# The Computer Rag
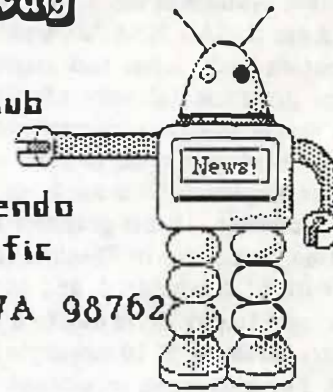
newsletter of the
Yokosuka Computer Club

News, Gossip, and Innuendo
from the Western Pacific

He did it . . .

Made in Japan

News!

DMS Box 187, FPO Seattle, WA 98762

## Local Gossip

- **Feb. Meetings**: Will be held on the 2nd Wed., **Feb. 13**, and the 3rd Tues., **Feb. 19**, both at 6 p.m. in OEC (top floor of Barracks C). Tentative events include a presentation by an Avalon Hill Microcomputer Games playtester.

- **Last Month**: On Jan. 9 Lawrence Charters demonstrated the Radio Shack Model 4, using three different operating systems. He also gave an overview of how WordStar 3.0 and 3.3 could be patched to perform interesting tricks. On Jan. 15 Jim Lee demonstrated how to set up a file in dBase II, which is a strange and awesome task. Lawrence Charters had the Apple Macintosh play music, talk, and do odd things with a chess set. Bloom County fans immediately recognized the similarity between the Mac and Oliver's famous computer, and some wanted to know how to make the Mac walk. At both meetings members agreed to investigate the purchase of public domain software from sources in the U.S. There was also general agreement that the YCC should look into the possibility of setting up a computerized bulletin board, or talking some local command into setting up such a board. In addition to being fun, several Stateside commands use boards for distributing computer-related information, and assistance.

- **NEX Rumor**: Usually reliable sources suggest A-33 is dropping the Atari computer line. On the other hand, NEX claims it will sell goodies for the machine as long as there is local demand. (Atari claims it is still building the 800XL in overseas plants, but most dealers think Atari is dropping the machine. During Christmas 800XL sales killed those of the Commodore-64, much to Commodore's surprise.)

- **Comdex Japan '85**: Break out your phony corporate credentials and get set to go to Harumi Exhibition Center in Tokyo Mar. 26-28. Comdex is the most important personal computer, stereo equipment, and general gadget show in the world. About a zillion people are expected to show up.

- **Corton clone**: Corton Systems at the New Sanno Hotel is now selling the Sprint 2000, an attractive and moderately priced IBM PC compatible.

## Non-Local Gossip

- **Return of Atari**: Atari has introduced a new 68000-based computer, the 130ST, priced at $399 without monitor or disk drives but with BASIC or Logo. It uses Digital Research's GEM operating system, enabling it to act like an Apple Macintosh, but in color. A "Fat" ST with 512K will cost around $699. When the machine is available in April some analysts believe it will deal a deadly blow to Commodore. (For a picture of the new ST machine, see the Jan. 28 *InfoWorld*.)

- **And More**: Also introduced were a variety of new 8-bit computers, among them the 130XE (with 128K) and 65 XEP, a portable computer with 3.5 inch disk drive and 5-inch monitor. The 65 XEM is a music synthesizer which will cost around $120-$200. Atari also claims it will introduce a 15-megabyte hard drive for $399 -- someday.

- **Commodore Double**: Commodore has released the Commodore 128, essentially a Commodore-64 but with twice as much memory, for $299. It includes a Z-80 chip, and can run CP/M. Commodore claims it is a business machine, but not a single store specializing in computer products has expressed any interest in carrying it. Commodore also introduced the LCD, a three-pound portable with BASIC, 80x16 line LCD display, modem, word processing, file management, and spreadsheet, priced at $500. A $99 Model 16 was also released; it is basically a VIC-20 with more memory. Many people who might have given Commodore a chance are waiting to see what kind of damage Atari can cause under the control of former Commodore boss Jack Tramiel. (For a picture of the new 128, see the Jan. 28 *InfoWorld*.)

- **Infocom**: producer of the popular interactive games Zork, Starcrossed, etc., has released its first business package, Cornerstone. This database management system is available only for the IBM PC, and costs $495. Users say it is very powerful, but wonder if anyone wants another DBMS for the IBM PC.

- **Bye-Bye**: Visicorp, fresh from its multi-million dollar court loss to Software Arts, has vanished. Visicorp merged with Paladin Software of San Jose, a company just a year old with no products.

- **Ada Banned**: COCOM (Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls) has banned the export of programs written in Ada and Chill to Eastern Bloc countries. COCOM also decided that most

8-bit systems (such as the Apple II, Kaypro II, etc.) will not be regulated, but 16-bit and larger systems (IBM PC, Tandy 2000, Macintosh) will have to qualify for licensing on a case to case basis. Militarized systems of any size will remain restricted.

**More Ada**: NASA's first "Ada-only" system will be the multi-national space station, developed in coordination with Japan and major European powers. By designing the station to work with Ada language programs (already adopted as NATO's "official" programming language), NASA hopes to reduce compatibility problems among systems designed in different countries by different teams. Target date for the station is 1992 or 1993.

**HP Monster**: Hewlett-Packard has introduced the $5000 Integral Personal Computer using an 8 MHz 68000 processor, 16-bit graphics chip, flat-panel amber electroluminescent display with 512x255 resolution, and built-in Thinkjet ink jet printer -- all in a 25 lb. package. Portable, it runs UNIX, comes with 512K standard, and uses double-sided 3.5" diskettes holding 720K. UNIX will run with just a single floppy drive due to a huge ROM which holds the core of the UNIX operating system. H-P also introduced a 3.5" 10 megabyte hard disk. Order 10,000 of them for just $400 each.

**Words From IBM**: In an attempt to make the IBM PC work like the Macintosh, IBM announced the [still unavailable] TopView interface, which does everything the Mac does -- but without graphics. IBM researchers working with preliminary copies have nothing nice to say about it. One IBM researcher, fed up with all the negative criticism, had this to say: "1) It has a nice logo. 2) See 1."

**Chief Executive Compaq**: Former President Jimmy Carter is probably the most famous Compaq computer user. As far as anyone can tell, no other Pres. or Vice Pres. has ever used a computer.

**Today Europe**: Tandy and Applied Computer Techniques (ACT), Britain's most prosperous computer firm, have started a joint venture, TA ComputerWorld. TA ComputerWorld has taken over the 49 Tandy and 29 ACT stores in the U.K., and will distribute both Tandy and ACT products throughout Europe, including the 430 Tandy stores on the continent.

**Franklin Gone?**: Franklin Computer Corp. may be "gone," but officers of the company are still putting the finishing touches on a service plan for Franklin's 150,000 owners. Bell & Howell and Xerox are both looking over the deal. Franklin sold a non-exclusive license to its new FDOS-2 operating system to Apple for $70,000. Officers of the corporation are hoping now to come up with some strange investors willing to let the company try once more to manufacture a "super" Apple II machine, called the Ace 2000. For a company that has been liquidated, Franklin sure is busy.

**Apple Monster**: Apple's LaserWriter laser printer has a 68000 running at 12.5 MHz, 512K ROM, and 1.5 megabytes of RAM. Apple will advertise it as "The Most Powerful Apple," for $6,995 plus $100 for a cable. It is IBM PC compatible . . .

**AppleTalk**: Apple has introduced a very inexpensive networking system for the Macintosh, called AppleTalk. A complete kit to hook a Mac into a local area network costs just $50. Up to 32 computers and peripherals can be connected.

**New Mac -- sort of**: Apple unveiled a super Macintosh at its stockholders meeting. The Mac XL looks suspiciously like a Lisa, has two Sony 3.5" disk drives, and 512K of RAM (expandable to 1M). Called the "heart of the Macintosh automated office," the machine even has the same 1.5:1 screen ratio as the Lisa (a real Mac has a 1:1 ratio). This "new" machine will cost $3995. In addition to a new name, the Mac XL has a new color: white. All future Apple products will be white, which should lead to booming sales of computer cleaning products. (Even bigger Macintosh machines are supposed to be everywhere. One rumor is the Big Mac, with a 68010 processor, 12" screen, 512K to 1 megabyte of memory, optional hard disk, and big, big price. Another rumor is the Color Mac, with a screen resolution so high it emits hard radiation. Then there is the...)

**Not bad**: Apple sold 275,000 Macs last year. 500,000 Apples (all models) were sold in the 4th quarter of 1984, beating out IBM.

**Great Big Rumor**: IBM is gearing up to try for a takeover of Apple. (That'll keep them thar upstarts from causing any more trouble!) Apple, meanwhile, is engaged in talks with Wang to form a "strategic alliance" to tackle the computer market (i.e.: I.B.M.).

**Clones Multiply**: Radio Shack's Tandy 1000 (an IBM PC clone with extras) has broken all company sales records. Radio Shack is surprised, as the Tandy 2000 is a better machine and few are buying it.

**Super Lap**: The Tandy Model 200 has been released, and it does everything the Model 100 lap computer did plus much more. It has a 40x16 flip-up display, redesigned cursor pad, improved Text processor, improved built-in modem and Telcom package (supporting both pulse and touch-tone dialing), improved scheduler (up to 255 alarms can be set, and alarms will sound and turn on machine if machine is off), built-in MultiPlan spreadsheet, BASIC, etc. Memory starts at 24K (for $999) and can be expanded to 72K in three 24K banks.

**Kaypro**: somehow managed to lose $268,000 on a record $119.6 million in sales for 1984. Auditors are looking for the expected $10 million profit which vanished.

**Super Chip**: Motorola has introduced an amazing processor, the MC68HC11A8FN. It does everything a 6801 CPU does, but it also has -- on the chip -- an 8K ROM, 512 byte EEPROM, and 256K bytes of RAM.

All you need is a keyboard, monitor, and disk drive...

**Utah Plot**: Axiom is now marketing the Penman three-pen Robot Plotter for $399. Unlike most plotters, the Robot Plotter is placed on top of the paper, and draws as it crawls around.

**IBM Rumor #85-1034265**: IBM is supposedly working on an 80186 upgrade board which would allow the PC to run more advanced software, such as that available for the Tandy 2000.

**It Must Be a -- Sinclair**: Timex said it would "never" return to the computer market after selling 2 million machines and losing $2 million. Now it has signed an agreement with Sinclair Research to produce 70,000 Spectrum computers a month for sale in the U.S. and Europe. Sinclair is also shipping large numbers of Spectrums to China. (Sir Clive Sinclair has also started selling cheap electric cars, under $1000, in Britain.)

**New Math**: IBM's new super machine, the PC AT, has simplified math operations. $2*2=0$, and $234/6=0$ -- in fact, everything equals zero. The problem can be fixed by buying a $389 80287 math chip, or by making a change to the operating system.

**Pin-Stripe Lap**: IBM's rumored lap machine has been postponed because it isn't as good as the Data General One. When it has more features, or a killer price, it will be released.

**Coleco out**: the Cabbage Patch doll people, has announced it is selling its entire Adam inventory to a chain of U.S. toy stores and is getting out of the computer business. Some analysts estimate there may be as many as 200,000 unsold Adams floating around, half of the total built. (Coleco showed up at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show with a new home computer. The computer was exhibited in a secret "back room" where Coleco officials hoped they'd lure someone to buy the design. Coleco claims it will run Apple II software and have a built-in telephone.)

**Steve Wozniak speaks**: "I'd like to write a piece of code or design a board that **actually** goes into production." (Some believe he is talking about the mythical super machine, the Apple //x) Wozniak is also a fan of optical disk storage. "But what will you do with 400 megabytes?"

**Apple IIe upgrade**: Apple appears to be designing an upgraded Apple IIe with 128K as standard, and a fast 65C02 (like the IIc). No one knows if this upgrade can be made to older Apples.

**Croaking Computers**: France has announced a plan to put 120,000 microcomputers into French schools this year, at a cost of $211 million. France also claims it will teach 110,000 teachers everything they need to know about computers by the end of the year.

**Microsoft Chip**: Microsoft and two Japanese firms, ASCII Corp. and Nippon Gakki Co., are producing the LCDC, an image processor which can control colors and images on CRT and LCD computer displays. The chip will cost ¥3,000, and Nippon Gakki claims it will make 50,000 a month starting in April.

**Shugart**: It may have invented the 5.25" floppy disk drive, but Shugart is losing money, and has sold all 5.25" parts and patents to Matsushita. Xerox, which owns Shugart, will dissolve the company.

### From the Cortex Computer
### Systems Bulletin Board

**The Eyes Have It**: Dr. Sum Kornea, noted Japanese surgeon in the field of ophthalmology, performed delicate eye surgery last week using a redesigned print head from a Hewlett-Packard Laser Printer. The doctor decided to use the unconventional tool after experiments showed that by changing to different font sizes he had greater control over the light beam than with the hospital's standard laser equipment. Dr. Kornea claims the only obstacle he had working with the printer was trying to fit the patient's head into the Paper Feed.

### ¤ User/Special Interest Groups ¤

**F.E.T.C.H.**: Meets each Saturday at Building 510 Camp Zama. Apple/TRS-80 Special Interest Groups. Call Robert Sanders mil. 233-6743

**Tokyo PC (IBM)**: Meets each first Thursday at Tokyo Union Church, Aoyama. Call Wick Smith 03-567-3231 ext. 474

**Bingo (Apple)**: Meets each first & third Wednesday at Tokyo Jewish Community Centre. Call Rick Sheldon 03-585-1176

**NEC Users Group**: Meets second and last Wednesday at Bldg 504 Misawa Air Base. Call Melvin Molder mil. 226-6151

**Tokyonet (Communications)**: Meets irregularly in the Tokyo area. Call Milo Parsons 03-725-0379

**Okinawa Computer Club**: Meets every Sunday at noon at Schilling Recreation Center on Kadena Air Base. Call Joe Garcia mil. 634-1221

**Commodore Computer Club**: Meets every other Wednesday at the new high school vice the education center Bldg. S-523 Misawa Air Base. Call Robert Anthony mil. 226-7034

**Yokosuka Microcomputer Club**: Meets every 3rd Sunday at Yokosuka Youth Center near Yokosuka Chuo station. Call Yutaka Muto at 0468-49-7101 (after 9pm)

### Hint

**Bigger Drives**: The Feb. *Nibble Magazine* has a letter giving directions for formatting Apple II disks with 40 tracks, rather than the usual 35, resulting in 20K in extra storage at no cost. See pp. 111-112. (Space permitting, the directions will appear in next month's **YCC** newsletter.)