

Kids' KOrner

Turn on pink noise for more quiet

WASHINGTON - Sometimes you've got to fight with noise.

Turn on some "pink" noise, and wishssssssshh. Suddenly the hubbub in the room seems to diminish. The right blend of pink noise may sound like nothing more than the whish of air coming out of an air conditioner, but it can be enough to mask the daily clatter of office activity, particularly in open offices that have no doors or solid walls.

The actual level of everyday noise doesn't drop one decibel, but the people working there think a relative hush has settled upon them.

Within the last decade, noisemakers have been designed into the acoustical systems of some new office buildings. Random-noise generators operate in combination with sound-absorbing ceilings, and floor and wall coverings, which reduce noise levels. Random noise, unlike music, has no tonal qualities. Specific spectra of random noise have been labeled pink and white.

Acoustical Perfume
"Sound-masking systems cover up leftover noises by being louder, but innocuous and ignored. They've been called acoustical perfume. Fortunately a sound similar to swishing air is just right for speech-masking. It can be shaped to cover the sound of the male voice, which automatically takes care of some other office noises," says Larry Philbrick, an acoustic consultant with Bolt Beranek and Newman, of Cambridge, Mass.

Sound masking is used primarily in large open-office areas, but has been designed also for places such as psychiatrists' and lawyers' offices and college music buildings.

In a typical floor of open offices,

the background which is transmitted through a series of loudspeakers concealed above the ceiling. The sound is generated by two pink-noise generators. Pink noise, so-called in an analogy with the light spectrum, is predominated by low-frequency sound. Two equalizers shape the sound and amplifiers increase it.

Sound-masking systems run on little electricity and are less expensive to install than sound-proofed enclosed offices. Although these systems are found in more and more office buildings today, their use is still something people generally keep quiet about.

"It's the whole mind-manipulation issue. Sound masking does make you think you're not hearing as much noise although the noise is still there. There's been a great deal of prejudice against it," according to one acoustics expert.

Never Turned Off

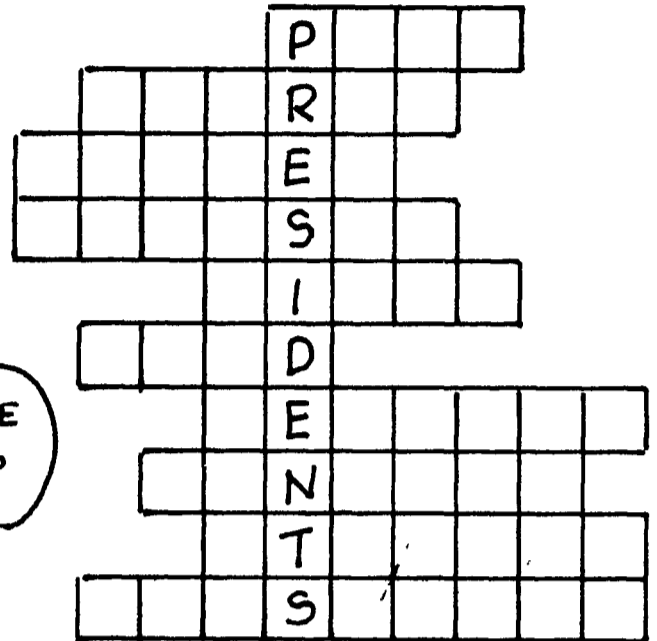
People have blamed sound masking for headaches, irritability, malaise, and other psychological problems. Labor Department officials and audiologists say that no studies of its effects on human beings have been made. There is no scientific evidence to prove or disprove a relationship between sound masking and any of these symptoms.

"It will probably not drive anyone bonkers," says one audiologist. It has been used in government offices with no problems, says a federal official.

Many people who don't know they are working in offices with sound masking have assumed they're hearing the air conditioner, Philbrick observes. Once the sound is turned on, it stays on. It's when it goes off that you notice it, he says. Suddenly the room is noisier

KIDS, CAN YOU ADD THE MISSING LETTERS TO SPELL OUT THE NAMES OF THESE TEN PRESIDENTS?

P.S. THESE ARE LAST NAMES



ANSWERS ON PAGE B12

BY DAVE CARPENTER...



BLOWING IN THE WIND

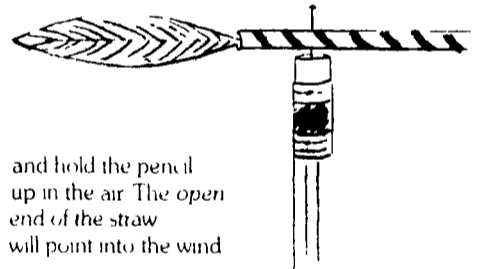
Would you like to be a weather forecaster? Then make a weather vane to check changes in the direction of the wind.

Cut a piece of paper in the shape of a 3 inch feather (See picture.) Stick the end of the

paper feather into one end of a soda straw. Stick a long straight pin through the straw as shown and into the rubber eraser of a pencil. Don't squash the straw. Let it spin on the pin.

Stand out in an open space

and hold the pencil up in the air. The open end of the straw will point into the wind.



COLOR THIS!

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. BLACK | 6. ORANGE |
| 2. RED | 7. GREEN |
| 3. YELLOW | 8. LT. BROWN |
| 4. BLUE | 9. LT. BLUE |
| 5. LT. GREY | 10. LT. GREEN |

ICE BOATING: THESE BOATS ARE USED FOR PLEASURE SAILING AND COMPETITIVE RACING. THEY SKIM OVER THE ICE AT VERY HIGH SPEEDS. THE FIRST ICE BOAT WAS BUILT IN 1790 BY OLIVER BOOTH. IN THAT YEAR CONTESTS WERE HELD ON THE HUDSON RIVER. AN UNOFFICIAL SPEED OF 163 MILES PER HOUR WAS REACHED IN 1938.

