

# TECH TOYS

WHO SAYS ENGINEERS CAN'T HAVE FUN?  
by Joan Lynch, Managing Editor



## HANDS-FREE TYPING

Instead of typing with your hands, let your voice do it. Dictate your memos, articles, reports, or letters into the D1000 digital voice recorder. A mini 2- to 8-Mbyte flash-memory card stores your words. The card pops into your laptop's PCMCIA slot, and IBM's ViaVoice transcription software types your words onto the screen. It costs \$299. **Olympus America**, Melville, NY. 1-800-622-6372, [www.olympus.com](http://www.olympus.com). **Circle No. 408**

## SAVE OUR STUFF

Good things really do come in small packages. Take the Pulsar Desktop 220+, for example: This 3-lb unit gives you 10 minutes of battery backup so you can save your PC files in the event of a power fluctuation, interruption, or surge. The uninterruptible power supply is smart enough to do the work for you by automatically closing files and shutting down the system. \$129. **MGE UPS Systems Inc**, Costa Mesa, CA. 714-557-1636, fax 714-557-3256, [www.mgeups.com](http://www.mgeups.com).



**Circle No. 407**



## DO IT YOURSELF

No need to worry about your auto mechanic ripping you off. Plug the AutoTap smart converter cable into the OBD II connector on or under your car's or truck's dash and into the RS-232C port of your laptop. A specialized  $\mu$ P, circuits, and software convert the signals from the vehicle's sensors and modules into messages on a computer. Try a test run at [www.obdii.com](http://www.obdii.com). The AutoTap converter is available now for GM cars and trucks; models for Ford, Chrysler, and other cars are being developed. \$249.95. **B&B Electronics**, Ottawa, IL. 815-433-5100.

**Circle No. 409**



## A VIEW FROM ABOVE

A service called Spacepix gives you access to satellite images of the New York and Chicago areas of the United States. During the next year, the service will add 20 major cities throughout the world to its library. For \$7.95, Internet users can download and print a 1000x800-pixel image in JPEG or TIFF format. You can also send a free electronic postcard of the image to a buddy. **SSC Satellitbild AB**, Solna, Sweden. +46 8 627 64 50, fax +46 8 98 49 75, [www.spacepix.com](http://www.spacepix.com).

**Circle No. 410**