



The Computer Rag

Take that, George!

newsletter of the
Yokosuka Computer Club

News, Gossip, and Innuendo

from the Western Pacific

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Local Gossip

May Meetings: will be held on the second Wed., May 8, and the third Tues., May 21, both at 6 p.m. in OEC (top floor of Barracks C). The Wed. meeting may feature a demonstration of all the wondrous capabilities of the Commodore-64, while the Tues. meeting will feature techniques for backing up poorly behaved Apple software.

Last Month: April 10 featured a splendid presentation by LaVerne May on the NEC 8801, until recently the best-selling computer in Japan. [It was recently overtaken by the NEC 9801.] May demonstrated some really nice features of the NEC, including fantastic graphics, WordStar in purple (or red, or blue, or green), and a clever disk utility for reading virtually any 5.25" disk. There was also a review of the COMDEX in Japan show, much more technical than the story in the Seahawk. April 16 saw still more discussion of the COMDEX show, plus a review of all the major microcomputer manufacturers, their products, their strengths and weaknesses, and future plans. The crowd was small but quite vocal, proving once again that computer owners are not timid.

March Meetings: Jim Lee ran away from Yokosuka, after a brief seven year stay. Before departing he narrowly escaped with his Model 200 notebook computer, which on several occasions fell into the greedy, envious clutches of admirers. Demonstrations included the Z-150, Zenith's brilliant answer to IBM, and Lee's Model 200. Participants in the First Annual Yokosuka Computer Faire finally received their very sharp looking awards certificates. When will we hold the next one??

April Newsletter: the YCC Newsletter for April had very limited distribution, limited to one computer, in fact. The editor wrote it, but was too busy goofing off to ever print it. Isn't it disgusting how the quality of unpaid labor has declined?

Non-Local Gossip

Final: Apple has finally admitted Steve Wozniak left, sparking a sharp decline in Apple stock prices. Woz will use \$2 million of his own funds to start MBF (My Best Friend), which will work on home video and home control devices. (Woz sold a lot of his Apple stock before leaving, and has an estimated \$100 million floating around.) Apple says Woz will remain as a paid consultant, but Steve is widely quoted as believing "Apple has been going in the wrong direction for the last five years."

Observers note that, for two years running, no mention of the Apple II division has been made in the annual stockholders meetings, in spite of the fact that II sales account for 80% of Apple's revenues. Jobs has toyed with the idea of cancelling the II line completely, but investors have resisted, threatening to cancel Jobs instead. Many engineers, disgusted with Apple Computer Co.'s odd view of reality, left after the Ix "supermicro" project was shelved.

Risen From Chapter 11?: Franklin Computer Co. Will use its FDOS-2 operating system as the basis for a new "95% compatible" Apple II line. Still selling Franklin Ace computers to keep cash coming in.

PC AT Clone: Kaypro's 286i machine is more expensive than IBM's machine, but includes an advanced graphics board and five MicroPro software packages. Some doubt Kaypro can make it in the heavyweight IBM PC AT world.

You've Been Warned: Mother Jones' Son's Software Corp. Includes the following on their license agreement:

Violate this agreement and our attorney's will see to it that life on this earth, as you know it, is completely ruined. Also, you agree that 30 days after you violate this agreement, ownership of your eternal soul automatically passes to us, and we have the right to negotiate the sale of said soul to the first smoking blood-drenched apparition with fangs (SBDAWF) that meets our price. The SBDAWF may collect your soul at any time of his/her choosing.

Given the remotest chance that some supernatural entity could actually enforce the soulcatcher clause, you'd be a real bozo to take any chances.

Seequa Computer Corp.: on the verge of Chap. 11, is also on the verge of selling \$24 million worth of portable computers (12,000 machines) to the Navy and Air Force.

Lotus: has purchased Software Arts, creators of VisiCalc and TK!Solver.

Kaypro's new 2000: is a battery-powered 11.5 lb. portable, IBM-compatible with detachable keyboard, 256K RAM, 1 720K 3.5" diskette, 80x25 LCD screen, WordStar, etc., all for \$1995.

Survey: 72% of corporate buyers assumed employees wanted IBM computers, 4.5% thought Apple, 9% though Wang, and 2% thought HP. Only 42% of users wanted IBM, 32% wanted Apple, 4.5% wanted Tandy/Radio Shack, 3.5% wanted HP, 2.5% wanted Wang, and 2% wanted DEC.

IBM Profits: aren't what they used to be. Though IBM still made money, their last quarter was the first earnings decline in several years.

Commie Computers: Apple, Commodore, and Radio Shack were given the green light to try and sell up to 24,000 computers to schools in the Soviet Union. Permission extends only to conventional 8-bit machines; Tandy's 2000 and 6000 and Apple's Macintosh are barred from the USSR by a NATO export control committee.

Microsoft: Will offer two integrated programs (such as 1-2-3, Framework, etc.) for the Macintosh, Excel and Mouseworks. Mouseworks was created by the same group that developed Appleworks.

Appleworks: is currently outselling Lotus 1-2-3, Symphony, and Framework.

IBM: is rumored to have over a year's worth of PCjr's stashed away. Also rumored to be working on a whole range of transportable computers, from a diskless notebook machine with LCD display and 128K for \$1400 to a 3.5" disk based machine with gas plasma display for \$6000.

TI: has a PC AT clone, the Business Pro. It sells for \$3999 with 512K and can be expanded to 15 megabytes of RAM.

Apple: has released an upgrade kit for Apple IIe machines consisting of a 65C02 MPU and new set of ROMS, for \$70. Apple wants everyone with a IIe to buy the kit so they will also buy some new bit-mapped, mouse-based applications designed for the IIe.

Sorcim: has released SuperCalc 3A for the IIc and enhanced IIe. This is a very nice integrated spreadsheet/graphics package, but IIe owners must have the new MPU and ROMS to use it.

Japanese Computer Market: current sales give NEC 58%, Fujitsu 20%, Sharp 9%, and everybody else 13%.

Answers to Questions

Oberon International, MacArthur Plaza, Suite 6300 LB48, 552 MacArthur Blvd., Irving, TX 75062, has a low cost (under \$600) optical character reader for reading typewritten sheets of paper directly into an RS-232 port on the back of a computer.

Microcomputer Games, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214, sells war games and simulations for IBM, Commodore, Atari, Apple, and Radio Shack machines.

Strategic Simulations, Inc., 883 Stierlin Road, Bldg. A-200, Mountain View, CA 94043, also sells war games and simulations for IBM, Atari, and Apple machines.

ADAPSO, 1300 North Seventeenth St, Arlington, VA 22209, has a free brochure on why you shouldn't pirate software.

BCCOMPCO, 800 South 17 Box 246, Summerville, MO 65571, is a tiny company with very high quality ribbons for almost every printer imaginable.

Computer Language, 2443 Fillmore St., Suite #346, San Francisco, CA 94115, is a magazine devoted to hackers; 12 issues, \$24.95

American Software Club, Inc., 80 Topstone Rd., Ridgefield, CT 06877, is a "membership" computer club with good prices on software, and they don't give you too much trouble about FPO addresses..

Zenith Z-120 Stuff

Interaction Dynamics Systems, P.O. Box 2459, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745, offers SofTouch, a keyboard remapping utility for Z-100, with pre-configured file for WordStar, \$39.

The Software Toolworks, 15233 Ventura Blvd., Suite 1118, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, has developed ZP/SIM, which runs most CP/M software directly under ZDOS, for \$29.95. The Software Toolworks also has a \$59.95 spreadsheet, a \$49.95 spelling checker, a \$39.95 text editor, and similar low-priced Zenith software.

Sextant Magazine, 716 E Street SE, Washington, DC 20003, is the largest magazine devoted to Zenith/Heathkit computers. Bimonthly, \$14.97 for subscription (may be monthly soon).

Sunflower Software, 13915 Midland Dr., Shawnee, KS 66216, has a \$59.95 statistics package; a ZDOS Tools package that sorts the disk directory, allows on-screen underlining, and easy serial-port setting, for \$24.95; a ZBASIC cross reference utility for \$27.95, and other low-cost goodies.

Lindley Systems, 21 Hancock St, Bedford, MA 01730, has Z-UTIL, which includes RUNPC (allowing IBM PC software to run on the Z-110 and 120), SCREEN (a graphics screen dump utility), and TP (a typewriter utility) for \$35.00.

Selfware, Inc., 3545 Chain Bridge Rd., Suite 3, Fairfax, VA 22030, has Convert, a \$99 format conversion utility allowing the Z-100 to read Epson, IBM, LNW, Morrow, NEC, Osborne, Sanyo, TRS-80 Model 4, Xerox 820, and Zenith Z-90 diskettes.

Software Wizardry, Inc., 122 Yankee Dr., St. Charles, MO 63301, has developed a \$150 light pen for the Z-120, and carries a huge selection of items for the entire Zenith line.

Quikdata Computer Services, 2618 Penn Circle, Sheboygan, WI 53081, has several popular programs in ZDOS format (Spellbinder, The Word Plus, dBASE II), plus a \$47 RAMDRIVE RAM disk utility.

Hudson Associates, P.O. Box 2957, Santa Clara, CA 95055, has several 8087 math processor boards for the Zenith Z-100.

Microservices, P.O. Box 7093, Menlo Park, CA 94026, has a wide variety of graphics, statistics, and engineering packages for the Z-120. They also have Snapshot, a \$65 graphics screen dump utility which supports Epson, Gemini, and Okidata printers (among others).

Advanced Software Technologies, 417 Broad St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003, has micro/Versal, a \$79.99 utility which reads, writes, and formats diskettes for Cromemco, Epson, HP, IBM, Kaypro, Lobo, Morrow, NEC, Osborne, Sanyo, TI, Radio Shack, Xerox, and Z-89 computers.

21st Century Data, P.O. Box 1139, Solana Beach, CA 92075, has Rescue & Repair, a utility for recovering crashed diskettes for \$54.95.

Heathkit, Heath Company, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, has all kinds of strange things for Zenith computers, which is no great surprise since they make them. Among other attractions are the new MSDOS Version 2 operating system, ZLAN Local Area Network, IBM 3274/3276 emulation, and cables to attach Z-120s to almost anything.

Macintosh Error Codes

- 32767 — General system error
- 1 — Bus error
- 2 — Address error
- 3 — Illegal instruction error
- 4 — Zero divide error
- 5 — Range check trap error
- 6 — Overflow error
- 7 — Privilege violation
- 8 — Trace mode error
- 9-10 — Line trap errors
- 11 — Hardware exception error
- 12 — Unimplemented core routine
- 13 — Uninstalled interrupt error
- 14 — I/O error
- 15 — Segment loader error
- 16 — Floating point error
- 17-24 — Package 1-7 not present
- 25 — Memory full
- 26 — Bad program launch
- 27 — File system map trashed
- 28 — Stack ran into heap
- 29 — No error
- 30 — Request offline disk
- 31 — Not the disk I wanted
- 32-56 — Memory errors
- Errors preceded by minus sign
- 1 To -197 — recoverable errors
- 1024 To -4095 — application errors

40 Tracks With DOS 3.3

Enter the Apple Monitor using Call -151. Type AEB5:A0 B3EF:28 BEFE:28. Or, from Applesoft, type POKE 44725,160 : POKE 46063,40 : POKE 48894,40. After doing this, type INIT HELLO to initialize a new disk; the new disk will have 576 sectors, 80 more than standard. Any disks written using the modified DOS 3.3 will also have 40 tracks, and an unmodified DOS 3.3 will also be able to read a formatted 40-track disk. For more details, see Nibble Magazine, Feb. 1985, Pp. 111-112

Last Gasp from the Corton Bulletin Board

Should Have Made Backups: A careless IRS dataprocessor working at the agency's National Records Center accidentally erased from the computer banks all tax records of Americans named Bob. Seems the worker, in trying to retrieve all the records of a Mr. Robert Dylete, misspelled the name, typing instead: ALL BOB DELETE.

New Software: Puntronics has begun to ship the first in a series of Inventory Control Software for Emory Board Manufacturers called, simply, FILE MANAGER.

WordStar Review: Everyone has heard of it. A lot of people swear by it. It's used in the office and in the home. It's packaged with Kaypro computers and by next summer may even be included with Cabbage Patch Dolls. Like it or not, Wordstar holds a special place within the software industry. I never used Wordstar until I started this review and, frankly, I was shocked at the program's shortcomings. For a program that has been on the market so long it is unacceptably lacking. It has always had the reputation of being hard to learn but this is simply ridiculous. To put it bluntly, as far as I'm concerned: WORDSTAR IS THE WORST SPREADSHEET PROGRAM ON THE MARKET.

The program doesn't even look like a spreadsheet. The familiar row numbers and column letters running across the left and top of the screen are not present at all. Rather the user is presented with one huge column that fills the entire width of the screen. Users have to guess which row they're on! A column's width is adjusted by a pair of commands known as Set Left Margin and Set Right Margin. The default width of a cell is 80 decimal places but they can be widened to accommodate numbers as long as 256 decimal places. The program even has a "wrap around" feature that will continue a number onto the next line if it goes beyond 80 characters. Although this is a neat feature I doubt if many businesses deal with numbers larger than 80 decimals in the first place.

Once I accepted the radical appearance of the spreadsheet I turned to the user manual to learn how to set up a worksheet. This is where the program REALLY fails. THE MANUAL IS SO BAD THAT MOST SPREADSHEET FUNCTIONS ARE NOT EVEN DISCUSSED!! Such common functions as Future Value, Net Present Value, and Cumulative Total are nowhere to be found.

In fact, just about the only section in the manual that even remotely relates to spreadsheets is a chapter devoted to decimal tabs. The section shows how to line up rows of numbers underneath each other but the directions end there.

I never did find out how to total the columns. The only strong point of the program is its flexibility to type text into the cells as headings and comments. Indeed, the manual seems to deal almost exclusively with this part of the worksheet building process. In my opinion Micropro went way overboard in this area. Few other spreadsheet companies allow such nice frills as Boldface and Superscript headings. But Wordstar will let you even add footnotes!! Footnotes in a spreadsheet!! Talk about silly frills...

You think THAT'S silly frill ? By using the "Read File" Block command the program will add row and column titles already stored on disk into new worksheets thereby saving the time it would take to retype them. Micropro even sells an optional add-on module called Spellstar to check the spelling of your header names. Neat ideas but, seriously now, who needs them?

After spending a week trying (and failing) to get Wordstar to do even the simplest spreadsheet work I have given up. All the talk of the program being hard to learn is an understatement, it is nearly impossible since the manuals are useless in their present form. Micropro should have concentrated less on frills and more on spreadsheet basics. I'm sure the program works well once you learn how to use it (after all, it's still selling well) but it all seems too confusing and not worth the trial and error. At this time I cannot recommend Wordstar for serious spreadsheet use.