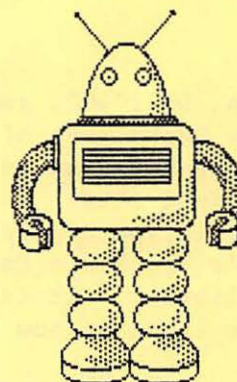


The Computer Rag

newsletter of the
Yokosuka Computer Club

News, Gossip, and Innuendo
from the Western Pacific



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Local Gossip

January Meetings: Will be held on the second Wed., Jan. 9, and the third Tues., Jan. 15, both at 6 p.m. in OEC (top floor of Barracks C). Scheduled topics include: spending money (possible purchase of public domain software), setting up a club computer bulletin board, and more information on either installing WordStar or exploring dBASE II. There may also be a demonstration of the Radio Shack Model 4P at the Wed. meeting, and a demonstration of some new Macintosh tricks at the Tues. meeting. Discount cards for Apple World Tokyo will also be distributed to anyone interested (cards expire Jan. 31).

December Meetings: On Dec. 12 Frank Kellner, a brand-new Zenith Z-150 owner, made an appearance on short notice to show off his machine. The Z-150 is an exceptionally well designed "IBM PC clone," capable of running virtually anything an IBM PC runs -- but with less trouble. Kellner freely admitted he didn't know much about his machine, which gave everyone at the meeting lots of opportunity to play with it and make suggestions. J.R. Lee offered a brief overview of dBASE II, the world's most popular relational data base management system (translation: very clever filing cabinet). Lee has just recently started exploring dBASE II in earnest, and strongly hinted he would like to share tips and tricks on using the software with anyone and everyone. Lawrence Charters used a Radio Shack Model 100 to call up the computer bulletin board at the New Sanno Hotel in Tokyo (229-7174). Everyone thought this was a neat trick, and some asked if he knew the phone number for NORAD.

On Dec. 18 Lee repeated his dBASE II demonstration, using a dBASE II program written by the U.S. Army as an example. Charters again phone the bulletin board at the Sanno, and several people posted odd messages using its electronic mail facility. An expected demonstration of another Z-150 failed to materialize; the owner begged off, pleading marriage problems. [He wants to get married, but red tape is causing problems.]

Computer Course: Central Texas College is now registering students for its Microcomputer Science 1451 course, Intro. to Microcomputer Programming (BASIC). The course runs from Jan. 14 to Mar. 9, meeting three nights a week. For details, call 234-5125 or 7289. An advanced BASIC course will be offered from Mar. 18 to May 11.

Cheap Disks: Computer Learning Center, P.O. Box 45202E, Tacoma, WA 98445, is advertising lots and lots of inexpensive public domain programs for the Apple II, at \$4.00 per disk. If you are interested be sure and come to the next meeting so we can argue about spending some of the club's money.

Cheap Book: If you send \$4.50 to Dept. 36-JW, Superintendent of Documents,

Washington, DC 20402, and ask for stock no. 008-047-00361-7, you can get a copy of the new Department of Defense book, Introduction to Programming in BASIC. The 145 page book was written by the Navy, and is said to be designed especially for individual study.

Nice Book: If you are interested in how your computer works, check out Henry F. Beechhold's The Plain English Repair and Maintenance Guide for Home Computers at the base library. It is illustrated with good line drawings, and even explains such basic items as how to use a multimeter.

Semi-Local Gossip

Local Rag: Computer Tokyo is busy looking for subscribers. Published by International Marketing, it usually runs four pages, mostly of ads for International Marketing. A 28 issue subscription costs ¥1000. If you are interested, write for a four-issue free trial subscription to: International Marketing Corp., IPO Box 5056, Tokyo 100-31.

Apple World Fair: Sponsored by Apple World Tokyo, the Fair was held Dec. 8-9 and attracted visitors from all over Asia. Representatives of several U.S. firms were also on hand to demonstrate hardware and software. Macvision and Micron Eye digitizers were shown for the Macintosh, allowing photographs to be entered directly into MacPaint documents. Several new Mac languages were also demonstrated, along with some very odd games. Roland had an Apple IIe hooked up to one of its MIDI music processors, allowing the Apple to play six different keyboards at the same time (very, very impressive). Karateka, a new Apple II game, was probably the hit of the show, though the giant gold custom-made apple balloon hanging from the ceiling (and leaking) attracted just as much attention. Free apples (edible) were given to all visitors -- and they were excellent.

Goodies: If you like electronic toys, make sure you are free for Comdex Japan '85, to be held at the Harumi Exhibition Center in Tokyo from Mar. 26-28. Comdex is the most important trade show in the world for introducing new computers, programs, stereo equipment, and other salary-breakers, and this will be the first show of its kind ever held in Japan.

Non-Local Gossip

Fast Mac: General Computer Company has started shipping their HyperDrive for the Apple Macintosh. The HyperDrive is a 3.5" 10 megabyte Winchester hard disk which mounts inside the Macintosh case. The drive also includes an upgrade to 512K of memory, with the drive using some of this memory as a "cache." Translated into English, this gives the Macintosh a huge amount of very, very fast storage.

Mac Speaks: First Byte has started shipping (for \$150) its SmoothTalker software for the Mac. Using no extra hardware, SmoothTalker allows the Macintosh to "speak for itself," using a very sophisticated speech synthesis technique.

Fast Print: Hewlett-Packard's laser printer is, at \$3495, already very attractive (at least to those with \$3495). HP is now working on some graphics enhancements to the printer, and also considering dropping the regular model's price by \$1000.

TI Tries Again: Texas Instruments has introduced the 10 pound ProLite lap computer with 3.5" diskette drives, 256K, 80C88 processor, and 80x25 LCD screen. In keeping with tradition, the TI machine is not IBM compatible.

Big Kaypro: Kaypro has introduced the Kaypro-16, an IBM PC clone which includes, as standard equipment, a 10 megabyte hard disk, 256K, serial and parallel ports, RGB outlet, WordStar, MailMerge, CalcStar, Microsoft GW-BASIC, a spreadsheet, a database manager, and communications software -- all for \$3295.

Fast Kaypro: Anyone interested in speeding up their Kaypro II should look at the

March 1984 issue of Microcomputing, or write to YCC (address above). A short article shows how to remove your old Z-80 and replace it with a faster version. Phantom Machine, Real Software: AT&T's Model 7300 computer doesn't even exist yet, but Lotus 1-2-3, Symphony, and WordStar 2000 are already converted for use on the UNIX-based machine.

Commodore Rudderless: Commodore's Plus 4 micro has been highly praised for its built-in BASIC and moderately praised for the rest of its built-in software, but soundly condemned for its poor construction. Also enraging owners is the fact it is completely incompatible with all other Commodore software and hardware. Commodore-64 owners, on the other hand, are upset that Simon's BASIC, a superb BASIC add-on package, is virtually unavailable -- because Commodore didn't realize people would want to buy it.

Commodore Surrenders: In an agreement with the Federal Trade Commission, Commodore has paid an undisclosed fine and agreed to stop advertising non-existent products. Consumers and the FTC were particularly upset with Commodore's three year ad campaign for CP/M for the C-64 -- a product which has only recently been released.

Be True: Addison-Wesley will market True BASIC for \$149.90, beginning in January, for the IBM PC. A Macintosh version is expected in early 1985. True BASIC supports graphics, mice, and other goodies, and programs written on one machine will work on others without change. True BASIC was designed by John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz, creators of the original BASIC in 1964.

Macintosh BASIC 2.0: Microsoft will release version 2 of its Macintosh BASIC in January. The new version makes line numbers optional, and provides direct support for sound and music, multiple windows, and other exotic features. Oddly enough, it also has some features very similar to True BASIC.

Osborne Stuff: Osborne is selling a new 10 pound computer as the Osborne 3 and Encore, while Morrow sells the same machine as the Pivot. Who makes the computer is a mystery. Osborne is also selling the Vixen, a new, improved version of the original Osborne-1. Finally, not only has Osborne emerged from Chap. 11, it is even selling stock again.

WordStar Words: MicroPro claims there are 1.25 million legal copies of WordStar and at least that many illegal copies. WordStar 2000, the spectacular new, improved version for the IBM PC, is copy-protected. MicroPro plans a Macintosh version of WordStar 2000 sometime in early 1985.

Franklin Folded: Franklin Computer Corp. has been liquidated. Just five days before it had announced a major push to promote its CX "super Apple," then dropped the project two days later. So much for the world's only "legal" Apple compatible --

Unlimited Expansion: People upset with the "closed" bus on the Apple IIc should consider DEC's new 8600 Venus. More than twice as fast as a VAX 11/780, the 8600 can handle up to 64 megabytes of memory, and more disk storage can be attached to the 8600 than to all the microcomputers in the world -- combined. The pretty graphics in "Tron" and "Star Trek II," plus several other films, were drawn with DEC VAX equipment. If you can't wait, just send DEC \$450,000 for a basic model. If even this won't satisfy you, try Cray Research's new X-MP series (also heavily used in movie graphics), easily the most powerful machine in the world and, as the Soviets will testify, a steal at \$5 to \$14 million.

Orphans: Coleco is rumored to be abandoning the Adam computer, and Apple is rumored to be dropping the Lisa. Maybe companies shouldn't give computers first names --

AppleWorks Update: A new version of AppleWorks, 2.0, is rumored to be in

testing.

Microsoft Laps: Microsoft has developed a lap-top computer operating system, HH-DOS. It uses subsets of MS-DOS, Word, MultiPlan, and File, and adds Telcom, an appointment calendar, BASIC, and a calculator, all crammed into 200K of ROM. Microsoft expects HH-DOS to be used in several unannounced machines in 1985.

Zenith: Is planning a lap computer with a built-in version of WordStar, but Microsoft (see above) is pressing hard for a version of Word.

Tandy Lap: Tandy is expected to release a new lap machine, the Tandy 200, almost any time. Details are scarce, but one rumor said preliminary versions would eat a set of four AA batteries in half an hour.

White House Worries: Jack Anderson has reported that the Office of the President is very concerned with a recent bid: OOTP had sent out a proposal for something which walked and talked like an IBM XT, and Radio Shack won the bid. But the Office of the President doesn't want to buy Radio Shack, apparently forgetting that Tandy's Texans are all Republicans --

Wrong: In the last issue it was said Tandy's new Tandy 1000 computer was designed by Tandon. Not correct -- it was designed in Ft. Worth by Texans working for Radio Shack. The errant spy responsible for this mistake has been terminated.

Hayes: Has just introduced their Smartmodem 2400, a clever little box which will allow virtually any computer to transfer information over regular phone lines at speeds eight times faster than the usual 300 baud rate. It comes with a two year warranty for just \$899.

Oops: Between 10% (IBM says) and 60% (dealers say) of IBM's new super-duper PC AT machines are being delivered with defective 20 megabyte hard disk drives. Because of the low sale price of the PC AT, each defective machine means a loss to IBM of roughly \$2000-3000. In spite of this, the PC AT is selling faster than IBM can make it.

You Make It: Columbia Data Products, makers of a superb selection of personal computers (sold at Corton Computer Systems at the New Sanno, for example), is getting out of the manufacturing business. It is talking about selling its manufacturing division to some former employees who will make the machines, while Columbia will continue to market them.

Big Byte: Maxell has released a 5 1/4" metal, super high density floppy disk drive with 10 megabytes of storage, and a 3.5" disk with 5 megabytes of storage. Unfortunately, no one has produced drives for the diskettes yet.

Easy Come: Dysan lost \$50.1 million last year on sales of \$214.1 million. All of the losses came from bad investments in other firms.

Bigger Byte: Hitachi has introduced a CD-ROM optical disk memory system. Using CD laser disk technology, the CD-ROM allows 550 megabytes of information to be put on a single disk. Hitachi estimates the machines will cost manufacturers no more than \$375 in large quantities. Hitachi will record a master disk (the disks cannot be erased or re-recorded) for \$5000 or less, then produce copies for \$5 each. Sony has also introduced a similar unit, in a smaller case. One of the nice things about using CD laser disks for storage is that, unlike floppy disks and laser disks, CD disks do use a standard format, making exchange of information fairly easy.

New Mag: The infamous Wayne Green will start a new magazine, Pico, for lap computers in January.

Really?: Mimic Systems (1112 Fort St., FL. 6M, Victoria, BC, Canada V8V 4V2) has introduced Spartan, a hardware/software system which allows a Commodore 64 to run Apple II software.

Rearry?: According to a Japanese tour guide employed by a computer firm, IBM "stands for Imperfect But still Marketable."

Atari: Has cut the Stateside list price of the Atari 800XL to \$119. Oh, sooooo tempting . . .

Jazz: Lotus has released Jazz, an integrated word processing, database management, forms, spreadsheet, graphics, and communications package for the Macintosh. It costs \$595, requires two disk drives, and is heavily copy protected.

Red Menace: The Soviets plan to build 10,000 really bad copies of Apple II machines over the next five years to promote computer literacy in the USSR. Each machine will cost about \$20,000. China, on the other hand, built over a thousand Great Wall computers last year. The Great Wall is a fairly good, fast copy of the IBM PC, and costs about \$5000.

Want Ads

Commodore Owners: Contact Greg Yelland at ext. 7650/7651 (work) or 0468-75-1325 (home) if you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group. Also, write to the Yokosuka Computer Club (address above) if you'd like to do a presentation on the Commodore. A-33 has sold zillions of these things; where are they?

Anybody: The Club's landlord will be abandoning us early this year, and the new landlord may or may not be willing to put up with us. If you know of a good place for the Club to meet (climate control, electrical outlets, and tables and chairs are a must) please call Kathleen Charters at 234-4326, or contact any other Club officer.

Everyone Else: If you have some topic you would like to present, or would like to see, contact the YCC by mail or call Pres. Kathleen Charters at 234-4326. As it stands, next month's programs may boil down to bird imitations by the redoubtable Joe Slobotnik, hero of Charlie Brown.