

BBS

THE
BULLETIN
BOARD
SYSTEMS

March 1994

US \$3.50

Canada \$4.95

70989-35460

Ron Brandt

with the

DSC BBS

Visiting
Galacticomm

Producers of The Major BBS software

GALACTICOMM



The Internet • Shareware • Novice Nook • Macintosh

What Can You Do with the Open

Multimedia Document Retrieval Systems

MagiComm, Inc.
Parallax Development Corporation

Group Decisionware and Electronic Democracy

Consensus Systems, Inc.
MagiComm, Inc.
MajorSoft Inc.

Novell LAN Access

Galacticomm, Inc.

Language Add-on Options (Spanish, German, French, Italian, Greek, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, RIPscrip, etc.)

Astrocom Multimedia
BSI Technologies
Galacticomm, Inc.
Infima
Medcom Information Systems
Online Store
Studio 5 Liguria SRL
Techtrade
TeleGrafix Communications Inc.

Online Shopping/Order Entry/Auctions

BSI Technologies
DataSafe Publications
Durand Communications Network
Excalibur! Software
Galacticomm, Inc.
Infinetwork

Developer's Toolkit and C Source Code

Galacticomm, Inc.

Integrated Fax Capabilities

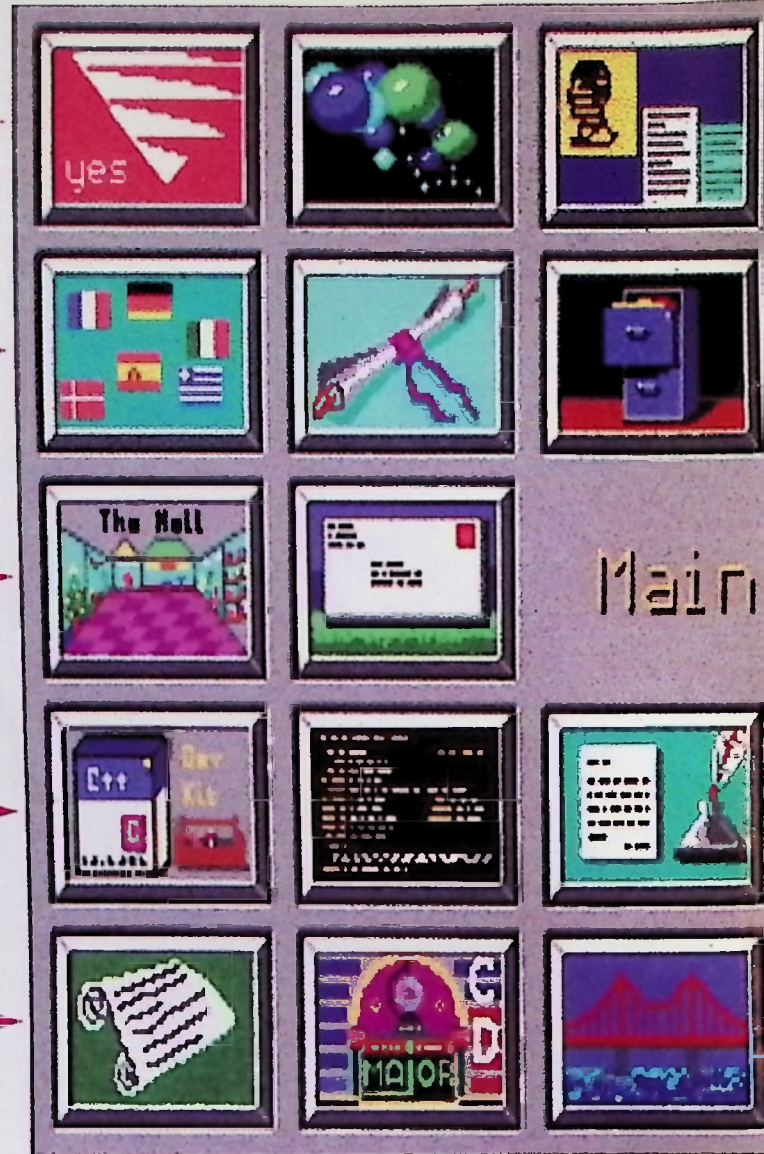
Galacticomm, Inc.
MagiComm, Inc.
The Business BBS

Super CD-ROM Management

Farwest BBS
Mountain Rose Multi Media

"Dial-Out" with Scripts

Galacticomm, Inc.
Logicom, Inc.



Just about anything you want. That's because The Major BBS is a completely open-ended platform for creating your own unique online service.

You can choose from a huge selection of off-the-shelf software — just a small fraction

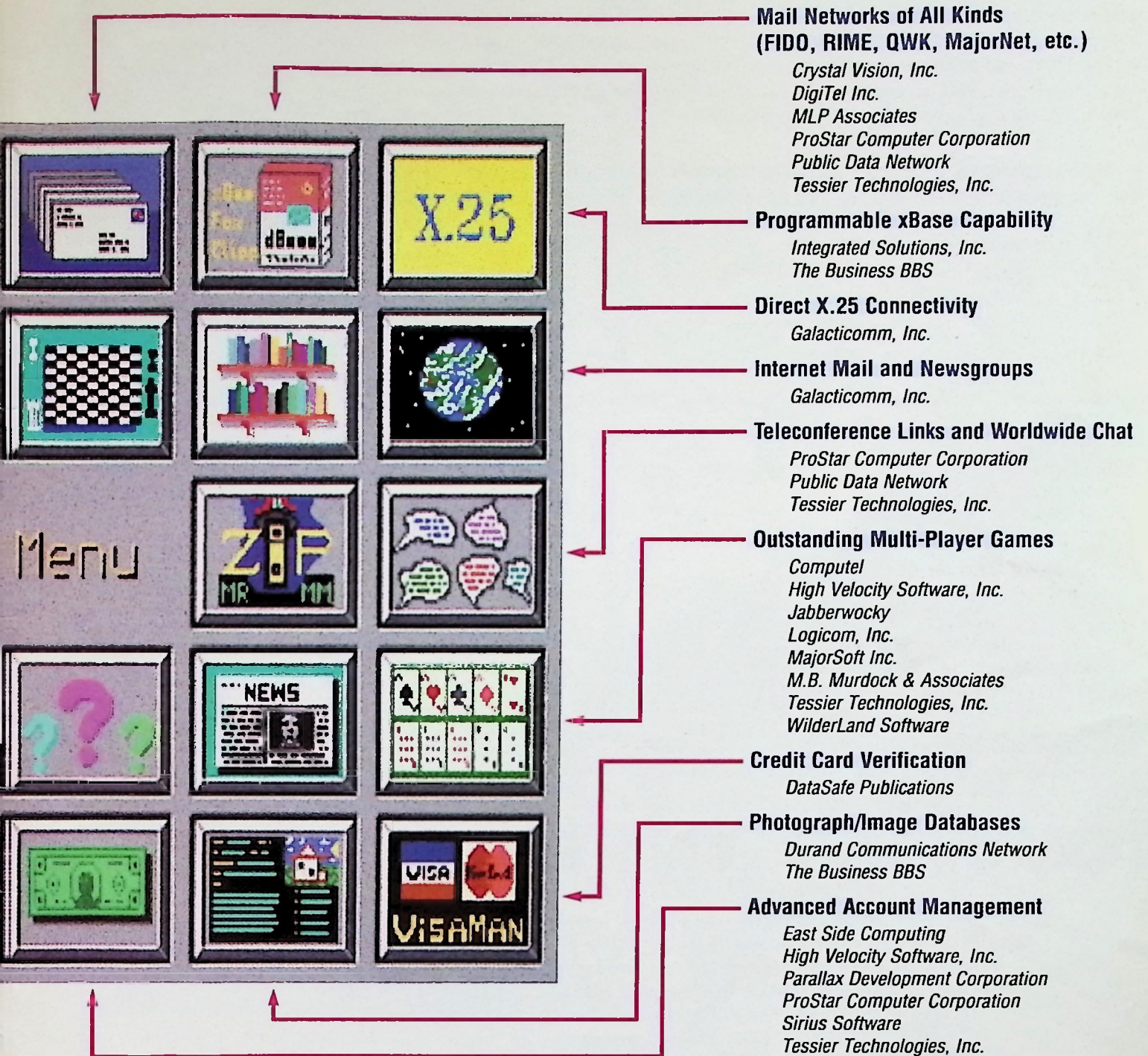
of which is represented here — offered by over 100 third-party developers.

Most of these add-ons integrate into your BBS as DLLs (Dynamic Link Libraries). No shelling to DOS is required. And because these DLLs are written in C and Assembly,

they provide far greater performance and flexibility than script languages or dBase derivatives.

You can run all this from a single computer and support up to 256 simultaneous users via modems, serial connections, direct

Architecture of The Major BBS®?



X.25 circuits, and Novell LAN channels. No other BBS platform gives you this power.

Need "doors" capability too? You can hook up additional machines and instantly use the programs written for multi-node BBSes as well.

To quote Newsbytes, "The Major BBS is one of the most powerful and expandable boards available, yet it is extremely easy to install and run."

For more information, see your local dealer, or give us a call at 1-800-328-1128 (out-

side U.S. and Canada call 305-583-5990). And team up with BBS developers that link you into everything else.

 GALACTICOMM

IF YOU HAD THREE WISHES,

Take a close look and you'll see why so many sysops are switching to the Synchronet Multinode Bulletin Board System. For one, message networking is second nature for Synchronet. Not only does Synchronet support FidoNet, QWK, and PostLink (RIME) message networks, but network considerations are integrated into every aspect of the BBS. Synchronet's hierarchical message and file areas are the perfect organizational solution for today's multi-network message and CD-ROM file areas. Synchronet has many built in features that other packages either don't offer or require an add on, such as multichannel and private key by key chat, offline reader features, and multiuser CD-ROM support. First time operators appreciate Synchronet's elegant menu driven configuration, while experienced sysops revel in its wealth of options and flexibility. The list goes on and on. But don't take our word for it, check out the competition first. With Synchronet, you won't need three wishes.

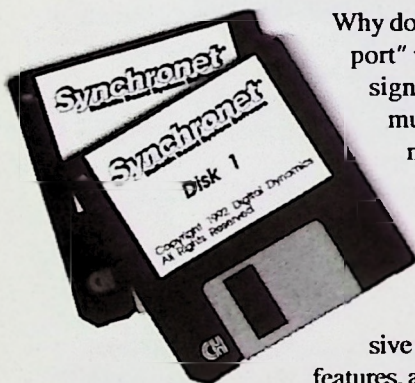


Feature and Price Comparison for an 8 node BBS on a single 486 PC

	Synchronet	Wildcat!IM	PCBoard/M	MajorBBS	TBBS
Node license	\$199	\$799	\$440	\$508	\$895
Multitasker	\$200	\$200	\$200	Yes	Yes
8 port I/O	\$300	\$800	\$995	\$575	\$500
Multinode chat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multichannel chat	Yes	Extra	No	Yes	Yes
Private key by key chat	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Offline reader support	Yes	Yes	Extra	\$199	\$99
QWK networking	Yes	Yes	Extra	No	Yes
FidoNet import/export	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Send/receive NetMail	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
PostLink (RIME) support	Yes	Extra	Yes	Extra	No
RIPscrip GUI support	Yes	No	No	Extra	No
Novell/DOS LAN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
976/900 billing support	Yes	No	No	Extra	Extra
Real-time node activity alerts	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Enhanced CD-ROM support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Extra	Extra
Multiuser SDK	Yes	No	Extra	Extra	Extra
Incoming FAX support	Yes	No	No	No	No
Chat between doors	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Bidirectional file transfers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multiple user command sets	Yes	No	No	No	No
Supports DOS doors	6 types	1 type	3 types	No	No
Hierarchical msg & file areas	Yes	No	No	No	No
External transfer protocols	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Total price	\$699	\$1799	\$1635	\$1282	\$1494

Prices do not include CPU or modems. Features and prices compiled from vendor supplied information 2/93, are subject to change without notification. Wildcat!IM, PCBoard/M, MajorBBS, TBBS, QWK, FidoNet, PostLink, RIME, RIPscrip, Novell, and DOS are trademarks or their respective companies. Commercial or Shareware Toss/Scan utilities are required for some message network technologies.

YOU COULD TOSS THE OTHER TWO.



Why doesn't Synchronet have a special "multiport" version? Because Synchronet was designed from the ground up as a high-speed multinode BBS capable of running up to 10 nodes on a single 486. It's advanced interrupt driven output design combined with DESQview optimizations maximize CPU utilization, allowing Synchronet to out perform other systems running special "multiport" versions on expensive coprocessed I/O cards. For performance, features, and value, nobody beats Synchronet.

Synchronet® BBS Multinode Bulletin Board System Software

Undeniable Value

2 Node License	\$ 99
4 Node License	\$ 149
16 Node License	\$ 199
250 Node License	\$ 399
Multiuser SDK	FREE

Node license upgrades are available for the difference plus 10%. Minor revision upgrades can be downloaded free of charge.

Digital Dynamics®

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Download the Free demo version:

(714) 529-9525 2400bps (714) 529-5313 9600+bps v.32
(714) 529-9721 9600+bps ZyXel (714) 529-9547 9600+bps HST

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Rusty Edie

Dual Eliminator

Rusty n Edie's BBS announces the introduction of their Dual Eliminator. Simply plug your phone line to the Dual Eliminator and then plug the Dual Eliminator into your modem. This device consists of 2 passive electronic filters that handle both high and low frequency noise from the phone line. Both high and low frequency are independently adjustable with knobs that mount on the front of the unit. Surge protection is provided by an electronic varistor.



A light emitting diode, also mounted on the front of the unit, glows whenever the device is eliminating noise from the phone lines. This device can solve the majority of noise problems associated with telecommunications today, and is sold with a 30 day, money back guarantee. They sell for \$25 each plus \$4 shipping and handling. To order, call Rusty n Edie's at 216-726-4217, fax to 216-726-3595 or call their BBS number 216-726-2620; they will accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

Rusty n Edie's BBS
7393 California Ave.
Youngstown, OH 44512



readme.txt



Only a month to go until BBS EXPO '94 in Washington, D.C. For all those wishing to find out the latest on the electronic bulletin board frontier, and computer communications in general, consider this close to the last call.

April 5-7 will mark the first BBS EXPO, an exposition to bring you closer to the developers of products you use each day...to meet those people and get the inside story on what's in store for the coming year, and what to expect as we approach the millennium. It's "a big year for experimenting," said the Philadelphia Inquirer. We agree, and BBS EXPO '94 will help to bring it all (experiments, advancements and breakthroughs) into clear focus.



To be held at the Sheraton Washington Hotel, the expo (as mentioned last month) is not only names and faces, it's also exhibits by big and small companies and informative seminars by the chief experts in the business. And without going into lengthy detail, we should also mention attendees can expect a few surprises.

Bottom line is if you use a BBS in any fashion and want to stay connected, you'll be missing more than just a good time by staying home April 5-7.

We hope to see you there.

This month our attention has been caught by Galacticomm, Inc. and Datamax/Satalink Connection BBS.

Nearly two years ago *BBS Magazine* looked into Galacticomm, Inc. (creator of The Major BBS), and found a company taking off. This time we find it in full flight with a new version of The Major.

DSC BBS (Datamax/Satalink Connection) is sort of a conglomerate BBS in Pennsylvania. The BBS began small then incorporated other boards to become quite a powerhouse service. From Internet to Clarinet, DSC offers it.

Next Month: RoboBOARD/FX and Software Creations BBS.

Richard W. Robinson Jr.

Editor-in-Chief

The Capital News

US Edition

Medford, NJ

April 5-7

BBS Expo '94

WASHINGTON, DC – The nation's capital has been designated to host the first annual BBS convention of its kind. This convention is intended for anyone interested in the fast growing "information superhighway" provided by local BBSs, information services such as Prodigy, CompuServe, GEnie, etc.

The sponsor, *BBS Magazine* (aka *BBS Callers Digest*), intends to bring together its readers with companies that represent the latest in BBS software, communications, utilities and hardware. Companies include:

- Clark Development Co. Inc. (PC Board)
- Durand Communications (DC Net)
- Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Galacticomm, Inc. (Major BBS)
- Planet Systems, Inc.
- ZyXel, Inc.

Educational forums will include:

- BBS Software BBSs Today and Tomorrow
- Using BBSs and Online Service
- BBSs and the Law, Electronic Democracy
- BBSs Networking: Internet, Fidonet, QWK
- Modems, Telecomm Software, Shareware
- Connecting to the Internet for Users/Sysops
- Which Hardware and Software to Use

Playing host to this event is The Sheraton Washington Hotel, 2660 Woodley Road, NW (photo upper right). Located in northwest Washington, DC, The Sheraton Washington is in an excellent setting for BBS EXPO. Set two miles from downtown DC, minutes from National Airport and a few miles from the Balt/Wash International Airport, the award-winning Sheraton Washington Hotel combines first-class amenities, restaurants and an experienced exhibit service department to provide a first-class venue for BBS EXPO.



Sheraton Washington Hotel in Washington, DC

Corporate buyers, resellers, operators of bulletin board systems and regular BBS callers looking to acquire the latest in software are hungry for information on what's over the horizon. Technological advances, new products, additions to the old

.....
The sponsor, BBS Magazine intends to bring together its readers with companies that represent the latest in BBS software, communications, utilities and hardware, plus much more.
.....

ones... these are all of chief interest to attendees of BBS EXPO. From the hobbyist to the experienced BBS system operator to the executive using electronic bulletin boards strictly to increase sales, all backgrounds and interests will be represented.

Along with many exhibits and onsite demonstrations from leading and startup companies in the industry, the show will present educational forums held by experts in each of the related fields. The cost to get connected is only \$195 for all three days or \$100 for one day. College students with current ID cards can purchase a complete three day pass for only \$125, or \$65 for a one-day pass. If purchased after March 5, three-day registration will cost \$250. Student registration will be \$195.

Registration forms should be mailed in with check or money order as soon as possible. Please make all check or money orders payable to:

BBS EXPO

You can also fax your registration form using a Visa or MasterCard to 609-953-7961.

For more information please call BBS EXPO at 609-953-5955. Sales information 203-254-0500.

REGISTRATION FORM

BBS EXPO '94 April 5-7, 1994

MAILING INFORMATION: (Please print clearly)

Full Name _____

Address _____ Daytime Number _____

_____ Fax Number _____

City _____ State/Zip Code _____

Province/Postal Code/Country _____ BBS Name/Phone _____

ATTENDEE BADGE INFORMATION: (Please print clearly)

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Visa MasterCard Check Money Order Amount Enclosed \$ _____

If paying with credit card, credit card # _____

Expiration Date: _____ Signature: _____ Total to be charged _____

Charged by: Callers Digest, Inc.

NEWSWIRE

eSoft Announces Support for Hayes 28,800 Modems

AURORA, CO. — eSoft recently announced it is making available a free update to its TBBS bulletin board system software to support Hayes' new V.FC based Optima 288 modem product. The update, which adds support for 57,600 bps and 115,200 bps interface rates, allows TBBS-based bulletin boards to provide the high data transfer rates possible with the new modems.

eSoft President Phil Becker, said, "TBBS is the only product in existence

which can run up to 64 of these modems on a single computer. Not Unix, not OS/2, not any other BBS product can support more than a few of these modems on a single machine without serious performance reduction. TBBS can support up to 64 of them, all with less than 10 percent degradation in performance, and all on a single DOS-based PC."

For more information, contact eSoft at 15200 E. Girard Ave., Suite 3000, Aurora, CO, 80014, or call voice (303) 699-6565. Or e-mail Alan Bryant at abryant@esoft.com.

Delphi Acquires Lotus Original

CAMBRIDGE, MA. — Delphi Internet Services Corporation, one of the nation's top online services and significant provider to consumers of full access to the Internet, recently appointed Ezra Gottheil as senior product design manager. Gottheil is heading the team designing Delphi's new graphical user interface for its online system and developing its documentation.

As one of Lotus Corporation's three original employees, Gottheil worked for the company for over 11 years.

Founded in 1981 as General Videotex Corporation, Delphi was acquired by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in September of last year. Delphi is the sole major online service providing an unabridged connection to the Internet.

For more information, contact Delphi Internet Services Corporation, 1030 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138, or call voice (617) 491-3342, fax (617) 491-6642.

CompuServe and Exec-PC Sign Agreement for Network Services

COLUMBUS, OH — CompuServe Inc.'s Network Services Division has announced an agreement to provide Exec-PC Inc., a major provider of CompuServe shareware, with access to the CompuServe global public data network. The agreement will enable Exec-PC to extend more efficient and economical dial-up network services to its customers.

Exec-PC, of Elm Grove, WI, main-

BTW...

SOMEONE'S TELLING SECRETS.

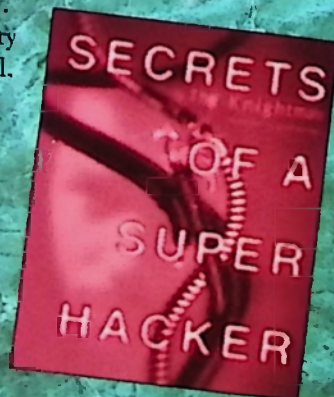
Sysops take note: A newly published book might have you running for safety. "Secrets of a Super Hacker" (Loompanics Unlimited, 205 pages), by an author known only as The Nightmare, provides readers with hints on cracking and hacking, not to mention "BBS Exploitation," "Bypassing BBS Security," "Crashing BBSs" and "Trojan Horses," those smart little programs uploaded to BBSs that, when run by the sysop, carry out surreptitious assignments such as collecting passwords.

Knightmare, while writing authoritatively, helpfully breaks the 15 chapters into dozens of smaller sections, allowing the uninitiated to keep up or skip directly to what they prefer to read. The text is saturated with vignettes, as well as personal accounts which in many cases paint a heretofore unseen picture of hacking culture and computer security.

The volume covers subjects from the history of hacking to "The Hacker's Ethic." A helpful, if brief, glossary is included, as are thorough appendices (with one even offering common passwords for would-be crackers).

With an introduction by Gareth Branwyn and cover by Bart Nagel, "Secrets of a Super Hacker" is a sort of textbook for anyone concerned about the security of their system.

Sysops may find it necessary to read this one, especially if their callers read it first.



tains a storehouse of over 650,000 shareware programs and files on a BBS users can access through CompuServe. Since it was established in 1983, more than 10,000 enthusiasts have posted shareware on Exec-PC, while hundreds of thousands of users have accessed the library to d-load shareware. Exec-PC's Hyperscan online search feature is able to search 20,000 files every two seconds.

For more information, contact CompuServe at 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Box 20212, Columbus, OH 43220, or call (614) 457-8600.

Spider Island Enhances TeleFinder BBS for Macintosh

IRVINE, CA — Spider Island Software, maker of TeleFinder, the Mac BBS, has released version 3.2 of its Group Edition Host software with significant new features most frequently requested by users and sysops.

TeleFinder 3.2 now gives users the ability to view GIF files in addition to PICT format files and their captions while online, thereby providing the opportunity to automatically decompress and view graphic files while d-loading them.

In addition, TeleFinder 3.2 now includes built-in drivers for V.Fast modems from Hayes, US Robotics and Microcom. When using V.Fast-compatible modems and V.42bis compression, TeleFinder is capable of achieving file transfer rates exceeding 100,000 bits/sec.

Spider Island has also announced that it now supports Internet Mail access via InterFinder, a third-party mail gateway that supports the simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) commonly used for sending mail over the Net.

Finally, on top of its Mac GUI and text-based support for standard TTY, VT100 and ANSI terminal connections, TeleFinder 3.2 now optionally supports Windows users TeleFinder User for Windows.

For more information, contact Spider Island Software 4790 Irvine Blvd., Suite 105-347, Irvine, CA 92720 or call voice (714) 669-9260, BBS (714) 730-5785 or fax (714) 669-1383.

GEMini Atari CDROM

Available

WALNUT CREEK, CA — We know you Atari users are out there...here's something new just for you.

The GEMini CDROM for Atari computers, featuring 616 megs or 2,872 public domain programs, shareware programs and commercial demos for the Atari ST, TT and Falcon computers (as well as graphics and text for the Lynx and Jaguar video game systems), is now available from Walnut Creek CDROM.

Walnut Creek has set up the CDROM in a logical tree structure, which simplifies searching for and running files.

Sysops can install the GEMini CDROM on an Atari or MSDOS BBS. All the non-compressed files have a corresponding compressed version.

BBSs supported include PCBoard, opus, Wildcat, RBBS, Spitfire and Maximus.

For more information, contact Walnut Creek CDROM, 1547 Palos Verdes Mall, Suite 260, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, or call voice (800) 786-9907, fax (510) 674-0821. Or contact Edward McGrath at (510) 674-0783.

Help for Women Online

For women seeking help with their information and networking needs, Women's WIRE (Worldwide Information Resource & Exchange), described as the first international, interactive computer network dedicated to women, just might be the answer.

Women's WIRE, the product of WIRE Network's, Inc. out of San Francisco, CA, last fall held phase one of its project to educate and train women about cyberspace and online communications. Fifty California non-profit women's community-based service providers and public policy organizations took part. Phase two, in January, was to provide free one-on-one training, technical assistance and accounts on WIRE.

If you are a woman interested in getting involved, contact Women's WIRE at voice (415) 615-8989, or e-mail to info@wire.net.

Correction:

In the Modem Discounts column of our Dec. '93 issue we misused the term "closeout offer" when referring to Practical Peripherals' special pricing deal on the PM14400FXSA modem (\$215/\$190 each for five or more). As for the PM14400FXMT, the regular sysop discount applies: \$155 each.. Practical Peripherals has no intention of discontinuing or "closing out" either modem. Further, the special offer has been extended to the end of this month.

The Skinny

SOFTWARE VENTURES, CORP. has upgraded its MicroPhone line to include multiple sessions and Internet access tools.

THE WASHINGTON POST CO. is planning to dispense an electronic edition of The Washington Post newspaper.

At presstime, CISCO SYSTEMS INC. was reportedly planning to announce support for AppleTalk Remote Access in one of its communications servers. The announcement was planned for MacWorld Expo in San Francisco.

ONLINE YELLOW PAGES, along with display advertising, will be offered online following an alliance of Prodigy Services Company and NYNEX.

APPLE COMPUTER INC. is offering a family of remote access items aimed at making dialing easier, cellular connections better and x.25 support through an extension.

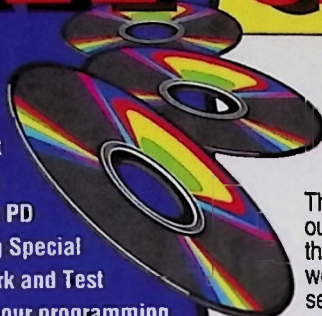
PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL and ZIFF DESKTOP INFORMATION plan to distribute the multimedia features of Ziff magazines, which include PCWeek and Mac WEEK, electronically over PSICable Internet system.

CORPORATE SOFTWARE INC. has started beta testing on a new product designed to link the Internet's Usenet newsgroups with Lotus Notes.

HUGHES COMMUNICATIONS Inc. has filed an application with the FCC for a proposed satellite service to offer on-demand high-speed data communications and video telephony services to

CONTINUES...

FREE CD-ROM DISC!

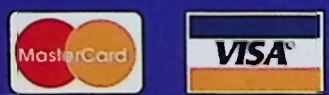


Mega Demo & Test contains 350 Megs of PC Shareware & PD software. Including Special CD-ROM Benchmark and Test Utilities written by our programming staff, & NOT available on any other CD-ROM Discs. Our Special Test Utilities measure throughput as well as access time in a reliable and consistent manner for a meaningful real-world benchmark for CD drives. The Disc and Interface Software are fully functional (Even for BBS Use) and not crippled in any way. When purchased separately Mega Demo and Test is \$14.00 plus \$6.00 for S&H However for a Limited Time This Demo and Test CD-ROM Disc is Free with any CD Disc purchase.

These are the Only Shareware & PD CD-ROM Discs with both a DOS, and a Windows 3.1 "Hypertext" Retrieval Interface. Plus All CD Discs are BBS Ready, and Include files.bbs plus our BBS Door with our "Remote User" Mouseable Pull-Down Menu Interface.

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Our CD-ROM Discs are "BBS Ready" & include files.bbs, plus MegaDoor & MegaTerminal. Both programs fully support the hypersearch lookup features of MegaSearch. MegaTerminal is our "Remote BBS Graphical User Interface" for MegaDoor that allows the remote user to access MegaDoor using... Mouseable Pull-Down Menus in a Windowed Environment! Try it, It's unlike anything seen before on public BBS systems. Call our BBS at (602) 770-0008. Select Doors from the main menu, run door #1, enter ! to download MegaTerminal, Unzip, read the short document megaterm.doc, install as instructed and experience Mega Terminal!

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Contains PC Games from Shareware Companies such as Apogee, and Epic, plus many many others. Game Bytes Electronic Magazine, with file categories that include Arcade, Adventure, Puzzles, Mind & Strategy, War Games, Card Games, RPG Games, Plus 256 Color GIF's, FLI's of all types & Includes Sound Files, .MOD, .ROL, .WAV & .VOC

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business and consumer markets.

DOW JONES & COMPANY, INC. and The New York Times Company have announced the content of the New York Times (as carried by The New York Times News Service) will be distributed by Dow Jones Business Information Services beginning this spring. The Times Co. also struck a deal with America Online to deliver The NY Times Online, an interactive service scheduled to launch sometime before April.

FUJITSU NETWORK

SWITCHING of America is offering an asynchronous transfer mode gateway giving end-users the opportunity to access growing broadband public info highways.

HOUSE INFORMATION

SYSTEMS plans to provide full Internet access beginning in 1995, at the start of the next Congress. Access will include, among other things, databases offering information about voting records and legislation.

HEWLETT PACKARD

COMPANY of California has acquired the rights to the trademark PC Dashboard from No Sweat Software, Inc., a Virginia corporation. PC Dashboard has been upgraded and now goes by the name Starting-Line.

MICROCOM INC., of Norwood, Mass., is now offering a remote network server with V.fast modem technology and a Microsoft Windows-based interface.

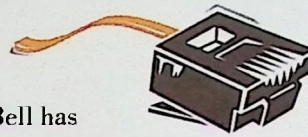
APPLE COMPUTER INC., reportedly has plans to build an electronic news and information network. The service will be competing with the likes of America Online CompuServe and Prodigy.

TRAVELING SOFTWARE'S CommWorks for Windows

will be bundled with all Gateway 2000 modems.

PACIFIC BELL recently filed four Video Dialtone applications with the FCC. P. Bell has its eye on creating a communications superhighway for California.

MICROSOFT CORP. plans this year to give about 2,000 in the Seattle area remote access to its corporate LANs through ISDN connections.



PRODIGY SERVICES CO. announced that its e-mail gateway to the Internet generated 200,000 messages for each of its first two months of service.

SYMANTEC CORP. has released DiskDoubler 4.0, its noted compression utility for the Macintosh. Also for the Mac, E-Machines, the division of SuperMac Technology Inc., has announced Simply TV: a card allowing any television to become a Mac display. ■■■■■

A large advertisement for GARLIQUE Image Center. The background is a stylized, high-contrast image of a person's face, possibly a woman, with a dark, shadowed area on the right side. The text is white and black.

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GALACTIC

Discussing The **NEW**
“really cool things” with

Nearly two years ago BBS Magazine sat down with Tim Stryker, founder and chairman of the board of Galacticom, Inc., (creator of The Major BBS) for a revealing interview. This time we look to Scott Brinker, president and CEO, for an update about the goings-on at the multi-million dollar company, including the recent release of The Major BBS 6.2.

Scott Brinker



AMBITIONS

Major BBS, customer satisfaction and other Galacticom's energetic CEO Scott Brinker.

Brinker was the company's second customer back in 1986 and later acted as its general manager (among other things) until he was named to his current post a year ago this month.

At 22, Brinker has an intense confidence in his products that stretches beyond his years, frequently stressing the importance of customer satisfaction. And as we found out, the formula is working.

Tell us what's been happening over the past 22 months.

Well, everything has gone gangbusters. Sales have doubled, our staff has doubled, our customer base has doubled, our third-party developers have doubled, the size of our facilities has doubled — we're thrilled to be in the heart of it.

Over a year ago, we unveiled the Version 6 platform, which enabled add-on options to plug into the BBS directly as DLLs. I think it's a breakthrough that has made The Major BBS the most open-architecture bulletin board system around, and it has really fueled our growth.

Two years ago we had 20 employees. Now we've got 40 people on board, over 100 third-party developers, close to 300 dealers and VARs worldwide...and over 15,000 multi-user systems sold into business, education, government and entertainment applications.

We've taken on a leading role in the acceptance of graphic technology for BBSs, such as RIPscrip. And we've given a lot of attention to the international market, supporting almost a dozen translations of the BBS into languages around the globe, from Spanish and German to Czech and Hungarian.

It's no secret you're now running the company. But how did this come about?

Well, for many years I ran a third-party company in Fort Lauderdale [Moonshae Telecomm and later Galactic Innovations...Brinker also worked summers for Galacticom in '87 and '88] that developed add-on products for The Major BBS, such as a multi-user database and the hit game Kyrandia [which later inspired Virgin Games' Legend of Kyrandia]. We also ran the largest public BBS in the southeast, Moonshae Isles, so we worked closely with Galacticom on a regular basis.

At the time, my company was rich in engineering talent, but relatively low on project capital. Galacticom was almost in the opposite situation. So in December of 1990, we decided to merge the two companies, and I came on board as vice president.

Over the years I've dug into everything from marketing to engineering to sales support. When Stryker decided to turn over the helm, I was delighted to take on the challenge. Of course, it means 15-hour days and seven-day work-weeks, but when you do what you love and love what you do, there's never enough hours in the day.

Were you attending school while running these companies?

I finished 11th grade in high school and was allowed early admission to the University of Miami because of the work I was doing...there I studied computer science and electronic

CONTINUES...

book with their individual credentials and accomplishments.

Where does that leave Stryker?

He's published his book, "Think a Little," on the evolutionary perspectives of the future of civilization. And he's done some rather extensive research on electronic democracy. In fact, he's formed a new company, Consensus Systems, Inc., for the purpose of developing advanced multi-user polling and debate software [Brinker said Stryker is keyed into the development of electronic democracy, or superdemocracy, where the need for legislative representation would be eclipsed by citizens' abilities to vote directly on issues via electronic technology]. He's also released some fantastic computer-generated art on film and canvas.

But he's still with Galacticomm?

Oh yes, he's chairman and still has his fingers in the pie, so to speak.

Thus far we have been talking in general terms. Specifically, what's new on the software front?

Well, we've just unveiled Version 6.2 of the Major BBS, and phones are ringing off the hook. We've made four major enhancements (no pun intended, he says) to the baseline package.

First, we've rewritten our File Library from scratch. A full-screen ANSI file manager lets you quickly scroll through the files, tag them for download later, view detailed information (including the contents of ZIP files), or download one immediately and return right back to the list.

It's got superb support for CD-ROMs, with quick file logging and a "copy before download" option. The search capabilities are rather snazzy, too, with options to search not only for keywords and file names, but also for recently added files as well as the most commonly downloaded ones. And one of our third-party developers, Mountain Rose Multi Media, has an add-on for the Library that lets you have an unlimited number of CD-ROM "servers"



Tim Stryker, Galacticomm's founder, with an example of his computer-generated artwork.

music. When our company merged with Galacticomm I took a leave of absence from the university.

Tell us about the others at Galacticomm.

I'm working with what I'd call 39 of the most talented and dedicated people I've ever known. Bert Love, who has about 20 years of experience with communications hardware and software, is our vice president of research and development. He's worked with big companies, such as General Datacomm and Hitachi, on everything from modem design to ISDN. He works closely with

Chris Robert, our director of technology. Chris and I have worked together for the past four years, and he's the lead engineer in Version 6 and 6.1, as well as our Fax/Online project.

Richard Skurnick, who was a partner in my previous software company, is our director of operations. Sheri Robert is our director of marketing. [In fact, Sheri and Chris were married a year after meeting at Galacticomm]. And Michael Hunt is our chief financial officer and head of administration.

It's a very horizontally managed company, so it's only fair to say that all of the employees have an entrepreneurial stake in its success. I could fill a

Earl Morton, production foreman for Galacticomm hardware and software.



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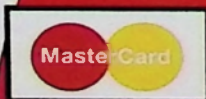


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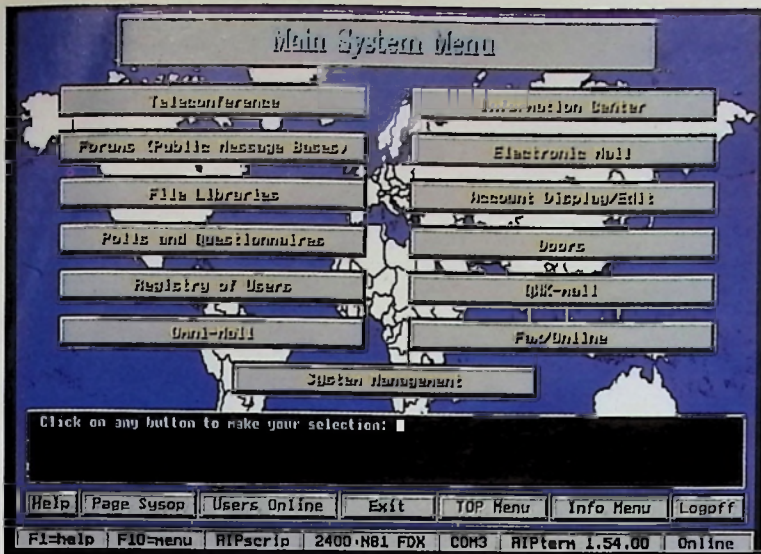
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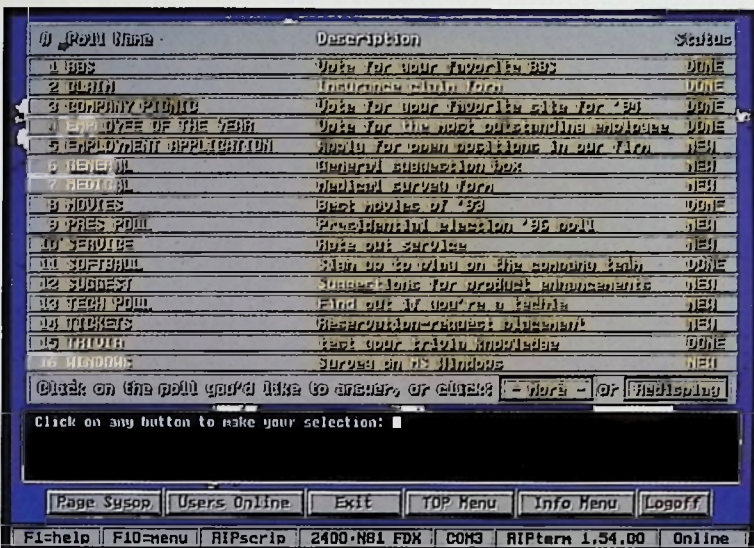
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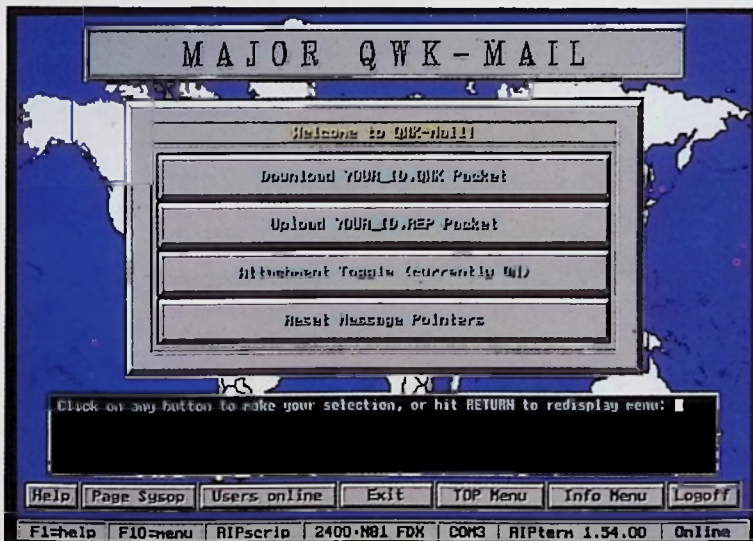


The Major BBS V6.2 includes RIPscrip, which provides your BBS with a mouse-driven GUI.



Users can be offered an unlimited number of polls and questionnaires in V6.2.

Version 6.2 of The Major BBS includes QWK-mail, allowing users to d-load news, e-mail and Forum messages for perusal offline.



across a LAN, for managing huge multi-gigabyte setups.

We also wrote a brand new Polls and Questionnaires facility. It has all the basic features of question branching, automatic tallying of results (which now happens online in real-time), and ways of restricting who can answer a poll and how many times. But that's just the beginning.

You can grant a file, or online time, or a security key to a user who completes a particular poll; you can even change their user class. Answers can be stored permanently with a user's account or saved to an ASCII text file, or both. You can take credit card numbers. You can force people to take the poll the moment they log on, or just give them a friendly reminder. It's seriously flexible, yet very simple to configure.

In addition, we integrated support for QWK offline mail packets and we added an "English/RIP" language into the baseline package. It supports auto-generation of RIP menus, automatic download/update of icons, automatic detection of RIPTerm at connect time. It includes a bunch of standard RIP menus and messages, and with the RIPaint add-on option you can design your own.

We've also spent a lot of time fine-tuning our system performance, including support for the new 28.8k modems.

So you're big supporters of RIP?

Well, we're big on graphics. RIP was the first really viable option for the BBS market. We jumped on that the moment we saw it. In fact, to this day we're the only BBS [software] that supports direct RIP design in the sysop configuration utilities. Our CNF offline editor supports a plug-in DLL that incorporates RIP support right in — it's just a keystroke to switch between your ANSI text blocks and your RIP ones.

Is Galacticcomm developing other add-ons for The Major BBS?

Well, our focus is mostly on the development of the platform...baseline BBS and connectivity...LAN/x.25. Our strategy has always been to encourage third-party companies to develop the myriad potential add-ons for this technology. [See penultimate paragraph for more about add-on options].

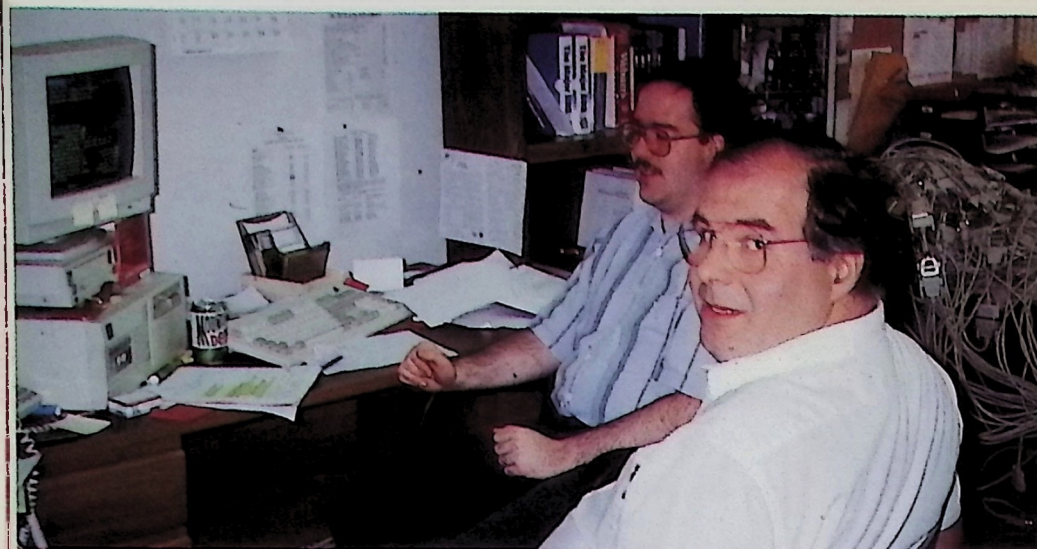
What is your major market?

About 80 percent of our market is in the business and corporate market while 20 percent is in the entertainment industry, ie. people running systems for profit.

What do you see on the horizon as far as BBSing is concerned?

The Internet, although that's no big surprise to the BBS world. Our Major Gateway/Internet product has become a

CONTINUES...



Bert Love, vice president of research and development, works with engineer Don Pitchford.

rather hot item: everyone wants easy access to Internet mail and news-groups. With FIDO and CompuServe and just about everyone else connected, it is the definitive backbone of this mysterious "information highway."

The 28.8K modems are looking pretty sharp, too, as they will start to give us the bandwidth to deal with multimedia online. I think this is going to be an exciting year with improving graphical interfaces. BBSs are going to start to rival the look and feel of services such as America Online, which have proven to be successful in reaching the broad home and business PC market.

I also feel that the third-party market for BBSs, particularly The Major BBS, is going to skyrocket. So many people are scrambling to catch this wave of cyberspace, and every one of them has a different idea of what the "ideal" system should look like. And the truth is, many of them do have some really great ideas. Our third-party com-

panies [Durand Communications, Tessier Technologies], are turning those ideas into products. We've always believed that the key to success is keeping a completely open architecture.

Tell us what the future holds for Galacticom.

Look out Microsoft! *Brinker says with a laugh.*

Our corporate mission is "to do really cool things in the field of computerized communications and make a buck at it." It's no secret that this industry is exploding. We're ready to tackle that wave, with a corporate infrastructure that can handle 100 percent-200 percent growth per year.

I can't tell you what else is on the horizon product-wise, at least not yet, but I'm confident that by the end of this year there's going to be some even cooler advancements in our overall BBS architecture.

So what is it that makes Galacticom different? What sets you apart?

Well, technologically, I think we beat the competition in: flexibility, with our support for up to 256 simultaneous users on a single 486 machine; super connectivity via modems, serial ports, Novell LAN channels and direct x.25 circuits; and, expandability, through our open-ended architecture, availability of source code, and a huge selection

of third-party add-on options.

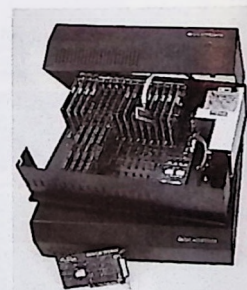
But what really separates us from the crowd is our philosophy of doing business. We're a real jeans-and-T-shirts, work-like-hell-to-make-people-happy kind of company. There's not a lot of bureaucracy and our one rule is that the customer comes first. We stay late into the night, work on the weekends and generally enjoy the heck out of what we do. And it shows.

Our free technical support, extras such as The Major News and promotion in our Guide to Public Online Services, and our aggressive development work are just a few of the ways we deliver on our promise: the customer is number one.

Connectivity options for The Major BBS include "User Six Pack" (providing support for six additional simultaneous users), "Advanced LAN Option" (allowing IBM-PC users on your Novell LAN to log into your BBS) and "X.25 Software Option" (connecting the BBS to an x.25 packet-switching network without the need for a PAD). Add-on options include RIPscrip, German Language Add-On, Spanish Language Add-On, The Major Database, Fax/Online, Shopping Mall, Search and Retrieve, Dial-Out, Major QWK-mail, Major Gateway/Internet, Entertainment Collection and Kyrandia.

Brinker notes these are available through Galacticom and others, such as Durand Communications.

Galacticom also offers source codes, a C Source Kit, GalactiBoard (an 8-port RS-232 serial interface for connecting The Major BBS to external modems, terminals, or other computers running communications software), and



Galacticom's GalactiBox.

GalactiBox (an AT-size expansion chassis with slots for up to 16 internal modems or serial cards.

Galacticom can be reached voice at (800) 328-1128, in the U.S. and Canada. Otherwise call (305) 583-5990. The BBS number is (305) 583-7808 and to fax Galacticom dial (305) 583-7846. ■■■■■

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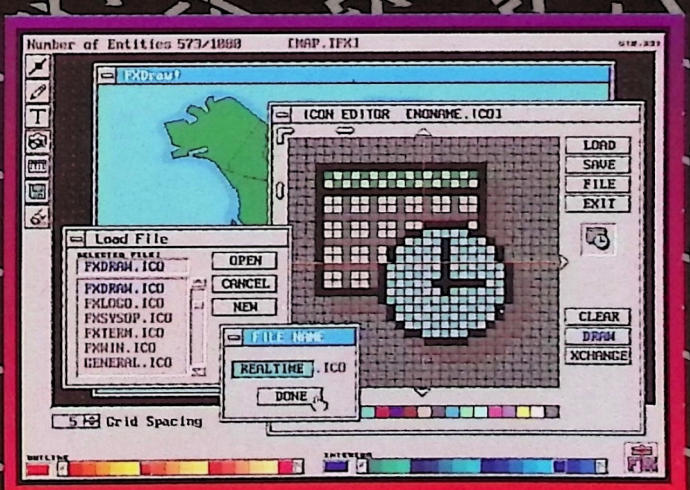
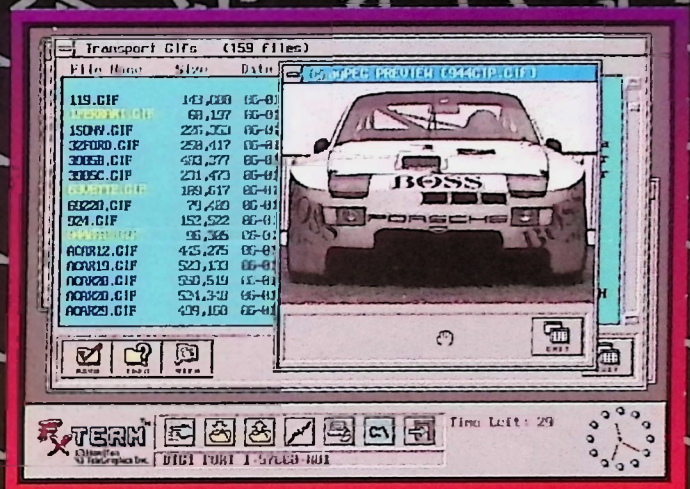
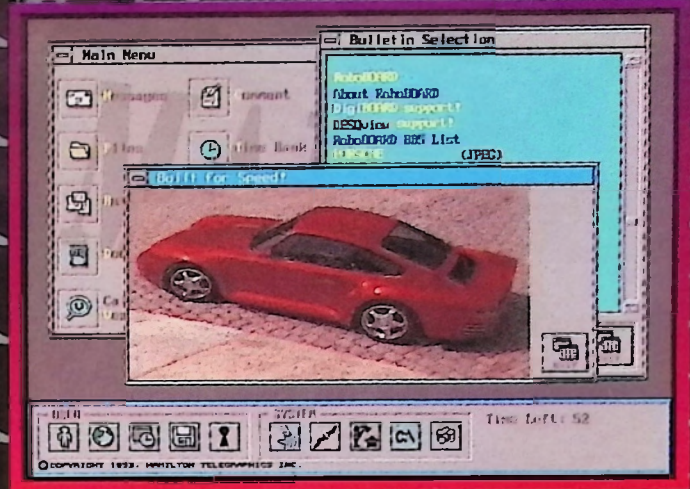
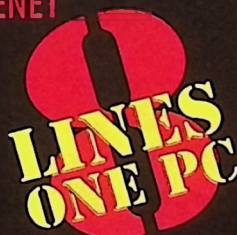
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Doing it all at

Datamax/Satalink Connection

On New Years day in 1989 a 2400 baud, single line, 80-meg BBS called Satalink went online in Warminster, PA. Five years later the system has a new name, 10 gigabytes and 65 lines. It was a busy five years.

According to Satalink's sysop, Ron Brandt, the system's original theme was messaging. A key goal was getting the BBS hooked up to a satellite so it could provide information found on no other board. The satellite link worked for a time, transmitting Usenet, but shortly thereafter transmission was lost when the satellite firm's parent company elected to drop the free Usenet feed. Undaunted, Brandt pressed on.

It wasn't long before three mail networks were installed (RIME, Fidonet and Smartnet), and within a few months of launching the system Satalink was running on one of the first versions of lantastic with two lines. Said Brandt: with a total of 255 conferences available through Sam Smith's Prodoor, Satalink was a one-stop provider of echomail at the time.

That October the system moved to Huntingdon Valley, PA, and two more nodes were added. In March of 1990 Brandt made the decision to take the board from hobby to business. Though still running it from his house, Brandt was now able to give the system his full attention. ILink was added; Satalink became one of the few systems to offer Usenet News and Internet e-mail (with the help of Ed Hopper's UUPCB package); conferences jumped to 800; and,

several support conferences were added for local software companies. Satalink further distinguished itself by becoming only the 21st BBS joining the ASP.

Expansion continued with Satalink acquiring other local BBSs, including the four-line UnderDog PCBoard. Then came DATAMAX.

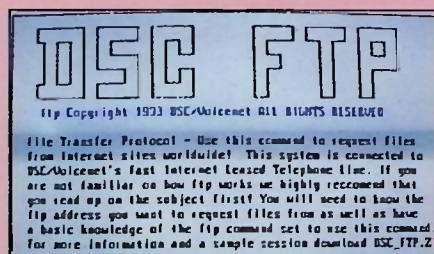
Merge

DATAMAX BBS, owned by Carmen DiCamillo, was a four-line system with the largest database in the tri-state area. The merger of the two, according to Brandt, made for the perfect setup. The two systems combined names to form Datamax/Satalink Connection BBS, currently known as the DSC BBS.

"Our common goal was to provide an online service with a huge file collection and access to all major mail networks," said DiCamillo, now DSC president. "We also wanted to provide connectivity to wide area networks, such as Internet."

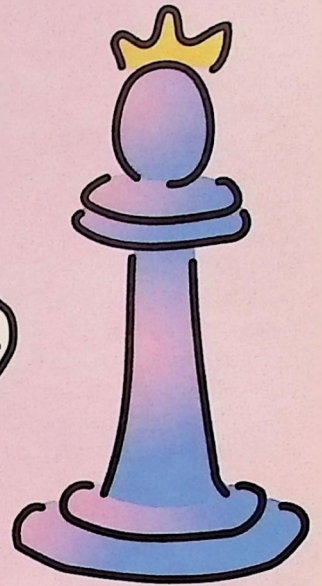
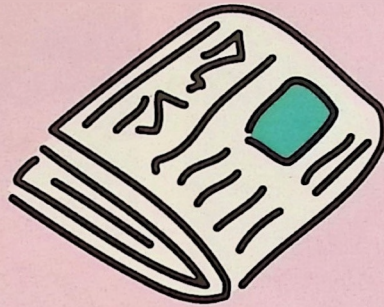
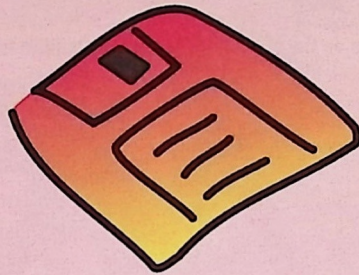
Today DSC, a VoiceNet company known as Pennsylvania's largest BBS, is jointly run by Brandt (vice president and system manager) and DiCamillo in office space in Ivyland, not far from Philadelphia.

DSC ftp.



DSC

BBS



Continued Growth

The PCBoard 15.0 system has continued to grow, with features such as local access numbers in 350 cities (callers purchase a block of time for a fee), user-friendly live Internet access with ftp/telnet services (callers get real-time access to millions of sites in 40 countries; a unique reverse ftp protocol allows Internet callers to log onto DSC and d-load through the Net), a full Usenet feed of over 3,000 newsgroups and plenty more. A summary follows:

- A variety of media for information exchange, including mail messages from 12 networks. Messages in most conferences are echoed worldwide.

- Over 5,000 conferences.
- Thousands of files.
- International echo mail.
- Gaming conference.
- Vendor support conference.
- Online technical assistance.
- Large adult conference.
- Custom scanning.
- Local product support conferences.
- ASP and ASAD approved files.

DSC features include:

- Multi-node setup for "no waiting" service.

- Over 10 gigabytes online.
- Member of the DVNET (Desqview File Network).
- Member SDN/WORKS! (Shareware Distribution Network).
- Member PDN (Programmers Distribution Network).
- Member WINNET (MS Windows file distribution network).
- Member SDS (Shareware Distribution System).
- QMAIL and MarkMail Offline Mail Doors.
- King of the Board, Super Slots, Trade Wars, Pegjump and more.

Callers expecting a broad array of files will not be disappointed with DSC. Program categories include utilities, education, networking, games, database, CAD, graphics, word processing, communications, desktop publishing, virus scanning and business applications. Seventy-six in all.

Besides those already mentioned, networks include Usenet, Smartnet, Treknet, Annex, AdultLink, Throbnets, AfterDark and AdultNet. And as for the adult, DSC offers a copious supply of adult files and message areas.

Software engineers (from left) Rudy Kappra and Kurt Reimer, John Prenis, hardware engineer, Carmen DiCamillo, president, Ron Brandt, vice president and system manager and Stephanie DiCamillo make up DSC BBS.



CONTINUES...

TAPPING THE NET

There are plenty of avenues for those wanting to e-mail via Internet. But, as DSC puts it, messaging is just the tip of the iceberg. Internet provides access to over a million hosts worldwide; resources to millions of available file archives for every known computer platform and the ability to instantly connect to a computer anywhere on the planet

Creating a system to offer the Internet live to its members posed a difficult task for DSC.

"We approached this project fully realizing that a serious amount of software could be required, since the Internet is primarily a Unix oriented wide-area network," said DiCamillo. "Since Unix-type shell access is readily available, we felt that providing an 'easier' user interface would be highly desirable — and a necessary requirement for our software to meet."

Brandt and DiCamillo defined the operation specs and began hardware implementation in conjunction with DSC hardware expert John Prenis. Software engineers Kurt Reimer and Rudy Kappra set about the job of writing the software. Two-and-a-half man years later, the project was finished.

Today the software interface consists of the TCP/IP drivers and the application interface to the users that are accessible from the BBS menu as simple commands.

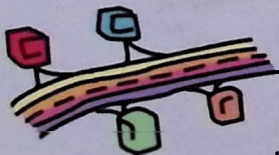
Telnet — The telnet command allows users to log onto any Internet host...it's menu-driven so inexperienced users can simply select a site (such as the Library of Congress) from a list. At that point, the connection is immediately made.

FTP — The ftp function allows users to connect to a network computer. Once the link is established, commands such as "dir" and CD allow callers to change and list the contents of the remote host's directories. Files from the Internet host can be transferred by issuing the "get" command and a file name.

"To complete the integration we needed to provide access to our system from the Internet," said DiCamillo. And they did just that.

Using a terminal server, users can telnet to DSC. After other protocols proved inefficient, the DSC team decided to develop their own. What they came up with is a reverse ftp, letting users flag or select files for d-load. The system then prompts the user for the host name, account, etc. The DSC system then will automatically initialize an ftp

session with remote hosts, log in and put selected files into the user's root directory.



Ron Brandt works on the system as Carmen DiCamillo looks on.

Clarinet

Datamax/Satalink Connection also provides Clarinet, an electronic newspaper with live United Press International newswire information and news about the computer industry. Being that the newspaper is online, callers can quickly perform searches for subjects of interest. UPI articles also have keywords for further topics, and they're coded according to priority and location. Components include general, international, financial, technology, local, sports and headline news and features.

Membership

Of chief importance to many callers, of course, is an affordable membership — DSC offers plenty of options. A basic membership gives users two hours a day of online time, a three-meg daily d-load limit, access to all conferences (except Adult and Usenet/Internet) and use of Fidonet. Memberships include a reference guide for getting the most out of the system. Price of the basic membership is \$20 for three months, \$35 for six months or \$50 for a year. And keep in mind, DSC allows you to pick and choose precisely which options you'd like, thereby keeping costs where you want them.

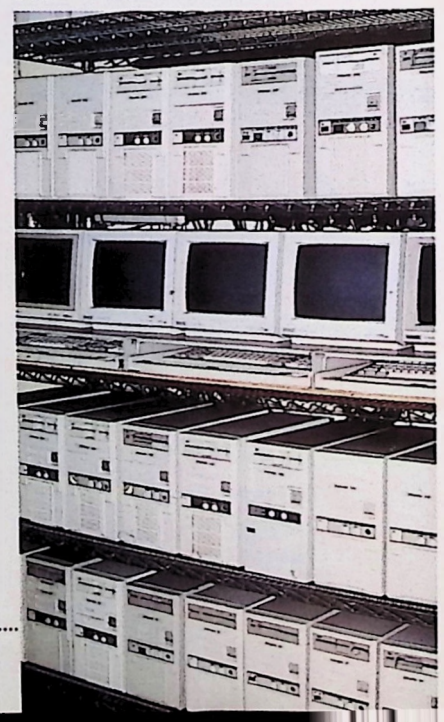
Additional options include more time, access to adult files and messaging, and access to the Usenet and

Internet e-mail and ftp/telnet. A year subscription with everything will run \$285.

With six employees and a current membership of 4,700, DSC's DiCamillo and Brandt have a simple goal in mind: "...new and innovative wide area networking for the future," Brandt said.

DSC can be reached at (215) 443-7390 for V.32bis/14.4; (215) 443-5830 for HST/DUAL; dsc.voicenet.com for telnet via Internet; or, (215) 674-9290 voice. For local access numbers, call voice (800) 521-2733. Write to them at 17 Richard Road, Ivyland, PA 18974. ■■■■■

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Trader's Lounge

Bradenton, Florida

Oasis in the Digital Desert

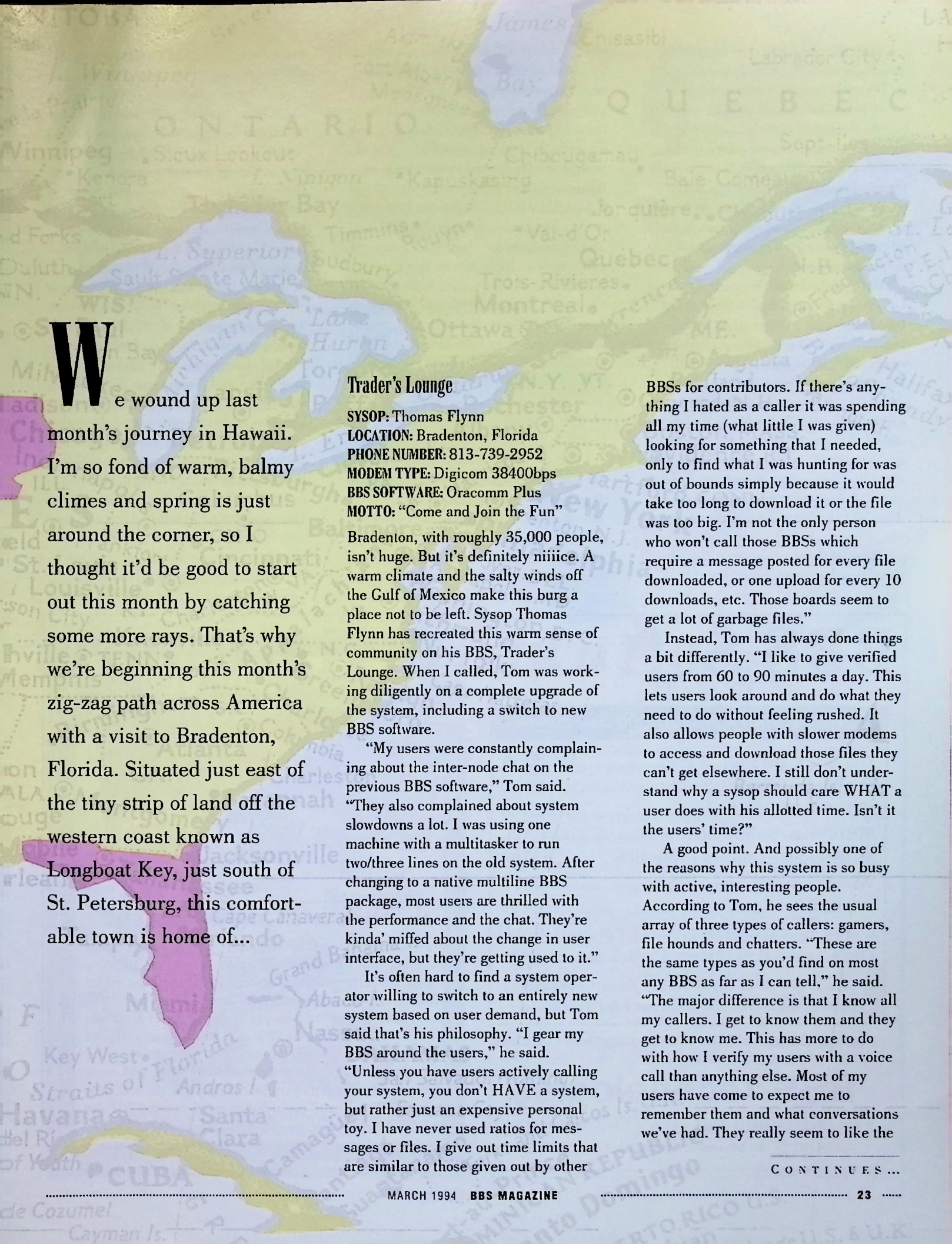
Boone, Iowa

Solar FX

Corpus Christi, Texas

Fascinations

Rock Springs, Wyoming



We wound up last month's journey in Hawaii. I'm so fond of warm, balmy climes and spring is just around the corner, so I thought it'd be good to start out this month by catching some more rays. That's why we're beginning this month's zig-zag path across America with a visit to Bradenton, Florida. Situated just east of the tiny strip of land off the western coast known as Longboat Key, just south of St. Petersburg, this comfortable town is home of...

Trader's Lounge

SYSOP: Thomas Flynn
LOCATION: Bradenton, Florida
PHONE NUMBER: 813-739-2952
MODEM TYPE: Digicom 38400bps
BBS SOFTWARE: Oracomm Plus
MOTTO: "Come and Join the Fun"

Bradenton, with roughly 35,000 people, isn't huge. But it's definitely niiiice. A warm climate and the salty winds off the Gulf of Mexico make this burg a place not to be left. Sysop Thomas Flynn has recreated this warm sense of community on his BBS, Trader's Lounge. When I called, Tom was working diligently on a complete upgrade of the system, including a switch to new BBS software.

"My users were constantly complaining about the inter-node chat on the previous BBS software," Tom said. "They also complained about system slowdowns a lot. I was using one machine with a multitasker to run two/three lines on the old system. After changing to a native multiline BBS package, most users are thrilled with the performance and the chat. They're kinda' miffed about the change in user interface, but they're getting used to it."

It's often hard to find a system operator willing to switch to an entirely new system based on user demand, but Tom said that's his philosophy. "I gear my BBS around the users," he said. "Unless you have users actively calling your system, you don't HAVE a system, but rather just an expensive personal toy. I have never used ratios for messages or files. I give out time limits that are similar to those given out by other

BBSs for contributors. If there's anything I hated as a caller it was spending all my time (what little I was given) looking for something that I needed, only to find what I was hunting for was out of bounds simply because it would take too long to download it or the file was too big. I'm not the only person who won't call those BBSs which require a message posted for every file downloaded, or one upload for every 10 downloads, etc. Those boards seem to get a lot of garbage files."

Instead, Tom has always done things a bit differently. "I like to give verified users from 60 to 90 minutes a day. This lets users look around and do what they need to do without feeling rushed. It also allows people with slower modems to access and download those files they can't get elsewhere. I still don't understand why a sysop should care WHAT a user does with his allotted time. Isn't it the users' time?"

A good point. And possibly one of the reasons why this system is so busy with active, interesting people. According to Tom, he sees the usual array of three types of callers: gamers, file hounds and chatters. "These are the same types as you'd find on most any BBS as far as I can tell," he said. "The major difference is that I know all my callers. I get to know them and they get to know me. This has more to do with how I verify my users with a voice call than anything else. Most of my users have come to expect me to remember them and what conversations we've had. They really seem to like the

CONTINUES ...

personal attention and interest in them that they get on my BBS.”

Tom said he keeps some strange hours at his “other” job and, as a result, he’s on the board with the nightowls. “I work the night shift with a variety of hours/days worked, so I’m home and on the machine when most sysops are sound asleep,” he said. “I get quite a lot of users who log on at wee hours of the morning, page me, then log right off if I don’t answer them.”

Many of the active users on Trader’s Lounge communicate with each other, too. The system’s nice variety of sub-boards offer access to message conferences, both local and internationally networked, covering a wide range of interests. I found sections for discussion of such diverse topics as technical issues, Amiga computers, Macintosh computers, out of body experiences, classified ads, political matters, Florida sights, home schooling, health issues, Apple computers, Commodore computers, cooking, diving, singles and more.

Many of these sub-boards also offer their own download areas. This is

where callers will find hundreds and hundreds of files. I found loads of files on the numerous menus, and Tom is actively adding new selections all the time. In just the couple of days between my calls to Trader’s Lounge, the list of new files added to the system was impressive. For example, I found KALAKH.ARJ, an intriguing Russian game of logic and strategy; FGOD-MON4.ZIP, another logic and strategy game with multiple levels, this time based around a fairy tale theme; STEL-CON.ZIP, an interesting new VGA space battle game; SOLAR.ARJ, a new arcade game from Epic MegaGames; several interesting BBS and modem-related programs and utilities, and too many more programs to list here.

The most interesting new file I found, however, was something of interest to Barney haters everywhere: BARNEY.ZIP. This is an archive containing two .BMP Windows graphics files — one displaying the sickeningly-sweet dinosaur on a wanted poster and the other making him an integral part of a re-designed Jurassic Park logo. Funny

stuff! And this sort of thing is going up on the system all the time.

Tom has also recently added a CD-ROM drive to the system and plans to add three more soon. More files, folks.

Add to this list a fine matchmaker program, a BBS database, and Oracomm’s built-in online text adventure game, and you’ve got a solid mix of entertainment, interaction and information. In addition to the new CD-ROM drives, Tom fully intends to continue building a better system.

“I’m setting things up to start writing a game designed for multi-user play from the ground up,” Tom said. “I’m tired of door games that claim to be multi-user and ‘interactive’ then fall face first. So that will start here shortly. I’ve also added a second hard drive that almost quadruples my storage capacity. I’ll be adding a new phone line within the next month and I hope to upgrade to OS/2 so I can run the OS/2 version of Oracomm very soon. It has features which can’t be found in the DOS version.”

Trader’s Lounge is still basically

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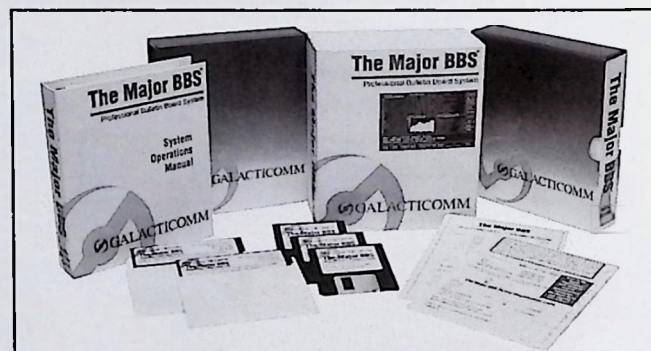
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free, especially to long-distance callers who bother to register, but Tom is very appreciative of all regular callers who make cash contributions to the system. He is currently offering three subscription levels which expand upon what he offers non-paying callers. Level one — \$10 per year — allows you 75 minutes and 2 megabytes of downloads daily. Level two — \$15 yearly — gets you 90 minutes' access and 2 megabytes of downloads daily. Level three — for a donation of \$40 or more — gets you Premium access, with 120 minutes online per day and unlimited downloads — FOR LIFE. All subscribers also get access to special contributors' areas and to numerous doors.

Tom apologized for the clutter while I was looking around the system. He was still re-constructing things after the software switch — but I'll bet by the time you read this he'll have it all rolling smoothly and growing nicely. You should definitely check it out.

Unfortunately, it's time to move on, leaving the sounds of construction behind us as we lay our hardhats on the

shelf by the door. Despite my love of the sea, it's time head north and east to Iowa, where the weather often takes harsher turns. Fortunately, it's almost spring now. Besides, this part of the country is always beautiful. The crisp, post-winter air will do us all some good, too. Winter wheat is up and the corn is going into the ground as we enter the city of Boone, a burg with barely 12,000 people, many of whom regularly call...

Oasis in the Digital Desert

SYSOP: Ryan Myers
LOCATION: Boone, Iowa
PHONE NUMBER: 1-515-432-4472
MODEM TYPE: U.S. Robotics 38400
BBS SOFTWARE: Renegade 07-17
MOTTO: "The BBS That Can Be Whatever One Wants To Make of It."

Oasis In the Digital Desert sysop Ryan Myers put the system online in June of 1993, as a service to local computer users. "I've seen other towns that are smaller, and they have more boards, so I figured there must be enough support for another one here," he explained. "I

also wanted to provide users in this town some entertainment because, with only one board in the area, other callers get a lot of busy signals. I figured I would help slow down the occurrence of busy signals users get because now they can call here, too."

The entertainment Ryan spoke of is provided in the guise of a number of interesting game doors. "I find that most of my users are big fans of door programs, for some unknown reason," he said. "I'm just not a real big fan of doors myself — but that's only my opinion. I do play them occasionally, but I don't make it a habit."

Still, Ryan has made a point of gathering loads of online game doors for the callers to play, including a hot nationwide Operation Overkill II BBS-to-BBS tournament. I also found Casino, The ANSI Art Galleries, TradeWars 2002, Solar Realms, Junknews, Pit, Modern Warfare and Pimpwars when I called. Access to the game doors — and to an extensive area of adults-only entertainment — is available to all supporting subscribers.

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Ryan said he'd like to see more "average" callers to his system — those looking for message bases and files. Man, those doors MUST be popular. Most system operators complain about having too many file hogs. And I can't figure out why Ryan wouldn't get more callers looking for files. Oasis in the Digital Desert offers more than two gigabytes of shareware and freeware programs to choose from, and Ryan is constantly adding new files to the list. Available downloads are arranged into 60 different categories — everything from text files, ANSI art, stuff for youngsters and financial/productivity software to movies and animation demonstrations, communications programs, sound files, complete BBS programs and more. Supporting subscribers can also access a new CD-ROM drive Ryan was in the process of installing when I called, offering roughly another half a gigabyte of files. Unfortunately, this won't be available to first-time callers, but look for bulletins about which discs will be offered when you call — he'll be rotating several and they could be just the ones you're looking for.

Oasis in the Digital Desert is also an authorized distributor of popular shareware programs from Apogee, Software Creations and Epic Megagames.

Again, I was surprised, but Ryan also mentioned he'd like to see more callers interested in messaging. Oasis in the Digital Desert offers callers access to plenty of interesting conferences on a broad variety of topics, including selections from three echo-mail networks (FidoNet, ITCnet and SWCSnet). There are definitely plenty of topics for message fans to tackle.

Available message conferences range from general local conversation, amateur radio, ASP, general complaining, arcade games and CD-ROM topics to Star Trek, Windows, the White House and more. Plenty to keep you chatting forever and a day with interesting folks all over the world.

In fact, Ryan feels strongly about communications as the future of BBSing unfolds. "BBSing is a newer form of communications that is taking over person-to-person talk by voice, and applying new technology to the entire thing," he said.

SWCSnet is perhaps the most interesting network offered here. This is a new one — it wasn't really open to public access yet when I called, but Ryan explained this is an echomail message base for a new online shopping center he recently added to the system. "Users can order CD-ROMs to computer hardware right online with a credit card," he said. "I did this as part of the mail network I'm in the process of setting up with another board, called SaveWare Computer Shopping Network. Users can buy things directly from me, but it actually comes from the main BBS — SaveWare, in Chicago. This network will be better known as SWCSnet."

Although the supporting echomail network wasn't running yet, the store itself was online and offered a fine assortment of interesting products for prices I thought were fair to excellent. I found an online catalog of CD-ROM discs and a complete selection of computer motherboards, disk drives, monitors, printers and more — new and refurbished. This is well worth looking into and promises to grow quickly as the network opens up and spreads. And you can get a first look on Oasis in the Digital Network.

The system is a perfect reflection of its surroundings. Cozy, caring and uncomplicated, with clean, straightforward menus offering you a choice of ASCII, color ANSI or RIP operation. Ryan told me all callers get access to the system after registering at no charge — but that access is extremely limited. To really get into things, you'll want to subscribe. There are a variety of supporting subscriber options available to you, from \$5 for 60 minutes a day for 60 days to \$25 for 90 minutes per day for a full year (\$35 gets you 90 minutes of access per day for TWO full years — an excellent value).

I like the name, the system operator, the feel of the system and what it has to offer. You can't ask for much more than that. This one deserves a call.

But, alas, I sense some late winter weather coming on. It's time to move along, this time south again, all the way to Texas, back to the Gulf of Mexico. We're going down to Corpus Christi, a beautiful coastal city perched just

across the bay from North Padre Island, a favorite stop of mine on vacations with the family, along our route to South Padre Island. Yes, despite the pretty beaches and temperate climate, there ARE modem users here... plenty of them. And no wonder, with systems like...

Solar FX

SYSOP: Tony Honaker

LOCATION: Corpus Christi, Texas

PHONE NUMBER: 1-512-883-7839

MODEM TYPE: U.S. Robotics 19200 V.32

BBS SOFTWARE: WildCat 3.60

MOTTO: "Continuing the Drive for World Domination"

Corpus Christi funeral director Tony Honaker doesn't fit the stereotype too often attached to his profession. An avid hunter and computer fanatic, Tony's blessed with a surprising sense of humor. He's also operated one of the largest bulletin boards in his area — BlueWater BBS, — for more than two years. I've known Tony for quite a while now and I have to admit I always look forward to hearing what he's up to next.

What he's been up to is a merger with another large local BBS, bringing together years of experience and a broader spectrum of services for callers. The result is the birth of a new BBS — Solar FX — which combines the best of BlueWater BBS and CCAT BBS. "In order to maintain a quality board, manpower was needed," Tony said. "Now Dave Burke and Steve Fernandez, of CCAT BBS, in partnership with myself and Bruce Claunch, are providing the concerted effort to make Solar FX what it is."

The new system consists of a 486DX host networked with 2 386DX's, to handle the nodes & utilities. The system is fast and fun, but Tony didn't start out so sophisticated. "After being a BBS caller for a couple of years, I soon found I didn't have the time and hard disk storage I needed for the collection of files I wanted to keep," he explained. "One day, out of the blue, one of the local sysops called me and asked if I wanted to buy his machine — BBS software, modem and all. After making the purchase, I remember thinking, 'What have I done?,' but all there remains of that original system now are

the 5 1/4" disks which held the BBS software. The original software wasn't able to support the rapidly growing demands of the system's users so, after a few weeks, I switched to WildCat and have been very pleased with it."

Tony said most Solar FX callers are looking for files. "With the current file count numbering over 40,000, it's not hard to imagine what most users come here for," he explained. "With a constant flow of new files obtained daily, from various sources, we have become known as the source in this area for hard-to-find files. This influx of new & updated files, on a daily basis, ensures that our most demanding users receive their daily fix of new 'virus free' software."

Here Tony paused and chuckled. "Many of our users have been treated in the emergency room for IC (Integrated Circuits) tracks on their arms," he added, smiling wickedly. "With the efforts of multiple sysops, as well as authors directly uploading to the system, our most rewarding experience is when we pluck a piece of new software off the vine the day of its release and have it available for download the very same day."

That's what you can expect to find often on Solar FX, thousands of fresh, new programs and text files to choose from every day — roughly two gigabytes' worth. You can also select from 6 different CD-ROMs, also chock full of the latest quality programs and utilities, including Pier 3, NightOwl 9, NightOwl 10, Shareware Vault Gold, Cream of the Crop 2 and CD Win Box. Plenty to choose from, to be sure!

A strong interest of Tony's is online communications among the users. "Another enjoyable activity as sysop is

networking with people from all around the country, from all walks of life," he said. "Drawing from the pool of knowledge they have and offering, in exchange, any information I might have.

"In fact, I believe the word 'BBS' no longer applies to what some services, such as Solar FX, offer to today's user," Tony continued. "It's more accurate to call it an information exchange. Users exchange knowledge with each other as well as gain access to programs which can aid them in their everyday life. No longer does the information gained through access stay at home in the 'hobbyist' mode. Instead, it goes into the workplace, to help them perform their jobs more effectively. And not just programs, but technical knowledge gained through the exchange of mail throughout the echoes. Many companies have echoes directly related to their products and businesses tap into knowledge that the end users (as well as the companies they work for) hold."

Toward that end, Tony's always tried his best to provide all the echomail and local conferences his users requested when he ran BlueWater BBS — but quickly found it to be a costly proposition. "I didn't feel I could provide all the requested echoes without breaking the piggy bank," he said, "so we added the 'Planet Connect' satellite data service to Solar FX and literally opened up the world to our callers. The impact has been vast amounts of information and files which can be brought into the system at a nominal price. Not being restricted to a few echoes, we now can tap the entire backbone of the Fido network, as well as a few other notable message networks, thus broadening the knowledge base available to our users."

The system now offers access to




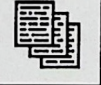
more than 600 different message conferences and Tony said many of the callers have shifted their focus from a file addiction to communicating, through the networks, with other BBS users all over the world. Access to a vast array of Internet e-mail and Usenet newsgroups is also offered on the system. And, since the satellite connection also pulls in literally thousands of new files each week — you won't have to worry about taking care of EITHER addiction on Solar FX.

The only side effect of this transformation into the satellite age is the impression it gives some of Tony's neighbors. "They laugh when they see my back yard," he said. "It looks like a satellite farm with a dish for data and another dish for TV."

As if that weren't enough, you can also find a nice assortment of electronic magazines on Solar FX — including GENESIS Daily News (an excellent general news wire service), CompuMag, HI-TECH HOME Weekly, Thinking Magazine, Business Sense and Astra Review from my own BBS Press Service. You can read these, in addition to Computer Underground Digest and far too many more to list in this column, in some really fine special doors created to make accessing the online magazines and browsing their pages easy and enjoyable.

In fact, easy and enjoyable would be the perfect description for this entire system. Tony and crew have been working into the wee hours implementing full RIP graphics support on Solar FX and the result is some of the most stunningly beautiful, sometimes downright funny and always

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charming menus and screens I've seen on a RIP-compatible BBS yet. The system's RIP interface was still under construction when I called to check out the board, but what I saw was enough to impress me. I know it's going to get even better as they continue their work. Of course, Solar FX also offers clean, colorful ANSI menus and ASCII menus, too.

Needless to say, with all this to offer, Solar FX has attracted a huge active user base. So many, in fact, that Tony said it's hard to define a typical

caller. "If you had to pick one of our users out of a line-up, you probably couldn't," he said. "Our typical users are hobbyists by nature. They thrive on the satisfaction they get from seeing the variety of files and message areas that we offer. Users have come to expect the user friendly environment Solar FX provides. We understand users have different comfort zones, and we feel our service fills each of them. We all remember when we first started on a BBS: we needed full HELP screens. Then we progressed beyond our 1st-

grade experience, to a more advanced level of use."

You'll find all those levels of experience on Solar FX, interacting, chatting, playing online games, reading the magazines and — of course — downloading TONS of files. Still, there's one type of caller Tony said he and his partners would like to see on the system more often — the business and professional BBS user. "We would like to see more professionals who would use our resources as an extension of their own knowledge, putting to use the tips, tricks, and tidbits of information on the system which would enhance their ability to perform their jobs in a more effective way."

If you haven't ever called Solar FX, give it a try. Even if you've called Tony and Bruce's BlueWater BBS or Dave and Steve's CCAT BBS in the past, it's a whole new system now. And the changes are STILL going on. Tony told me he plans to add more lines, better graphics and more CD-ROM drives to the system as soon as possible, and plans are already under way to get Solar FX set up as an Internet host. That's just what is planned for the IMMEDIATE future.

Even better — access to Solar FX is absolutely free. Subscribers get access to more lines and longer time online, but all registered callers gain admittance to the entire system. Tony admits spiraling costs will eventually force the partners to limit free access or, possibly, to eliminate it altogether — but you've still got time to see this system for yourself at no cost other than a little long distance...and you're already racking that up pretty regularly anyway, right? I recommended this one!

Ahh. These seaside visits always do me so much good. But, even the best of things must come to an end. After our visit to Solar FX, leaving this lovely area of the country is even harder, but we must press on...there's still one more side-trip we must take...moving north and west again to complete our zig-zag journey for this month...all the way to the wilds of Wyoming. Here we stop in Rock Springs, another lovely little town (do I detect a small-town theme here?), located in the southwest corner of the state. Despite the sparse popula-



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tion, the landscape is marvelous and it's here we find an active BBS called...

Fascinations

SYSOP: Monte Chambers

LOCATION: Rock Springs, Wyoming

PHONE NUMBER: 1-307-382-6851

MODEM TYPE: AT&T 19200

BBS SOFTWARE: Remote Access 2.01 Pro

MOTTO: "The Ever-expanding BBS!"

Fascinations system operator Monte Chambers explained he sort of fell into the task of running a BBS by default. "I have been involved in BBSing for eight years," he said. "This was the one hobby I never got tired of. We had one BBS in town, and I was a co-sysop on it. Then, in October of 1992, the operator of that system received a job advancement which required that he move out of state. I felt we needed a BBS in town, so I took over his phone lines and started Fascinations BBS."

I'm sure a large number of Rock Springs computer users and callers from around the country are glad Monte decided to keep things rolling. Through his dedicated efforts, the two-line system plays host to a good selection of callers from all walks of life and areas of interest. "The typical user is a common, everyday person who likes computers," Monte explained. "Most of my users are filers — they like to check out new software. They're on a quest to find just the right software to suit their needs."

File hounds shouldn't go away from Fascinations unhappy. I found more than 200 different file areas when I called the system — everything you could imagine, including FOUR sections of programs and utilities for home use, plus sections for educational files,

games, desktop publishing, databases, BBS systems, calculators, editors, financial programs, graphics, sound and more. More than 600 megabytes on hard disk. And Monte had just added 2 CD-ROM disc drives before I called, rotating 6 different discs for a total of roughly 35,000 more files to choose from. The first two weeks of the month you can download files from MegaRom 1 and NightOwl, the third week Shareware discs 1 and 2, and the fourth week Shareware discs 3 and 4.

Monte told me he'd like to see more people calling to play the excellent selection of online games he's put online. When I called, I found more than 25 online challenges to choose from — including Murder Warfare, Star Flight, Refraction, Klondike, Pit, Traps, Casino, Nuclear Strike, Black Jack, Choice 3 Games, Devastation, Global War, Dark Castle, Roulette, Horse Racing, Phantasia, Jet Fighter and more. Well worth even a long distance call for fans of online games.

Monte said he'd like to see more of his users taking advantage of FidoNet echomail conferences, but, like the other systems covered this month, I couldn't find any reason why they wouldn't, once they saw the message areas available on the system. I found dozens, in all variety of interests, when I called — many of them linked via FidoNet to more than 19,000 other participating boards around the world.

But that's not all. Fascinations is also a local computer store and (believe it or not) gift shop. Callers can request help with their purchases online, or haul their equipment down to the store Monte operates to get them repaired or pick up new items. Monte will also custom tailor

areas on the board for companies, providing you with your own corporate message base and data transfer areas which are private to your company.


Like the motto says, Fascinations continues to grow. "In the near future, I'd like to add more storage for downloads, an information database and prizes for the callers," Monte said. "I feel a BBS should be a place where you can get information you need. It should be a place people can call and have fun, too — children and adults. And it should be low-cost and easily accessible."

Monte's accomplished these goals — and more — with Fascinations.

Subscriptions are available for just \$30 per year (offering one hour of access per day and, apparently, unlimited downloads — MC and Visa accepted for signup right online). And Monte has just added RIP graphics to the system, making it much easier to use — and prettier, too! "This is a long-overdue feature," he said. "The graphics are great and the speed is good, too. This is a feature I've been looking for for years and at last it's here!"

You should consider being "here," too. Fascinations is a good example of yet another small-town system with big-town value and all the amenities of a warm, cozy community. Well worth your visit!

Regrettably, that wraps up yet another monthly traverse down the electronic highway. If Kooky will just find me my comb, we can get back on Route 66 and head for home once again. As usual, don't bother to unpack that travel bag. It's just a few weeks until we hit the road again. See you then. ■■■■■



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The Electronic Frontier Foundation

Fighting for your rights

For over a year now I've been trying to keep you informed of many of the legal issues that should be important to those of us communicating online. This time I'd like to tell you a bit about the organization for which I work, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and highlight some of the work we've been doing to protect the rights of BBS users and sysops.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, or EFF, was founded in June of 1990 by Mitch Kapor, of Lotus 1-2-3 fame, and John Perry Barlow, a computer aficionado probably best known for the lyrics he writes for the Grateful Dead. Mitch and John's paths had crossed before, but a series of events in the BBS world served as the catalyst to bring them together to form EFF. These events were the seizures of dozens of BBSs throughout the country by Secret Service agents in early 1990, collectively known as Operation Sun Devil.

Operation Sun Devil was a lengthy investigation that started with one young man illegally gaining access to a computer owned by the telephone company Bell South in Atlanta, Georgia. Like many young intruders, this particular explorer did no damage to the system, but made a copy of a "proprietary" Bell South document as something of a trophy of his escapades. When Bell South learned of the intrusion, they called the Secret Service, which focused its efforts not on arresting the young man and confiscating all known copies of the document, but instead on watching the young man's actions from the shadows. It was not until the copied document, known as the E-911 document since it explained the workings of the telephone lines dedicated to the emergency 911 system, was published in an electronic newsletter and distributed throughout the country that the Secret Service

decided to act.

And act they did. On May 8, 1990, the Secret Service served 27 search warrants in 14 cities throughout the United States. On that single day, they confiscated 40 computers and seized over 23,000 disks. The young man who committed the initial trespass was arrested, and subsequently pled guilty and went to prison. The publisher of the electronic newsletter that originally distributed the story was arrested. (Charges were dropped on the third day of his trial when it was established that the E-911 document did not actually contain proprietary information.)

But the real straw that broke the camel's back was the seizure of equipment belonging to Steve Jackson Games.

I've written about Steve Jackson Games before, so I won't go into tremendous detail here. Suffice it to say that Steve Jackson Games published books to be used to play fantasy games. During the Secret Service seizure, the company's BBS, business records and manuscripts of a soon-to-be-released book were confiscated and held for over four months. During that time, Steve Jackson was required to lay off half of his work force. When the computers and disks were finally returned, it was evident that all of the electronic mail on the BBS had been read by Secret Service agents. As it turns out, Steve Jackson Games had never had a copy of

the E-911 document on its computers in the first place, and the Secret Service decided not to press charges.

Mitch Kapor and John Perry Barlow were both users on the same electronic bulletin board system, called the WELL, out of Sausalito, California. Discussions on the WELL over those months were full of the horror and frustration users felt over the turn of events and the lack of any good place to go for help. Organizations that traditionally played the role of protecting civil liberties, such as the ACLU, had too limited an understanding of the technology involved. Computer lawyers at the time were more attuned to the needs of large companies rather than civil liberties issues. There seemed to be a gap in basic civil liberties protections for the users of new technologies.

Mitch and John decided to form the Electronic Frontier Foundation to fill that gap. As John Perry Barlow states in his wonderfully written piece on the state of the electronic world at that time, *Crime and Puzzlement*, EFF "will help to create for America a future which is as blessed by the Bill of Rights as its past has been." One of the first things EFF did was initiate a lawsuit against the United States Secret Service on behalf of Steve Jackson Games and the users of that company's bulletin board system, alleging that the stored e-mail messages were protected speech and that publishers like Steve Jackson Games had special protections from having their systems seized, and that that had been violated.

We won the Steve Jackson Games case (although the judge held that the unread e-mail messages were not "intercepted"). And since we've come on the scene, we've prided ourselves in providing legal assistance and advice to BBS users and sysops who call on us for help. We've worked to ensure that federal laws and regulations that would infringe upon the rights of users of high technology are debated and discarded. We've helped lawyers understand the nuances of the technology so they could provide adequate defense for their clients. We've written documents to courts to help them focus on critical civil liberties issues.

Of equal importance to our day-to-day work, assisting individuals with legal problems, is our vision of the

EFF MEMBERSHIP FORM

Return this form to:

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We occasionally share our mailing lists with other organizations promoting similar goals. However, EFF respects the individual's right to privacy and will not distribute your name without explicit permission.

I grant permission for EFF to distribute my name and contact information to organizations sharing similar goals.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization supported by contributions from individual members, corporations, and private foundations. Donations are tax-deductible.

future and the policy work in which we engage to further that vision. EFF's Open Platform proposal, which calls for the National Information Infrastructure (NII) to protect free speech and provide access to all, has just been introduced in the House of Representatives in a bill by Congressman Ed Markey (D-MA). We have also worked hard to ensure that individuals have the freedom to choose the technology they wish to use to protect their privacy and have fought to make government information accessible to anyone who requests access.

EDUCATIONAL MISSION. Along with our legal work, we have taken on the role of educating people of the legal issues and what they can do to help. EFF is committed to giving you current information on the critical issues that will affect your online communications. We post bulletins to the Internet Usenet group comp.org.eff.news and pass them around the major BBS networks. Future bulletins will include calls for e-mail campaigns, important legislative and judicial news, and updates on EFF's work.

EFF, with a grant from the Apple Computer Information Library, commissioned the writing of a free tutorial entitled, *The Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet*, available in electronic formats in both ASCII (DOS) and Hypercard (Mac) free of charge. In fact, all EFF publications, in both electronic and

paper formats, are free.

We have just begun distributing a directory of supporting BBSs to all EFF members. BBS sysops who are members of EFF are listed in the directory, and all supporting sysops can request a diskette with all of EFF's major publications and newsletters (including the *Big Dummy's Guide*) that can be posted to their boards. EFF is also planning to have its own BBS up and running early this year. When fully operational, the EFF BBS will feature conference mail from several networks including FidoNet and Usenet, the full selection of files available from EFF's ftp archive, EFF membership materials, bulletins on the latest issues affecting civil liberties in cyberspace, and more. EFF is currently accepting tax-deductible donations of hardware and money to help us start our BBS.

EFF is a membership organization, and we could use your support. If you believe in the work we do, we hope you'll take a minute or two to fill out the attached membership application and join with us. There's still much to do to ensure that users on the Electronic Frontier are guaranteed their very basic constitutional rights.

Shari Steele is Director of Legal Services at the Washington office of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). Send her your legal questions at sssteel@eff.org (Internet) or c/o BBS Magazine.

B.C.



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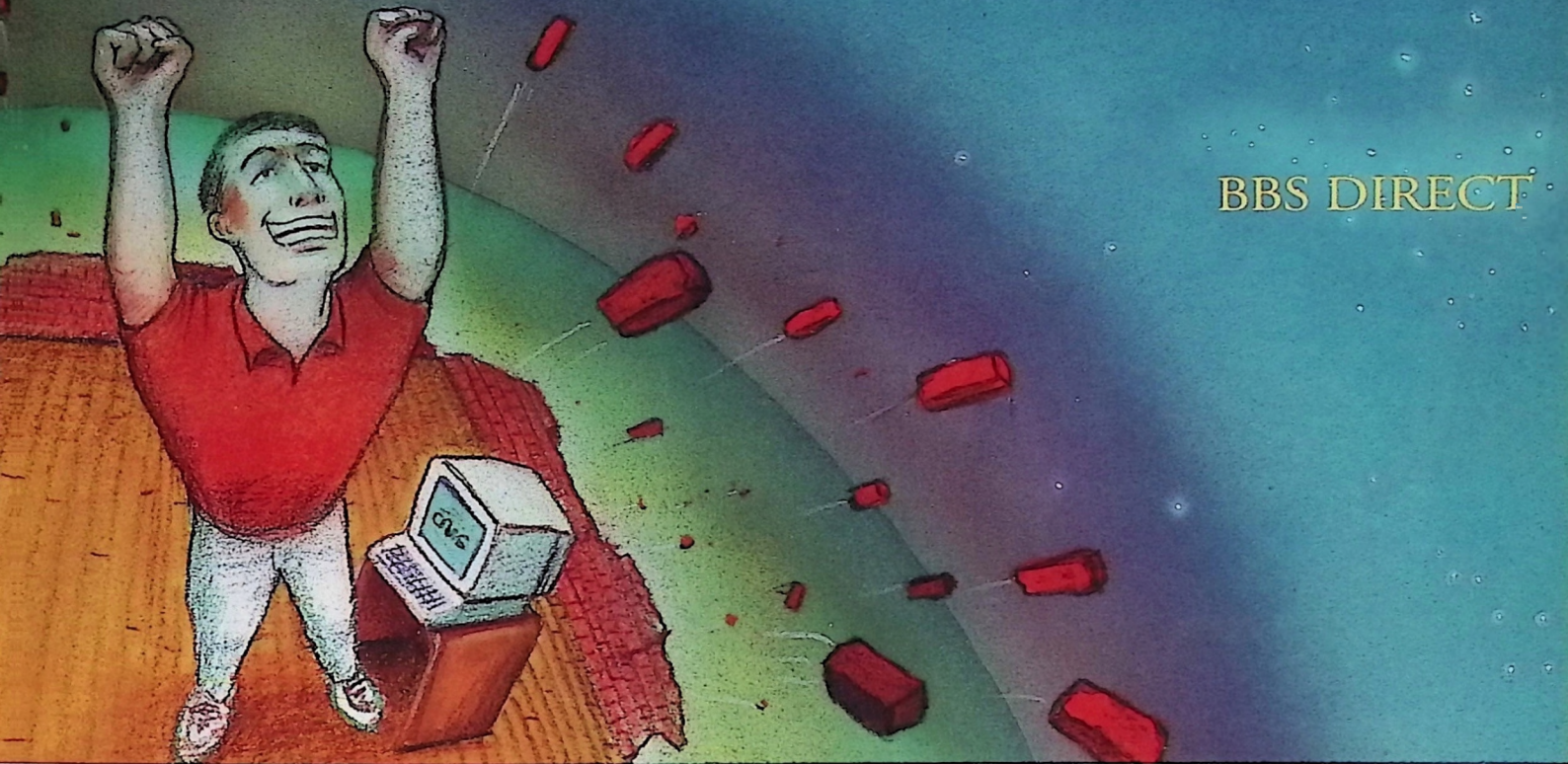
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- WELCOME TO CRIS!

IF ALL ELSE FAILS,
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Message in a Bottle

*Forum or conference?
Private or public?
Getting messages to
the right place takes
more than luck.*

Most BBSs are pretty much alike in regard to the steps in sending a message. The caller is required to choose an area, forum, or conference where the message will appear and enter the name of the receiver. Essentially, "forum," "conference" and "area" are synonymous with "category" and are virtually unlimited in number. On my BBS are nine conferences ranging from General Messages to Homeschooling, Teacher and Student forums and Tutoring.



I've seen literally page after page of topic areas on other BBSs where callers can read and respond to messages. If a caller desires to initiate a welcome message — introducing him or her to the other callers on a BBS — that message would fit in with the theme of a conference called "General Messages," or more specifically, "New Callers." Messages concerning a problem with downloading would be more appropriately placed in a conference area referring to problems rather than in a "General" conference.

Choosing a more specific conference assures that more readers interested in that topic will see the message and offer help. On a one-node BBS, one where only a single caller may dial in at a time, there are some terms I should define:

Local mail and echo mail

If such a BBS is self-contained, mail sent to and read on this type of BBS is referred to as "local mail." Callers to this BBS will be able to communicate

only with each other. Conversely, there are other boards which participate in "echo-mail," and callers from many BBSs may communicate.

Public and private messages

Local mail may be responded to in two ways — public or private. Some conference areas on BBSs will allow private messages to be written, others only public messages. A General Conference will usually allow only public messages, so sensitive information should not be included in a public conference (personal or sensitive messages should be put into the appropriate topic area, especially where they will be written as a private message).

Callers should be very cautious about this and peruse the topic areas noting which ones are public and which ones allow private messages. I once deleted a message between two callers on my BBS where one gave directions to her house in a public conference, even describing the area. One should not, in a public message, tell virtually hundreds of strangers where the com-

puter is located, inviting possible burglary. I mention this only to heighten one's awareness. In general, know where your messages are going and be sensible about personal information.

Quoting messages

BBSs often allow a message writer to "quote" part of a previous message in the reply of that message. When this is incorporated, the original author will better understand the reply, especially if he or she calls back a month or so later. Quoting also helps outline the reply, covering all the questions asked previously. This helps assure fewer calls to cover the topic. I've also found that quoting can show the name of the message receiver and helps me remember who I'm writing to, especially if answering more than one letter on the same topic.

.QWK packets

Next time I'll describe a helpful method of sending and retrieving mail with something called the .QWK pack-

et. This will allow a caller's new messages to be zipped up into a file and downloaded to the computer. After logging off, the caller views and replies to mail on his own time, then dials up the BBS and uploads the replies. When calling long distance, the money saved by this method is really appreciated. (To read how this is done with a Mac, take a look at Michael Kuykendall's Macintosh Online column in this issue.)

Cyberspace has no boundaries

If you're new to modeming AND this column, my goal is to instill the caller with a desire to make friends with others out there in cyberspace. What you've heard is true: Teachers can share ideas, lesson plans and files with other teachers, parents and students. Students can learn about their online peers. Shut-ins can gain a new sense of self-esteem by communicating with people they otherwise would never meet. The benefits of modeming are boundless. Just keep dialing.

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*Technology changes learning at home
and in the classroom*

Do you remember the words to the popular song of years ago "School days, school days, good old golden rule days...readin', writin' and 'rithmetic?" Well, things in today's classrooms just aren't the same. Fifty years back, the worst discipline cases involved gum chewing, smoking cigarettes and paper spitballs. Modern classrooms sometimes involve much more serious offenses.

Computerized classroom is almost here

However, all is not lost. Dramatic advances in electronics are transforming the classroom into advanced learning centers and unlimited educational opportunities for 21st-century kids.

The information highway is winding its way over hills and through valleys across America. It's making its presence felt in large cities and small, and in rural towns everywhere.

Vice President Al Gore foresees a time coming when information from science to the humanities will be available to every student "at the simple touch of a computer switch and an online modem." That time is close at hand!

Wired desk, video blackboard

Can you picture how the small, tight, back-breaking desk of yesteryear will be replaced by a 100 percent computerized version? A fingerprint touch or perhaps a voice-activated command turns on the pupil's electronic desk and workstation.

No bulky monitor. Instead, the screen is built neatly into the desk surface for a combination writing and com-

puting area. Each machine is networked, not only to the teacher's computer but to thousands of classrooms and universities around the globe, via a rooftop satellite dish.

The old, slate blackboards are already scheduled for a facelift. Large video screens for inter-school or visual conferences will replace the former dull boards.

According to the NII (National Information Infrastructure) prospectus, portable, handheld computers will let kids do their homework offline or online, right in their own homes. The units will be connected directly to the school network for research or instructional assistance.

Home-schooling families

In the Connecticut community of Cheshire, there lives a five-member family which has discovered the excitement and educational values of home schooling, computers and BBSs.

In his letter to BBS Magazine, Richard Shalvoy wrote, "For several years, my wife and I have been home-schooling (HS) our children. We have received a tremendous amount of sup-

port from fellow home schoolers that we have met via BBSs.

"Home schooling is not such a common thing YET, but on these BBSs we have met hundreds of like-minded people. Through these people, we have gotten an education ourselves and now are in a position to help others with their questions."

This is the Shalvoys' story.

Three years ago, their oldest daughter, Stacy, was introduced to the home classroom instead of the public/private school classroom of most youngsters.

Stacy Shalvoy says in retrospect, "I feel very special in my family. It was because of me and my education that our family got involved in this idea of learning at home...and all the good things connected with HS."

"It's neat to be able to wander around my house or read a textbook in a relaxed way on the living room sofa or my bed, if I want to. There isn't any pressure on me. I study and do my schoolwork when and where I want. The choice of time and place is mine to make."

Stacy is now 13 years old. Her younger sisters, Joanna, 9, and six-year-old Becky, have also received excellent teaching and instruction from their mother, Karol Ann, and their dad, Richard.

They recognize the benefits of personally tutoring their children on a one-to-one basis: Home Schooling is financially affordable; it also eliminates a number of the undesirable problems such as violence, etc. which so often bother school kids across America. But, best of all, it gives the children an even closer togetherness in a two-parent family, plus a solid educational foundation.

Richard says, "Home schooling provides close involvement with our youngsters and gives us the marvelous chance to work one on one or perhaps one on two with our offspring. HS is a very positive and pleasant experience for young and old alike."

A day at home

To those unfamiliar with HS, it should be pointed out that the quality of education is top-notch. Each day, the standard school curriculum of English, Math, History, etc. are carefully subscribed to.

During the year, a portfolio review is required by the state of Connecticut in order to verify that genuine teaching and learning by the pupils at home has been taking place.

The offline computer is always a great help to the kids. Joanna, a 4th-grader, enjoys all sorts of games, educational software and word processing. She keeps a computer list of various books she has read and prints out the titles as part of her educational portfolio presentation.

She enjoys "Balloon Speller" to improve her vocabulary by electronics. Or, "Outnumbered" to sharpen her math skills, played like a game.

The Shalvoy children from have demonstrated the worth of HS by their excellent performance levels, which actually exceed those of the public school system.

And today, by some estimates, more than 500,000 American children are being educated in HS programs.

Parent as teacher

Although some families utilize the services of a tutor, most of the time the parents serve in the role of teacher. In the Shalvoy home, the usual routine of bus schedules, delays and long period-breaks of the average school day do not exist.

Teaching preparation for the parents

is not difficult. Subject manuals are always available, however the majority of adults find they are already quite familiar with the subject contents. Richard says, "Many just start out and wing it perfectly."

Actual teaching time each day varies greatly from home to home. Stacy says, "Some kids spend as little as three hours a day studying, while others go slower and take all day. It's up to the student."

"Home schooling lets us work together with mother and dad on special projects. We can even take vacation trips as we are not tied to school calendars. We have both the time and freedom to choose the place to set up our classroom, at home or many miles away. We just carry our school with us."

Stacy reflected, "In our home school, we just study till we're done."

BBS high

It was Karol Ann, the mother in the Shalvoy family, who discovered the benefits and opportunities in BBSs and an online introduction to Prodigy. Other BBS and electronic services like GENie and National Videotext (NVN) have followed.

"Teacher Mom" found that computer

CONTINUES...

LEARNING IS *THIS* FUN? The Shalvoy children (from left) Stacey, Becky and Joanna.



learning could be fun, as well as instructional. Her students discovered "unlimited fun times" in Prodigy's Kids Area.

For example, "Krazy Kaptions" helps them with grammar and NOVA provides a rich introduction to science. Even six-year-old Becky has found her favorite electronic spot at her online "Sesame Street."

Richard Shalvoy observes, "It's great. The youngsters can do all the computer hook-ups on their own. No parental assistance is required." Each of the Shalvoy girls spend at least an hour a month with Prodigy. And Stacy finds that E-Mail gives her a chance to keep updated with her friends, near and far away.

No huge expensive financial outlay for the online connection is required for the Shalvoy family. A 286 AT clone with an 80-meg HD, a 9600 bps modem and a Panasonic KPX 1124 printer does the job nicely. "AMIPRO" and "Microsoft Works" are family favorites.

Richard served as a software beta-tester for Prodigy's "Mail Manager." And in the past few months, the

Shalvoy's have gotten online with Internet e-mail.

Family gatherings

In truth, HS has given Karol Ann, Richard, Stacy, Joanna and Becky a chance to travel and talk "by computer and modem" to lots of people across the country. They were able to make lots of new friends from Florida to Texas, California and the Pacific Northwest.

"The BBS channels work so well for our family," Richard Shalvoy says. "It gives us the chance to get together with hundreds of like-minded people — without leaving our home. Problems that may have bothered us for years can be answered for us in a single night on the BBS."

One of the greatest benefits online connections (to other home schoolers) has brought goes beyond academic help, to emotional insight and guidance. Pupils at home or in public schools are human beings and sometimes behavioral instruction is as important as book learning. The BBS connection has proven a valuable tool

for the Shalvoy household in this area.

To illustrate the value of the BBS connection, the Shalvoy family posted a notice about a Latin unit they were working on and requested online input from other HSs. They received a number of replies and were presented with the opportunity to get resource materials without leaving home.

Kids and computers

Heidi E.H. Aycock from North Carolina is a freelance writer and online advisor to the popular magazine, Kids and Computers. Like the Shalvoy family, she recognizes that kids have plenty of room to talk and explore the various areas for fun and learning on the Prodigy Network.

In her recent article, "Kids Only, No Grownups Allowed," Heidi is informed by her youngsters, "No eavesdropping here, Mother, you're too old." But she admits that she'd sometimes like to know some of the provocative questions and answers that are exchanged between the kids.

Prodigy's private forums "just for kids" is divided into two sections, according to Heidi Aycock. "There is a forum for teenagers and also an under 12-year-old online-area." The former can contain epic tales of heroes and dragons. The "Kids By Kids" department has a great amount of interactive programming for the young. She heartily recommends Prodigy as an excellent tool for fun and learning.

So the old tune "School days" has a brand new ring across the U.S. Sure, there's still plenty of reading, writing and arithmetic...But also high-tech computers, modems, electronic education, friendships and family home schooling. I think it's a great new melody.

If you are interested in learning more about HS, please contact the Shalvoys on Prodigy or National Videotex.

Your turn

Like the Shalvoy family, BBS Magazine is open to your comments, questions and online stories. If you are interested in being interviewed for this monthly column, please call our office at: 609-953-9110 from 10 am to 4 pm (est). Or write in care of this magazine. ■■■■■

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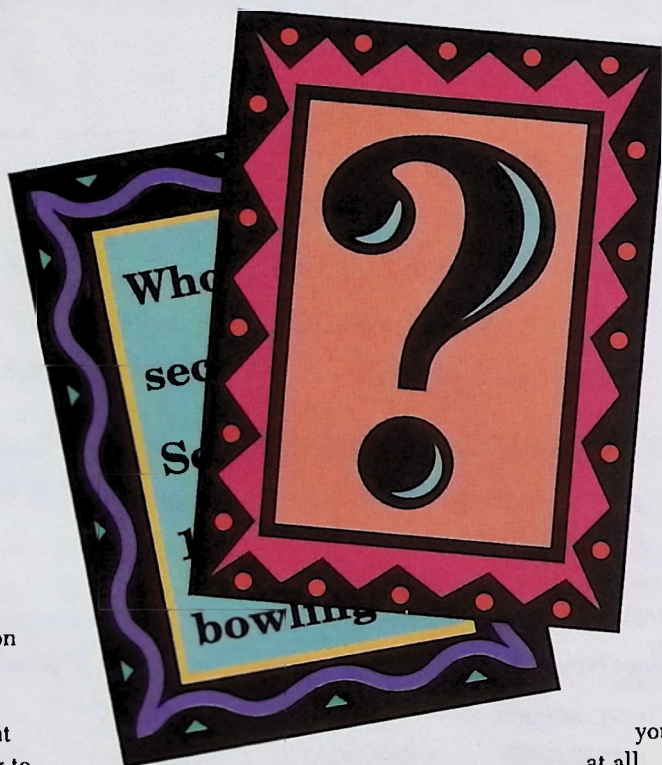
General Trivia

by Dan Linton and Jason
Blochman
GENTRV.ZIP

Almost everyone likes trivia. Some are better than others, but it's still sometimes fun to play. There are several trivia games for the PCs but none are quite as nice as the family of games associated with TRIVIA SHELL by Dan Linton and Jason Blochman.

First, let's take a look at one called General Trivia. As you might expect, there are questions relating to a broad range of topics, such as history, U.S. presidents, states, science, etc. — 15 categories in all. Before beginning, though, players must set up the game. One to four participants can play after each name is entered. You can then choose one of three skill levels and set other options such as Hints on/off, Correct Answer on/off and more.

The game defaults to Intermediate play, which is a multiple choice test where you are given four choices. You can also opt



to try the Beginners level — True or False questions — or Advanced — answers are keyed in. But whatever you decide, you can be sure the questions will not be easy. This game will certainly test your knowledge.

To play any of these trivia games you will need at least an EGA display. A mouse is recommended, although not necessary. The graphics are first rate and it's easy enough to play that you'll be guessing answers in no time at all.

At the start I mentioned that General Trivia was one of a whole family of trivia games. These were all written around a product called TRIVIA SHELL, by the above-mentioned authors. What this means is that even if you have no knowledge of programming, you can have a share in a trivia game by creating questions and answers dealing with a specific topic. So, as you can imagine, there are several different games relating to many topics already available or "in the works." To cre-

ate your own database of questions and answers, you would use another product called TRIVIA PREP by Bob Falk. Everything else will be done for you, even the creation of stunning graphics! If you would like more information on compiling a set of trivia questions, see the documentation in any of the TRIVIA SHELL games.

The shareware versions include about 100 questions. To get more, you need to register. There are 3 levels of registration:

- CLASSIC — 300 questions, \$11.95
- DELUXE — 600 questions, \$16.95
- GOLD — 1000 questions, \$21.95

CALLRGD

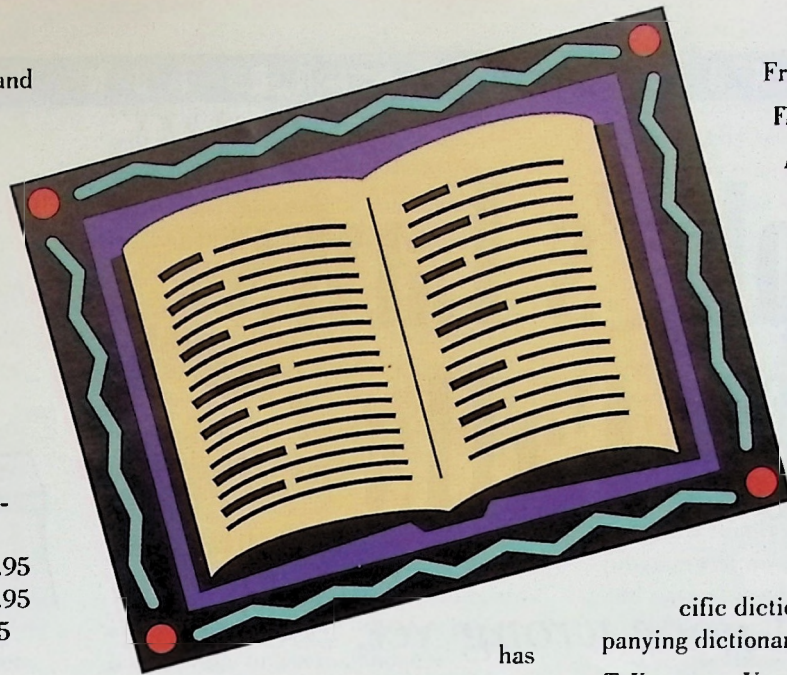
CALLRGD.ZIP

Here's one for any user calling a PCBoard BBS. Put together by Clark Development (PCBoard creators), it is a very well done PCBoard Callers Guide which has been converted to hypertext. All the commands are covered in depth with explanations on how to stack commands.

The first area you will want to look at is "Logging In." After a summary and explanation of the questions PCBoard asks you when you first log on, you are shown a typical menu. You can then click on any item with your mouse and that command is explained in full. And, since this is Hypertext, if you see a word in brackets, you can click on that for more information. Other selections include General Information, Stacking Commands and Basic Command Usage.

Besides the information mentioned above, CALLRGD includes some helpful appendixes. Appendix A explains how to use the Boolean Text Searches when using the TS, Z, or WHO commands. It shows how to make best use of searches with the and/or switches. Appendix B is a Modem Primer. It takes the mystery out of such terms as V32bis, HST, MNP and more. Appendix C helps you set your modem for optimum performance.

But probably of most interest to callers will be Appendix D. This one



has to do with file transfers. It shows users (step-by-step) how to upload and download, including explanations of the different protocols available. Appendix E is a glossary of terms you might encounter on any BBS.

This program can be invaluable to the new user as well as the "seasoned" power BBSer. PCBoard sysops will most definitely want to make this available to all their callers. With a minimum of time, anyone can master PCBoard.

JSPELL ver 2.0

JSPELL20.ZIP by Joohee Jeong

Here we have the next generation of shareware spell checkers. JSPELL is slick as they come, and easy to use with a mouse or keyboard. Misspelled words can be replaced with just a mouse click or they can be added to your personal dictionary. A dictionary manager is included allowing you to add or edit your dictionary files.

From the manual:

FEATURES

Ease of use: Mouse support and online help.

Speed: Fast loading dictionary, spotting misspelled words, and finding suggestions for nearly all misspelled words.

Dictionary: Multiple user dictionaries, file specific dictionary, and an accompanying dictionary manager.

TeX support: Versatile and user configurable.

Foreign character support: extended ASCII character or

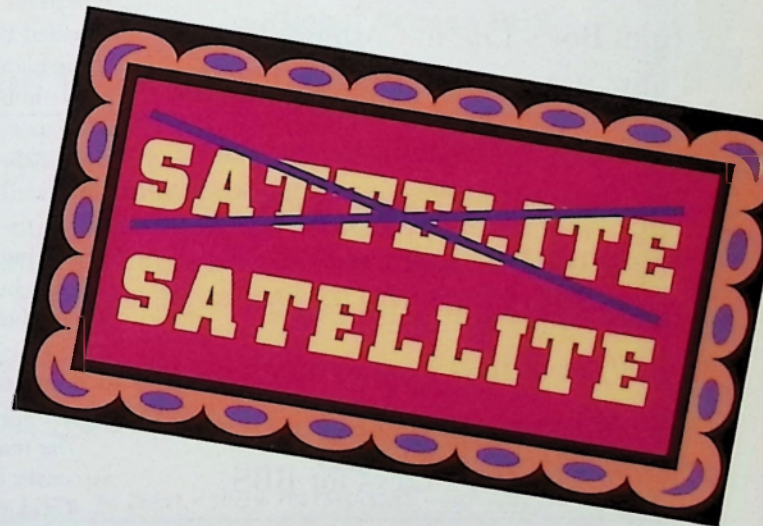
TeX commands (e.g., G^vodel, Erd\H{o}s)

Undo: Up to 400 steps.

Network support: Each user can have his/her own configuration and personal dictionary while sharing the executables and the base dictionary with other users.

One of the nice features is the UNDO command, something many other spell checkers don't have. This can come in handy after you've replaced a misspelled word with the wrong correction. I seem to do that all the time!

JSPELL certainly deserves a look. You'll like this one. Registration is \$27. ■■■■■



Murphy's Laws of BBS Calls

If it hasn't gone wrong yet, look out.



The concept of Murphy's Law is an apt one in my life. The realization that "if anything can go wrong, it will" is something each of us can relate to. That's why the Murphy's Law theme is one that writers often shamelessly steal, er, uh, I mean, adapt. You've probably seen columns using the Murphy's Law concept in just about every magazine, from *Boy's Life* to *Cosmopolitan*.

Well, being as shameless as the next guy, I decided to jump on the bandwagon and 'adapt' the Murphy's Law motif and see if I could apply it to BBS users.

What follows is my takeoff on the Murphy's Law concept—my list of Murphy's Laws for BBS callers.

Law of the modem

The day after you buy an expensive new modem, the price of that modem will drop by at least 50 percent.

The dip switches on your modem will always be in the most awkward positions imaginable.

Whatever COM port your modem needs to run properly will be the only COM port not available.

The bigger your hangover from last night's party, the louder your modem's connecting noise the next morning.

Law of the call

Whenever you call an unknown, untested BBS number in the middle of the night, it will be the home phone number of an angry old lady who has caller ID and whose son-in-law, as she will tell you upon her return call, carries a badge in his wallet.

Dialing the number of a national, toll-free bulletin board is futile. Why? Thousands of other BBSers across the country also have the number and are calling it at the same time you are.

The really great bulletin boards are never in your local calling area.

You keep hoping your favorite bulletin board will get Internet

access. But when it does, it becomes so popular you can no longer get through.

You always forget that one BBS password you didn't write down because you were positive you'd never forget it.

Murphy for him

Your wife, who rarely visits you at your computer, will stop by at the exact moment you're viewing some of the finer points of a just-downloaded Cindy Crawford file.

Murphy for her

You finally meet the guy you've been chatting with the past few months on that singles' BBS...only he's not Bill Gates' billionaire cousin as he claimed to be online.

E-mail

The e-mail you send to Bill Clinton will include a sarcastic comment about kidnapping Hillary, a comment you're sure you deleted before you sent the message but which somehow got stuck in there anyway, causing the Secret Service to burst through your door with assault weapons at 2 a.m. the next morning.

You'll eventually mistype one important character in an e-mail

address so that your message to your friend Florence in Saint Paul gets sent to someone named Saint Paul in Florence.

Public BBS messages

At least 50 percent of all public BBS messages, intended for all, are private conversations that make sense only to the two people writing the messages.

No matter how tactfully you compose a public BBS message, expect an angry, sarcastic or generally belittling reply from someone.

Whenever you think a question you ask in a BBS message is dumb, it probably is.

Whenever you think a question you ask in a BBS message isn't dumb, it probably is.

Technical difficulty

Whatever solution you devise to fix one problem with your modem, it inevitably will lead to at least six other problems.

Calling technical support to solve a problem won't help because your hard-

ware company will simply blame your software, and your software company will simply blame your hardware.

Whenever you have a confusing technical problem with your modem, reading the manual will confuse you even further.

According to a sysop, whenever a BBS caller has technical trouble on a BBS, it's always the caller's fault.

According to BBS callers, whenever they have technical trouble on a BBS, it's always the sysop's fault.

Murphy and the BBS

You'll always log on to a bulletin board at the precise moment someone in your house needs to use the phone.

Any truly great bulletin board is either illegal, immoral or too expensive.

The excitement you feel over using a fantastic new bulletin board lasts until your next phone bill.

Time flies, especially on a bulletin board that charges by the hour.

The more expensive a commercial bulletin board is, the more confusing and awkward and time-consuming it

will be to use.

Your favorite commercial bulletin board finally sets up flat-rate pricing for basic services. But the only thing it counts as basic services are the weather and hockey scores.

Miscellaneous Murphy's Laws

Any bill you pay electronically will get sent to the wrong company.

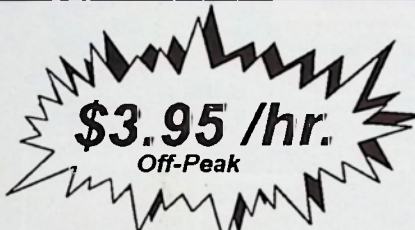
A file that takes three hours to download will always fail during the last 10 seconds.

You'll finally delete that shareware program you downloaded two years ago and haven't used once, then immediately discover a need for it.


The first time you forget to scan your file downloads for viruses will be the first time in your life you'll actually get a virus.

A BBS caller and his money are soon parted. ■■■■■


Lance Whitney is a freelance writer who specializes in computers and comedy. He's a member of the Westchester PC Users Group in New York State.



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



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- ✓ Most images compress to 8k-15k
- ✓ Shareware terminal program distributed royalty free

Order Entry v1.0

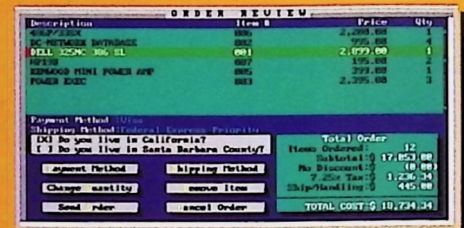
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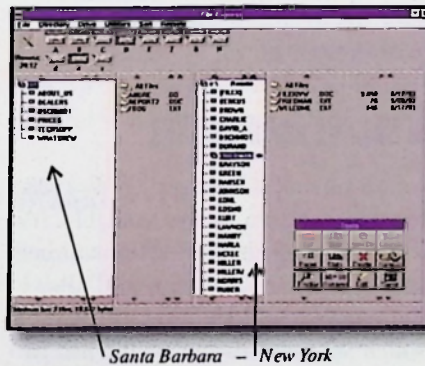


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Commodore Smorgasbord



Hints, tips and the inside scoop

Mice come home

If you've been looking for a mouse for your Commodore 64/128, you've probably discovered they've become scarce. Personally, I think they scurried overseas when they heard about our high speed devices that make using GEOS, and therefore mice, easier. The good news is CMD (Creative Micro Designs, Inc.) is doing something about it. They're importing mice from overseas, and CMD is in the design phase of developing their own mouse for the Commodore 64/128. They're giving serious consideration to developing a true proportional track ball. Both mouse and track ball should be able to utilize mouse drivers (such as for GEOS) that are already in existence for the 1351 mouse.

New GEOS support

CMD has also become the source for all Commodore GEOS programs previously manufactured and distributed by Geoworks (formerly Berkeley Softworks). Creative Micro Designs, Inc will handle customer support for the Commodore GEOS products, as well as manufacture and distribute the products. Geoworks will retain actual ownership of the programs. This is good news, as customer support for Commodore GEOS programs was dwin-

dling at Geoworks, and CMD has a good reputation for solid customer support. Maurice Randall's geoShell is also available from CMD, with the same price as direct from the author, \$24.95. GeoShell is an alternative to GEOS DeskTop, suited for those who prefer to type in direct commands rather than use the icon-based DeskTop. Version 2.2 has many additional features including copying across partitions when used with a CMD device. For more information contact CMD at (413)-525-0023.

DES01.SFX and DES02.SFX

A new version of Desterm, the C= 128 terminal program, is now available. It's a big advantage is for RAMLink owners and BBG owners. Desterm 2.01 allows file transfers to RAMLink partitions, which the previous version did not. In fact, version 2.00 did not even "see" RAMLink as a disk drive. Desterm 2.01 is only an interim release, however. Matthew Desmond dropped support for Desterm while in the Beta testing process for version 2.01.

The program was picked up by programmer Steve Cuthbert, who released the program "as is", including the initial "Beta Test 2.01" screen. Because of this, I suggest only those users who are already familiar with Desterm 2.00 use this update, and of those, if you

don't have a RAMLink, RAMDrive or BBG unit, you should probably stick with the 2.00 version until the next release of Desterm is available. While this Beta version makes a world of difference to the owners of the above mentioned devices, it has a few problems in it: 1581 users have to save all files twice, otherwise the files don't save properly; the script files don't work as well as they should. There's also very scant docs included with this release. Perhaps the next release will swat the bugs and remove the Beta notice from the opening screen.

Registration for the program is \$25. Those who already registered are asked to pay \$10 if they wish the next 3 program versions to be mailed directly to them. Otherwise new versions will be available for download at a variety of sites. Steve Cuthbert can be reached at: Box 196, Radway, Alberta, Canada, T0A-2V0, or via Internet at: steve.cuthbert@cuehere.greysage.edmonton.ab.ca.

WAVPLAY.ARC

WAVPLAY.ARC, found on many bulletin boards, lets us Commodore users download Windows sound files that have filename extensions of .WAV. Waveplay will play the sound clips and can save them as Commodore .RAW files. There are a wealth of .WAV files available, as many BBSs with CD-

ROMs have entire CD's online with nothing but .WAV files. Some of them are really quite interesting to hear. Waveplay has a toggle for old and new style SID chips, for the newer C=64s have a slightly different SID chip making the sound quality different.

The Compression Kit

Mad Man Software is releasing Version 2 of The Compression Kit. The Compression Kit (CKit) compresses Commodore 64/128 disk files and entire disks or directories into smaller files. It is completely menu driven, which makes it far easier for non-experts to use. Included with the CKit are file and disk/partition copiers, an archive program and another utility called a "BOA". Think of a Boa Constrictor and you'll immediately get the idea. "BOAs" are entire disks or partitions that are "swallowed whole" as a boa constrictor would do, compressing every piece of information about a disk into 1 or more files. In fact, the picture on the front of the manual shows a boa constrictor squeezing a helpless disk drive!

The ability to compress 1541 disks into a series of files has been available with the Zipcode program, but there has never been a utility to compress larger style disks such as the 1571 or 1581 until The Compression Kit came onto the scene.

This is a completely CMD drive friendly program. As mentioned above, it will copy entire partitions and can use the same CMD device as both source and destination drives, really speeding up many of the routines. Users fortunate enough to own two separate CMD products such as a RAMLink and Hard drive or FD series drive can back up or copy partitions from one device to the other. Another very useful feature is the ability to archive entire native mode partitions to back them up. The program allows users to define a block size for the backups so you can use several disks, if necessary, to back up large partitions.

It's not a speed demon, but speed was sacrificed for reliability. Every function from copying to creating and dissolving BOAs are verified, making it

very reliable for storing very important data.

The Compression Kit requires a security key inserted in the joystick port to use. Files archived with the CKit can be dissolved using a stand-alone program called the Decomper, which is fully distributable on BBSs. In other words, you don't have to own the Ckit to dissolve files archived with it. Version 2 includes a larger buffer based on the available equipment a user has. It's said to utilize the VDC chip within the 128 for additional buffer space, and will also use RAM Expansion Units and/or DACC partitions in RAM devices for additional buffer space. Version 2 also has better compression rates. The Compression Kit is available from Mad Man Software for \$39.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling. Upgrades are available for either \$4.95 or \$9.95, depending upon how much of an upgrade is necessary. For more information, call 307-632-1178.

OMNI128 BBS Update

The price of OMNI 128 BBS is \$65 (manual \$15). Virtual memory of a type is now in use in the BBS, in a special editor program called BIGMEM, which lets the sysop edit text or system data files up to approximately 180 - 190 CBM blocks in size, about 5 times the normal capacity of the operating editor! The BBS program was reviewed in the Jan. '94 issue of this magazine.

QWKRR128 V4.0

Rod Gasson has sent out Beta versions of the offline mail reader QWKRR128 version 4.0, and I'm happy to report that the editor is much better than version 3.5.

Version 4.0 is a complete revamp of the offline reader and includes a new QPX program to help dissolve the program, set disk device numbers, and automatically begin Indexing the mail packet for faster reading. The taglines feature allows users to move through several tagline files simply by pressing one key. A TWIT feature allows you to either ignore people listed in the TWIT file, or to search for and read messages from the TWIT list. It's convenient enough that I use it to read messages

from selected people. Those in my TWIT are actually folks I consider to be VIPs. Gasson doesn't plan on changing the name of the feature to TWIT/VIP because it tickles his sense of humor to "TWIT" the moderators of various conferences. Considering that the Commodore 64 and 128 computers have both RUN and STOP on the same key, this seems only natural that our TWIT functions would also act as a search for Very Important Persons whose messages we wouldn't want to miss!

Net Mailing Hint

I've found a new use for MACRO keys: Macro keys make sending mail through the Internet, with their long addresses, painless. Simply add the internet addresses to your term program's macros and save them. Pressing one or two keys to send the long address, such as mine: g.moranec@genie.geis.com is much easier using a macro. Remember, you're using a computer — the idea is to use it to make things easier. ■■■■

Gaelyne Moranec is a freelance writer; editor of CEE-64 Alive!, a disk magazine for Commodore 64 users; secretary and co-editor for her local Commodore User's Group; and, co-sysop on Ancient Heart BBS in Saginaw, Michigan. She can usually be found in the CBM FIDONet echo.

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Prepared by the publishers of the book
How To Successfully Run A BBS For Profit.

Out of the Box and Endlessly Screaming

Hayes Optima 288+FAX passes the test, and then some.

As this went to press, I'd had my Hayes Optima 288+FAX only a short time. Hayes has been deluged by the intense interest in this new product. Although they usually ship Sysop Discount orders as fast as they come in, Hayes is running a two-week backlog at this time. Normally, credit card orders can be fulfilled in as little as two days.

I'm pleased to announce that it does, indeed, run right out of the box. I use PCBoard BBS software by Clark Development Corp. and they have been participating in the ongoing v.FC compatibility testing. This, I was not surprised to see setup strings dumped directly available in the PCBoard configuration software. Over the years I've found that Hayes products generally don't require much (if any) tweaking and their factory settings are adequate for almost all uses.

Since v.FC technology is so new (as of this writing) I haven't yet had any V.FC callers. However, the major BBSs of the world are bringing them online including the Salt Air BBS (home of PCBoard) and Hayes Online BBS (toll free 1-800-USHAYES). My initial use of this modem from the caller's perspective (i.e. dialing out) has been very exciting.

Before I share my benchmarks, a few words about my hardware and software configurations. I currently run six modems off of a 486-DX2 66Mhz computer with 1MB external cache and 16MB RAM. Each of the six modems runs in a separate DESQview DOS window with 640K RAM (or so). Four of the nodes go through an Arnet SmartPort 4 serial card with 64K onboard RAM. The other two nodes are

COM1 and COM2 off of an STB 4-COM board that presents four virtual 16550APN UARTS in a single slab of silicon. For maximum disk performance, I run an 8-MHz disk cache that defers disk writes as long as possible.

With any reasonable configuration, I get the COM ports to run faster than 38,400 bps for two very practical reasons. First, more than 95 percent of the files on my BBS are already compressed and a such a 49,200 bps setting can be adequate for v.32bis/v.42bis. Second, the DESQview multi-tasker can get bogged down in interrupts at rates above 38,400 bps.

For the transfer test, I used a fairly typical setup that many readers might have. Specifically, I used a 16550AT COM port opened at 38,400 in conjunction with Omen Technology's popular DSZ.COM external Zmodem protocol driver. Again, this session took place inside of DESQview, which was also running five other modems live. Transferring compressed .ZIP files, I routinely achieved V.FC download speeds as high as 3009 cps. This is about double my usual v.32bis/v.42bis rate and quite amazing considering the other activity going on in the system.

Another test involved downloading the Electronic Industries Association

CONTINUES...

TABLE 1a — SYSOPS HIGH-SPEED MODEM DISCOUNTS BY VENDOR AND MODEL TYPE

VENDOR/ PRODUCT	9600 V.32 EXTERNAL	14400 V.32BIS INTERNAL	14400 V.32BIS EXTERNAL	V.32TERBO, V.FC OR V.31 ETERNAL
Aceex	N/A	1496VP* \$290	1496V+* \$320	N/A
AT&T Paradyne	N/A	3721-B1-001* \$160	3710-A1-201* \$180 PC \$190 Mac	N/A
ATI Technologies	9600 ETC/E \$275	N/A	N/A	N/A
CPI/ ViVa	ViVa 9642e \$176	ViVa 14.4 \$180	ViVa 14.4 \$196	N/A
Digicom Systems	Scout \$248	Scout Plus \$266	Scout Plus \$276	N/A
Forval	N/A	9624PC+ \$340	9624LE+ \$350	
Hayes Corp.	N/A	14400 (Int.) \$375	14400 (Ext.) \$405	N/A
		Optima 144B* \$179	Ultra 144 \$249	Optima 288+FAX v.FC 28.8k \$288
			Optima 144+FAX* \$179 PC	
			Optima 144+FAX* \$179 Macintosh	
Intel	N/A	SatisFAX/400 \$249	14.4 EX \$269	N/A
			SatisFAX/400e* \$245	
Multitech	MT1432BA* \$375	MT1432BC \$400	MT1432BA* \$400	N/A
		MPE1432LS \$400 MCA	MPE1432MU* \$300	
			MT1432BL* \$450	
			MT1432PCS \$575	
Practical Peripherals	N/A	N/A	PME1400FXSA* \$245	N/A
			PME1400FXMT* \$155	
Supra Group	N/A	SupraFAXModem* \$129	SupraFAXModem* \$149	N/A
U.S. Robotics	N/A	N/A	HST Dual Stand Courier v.32bis \$299	HST Dual Stand v.32terbo 21.6k \$399
VSA-Tel. Inc.	EC144FAX* \$195	ECM144FAX* \$195	EC144FAX* \$215	N/A
		PCMV.32bis* \$180	ECV.32bis* \$525	
		MCMI44FAX* \$380 MCA	RMV.32bis II* \$425	
Zoom Telephonics	N/A	VFPV.32Bis* \$145	VFXV.32Bis* \$149	N/A
ZyXEL	N/A	U-1496B* 16.8K \$299	U-1496E* 16.8K \$299	U-1496E* v.32terbo 16.8K \$299
		U-1496B+* 19.2K \$389		

* Modems with an asterisk include 14,400 baud FAX send/receive at no extra charge.

- Notes on Table 1:
1. All internal modems are assumed to be PC-AT-ISA bus unless otherwise noted.
 2. Consult manufacturer for details on availability of Caller ID or voice-mail processing options (any modem above).
 3. These prices NEVER include shipping and handling, which is always extra.

TABLE I — SYSOPS MODEM ACCESSORY DISCOUNTS BY VENDOR

VENDOR	PART #	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	SYSOP PRICE
Hayes Corp.	08-00593	ISDN PC Adapter	\$450
	08-00509	ISDN System Adapter	\$450
	08-00456	ESP 2.0 Enhanced Serial 1-Port	\$ 69
	08-00456	ESP 2.0 Enhanced Serial 2-Port	\$ 89
MultiTech	CC216A	Rackmount for 16 modems. no PS	\$175
	PS216A	Power Supply for RackMount	\$ 85
USRobotics	N/A	High-speed Dual-Async Serial Card	\$ 50
Ven-Tel	DS1200-3PR	Rackmount for 16 modems. w/PS	\$425
ZyXEL	N/A	High Speed I/O (1P/2S/1G) 1 16550	\$ 30
	N/A	High Speed I/O (1P/2S/1G) 2 16550	\$ 45

TABLE II — SYSOP BUYERS RESTRICTIONS - IMPORTANT!

VENDOR CONTRACT	BBS MUST HAVE BEEN UP AND WORKING FOR...	AFTER BUYING IT, YOU MUST USE IT FOR...	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MODEMS YOU MAY BUY...	CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED FOR PURCHASE
Aceex	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
AT&T Paradyne	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard American Ex.
ATI Technologies	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
CPI/ViVa	2 months	12 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA MasterCard
Digicom Systems	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
Forval	N/A	N/A	No Maximum	none
Hayes Corp.	6 months (may be waived)	unspecified time	1 per phone. Max. 4, may be negotiated	VISA MasterCard
Intel	currently	12 months	1 per phone. Max. 4.	VISA MasterCard American Ex. *
MultiTech	currently or plan to	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	none, must have Cashier's Check
Practical Peripherals	currently	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
Supra Corp.	currently	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
USRobotics	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
Ven-Tel	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA MasterCard
Zoom Telephonics	6 Months	9 Months	Double the # of current phone lines on the bbs	Visa MasterCard Amex
ZyXEL	3 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA MasterCard

* Indicates no personal checks accepted.

(EIA) standard "text" file for data transfer tests. This file, approximately 1 MB in size, sustained a 3277 cps rate across the entire transfer. Transfer rates of the .ZIP and text files might have been better on a standalone system without a multitasker; however I prefer to test equipment in a real-world scenario whenever possible.

A Supra low price

This past year has seen modem manufacturers leapfrogging each other several times to give you the best deal. This time Supra jumps over the competition in offering the lowest priced Sysop Discount of all time. On October 26th, 1993, Supra announced price cuts in its Sysops Discounts. Specifically, the SupraFAXModem V.32bis external modem has been reduced to just \$149, representing a \$100 price cut. Also, the SupraFaxModem-IPC V.32bis internal modem has been reduced to just \$129, representing a \$70 price cut. These are the only two modems currently offered by Supra in their Sysop Discount plan.

All modems support 300-2400bps, v.32 (9600 bps), MNP 2-5, V42bis, 9600 send/receive fax (v.27ter/29), CLASSEs 1 & 2 (fax software-fax modem communication standards), v.32bis (14400 bps) and v.17 (14400 fax). The units come complete with Caller ID. VoiceMail support will be available in the near future. This is all packaged in Supra's famous small case (1" high x 4.5" wide x 6.5" long). The internal's are a full height, 8-bit, half card.

The external modems have 4 lights (RD/SD/OH/TR) and an LED display. The display will show the connection rate, compression protocol, error cor-

rection protocol, etc. in a cycling fashion.

Contacting Supra:

503-967-2400 (main 8-5pst)
 503-967-2401 (Fax)
 503-967-2410 (Sales 6-5pst)
 800-727-8772 (Sales 6-5pst)
 503-967-2440 (Technical Support 8-4:30pst)
 503-967-2444 (BBS, 8 lines, v32bis 24hr.)
 CompuServe 76004,565
 GENie SupraTech
 Bix SupraCorp
 American Online SupraCorp2
 InterNet supra@supra.com
 FidoNet 1:357/4 or in the SUPRAFAX echo (To: SUPRA CORP)

Price and performance

I've boiled down all the price and performance data from the manufacturers into a simple chart (see Table Ia). The minimum performance level is v.32 (9600 bps), since this is the worldwide high-speed standard. All modems also must have v.42bis for error correction and data compression to make this list. The rightmost column of Table Ia shows all modems faster than 14400 bps that support at least v.32bis standards.

In practice, I recommend only v.32bis (14400 bps) modems for sysops. The v.32bis offers 50% more throughput than v.32 for between 5 to 15% extra cost. I expect that many manufacturers will quietly discard v.32 modems from production as soon as v.FAST/v.34 (22000 to 28000 bps) modems go into production. Beware of upgrade plans to v.FAST/v.34 modems:

these can run you from \$100 to \$300 for such an upgrade.

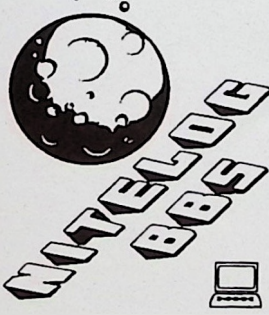
Some vendors offer more than just modems to the sysops that join their program. For example, Hayes Corp. offers 50% to 70% off discounts on the high speed serial ports and ISDN adapters. Other vendors offer big discounts on modem rackmounts. A rackmount reduces the tangle of multiplying power supplies and becomes economical for sysops planning on eight or more of the same brand modem. See Table Ia for a complete listing of modem accessories available.

Restrictions

If you're the sysop of a BBS that has been operating 24-hours per day for the last six months, then you're automatically eligible for any of these discounts. Table II shows the minimum operating requirements as given by each manufacturer. Some manufacturers only require that you are currently running a BBS at time of ordering. A few, such as Hayes, may actually waive the current operating requirement.

Once you receive your modem, you're expected to keep the BBS up and running between six and twelve months (requirements vary). Generally, the modem is yours to do whatever you want with after this period expires. Some manufacturers may ask you to never sell modems purchased on a discount plan. Modem resellers, such as computer stores, are generally excluded from participation in discount plans. Most manufacturers allow you to purchase up to one modem per incoming BBS phone line. The only exception

C O N T I N U E S . . .



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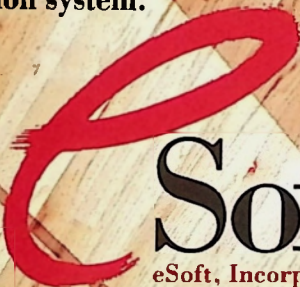
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*Picture shows complete 16 user TBBS/TDBS System.

TABLE IV — VENDOR CONTACT INFORMATION

VENDOR NAME	CALL THEIR BBS AT THIS NUMBER AND...	...DOWNLOAD THIS FILE.	IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS CALL..	CONTACT VIA EMAIL
Accex	(416)538-9999	ACEEX.ZIP	(416)538-0101	
AT&T Paradyne	(813)532-5254	ATTSYSOP.TXT	(800)554-4996	t.bradshaw@paradyne.com
ATI Tech.	(416)756-4591	SYSOPLAN.ZIP	(416)756-0718	
CPI/ViVa	(805)499-9646; (215)746-9948	CPIA.TXT	(800)854-7600	
Digicom	(508)262-1412	SCOUT.TXT	(508)262-1277	wolfgang@netcom.com
Forval	(408)294-3065	FORVAL.ZIP	(408)294-0526	
Hayes Corp.	(404)446-6336; (800)USHAYES	H96SYSOP.TXT	(404)840-9200	rlacy@hayes.com
Intel	(503)645-6275	OFFER.TXT	(503)228-9707	
MultiTech	(612)785-9875; (800)392-2432	PRICE.TXT	(612)785-3500	
Pract. Per.	(805)496-4445	SYSBBS.TXT	(805)497-4774	GO PPIFORUM (CompuServe)
Supra Corp.	(503)967-2444	SYSOP.TXT	(503)967-2400	supra@supra.com
USRobotics	(708)982-5092	SYSDEAL.TXT	(708)982-5010	
Ven-Tel	(408)922-0988	SYSDEAL.TXT	(408)436-7400	
Zoom Teleph.	N/A	N/A	(800)631-3116	
Zyxel	(714)693-0762	ZYXEL.TXT	(714)693-0804	

is Zoom, which allows up to two modems per existing phone line. However, if you plan to purchase more than four modems at the discount price, then you should talk to someone before placing your order. Multiple modem orders may require you to submit copies of phone bills as proof. At that point, there may be traditional quantity discounts available.

Nearly all of the modem vendors are accepting VISA and Mastercard for orders. However, Accex, ATI, Digicom, Forval, and MultiTech still do not accept credit cards for orders. In those cases, you must submit a cashier's check or money-order. Personal checks often require additional clearing time which just holds up your order.

One requirement, which goes for

nearly all vendors, is that they generally expect at least a one-line advertisement somewhere in your welcoming screens. For example: "Using the finest Model YYZ modem from Acme Modem Co." would be perfectly acceptable in all cases.

Most vendors will expect you to create a special account on your BBS for them to verify at least one of your phone numbers. They don't like to have to sign on without a pre-existing account.

Order Processing and Availability

Delivery times and schedules vary radically, so your mileage may vary. My own experience with Hayes Corporation is that they will generally ship Sysop

orders within 48 hours. I have also ordered from Practical Peripherals and they have a mandatory three week waiting period before they ship. On the far extreme, US Robotics guarantees a two to six week waiting period. Table III summarizes the published processing schedules of each manufacturer. Remember, the manufacturers are doing you a favor by offering discounts below retail. Please observe courtesy.

For Canadian, European, and other sysops outside the U.S., you may or may not be eligible for a discount offer. Please check carefully ahead of time to avoid disappointment. You may want to check with their European subsidiaries before contacting the U.S. office. ■■■■

Victor R. Volkman has been researching modem prices since 1991.



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WEB, WAIS and Gopher

Tour guides in cyberspace

It's understandable the eighties were known as the decade of computer revolution. The pure processing power of the average computer seemed to double every year. Corporate America, seeing a way to improve earnings, along with home users, put the "electronic abacus" in almost every aspect of society. The PC became a household acronym. Kids were mastering Macs.

So where does that leave us here in 1994? The Information Age.

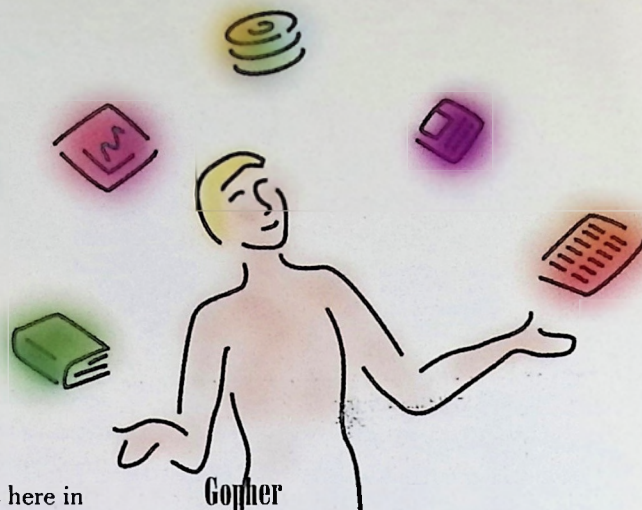
Granted, the term is not a new one, and it too has been used to describe the eighties. But I believe that the hot topic of this decade will be how to manage large amounts of information. Terms such as client/server and relational database basically describe different theories or technologies that are used to manage massive amounts of data effectively. Imagine the amount of information a company like AT&T generates every day, or just one year's worth of tax forms the IRS keeps on file. Meanwhile, I seem to have trouble balancing my checkbook each month.

The Internet is no different. Over the past ten years, it has grown from a small, hacked-out networking scheme to a gigantic international system networking millions of users who each have a different need or reason to be connected.

Tapping into the Information Age

Currently, there are three major ways to access information on the Net: Gopher, Wide Area Information Search (WAIS) and World-Wide Web (WEB).

And there is Archie: a client-server database program able to search thousands of anonymous FTP sites for a particular file. But it has a specific goal in mind, and differs greatly from the others.



Gopher

Gopher is designed around an easy-to-use menu-driven interface. Its primary objective is to make access to other services simple. These services can vary widely, from online databases and campus directories to Archie, Knowbot (see *BBS Magazine*, Oct. 1993) and even file transfers. You can also access any other Gopher available on the Internet, referred to as Gopherspace. So if you don't like the Gopher site you normally use, you can search around until you find the one you like.

Prior to Gopher, accessing free services was disorganized and often frustrating. Every service has a unique method of operation, so you might have to learn ten sets of commands to access ten different services. With Gopher, you need only learn how to use one set, and let Gopher handle the rest.

One of the benefits of Gopher is that each site can set it up to best meet the needs of its users. For example, one Gopher site might make access to various databases very easy, while another site focuses on current news events. Each Gopher site is set up and maintained by a system administrator. What this means is that one administrator with few duties has the time to create an excellent Gopher menu system, another administrator who is overworked will probably have a bare bones menu system.

If you have an existing telnet connection and want to reach an existing Gopher site, try telnetting to port 70 of that site (again, see Oct. '93) The correct syntax would be 'telnet gopher.site.name 70'. If the site allows open access, which it should, you will be directly connected.

WAIS

If you need the ability for complex data searching, Gopher will probably fall short of the mark. This is where WAIS comes in. WAIS is a searching program that can scan a wide array of electronic texts, even on many charging a fee for access. But don't be misled, you're not actually accessing these services — those that are pay-based, such as the Dow Jones Information Service, will require you to pay to retrieve the articles at that site. WAIS will simply tell you where there are articles that match your search.

There are problems with WAIS, however. For example, if you were seeking the actual words to the nursery rhyme Jack and Jill, searching for "Jack and Jill" would result in every text that had the words "Jack" and

"Jill" in them — not what you really wanted. However, if your search is specific, WAIS is an excellent resource.

Another problem with WAIS is due to the nature of the Internet. As the Internet grows, so does the available information. Searching for particular items can be slow, and is often-times outdated. The best way to use WAIS is to integrate it with Gopher or another similar system.

WEB

The newest and most powerful Internet searching tool is World-Wide Web. It is based on hypertext technology, so once you've found something you want you can quickly go to other closely related items. If you've used a Macintosh, you've probably seen an example of hypertext. For example, if you are viewing information on a type of health care, you might be able to jump to pension plans, dental or vision care, or even President Clinton's plan for nationalized health care.

The WEB is very new technology, hence, very few sites are available. Unless you absolutely need it, stick with Gopher and WAIS for now. Given

a year or two to develop, WEB promises to be a very exciting. The WEB is also developing faster in Europe, which means that information found with it will not be limited by our national boundaries.

Word Watch

BANDWIDTH. Bandwidth refers to the maximum capacity able to be transmitted with a given medium. Compare the bandwidth of a 9600 baud modem to a 10 Megabit-per-second direct ethernet connection, and you'll see why bandwidth is important.

Books

Connecting to the Internet: A Buyer's Guide, by Susan Estrada. This is a well-written book for the mid-level manager. If you're responsible for getting connected, this book will guide you through the many possibilities, listing advantages and disadvantages of each. "Connecting" also includes basic pricing information, a glossary of terms and an overview of Internet technology. ■■■■

Mike Robinson can be reached at mrobinson@wharton.upenn.edu

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DSC Datamax/Satalink
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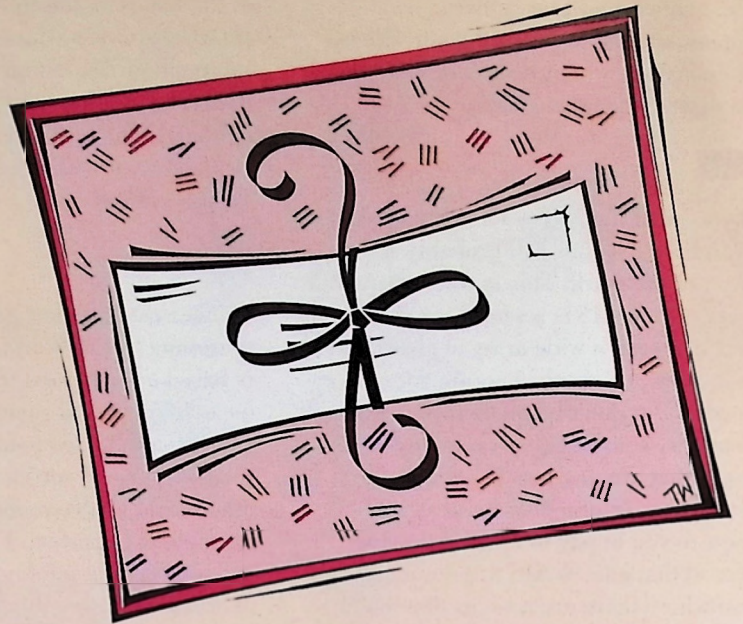
V.32bis 14.4 (215)443-7390

HST/DS(215)443-5830

telnet via Internet: dsc.voicenet.com

Mail Call

*Trafficking messages
the QWK way*



Over the past few weeks, I've been delving into the dark side of telecommunicating...the Internet. Conveniently, my wife (the computer widow I married over 6 years ago) is attending a local college and has an Internet account. Consequently, I have an account.

Several friends and I have been discussing the ramifications of all the information and things accessible via modem, and the information overload it has caused. The Internet has lots of great sites for Mac software, tools, you name it. The University of Minnesota has a great site, with many sites mirroring the info there. On a mirror site, you can find telecom programs to allow you — if you are hooked up through TCP/IP on your Mac — to send e-mail worldwide, get files, etc., and provides a nice user-friendly Mac interface with which to work. There's even a comm package created exclusively for play on MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons), which are scattered all over the Internet.

But no matter how much info and general "stuff" is available, you'll never learn it all. There's too much there. And there's not enough time to get it all down, but boy is it fun to play.

Speaking of saving time, I'd like to address programs that allow you to take your mail, compress it into one packet, download it for offline reading, replying and finally preparation for upload. Many Mac host software packages allow you to do this fairly easily. First Class has BulkRate 1.72, the current version I believe, that allows you to bundle all your messages together, then read and

reply to them offline at a later date. NovaLink Pro does the same thing, through the use of an external. But since most of the BBSs out there are not Mac boards, (unfortunately) then we have to come up with ways to deal with PC host software and the way they deal with messages.

The squeeze

The standard method used in compressing messages down into a packet for later use is through the use of a door, and the creation of a file called a .QWK packet. A .QWK packet is usually a .Zip file with your messages, two files called "MESSAGES.DAT" and "CONTROL.DAT" (which contain info about your messages, such as the conferences they are from, etc) and several other miscellaneous files. When online, you can use the door to compress your new messages, then download the file to your hard drive. Once you've done that you can start your post-processing, so to speak.

To aide with the post-processing, there are several utilities and programs that will help you read messages and prepare replies, then compress the reply back into a packet — called a .REP packet — that you upload to the

board the next time you log on. Some of these utilities that we will examine include QWK 1.30 and Freddie 1.25

QWK 1.30

This program, by Bob Blaylock, allows you to convert your messages, after they have been unzipped, over to a word processing file that you can read and set up your replies in. There are many shareware packages that will unzip the .QWK packet for you, including UnZip 2.0, and ZipIt 1.1.1. You must, however, make sure NOT to strip linefeeds or convert the files it extracts in any way.

Using some of Bob's embedded commands to tell the program what are replies, who the messages are to, etc., you can then run the file back through QWK 1.30 to create a .REP packet that you can upload. Now this may seem difficult for novices having to use commands in your file, almost like a programming language, but it's worth it. The beauty of the package is in the power it gives to the user. You can password-protect a message, make a message a non-echo message — so it won't be sent over the network — add and drop conferences, and more. The program sounds complicated, but is easy to learn and to quickly use.

QWK 1.30 is a shareware package, \$10, and your money may be sent to Bob Blaylock, 580 Pintura Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93111. His AOL address is "TheBob."

Freddie 1.25

Freddie is another offline reader of interest. After you unzip your mes-

sages, simply launch Freddie. If you're using System 7, you can drag-and-drop the .QWK packet onto Freddie, then ZipIt will automatically unzip the file for you. Once you are in Freddie, it will ask you to select one of the files from your unzipped packet. Freddie then reads the "CONTROL.DAT" file and creates a bookmark file. The bookmark is actually a database used to store all the information about the packet being opened.

After you save the bookmark file, Freddie then reads the "MESSAGES.DAT" file, which contains the text of the messages you pulled off the BBS. Freddie next reads the "NEWFILES.DAT" file which contains info about all the new files that the BBS has received since you last checked. Then the packet is sorted, the main window opens and the fun begins!

The main window provides info about the BBS you downloaded from and when you downloaded, and provides a quick route to the Files, News, and Bulletins windows with buttons you can quickly push. There's also a Mail button that will bring up the "Conferences," "Incoming," and "Incoming index" windows.

I won't tell you how to do everything from here (you can download the package and see for yourself) because the documentation that comes with it is very easy to follow and understand. However, I do want to point out a few features that I found very nice when working with Freddie. While reading your incoming messages, Freddie has little arrows that allow you to advance quickly through your messages, or you can search your messages for a charac-

ter string to cut down on your read time. Freddie allows you to easily quote from messages in your replies, and you can even create your own unique tagline for replies. Taglines are the little messages "tagged" on the end of each message you see online. Kind of a neat way to personalize your messages, though some have gotten into a bad habit of using it to advertise a service or business. Most use it as a way to insert funny quotes or sayings. To create a .REP packet you just have to go under the File menu to "Create REP". It's that easy.

Freddie makes for a friendly interface that, if you're not careful, will have you smiling while reading messages. Freddie is a shareware package, \$15, and money should be sent to Kem Tekinay, 75-05 64th Place, Glendale, NY 11385. Kem's AOL address is "KemT". Freddie may be found on most online services and local BBSs.

Next month, we will look at CounterPoint 2.3, an offline parser, reader and packer that works with mailers like Cope, Tabby, WhiteMailer, Formula-1, MacWoof, and some QWK doors, as well as some other FidoNet mail packages. Until then, keep connected. ■■■■■

Michael A. Kuykendall is a veteran Mac User and crony from the days of 64K ROMs and 400K floppies. He has been an overworked officer for 3 Mac User Groups, written for several computer publications around the country, and is currently President/Sysop/General Flunky for the Online Macintosh Users Group, based out of Atlanta, Georgia.

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BOOKSHELF

Internet Basics

by Walt Howe and Steve Lambert
\$27, 420 pages

Funny thing, that Internet. The network eliminates the need for paper, in many cases, but to get in the inside lane of the Net a book is required (well, very helpful). There are plenty of them out there, and now there's another

"Internet Basics" (Random House Electronic Publishing), by Walt Howe (chief moderator for Delphi Internet Services Corporation) and Steve Lambert (a freelance writer and co-founder of Online Press, Inc.), was composed mostly online as a simple on-ramp to the vast network of information and entertainment found on the Internet.

A big plus with "Internet Basics" is its explanations in non-technical terms about how to access the hundreds of forums, games and chat lines available to anyone with a PC and modem.

To boot, the book includes five free hours of time on Delphi Internet Services to get you started.

Mostly Windows With Just Enough DOS

by Herbert Schildt
\$24.95, 480 pages

Here's an interesting one. Want to get the most out of Microsoft Windows, but know little about the DOS operating system? For computer Johnny-come-lately's and others looking to freshen up, "Mostly Windows With Just Enough DOS" (Osborne/McGraw-Hill) might be the one for you.

The book, by Herbert Schildt (million-selling computing author), is targeted at both users familiar with DOS and are moving to Windows and for new users who have Windows already

installed on their system.

Said Schildt: "To fulfill the promise of Windows' power, a solid working knowledge of DOS is required. This book will make Windows users more productive and give them the background they need to work with DOS confidently and easily."

The volume moves from a discussion of fundamental background on to DOS basics (such as DOS prompts, simple commands, files and directories). Then the relation between the two is probed. Windows' Program Manager, File Manager and other utilities are described in detail and more advanced commands, such as batch files are also explained.

A helpful "How To" appendix is also provided with quick instructions for specific tasks.

Pro Audio 16: The Official Book

by Ivan Luk and David M. Golden
\$34.95, 512 pages, illustrated

Computers: Silent no more. That's the message from "Pro Audio 16: The Official Book" (Osborne/McGraw-Hill) by Ivan Luk and David M. Golden (last collaborating on Sound Blaster: The Official Book).

True, desktop sound is here in spades, but for many it's not quite as easy as what meets the ear.

The authors know this. That's why they've spent over 500 pages looking into all Pro Audio products — the noted 16-bit sound cards from Media Vision — introducing readers to the world of sound card technology, including hardware installation, sound basics, software and enhancements.

Inside the book lies comprehensive instruction and troubleshooting tips for hard/software installation, including

discussion of Windows drivers; tips and techniques for solving joystick problems, interrupt conflicts and compatibility problems; operating instructions for simplifying use of the software bundled with the Pro Audio 16 family of cards; a 3.5 disk loaded with software designed to enhance performance and capabilities of the Pro Audio 16 cards; and, CD-ROM drive information covering everything from buying and installing to configuration and troubleshooting.

The Official SimCity Planning Commission Handbook

by Johnny L. Wilson
\$19.95, 232 pages

SimCity, the realistic city planning game from Maxis Software, has just been re-released as SimCity Classic. In order to help the thousands of new "urban planners" as they discover SimCity Classic for the first time, Osborne/McGraw-Hill has recently published "The Official SimCity Classic Planning Commission Handbook" by Johnny L. Wilson, editor of Computer Gaming World.

Based on Osborne/McGraw-Hill's top-selling "SimCity Planning Commission Handbook," first published in 1989, The Official helps players master the intricacies SimCity.

Included between the covers is everything readers need to enjoy the game, including the a full description of the icons and menus used when creating a city.

The book also explores the urban planning model on which SimCity Classic is based and examines the real-life consequences of all planning decisions. ■■■■■

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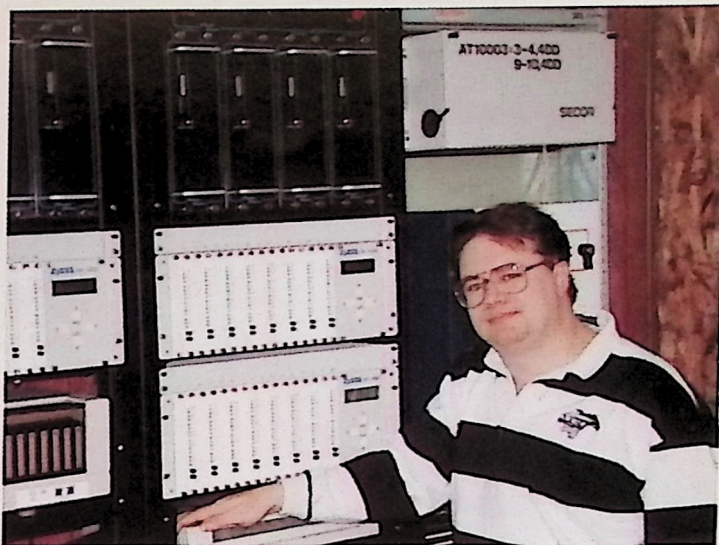
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Marc Burnett at APDI's BBS Controls

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Authorized CD SUB

BBS List

As more BBSs register the CD-SUB program, they will be listed in the next issues. Each registered BBS gets free access to The Livewire BBS 609-235-5297 for newer versions. If you registered and are not listed, please give us a voice call (1-609-953-9110, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., M – F; EST) to make the correction.

LISTED IN ORDER OF AREA CODE:

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Griswold's Private Reserve	Jim Kelland	316-788-7520
Warp Factor BBS	Mark Stewart	404-773-7966
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Computer Confident	Edward Zdrok,	508-528-2295
Schunix — Pub UNIX	Robert Schultz	508-853-0340
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The Last Resort BBS	Derek Figg	703-435-8644
The Arlington Software Exchange	Jay Falvey	703-532-7143
Xsword's Haven	Randy Hedgecock	703-638-7580
The Virginia Connection	Tony McClenny	703-648-1841
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Addison Dos Haus	LeRoy Hein Jr.....	708-832-7754
BBS Data Systems	Greg Kaiser	708-991-2452
Cyberia	Sarah/Adam Viener.....	717-840-1444
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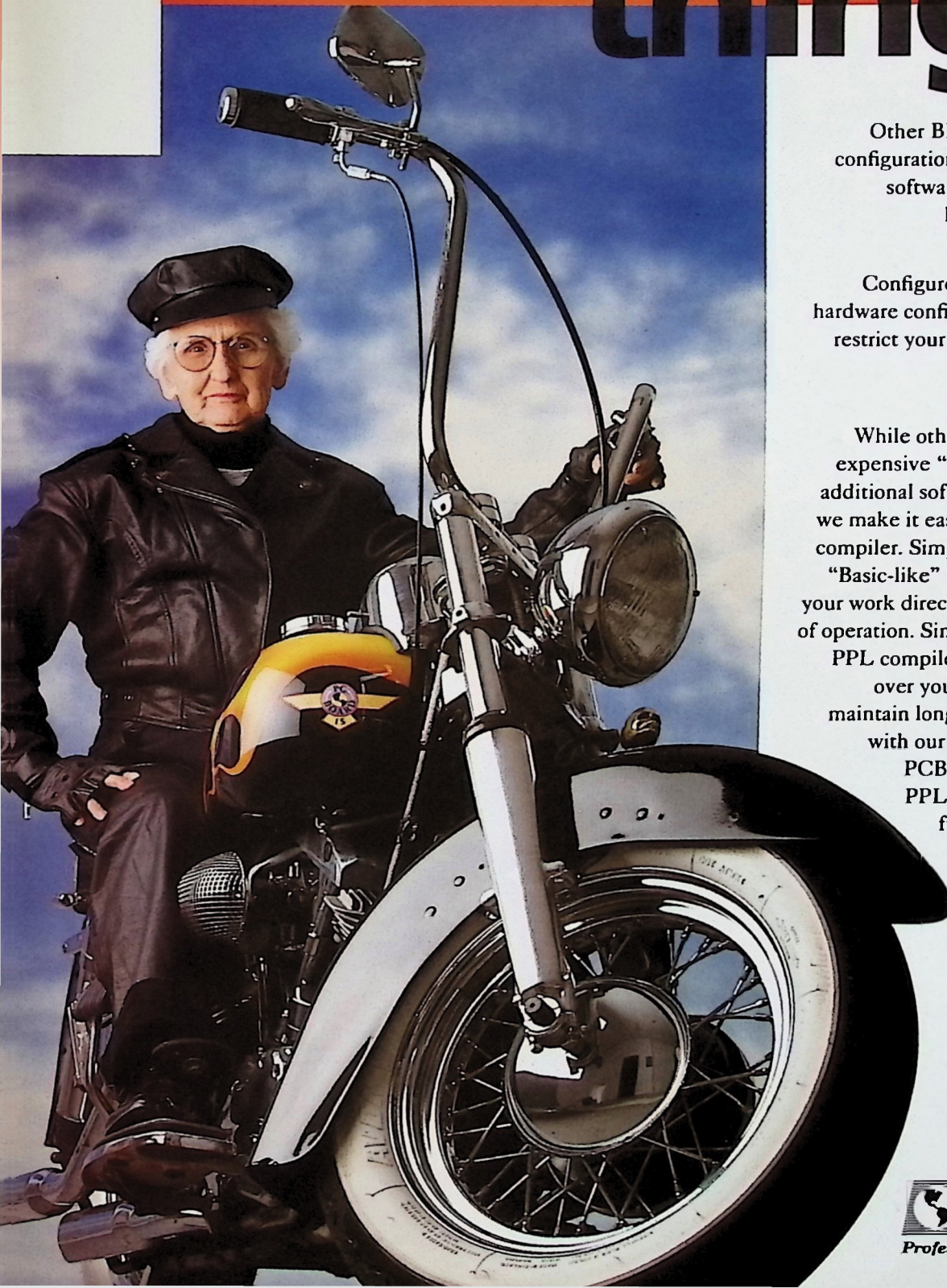
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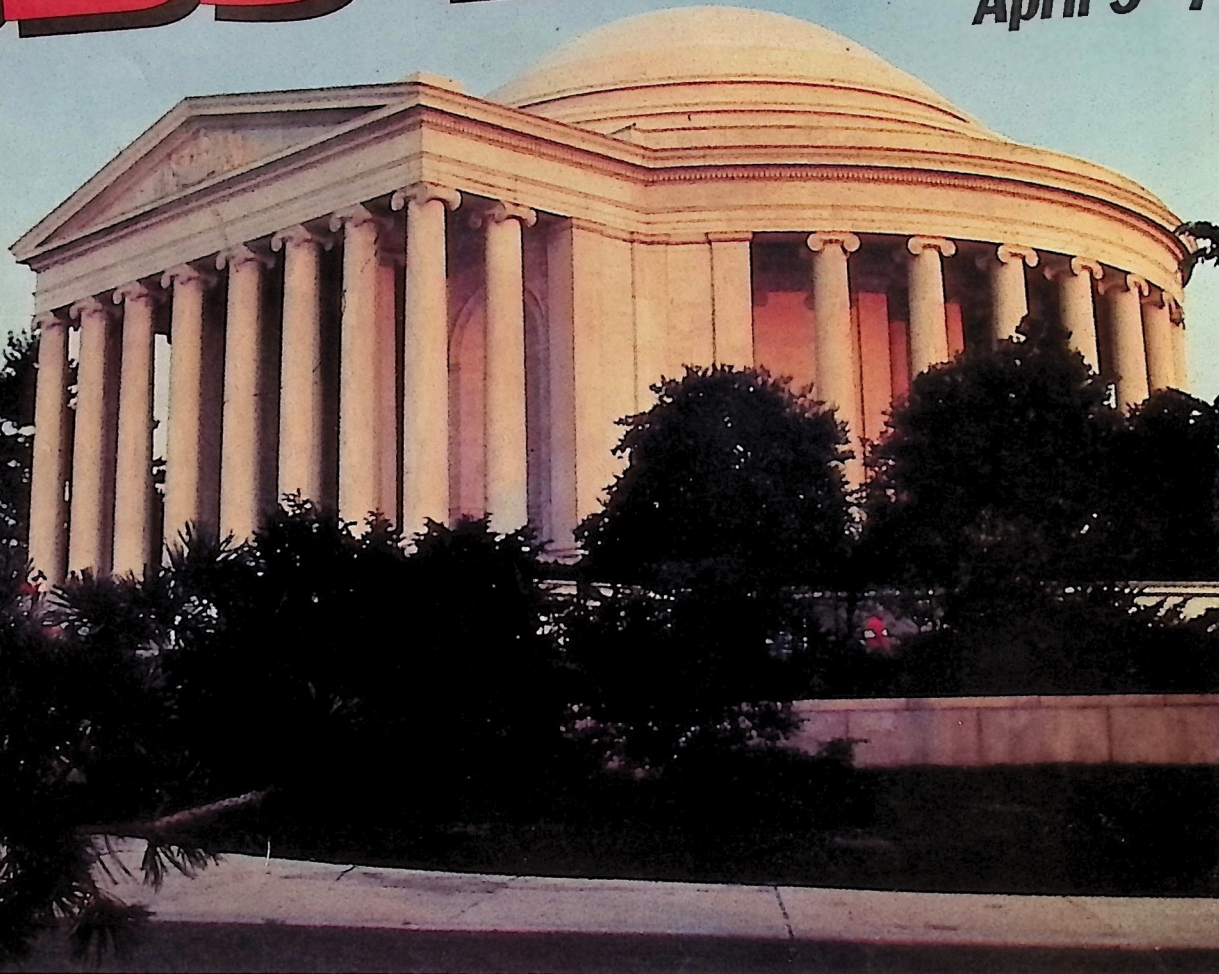
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