

Skipping 50 Webcasts per hour and other news

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Greetings to Jewish New Year celebrants

The Jewish New Year begins Friday at sunset, and we wish those who celebrate it a happy, healthy and prosperous 5781. Wow. They're all thousands of years older than they look!

Pro Ears has a wealth of stealth

Both lightweight, in-ear Pro Ears Stealth 28 (online \$60) and Stealth Elite (online \$140) cut ambient and abrupt noise by 28 dB, both put Bluetooth electronics behind your neck, both can amplify ambient sound up to 5X and both USB-recharge. The Elite has Bluetooth 4.1 (30' range), noise-isolation mikes, high/low dynamic level sound compression and noise-cancelling. Look up both and let Gary know of your interests. **Contact: Gary Lemanski, Altus Brands (Grawn, MI) 231-421-3810 glemanski@altusbrands.com <http://altusbrands.com>**

Tame your water at the funnel of love

Coming very soon, Magnation water-smoothing/improving technology in a funnel. With Good Gracious That's Magnacious, tap water goes in and tantalizingly terrific water comes out. It's smoother on the palate, better at dissolving flavors and never needs replacement filters, crystals or consumables. Cook with it. Make drinks with it. Coffee tastes richer. Soups taste fresher. Ask Stef. **Contact: Stef Jenzeh, Magnation Corporation (Oakland, CA) 510-467-3900 stef.jenzeh@rainlikewater.com <http://rainlikewater.com>**

Blue Iris shuns camera orthodoxy

It's almost expected that surveillance video monitoring software will require that all connected cameras be from a specific brand or meet other constrained requirements; that's not at all true of Blue Iris Video Security and Webcam software for Windows (\$70). Most IP-connected or USB cameras can work with it, including most doorbell cameras, many nanny-cams, repurposed webcams and more, including all of the latest/greatest high-end PoE cameras. Even better, Blue Iris can get those cameras to participate in levels of functionality that few competitors can match. **Contact: Ken Pletzer, Perspective Software (Northville, MI) 248-308-2418 ken@blueirissoftware.com <http://blueirissoftware.com>**

Triplett weaves which-wire witchcraft

Or make that which-craft. When the 2 ends of a wire are in separate places, a time-proven way to match them is to inject a tone on one end and listen for it at the other; check out these tone and trace Triplett products. The simple CTX30 (\$25) handles a lot of phone, alarm and speaker cable traces. Fox & Hound Jr. (\$63) is a favorite compact duo for field work. Triplett's CTX590A ProTone Wire Locator Kit (\$95) uses an inductive probe with an oversize speaker. The Fox & Hound Premium Kit includes a tone generator with overload protection and an amplified inductive probe. The new CTX200PA (\$115) is tailored for RJ45 and coax cabling, including a wiring analysis. Fox & Hound Hotwire (\$220) answers the call for a live-wire-compatible multiple-voice toner with a sensitive precision probe. **Contact: Arpineh Mullaney, Triplett (Manchester NH) 603.621.6039 amullaney@triplett.com <https://triplett.com>**

Special sensors let uHoo read carbon monoxide, dioxide

Furnaces are firing up now, or soon, and when combustion happens, one common carbon compound can get thrown out of balance and its more lethal cousin can make a surprise visit. Happily, homes that monitor IAQ with uHoo (online \$329 at Amazon et al) can keep atop of both. Keeping tabs on carbon monoxide involves an electrochemical sensor; remember, without an alert to that, naps can start that never end. That would be an extreme case with carbon dioxide, but fatigue and some pains are common when it gets out of balance with oxygen, so uHoo uses a sophisticated NDIR sensor for that; NDIR is non-dispersive infrared spectrometry. As always, uHoo handles the tech and the science, lets you read the numbers if that's what you want, but more significantly, alerts you to the need to do something and suggests simple somethings to do. Ask Dustin. **Contact: Dustin Jefferson Onghanseng, uHoo (Hong Kong) skype: dustinonghanseng dustinonghanseng dustin@uhooair.com <https://uhooair.com>**

Nostrils damn us

Now that science is identifying bradykinin peptide attacks on ACE2 enzymes in the nostrils as how Covid-19 attacks, there may be new roles for some ZQuiet products. We're not ignoring the snoring, but any shift from nose breathing to mouth breathing circumvents natural mechanisms for nurturing defenses within the nostrils, even white blood cells. That could be one more reason to consider using the nostril-expanding ZQuiet Breathe (\$10) nasal insert; expanding the nostrils also reduces the incident air pressure of breathing and shrinks the range from which infectious agents in the air would be inhaled. Ask Dan. **Contact: Dan Webster, ZQuiet (Shelburne, VT) 802-985-3013 dan@Zquiet.com <http://zquiet.com>**

Special Report: Retail/etail changes beyond detail

Shopping malls are converting upper floors into living quarters; common-area HVAC costs make them economically unsustainable with low occupancy of retail spaces. For stores, chains and the vendors who sell goods into them, the pandemic has been a death knell for already-weak performers, but this has opened up real and virtual shelf space for many vendors whose goods would not have been selected in a more normal era. One specific example of a strong success in this era is Bed Bath & Beyond online (as well as in stores, to some extent); much of the strength has been in a product mix embracing many items that make working at home more tolerable or more productive. Elsewhere in the economy, we note that luxury hotels have recovered from occupancy rates under 30% and are now seeing occupancy over 50%. The pandemic is fostering a Darwinian purge of the weak and rewarding those that adapt to the new realities.

Newstips Review: Wayzn sliding glass door automator

Wayzn is a device intended for dog owners that can open or close sliding glass doors through either its app or by detecting the motion of the size and rough profile of your dog. An AC adapter powers it. There's a process (some of it before you order) for fitting it to your sliding glass doors and orienting it for left or right opening. The actuator is a rod arm that extends and retracts with enough oomph to push or pull the door along its track; from the whirring sound inside it, we surmise that the mechanism is a screw jack (and if you're not familiar with these, you may enjoy what you learn when you look them up). Bottom line: Wayzn is a way out for a dog that just may otherwise create an indoor cleanup challenge, and back in as well, while allowing you or others control over when and how that happens and leaving the rest to the device's muscle and mind.

Newstips Review 2: Spiffy Gear KYU LED light combo

Orili sent a collection of their innovative light band products, including a KYU6 bicolor (warm and daylight white) wearable slap-on LED bracelet, 2 KYU6 RGB counterparts, a panel that holds all three (stripe-style), a cold-show camera mount and a Lumiee 3-light USB charging cable. The whites let you set a desired color temperature or set your choice of effects. The RGB bands blend red, blue and green into 15 other colors and their own selection of effects. Each of the bands has a magnetic back and a mounting hole; the 3-band mount clamps on geometrically. Bottom line: Spiffy Gear LED bands are useful as still or video fill lights, or for light effects, or just for fun.

Newstips Review 3: Klein-Kurve heavy-duty stripper/crimper

Uninsulated terminals and lugs may be needed to mate with connections (especially ground connections) when doing wiring, and the new Klein Tools K12065CR Klein-Kurve (grip series) heavy-duty wire stripper/crimper tool can crimp lugs or terminals onto 10-20 AWG stranded or 8-18 solid wire. These same sizes fit its stripper holes, so it's capable of dealing with larger-gauge wires than we've been using. Its cutter blades are a little longer, which also improve its handling of larger cables. While it's obviously built for strength, we found it to be faster and nimbler at stripping Romex conductors than most of the other tools here. Bottom line: Klein's new Klein-Kurve heavy-duty stripper/crimper cuts through bigger work with noteworthy ease.

Newstips Review 4: Audience AV Jewel cable lifter

Audience AV caters to extreme audiophiles who are intolerant of the least little bit of extraneous noise or impurity in their listening, and in what may be their least-complicated, least-tech product ever, they sent us their new Jewel cable lifters. Those extreme audiophiles tend to be uncompromising in their cabling, using power cables and speaker wires that are of a considerably larger diameter than what less-demanding listeners employ and, as a result, they're heavy. Over the years, there have been several offerings of cable lifters that raise those cables off the ground and, when placed near their point of connection (power outlet or speaker terminals), help reduce the strain on those connections that result from the weight of those cables. In this realm, spousal approval is a factor of continuing significance, so these are glass cubes, roughly 2 inches on a side, and with a gently grooved top; at a distance, they look like crystal, making them less disruptive to décor. To the uneducated, they look like uppity cigar holders. Bottom line: Jewel cable lifters from Audience AV were born to reduce noise, both from connections and from significant others.

Newstips Review 5: Triplett pocket thermometer

Triplett sent their TMP10 pocket thermometer which appealed to our grilling side with a food-grade stainless-steel probe for measuring air, liquids and food to 0.1-degree resolution with 1°C/1.8°F accuracy. Astride the LCD readout are power and C/F buttons on the left, Max/Min and Hold on the right. This is a handy way to check the internal temperature of grilling meats, for example, without leaving a hole as big as a 16-penny nail. Bottom line: Triplett's slim TMP10 pocket thermometer slips away easily into a kitchen drawer for cool accuracy when cooking.

Newstips Review 6: Worx 4V Max cordless screwdriver kit

Worx sent their delightful 4V Max compact cordless screwdriver, a cylinder slightly larger than a motorcycle handgrip with a USB-C charging port at one end, a 1/4" magnetic chuck at the other, just ahead of its LED work lights. Between, a pushbutton lets you cycle it through 3 torque settings and a slide switch gets it spinning in a forward/fastening or reverse/unfastening direction to a maximum of 300 rpm. It comes in a carry case with shaped chambers for the driver, a USB charging cord, 10 bits, a magnetic bit extension and a longer Phillips bit, all included. This driver fits where a lot of bigger tools won't and it's very easy to keep on hand for the occasional screwy needs that we all occasionally encounter. Bottom line: The Worx 4V Max cordless screwdriver kit is exactly the kind of tool that every handyman wants to keep handy, man.

HVAC ready for prime time

Our starting point was a furnace, an air conditioner, an old round thermostat (bimetal spring and mercury switch; *that* old; required manual switching from heating to cooling) and a rust-dripping humidifier. We gathered the goods and brought in Jack, our favorite HVAC guy. There's now a new humidifier and a 90 pint/day dehumidifier with a forced air intake, all controlled by a Honeywell Prestige thermostat with sensors indoors, outdoors and in the ducts and adaptive smarts for controlling everything as if we were being smart and riding it all the time. There's also an Emerson/White-Rogers/Sensi Predict 10-sensor system to give us early warnings when HVAC elements start underperforming. And the UVC Power 4-lamp disinfection array (90% reduction in

still-active microorganisms with every pass) is safely wired to its double ballast wall box, using flexible duct where the wiring crosses the HVAC coolant lines. We custom-built a top-hinge metal door, flanges hugging the sides of the duct and adhesive-attached magnet strips holding tight against the face; it covers a UVC lamp-access hole and overlaps it by an inch on all 4 sides . Replacing the off-trunk ducts comes next, and that should end this phase of upgrades.

On PCRS: Stage craftiness

Marty's segment on Wednesday night's **Personal Computer Radio Show** (archives appear at <http://hankkee.net>) – is about an aspect of TV studios that few outsiders know, that they are large areas within which smaller areas are used for individual sets, and what this means for designing the lighting and camera placement options within that space, and how that's happening in the basement studio he's (still) building.

On CTR: DIY or don't

Marty's segment on **Computer Talk Radio** (<http://computertalkradio.com/podcastCTR/>) next Saturday is about guidelines and decisions about what parts of a product anybody might try to DIY (do-it-yourself) and at what point you should consider letting a pro come in to finish the work.

Winter a wonderland?

In a sense, there will be a lot of wonder this winter – wondering about Covid-19 and its eventual prevention and cure, wondering about our politics and where they go from here, wondering when the marketplace can ever return to normal. Some are more familiar wonders, like wondering how long the next power failure will be, what the holidays will be like this year and how far off lies anything even resembling normal. On what subjects will your winter wonders land? **Contact: Lord Martin Winston, Newstips (Chagrin Falls, OH) 440-384-3111; marty@Newstips.com Skype: [martywinston](https://www.skype.com/user/martywinston) <http://Newstips.com>**

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