

ing, Bio-Rad's Gene-Master has been designed for speed and convenience in one particular application (Reader Service No. 116). The system includes an IBM PC AT microcomputer that stores and analyses sequences entered via a digitizing pen. Bio-Rad's model also uses a voice synthesizer to call out bases as the pen records them, so that sequences can be verified without looking away from the autoradiogram. Lane and band curvature doesn't throw the Gene-Master off track, and the menu does not require pen activation which Bio-Rad has deemed distracting. As with most pen-operated readers, the reading process is accelerated when the user can keep an eye on the gel.

Patrons of Shandon's Electrafor products for electrophoresis can now **order supplies by phone** with the Cheshire company's free telephone order service (Reader Service No. 117). A rapid delivery service, combined with the direct-dial



ordering system, helps speed up restocking of the cellulose acetate membranes, buffers and stains in the Elecrafor range. First-time customers will get free samples

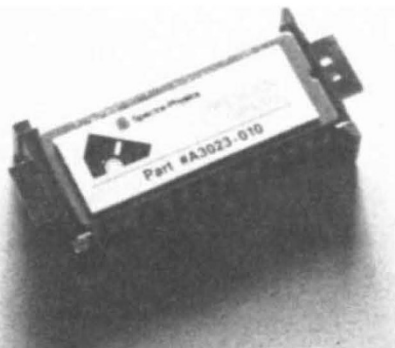
These notes are compiled by Karen Wright from information provided by the manufacturers. To obtain further details about these products, use the reader service card bound inside the journal.

from Shandon, and all customers get a free box of Electrafor membranes with every 10 purchased. Until the end of May, buffers and stains ordered with membranes will also be discounted 10 per cent.

A New York-based mail-order company has moved into the scientific arena. Transcat Inc. has published its first issue of **Laboratory & Scientific Instruments**, a 274-page catalogue that describes the products of over 200 manufacturers (Reader Service No. 118). Companies featured include Bausch & Lomb, Beckman, Corning, Ohaus, Orion Research, Techne, Thermolyne and Wallace & Tiernan, and products range from microscopes to hot plates. Transcat gives prices, ordering information and a toll-free number to facilitate inquiries.

Tomorrow's program

Spectra-Physics has put a program for **automated stop-flow UV-Vis scanning** on a chip that plugs into their SP4200 computing integrator (Reader Service No. 119). The integrator is attached to a Kratos Spectroflow 783 detector through a current loop serial connection. The program, on the \$1,500 (US) 783 SCAN chip, will perform background subtraction, peak ratioing and time-programmed wave-



Data acquisition by word of mouth

In over 2,500 laboratories across the United States, microcomputers that once turned deaf ears to their surroundings may soon be called on to perk up and listen. Laboratory Technologies, makers of the data acquisition package LABTECH NOTEBOOK, recently agreed to develop a scientific vocabulary for their software commands that would enable the package to respond to voice commands. LT's arrangement with Kurzweil Applied Intelligence will link the Kurzweil Voicesystem (KVS), a 1,000-word speech recognition system, with the IBM PCs that run LABTECH NOTEBOOK (Reader Service No. 120).

LT is hoping that setting up and controlling LABTECH NOTEBOOK will be much easier using simple spoken words. The operator talks into a telephone handset or a lightweight headset microphone, and the NOTEBOOK software does the rest: the PC channels will automatically gather information from attached sensors, instruments or gauges, and pass it on for analysis, control and monitoring. A KVS with an IBM PC AT interface costs \$6,500 (US); the \$895 (US) LABTECH NOTEBOOK package can integrate with Lotus 1-2-3, Symphony and RS/1 for detailed statistical analysis and display. □

length changes for selected liquid chromatography components; scanning parameters can be set via the integrator.

Three new software utility programs now complement IBM Instruments' CAP 2 software for their chromatography workstation (Reader Service No. 121). One of the programs, a utilities library, can aid in the analysis and display of chromatography data. Another, called Touch & View, manages screens, keyboards and key pad functions to allow up to seven programmes to run concurrently. GC/9630 Emulation, the third program, was designed to replace the standard VDU control terminal component of IBM's GC/9630 chromatograph: it provides comprehensive instrument control during data acquisition. IBM Instruments sells the programs for \$250, \$400 and \$200 (US) respectively. □

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