CBing Into the future

CBers have developed a language of their own, and the craze has spread to foreign lands. There are over 20 million CBers in this country—and more continue to get in on the action.

By Tea Montier

About the greatest little innovation to come along in the form of two - way communications since the walkie - talkie is the CB radio. Now from what CB 'ers would have you believe there's a whole class of folk in America who sincerely 'get off' on trading vocal sounds with little black boxes.

But beyond the recreational uses connected with CB or Citizens Band radio comes the more practical advantages of access to a unit. That practicality leads to the question of unit placement in the shrinking cars of the '80's, yet another factor CB'ers have to deal with.

CB rasio is a communications phenomenon touching people of all races, from all parts of the world, and most of them just like to talk.

"It's personal communication," spurts Terry Carter an avid CB 'er, " . . can you imagine the thrill I got when I talked to a guy in New Zealand, and then got a confirmation card (post card)?"

What Terry is referring to is the apparent raw thrill that many CB 'ers experience when making conversation with parties long distances, across the city, across the country or across the world.

The ability to initiate conversations at random, to talk freely with people whom they've never met just seems to tickle many a CB 'er and it certainly keeps the industry alive.

There are CB magazines and CB postcards, conventions and clubs, all designed to boost interest and participation in the communications sport. That sport however is not taken lightly by many CB 'ers who pride themselves on respecting the airwaves and "policing their own."

"CB's are coming out of the hands of the 20 to 23 - year - old," adds Mr. Carter, 36, himself into CB's since 1977, "All serious CB'ers are successful adults who own their own homes or vehicles because you certainly can't put up an antenna on rented property or someone else's car!"

Advertisements for CB's promote the advantages and practicalities of Citizen's Band radio. During the recent gas crisis CB 'ers were able to stay in contact with each other to find out where the gas was and the gas lines weren't thereby eliminating unecessary travel, time and expense.

There's more to CB'ing than just putting a unit in your car though, a little 'schooling' is involved. "If you don't use the jargon right then other CB'ers won't talk to you," adds Carter alias The Mechanic, " . . they'll call you a good buddy, or a channel 19 resident and that means that you're new to the CB operation."

Black CB 'ers say they've learned to use the standard language well however they've tailored it to fit their needs. They've developed their own codes systems where the standard phrases used by the average CB 'er takes on new meanings in the black communities.

Citizen's Band radio falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission. Amongst the FCC's CB regulations are stipulations that CB 'ers not contact other stations located more than 150 miles away or talk to foreign or unlicensed stations.

Despite those very simple rules, CB 'ers have been "shooting skip" and talking to foreign stations since the time Citizens Band was first inplemented (1958).

With well over 20 - million CB 'ers in the U.S. the FCC finds it extremely difficult to enforce its own rulings, rulings CB 'ers say are unnecessarily restrictive anyway.

'Skip' is a phenomenon where radio waves bounce off the ionosphere 'skipping' large distances and making communication possible between CB 'ers in different states and even different countries.

"The first time I was operating my unit and skip occurred, I picked up Texas and was ecstatic!" exclaims veteran CB operator Terry Carter. "Skip follows the sun, you wake up in the morning and you hear Puerto Rico, Europe and the Islands. You go to bed at night and hear California, Mexico and South Amercca."

Probably foremost among concerns about the mobile CB unit is the question of placement and how to keep it from being stolen.

As cars of the '80's continue to get smaller and smaller CB 'ers are faced with the challenge of having to find creative ways of mounting their units so that they are easily accessible and preferably out of sight.

Hidden radios, one - handers with controls in the microphone, are great for recreational use. The dash and underneath the seats are only two of the places to consider when installing a CB rig.

CB Club Jacket for group in Baltimore.

Freddie Williams of the Tree Toppers CB Club operates a mobile rig. Club members also have base stations in their homes.

—Focus

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awaken your sense of tactile perception. You'll find that you can layer a sweater over slacks, put a sweater coat or jacket over it, and top it off with a woven shawl or scarf.

Advances in technology, have revived an interest in knitwear. Textures that were previously available only in hand-knits can now be made faster and cheaper by machine.

Most knit garments keep their shape much longer if they are folded rather than hung. This also applies to washing. Most will retain their original shape if they are laid flat to dry.