

# Natural Radio

*News, Comments and Letters About Natural Radio*

**February 2012**

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In my last column, I published a circuit for a receiver to work with the Zoom H2 digital recorder. After the article went to press, I discovered that Zoom had updated the recorder and released the H2N, which has some interesting new features like a built-in monitor speaker. Initially, it appeared that the microphone input was eliminated, but checking the manual I found that it is still there, so the circuit should still work with the new version of the recorder.

Between holiday festivities, replacing sump pumps and other distractions, I haven't gotten back to optimizing the receiver adapter for the Zoom H2. Hopefully, that will happen soon as I want to try out one of my Christmas gifts which was a new soldering station with a temperature controlled iron and hot air gun for surface-mount components.

Yesterday, my son Jeff and I went to the Wheaton, which is the first one of the season. There was a plentiful supply of junk and obsolete consumer electronics, but other than the dealers selling connectors, there were virtually no modern components for sale. It was packed with people, but there were not many items of interest. I left with a few rolls of electrical tape and an SD card reader for my computer.

**Website** – Part of the distraction that has kept me away from the workbench this month has been learning Wordpress. For those of you who aren't familiar with Wordpress, it is an open-source software package for creating websites. Wordpress started out as blogging software, but evolved into a powerful tool for building almost any type of website. It is well supported and has plug-ins for almost any type of functionality. Best of all, it works for both beginners and expert site builders. Many different design themes are available so it's easy to have a very nice site up and running in a couple of hours. I've converted a couple of my websites to Wordpress and decided to adopt it for all of my existing and future sites.

As part of this process, I'll be converting the Natural Radio Lab site to Wordpress over the next couple of months. The site was originally built in Drupal and converted to Mambo a couple of years ago, but is still awkward to modify or update. As they say, "the third time's a charm", so I am hoping this is the final platform. Using Wordpress will allow me to concentrate on content rather than having to figure out complex programming and formatting every time I want to make a change on the site.

While I was working on the site, I uploaded all of my 2011 articles to the Lowdown Archive section, but I'll hold any other additions and improvements until the site is running under Wordpress.

**Solar Sensationalism** – I still find that media's reaction to minor solar flares amazing. On January 19<sup>th</sup> there was a long-duration M3 flare which had an associated earth-directed CME. NOAA predicted some minor geomagnetic storming on the 22<sup>nd</sup> as a result of this, which is exactly what happened. Space.com's headline for the day was, "**Incoming! Sun's Fury Unleashed and Earthbound.**" Other news reports predicted damage to satellites and the power grid. No wonder the border between science and science fiction is eroding and the public's understanding of and trust in science is fading.

There was an M9 flare last night. I can't wait for the news reports!