

DESIGN NEWS

The background of the cover is a photograph of the interior of the Toronto SkyDome. The stadium is mostly empty, with blue seats visible in the lower half. The upper half shows the complex steel and glass structure of the retractable roof, with a large, white, curved structural beam extending from the top center towards the right. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

TORONTO SKYDOME

A Showcase for Power Transmission, p. 52

Traction Control for the New Lexus, p. 68

How Microprocessors Transform Design, p. 94

Will Nuclear Power Make a Comeback? p. 21

Pick the Best Ads, Win a Macintosh! p. 1

DESIGNER'S CORNER

Useful technology for your idea file

Remote control camcorder

Have you ever noticed that the owner of a video camera is rarely seen onscreen? He's always behind the camcorder, peering through the viewfinder.

With "Robocam," the operator can now help blow out the candles and open the presents. That's because he controls all camera functions, including motion, from as far as 20 ft away with a hand-held remote control.

A standard camcorder mounts on a motorized tripod which, in turn, mounts on a steerable, motorized, four-wheel dolly. A battery supplies power.

The remote control includes switches

for dolly motion forward, reverse, left, and right. Camera motion up (to seven ft) and down, pan left and right (280 deg), and tilt (30 deg), are also switch-controlled.

Other switches control camera on-off, record, zoom, and video light on-off. And in the center of the control, a two-inch color monitor lets you see the result of all your button pushing.

U.S. patent applications have been filed on the "Robocam."

Anwar M. Farooq, Box 4338,
Montclair, CA 91763, 714-620-7711,
ext.247.

All functions of video camera and dolly can be controlled remotely. Wireless control is under development.



Submit your ideas and rough drawings for this section to Designer's Corner, Design News, 275 Washington St., Newton, MA 02158

Did you find this section useful? If so, let us know. Circle No. 842

NOTE TO READERS

The correct address for more information on the Syringe Guide described in the October 23, 1989 issue is: Emery Tetreault, 35 Parkwood Drive, Pepperell, MA 01463.

Father sees necessity of invention

By Lisa Van Proyen
Staff Writer

An inventive idea all began when his son asked: "Daddy, where are you in these movies?"

It was then that Anwar Farooq, a Pomona resident and electronics engineer at Telcom Technologies in Pomona, invented the idea in his mind about a remote control unit for the video recorder. With this, the movie person in the family would be in the picture too.

"Robocam" is the name Farooq has given to his invention — the name standing for robotic camcorder, camcorder being a contract of camera and recorder itself. The device hooks onto an existing VCR camera with wires remote control with a color screen.

"You don't have to sit in the back of the camera. You can sit in the front and have fun," he said. "I haven't seen a single product that looks like this and the reason is very simple ... because they don't have a screen."

The inventive, battery-operated device allows for the camera person to film up to 15 feet away from the video camera.

The base of the system has its own power supply and can move in any direction with the remote control by just pressing a button.

The video camera can also be turned on and off, recording started and stopped, and the camera zoomed in and out all by remote control.

"Later on it could be made as a wireless control," Farooq said. "It will also be more flexible ... then you can grab it and put it in your car." Farooq has been working on the Robocam on weekends during three months when he's not working at Telcom, an electronics firm that makes computerized phone answering services for businesses.

"I like to play around with things, nothing special. ... It's just part of the fun," Farooq said. He believes everybody has the capability to invent. "It's just a basic human thing. I just strive to do that. ... If it can work, why not give it a shot?" he said as he sat on the floor fastening last minute pieces to his new invention.

"He's a pretty clever little guy," said Boniard Brown, Farooq's father. "He's conferred, and searching (to make sure no other like invention exists) is under way."

The inventor already has a U.S. patent on a turbo bike — a cycle with a centrifugal pump attached to a sprocket wheel that draws in and compresses air as the biker rides, thus making the bike do more of the pedal work.

Until it is patented, Farooq will t-



Staff Photo by Eric Vilchis

Anwar Farooq stands with invention, the remote control video camera.

to improve the Robocam to run more smoothly. He then intends to contact retailers such as Neiman Marcus and others carrying unique products.

Farooq estimates that his invention, if put on the market in mass production, will cost \$1,000 without the video camera. He believes that it will begin as a novelty product, later branching into many uses.

The Robocam, according to Farooq, can benefit reporters by allowing them to stand far enough away from

dangerous areas, and at crowded press conferences while filming with the remote control.

The remote control invention can also serve as a monitor for the kids' or baby room, or act as a surveillance tool for police and drug enforcement agencies, according to Farooq.

"A lot of people have cameras on their shoulders or have to jump up to see. With this, you can raise the camera (by way of the remote control)," Farooq said.



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