

CB CITIZENS BAND

WRITTEN BY CLARK TURNER
"For my information, as well as others, PLEASE outline in your column in simple English words what SWR is and how to tune an antenna."

This request, from S. Barnash of Buffalo, sets off a two-part answer to this session of Question and Answer.
The reason Mr. Barnash is frustrated is that few good explanations of SWR (Standing Wave Ratio) are available — at least, in words that anyone except an FCC-licensed technician can understand.

Usually, SWR discussions are couched in phrases like, "The length of your antenna must have a good match with the wavelength of your transmitter, or your signal will reflect and cause trouble for your power transistors," or "similar language. The explanation then hurries along to tell you to shorten or lengthen your antenna, using a meter, to make a "good match." But it doesn't tell you what's really happening with your radio wave.

My colleagues — who shy away from explaining SWR — aren't stupid, it's just not easy to explain. But I'll give it a try. Remember the swinging door between the dining room and the kitchen? Or the revolving door that's common in stores, office buildings and bus stations?

Think of that door for a moment, and imagine it to be the antenna transmitting the signal from your CB set, up-and-away into the atmosphere. Then imagine yourself as a kid, trying to run through the door at just the right moment to hit the gap when it's there. To put it in simplest terms, the door is the antenna, and you're the signal. Get there too late, and you've got to wait for the door. Too soon, and you get zapped in the kisser. Just in time, and away you go!

To put this into radio terms, the signal (wave-length) of your CB radio is about 36 feet long. It's got to pass through an antenna that will keep it that long (or somewhere in the immediate vicinity) or it'll get slowed or zapped, depending on how good the "match" is — the same match as our analogy of the swinging or revolving door. Hit on the gap (a 1:1 ratio) and you sail through without a hitch. Less than 1:1 lessens your signal. It either has to wait, which decreases its power (the kid slows down), or it blocks it (the kid gets zapped).

I call it the "zing-zap" syndrome. You either zing through like there's nothing in the way, or you get zapped, and get nowhere. In the "zapped" condition, you blow out your final transmit stage, and you're down until it's fixed. In "zing" condition, everyone thinks you're running power (illegal amplification of a signal) when you're not.

The difference between pure "zing" and pure "zap" is the Standing Wave Ratio SWR. In my analogy, let's call it "Speed While Running," because that's how we hit the gap in the door when it's turning or swinging.

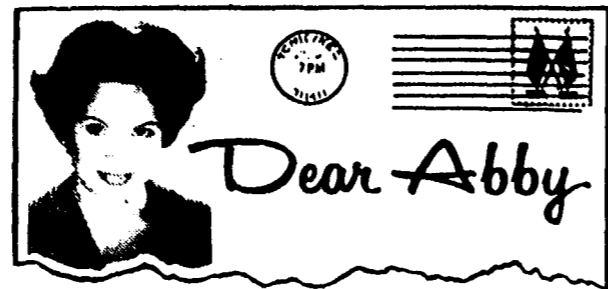
Either way — radio wave, or kid hitting the gap — the ratio's all-important. It's expressed as 1:something, with the

"something" as the most important number.
Next week, we'll look at tuning for SWR to make your signal as good as possible.

HANDLE OF THE WEEK: From Wassaic, N.Y., another "Father Time" (the only repeater, ever, in this column), that Berk Brizzle. Repeater because that "Father Time" of Swarthmore, Pa., passed away some years ago, when I was still a CB'ing kid.

QUIZ OF THE WEEK: Since this is Kentucky Derby time, do you know any owners or trainers of thoroughbreds using CB for hoofing purposes? Anyone with an answer gets the Kazoo-of-the-Week prize!

The Blue Kazoo welcomes questions, anecdotes and interesting experiences about CB from readers. While the Blue Kazoo cannot provide individual replies, material of general interest will be used in the column. Write to the Blue Kazoo, c/o Field Newspaper Syndicate, 401 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60611.



Do Brides Get Writer's Cramp?

By Abigail Van Buren

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DEAR ABBY: Why is it that brides-to-be can write hundreds of invitations and wedding announcements to people they scarcely know, but after the wedding they can't write a simple thank-you note for the gift?

This has happened to me so often lately I am about ready to stop buying gifts.

You have a booklet on "How To Have a Lovely Wedding." How about writing one on what to do afterwards?

L.S. IN BOONE, IOWA

DEAR L.: I have. It's "How To Write Letters For All Occasions."

DEAR ABBY: The woman signed SICK WITH FRIGHT reminded me of myself not too long ago. I too was afraid to open my mouth in a group because I felt I had nothing important to say.

At age 43, I went back to college and earned a degree in accounting, but I was too shy and self-conscious to stand up and talk in front of a group. Then I joined Toastmasters Club 990 of TRW where I was employed — and still am. Three years later I was elected president of the club!

The first six times I stood before an audience (of only 20), I shook like a leaf. Today, I am calm and enjoy it! Toastmasters is a club where we learn how to listen, think and speak better. There is a Toastmasters Club in nearly every city. Tell SICK WITH FRIGHT to look in the yellow pages of her phone book, or call the Chamber of Commerce. I know she can overcome her fright. If I did it, she can.

EVY IN HAWTHORNE, CALIF.

DEAR EVY: I know you're right. Some of the best speakers I've ever heard were once "sick with fright" but overcame it — thanks to Toastmasters.

DEAR ABBY: Last summer I read a very moving article in your column about a 17-year-old boy who had been killed in a car accident due to his own reckless driving. It made a deep impression on me. Little did I know that we would lose our own 18-year-old son in a car accident soon after. If this letter saves one life it will be worth writing.

Our son wasn't driving Mother's or Father's car, he was walking home from a party with a friend. A car stopped and the driver, a 19-year-old boy, offered the boys a ride. They happily accepted.

The driver started to speed and the police took out after him. He refused to stop. Finally he struck a tree and his car was severed in half!

Our son was killed instantly and his friend died three days later without regaining consciousness. The driver survived with minor injuries. This happened only half a mile from our home.

We later learned that the driver of the car was on probation and the car was stolen, so he was afraid to stop. No alcohol was involved. And yes, Abby, he was our only son.

LONELY IN JOLIET, ILL.

DEAR LONELY: There is a valuable lesson to be learned here. Never accept a ride just because it's offered.

Are your problems too heavy to handle alone? Let Abby help you. For a personal, unpublicized reply, write: Abby, Box 69700, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

BY EMILY WILKENS

Get rid of the blond sausage curls, wipe that sneering expression off her face, and Nellie Oleson (she's the meanie on TV's "Little House on the Prairie") turns into a pleasant, talented 16-year-old actress Alison Argrim, who enjoys playing Nellie for just one reason: She loves to act.

Alison was born into a show business family — her dad is a personal manager, her Mom supplied the voice for Casper the Friendly Ghost among others, and her brother Stefan as a child star was a regular on "Search for Tomorrow" and "Land of Giants."

"Once in awhile, I'd tell my brother my ambition was to be a flight attendant and he'd say, 'Be an actor — it's much more fun.'" Alison told me. Now that she's had a taste of grease paint, she agrees.

"Acting gives you a chance to 'try out' for other professions — maybe play a doctor one day, a teacher the next," she suggested. "And you meet such interesting people. The rewards are incredible, including travel."

Alison sounded very adult, until she let some girlish exuberance slip out and revealed that acting has helped her pursue one of her hobbies — collecting the autographs of famous stars.

How does a teen-ager who wants to act go about it? "You have to be prepared to work very, very hard," Alison told me. "I must have done hundreds of auditions before I got a job for a commercial at age 6."

"I think the most important thing you need is confidence and, after that, perseverance. It could help to take a drama class because you'd be in plays and you might be seen — it's rare but it could happen."

When it comes to perseverance, Alison admits that to see someone who could help her get an audition for a part she wanted, "I'd drop through the ceiling, bore through the floor, crawl through the window, or kick in the door."

A THIN FAMILY

"I'm a slim teen-ager — 'I was a thin child' — Alison never worries about her figure.

"We always ate a lot of fish, chicken and salad and never had fat foods around when I was young because my parents were watching their weight. Weight isn't a problem for me. I didn't eat bread until I was 7. I don't eat a lot at one time but have several mini meals each day."

Alison's big beauty hangup is her hair. Like most teens, she usually washes it daily, using conditioner every few days to get rid of tangles and add body. "And after I use conditioner, I shampoo lightly again," she said. "The big

thing to remember when you wash hair is to rinse, rinse, rinse."

Alison prefers hypo-allergenic makeup because she feels it's best for her oily complexion. "Teens shouldn't use heavy, greasy moisturizing makeup," she said, "it just makes oily skin worse."

In addition to her Nellie Oleson role on "Little House on the Prairie," Alison Argrim has been appearing at comedy clubs in the Los Angeles area. That makes her one of the youngest stand-up comedians in the business. In between lessons (a teacher on the set when she's doing TV, Hollywood High School when she's not) and her working career, Alison finds time to date. Her ideal man is good-looking and has a sense of humor, she says. She rates humor high because "if you think about it, you can probably find something to laugh about even when the worst thing you can think of happens to you."

JUST FOR YOU
Dear Emily: My mother says a lot of actresses had to wear braces and that's why their teeth are so straight. Did Farrah Fawcett-Majors ever wear braces? — Doubtful

Dear Doubtful: I asked Farrah this question recently. Her answer was no. Farrah's dazzling smile is a natural... and her sister has one just like it.

I can tell you of a young actress who's wearing braces right now — they won't come off until June. She's Alison Argrim. For television, Alison puts "orthodontal wax over the plastic braces in front, so they don't show so much," she told me. No, Alison's not happy about wearing braces — who is? — but she's going to whoop with delight when they come off, revealing what promises to be a real movie star smile.

If you're planning Operation Shape-up for summer, you'll find excellent how-to diet secrets from the world's most famous health resorts in "Emily Wilkens' 'Spa Secrets' bulletin. To obtain a

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EMILY WILKENS welcomes letters, but cannot undertake to answer each one. She will use questions of general interest in her column. Address your letters to Emily Wilkens, care of this newspaper.

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Teen Forum

By JEAN ADAMS, Ph.D.
FAST: (Q.) My sister and I were riding around last weekend and we met two guys. They followed us home and we sat and talked to them for a while.

I really liked one of them. His name is Terry. Well, we saw them again this weekend and this time I rode home with Terry and the other boy drove my car.

When we got to my house, we sat out in Terry's truck for about an hour. I like him so much, but I have never done anything but neck with a guy. How do I keep him interested and still stay in Illinois?

(A.) Your letter tells me that necking is not enough for Terry. He wants sex.

He wants it despite the fact that you haven't seen each other but twice, and he followed you home once and drove you home once.

He has not bothered to date you or find out what your interests are, or meet your parents, or take you to a baseball game or a movie or even just to get a pizza or a burger.

What he wants is sex, fast, and no fooling with those other standard ways of getting acquainted.

If you give it to him, he will take it, and when he has all he wants from you he will go looking for another girl to follow home.

Please put more value upon yourself. Please demand more from a boy than just to be followed like a stray dog. When you value yourself, a boy will value you. But not until.

CRUSH: (Q.) I've got a crush on this girl Melissa. She has beautiful brown eyes. I'd like to tell her how beautiful her eyes are and how much I like her, but I can't. Should I try to tell her now or wait till I'm older? I am 13. — Admirer in Pennsylvania.

(A.) Some day soon you can tell Melissa that she has beautiful brown eyes. But don't start out by saying that to her. At first, just talk to her about everyday things. It is not too early to start talking with her in person and on the telephone.

(Have a problem? Write to Dr. Jean Adams, care of this newspaper, P. O. Box 2402, Houston, Texas 77001. Because so many write, Dr. Adams cannot answer you personally. But she will answer readers' questions in Teen Forum daily.) Copyright, 1978, United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

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