

WILSON

2m FM Transceiver

The basic circuit of the Wilson transceiver has evolved from the Ken unit a year ago to the Henry Tempo FMH — and now it is the Wilson. But there are changes — substantial changes — and all for the better. The Ken was a lot of transceiver for its price, but some amateurs wanted a hotter receiver and wanted a little more poop in the output. The Wilson has a new front end and it is a hot one. It also has a better rear end for more poop on transmit.

There are some other benefits to this rig when compared with other HT's on the market — things like the netting capacitors on all of the crystals, both transmit and receive. This makes it a lot easier to get the unit right on channel. And all of the crystals are plugged in too, not just some. The earlier Ken units had two channels soldered in — which was not serious where you had a use for both 34/94 and 94/94 — but these days, with no 34/94 repeater in New York, Chicago, Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, etc., that turned out to be a rather serious wasted channel. And in the 34/94 areas, the 94/94 pair wasn't all that valuable. Better that all crystals can be plugged in as in the Wilson. The fact is that a five channel HT with two soldered in channels is a three channel radio.

The Wilson has six channels — and that is none too many in most areas. It is none too few either, for seldom are you in an area where you can reach more than six repeaters with an HT. Considering the size of the HT — and there is more than a little resistance to the larger HT's such as the Unimetrix — more than six channels would begin to crowd things inside so the unit would have to be bigger. You want a unit that is comfortable to hold in the hand — that will fit in the pocket — or on the belt.

Speaking of holding in the hand — one of the really annoying things about most HT's is that if you have any kind of noise level you have to

hold the speaker up to your ear and then quickly swing the HT down to speak in the loudspeaker when it is your time to transmit. This little maneuver usually takes longer than the time between transmissions on the repeater, so you are aced out. With some ops you have to be mighty fast of finger to break in and that part of a second it takes you to swing the HT from your ear to your mouth you'll lose out. The Wilson has thymike mounted toward the bottom of the unit, right where your mouth comes when you put the speaker to your ear.

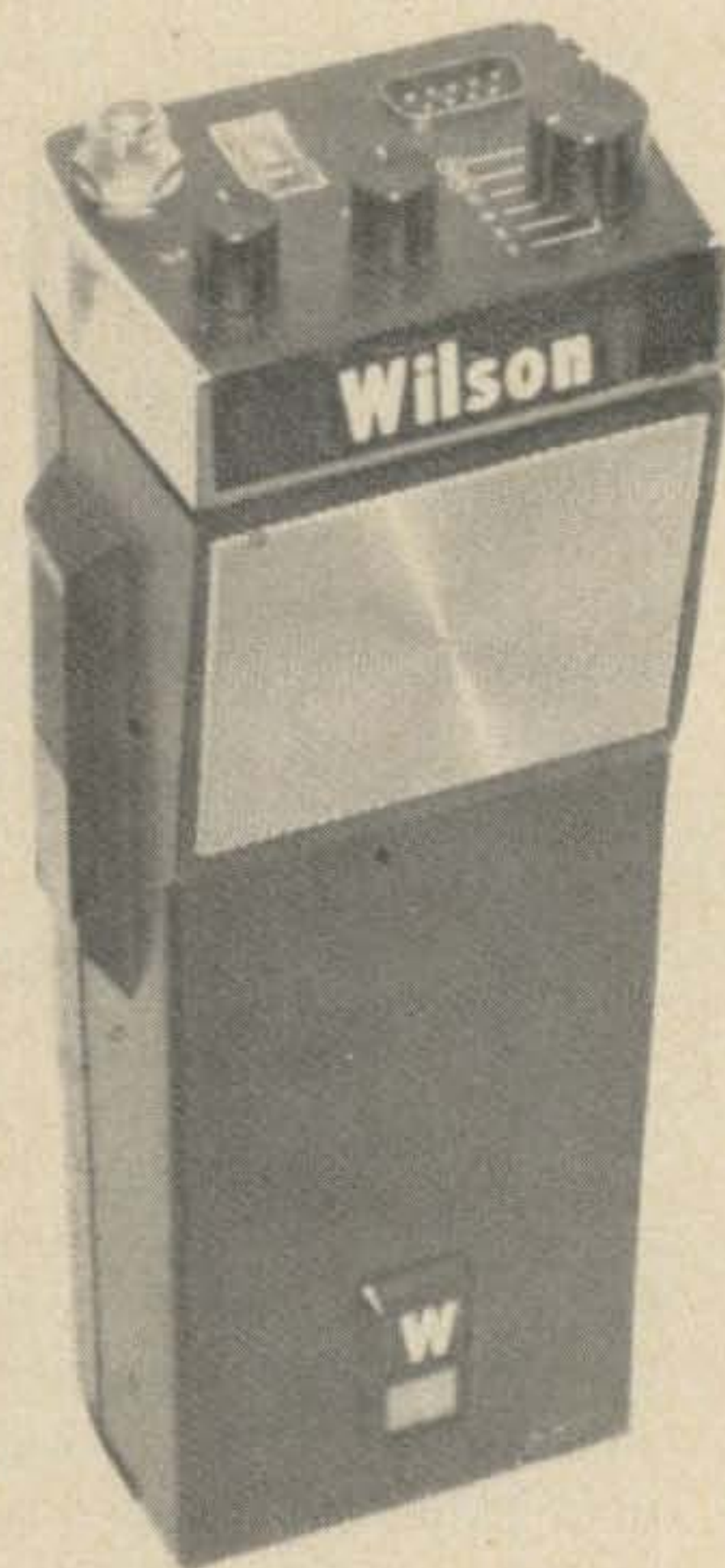
The use of the separate mike (such as you'll find on the late Motorola HT's) results in considerably better audio. You'll find that reports are most gratifying on your audio.

Another big hassle with the Motorola units are those incredibly expensive nicad battery packs they use. The Wilson uses those low cost AA size nicads (you can put in regular AA flashlight batteries in an emergency) — these batteries sell at every Radio Shack or Lafayette store for peanuts — or you can even catch someone like Hal Babylon (advertised in 73) with surplus nicads for a fraction of the Radio Shack price!

When you use your HT on your belt — for instance at hamfests — you want a remot mike that plugs into the unit. The Wilson has a plug for this — and it also feeds out the audio from the loudspeaker which you can hear from a small speaker which is mounted right in the mike case!

The S-meter is handy when you are in a weak signal area and want to peak up a repeater in order to be sure to get the best signal back into it. It doubles as a battery indicator so you won't run your nicads down too far and reverse them. Nicads don't like that.

The circuit board for the Wilson is the size of the case — and this means that everything is easy to get at for servicing. If you've ever tried to fix a Motorola HT-220 you will appreciate the room in the Wilson for work —



and the use of small, but not invisible parts.

One problem with the earlier Ken units was a weakness of the internal molded track for the battery pack — it often broke when the HT was dropped — and who doesn't drop one now and then? The Wilson may break if you try hard enough, but it will take an incredible beating before giving up.

Obviously the Wilson is quite a rig — and one would expect it to come through at around \$280 or so. Wilson is selling them for only \$199 for reasons best known to themselves. It would seem prudent to get one of these radios before the folks at Wilson wise up.

...STAFF