

New barrier saves one driver's life

A barrier system adapted from aircraft carriers has already saved the life of at least one Texas motorist.

Dr. T. J. Hirsch and Dr. E. L. Marquis of the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) took the idea of the barrier to stop aircraft on a flight deck and installed it on Texas highways.

"There are several areas along roads and highways which are dangerous to vehicles when leaving the travelway at high speed," Marquis said. "In many cases, conventional guardrails or crash cushions are not effective or economical.

"Some examples are the hole between twin bridges on divided highways, the deadend of a road or highway, or barriers to close off entrance and exit ramps on freeways," he said.

Going in the gap between twin bridges or off the road on the approach to an overpass could result in a car running into traffic below.

The researchers developed a chain link fence vehicle-arresting system designed specifically to prevent motorists from entering the gap between twin bridges on divided highways. A guardrail would be unsafe because the vehicle would be impacting almost head-on.

"Each end of the fence is attached to an energy absorber mounted on a standard wooden guardrail post," Marquis said. "Similar devices have been used at automobile drag race tracks.

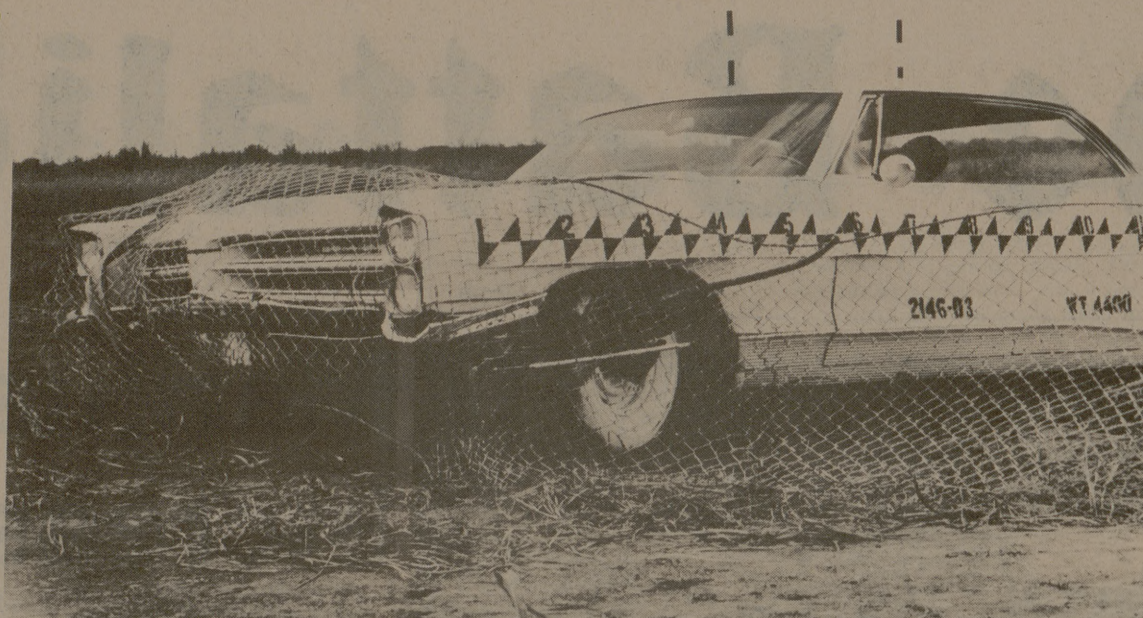
"The net consists of 11 gauge chain-link fence, 48 inches high, supported by posts driven in the ground. The posts are spliced with brass screws to provide a breakaway feature.

"For the TTI test, a 2½-ton auto was driven into the barrier three times at 60 miles per hour," Marquis said. "After it was over, the damage to the car was minor, not even a broken headlight."

A letter that Marquis received from the Texas Highway Department stated that a test unit of the barrier located on U. S. Highway 59 in Nacogdoches County had been used over the weekend.

"Sometime during the weekend someone struck the dragnet..." the letter stated. "The dragnet apparently performed as hoped, for the driver evidently backed out off the net and continued on his journey."

"We have been unable to determine who struck the net," the letter said. "The Department of Public Safety has no record of an accident at this location nor have we found the car that was involved."



TAMU's test car was virtually undamaged after three successive 60 miles per hour collisions with fence-type crash barrier.

Mexican institute aids computer circuit research

Officials at TAMU were notified last Friday that the National Institute of Astrophysics, Optics and Electronics in Puebla, Mexico has added \$12,712 to a joint scientific program the schools are conducting.

A total of \$53,325 has been contributed to the cooperative electrical engineering program by the institute. TAMU co-organizer Dr. J. L. Stone said the research will be on integrated injection-logic circuits

applied to computer circuits.

Stone said a new concept allows more information on a single circuit. The new technique will bring highly sophisticated computers within the economic reach of all businesses.

"We're developing fast, extremely small transistor integrated circuits for use in computer memories," Stone said. "One use is in building simpler, longer-lived solid-state watches. It's not so much the extended life of the battery but rather the circuit is simpler to make."

He speculates the new circuits will eventually make watches as cheap as pocket calculators. Stone said a refining operation makes the circuit faster.

In this program, discoveries by one part of the research facility is passed to the other. This way, staffs and facilities of the two institutions complement each other.

Darlington takes post as E.D. department head

Robert P. Darlington, a Massachusetts architect with a teaching and research background, is the new head of TAMU's Environmental Design Department.

Dean Raymond D. Reed of TAMU's College of Architecture and Environmental Design said the appointment was effective yesterday.

Darlington succeeds Alan L. Stacell who resigned from the administrative post earlier this year to return to full-time teaching. Assistant Dean John O. Greer has served as acting head of the department.

Since 1973 Darlington headed his own firm in Acton, Mass. he was an

officer or partner in firms based in Massachusetts and Illinois during the prior seven years. Before going into private practice, he was associated with the Building Research Institute and the Building Research Advisory Board of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, in Washington, D. C.

From 1953 until 1961, he taught in the Architecture Department at Washington State University and was head of the Architectural Research Section at Washington State Institute of Technology. He later served as a visiting lecturer at Cornell.

Darlington holds two under-

graduate degrees. One in English from Swarthmore College and one in architecture from Cornell. He also holds a master's degree in architecture from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana campus.

He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Building Officials Conference of America. He holds architectural registrations in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

The new department head is the author of two books, "Modular Practice" and "Architectural Research Reports". From 1971 until 1974 he wrote a layman-oriented architectural column which appeared in several newspapers.

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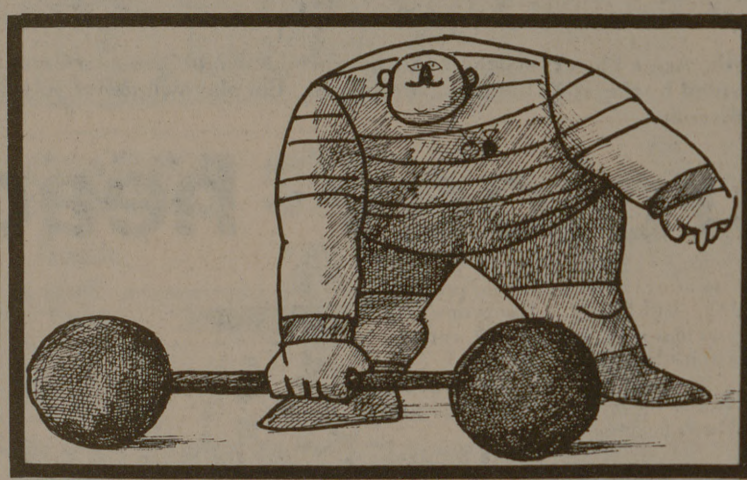
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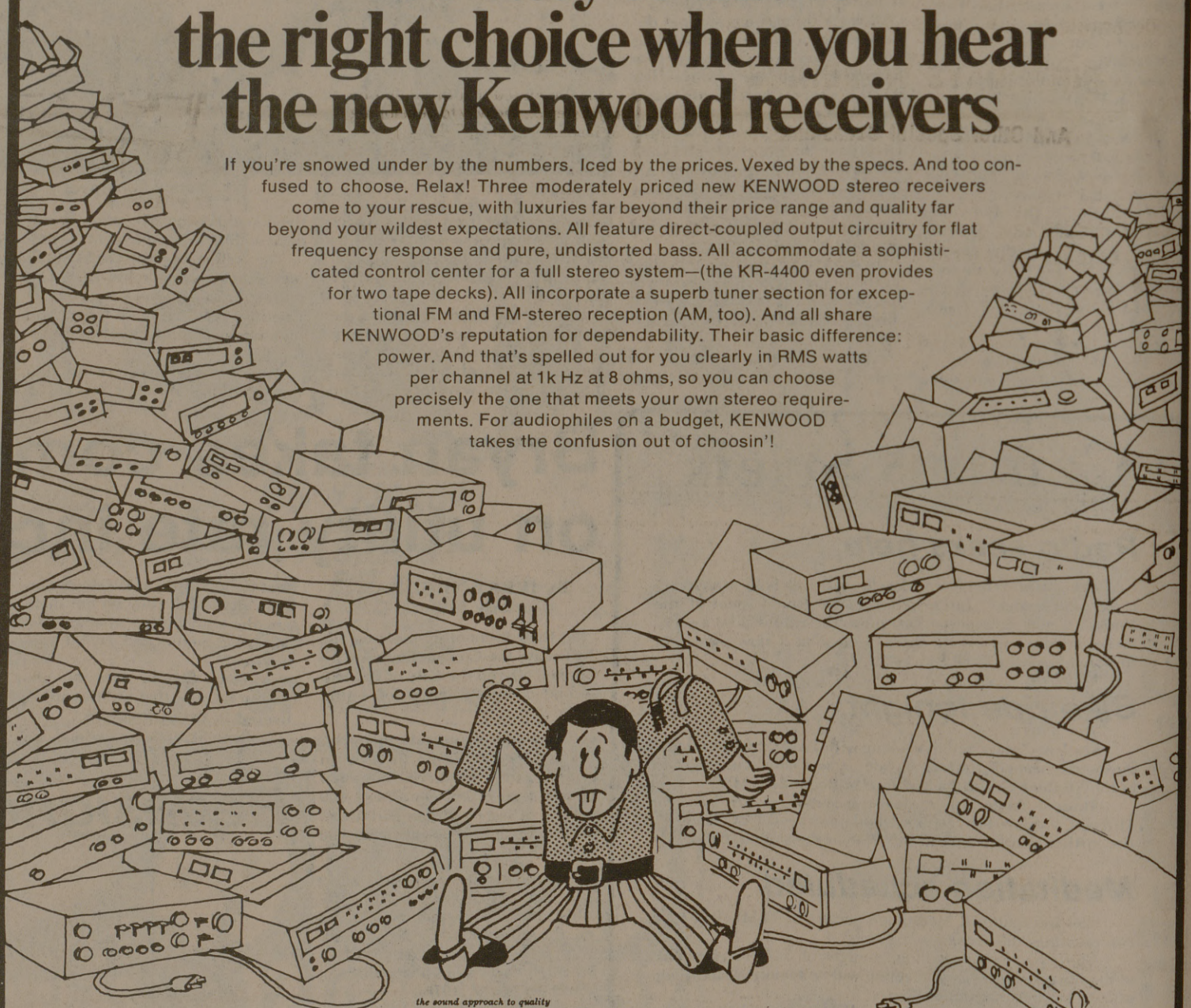
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