THE MODULAT

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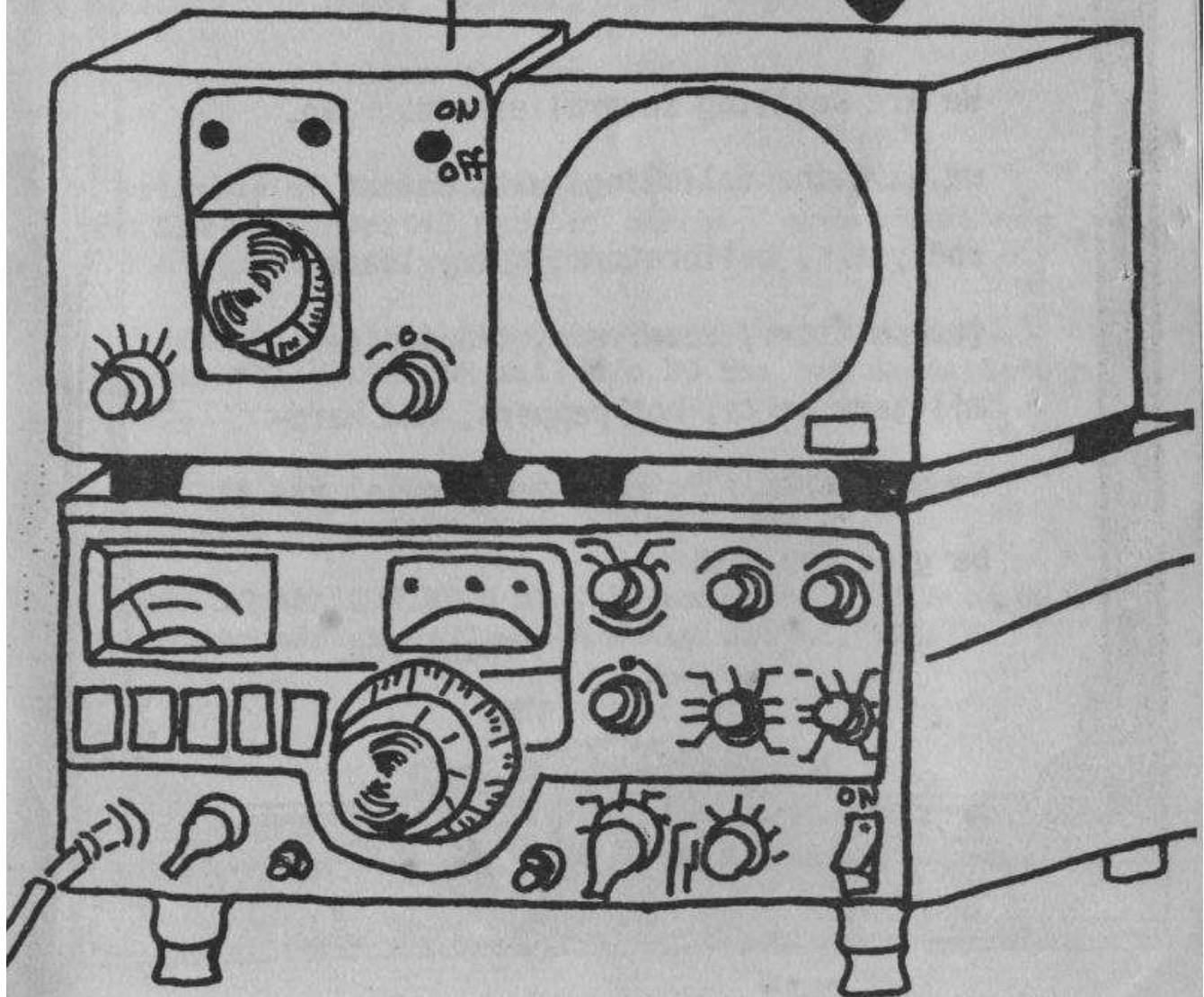
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Sara Ponemone
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BARC

MEETING SCHEDULE: General Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. Business Meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

MEETING SITE: The Ames Methodist Church, 9 West Walker Avenue, Pikesville, Maryland.

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Articles of interest to Amateurs are welcome. HAM ADS are inserted free of charge. Commercial ads are accepted at a yearly fee.

Please submit all items by the 1st of the month. Address all MODULATOR mail c/o PO Box 163 Randallstown 21133.

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LISTEN TO AMATEUR NEWS AT 7:30 am by Rol, K3RA on 07/67. Repeat broadcast 6:00 pm 34/94 by Julian, WB3AAU.

SEPTEMBER 1977

MODULATOR

A REPORT ON PC'77   by Robert Glaser N3IC

Personal computing is a new hobby made possible by the development of "computers on a chip," called microprocessors in the last few years. Last summer for the first time there was a conference called Personal Computing 76, or PC'76 for short. This was the first conference on computers intended entirely for the layman hobbyist. It was a great success, and it has turned into a yearly affair. Having missed PC'76, I decided to attend PC'77, August 27th and 28th in Atlantic city, NJ.

Just about every manufacturer in the microcomputer business was represented, each showing his wares. It is amazing how fast the computer systems have advanced in the limited time since their inception. There were a multitude of color graphics displays, mostly demonstrated by game programs. There was Monopoly game (quite appropriate for the setting) with the board in color on a CRT screen showing the players' moves and the cards, as well as a blackjack game showing the cards in color. Both of these were a sight to behold, the colors outstanding. There was also a color graphics display utilizing a light pen, which allows pictures to be drawn on the screen.

Another impressive application of computers demonstrated was voice synthesis. Some systems were set up to repeat certain messages, while a more interesting setup allowed one to type in a message, and if the words contained in the message were known to the computer, it said them! It took little time before this device was calling, "CQ DX CQ DX CQ DX FROM N3IC N3IC N3IC." Of course, everybody thought I was crazy. There were several computers playing music, with various selections to choose from. And I

wouldn't try to even count the number of Star Trek games that were running. There was one fellow who had made an entire booth with controls and a large screen in the front for which many Trekkies were lined up to play their favorite game, this time actually in the Captain's seat.

Some of the more crowded displays were Commodore, Heathkit, Radio Shack, RCA, and MITS. Commodore was showing off its new PET (Personal Electronics Transactor) computer, and it is indeed going to have a major impact on the hobby market. This self-contained system includes CRT, Keyboard, BASIC, cassette recording, and graphics. Heathkit and its 8080 system and LSI-11 system on demonstration. Radio Shack was showing its new Z80 based processor system, with the computer built into the keyboard. It will be available on an order only basis from certain of their stores. RCA was demonstrating its new COSMAC VIP processor which has built in video and cassette interfaces. Many game programs are available already for the VIP from RCA. They had one wired into a Heath HW-2036 synthesized rig, performing a priority scan function, with read out on a CRT. The most impressive thing that MITS was showing was its multi-user BASIC running in their Altair. I was highly impressed, as I sat down at one of the terminals, and promptly gave it a CPU-time consuming number crunching program, as I attentively watched the other three users to see how much my hog program would bog them down, and much to my surprise, it didn't! Hats off to MITS.

There were quite a few hams there (many a walkie-talkie was hanging on a belt), and I attended a talk on ham radio applications for hobby computers by Dr. Robert Suding, a W0 who is active on SSTV as well as much else. The ARRL and AMSAT were represented, and many companies which cannot even be mentioned. Carl Helmers, editor of BYTE magazine was there with staff, and I had quite an interesting discussion with him on a variety of subjects.

It was well attended, as many demonstrations were difficult to see through the crowds. I understand that the hotel was more crowded on Saturday than Sunday, and it was amply full on Sunday.

Aside from the conference, I had a fun time motorcycle

mobiling up there Sunday morning, and returning that night.
By the way, with 2 watts and a 5/8 antenna on the bike, I
held 07/67 through the Aberdeen exit on I95, and had no
problem working it on the Delaware Memorial Bridge. I
had opportunity to use the WR3ABI 34/94 near Philly and
WR2AFL, also 34/94, in AC.

My opinion of PC'77? Great, but phooey on the $10
admission--however, CU at PC'78!

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FCC HAS 10-4 FOR CBers: ITS SLIDE SHOW IS AVAILABLE
(In case you didn't read this in THE MORNING SUN.)

Hey, you CBers the Federal Communications Commission
has a big 10-4 for you.
For non-CBers, a 10-4 means "I've got a message for
you."
The FCC has announced it has produced a 10-minute
cartoon slide-and-sound show about CB rules, entitled
"10-4 Uncle Charlie." In CB lingo, Uncle Charlie is the
FCC.
The show is available for purchase by clubs, associations,
schools and others interested in CB radio.
Viewers will meet such CBers as Rhinestone Cowboy,
Earthmama, Bucketmouth and others.
The program includes 72 slides, a 10-minute audio tape
cassette, a script and a question-and-answer sheet designed
to answer most questions CBers are asking about FCC rules.
Phyll Horne, chief of the FCC's Field Operations Bureau,

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