Subject: Re: Pioneer RT-909 Reel-to-Reel
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 30 Jan 2004 12:05:07 GMT
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I always thought the RT-909 was an attractive deck too. I maintain my deck, and have owned it for about 25 years. Service and owners manuals for this deck can be purchased from www.StereoManuals.com.

So far, all I've had to do was replace the pinch rollers, but it's time for a tension adjustment. When motor torque gets off, the tape speed slows and it acts like a mechanical drag. But adjust the driver circuits and you're back in business. It is a rare occurrence, but these things have been on the road long enough that it is a known failure mode, and I'd consider it to be a common symptom. I've never had to do this tension adjustment on this deck and it's had heavy use, so "common symptom" shouldn't be taken to mean that it necessarily happens frequently. But I've seen it on other RT-909 decks and performed the alignment for people, and it is probably one of the more common trouble symptoms described of them.

Here's a fun little story. I bought this tape deck new in the late seventies, and back then, I had a little computer based on a 6502 microprocessor, 4Kb RAM and 8Kb BASIC on ROM. It was a Synertek Systems Sym-1, also called a Vim-1. Lots of digital I/O - Great for building robots and controlling stuff in your room. So I connected a half dozen lines on this computer to the control buttons (play, fast-forward, etc.) and also monitored the index pulses. On the back of my RT-909 is a DB-25 connector to allow connection between the computer and the tape deck, and I used the tape deck both to store data and music.

I would put digital index files at the front of tapes that held a catalog of their contents, and you could select what music to play and it would automatically seek the songs in whatever order you wanted. So I had an early form of shuttle search and indexing. I also stored all my little programs; PiAlign and other programs were stored on one of my reel-to-reel tapes back then. Back in my college days, people would walk by my room and see the reel-to-reel "magically"

and I still have the tape deck and the computer to remember them by.

Seems like just yesterday to me, but also a long time ago, know what I mean?