



## Rangefinder Magazine Archives

**Archives:** [April 1999](#) :First Exposure

04/01/1999

### ***First Exposure***

***PocketWizard by Jack & Sue Drafa***

There will be times in every photographers' career when a sync cord is not long enough or the distance is too great to use slaves. Not to worry though, as LPA Design specializes in a wide variety of triggering devices for photographers. The PocketWizard is a 16-channel radio slave system designed to extend the range of your remote capabilities to over 800 feet.

Both the transmitter and receiver units are compact enough to fit in the palm of your hand and operate on 2 AA-size batteries for convenience. Each have basic controls for power on/off, a sync out jack, status light, 16-channel selector and an antenna. The transmitter also has a test/fire button, sync in jack and a switch which offers you the choice of transmitting a signal to the receiver only (remote), operating whatever is attached to the transmitter (local), or both. The system uses Mini-Phone connections to greatly increase the reliability of the radio.

Each channel uses complex 16-bit digital coding so other radio frequencies in the area cannot interfere or trigger the PocketWizard's unique signal. The speed of the re-lay is very fast and allows consistent flash sync at 1/250 second for focal plane shutters, and 1/500 sec-ond for leaf shutters. The operational range between the two units varies depending on interference inbetween, but they will operate at 800+ feet when there is a clear line of sight. It is best to try and keep the units away from large metal, concrete or water-filled ob-jects for best performance.

There are two main applications for these units: remote operation of a camera or extending the distance between camera and flash. Once you try the system, you will quickly find even more uses than we will describe. To better understand how it all works, we will take you through a couple of situations where we let the PocketWiz-ard perform some magic.

#### Remote Camera Operation

We first tried the remote camera operation. This setup works with any camera that has an electronic cable shutter release. LPA Design offers a wide variety of cords for just about any camera and flash on the market. Once you have the correct cord, attach it from the receiver to the camera shutter control. Select a channel on the receiver to match the channel on the transmitter. When you press the test/fire button on the transmitter, the camera fires like magic. This works great if you want to take close-up pictures of birds at a feeding station, for example. Simply set the camera and flash next to the feeder and attach the receiver. Move a comfortable distance away and wait for the birds to start feeding. When you see an angle you like, just press the button and the camera fires.

With multiple PocketWizards, you can remotely operate even more than one camera. Connect each camera to a receiver, and set each channel to a specific number. Camera one might be channel one and camera two set on channel two. When you want to fire camera one, simply turn the dial on the transmitter to that channel and fire the button. Change the transmitter to another channel and fire a different camera. You can even set them all to the same channel and fire them all simultaneously. The possibilities are endless!

Instead of manually firing the transmitter, you can also use a camera to fire a second camera a distance away. In this scenario you would run a sync cord from the hot-shoe connection on the camera to the sync in on the transmitter. The second camera would have an electronic shutter-control cord attached to the sync-out jack on the receiver. When the

first camera fires, the transmitter sends a signal to the receiver which fires the second camera. This setup works great for outdoor photographers who need a camera set close to a bird's nest and a second camera some distance away. The one closest to the nest could have a flash attached, and when the shutter is depressed on the first camera, you will capture two different angles of the same nesting action.

#### Remote Flash Operation

The second application for the PocketWizard is when you want to fire a remote flash. Often conditions don't allow long cords or slave units won't do the job. In this situation, you would run a sync cord from the camera to the transmitter, and connect the receiver via sync cord to the flash. When you depress the shutter on the camera, it triggers the transmitter to send a radio signal to the receiver which fires the flash. As we mentioned before, with multiple receivers you could activate multiple strobes and light up the world.

Commercial photographers should find this application useful for situations where a flash is needed in positions where a sync cord would show up in the photograph, or the slave function does not fire the remote flash. Nature photographers can set a flash close to the action but just out of the image area and use the PocketWizard to fire the flash from a great distance.

By now you should agree with us that the potential of such a system is endless. We have not even scratched the surface of possibilities. One final word of warning though. We did find the PocketWizard addictive. It opened so many doors to photographic possibilities, that we found ourselves creating situations that required the magic of the PocketWizard. Let this impressive photographic tool extend your photographic limits.

#### Other Devices

If you ever find yourself with a situation where the PocketWizard can't accomplish the task, LPA De-sign has several other gadgets that might help do the job. The Lite Tap is a very compact radio re-ceiver that connects to a power pack or compact strobe sync and power supply.

The Wave Sensor uses a built in microphone and remote laser as a beam-and-sound trigger. The Time Machine acts as a multiple-flash trigger, camera intervalometer, or as a flash delay rear curtain sync.

The FlashWizard offers a variety of remote triggering, complex camera/flash sequencing, and rearcurtain effects with flash. The Flash-Wizard II is used to fire multiple cameras with one flash setup. The Speed Cyclor uses up to four flash units to take pictures in rapid suc-cession to eliminate recycle time hassles. The LVTS is a special device that protects your camera from some of the older flash units that use high voltage as a trigger.

All of these products are marketed exclusively by Bogen Photo Corporation. If you're not sure your camera will work with their system or just what cords you'll need, log on to the Bogen web site: [www.bogenphoto.com] and di-rectly link to the LPA web site at [www.lpadesign.com].

**[Magazine](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)  
[Rangefinder Guestbook](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Message Board](#)**

2001 Copyrighted by WPPI: Produced by [BigHead Technology](#)