

News before Kiss An Australian Day

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Breaking: Flight attendants flu United

We just learned that United Airlines flight attendants are discouraged from missing work even when contagious with the flu, pneumonia or other diseases. The airline uses a demerit system based on points & points are assigned even when a physician confirms the illness. United flight attendants we interviewed confirm incidents of severely ill coworkers serving food & beverages to passengers for fear of the consequences of this policy. For your follow-up we suggest going through their union to find flight attendants recently separated from United.

Breaking: Rio shuttle exposed riders to bronchitis, pneumonia

In a related development on a much smaller scale, we learned that the contractor for shuttle bus services between the Rio & Harrah's in Las Vegas has permitted drivers to remain on the job despite knowing they were in the contagious stages of the flu, bronchitis & pneumonia. Once the Rio became aware of this they put pressure on the contractor but the result was a witch hunt by drivers to determine which passenger had blown the whistle. Riders of that shuttle during CES week & Shot Show week are likely to have been exposed.

Navigator resuscitator

If you've never had your visibility obscured by a translucent to opaque gray film on your windshield & never ever turned on your defroster to cope with that then you live somewhere that never gets cold enough for water to condense on surfaces. For the rest of us, condensed water or frost in an oxygen atmosphere sooner or later leads to oxidation & in a car, one place you may see bad results from that is your navigator. Initially, it may just take a little longer to boot or charge; there may be a more dramatic set of challenges when you bring it in to get updates through your computer. You don't need a navigator to see where this is going: a drop of CorrosionX for Electronics on the USB & power socket connectors cleans away oxidation now & keeps it away for many thousands of miles ahead. **Contact: JD Hill, Corrosion Technologies (Garland, TX) 972-271-7361 jdhill@corrosionx.com <http://corrosionx.com>**

New OmniMount Play70 ships next month

If your big screen weighs more than 70lbs choose something else, but for anything lighter than that the new full-motion OmniMount Play70DS wall mount (guessing \$400, give or take) sports a great mechanism, a handsome all-black finish & double-stud wall plates. To get one to review bet on Betsey to reserve one for you. **Contact: Betsey Banker, Ergotron/OmniMount (Phoenix AZ) 480-829-8000x152 betseyb@omnimount.com <http://omnimount.com>**

Smart phones yes, tablets no; Bobine engineering

The gooseneck around the USB connecting cable in an Une (24", \$30) or Petite (12", \$28) Bobine is about 1/4" in diameter; it handles the weight of the phone with a great deal of flexibility & enough integrity to hold the shape into which you bend it. So far, it works with every smart phone they tried but people keep asking about tablets. The short answer is: physics say no because you can't scale up the gooseneck without compromising on its ability

to hold both its shape & the gear. Jingle Jon to get one to review with your handset & you'll have one more thing to talk about. **Contact: Jon Fawcett, FuseChicken (Cuyahoga Falls OH) 330-338-7108 jon.fawcett@fusechicken.com <http://fusechicken.com>**

Continuing HoverCam models still reviewable

While we all wait for the many new HoverCam models to arrive there's nothing about the continuing models that is any less interesting or compelling & John can make those available for review right now. **Contact: John Miewald, Pathway Innovations & Technologies Inc. (San Diego, CA) 858-750-3499x203 johnm@thehovercam.com <http://thehovercam.com>**

Super Talent Bolt SSDs fit small or tall for fast

We know a lot of the first interest in the high-throughput (250MB/sec) value-priced Super Talent Bolt SSD line has been for simple small-platform retrofits; bigger capacities (to 128GB) will be shipping soon. There's also a lot of interest from the BYO crowd in creating tiered systems with boot files & executables on an SSD & documents, media & other work files on a rotating drive for capacity. The Bolt is also raising interest as a great way to populate RAID 5 arrays for the best of speed & safety. This may be just the kick start the SSD category needs; ask Roman. **Contact: Roman Nahal, Super Talent Technology (San Jose, CA) 408-941-8670 roman.nahal@supertalent.com <http://supertalent.com>**

2 feet, 2 legs & yours underneath: that's WorkEZ Executive

We talk about the WorkEZ Executive (18"x11" tray, folds to 22"x11"x2", 22" between legs, \$70) as resting on a desk or table or chair or sofa or bed but with its lowest leg section on the floor, the bottom of its tray is 24" up from that. That lets you put a "pop-up" workstation (for a notebook, tablet, eReader, book, magazine or even just a jigsaw puzzle) just about anywhere. Ask John to send one to you for review & watch how many different stories unfold. **Contact: John Failing, Uncaged Ergonomics (Cumberland MD) 240-583-0517 jfailing@uncagedergonomics.com <http://uncagedergonomics.com>**

Special Report: Romance & rebound reshape respect

Apple is a good example of a company that recently lost customers (mostly to Samsung) because new products didn't fulfill the expectations that initially romanced them into previous Apple product purchases. When "enchantment" wears off & reality kicks in, feelings of betrayal can affect many product selection choices. Once a brand is vulnerable to this kind of loss for one product category, there is often spillover into others & even beyond the brand. Category leadership can be a fleeting circumstance depending on the readiness of competitors to make their own new overtures an appealing substitute. Non-Apple tablets, for example, will have a bigger market share open to them as iPad is regarded as another in a family that's been fickle in its affections. In technology markets there are few enduring empires.

Newstips Review: IoSafe Solo G3

It's not small & it's not light; instead, the IoSafe is the most hardened hard drive we've seen, designed to survive fires (up to 1550F for 30 minutes), floods (10' of fresh or salt water for 72 hours), thieves (bolt it down or use a Kensington cable) & more. It may be 17 pounds of sturdy but it's electronically light on its feet via its 5Gbps USB3 connector & politely quiet (fanless cooling). A data recovery service activation is included for extreme circumstances where the drive's physical survival doesn't extend to its data. Bottom line: the IoSafe G3 USB3 external hardened hard drive can give convenient onsite storage a lot of the same disaster protection that has always required offsite backups.

Newstips Review 2: Power2U

The NewerTechnology Power2U is a grounded (3-prong) duplex AC wall outlet (we recommend installation by a professional electrician for most end-users) that also incorporates an internal DC converter to provide 5.2VDC at 2A to a pair of spring-shutter-covered USB

power ports. The shutters also turn off the power to an unoccupied USB port. You can still end up with a lot of wires plugged into one place but you get to skip the bulk & drain of a couple of wall warts. Bottom line: the NewerElectronics Power2U grounded AC plus selectively engaged USB power ports delivers both modern power standards to one appropriate place.

Newstips Review 3: Auralex SheetBlok-AF

Auralex SheetBlok-AF is a sound isolation barrier material; if you line walls, floors or ceilings with it you attenuate the transmission of noise from the other side. It's difficult to draw acoustic conclusions from the 6" square they sent but we can observe that it's thin (about 1/8") & dense. Its black rubbery face needs adhesive to apply it to the surface it's trying to deaden; the room-facing side comes white & can accept latex paint. Bottom line: Auralex SheetBlok-AF may allow new flexibility in taming hostile audio environments.

Newstips Review 4: Master Grade Premium Sharpener

The Master Grade Knife Sharpener Premium Model features slot pairs (left & right) in both coarse & fine powered soft-stone grinds that result in a narrower-angle (ergo sharper) edge on the knives you run through it. We ran an old Swiss Army Knife through it & had a much sharper edge in less than a minute. Bottom line: the Master Grade Knife Sharpener Premium Model can help blades restore & maintain their edges.

Newstips Review 5: FastCap FastWrap

They recommend it for wrapping cables or tying hoses to places where dust will be; you'll find your own uses for FastCap FastWrap, a 10' roll of 1/2"-wide hook-opposite-loop ribbon. Its thicker core is tougher to tear & more work grade than many others. Bottom line: FastCap FastWrap is where tough meets handy in double-sided hook & loop tape.

Newstips Review 6: Inova X3R USB-rechargeable LED flashlight

When you leave standard cells behind, flashlight shapes gain new options as is the case with the Inova X3R USB-rechargeable LED flashlight. Its unique 3.7V Lilon battery yields a shape a little thinner than a 2-C flashlight & a little thicker than a 2-AA model, but neither offers the energy density of Lilon. The result is a bright 227-lumen output with a 2hr 45min runtime or a low but very usable 22-lumen output for 41 hours. The tail switch & screw cap combine to support lock-out, momentary or continuous operation. Slightly unscrewing the head reveals the mini-USB charging connector & a charge-status LED. Bottom line: its options for high brightness or very long runtime gives the Inova X3R USB-rechargeable LED flashlight value beyond skipping the need for disposable batteries.

Newstips Review 7: Black & Decker Gyro screwdriver

While the shape is somewhere between a squirt gun & a potato whistle, the Black & Decker Gyro is a very cool cordless screwdriver that takes speed & direction cues from which way & how much you twist your hand while holding it (180rpm max). Palm pressure on its grip turns it on & off as confirmed by a white LED headlight. The 3.6V Lilon internal battery is rated to hold its charge for 18 months. Bottom line: the Black & Decker Gyro rechargeable screwdriver lets one hand control engagement, speed & direction with no setting selections needed.

Newstips Review 8: MTM Case-Gard Patch Catcher

This is made for long guns (rifles & shotguns) with barrels that a cleaning rod can reach from the hammer side: the MTM Case-Gard Gun Cleaning Patch Catcher from Brownells is a molded, hinged-cover plastic trough with one open side & an integrated fastening strap. When cleaning, you slide the muzzle end of the barrel into it & cinch it on; cleaning patches that emerge dirty from a push down the barrel fall off into the trough. When done, undo the strap & dump the discarded patches into an appropriate waste receptacle. Bottom line: the MTM Case-Gard Gun Cleaning Patch Catcher from Brownells is a litter basket for rifles & shotguns.

Newstips Review 9: Grovtec EZ Clean GTEZ-20

The Grovtec GT EZ-Clean bore cleaner for 20-gauge shotguns is more than 5' of aircraft cable with a quintet of mops & brushes in its final 2' of length. Soak the first 2 mops with cleaner & the third with a corrosion-preventing lube & the clean-brush-clean-brush-lube sequence slides down the shotgun barrel to do 5 rounds of maintenance in a single pull. Even the pull is made easier by a slip-on machined handle. Bottom line: the Grovtec GTEZ-20 EZ-Clean bore cleaner for 20-gauge shotguns makes cleaning both more thorough & easier.

Newstips Review 10: Mossberg 500 Cruiser

When we reviewed the Mossberg 500 Bantam we noted that its downsized stock & forearm felt a little cramped to use (the Bantam was designed for younger or slight of frame shooters). We just got its sibling, the Mossberg 500 Persuader its name when the standard butt stock is attached) or Cruiser (its name when that's replaced by a pistol grip) 20-gauge pump shotgun. With the standard stock in place, it's safe to shoot from the shoulder, as you might do when hunting; we chose the pistol grip configuration, designed for shooting from waist-high. With the pistol grip & its relatively short barrel length, the entire gun has no dimension greater than 30" which makes it very maneuverable for home or office defense. It can hold up to 6 shots (5 in the magazine & one in the chamber). The operation is smooth & reliable. Its 3-lb trigger pull is nicely light (the manual has instructions on how to crank it up to as much as 6lbs for those who prefer more resistance). At least for now, this will be our 20-gauge platform for defensive shotgun peripherals & accessories. Bottom line: the Mossberg 500 Cruiser 20-gauge pump shotgun is short enough to be agile, tough enough to be effective & reliable enough to be very well suited as a great choice for defense.

A little late

We got back Saturday night & got hit by what may have been either a cold or an old allergy (triggered by changes in weather; major snows began right after we returned). Most of this issue was written before we left but needed updating; we had mountains of address changes to enter; we had to comb false positives out of 6,000 messages in the junk mail folder; the immediate event follow-up stack was 2" thick & we had to quick-author a new 10-page briefing document. Because of all of these lame little excuses, our nominally Wednesday issue (which we like to get out on Mondays if not earlier) is just getting out now. Our apologies. We hope to have next Wednesday's issue in your hands on Monday.

Notes on Shot Show & AEE

Shot Show 4-walled both levels of the Sands & took a lot of Venetian spaces as well; the aisles were thick with people & as a business-to-business event, the crowds were all people in the trade. We saw more motorized scooters per square yard than at any trade show in memory. The draggin' wagons were snap-open crates about 2' per side; this is a crowd that still carries paper. There was a ton of tech: solid state lighting, laser devices, rangefinders, GPS, night vision & more. Most companies complained about being supply-starved in the face of huge demand; some expressed continuing problems in finding enough machinists to hire to catch their production capacity up to meet demands. There was significant evidence of industry forces (other than show sponsor NSSF) trying to "stampede the lemmings" into donations or actions against imagined or invented "threats". We left Shot Show one afternoon to head to the Hard Rock for B2B day at AEE. It was smaller than life (Showstoppers occupied more acreage); about half was devices; only a handful of DVD content houses had any presence & we were able to walk all the booths 3 times & get back to the Sands with a total elapsed time of 90 minutes. How the mighty have fallen! (You didn't miss much of anything).

Marty's going to build a gun

Building PCs from scratch is almost too easy but in the next few months, Marty will be building an AR15 semi-automatic rifle from scratch, customized to be especially appropriate for use in a strictly defensive context. Given the huge demand for .223 ammo in the marketplace, we

may have it done & ready for quite a while before we get to fully test it. Also, after 2 weeks in Las Vegas, Marty reports that even the cat doesn't recognize him (though the scowl on wife Judie's face says that she still does). **Contact: Martin Winston, Newstips (Novelty, OH) 440-338-8400; marty@Newstips.com Skype: martywinston <http://Newstips.com>**

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