

30 December 1971

Dear Harold:

A hurried note that might save you an unnecessary trip into Washington with your TC-40. In all probability the trouble is not with the machine, but with a cassette.

At the top corners of each cassette, on the top edge, are two little break-out tabs in the plastic shell. This is a safety device to prevent erasing a permanent record by accident. That is, to make sure you don't erase a permanent record you wish to keep, you break out the tab at the upper left of each side. This allows a small tongue of metal to penetrate the cassette when the cassette is inserted into the machine, which locks the recording button and makes it impossible to record anything more on that side of the tape. Sometimes these little tabs get broken accidentally, and the effect is exactly the same -- you can't get the recording button down, which is the whole idea -- to keep the operator from accidentally erasing something. To defeat this system, all you have to do is to find the cassette with the tab broken out, and put a small piece of scotch tape over the hole. When a cassette thus taped is put into the machine, the metal tongue is pushed back into the machine, which unlocks the recording button and permits it to be depressed.

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I suppose this happens to all owners of cassette recorders. It certainly did to me, and I actually got to the shop with the machine. ~~wikx~~ The guy took one look.... I, too, had read all this in the instructions, and still forgot it when the crunch came. We have let things slide so for the past year that for the past six weeks we simply have had to attend to an accumulation of things, plus the holiday season which we avoid as much as possible, but that's not enough, of course. Anyway, we hope to get back to catching up on more interesting things in a week or so, at which time you should hear further from us.

In the meantime, thanks for letting us know which stories you have from the New Orleans paper. I note you have some which reached you without dates. When we get into the catching-up bit we'll supply anything you don't have, plus dates for those where you lack dates.

We have the following mailings from you since last accounting. Those dates followed by (?) indicate smudged postmarks where we had to guess at the date: 8nov, 15nov, 7dec, 10dec(?), 11dec, 14dec(?), 18dec(?), 19dec(?) and 24dec. The last two had been opened and resealed. That for 19dec(?) had been resealed crookedly. That for 24dec was less carelessly done, with three small bits of scotch tape added along the overlap. I mention this in case you opened them yourself for a last-minute enclosure and then resealed them before mailing.

Many thanks for all the enclosures, clippings, etc. All requiring comment will be dealt with eventually. We're both fine, just surfacing into other people's world for a few weeks, which of course knocked our own into a cocked hat.

Our best to you both,


jdw