

What's NEW

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Larry Van Horn, New Products Editor

CCRADIO-EP AM/FM

Portable

A Bob Grove What's New Review

While it may seem strange that we would be reviewing anything as plebian as an AM/FM portable radio, there is a method to our madness. For several years, GE offered their "Superadio" to the consumer market; it had good sound, sharp AM selectivity, and external antenna connections. The radio sold in the \$50-\$60 range, and was very popular with domestic AM broadcast DX-ers. When it was discontinued, we had a surge of inquiries for a replacement, but none was to be found. Will the new CCRadio-EP be the answer?



The radio has decent sound, good AM selectivity, wide/narrow FM selectivity, and external antenna connectors. It has the traditional, analog, slide-rule tuning dial which may be backlit for night viewing.

Its 4-inch, self-contained speaker delivers room-filling sound with notable bass and clean highs with minimal distortion. Separate bass and treble controls invite custom high/low roll-offs to suit the listener's preference. If you have a set of stereo headphones, a stereo output jack provides that listening mode as well. There is also a line-in jack in case you have a personal MP3 or other player that you'd like to hear through a larger speaker.

The radio runs on either four D cells (not included) or a 120 VAC/6 VDC wall adapter (included). A snap-up/snap-down carrying handle facilitates transport.

The CCRadio-EP is simple to operate and should appeal to techie types with its unique "Twin Coil Ferrite" AM fine tuning knob. This is an RF peaking adjustment for the antenna input, depending on the frequency being received. It works with both the internal and external antenna.

It appears that the choice of external antenna is rather critical, and experimenting with optimum length and placement may be necessary to avoid "swamping" that tuning circuit, as well as avoiding common mode (ground loop) hum. I suspect that a shorter outdoor wire antenna would be better than a long one.

The internal ferrite loop antenna remains in service with the external antenna attached. If

you were experiencing electrical noise interference, it will still be there, hopefully attenuated somewhat by stronger signal strengths brought in by the outdoor wire. It is advisable to attach a ground wire to that respective terminal as well to avoid AC hum and other electrical line noise. If such interference persists, battery operation and/or relocation of the radio are recommended.

An FM internal/external switch allows selection of an outdoor antenna via a TV-style F connector. The benefits and disadvantages of high sensitivity become immediately apparent when switching between antennas. With the radio's telescoping whip, distances of up to 100 miles are readily received at my location; switching to an external beam, strong signal overload clouds reception of weaker signals.

The AM wide/narrow IF filter selection is appropriately labeled "Music" and "Voice." The wide bandpass allows more highs for increased music fidelity, while the low bandpass restricts the bandwidth to reject the frequencies not required for speech reception. Additionally, the independent bass and treble controls have a profound effect on emphasizing or attenuating the high and low audio frequencies.

The accuracy of the printed frequency dial on our particular sample was excellent for FM, but rather arbitrary for AM. Of course with any analog-dial AM/FM radio, you tune for best reception, not for what the print on the dial says.

The CCRadio-EP has good sensitivity and the 4-inch speaker delivers credible sound, enhanced by the separate treble and bass controls. Its AM selectivity switch is very effective for reducing adjacent channel interference. FM sensitivity is excellent, providing distant reception through its telescoping antenna.

With so many off-the-shelf AM/FM radios now readily available from chain stores and at widely disparate prices, it's hard to compare them fairly. Taking the radio at its face value – an AM/FM portable with good sound and sensitivity – the CCRadio-EP does its job well.

CCRadio-EP lists for \$69.95 from C. Crane Company, Inc., 1001 Main Street, Fortuna, CA 95540, (800) 522-8863; <http://www.ccrane.com/radios/am-fm-radios/ccradio-ep.aspx>

C.Crane FT-007 Stereo FM Transmitter

A Bob Grove What's New Review

One of the handiest accessories for the savvy techie is a remote FM transmitter that broadcasts any source of audio to any convenient FM radio – car, pocket portable, clock radio, multiband portable, or home entertainment system. I can sit in my yard on a sunny afternoon with my inexpensive pocket FM radio providing me with the audio from my indoor scanner or shortwave receiver, or perhaps even my CD player.

The flexible FT-007 can be powered by the

120 VAC wall adapter (included), an external source of 3- to 6-volts, or two internal AA cells (not included). The sound source may be stereo or mono and it will be thus transmitted to your remote FM radio.



A thumbwheel control is used to provide adequate gain from your source of audio, and to prevent overload distortion as well. An 11 inch telescoping whip may be swiveled to any plane for best transmission pattern for your listening location.

The compact 3-1/2 x 3-1/4 x 1-inch housing holds an LCD panel with a transmitting frequency readout; the frequency selection is made by stepping through the FM band in 50 kHz increments (88.30-107.70 MHz) to avoid interference.

The display also shows battery status with the standard icon, and the automatic shutoff, if desired, for 1, 2, 3, 4, or 8 hours.

The unit is affixed with a coil cord terminated in a standard stereo mini plug 1/8 inch, 3.5 mm and a stereo adapter with RCA plugs is included. A red LED announces an audio overload condition so that the thumbwheel can be properly adjusted for best sound.

With the FT-007 plugged into my computer for the audio source, I slipped a musical CD into the tray. After adjusting the sound level to perfection and switching on a little pocket FM radio, I discovered that I could clearly hear the transmission anywhere in the house. Stepping outside, I found that I had adequate reception at least 50-feet or so from my front door.

The C.Crane FT-007 FM transmitter sells for \$69.95 from selected *MT* advertisers (see C.Crane contact information above).

Books and equipment for announcement or review should be sent to What's New, c/o *Monitoring Times*, 7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902. Press releases may be faxed to 828-837-2216 or emailed to Larry Van Horn, larryvanhorn@monitoringtimes.com.

When ordering or inquiring about the products mentioned in this column, be sure to tell them that you saw it in the pages of *Monitoring Times* magazine.