stable, I pick up signals from Niagara Falls, New York which, as the crow flies, would be well over 100 miles. I used a switch box to compare my other antenna, a homemade 'ground plane/discone' and the winner was....pizza pan.

Kent Britain WA5VJB responds:

It's always good to get positive feedback. Yes, it really is a serious antenna. For others wanting to try this, make sure your disks are at least 18 inches across and it will work fine at 150 MHz. Above 1500 MHz it does tend to have two beams going out from the edges of the pizza pans, but still pretty omni-directional. Good luck with your scanning. Right now, I'm working on a family of antennas to listen to aircraft transponders for MT's March Air Show issue.

Disappearance of the Boston Acoustics Solo II

Walter Breville writes:

I vey much enjoyed your article in the November 2012 *Monitoring Times* "The $467.56 Radio Buying Challenge" – except for one radio featured in the article that I would love to have, but can't find it anyplace: The Boston Acoustics Solo II. I have tried the websites of Amazon, eBay, Overstock, Best Buy, nobody even lists it as discontinued! You must have gotten information from Boston Acoustics just as they decided not to manufacture this model.

Cambridge Soundworks Ambiance Touch: AM/FM WiFi radio with iPhone/iPod docking offers superb audio and will be reviewed in the March issue of MT. (Courtesy: Cambridge Soundworks)

I discovered shortly after the November issue came out that the Solo II had been discontinued. As noted in my January Beginner's Corner column, the replacement was the Boston Acoustics Duo-iPlus is $250 ($100 more than the unavailable Solo II). But now that model is also discontinued.

If you're looking for great audio and WiFi radio, I'm recommending the Logitech UE Smart Radio ($180 with free shipping from: http://ue.logitech.com/en-us/smart-radios) and at the high end, Cambridge Soundworks Ambiance Touch ($400 http://store.cambridgesoundworks.com/info/Ambiance_Touch_World_Radio). The Smart Radio (wouldn't you know it) replaces the Logitech Squeezebox, also discontinued. But, it has a built-in rechargeable battery pack (Logitech had been charging an additional $50 for the Squeezebox battery pack). It's the best buy of all the WiFi sets. No AM/FM, but with WiFi, who needs it?

The Ambiance Touch is the best WiFi radio overall on features, including a great remote control (the Smart Radio doesn't have one) and it finds things I can't find on any other WiFi radio. It also has the best audio of any radio, including Bose!. The BA Solo II is a lesson to us all: Find a radio you like? Buy it without regrets! – Editor