Tom Edison:

One of the major reasons I am displeased with what TAP has become is that you have spent nearly 50% of the damn space bitching and venting your spleen and other organs about what you don't like about us, the readers. We subscribed because the original version contained interesting and useful information, not the ravings of an ego-maniac who is pissed at himself because he can't handle the job, and wants somebody else to do it for him. Knock off the crap, and get back to business, or I shall cancel also.

Wash., D.C.

I received the above letter a few days ago and usually whenever someone feels strongly enough to take the time to write a poison pen letter to the editor, there are probably many other readers that feel the same way but are just too damn lazy to voice their opinions or they feel that their complaint letters will never see the editorial page. I could have taken the easy way out and just thrown away your letter but I feel that anybody that takes the time to write me deserves a reply. I'm very sorry that you have expressed all my bitching but it WAS necessary. People are basically lazy. TAP readers are almost dead! To try and get some of our readers to write an article is almost as impossible as trying to get Bell to reduce phone rates. I honestly hoped that if I antagonized enough readers they would get off their asses and write me, even if they began their letter with "Stop bitchin', Edison, here's the info you wanted." No such luck. I then tried an "open door" policy where I decided to tell all our readers EXACTLY where we stood financially. I let you all know that we needed new subscribers fast. As an immediate result to all of your NON-action, I was forced to increase subscription rates! In another attempt to get some help I opened the TAP office from 12 noon to 9:99 PM for the months of July & August. Do you know how many TAP readers came in to help? I won't embarrass TAP by telling you how many people came in, but you could count them all on one hand and still have fingers left over to finger-fuck your girlfriend while cleaning out your ear with your pinky! As for being an ego-maniac, I plead guilty! I'd be a hypocrite if T had given me a swell head! As for being pissed that I can't do a better job but considering the fact that since I joined TAP we've published regularly and the fact that I have a full time outside job along with several other part time jobs, I don't feel that I've done up the job too much, do you? And as for wanting someone else to do the work for me, you're absolutely correct! I'd like nothing better than to sit on my fat ass just collecting the money and let some other sucker do all the work, but unfortunately it's just not happening that way. I wish that some of you who are bitching about the lack of technical info in our more recent issues could spend just one day at the TAP office! After 47 issues, there is just so much reader supplied info. I admit that I've had to scrape the bottom of the barrel sometimes for articles, but at least I've tried, which is more than I can say for most of you! Don't complain to me about the lack of technical info! You send it to me and I'll print it!

And finally, don't you threaten me about cancelling your sub. If you put a gun to your head to force you to subscribe and I can assure you that even with your subscription, TAP will survive.

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No. 48

Pay Bills By Phone

Automatic Telephone Payments (ATP) is an idea whose time has arrived. The service may be offered by 100 banks throughout the country within the next few months. Why do consumers like the idea? The overwhelming plus is that it is easy and convenient. It saves lots of time. There are no checks to write, no envelopes to mail, no stamps to address. You can use the service almost any time, day or night. From where you have time before you leave.

ATP cuts down on paperwork. Your record keeping is made simpler. It eliminates the embarrassment of writing bad checks for regular bills. It's usually far cheaper than conventional bill paying methods. It is cost as little as a 10 cent or 95 cent phone call. Some financial institutions charge no service fee at all. Some charge a monthly flat fee of $2 to $4. Some charge a 10 cent or 25 cent fee per transaction.

Consumers who are trying the service for the first time are so impressed with what the banks have to offer that many are asking that they be turned on the service. The benefits of ATP are so great that they are becoming a regular part of the routine of many families.

The system is so simple that it can be operated by even the most inexperienced customer. You get step by step instructions from a live operator or recording. The system is so foolproof that there is no danger of someone getting the wrong account and a identical account being hit.

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Dear TAP,

Your new smaller type is super — more information in less space. I was particularly surprised to see the article on radar speed detectors as I had just been reading an article in Electronic Magazine (copy enol) describing how good all J. Newton Simon, etc. of Condor, Kansas... (316) 331-7400... has put a 6800 microphone in their newest radar gun. The object is to balance the tactical range now, where the pistol grip range is left off until its victim is well within range, then raised smoothly and activated. It has your picture before your Passport has had time to wake up, let alone your foot react. The micro-controlled gun operates with a modulation-programming system which eliminates the transmitter's pulse width and repetition efficiency, it also raises the transmission detection to a point that a detector doesn't have time to respond. I can't see any reasonable electronic countermeasure to this gun, particularly since its first accessory will be a camera to record your license number, the speed and the date photographically. This device will almost certainly obsolete the radar machine anticipated in the September issue of the TRAVEL... has had, by the way, surfaced as one of the most irritating THE ELECTRONIC publications I've seen. Check out this issue; sure, they're into making money for the publisher, but you can read a lot of reality between 'the lines' (electronics too).

Of course, all this technology is really irrelevant as anyone who has ever contradicted a cop in traffic court knows, the judge listens to the cop. A prior example of this is the primitive trapper who sat in the forest for years trapping small game. Any cop who can solve the time-distance-vision limitation can cheat on this just by filling a switch a little early, get the device using real science in court. It's prohibited in California by V.C. 68008, which specifically prohibits conviction based on devices which measure the time required for you to traverse a certain distance. Related sections define a speed trap, outline the use of unrelated ears. Identify an officer as legally incompetent if he attempts to introduce evidence based on a speed trap or is not in uniform, etc.

The lesson to be learned is that one who drives at a reasonable speed (less than 55) would be well advised to purchase a copy of his or her state's motor vehicle code. I don't know if they all make this information available (40 is a suburb) but California does, and is required to by law. You aren't going to win by denying the violation, as you have to try to get a copy of the state's motor vehicle code. The law is better than the one we were made to learn or know some loophole that will make them rethink in protection sought. I have a couple of helpless bits of knowledge, first as soon as you get a ticket, go to court and plead not guilty for a trial date to take at the judge will allow. You will be arraigned and must be brought to trial within 60 days. It now appears that this trial will be held in a portable, safe, not that the court will be held mobile. If that doesn't happen, there's still a chance that the cop won't show up. I don't have a date today, or that the judge will allow a continuance. If he doesn't, you should say your lawyer didn't show up, whereupon the judge will order the trial to be set to the fifteenth, and you have a lot of cases since you were arraigned, you may more immediately to have the case disposed of for lack of prosecution, and the judge must supply. It's best, of course, to go to the courthouse to go help you with this, in fact they will often oblige you in an attempt to make you feel free, so read the book. Remember, this court-and-lawyer stuff is just a game, and nobody involved takes it very seriously... they just think it's fun. Unfortunately, you are the defendant and the only person who may hold the power to take it seriously.

While I'm digressing from the subject of telephone systems, perhaps I should send out a plea for help in the area of computer science. The unfortunate truth is that most folks don't trust the government, big business, & technology, also don't trust computers. But we're using computers, and the computer myths, to oppose us. The more we understand computers and other implementations of modern societal control, the better chance we have to subvert them. As most the subscribers know, the best way to understand something is play with it. Due to the miracles of modern technology we now have microprocessors... little chips of silicon that can be taught to do lots of interesting things. While I personally feel that they're being used as just devices and will allow us all the joy out of logic design (unless you happen to be a logic designer) I have the power of relatively cheap versatility. They never get tied down, and they're capable of extremely accurate timing, quite a lucrative market has developed around putting little systems into boxes and selling them as computers to bored engineers in industry, but it's not necessary to spend $2000 which is what they say is. The KIM can be found for $175 used, and with a lot of patience and a little insanity can be made to synchronize tapes, class relay contacts, measure frequencies, learn and repeat control sequences, and so forth. With these tools you can be reduced to about $50 by assembling some components, copying someone else's manual, flipping off small parts and hand-wiring. If you try to want an article on sample-eliminating, send a few bucks and I'll find the time.

Because the people who own personal computers tend to come from social strata where both several hundred dollars and the requisite education come naturally, there aren't many revolutionary computer freaks. There is a number of publishers trying to allow up on the computer, and political pressures prevent any exchange of sensitive information. If we send a feeling through where we can transmit information we're desperate need, like encoding algorithms for airline computer network data transfer, access means for FIDELsalers, and so forth. We have the radical (TAP) but shouldn't THE ELECTRONIC. Just a few letters from interested folks appearing in TAP would probably supply the activation for a lot more of the lazy fuckers. I'll be pleasantly surprised (as well as get our own hands) to hear from anyone with a desire to correspond in a less public manner, but I think everybody needs a little bit under the weather. ANON.

The Answer Man

Dear TAP,

This is a BLACK BOX ALERT! About a month or six weeks ago my cousin in L.A. has been a doubtful Black Box user for some time, heard a knock on the door and opened to find a local computer salesperson who described an electronic computer price-cut of every phone call that had been made to him since then. This year they had been alerted by the large number of "announcements" which he had the wrong time. He asked him what he would know and how to build one (or who knew)? When he said no one knew and, where is it (where were you), etc. they told him not to do it; he said they were two of Black Box and they did, to the means to design them. There is no very large number in the New York, but at the very least in the large for those to buy. Can we call in the... 

$40 as partial payment for the talk avoided, and they agreed not to participate. The next include data about the next TAP issue. I don't know what to do since I'm everybody in a number of Black Boxes for a month or so. That might have been a hint.

The Answer Man
The Elephant and the Gnat

A thin little paper with a front cover that says: "The Elephant and the Gnat"

The text begins:

The Elephant and the Gnat

An elephant and a gnat met

"Elephant, will you help me?"

"Help you? At my size!"

"Yes, I will help you."

"But how can you help me?"

"I will put you in a teacup."

"A teacup! That is too small."

"I will put you in a coffee cup."

"A coffee cup! That is too small."

"I will put you in a sugar bowl."

"A sugar bowl! That is too small."

"I will put you in a tea pot."

"A tea pot! That is too small."

"I will put you in the kitchen."

"The kitchen! That is too large."

"Then you do nothing."

"No, I will do nothing."

"What will you do?"

"I will do nothing."

"Then you are of no use to me."

"I am of no use to you."

The gnat died of hunger.

The elephant was not disturbed.

The moral of the story:

"Small is beautiful."

The story ends with a poem:

"The Elephant and the Gnat"

"The elephant was large and grey,"

"The gnat was small and very joy.

"The elephant was proud and loud,"

"The gnat was quiet and meek.

"The elephant was strong and strong,"

"The gnat was weak and meek.

"The elephant was wise and wise,"

"The gnat was foolish and meek.

"The elephant was happy and happy,"

"The gnat was sad and meek.

"The elephant was great and great,"

"The gnat was small and meek."
Dear TAP,

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the 312A HF & DP Trunk Test Set. We are currently supplying a number of Bell System and Independent telephone companies with this test set. The primary area of interest and application has been in switching maintenance. I have enclosed several data sheets for your convenience.

The 312A Trunk Test Set is far less costly than competitive instruments, and yet has superior performance and features. The price of the 312A, which operates from both central office battery supply and its own internal battery pack, is $650. The small size and light weight makes the 312A very versatile and easy to use.

If you or anyone else at your company would like more information regarding the 312A HF & DP Trunk Test Set, please call or write:

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Dessert of Day:

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Pot Luck...

Two Kittatinny Regional High School students face Juvenile court action because they added too much "plee" to Brownies in a home economics class, police said. State police in Newton said yesterday that two 16-year-old boys in a cooking class in the school in the Sussex County community of Stanhope loaded brownies with marijuana and passed them to classmates.

The teacher became suspicious when students began walking down the wrong hallway, police said.