Improving Timex/Sinclair Data-Tape Loading
Sony's New Personal Desktop Computer System
Computerized Video Drawings Made Easy
One-Shot Testing of Multiple Circuit Points

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Meet the Banana, the very tough, versatile, portable, and reliable dot-matrix printer from Gorilla. At $249.95 retail it's an ideal and inexpensive companion for personal computers like Apple (or Apple "look alikes" such as Franklin or Albert), TI, Commodore, TRS-80, Kaypro, Timex, Osborne, etc.

After that, it's merely comparable to other printers that can cost up to three times as much: 10" carriages (to handle standard 9/" paper), 80 columns, graphics capability, 10 characters per inch (expandable to 5 cpi) draft-quality print (for perfectly acceptable form letters, data processing, business reports, etc.) tractor feed (for precise alignment and quick loading), parallel or serial interface (take your pick), self-inking ribbon cassette (for long life and easy installation), 10 portable pounds in weight, and compatibility with so many of the most popular personal computers on the market.

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That's the Banana: silly name, serious service. It's everything the expensive dot-matrix printers are . . .

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When it comes to logic probes, more people purchase Global Specialties! Because you can spend twice as much and not get the speed, precision, flexibility and accuracy offered by our four logically-priced probes—including our remarkable new 150 MHz ECL Probe. Not to mention the versatility, reliability and durability we've become famous for.

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UNIX THE EASY WAY
David Fiedler/Fundamentals of the Unix operating system.

FAST AND EASY GRAPHICS WITH A LOW-COST TOUCH TABLET
Joe Desposito/Enables computerists to bypass a computer keyboard, while creating drawings.

THE MODULARIZED COMPUTER—SONY’S NEW SMC-70
Stan Veit/A hands-on look at a unique small computer system.

A COMPUTERIZED DIALING SYSTEM FOR THE TRS-80 MODEL II
James Barbarello/Enhance utility of TRS-80 in office-type applications.

LEARNING 16-BIT MICROCOMPUTER TECHNOLOGY
George Meyerle/Part 7: How to use the monitor to create software.

A MULTIPLE TEST-POINT MONITOR
George Gooder/Measures volts at a number of circuit points simultaneously.

BEEP! BEEP!
James Antonakos/Add a power-failure sensor to any ac digital clock.

IMPROVING TIMEX/SINCLAIR TAPE LOADING
Tim Stoner/Reduce troublesome dropout and noise problems.

A VIC-20 CASSETTE ADAPTER
Bernard J. Sheehan/Interface for the VIC-20 allows any audio cassette recorder to be used.

COVER ART BY A. DANIELS

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LESION SOLOMON ON COMPUTER HARDWARE

Invisible Short Circuits In Digital Equipment.

COMPUTER SOURCES

ENTERTAINMENT ELECTRONICS

Len Feldman/Digital TV—How Soon?

THE ELECTRONICS SCIENTIST

Forrest M. Mims, III/Homemade Electroscopes and Experimenting with a Geiger Counter.

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL/Art Salsberg

Compuphobia.

LETTERS

NEW PRODUCTS

COMPUTER MART/ELECTRONICS CLASSIFIED

ADVERTISERS’ INDEX
A disk is built with certain safeguards. The technology is widely known. That's why most disk makers offer guarantees that the product you receive comes to you error free. We at Memtek Products are concerned that the minidisk remains error free, once put into use. Every time you use it. After exposure to dust, cigarette smoke, fingerprints, even wear caused by your computer. And so, we have built safeguards around the disk, as well. The hub ring. Designed to prevent our minidisks from jamming in your machine.
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**The Memtek lineup.** Includes premium double and quad density minidisks as well as 10- and 15-minute computer cassettes and a 5¼" disk drive head cleaner.

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**WE PLAY FOR KEEPS™**
Compuphobia

The fear of using computers—compuphobia—is more widespread than many people imagine, particularly among more mature adults. There are a host of likely causes, led by fear of failure and the challenge presented by linguisitics. Mix in poor documentation by manufacturers’ sales jargon, a confusing array of competitive machines and software, questionable utility, cost, incompatibility between computers, and even fear and awe of a system that might replace the user.

Some of the foregoing hurdles are slowly being overcome. Too slowly. But “The Force” cannot be denied. Inexorably, computers are encroaching indirectly on virtually everyone today, and more and more people are already eyeball to eyeball with them at work, particularly in professional, executive, technical, educational, and clerical areas.

The tip of the iceberg is clearly in sight. For example, a new computer network planned by Travelhost Inc. is expected to link hotel and motel rooms throughout the U.S., making available to guests a variety of information services such as videotext service, restaurant reviews, and computer data exchange using the hotel room’s TV set. This was launched recently in Chicago’s Midland Hotel with computer terminals in 100 rooms, according to a company spokesman. Another hotel system designed by HotelTech International, called “Suitetalk,” consists of a color microcomputer system that offers word processing, business programs, and data communications, among other services, for about $9 per hour at night and $20 per hour during the day. Information is presented in magazine-page format, activated by the user pressing a letter or number on a keyboard. Function keys include games, news, stocks, home-office, messages, calc. and airlines.

For anyone not yet familiar with what a personal computer can do, a trip to a local computer store can be a fruitful outing, especially if he gets a helpful salesperson to demonstrate some software. There’s a new in-store information center from Apple Computer, too, that can be a relief to people who have compuphobia. It consists of an interactive laser videodisc system with a touch-sensitive screen that gives answers to the most commonly asked questions about personal computer applications. For example, if one touches a spot on the screen next to the topic “Word Processing,” a list of subtopics is displayed. Touching the screen again to choose a specific segment, say, making text changes or text search, the selected topic is played back on the 13” color monitor.

There are also some interesting efforts being made to demonstrate computer software. Buyers face a choice from among tens of thousands. One “creative” idea was rental of software, in much the same manner as recorded video cassette tapes are rented. However, software makers are more than displeased by this owing to the possibility of a customer’s copying a program illegally. In fact, Micropro has filed suit against a software rental company, charging copyright infringement because consumers do not own their software. They are licensed to use it and lending it to others is prohibited.

Another interesting approach to researching software products is the establishment of the National Software Reference Library, a division of PC Telemart, Inc. in Fairfax, VA. This facility is reported to house the hundreds of microcomputer software programs and associated documentation, along with appropriate personal computer configurations. Members can operate software packages to aid them in purchasing the products ($25 per day). The company plans to establish nationwide on-line data-base equipment for placement in computer and book stores.

Computers are not as easy as they could be to operate. But there is a growing trend to design them with humans in mind—built-in application ROMs, graphic screen menus, function keys, adjustable terminals, etc. The scope of the better, of course, since we are rapidly moving into an awesome information age where hardly anyone will be untouched by computer technology. This being the case, the smart move is to embrace computers as early as you can, not waiting for all the operating conveniences to be in place. Imagine what would have happened if people hadn’t learned how to drive automobiles because shifting gears was too complicated.

Art Schlegel
Now get Wabash Quality at a CE Price
For over 17 years, Wabash has been making high quality and dependable computer products. Wabash diskettes are made to provide error-free performance on your computer system because every diskette has been totally and hypercritically tested. Since you can now buy Wabash computer products directly from CE, the world’s largest distributor of magnetic media, you can now get maximum savings on every order. You can even order toll-free.

New Wabash Six Year Warranty
The quality of Wabash diskettes is stressed throughout the entire manufacturing process. After coating, all Wabash diskettes go through a unique burnishing process that gives each diskette a mirror-smooth appearance. Wabash then carefully applies a lubricant that is specially formulated to increase diskette life. Then, to keep out foreign particles, a unique heat seal bonds the jacket and liner together to help prevent contamination. After 100% hypercrilical testing and certifiction, Wabash then packages each diskette, (except bulk pack) in a super strong and tear resistant Tyvek envelope. The final Wabash product is then shrink-wrapped to insure cleanliness and reduce contamination during shipment. Wabash diskettes are so very reliable that Wabash now offers a six year warranty in case of defects in materials or workmanship on all diskettes purchased directly from Communications Electronics.

New...Wabash Diskette Duplication Services
Communications Electronics has teamed up with Wabash to provide a single-source solution for the diskette duplication requirements of software developers, OEM’s and distributors. All service is in-house, to give you fast, dependable service. In most cases, delivery can be completed in five days. Whether you require 100, 1,000, or 10,000 copies per week, CE first for a no obligation price quote. For additional information, please write us on your letterhead with your requirements.

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Product Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part #</th>
<th>CE quant. 100 price per disk ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; SSSD IBM Compatible (128 B/S, 26 Sectors)</td>
<td>F111 1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; SSSD Shugart Compatible, 32 Hard Sector</td>
<td>F31A 1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; SSSD IBM Compatible (128 B/S, 26 Sectors)</td>
<td>F131 2.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>8&quot; DSDD Soft Sector (Unformatted)</td>
<td>F14A 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; DSDD Soft Sector (256 B/S, 26 Sectors)</td>
<td>F144 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; DSDD Soft Sector (512 B/S, 15 Sectors)</td>
<td>F145 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&quot; DSDD Soft Sector (1024 B/S, 8 Sectors)</td>
<td>F147 2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSSD Soft Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M11A 1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; Same as above, but bulk pack w/o envelope</td>
<td>M11AB 1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSSD 10 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M41A 1.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSSD 16 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M51A 1.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSD Soft Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M13A 1.79</td>
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<td>M13AB 1.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSDD 10 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M43A 1.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSDD 16 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M53A 1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; DSDD Soft Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M14A 2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; Same as above, but bulk pack w/o envelope</td>
<td>M14AB 2.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; DSDD 10 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M44A 2.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; DSDD 16 Hard Sector w/Hub Ring</td>
<td>M54A 2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSQD Soft Sector w/Hub Ring (96 TPI)</td>
<td>M15A 2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; SSDQ Soft Sector w/Hub Ring (96 TPI)</td>
<td>M16A 3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/4&quot; Tyvek Diskette Envelopes - Price per 100 Pack</td>
<td>TE5 12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantity Discounts Available
Wabash diskettes are packed 10 disks to a carton and 10 cartons to a case. The economy bulk pack is packaged 100 disks to a case without envelopes or labels. Please order only in increments of 100 units for quantity 100 discount. With the exception of bulk pack, we are also willing to accommodate your smaller orders. Quantities less than 100 units are available in increments of 10 units at a 20% surcharge above our 100 unit price. Quantity discounts are also available.

Order 500 or more disks at the same time and deduct 1%; 1,000 or more saves you 2%; 2,000 or more saves 3%; 5,000 or more saves 4%; 10,000 or more saves 5%; 25,000 or more saves 8%; 50,000 or more saves 8%. Orders of 50,000 or more saves 9% and 1,000,000 or more disks earns you a 10% discount off our super low quantity 100 price. Almost all Wabash diskettes are immediately available from CE. Our efficient warehouse facilities are equipped to help us get you the quality product you need, when you need it. If you need further assistance to find the flexible disk that’s right for you, call the Wabash compatibility hotline. Dial toll-free 800-323-9868 and ask for your compatibility representative. In Illinois or outside the U.S. dial 312-593-6363 between 9 AM to 4 PM Central time.

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To get the fastest delivery from CE of your Wabash computer products, we recommend you phone your order directly to our Computer Products Division and charge it to your credit card. Be sure to calculate your price using the CE prices in this ad. Written purchase orders are accepted from approved government agencies and most well rated firms at a 30% surcharge for net 30 billing. For minimum savings, your order should be prepaid. All sales are subject to availability, acceptance and verification. All sales are final. All prices are in U.S. dollars. Prices, terms and specifications are subject to change without notice. Out of stock items will be be placed on backorder automatically unless CE is instructed differently. Minimum prepaid order is $50.00. Minimum purchase order $200.00. All shipments are F.O.B. Ann Arbor, Michigan U.S.A. No COD’s please. Non-certified and foreign checks require bank clearance.

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This all-new self-study course (EE-8068) provides in-
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Program writing. Addressing
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And hardware interfacing.
And by using your 16-bit Train-
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experiments (over 60 included), you'll
gain actual circuit interface and soft-
ware programming experience with an
8088 microprocessor system.

Trainer/Learning Computer
A unique combination of design features makes this
versatile microprocessor system much more than a
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vanced Microprocessor course. Use it as an experimen-
tal design computer. And use it to run a wide variety of
16-bit software—including
Z-Dos, Multoplan, Z-Basic,
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and much more.
In its most
basic form, the Trainer/
Learning Computer
is a 16-bit,
cassette-based microcomputer.
Its unique design features access ports
and solderless breadboards to allow you to build inter-
faces, design and modify circuits, or simply experiment
with the inner workings of the microprocessor system.
The basic system has an 8088 processor, 32K ROM (in-
cluding assembler, editor and debugger) and 16K RAM.
The unit also features a serial I/O printer port, cassette
interface and a detached 95-key keyboard (including 16
function keys and a numeric keypad) which generates a
full ASCII character set. It's available either in kit form or
factory assembled.
And you can take advantage of the system's H/Z-100
computer design heritage by easily upgrading it to a
disk-based, 16-bit microcomputer that will run H/Z-100
series software and many other
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Fully Upgradeable
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Learn on it. Design with it.
Use it as a 16-bit computer.
It's the only 16-bit microprocessor system specifically
designed to integrate theory with a hands-on under-
standing of how 16-bit computers work. And it's from
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in problem-solving courses, trainers and accessories to
help you learn state-of-the-art technology.
UPGRADING T/S VIDEO

With regard to my article "Upgrading Timex-Sinclair Video" (May 1983), it should be noted that the article and the diagrams were based on the ZX-81, not the ZS-80. However, during the time between the article's conception and its publication, the computer underwent a layout change to accommodate discrete pull-up resistor instead of several single-line resistor packages. Schematically, the computer remained the same, but the positions of D9, R31, and R32 changed. They are still accessible, however, and must be removed as in the article. It has also been observed by some of your readers that bending and tearing may occur on some TV sets when inverse characters are displayed while the DVC-2 is operating in the normal mode. This is due to the TV's inability to clamp the horizontal sync pulses properly. Reducing the value of R7 to 3.9 kilohms or 4.3 kilohms will increase the ratio of the sync pulse to video signals and should solve the problem.—Steve Pence, Phoenix, AZ.

COMPUTER PLACEMENT

I appreciated your article "Maximize Your Computing Comfort and Efficiency" (April 1983) and intend to recommend it to management and occupational physicians and nurses for aid in relieving employee complaints. I have seen computers set up against a west window so that the operator was facing the relatively low-level illumination of the video screen against the exceedingly bright background outside the window—a very difficult visual task!—J. M. Krichbaum, Occupational Ophthalmologist, Lakewood, CO.

KAYPRO AND MBASIC

The review of the Kaypro II (June 1983, p. 57) was a pleasure to read but was a little confusing as to the types of software that are available for the computer. The author correctly said that MBASIC comes with Kaypro and then went on to discuss the limitations of SBASIC for the Kaypro. To set the record straight, you should point out that MBASIC-80 from Microsoft now comes with the Kaypro at no extra cost.—Betsy Wallace, Westminster, MD.

OUT OF TUNE

In "Data Storage in a Nutshell" (July 1983), on page 48, in the second paragraph, the last few lines should read, "Thus, using semiconductor technology, 16 × 64,000 or 1,024 × 10^10 bits per square inch can be created. Compare this with the 10^10 bits per square inch of logarithmic recording and 10^10 bits per square inch of perpendicular recording.

RECORDING WITH THE VIC-20

With regard to the discussion on using a cassette recorder with the VIC-20 (see "Computer Hotline," March 1983, and "Letters," June 1983), I have been using the circuit below with my VIC-20 for several years and it works fine.—Joe Little, Atlanta, GA.
Memorable.

With 3M diskettes, your computer never forgets.

3M diskettes remember everything, every time. Because at 3M, reliability is built into every diskette. We've been in the computer media business for over 30 years. And we've never settled in. We're constantly improving and perfecting our product line, from computer tape and data cartridges to floppy disks.

3M diskettes are made at 3M. That way, we have complete control over the entire manufacturing process. And you can have complete confidence in the reliability of every 3M diskette you buy.


3M hears you...
For everyone who's tried to top the MX-80, bad news. We just did.

Epson.
The Epson MX-80 is the best-selling dot matrix impact printer in the world. It has been since its introduction. And despite the host of imitators it spawned, no one has been able to top it. Until now.

FX-80: Son of a legend.
The new Epson FX-80 is far more than just doo-dads added on to last year’s model. It’s the most astonishing collection of features ever assembled in a personal printer.

For starters, it’s fast: 160 CPS. And clean. All the print quality Epson is famous for in a tack-sharp 9x9 matrix.

But that hardly scratches the surface.

Create your own alphabet.
With the new FX-80, you aren’t limited to ASCII characters. You can create your own. Any character or symbol that can be defined in a 9x11 matrix can be added to the FX-80’s already impressive library of type styles and stored in its integral 2K RAM.

So you can create “Sally’s Gothic” or “Tom’s Roman” just by downloading and modifying standard characters. Or you can create a custom set from scratch. Either way, you can store up to 256 new characters. And if you don’t need a new alphabet, the RAM functions as a 2K data input buffer.

Who knows graphics better than Epson?
Nobody, that’s who. And if you don’t believe it, witness the FX-80.

With a 12K ROM capacity, the FX-80 gives you a few things the others don’t. For example, not one, not two, but seven different dot addressable graphic modes are program selectable. And can be mixed in the same print line. Everything from 72 DPI (dots-per-inch) Plotter Graphics to the 640 dots per line resolution designed to match the remarkable monitor clarity of the Epson QX-10 personal computer.

And that is in addition to an astonishing array of 136 different user-selectable type styles including Proportional, Elite and Italic as well as the more conventional faces you get on other printers.

Hard-to-beat hardware.
The FX-80 has all the hardware features you’ve come to know and love on the MX Series: logic seeking, bidirectional printing, the by-now-famous disposable printhead, and more.

The FX-80 features an adjustable pin platen or optional friction/tractor feed, so you can use fanfold, roll or sheet paper ... backwards or forwards. The FX-80 even gives you reverse paper feed.

And if you’re printing forms, the FX-80 has a feature you’re gonna love: a function that allows you to tear off the paper within one inch of the last print position.

Be the first on your block.
We’d be willing to bet that the FX-80 — like the MX-80 — will have its share of imitators. Don’t be fooled. To make sure you get the genuine article, rush down to your local computer store right now and let them show you everything the FX-80 can do.

And while you’re there ... ask them to show you how it works with our computers.

The New Epson FX-80. See it at your dealer now.

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NEW PRODUCTS

LOW-COST LETTER-QUALITY PRINTING

Transtar’s Model 120, a $599 daisywheel letter-quality printer, is compatible with major word-processing software using existing Diablo routines for boldface, underscore, superscript, and subscript. Printing speed is 14 cps, and a DIP switch selects 10, 12, or 15 cpi pitch. Automatic paper loader handles cut-sheet paper. Initial offering is with a Centronics-type, 8-bit parallel interface. A serial version will support the DTR protocol as standard ETX/ACK or XON/XOFF and at transmission rates from 300 to 9600 baud.

Circle No. 84 on Free Information Card

MULTI-USER MICROCOMPUTER SYSTEM

CompuPro’s new MultiPro Model MP 10 is said to be the first four-user multiprocessor microcomputer offering simultaneous 8/16-bit operation at a price of less than $1800 per workstation. At $4995, excluding terminals, the system supports word/data-processing and communications functions through a shared database at high speed. Has 8-MHz 8088 16-bit CPU with 1M byte of main memory, 7 ports, 384K solid-state disk memory, and dual 5½” mini-floppy drives; four Z80B 8-bit user CPUs, each with its own 64K of RAM.

Circle No. 85 on Free Information Card

VIDEO INTERFACE

Texas Instruments’ video interface gives the TI CC-40 a 450-char × 24-line display on any TV receiver or TI video monitor. The HX-1100 attaches to the CC-40 through the hex-bus intelligent peripheral port, permitting operation in a text mode with limited graphics. Display modes include scrolling and paging. Both modes have top and bottom (first and last) lines protection. “Windowing” function permits viewing up to 80 char/line and display can highlight words by reversing colors. $99.95.

Circle No. 86 on Free Information Card

AM/FM SWEEP FUNCTION GENERATOR

Model FG-201 function generator from OK Industries has a 1-Hz to 1-MHz range, (in six steps) and sine, triangle, and square waveforms. Also, linear 100:1 FM modulation and 0 to 100% AM modulation. Square-wave output is independently variable, simultaneous and in-phase with the separate sine/triangle output for use as an individual signal source as well as a trigger or synchronizer. Source impedance, 50 ohms and switch-selectable < 5 ohms for sine/triangle; output level, ±10 V p-p. $250.

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We'll give you tomorrow.
Hands-On Reviews of Recently Released Game Software

EVERY so often, someone comes along with a really good idea. Such an idea was the Sony 3¼" microfloppy diskette, which looked like a logical and sensible approach to computer storage.

This diskette is small enough to slip into a jacket pocket and has a rigid protective jacket and a metal cover that slips over the normally exposed parts that are read by the computer. In short, it's well protected and well designed for easy portability, mailing, and just plain carrying around.

The diskette runs in drives designed to work with the same controllers that operate 5¼" minifloppies, and this is an important area of compatibility. Computer systems don't have to be redesigned to use these new miniaturized diskettes.

What about storage space? In its basic format, the Sony microfloppy can hold more than the most densely packed 5¼" model—up to about 900K formatted. Now that's an awful lot to be able to put on a disk that small; but like all areas of technology, mass storage has been going through its own refinement and development stages.

With all this going for it, you'd think companies would be battering down the doors to sign up for this new format. Some have. But others have decided that they'd out-micro the microdiskette with their own designs. At last count, there were at least four different diskettes in the three-inch range vying for industry attention. The leading contender today is Maxell's 3"; and like Sony, Maxell has a lot of camp followers, including some of the industry's biggest guns.

In the meantime, Sony is very quietly spearheading its drive for 3½" standardization. A special standards committee that includes Sony and Shugart, the latter being a giant O.E.M. manufacturer of disk drives, has established standards that all members have agreed to and can live with. Last summer, Sony signed a licensing agreement with Hewlett-Packard to use its microdiskettes, and this is the biggest single major manufacturer to go along with this development. A couple of other H-P computers use the microdiskettes, and it's certainly gratifying to see someone at least doing something sensible.

What of the other majors who've elected to go with other 3" formats? Most of them will make hardware and diskettes for whatever system will sell, but much of this hassle looks like the old multi-standards battle shaping up with proponents in each camp. There are no longer any 78-rpm records being made, but there are still plenty of both 33's and 45's being cranked out. Same is true of VCRs; not only do we have ¾" U-Matic, but also ½" Beta and VHS coexisting rather uncomfortably. And we also have laser discs along with CED video discs. (Now they've finally gone and introduced VHD video discs in Japan with an eye on the U.S. market.)

What's going to happen in the microfloppy diskette battle? We'll probably see at least two different sizes, and as many as four. We've also heard that there's a four-inch floppy. Just what the industry has been waiting for! For now, we're going to stick to our 5¼ inches. At least with these this size is the same, even if you can't necessarily use a disk from one kind of computer on someone else's machine, and one is hard sector, another soft sector . . . but that's a whole other story.

A. E.

Diskette for Atari 400/800
Brøderbund Software, Inc., 1938 Fourth St., San Rafael, CA 94901; 415-456-6424. $34.95

Graphics ****
Gameplay ****
Sustained Interest ***
Type: Joystick action game
Memory Required: 48K

The jacket blurb explains that "A. E." is the Japanese word for "ray" as in Manta Ray or Sting Ray. In this case, the A.E. was designed as a pollution-fighting robot and some slipped through quality control at the Mitsubishihuku Company and are running loose in the universe—not destroying or damaging, but being extremely pesky.

Your mission is to destroy enough of the A.E. to drive them out of our corner of the universe. A ship-like cannon moves horizontally (joystick control) and you try to shoot sections or preferably the head of the centipede-like A.E. as it sneaks in and around and up and about your city and then your planet. To destroy the A.E. waves, you have to detonate your shooter's missiles directly in their path.

If you succeed in a perfect attack on the A.E. waves—destroying all waves in your play level, you move on to the next level—from the city to planetary orbit, and then beyond. There are five different screens (levels) of play, and if you get really good at this, you can make the game even more difficult by pressing Control H (H = hard) when the disk is booting up.

The game also offers the option of pausing during gameplay to answer the phone, or nature's call, or to get another cup of coffee. It can be controlled either by joystick or paddle.

At first, gameplay seems a little strange; these cruising serpentine A.E.s don't look all that menacing until they "clean up" your cannon, and knock you out of the game. Like other "twitch" type games, your own reflexes and learning ability count for a lot. It's an interesting, action-filled game, and while it's not as good as some others to come out of Brøderbund, it ranks among some of the better computer games we've seen recently.

Yes, it can keep you up late until you unlock the key to ridding the civilized universe of those pesky A.E. robots. And once the universe is safe for pollutants once again, you can start all over—this time at the Hard level. Have fun!

RICOCHET

Cassette for Commodore VIC-20.

Graphics ****
Gameplay ****
Sustained Interest ****
Type: Keyboard strategy game.
Memory required: 8K

Plug in your 8K or 16K expansion module and go to town with this exciting and unpredictable strategy game. The instructions say there's nothing else to compare it to, and they're quite right. The screen display looks more like a double-ended bowling alley than anything else. Each of the two players (two humans or one human and the computer) has six targets at his end of the alley, arranged bowling-pin fashion. Behind the targets are up to four bumpers that give your opponent a ton of extra points.
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if his/her/its missile hits him.
You have two launch positions, top and bottom, and there are times when you may not be able to use one of these launchers. You may use your turn to re-arrange the locations of your targets to provide the most advantageous strategy positioning. Figuring out those bounces (or ricochets) in advance can be very complex. The missile ball, projectile, or whatever travels totally free of friction and can create some interesting and infuriating patterns before the turn is completed.

As long as the ball has something to hit, it will continue to ricochet. Each time it strikes a target, bumper or wall, it rebounds at a 45-degree angle and goes on to its next contact point. If there's nothing left to hit, it goes off the play field and the turn is over.

It's especially fascinating to watch the strategy moves the computer makes when you're playing solo. You can't help but wonder what the computer knows that you don't.

There are a number of game variations and choices to make before starting the game. The computer keeps track of the scores and the matches played with unerring impartiality and accuracy, but it's awfully hard to figure out the scoring system itself. Rest assured, the computer won't cheat on this; but it plays an awfully tough game.

This is another of those super-irritating games that can be habit forming. We've already seen an awful lot of sleep lost over it. So keep that coffee pot percolating. You'll need it.

THE NIGHTMARE

Diskette for Atari 400/800
Epyx (Automated Simulations, Inc.), 1043 Kies Ct., Sunnyvale, CA 94086: 408-745-0700, $29.95.
Graphics ****
Gameplay ****
Sustained Interest ****
Type: Joysticket adventure/action game
Memory Required: 40K

This one might well be called "Son of Escape from Vulcan's Isle" since it has a number of similarities to that earlier release from Epyx. As the player, you control the movements of a little man (or woman—it really has no gender) who runs around a castle trying to collect goodies and escape the various baddies who try to stop you.

Why is it called nightmare? The manufacturer says because it's so hard to tell reality from what could be simply a bad dream. But dreams should be made of more ethereal stuff; this game has definite characteristics, and urges you on to explore the many byways of the haunted castle while the computer scrolls merrily through one screen after another.

The instructions suggest that the first time you enter the haunted castle, you prepare a rough map to help you keep track of where things are. There are three floors plus a spooky dungeon to

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Minimum 16K memory necessary to operate software.
explore, and when you bang into a wall or obstruction, there's a sharp clunking noise and the screen flashes the message, "Ouch!" But these bumps and bruises don't cost you points—just time and frustration over trying to navigate a narrow passage.

You find yourself being pursued by the rat pack, the mistress, and the resident ghost—among others. You do battle with these creatures, and can kill them. It's just a little mind-boggling, though, to read a message such as, "You have killed the ghost." How can you kill a ghost?

This game is lots of fun, good for several evenings of engaging adventure-type gaming, and best of all, you can save your unfinished game to resume at some future date. The program will only allow you to save one game, and the dyed-in-the-wool adventure gamer might find this just a bit constraining. The Nightmare is a good game, and we recommend it.

SUPER AMOK

**Rom Cartridge for Commodore VIC-20**

U.M.I. (United Microware, Inc.), 3503-C Temple Ave., Pomona, CA 91768; 714-594-1351. $39.95

**Graphics ***

**Gameplay ****

**Sustained Interest ****

**Type:** Joystick action game

**Memory Required:** Resident 3.5K RAM

If you remember U.M.I.'s earlier game, Amok, you'll recognize this one immediately. But it's much better in many ways. The original Amok—which somewhat resembles the Atari's "Berzerk," was slower-moving, didn't have graphics as good as this later version, and the original was (and still is) on a cassette which can be super-slow getting loaded into the computer.

Because this is a ROM cartridge, you don't have to be too concerned about such niceties as memory expansion, and the like. Just plug it in and you're ready to go.

This joystick game can be played with one or two people—-the latter made possible by the simple expedient of passing the single joystick back and forth between players. This method is needed because the VIC has just one joystick port, but it doesn't have to be a handicap.

Like its predecessor, the game makes you a little man in an uncomplicated maze, surrounded by angry robots who try to shoot you. You try to shoot them first. Then duck, because robots who shoot can miss you and their fire can hit and destroy other robots. They may supposedly represent the pinnacle of technological achievement, but they're slow and dumb. Yet they can get in a lucky shot and zap you, so don't get overconfident. That's when other things start to happen.

Getting safely out of a screen starts you in the next screen and wave of robots, and they get harder as you go along. The robots move faster and you move slower, but you've got a pretty good, fast set of legs and can get out of the way if you keep your wits and don't get flustered.

In general, Super Amok is a worthy successor to its predecessor, and the graphics seem to be much better. It's awfully hard to do a graphically excellent program for the VIC with its limited amount of memory and the very special way its ROM addresses the color video screen.

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Finding Invisible Short Circuits in Digital Equipment

There are commercial test instruments for almost every type of electronic problem. However, as every computerist knows, there is one potential hardware problem for which there is no test instrument that can be of help.

This is the case where you are confronted by a pc board full of ICs, all soldered in, and the circuit does not work. The best that a logic probe, multimeter, logic analyzer, or scope can tell you is that a particular signal path is kaput. Unfortunately, you are left with some difficult decisions since none of these instruments can tell you whether it’s the source IC that is not delivering an output, or if it’s the IC (or one of the ICs) receiving the signal that has a short at its input, thus effectively removing the signal. All that these instruments can tell you is that there is no signal on a line that should have one. They cannot pin the blame (no pun intended).

Until this time, to hunt down this type of fault, you would have had to start unsoldering ICs, with the attendant possibility of damaging solder pads and slender foil traces. As you have probably found out by now, it does not take many solder/unsolder operations or very much soldering-iron heat to catastrophically destroy a foil pattern.

The short-hunter test circuit shown here can solve the problem of determining which IC is at fault, and there is no need to unsolder anything.

As an extra bonus, despite the fact that this novel instrument—for which there is no commercial counterpart—was originally designed for troubleshooting digital circuits, it can also be used to locate an inoperative IC or transistor in an analog circuit without unsoldering, junction testing, or otherwise removing the semiconductor from the board. It works on the premise that, when a semiconductor is supplied with the proper operating power and input signal, and if the device draws no collector current, the likelihood is very good that the semiconductor is bad. Operation in this mode will be covered further along.

In almost all digital circuits, one IC usually drives one or more other ICs or transistors. When the driving IC is delivering a high and there is a short to ground at the input of one of the signal receiving devices, current will flow down the trace making the electrical connection between the two. However, a scope, logic probe, etc., will not show the presence of this current, and, for all intents and purposes, will indicate that the line is “dead.”

Since all conductors have some finite value of resistance, according to Ohm’s Law, there will be a voltage gradient (though small in the case of low currents and a low-resistance path), between the current source and ground. If the source IC has failed, and will not deliver a high, then the line will still be dead, but there will be no voltage gradient.

What we need is a device that can respond to these minute voltages. Fortunately, this is the primary electrical property of a semiconductor device called an operational amplifier (op amp) whose differential inputs can respond to voltages down in the microvolt levels to cause the output to switch states depending on which of the differential inputs receives the higher voltage. In the diagram, note that each differential input of the op amp is connected via a 10,000-ohm resistor to a color-coded probe, biased via 100,000-ohm resistors, with a centering network including a potentiometer provided for zeroing. This potentiometer is adjusted for a zero-type output when the two probes are shorted to each other. The output of the op amp is connected to a pair of inverters, each having a different colored LED, and its associated-current limiting resistor connected at the outputs.

When you make up the probes, use sharp-tipped needles that can penetrate into the copper foil (through insulation if point-to-point wiring is used in the circuit under test). Although only one inverter/LED combination is required for general-purpose troubleshooting, using two inverter/LED combinations allows you not only to find out which way current is flowing in a trace, but which end has the high polarity and which the low.

If the polarity of the voltage present at the red probe is higher than the voltage at the black probe, the RED-color LED glows. If the voltage at the black probe is higher than the voltage at the red probe, then the GREEN-color LED glows. These polarities can then be checked against the circuit schematic to make sure that they are correct.

Obviously, if the source IC is not delivering a high, the line being tested will not show a voltage gradient.

For testing analog circuits, insert the needle probes in the foil trace or lead feeding the collector of each transistor or the +V pin of each IC. If the operating power and the base signal are present, but no current flows, then that particular semiconductor should be suspect. Open ground connections to the IC or transistor can also be checked with the short hunter.

In a digital circuit, make sure that the clock is operating, then use the probe on each signal-carrying IC lead. If the signal source IC is good, then the short hunter will find the defective receiving IC. If the line is dead, then the source IC is not delivering a high.

You should experiment with tip spacing, and make tests on an operating board to get the “feel” of this new test device. Since no commercial equivalent is available, you can write your own manual on how to use the circuit. Drop me a line if you use this circuit for any unusual applications.
Hardware

**Apple Modem.** The Summa 300 is a single-slot, 300-baud, direct-connect modem for the Apple II and IIE computers. It contains the modem and communications circuitry on one card without the need for additional peripherals or software. It is also furnished with software that permits the screen image to be captured in the Apple Memory. $119. Address: Zoom Telephonics, Inc., 207 South St., Boston, MA 02111.

**IBM-PC Color Monitor.** The RGB 12-inch color monitor for the IBM-PC will deliver 16 different colors using a special 31-mm dot pitch CRT that can produce 690 x 480 dots. Obviously, the monitor can be used with any type of video output from games to serious business applications. $795. Address: Quadram Corp., 4357 Park Dr., North, GA 30093 (404-923-6666).

**Winchester Drive.** The Hard Disk III is available as a 5M-byte (formatted) fixed or removable disk cartridge. It is also available in other configurations.

Adapters, which include hardware and software, are available for use with IBM-PC, IBM-XT, Apple II, Apple IIE, Franklin, TRS-80 Models I and III, LNM-80, and LNM-II. $995. Address: VR Data, 777 Henderson Blvd., Folcroft, PA 19032.

**Timex/Sinclair Expansion.** The 32K-plus-I/O module adds four parallel I/O ports, and 32K bytes of RAM to the T1000 or ZX81 computers. When plugged into the rear apron connector, this module allows the use of external controls, A/D, temperature measurements, etc. $155 plus $4.95 shipping/handling. Address: Wisconsin Electronics, PO Box 332, Milton, WI 53563.

**VIC-20 Memory Expander.** The Ramex is a 27,648-byte switchable memory for the VIC-20 and has two expansion connectors identical to the VIC Memory Expansion connector except for BLK-5. The memory is switchable in one 3K or three 8K sections. Also included are a reset switch, memory and connector safety fuse, operating manual, self-test program, and case. $169. Romax Jr. with 19,456 bytes is $139. Address: Apropos Technology, 350 Lantana Ave., Suite 821, Camarillo, CA 93010 (805-482-3604).

**S-100 Weighing System.** This load cell digitizing card is designed for S-100/IEEE696 systems to enable weight platforms, hoppers, and tank and truck scales to interface directly with compatible computers. The single-channel converter is compatible with all strain gauge transducers, providing excitation for up to eight 350-ohm bridges. In the high accuracy mode, 17-bit binary output is available four times per second.

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VIC Numerica Keypad. The Keypad for the Commodore VIC-20/64 comes as standard or hexidecimal. The 24-key keypad connects to the computer via a ribbon cable. The standard unit contains 0-9, +, -, *, /, shift, period, comma, colon, semicolon, space, delete, cursor down, cursor right, and return. The hexadeccimal version contains 0-9, A-F, shift, period, comma, space, delete, cursor down, cursor right, and return. $79.95. Address: Home Computer Corp., 154 Heard Rd., Kathleen, GA 31047 (912-987-0235).

Half-High Winchester. The Space Saver hard disk systems for the Apple and IBM-PC are available as fixed or removable cartridge systems. They are 2 3/4" high, 5 1/2" wide, 9 1/2" deep and weigh five pounds. They feature dynamic volume allocation (DVA) for the Apple allowing one or 65K volumes. DOS volumes can be allocated as large as 400K bytes. The user can define the volume size. For the IBM-PC, the device is hardware compatible with the IBM hard file products and operates transparently with IBM-PC DOS 2.0. The fixed system is $995 without controller, while the cartridge is $1325 without controller. For the IBM, the controller is $450. Address: Mountain Computer Inc., 300 El Pueblo Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066 (408-438-6650).

IBM-PC Speech. The PC-Mate Speech Master hardware and software provide synthetic voice output, text-to-speech conversions, and expanded native vocabulary while occupying a single slot. The Speech master provides two forms of speech synthesis: high-quality with a limited ROM-based vocabulary, and a lower-quality unlimited vocabulary using phonemes. The software operates under PC DOS 1.10 and contains two programs—English that provides for text-to-speech conversion, and Speak which sends screen output to the speech synthesizer for simultaneous spoken output. The Speech Master board is $995, and the Speech Master software support package is $95. A Speech Master Auxiliary Vocabulary Unit is $100. Address: Temic Inc., Personal Computer Products Div., 23600 Mercantile Rd., Cleveland, OH 44122 (216-464-7410).

### Software

#### Plotting Package. The Prime Plotter is a comprehensive plotting package for business, technical, and scientific applications. Features include data management, statistical analysis, X-Y plotting, pie charts, graphics, and slide show/replay. Users can perform trend analysis and curve fit regressions on data files. Then the data, fit, or any function/mathematical subroutine can be plotted. Screens can be saved or printed using a graphic printer interface such as the Grappler or Pkaso. Three disks come with the package: a master, a replay, and a user. $240. Address: Primesoft Corp., PO Box 40, Cabin John, MD 20818 (301-229-4229).

#### Cribbage Player. Cribbage Master II features card graphics on the TRS-80 screen with the player's cards moving from his "hand" to the "table". All rules are observed, and although the program may make a mistake in playing, it never makes errors in counting hand or crib points. Some scoring is automatic, but pegging is up to the player. Score is kept on screen. For TRS-80 Model I and III disk systems. $21.95. Address: Manhattan Software, PO Box 1063, Woodland Hills, CA 91365 (213-453-6943).

#### CP/M Communications. MITE allows CP/M based machines to appear as intelligent data terminals for on-line services such as Computerve or the Source. It also enables the computer to be used as a Western Union TWX or Telex terminal. The menu driven program supports many different protocols and provides full modem control with auto logon if required. Files can be transferred between any two CP/M computers with error checking. Pre-installed versions are available for most computers and installation is easy with other types of computer systems. $150. Address: Wordmovers Inc., 15818 Hawthorne Blvd., Lawndale, CA 90260 (213-542-7351).

#### Commodore Inventory Manager. The Inventory Manager transforms any Commodore 64 or VIC-20 with Data 20 16K Video Pak into an inventory management system. It has a capacity of 2500 separate files with 99,999 items per file. The menu driven software offers sales posting, edit update, display, inventory, inventory master listing, daily and monthly sales listings, selected field listings (over 1000 vendor codes per vendor report, re-stocking reports, department classification reports, sales analysis reports, etc. Two back-up routines that allow saving data files on tape and restore disk from tape are also provided. $99.95. Address: Electronic Strategies Inc., 23012 Del Lago, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 (714-770-3246).

#### Apple Children's Trainer. MATH FACTS LEVEL 1 is a self-paced instructional program for children from 4 to 7. It uses color drawings and large numbers and letters to teach the fundamental concepts of math. The program is formed from 16 units covering numbers from 1 to 20, number placement, number words, and addition and subtraction both with and without symbols. It also features a sound-off option for silent viewing in a classroom. Disk version is $25 (DOS 3.2 or 3.3). Address: THESIS, PO Box 147-M, Garden City, MI 48135 (313-595-4722).

#### IBM-PC Management Utility. The Sales Manager is a professional management information tool for executives in sales, marketing, and general business. It handles the tracking and reporting for Customers, Prospects, Sales Representatives, Quote, Commissions, Planning, Forecasting, Expenses, Sales Analysis, and Personnel. It is menu driven and requires 128K of RAM. $450. Address: Market Power, 11780 Rough & Ready Rd., Rough & Ready, CA 95975 (916-432-1200).
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There's a strange phenomenon that occurs at industry computer shows. As you walk up and down the aisles peering at a myriad of new products on display, some of them stop you in your tracks and compel you to investigate more closely. I call them the "eyepoppers"—a select group of products that generate real excitement at first glance.

Here are the ones I've seen at a host of recent shows that stretched from March to date. Most are just coming to market.

Computers

It's been said that Italians talk with their hands, so when I heard that you could "talk" to the Gavilan Computer in this manner, naturally I was interested. And sure enough, when Manny Fernandez, President of Gavilan Computer Corp., displayed his new machine, he held his hand in the air and said, "I am now going to choose an item from the menu." He placed his pointer finger on an area of the computer just above the keyboard, swirled it around, tapped the area, and a word processing program appeared on the screen. This "touchpad," controlled by Intel's 8051 computer on a chip, can be used to move a cursor around the screen and operate in a fashion similar to an electronic mouse.

But that's not all Manny did. He also took a 3" disk and, with a sleight of hand that rivaled a magician's, made the disk disappear into the side of the machine. Now this Gavilan computer is not very big. It's so small, in fact, that it easily fits inside a briefcase. So where did you put the disk, Manny? It seems that there's a 3" disk drive built into this computer.

The screen display is also very intriguing. It had first appeared when Manny pulled at the top of his rather small computer package. Resting on an angle, this small LCD screen displayed 8 lines and more characters per line than I could immediately count (66 it turns out). With a tap of his finger on the touchpad, superb graphics were displayed. The Gavilan computer is truly a breakthrough in computer design.

Besides the touchpad, built-in drive, and LCD display, there is a printer (optional) that plugs right into the back of the computer. It adds just 4.9" to the Gavilan's 11.4" length and only 5 lb to its 9 lb weight.

The Gavilan uses an 8088 microprocessor and supports MS/DOS as well as its own operating system. Included standard with the computer is proprietary, integrated, multifunctional software with windowing capabilities. Software is available on plug-in cartridges called CapsuleWare. The packages include CapsuleWord, CapsuleCalc, CapsuleOffice, CapsuleComm (communications and mail system), and CapsuleForm.

Other features of the Gavilan are a full typewriter keyboard and ten-key pad, built-in 300-baud direct-connect modem, 48K ROM, 32K RAM (expandable to 336K), video interface, I/O bus, rechargeable batteries (that operate for up to eight hours), and an ac adapter and quick recharger. Suggested retail price of the Gavilan is $4000.

The Sharp PC-5000 is another briefcase-sized computer with outstanding features. In particular, the computer comes with 128K of bubble memory. That's right, bubble memory is alive and well. The volatile memory can be used for storage in the same way as a disk drive. Besides the standard bubble memory, Sharp is planning to develop applications software on small bubble cartridges that can fit into one's pocket.

But like Lawrence Welk on a Saturday night, the PC-5000's whole show doesn't depend on bubbles. Exciting features abound in this portable. First there is an eight-line by 80-character liquid crystal display panel that folds flat over a typewriter-style keyboard when the computer is not in use. In the
"A select group of 'eyepoppers' that generate excitement at first glance"

Graphics mode, the display is 640 x 80 or 51,200 pixels.

Secondly, there is an optional printer available that plugs right into the back of the unit. The printer is a high-density dot-matrix thermal impact printer that uses thermal paper. However, a carbon ribbon can be inserted if you want to print on bond paper. Print speed is 37 characters per second.

Finally, an optional modem is available, which is both an attractive and functional addition to the computer. Besides using it as a modem, it can be an auto-dial phone and calculator keypad, too! It has a built-in speaker and microphone for two-way conference calling, and can store up to ten numbers. Of course, when used with communications software, it can store many more numbers. The calculator keypad doubles as a pushbutton dialer and a numeric keypad for data entry into the computer. The modem can be stored right in the case of the computer so that it adds nothing to overall size.

The PC-5000 uses an 8088 microprocessor and comes standard with 128K RAM (expandable to 256K). Also standard are word-processor and communications software. The computer weighs 11 lb and operates from a rechargeable battery that will run it for about 8 hr. (An ac adaptor is also supplied.) If needed, a 5¼" dual-head disk drive is available as an option. Target price is $2500.

There's not a computer on the market that can be all things to all people, although the next machine goes as far to that end as anything I've ever seen. Apl
ly named the Chameleon, it supports the two most popular operating systems in the 8-bit and 16-bit markets, namely CP/M-80 and MS-DOS. More the size of a suitcase than a briefcase, this transportable comes standard with 128K of RAM, dual 5½" drives, a 9" greenphosphor display, one serial (RS-232) and one parallel port, an IBM-PC-compatible keyboard, and 320 × 200 color graphics capability. Software included with the unit are Perfect Writer and Perfect Calc. The Chameleon is manufactured by the Seequa Computer Corporation and has a suggested retail price of $1995.

Lest you come to the conclusion that the only exciting new computers are portables, let me tell you about Adam. Adam is not just a computer, but a family computer system from ColecoVision. Standard features are an 80K RAM computer, a built-in digital data pak drive, whose plug-ins are said to have a data transfer rate comparable to a floppy disc's and can save up to 250 type-written text pages. A full-travel 72-key plus numeric keypad keyboard, a letter-quality 10-cps daisywheel printer, two game controllers, a built-in word processor called SmartWriter, SmartBASIC (which is Applesoft source-code compatible), and the Buck Rogers Planet of Zoom video game that plugs into Adam's game cartridge slot. "So what's the big deal?" you might ask. The big deal here is price. Only $599 suggested retail!! Why, up until now, a low-cost daisywheel by itself cost that much.

And there's more! So that you can play those super games from ColecoVision's game player, Adam has something called the ColecoVision graphics operating system. This is not to be confused with the CP/M operating system that Adam is compatible with.

Furthermore, Adam comes up as a word processor. The display is 36 × 24, but an 80 × 24 "window" mode is also available. The SmartWriter program makes heavy use of graphics so that a user can easily learn how to operate it. For example, one of the screens shows a typewriter roller near the bottom and a margin guide at the top. As you type, your words scroll up from the roller, just as they would on a typewriter.

Software

Have you ever wished for a software package that you could use on your machine without having to read a lengthy manual first? Better yet, what if you couldn't speak or read English, but wanted to do word processing in your native tongue? Well someone out there is thinking about you. Commodore has introduced a software series called the Magic Desk. Magic Desk does not use words to convey ideas. Instead it uses graphic symbols (icons) exclusively. It's similar to using a cigarette with a line through it to convey a "no smoking" message.

When the software is run, a picture of a desk with various items on it fills the screen. There is a typewriter, index file, telephone, calculator and financial journal. Alongside the desk is a file cabinet with an artist's easel and digital clock on top of it. Under the desk is a trashbasket.

To operate the program, an external device such as a joystick, trackball, or mouse is used to move a pointing finger to one of the objects on the screen. That object is selected by pressing a button on the device. If you choose the typewriter, a picture of a typewriter roller appears on the screen, and you may begin typing. As you type, the paper scrolls up, just as in a typewriter. The control device (joystick, etc.) can be used to move the paper up and down in the typewriter.

If you want to file a document, you return to the Magic Desk and move the pointing finger to the file cabinet. When you press the button, a picture of an open file cabinet appears on the screen complete with file folders. There is even a sound produced as you rifle through the stack of folders. There are three file drawers, with 10 files in each drawer and 10 pages in each file.

Although used with a disk drive, the Magic Desk will be sold as a plug-in cartridge for the Commodore 64. The first cartridge in the series will be entitled Magic Desk—Type and File with a suggested retail price of $100. Other titles will also be available for Magic Desk at a similar price.

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lisners. Named DesQ®, the software package is designed for end-users, software developers, and systems integrators who want to upgrade personal computers into integrated, multi-windowing systems. DesQ, which is based on Quarterdeck's proprietary artificial intelligence-like development language, can be used with packages such as WordStar and dBase II. Several programs can be run at the same time, each in its own window on the video display.

The windowing feature enables a user to mark information in one window and then transfer it to another. For example, a user might mark a column of numbers in a MultiPlan spreadsheet and then transfer it to a specific place in WordStar monthly status report. The software can operate effectively with either a keypad or a mouse. The package is available for the IBM-PC with 256k of RAM, one floppy disk drive, one five-megabyte Winchester, and either a color or monochrome display.

Peripherals

Besides new computers and software, a flock of new peripherals made their debuts at the recent industry shows. Most of those that attracted my attention could be classified as alternate input devices. Alternate input devices were shown that used light, touch, and voice to enter data into a computer.

The Caere (pronounced like “care”) Corporation manufactures an optical character reader (OCR) that reads the typefaces found on many familiar items such as electric bills and automobile licenses. Examples of the typestyles are shown in Fig. 1. The Caere OCR system is made up of two parts: the base control unit and either a handheld wand or slot reader. Both the wand and slot reader use a light-sensing photo diode array to "read" information and convert it into electronic impulses that are sent to the control unit. The information is then digitized and "recognized." The OCR devices are available for the IBM PC and Apple III. The Series 500 model for the PC uses a handheld wand and has a suggested retail price of $1145.

If you're one who enjoys letting your fingers do the walking (or inputting in this case), you'll be interested in the Point-I Monitor from MicroTouch. The Point-I has an integrated touch-sensitive screen that allows direct interaction with the computer by simply touching the display screen. For example, if you wish to make a menu selection, you just touch the number on the screen and the item is selected. The monochrome monitor comes in either amber or green and is priced at $1295.

A less expensive fingertip input device is the Koalapad Touch Tablet. Available for the Apple II line, IBM-PC, Commodore-64 and VIC-20, and the Atari line of computers, its suggested retail price is $125 including graphics software. The Koalapad has a 4" square drawing surface that's simple to use.

You just rub your finger along the pad and the drawing is displayed on the video screen. If you think this product is similar to the little device that's used on the Gavilan computer discussed earlier, you're right. The inventor of the Koalapad, Dr. David Thornberg, told me that Koala Technologies licensed the touchpad technology to Gavilan.

Another input device that responds to pressure (but with a pen) is Pencept, a product that accepts hand-printed information, for input into a computer. Using dynamic character recognition (DCR) techniques, Pencept allows you to fill out a form by hand and automatically enters the data into the computer. For example, a person in telephone sales could take information over the phone by hand, and Pencept would decipher the handwriting and send the information to the computer. You don't have to print perfectly either, as the Pencept's DCR techniques, can recognize a wide variety of character shapes (Fig. 2).

If you're not into OCR or DCR and feel that you've lost the touch, you might be interested in talking your way into the computer. VoiceDrive by SuperSoft gives you the opportunity to
Shown above is Caere's new wand reader, which is compatible with the IBM PC.

The Sharp briefcase-sized PC-5000 (right) has 128K of bubble memory.

do this! VoiceDrive is a speech recognition software interface that's compatible with ScratchPad, a financial spreadsheet package from SuperSoft. To use VoiceDrive you need the Tecmar voice recognition card and an IBM PC. But you're not constrained to voice input since both keyboard and speech can be intermixed at the discretion of the user. SuperSoft plans to market more application packages in coming months, all utilizing the VoiceDrive software interface. Price of ScratchPad with VoiceDrive is $495. (Bundled with the Tecmar board, it's $995.)

Not all eyepopping peripherals were alternate input devices. Indeed, the following peripheral is an exciting output device. It's the CX4800 printer/plotter available from Leading Edge Products, Inc. What is so special about this printer/plotter? At first glance, the CX4800 might be mistaken for a dot-matrix printer. However, as the copy emerges from the machine, there's no question that it's a four-color plotter. The secret is in the printhead, which consists of four colored pens rather than the usual matrix of pins.

Color changes can be made automatically under software control. The four standard colors are black, red, blue, and green, although other colors are available upon request. Plotting can be done at speeds of 120 mm/s for 0.1 mm depth (60 mm/s for 0.5 mm depth).

The CX4800 can also be used as a printer. It can print a standard 80-character line of a size comparable to pica type at a speed of eight cps. Single or fan-fold paper sheets of standard 9 1/2"-wide sprocket-feed paper can be used with the unit. Suggested retail price is $695.

For those who want colorful output, but need something more sophisticated than a printer/plotter, Sharp has introduced its 10-700 ink jet color image printer. It can reproduce, in seven colors, anything from graphs to detailed computer graphics. Roll paper that is 8-10 inches wide is needed to produce print areas up to 8 1/2" wide. The unit will print a maximum of 120 dots per inch and, when printing characters,
uses a 12 × 16 dot matrix. Price of the Sharp IO-700 has not been set but will fall into the $1000-1500 range.

One peripheral that handles both input and output is a low-cost mass storage device for one of the most popular low-cost computers. Available from Unitoric, the Expander and Wafer-drive module is a high-speed waferette drive plus 8K of RAM for the Commodore VIC-20 home computer. It plugs right into the expansion slot at the rear of the VIC-20 (and provides another slot at its rear). The module has a VIC floppy-disk look-alike operating system as well as a filing system. The unit, which uses 64K-byte data wafers, has a data transfer rate that is comparable to the speed of a floppy disk. Price is $99.

Can a computer also be a computer peripheral? If it's Quadram's Quadlink, it can. This peripheral board, which fits into a slot on the IBM PC, is functionally equivalent to an Apple II computer. To run Apple software, you just pop an Apple disk into your IBM drive and press one key. Although not fully compatible, Quadram expects Quadlink to run about 90% of Apple software.

Switching back to IBM operation is just another keypress away. Suggested retail price for the board, which comes standard with 64K of usable RAM, is $680.

New Technologies

Computer shows are often a showcase for new technologies that may well drift into lower-cost products. Three companies—Diser, Grid Systems, and Vertimag—had some interesting examples of products based on new technologies.

Diser was showing the Modula Computer, which costs about $22,500. Although priced beyond the range of most people, the interesting aspect of the computer was the language that it used. The language, Modula-2, is the final synthesis of Dr. Niklaus Wirth's widely used language, Pascal, and his research language, Modula.

The Modula Computer was designed to take full advantage of the power of the Modula-2 language. The language makes it much easier to handle complex programming problems. For example, Dr. Richard Ohran, vice-president of research and development at Diser, showed me a PacMan program that was developed by one of his computer science students in 80 hours using Modula-2. I played the game and it ran very much like the original. That's enhanced programmer productivity!

Another computer, the GRID Compass portable computer, although priced at about $9000 with software, is a showcase of state-of-the-art electronics technology. Most impressive is its amber-color, electroluminescent, flat-panel display. It has a 6" diagonal screen that can display 24 80-character lines. With a resolution of 320 × 240 pixels, the display also offers superb graphics.

The main processor is Intel's 16-bit 8080, which runs under MS/DOS 2.0 or CCOS (compass computer operating system). Another feature is Intel's 8087 80-bit arithmetic coprocessor. The computer has 256K of RAM Standard as well as 384K of bubble memory.

Packaged in a lightweight magnesium case weighing 10 pounds, the GRID Compass measures just 15" × 11½" × 2". Some of the other features of this portable are a 1200-baud modem and integrated software for word processing, electronic spreadsheet, data base management, graphics, and communications.

Vertimag is working on ways to increase the storage capacity of floppy disks. Using vertical rather than longitudinal recording techniques, and a disk that is an alloy of chromium and cobalt, Vertimag expects to achieve capacities of 2.5M bytes per side (and more) on a floppy disk. According to the people at Vertimag, the drive will cost about the same as a conventional floppy drive, while the disks will run about $20 each. Production begins in 1984.

Conclusion. As is evident, the recent industrial computer shows have produced a plethora of exciting new products. Not all of them are on the market yet and some may never reach it but they should give you an idea of what the companies are trying to do and in which directions the computer industry is going.

Some products that could have been classified as "eyecatchers" may not have been highlighted here for a couple of reasons. A product may have been introduced at other than an industry show and already covered in this magazine; the excitement may have been generated not by an individual product but by a line of them. For example, Atari recently introduced four new computers (600XL, 800XL, 1400XL, and 1450XL), plus a line of support peripherals and software.

All that's left now is to direct you to the list of addresses that I've included so that you'll know where to find out more information on any product that may have a peculiar attraction for you.
The Unix operating system originated at Bell Laboratories in 1969. Since its release to the general public in the early 1970s, it has gone through several major revisions, been transported to both microcomputers and large IBM mainframes, and has become an important force in the computer industry.

Unix was not developed as a general-purpose commercial operating system, nor even as a product. A Bell Laboratories scientist named Ken Thompson found a DEC PDP-7 (a small, but fairly powerful minicomputer) in a lab that was not being heavily used, and decided that it would be a good machine to implement an idea he had for a new type of file system. He used some innovations that were designed to provide what has been called by Dennis Ritchie “a pleasant environment in which to write and use programs.” While any operating system is designed to allow people to use a computer more efficiently, Unix has proved especially “friendly.”

Ritchie, one of Unix’s earliest users at Bell Labs, found it so fascinating that he began spending a great deal of his time helping Thompson refine it. While the Unix was originally written in low-level assembly language, they became dissatisfied with this approach, especially since they were considering putting Unix on other computers with completely different instruction sets. As a result, the C language was created as an “intermediate-level” language—one that was both highly efficient (fast execution of programs as well as low memory usage) and easily portable to other computers. With Unix largely rewritten in C, the operating system itself became portable. Consequently, widely different computers could run the same programs without the extensive rewriting that was previously necessary.

What’s So Good About It? While transportability is important in itself, there are other aspects of Unix that make it increasingly popular. Some of these are described below.

Tree-like file system. Operating systems usually impose a predefined structure of some type on the way files are viewed by their users. In most cases, this structure is a simple “disk directory” that lets one access certain files when the system is used. In Unix, the structure can be viewed as an upside-down “tree” with its single “root” at the top as shown in the diagram. The root is the main directory in Unix; it leads down to all other files and directories. You can add to your own directory, usually located in the /usr directory by creating new files or even new sub-directories. This allows you to create whatever structure you need to manage your data effectively, much like being able to add new filing cabinets with ever more drawers and more file folders.

This is called a “hierarchical” file system because it resembles an organization chart, where the “big boss” (in this case, the root) is at the top. Like some organizations where one individual may have two responsible positions, a Unix
file can be accessed by several different names through different paths.

In Unix, every directory is actually just another file, which can be read by user programs. The only difference is that the information contained in a directory file consists of names of files and directions for where to find them on the file system.

I/O simplicity: The input and output devices attached to a computer are what allow humans to communicate with it. Unix permits any device—CRT terminal, printer, laser typesetter, or even main memory—to be accessed by simply reading, or writing a character at a time. This is aided by the Unix view that all files are just a sequence of bytes to be read or written. No external structure is expected by the operating system. Even when a device actually requires data in large blocks (such as a disk drive), Unix hides this dependency by taking care of these details internally.

In fact, all devices on a Unix system appear to the user to be ordinary files found as entries in the /dev directory. Therefore, a program intended for use with a disk file could easily be changed to work with a printer instead, but the process called “redirection” makes even this rewriting unnecessary.

Redirection and piping. Any program that normally “prints” to your terminal can have its output redirected to a disk file, printer, or another device. Similarly, a program's input can be easily directed to come from a file, modem, or any device that can read characters. This allows the same program to serve many purposes. A text-editing program can get its input from a predefined set of instructions, for instance, eliminating errors in repeated complex editing sessions.

The concept of a program that simply operates on its input and transforms it into some output is important. In Unix, these types of programs are termed filters. Many programs in Unix are filters and perform one function only. The output of one can be connected to the input of another in a kind of “pipe” arrangement. By piping them together, it's easy to use them as “building blocks” to perform much more complicated functions without having to write more programs.

One example of piping that is often used when running Unix involves backups. The disks used to store files on most Unix systems are very large in capacity. Thus, it takes a long time to save all the files onto tapes or floppy disks. To save time, a Unix system administrator will save daily only those files that were actually changed on that particular day or certain files known to be important. The following command line will save to tape all C source files on an entire system:

```
find -name "*.c" -print | tar c
```

The “find” command goes through the tree structure, looking for all files that fit the criteria. In this case, it finds all files ending in "*.c", and emits a list of filenames. This list is then handed off to the “tar” (or tape archiver) program, which can then go ahead and write each file listed to a new backup tape. (The "c" after tar means to create a new tape.)

The best part of pipes is not just that they are a convenient way of sending information from one command to the next, but that the commands actually run simultaneously. The find takes a long time to go through the tree, and tar takes a while to write to tape. But as each filename is found, the pipe passes it along to be written out. Since both programs run at once, total run time is about halved. One wouldn’t want to wait until these programs were finished before using the Unix system, so they run by themselves in what is called the multitasking mode.

Multitasking. Did you ever have to wait for a program to run on your computer before you could do something else? In Unix, you can decide to run a program anytime (or several at once!) in “background,” while you continue using your terminal for another project. Just imagine writing a BASIC program, while at the same time a C program is compiling and its documentation printing out! You don’t even have to worry about compiler error messages cluttering your CRT screen provided you remembered to redirect those to the print-
er as well. All you have to do is type a "&" at the end of any command line, and you immediately get the shell prompting you for your next command while your other project goes on its merry way.

- **Multiuser.** On all but the very smallest Unix systems, several people can use the computer at once. Unix will take care of the details. If everyone wants to print simultaneously, the system sets things up so that data doesn't get mixed up in the printouts. It does this by automatically "spooling" or writing to disk files all output that is destined for the printer. It then prints it all in sequence, in background of course. To the user, it appears as if he has a 1,000,000-char/sec printer.

Modems are supported, so people can call the system remotely. (Unix can change the baud rate to match the caller.) People can also send messages to each other, either while they are logged on the system or as electronic mail files to be read at any time. Using the "uuucp" package you can even send mail to people at other Unix systems. If your program directs, your machine will dial their machine when the phone rates are lowest, and transfer the message unattended.

Naturally, with all these people on one system, havoc could result if a program (or unfriendly user!) ran wild. So Unix provides various levels of protection by different mechanisms. The first comes when you initially log in to the system. If you don't enter the right password, you can't get in at all! The next level is by protection bits. Any user can set the protection on his own files and directories, so that other users or programs can be prevented from reading, writing, or executing them. The highest level is by actual encryption of data, which is done easily on Unix by the inclusion of a special encoding program. Development tools and languages. Unix boasts an impressive range of utilities, languages, and development tools that are either expensive add-ons or unavailable with other operating systems. Here are some examples.

- The "diff" program can show the exact differences between two text files, and can also help you change one file to match the other.
- A compiler for the C language and an assembler are included. There are also versions of FORTRAN, ratfor, Snobol, and a dialect of BASIC supplied as standard. Available for many systems are COBOL, Business BASIC, and Pascal. Cross-compilers and assemblers are common tools, allowing you to develop software for an entirely different machine.
- Powerful software tools such as

The structure of Unix is like an upside-down tree with the root being the main directory and leading down to all other files.
"yacc," "lex," and "M4" let you develop compilers for other languages or computers. You can develop your own language for a particular application. "Yacc" (Yet Another Compiler-Complier) will generate a compiler for a new language. The language has been adequately described: "Lex," a lexical analyzer generator, can virtually write a program on its own for transforming data in prespecified ways. M4 is used to add macro facilities to an existing language.

• Word processing and typesetting can be done with "nroff" and "troff" programs and the appropriate peripherals. Such devices as the Diablo series of precision printers, Tektronix graphics terminals, and Versatec plotters are supported, and can be used as easily as their more ordinary counterparts such as "dumb" terminals and line printers.

• Utilities such as "make" and the Source Code Control System allow programmers to keep track of changes to their files. The latest versions of their programs, or a specified older version can be made to compile and run automatically, even if the source code is spread out over many files managed by different people.

The Shell. The "command interpreter" is the program that you spend most of your time interacting with when you use an operating system. Much of the power of the system comes from it. It not only handles the I/O redirection mentioned above, but actually a programming language in itself. Complex data management functions, testing, and file manipulation can be done with shell commands alone, without having to "write programs" in a more traditional way.

Shell programming features include loops, if-then-else, "case" constructs, error handling, and process synchronization. Since the shell interprets commands as they are typed in, often such a "shell program" is composed right at the terminal, and it can be easily saved for future use. The shell also permits you to "customize" the way Unix responds to your commands. You can change the prompt character, have the system search in particular places for commands, use your own favorite names for Unix commands, and run a predefined series of commands each time you log on to the system.

Is Anything Perfect? With all these attributes going for it, Unix seems like an idea system. But there are a few disadvantages that while relatively unimportant to a home user, could hamper its acceptability as a general-purpose commercial operating system.

• Security: In theory at least, Unix prevents unauthorized users from accessing or destroying data that doesn't belong to them. In practice, a great deal of caution is necessary when running a Unix system to ensure file security. There are several fairly well-known ways of bypassing the usual Unix security checks. Also, the system does not adequately protect against runaway programs that can use up all available system resources and cause Unix to grind to a halt. An experienced Unix System Administrator is usually needed to watch over things.

• Priority constraints: It is presently impossible to ensure that an important program will have exclusive use of the machine if necessary for high-speed calculations. Further, system resources such as memory or special devices cannot be reserved in advance, meaning a program that needs these resources will simply "bomb" (instead of waiting for the resource) if they are not available.

Real-time response, critical for certain kinds of projects, is simply not there in standard Unix. Segments of code needed for high-speed access could be "swapped out" to disk at any time, making them temporarily unavailable.

• Reliability: Unix systems are generally thought of as "fragile," a holdover from earlier versions that needed an expert available on an almost constant basis due to the complexity of the file system. Current versions are more robust and include programs to fix the file system automatically in case of a crash, but an expert will still be needed on certain occasions. Also, while a system might not be destroyed after a power failure, current state-of-the-art for commercial systems requires that all programs running before the failure pick up where they left off. This will not happen with Unix! While Unix may not be perfect in this regard, it's also a good deal smaller than those commercial operating systems. They are far too big to fit on a microcomputer and need a full-time team of experts to keep them running at all.

Owing to the way Unix implements its terminal interface, the practical maximum number of terminals usable on a Unix system is less than might be otherwise. Unix (designed as a time-sharing system for the purpose of efficient program development) is not always the appropriate choice for a large-scale application-based computer center. However, the sheer power of some of the newer Unix computers on the market, and their low cost, ensures that many installations will be running Unix anyway!

What Machines Run Unix? The first machines to run Unix were the DEC PDP-7, PDP-11/34, and PDP-11/70. For this reason (also because they tend to be powerful yet, moderately priced) the DEC PDP-11 line of minicomputers has been most often associated with Unix. Larger minis such as the VAX are also popular, and Unix has even been "ported" or moved onto the IBM 370 series of mainframe computers.

By far the most exciting news for the greatest number of people is that Unix has now been ported to almost every 16-bit microprocessor on the market, thus bringing its full power within the reach of most small businesses and even some personal computer enthusiasts. Also, new operating systems (known as Unix "look-alikes") developed by companies other than Bell Labs have come on the market, offering capabilities similar to Unix without the licensing headaches sometimes associated with the "real" Unix system. Yet since AT&T announced the new System III version of Unix, "binary" licenses (no source code included) to "real" Unix are available from systems houses for as little as a few hundred dollars.

The most popular microprocessor to use Unix at present is the Motorola 68000 due to its powerful instruction set, 32-bit internal data paths, and large addressable memory space. Typical of the many 68000-based computers that are now using Unix are:

• The Dual System 83: an S-100 machine which was one of the first micro-based Unix machines to be compatible with an industry standard bus.

• The Altos ACS68000, one of the most powerful machines on the market, dollar for dollar. It has a 40-megabyte hard disk and 512K of dynamic RAM, and supports 8 serial RS232 ports with an intelligent I/O controller.

• The Pixel AP/100, one of the fastest small machines around, with high-level
"I built this 16-bit computer and saved money. Learned a lot, too."

Save now by building the Heathkit H-100 yourself. Save later because your computer investment won't become obsolete for many years to come.

Save by building it yourself. You can save hundreds of dollars over assembled prices when you choose the new H-100 16-Bit/8-Bit Computer Kit — money you can use to buy the peripherals and software of your choice.

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Want room to grow? The H-100's standard 192K byte Random Access Memory complement can be expanded to 768K bytes — compared to a 64K standard for many desktop computers.

And the industry-standard S-100 card slots support memory expansion and additional peripheral devices, allowing your investment to grow.

High-capacity disk storage, too. The H-100's 5.25" floppy disk drive can store 320K bytes on a single disk. The computer also supports an optional second 5.25" and external 8" floppy disk drives. For maximum storage, an optional internal Winchester disk drive is also available.

For more information, circle the reader service number below. Better yet, visit your Heathkit Electronic Center for a demonstration!

The H-100 gives me the most for my computer dollar!
I/O controllers for virtually every device.
- The Fortune 32.16 has the distinction of being one of the smallest and least expensive ($4995 with 1 limited floppy disk) Unix machines. It has a “user-friendly” menu system that makes operation easy, but hides most of the power of Unix.
- Radio Shack Model 16 with dual processors now runs Microsoft Xenix, which is a licensed Version of Unix.

Then there are Z8000 and 8086/88 computers. Zilog and Intel both sell their own Unix-based machines. Zilog, the first microcomputer maker to support Unix, has several high-performance Z8000-based computers available starting from around $14,000. Intel’s latest 86/300 series uses its standard Multibus, and is slightly more expensive. There are several other companies using these CPUs as well, including InterSystems’ Z8000-based DPS-8000, which runs Coherent (a Unix look-alike from Mark Williams Co.).

Even the IBM Personal Computer can run Coherent for about $500, or you can get a real Unix derivative, Venix, for $900 from VenturCom, Inc., including several useful applications. The fastest-growing section of the market (after the 68000 onslaught) is expected to be in the 8086/8088-based desktop computers that can run MS-DOS, since Microsoft is attempting to make future versions of MS-DOS compatible with its Xenix version of Unix.

What about 8-bit machines? A few enterprising companies such as Morrow Designs and Microwave actually have Unix-like, multitasker, multitalking systems that run on Z80 and 6809 computers. Morrow's Decision I $100-based system features a Z80 CPU, 256K of RAM, a 10M-byte disk drive, and floppy backup. It can support several simultaneous users, and emulate CP/M at the same time. The Decision I runs the Micronix operating system (written at Morrow's company), which is compatible with Unix Version 6.

Several companies sell software that can simulate the Unix commands and shell on current 8-bit computers running CP/M. These are not really operating systems, but rather utility packages, although they can be quite useful. The most useful of these is possibly Microrshell from New Generation Systems ($150). Microshell can be called up at any time to actually replace the user interface of CP/M. This allows you to perform redirection, piping, automatic command search, and even shell programming, just like on Unix. The best

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### BUYERS GUIDE TO UNIX SYSTEMS

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Is something wrong in your home? You can listen from any phone in the world.

The SENSAPHONE Protects Your Home Whether You’re There Or Not—And You Can Listen to What’s Going On When You’re Away!

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Connect the Sensaphone to your telephone and at once you have an alarm system, an environmental monitor, an ear that lets you listen to ‘live’ sounds in your home or office, and an automatic dialer that dials any of eight pre-set numbers when you push one digit.

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If you’re away from home and are worried about the kids or about break-ins, call home from any phone. Your Sensaphone will report to you (privately, because your call will include a private code) on the monitored conditions. Then you can listen to the room sounds for yourself.

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Enter the eight numbers you call most frequently. Then, when you want to call one of those numbers (up to 16 digits each), press just one dial key and your Sensaphone will call the whole number for you.

Your Sensaphone won’t lose its memory if the power fails, because a battery backup protects it. What’s more, the Sensaphone will call the preprogrammed numbers to warn that the power is off and it’ll also warn you if the battery power is low.

- A product of Gulf & Western, made in U.S.A.
- Occupies only 7½" x 8½" of space.
- Connects to your phone in 10 seconds.
- “Standby” mode remembers information but prevents function.

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Plug your home or office phone (or both) into the Sensaphone. Use it for up to 30 days. If you decide for any reason you don’t want to keep it, return it for a 100% refund.

The Sensaphone is another electronic marvel from

NEW HORIZONS

Circle No. 17 on Free Information Card
REDIRECTION
MADE SIMPLE

Let's say you have a simple program called "add" that reads two lines of text from your terminal, puts those lines together, and writes them back out. Here is how that might look on Unix. What you type is in italics, and Unix responds in bold face.

```
$add
This is a short test of add.
This is a short test of add.
$

When Unix prompts with its "$", you simply type the name of the program to be executed. Then Unix finds this program and begins to run it, with the results as shown. Now suppose you want to save the results of the program in a file instead of printing them out. Instead of rewriting the program to create the file, open it, then write to the file and finally close it (as would be necessary on almost any other operating system). Just let Unix do the work. Simply type:

```
$ add > resultfile
This is another test of the add program.
$

Notice that this time, Unix returned immediately with its prompt. A file called "resultfile" has been automatically created by the system. If we were to look at it, we would see its contents were simply:

```
This is another test of the add program.
$

The notation "> " is clear in its meaning: send the results the way it points. The command line would usually be read aloud as "add, redirected to resultfile." This redirection of output can, as mentioned, be done to almost any device. The actual devices are accessed through their entries in the device directory, as if they were files. To send the output of the add program to the printer, for example, you could type:

```
$ add > /dev/lp
This is yet another test of the add program.
$

If you went over to your printer ("lp" is the general term for the system printer, actually short for "line printer") at this point, you would see that this is yet another test of the add program.

--

UNIX

part is that all this takes place with your current software. Your programs don't have to be rewritten to use these features. Output intended for the printer can be diverted to a disk file for spooling off later. The power of this package is that an entire user-friendly menu (written in shell commands, of course) is included just as a programming example. Such programs usually are sold as products on their own.

The Unica from Knowlogy ($95) is a group of Z80 utility programs that emulate, as far as possible, some of the most often-used Unix commands. While in some cases they duplicate the functions of programs you probably already have (file copiers and the like), they tend to work in more logical ways. The Unica programs support full "wildcards" in most commands, and redirection and piping among themselves. They allow full use of the usually neglected "user area" feature in CP/M 2.2, permitting easy use of large-capacity hard disks.

It's not really necessary to have a CP/M machine, though, to get a flavor of these systems. If you have a terminal and a modem, you can access several computers for just the price of a phone call, that can give you experience with some of the Unix features. Among these are the following:

CNODES: These systems use Unix-style commands, and provide online libraries of software that can be downloaded into your system. The eventual goal of these systems is to provide inexpensive electronic mail transfer facilities between computer hobbyists. Most software on these is written in BBS C. The systems and phone numbers are: Denver CNODE (the original): 303-781-4937; 24 hr; Norman, OK: 405-364-1373; 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays; State College, PA 814-238-4857; 24 hr, hard-disk storage.

The C Line: This system runs Microshell and some of the Unica programs, and has a bulletin board system and rumor "hotline" especially for Unix and C users, as well as providing some downloadable free software. Call 201-625-1797, 6 p.m.-9 a.m. weekdays, 24 hr on weekends.

Digital Research already feels the competitive pressure, and has put some Unix-style features in its new operating system CP/M-Plus. Quite a bit of competition will be seen as Unix migrates to smaller computers and CP/M moves up to larger computers. The eventual benefits of this competition? You, as a computer buyer and user, will find better software and hardware for less money.
Fast and Easy Graphics with a low-cost Touch Tablet

The Koalapad and Micro Illustrator team up to make sophisticated graphics a snap

By Joe Desposito

Anyone who uses a computer to create screen graphics probably has a keyboard bypass device on his most-wanted list. The new Koalapad Touch Tablet from Koala Technologies Corp., Los Altos, CA, makes it easy for this to come true. At $125, it adds a new dimension to computing for Apple, Atari, Commodore, and IBM personal computer owners. The Tablet comes with disk software called the KoalaWare Micro Illustrator.
to get one started, with other software packages priced at less than $50 each. This ability to permit the user to draw and point to images on the video display while ignoring the keyboard is the Koalapad’s forte.

The Tablet. The Koalapad is relatively small (8” x 6” x 1”) and lightweight (1 lb) so a person using it naturally holds it in his hands. The active pad surface is a 4” square that’s slightly recessed with two pushbuttons located above it. The unit is contoured in such a way that it can be grasped easily in the left hand with the left thumb pushing one of the buttons and the right forefinger or a stylus doing the drawing (or vice versa if the person is left-handed). The Koalapad is easy to interface with the Apple II+ (which is what I used it on). It plugs right into the game port.

Software. The software package reviewed here, the Micro Illustrator, is menu driven, though the menu is not the usual kind. Menu choices are accompanied by visual images and each command occupies a rectangular area of the screen. Selecting an item from the menu is as easy as moving one’s finger.

One rectangular box on the middle-left portion of the menu is labelled “Cursor.” This is an automatic function. When the Koalapad is used and a finger is moved around the pad, the cursor follows it on the screen.

As an example of how other portions of the menu are used, consider the box labelled “Draw.” To use it, the cursor is placed somewhere in the box, and a button on the tablet is pushed. The Draw mode is then in effect. With another push of the button, the screen goes blank and anything can be drawn just moving a finger around the pad surface.

Other commands can be selected in the same way. Two areas of the menu are not commands. One is for a “brush” set and the other for a “color” set. The brush set varies the width and shape of the lines drawn on the screen, while the color set permits varying the colors. There are two color sets. Each works well with colors from its own set; but if colors from different sets are mixed, peculiar color reactions may occur.

Let’s review in more detail the commands on the menu. “Draw” permits drawing straight lines and curves in any direction all over the screen. “Point” leaves a single dot on the screen each time the button on the pad is pressed. With “Line,” a single straight line is drawn in any direction. “Lines” is for making continuous lines. In other words, after a line is drawn, the button on the tablet is pressed to indicate the endpoint of the line. When the cursor is moved to another spot, another line is drawn from the end of the first line. “Ray” gives a fan effect. If a line is drawn, the button is pressed, and the finger is moved again, a whole set of lines fans out from the original line.

The “Frame,” “Box,” “Circle,” and “Disc” commands are for drawing squares, rectangles, and circles. For a rectangle or square, a button on the tablet is pressed to establish a corner point. Then the finger is moved away from the point. A rectangle begins to form and grows larger as the finger is moved farther away from the corner point. When the proper size is reached, the button is pressed again and there is a rectangle (or square).

A circle is created the same way except that the starting point is the center.
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of the circle. For a shaded rectangle or circle, the "Box" or "Disc" mode is used.

The "Fill" command will color any enclosed area. However, one must be careful and not leave an opening in the area or the color will "leak" out of the area and eventually fill the whole screen.

An "Erase" command permits erasing the whole picture on the screen, but not part of it. If a mistake is made and it is desired to erase just a small part, the color of the brush must be changed to the background color and the part to be erased must then be wiped out. It's like a typist using "White-Out" to correct a mistake on a letter. However, the procedure is not that simple since the finger is on the pad and the drawing is on the screen. There are no markings on the pad that will indicate a corresponding location on the screen.

What I found to be the easiest way to eliminate mistakes was to use the "Magnify" command. This enlarges the screen seven times. Thus, it's like looking at the drawing under a magnifying glass. There is also a large cursor that guides one to selected points.

The "Magnify" command is also useful when doing detailed work. For example, I drew a small box on the screen and wanted to put a letter in it. Using the magnified screen, I was able to create the letter dot by dot. When I entered "Normal" mode again, the letter looked perfect.

The "Storage" command permits saving artwork to disk. One of the problems I found with the Micro Illustrator is that it had no provision for a screen dump. Thus, if a file is saved, it can only be loaded back onto the screen again. (Screen dump software and hardware is available through other sources, however.)

Finally, the "Help" command gives assistance on screen so it is not necessary to refer to the manual. I thought this feature was rather poor, however, because it only referred to a few commands. So I used the manual to clarify any points about the program.

A short manual is included with both the Koalapad and the Micro Illustrator. The manuals are easy to read, direct and to the point. I still found it a little difficult getting used to working with the pad and the program (although my nine-year old son took to it more readily). However, after playing with it for a while, I became accustomed to it.

User Comments. My reaction to the Koalapad and Micro Illustrator was very favorable. It gave me the opportunity to create graphics with the Apple II that I could do before only on a much more expensive graphics tablet. There were some problems, however. Every so often, while in the "Draw" mode, a line would jut out seemingly at random. I tried to discover if there was a flaw in the pad, but I couldn't duplicate the glitch at any specific point on the pad. This is annoying because, as I mentioned, it's not that easy to erase a part of a drawing. (I spoke to Dr. David Thornberg of Koala about this and found that the problem was in the software, which has been corrected.)

Also, I tried to determine the optimum speed for drawing on the pad. I discovered first that it is not necessary to keep a finger on the pad while drawing. If I lifted my finger off and moved it to another point, the line was drawn between the points.

What this means is that a straight line can be drawn as fast as desired (although there is some delay until the line catches up). However, I also tried drawing a Z for Zorro. Since a Z is made up of four points, it can't be drawn too fast or the lines will be in the wrong places.

The Koalapad Touch Tablet is available for the Apple II, II+, and IIe computers as well as the Commodore VIC-20, IBM PC and Atari 400 and 800 models. Besides its use with the Micro Illustrator and other packaged software, the Koalapad tablet data can be incorporated into your own programs using subroutines in the manual.

Koala expects to market a variety of software packages aimed at education and entertainment for the home market, as well as productivity enhancements for business and financial applications. In fact, the Koalapad has overlay locations that can turn the pad into a custom keyboard for certain applications.

The Koalapad and Micro Illustrator are a synergistic combination that produces a remarkable end result. I saw it...
The Modularized Computer

SONY'S NEW SMC-70

By Stan Veit

SONY is certainly living up to a reputation as an innovative manufacturer with its new SMC-70 Z80A-based microcomputer (a 16-bit 8086-CPU adapter will reportedly be available soon). It's the most modularized system we've seen in a long time, in contrast to a trend toward all-in-one packages. Moreover, it uses 3½" disk systems, as well as having provisions for Winchester-type hard disks.

The SMC-70 system examined consists of a main computer unit that includes a keyboard ($1475), a 3½" microdisk system ($650 for one drive/ controller and $1100 for two), a 12" composite/RGB color video monitor ($875), and a 136-character-line dot-matrix printer ($725). Software packages were CP/M extended for color and graphics ($150), BASIC ($150), Word Processor ($495), and SuperCalc ($295). Additionally, we had a 256K solid-state disk memory peripheral ($875) and a battery backup unit ($350).

General Description. The main computer unit consists of a rectangular housing containing 64K RAM of main memory, 32K system ROM, and 32K video RAM. The keyboard juts out from the front as an appendage that fits into a slot, while the power supply mounts on the back of the main unit. Between the power supply and the main block is a telescoping slide with a ribbon cable and edge connectors mounted on it. Here is where the system expansion modules are plugged in. The Sony's keyboard is a standard 72-key QWERTY type with five function keys mounted on the top of the keyboard. There are also cursor control keys and INS (insert), DEL (delete), CLR (clear), and HOME keys on the top row of the keyboard.

There is also a hole in the keyboard with a red button beneath it for system reset. To use it you must insert a pencil or stylus into the hole (your finger will not fit). This is to protect the system against accidental reset, though it's rather a stern measure.

There are two ways that an SMC-70 can be expanded. One or two boards may be mounted inside the main computer section by a dealer. In another method, expansion modules are installed between the main unit and the power supply on the plug-in bus. This type of installation can be done either by the user or dealer. However, it is somewhat more complicated than merely opening a cabinet and plugging in modules.

The color video display on the SMC-70 is what you would expect from Sony. I found it to be impressively good. To start, the characters are actually displayed in an 8 × 8 dot matrix, a somewhat unusual arrangement, but one that produces characters that are sharp and good looking. You have a choice of a screen display that is 40 characters by 25 lines or 80 characters by 25 lines, as well as eight colors that can be used for characters alone.
The graphic color display has four resolution modes of operation:

- Mode 1: 160 by 100 dots, 16 colors, 4 pages.
- Mode 2: 320 by 200 dots, 16 colors.
- Mode 3: 640 by 200 dots, 4 colors.
- Mode 4: 640 by 400 dots, B & W.

The border area has 16 colors. Graphics and text have separate display planes, so you can superimpose characters, graphics, and the border areas! The display capabilities are therefore particularly impressive.

Sony has incorporated its 3½" disk system into the SMC-70. Like everything else in this building-block system, the disk system is an add-on. It can be added by the user, but it is strongly recommended that it be done by Sony or a dealer. The disk controller is sandwiched between the power supply and the main unit, while the disk unit mounts on the top of the main unit. There is also provision for mounting external drives.

The Sony 3½" drives use rigid diskettes that can store 280K bytes of data. The floppy disk inside the package is protected by a sliding metal cover. All you have to do to carry them around safely (say, in your pocket, where they fit) is to close the cover slide. They cost $5 each in a “hard pack” box of ten.

Double-sided 5¼" diskettes, which hold about the same amount of data, cost the same price.

You can’t help being impressed by the KX-121HG Trinitron 12"-diameter component color TV Monitor. It can display either a VCR/TV video signal or a video signal from the computer. This is done by switching signals from the computer if desired. Loudspeakers (8 to 16 ohms) have to be added to the 28.8 lb monitor if one wants sound. The company also makes available the CDP-120 12" green-phosphor tube Monitor that’s as good in its own way as the color monitor.

Sony's SMI-7020 dot-matrix printer is a Centronics type parallel printer that is an 80-column machine with selection of type styles and modes from software. It's similar to imported printers sold under various brand names. Other options include a numeric key pad ($90) and a light pen ($175), both of which plug into inputs provided on the computer.

The SMI-7050 Cache disk unit is an interesting module that adds 256K of memory, which is equivalent to adding a super fast disk drive to the system. CP/M recognizes it as a disk drive.

The SMI 7080 Battery Backup Module option will switch to the battery supply to keep the memory alive if power fails. If the power loss is less than 0.5 seconds, the in use light comes on and the power is drawn from the battery. If the loss is longer than 0.5 seconds, the beep tone sounds until the ac power is restored. The battery backup will keep the unit alive. However, if the loss exceeds 7 seconds, the backup dc supply will be cut-off. Then the beep will stop and all memory will be lost. This system is not, therefore, an uninterruptable power supply, but it does prevent loss of data when the electric company “blinks” as it often does.

User Comments. This highly flexible general-purpose microcomputer system worked beautifully (color and graphics were superb) once it was connected. Putting it all together, though, can be challenging. Using the computer revealed that the keys are too small and, therefore, somewhat uncomfortable to use as compared to larger, more conventional key designs.

Its expansion bus method, while neat in theory, is cumbersome in practice. Just getting the solid-state board to work took three tries.

Using the SMC-70 is simple enough. You insert the CP/M system disk and set a small switch on the left side to disk position, and turn on the computer and the video monitor. The system does a self-check and the disk drives come on. The CP/M System Disk contains a few exceptional programs that are not found...
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on the usual CP/M system disk. These include DIAG, a complete diagnostic check of the SMC-70 that includes all the peripherals. This is one of the most complete diagnostic programs I have ever seen in a user package. Then there is a BACKUP program. Selecting it from the directory enables the easiest user to perform all of the disk format, system transfer, and backup functions, under the direction of the computer.

Another helpful program is SETUP. This presents a setup menu with programs selectable by number, including Time & Date Setting, Screen Attributes (such as color or monochrome with white letters), Disk Configuration (what drives are installed and active), and Automatic Program Execute.

These programs simplify using the SMC-70, especially when employed with the packaged applications programs supplied by Sony or other vendors.

We received a Word Processor and SuperCalc with our test machine as examples of the software being distributed by Sony. Calling major distributors of CP/M software to find out the extent of support for this computer, we learned that Lifeboat and most others will configure their complete catalog of CP/M-80 software in Sony format. A definite plus for Sony!

Of the programs supplied, we found the Word Processor very complete and thorough, but unyielding to use and hard to learn. We suggest that a new owner buy one of the standard CP/M word processors in place of this one, unless he is very experienced with word processors. On the other hand, the DBMS (Data Base Management System) is first rate, and easy to use and to learn. It guides the user step-by-step through the system providing menus for every operation. Not only that, but the power of this DBMS will match, or exceed any I have seen used with CP/M.

The SuperCalc implementation is not quite "standard" in that Sony has used color to enhance the spreadsheets so that they are easy to read and to use. This is one of the most imaginative uses of color for business programming that I have ever seen. It is not restricted to the SuperCalc, either, since it is used throughout Sony's software. I am sure others will adopt these methods. Bravo Sony! When it comes to the use of color, it takes a back seat to none.

The documentation is really great, consisting of loose-leaf volumes of manuals protected by slip cases and illustrated with clear, understandable diagrams and photos.

Conclusions. What a strange beast this one is. Its very strength (flexibility) creates a great weakness (cumbersomeness). A complete setup is a klutzy-looking affair. The main computer section with a different-height power supply at its rear and an attached keyboard at its front that looks like it's a third element gives the setup disconcerting lines.

Top the foregoing off with a monitor that must be located on a stand that straddles the computer to get the proper viewing height and distance, coupled with a plug-in numeric keyboard that sits off to a side, and you get the picture.

The price marks aren't bad considering the obvious high quality and expandability of the system, and the evident hardware and software support that Sony seems to be putting behind it. In sum, while the modular going-their-own-way design offers great flexibility at the cost of some setup and appearance awkwardness.
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A Computerized DIALING SYSTEM FOR THE TRS-80 MODEL II

Enhance the utility of this business machine beyond billing, inventory, and other office-type applications

By James Barbarello

Most TRS-80 Model II computers are used in a business environment. The utility of the computer in such cases can be expanded by adding the simple, inexpensive telephone dialer presented here. With a minor hardware addition and a little software, a TRS-80 Model II computer can “dial” any telephone number, maintain a phone book, and, when used in conjunction with the internal real-time clock, originate calls when desired. No modification of the Model II is required.

Phone Dialing. If you lift the handset of a conventional telephone and look at the cradle, you will see a pair of buttons that are normally depressed when the handset is in place.

When the handset is lifted from the cradle, these buttons automatically extend and close internal contacts (called the “hook switch”) within the telephone body. If you could measure the dc voltage between the red and black leads attached to the telephone, you would note that about 48 volts will be present when the handset is in place. When the handset is lifted, current flows through the telephone and energizes a relay in the telephone office. This action also causes the dc voltage to drop to a low value. When the system in the phone office senses that “your” relay is operating, it searches for an idle dialing circuit to connect to your phone. When this occurs, you hear the familiar dial tone.

In a rotary telephone system, the dial acts as a short circuit until it is released and its spring returned to the rest position. As the dial rotates, it opens and closes the telephone lines as many times as the digit being dialed. Another switch contact within the telephone disconnects the earpiece until the dialing is finished.

Thus, for the purposes of dialing, a telephone system represents a simple series circuit that is interrupted by the operation of the dial.

Since we are dealing with a series circuit, dialing can occur at any point on the line where it can be interrupted. The schematic for the computerized dialing system is shown in Fig. 1.

Circuit Operation. Prior to dialing, the computer signal to J1 is a steady 5 volts dc. Since dc will not pass through capacitor C1, the voltage divider formed by R1 and R2 holds the trigger input of ICI (pin 2) above the trigger level, thus keeping the output at pin 3 close to ground. In this state, current flows through R4, LED1, and pin 3 to cause LED1 to glow. Also, since no power is applied to the coil of relay K1, its normally closed contacts complete the dc circuit between PHONE jack J3 and telephone LINE jack J4. In this state, the telephone works normally and is ready for everyday use.

When the computer signal drops from the +5-volt level to ground, the negative-going step passes through C1 and triggers ICI. When this occurs, the output at pin 3 goes high to simultaneously turn off LED1 while powering relay K1 through R5. When the relay operates, it breaks the PHONE-LINE circuit in just the same manner as the rotary dialer. The time constant associated with ICI keeps pin 3 high for approximately 60 ms which is the same as the “break” time that is prescribed by the telephone company.

At the conclusion of the 60-ms interval, ICI times out, relay K1 is de-energized, and LED1 glows. Thus, by controlling the pulses coming from the computer, any number can be “dialed” just as is done when using the conventional rotary dialer. Power is provided by a 9-V, 100-mA dc plug-in supply through POWER connector J2.
Software. Three programs are required. Two, written in BASIC, maintain the computerized phone book and provide reports on phone usage, while the third is a machine-language program that controls the interface (Program 1). In this program, lines 110 and 120 turn off the real-time clock that would otherwise interrupt operation every 25 ms. Line 130 retrieves the digit to be dialed and stores it in the E register, while line 140 places a delay constant in the BC register pair for later use.

The actual dialing is performed in the loop of lines 150 through 200. Line 150 loads a 1 into the A register (this value is arbitrary), while line 160 sends this data to I/O port 0E1H the Parallel Printer Port (PPP) connector on the rear of the Model II. Whenever we send data to the printer" via the PPP, we must inform the printer that valid data is on the lines. Pin 1 of the PPP connector (STROBE*) goes negative for an instant for this purpose. A special cable connects pin 1 of the PPP connector to J1 of Fig. 1. Thus, by sending "data" to the "printer," ICI can be triggered. In Program 1, lines 170 and 180 use the delay constant previously loaded in the BC register pair (line 140) for a delay of 100 ms. (See the TRS80 manual for an explanation of SVCs.) Line 190 decrements the number of times the phone line must be pulsed. If there are pulses remaining, line 200 returns operation to line 150 (loop); otherwise, line 210 returns to the BASIC program.

Program 2 contains the BASIC program that maintains a computerized phonebook. Line 10 clears 5000 bytes for string storage, and resets protected memory to EFE0H (one place below where the machine-language hardware controller will reside). It then loads "Phoner," the controller program. Line 15 gets the date entered when you started up the computer and converts it to a MM/DD/YY format, while line 20 opens the data file containing the phonebook entries and checks to see that it exists. If it does, it calls the subroutine at line 11000 to field buffer 1, which will be used to transfer data to and from the file. If it finds there are no entries, it initializes the file by placing blanks in all the records (line 30).

Lines 40 through 100 draw a graphic representation of a phonebook on the screen. Line 110 prompts you to press ENTER, whereupon lines 130 through 240 "open" the phonebook to the first page which contains the instructions. Line 260 prompts you to press a letter key between A and Z to select that page in the phone book (both upper and lower case are accepted). When the selected letter is entered, lines 290 through 320 retrieve the data from the file and "turn" the page to that letter. Line 330 calls a subroutine to print a prompt at the bottom of the screen. At this point the arrow keys are available to move the cursor to the row and column to be added to or modified. When the cursor is at the desired position, depressing "M" adds to, or modifies the data the cursor is pointing to. This takes place in lines 340 through 400.

When the "D" key in depressed a request dialing, line 580 draws an arrow in front of the number on the line the cursor is currently positioned on. You are then requested to depress ENTER when a dialtone is available, or ESC if you decide not to dial (or cannot get a
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Program 2. BASIC program to maintain a computerized phonebook.

dialtone). Line 600 informs when dialing has begun, line 620 searches through the 14 positions in the number column, and disregards all but those containing digits 0 through 9, while line 630 makes the digit in question black on white (reverse video) to highlight which digit is presently being dialed. It then calls the subroutine at line 10100 to perform the actual dialing. When dialing is complete, line 635 passes execution to the Log Call subroutine, starting at line 12000. When the call has been completed, execution returns to line 350.

The Dial subroutine (line 10110) checks for a “0” and converts it to the decimal number 10. The routine then calls the controller program (via the USK command), passing the digit to be dialed (3J%), and waits for approximately one second before returning.

The Log Call subroutine (Lines 12010 through 12130) starts by prompting you to press ENTER when the call begins, or ESC to abort logging. If you press ENTER (ASCII 13), line 12050 obtains the current time (HH.MM.SS.), prints it as “START:.”, and asks you to press ENTER when the call is completed. Line 12050 also turns on the real-time clock display, which is shown in the upper right of the screen. This allows you to monitor how long the call is lasting. When you finish the call and press ENTER, line 12070 gets the current time, turns off the real-time clock presentation, and restores the graphics that were erased by the clock. Lines 12080 through 12130 calculate the call length, then store it, the start time, date, and the phone-book entries for the name and number of the person called. This information is stored in the PhoneLog/ Dat file for later access. At this point, execution continues through line 13010, which clears the command line and returns to the subroutines.

PhoneBook Report Generator (Program 3) is a menu-driven program that retrieves the telephone data and prints a report (to the screen or to a line printer). The three options menus are subroutines beginning at lines 1000, 2000, and 3000 respectively. The end option (starting at line 3000) closes the file and ends the program. The remaining two options are essentially identical, except that one provides the data to the screen and the other to any 80-column line printer.

The report may include all data in the file, or you can select a range of months of logging data. In this way, you can maintain a full calendar year of data, printing only what you wish each time. To retain this data after the year’s end, rename the data file (i.e. PhoneLog/83) using BASIC’s Name command (see your user’s manual for details). Then a new PhoneLog/Dat file will be automatically started the next time you use the Phonebook program.

To print data for a single month, enter the same month number for both Start and Finish. If you enter a Start number less than or greater than 12 you will be informed that this is an *Invalid Input* and allowed to try again, or return to the menu. Similarly, if you enter a Finish number that is less than the Start number or greater than 12, it will also be treated as an *Invalid Input*.
Construction. Since there is nothing sensitive in the circuit and it is simple, any type of construction can be used.

The finished board is mounted within any type of enclosure with LED1, and the four jacks (J1 through J4) mounted on the front panel and suitably marked. Power can be obtained from any wall socket supply that can deliver 9 V at 100 mA. The power comes through J2.

The interconnecting cable between the computer and dialer is fabricated from a 4-foot (approximate) length of shielded audio cable. One end is terminated in a phone plug that mates with J1, and the other end is terminated on a header that mates with the parallel printer port edge connector on the rear apron of the solder. The braid to pin 24 of this connector and the center lead to pin 1.

This header uses an AP Products female header 929975, cut so that there is a double row of 19 contacts.

Loading Software. Enter Program 2 and save it under the name Phonobook. Then enter NEW and enter Program 3, saving it under the name Plotgraph.

The easiest way to load machine-language Program 1 is to use the TRS80 utility Debug. Enter system to enter the TRS80 Ready mode. Now enter DEBUG ON. When TRS80 READY appears, enter DEBUG. Next, press M, type EFE1, and then the F1 key (do not press ENTER). The top portion of the screen will appear similar to Program 4, with the cursor at the first position on the EFE1 line. Type in the characters on the EFE1 and EFFE lines (do not press the spacebar or ENTER key). Then check to see that all characters were entered correctly. If you find an error, use the arrow keys to position the cursor over the incorrect entry and type in the correct character.

When all characters are correct, press the F2 key to transfer the code to memory. Press O (letter) to turn Debug Off. Now type DUMP PHONER (START=EFFE, END=EFFI) and press ENTER. When TRS80 READY again appears, enter DIR and note that you have a new program named Phonere. Before proceeding, make a backup of the disk containing all three programs—just in case. Finally, enter the TRS80 Ready mode and type Auto BASIC Phonobook F-2 and press ENTER. This will cause the computer to automatically load BASIC and run the Phonobook program the next time you start up your Model II with this disk.

Using the System. Before using the system, you will have to prepare your phone line. This consists of cutting the tip (red) wire and connecting the two resulting ends to the tip lugs of two 1/4" phono plugs. All remaining wires in the incoming cable should remain intact. Whether to cut or not must be your decision, since there are many types of phone hookups. If you have a modular plug system, you may wish to keep the cable intact, and use modular jacks wired into the interface. In any event, you must interrupt the tip (red) wire before it enters the phone, and connect the resulting wires to the J3-TIP and J4-TIP points.

When the J3 and J4 plugs (or connections) have been made, connect the interface cable to the Model II and the interface. Finally, connect the power supply cable to J2 and plug it into a 120-V ac outlet. If the power supply does not have a 1/4" phone plug on the dc end, you can either use a mating jack for J2 or connect a 1/4" phone plug to the dc end. If you modify the supply, be sure the +9-volt lead goes to the tip of the 1/4" phone plug, and the remaining wire goes to the phone plug's "plug" lug.

Run the Phonobook program. Then follow the directions that appear on the last screen line. Select a page in the book and enter some phone numbers. Save the new (modified) page, and continue on to other pages.

Now select a number to dial. Note that LED1 on the interface is glowing. Pick up your handset, and obtain a dialtone. Then press ENTER to begin dialing. You will note that LED1 pulses in unison with the dialing. Since you are not using the phone's dial, its muting
function is not available. Therefore, you will hear loud clicks as the number is dialed. This is normal. When dialing is completed and you have reached your party, press ENTER to begin logging. When the call is completed, press ENTER again to end the logging. You may continue dialing, changing the phone number data, or you can "close" the book. In any event, the last screen line will always tell you what to do next.

You might have noted that, while dialing was taking place, as each digit was dialed it appeared in reverse video. If you had entered non-numeric data in the number column (such as dashes) you would have noted that such data was automatically skipped.

**Note:** You must advise your local telephone company that you plan to interface a device to their lines in the event they have certain requirements that must be met for the installation.

To obtain a report of phone usage, you must end the Phonbook program (by "closing" the book) and then enter **RUN "PLOGRF"**. This menu-driven program allows you to select all data or only data for a given month (or range of months). You can print the data to the screen (TASK 1) or to any 80-column printer (TASK 2). When finished, select the END task.

**Modifications.** Different phone lines will accept different dialing rates. If your interface dials too fast for your line (or, on the other hand, your line can accept faster dialing) you can modify the rate. This is a two-step process. First, you can change the pulse time by modifying the values of either R3 or C2. (The rate is approximately \(1.1 \times R3 \times C2\) milliseconds, with R3 in megohms and C2 in microfarads.) If you change the pulse time significantly, you should also change the time between pulses so the ratio remains at about 60/100. To do this, change bytes EFE7 and EFE8 in the Phoner program per the formula: Delay (\(\mu s\)) = 6.5 \times (BC-1) + 22. We originally loaded BC with 15804 (3DBC Hex). Calculate the new constant, and convert it into Hex notation. Then patch the Phoner program with the new values. As an example, to change the time between pulses to 90 ms (90,000 \(\mu s\), use a constant of 13844 (3614 Hex). Since the hex number is entered as Least Significant Bit, then Most Significant Bit, we would patch Phoner A = EFE7, F = BC3D, C = 1436.
LAST month we introduced the ROM-based monitor and its entry commands. Here we will show how to use the monitor to create software.

All monitor commands require one or two character entries plus their optional address and/or iteration fields. Command lines are terminated by operating the carriage return key which starts execution of the command.

Following is a list of conventions used:

1. The > character is the monitor video prompt. When it is displayed, the monitor is waiting for a command entry.
2. The < character indicates that a carriage return must be initiated. This character does not appear onscreen, and is used here only to indicate carriage return.
3. Any values within parenthesis are optional. The parenthesis are not entered but appeared for clarity only.
4. The value “FA” represents the Full Address i.e.: an address that may contain both a segment and an offset address value. The segment and offset are always separated by a colon as in the form CS:IP (CS = segment register; IP = instruction pointer). The segment value is optional and if it is not used, then the current code segment is assumed to be operative.
5. The value “AD” represents an offset address value. No segment address is allowed within a “AD” field.
6. Any register pair designation may be used in place of an address.
7. All address fields must be separated by one or more spaces.
8. All entries are in hexadecimal with the exception of the iteration count which is in decimal.
9. The iteration count is entered by typing in an asterisk followed by a numeric value. The default iteration count is 32.

The Command Set.
DISPLAY
The format is:
D (FA) (AD) <
D (FA) *nnnn <
Example:
D F000:E000 *5 <
In this example, F000 is the code segment start address (however, since we are dealing with a 16-bit processor, this is actually F0000), E000 is the offset address found in the instruction pointer), and 5 is the number of bytes required to be displayed.

The absolute hex address where the monitor will actually go to is found by adding the code segment and offset addresses as follows:
F000 code segment
E000 offset address
FE000 absolute hex address
Thus, if the command D F000:E000*5 were executed, the first five bytes of whatever started at address FE000 (1,040,384 decimal) would be displayed. In our case, this happens to be FA B4 D5 9E 73, first five bytes of the Explorer-88 ROM-based monitor program as shown in Fig. 19.

The same absolute address can be obtained by using any combination of code segment and instruction pointer values that, when added, equal the absolute value FE000.

Being able to set the code segment value at 64K boundaries has the advantage of breaking up the 1 million memory addresses into sixteen 64K blocks which is convenient. Keep in mind though, that the flexibility of almost endless combinations of segment and offset addresses can be very useful. Because of its complexity, it would require a small book on 8088 addressing modes to describe how this addressing scheme is employed. The reader should consult any of the currently available 8086/8088 books for details.

The “D” command, can also be used to display the following:
D SS:SP *2 < (SS is stack segment while SP is stack pointer) displays the first two bytes of the stack pointer.
D 0:00 FF < Displays the absolute locations 00000 to 000FF. Note that the first 32H bytes displayed are the interrupt jump vectors.
D D5:0 < Displays the first 32 bytes of the data segment (DS).

REGISTER
Format R <
Example R (RP)
This group of commands is perhaps one of the most important features of the monitor. To know what has happened in your program, you must be able to review what has happened to the registers inside the microprocessor.

The 8088 registers are shown in Fig. 20. The general registers are subdivided into two sets of four registers each. Each segment is separately addressable which means that one register can be used as one 16-bit, or two 8-bit registers. All other registers are 16 bits wide. In addition to the registers, nine status flags are available.

An R followed by a carriage return will cause a display of all the internal 8088 registers. An R followed by a register pair designator (RP) will cause the selected pair to be displayed and allow modification of that pair. If a change is required, enter the change followed by a < (carriage return). If no change is required, entering a < will terminate the review.

A typical register display might look like this:

| DX | 0000 |
| CX | 0000 |
| BX | 0000 |
| AX | 04FF |
| SS | 0FFB |
| ES | 0000 |
| DS | 0FF0 |
| CS | F000 |

**Fig. 19. First five bits of the monitor program.**
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BLOCK MOVE
The block move command is helpful to relocate a program/subroutine, or, if you want to fill a portion of memory with a constant. The formats are as follows:

B FA AD AD <
B FA AD *nnnn <

The first address is the beginning address of the block to be moved. The second address is the beginning address of where the block is to be moved to. The third address is the last address of the destination block which could alternately be replaced by the iteration count designation which is simply the number of bytes to be moved.

The command: B 0:0 500 5FF < will move the data in locations 00000-000FF to 00500-005FF. The data in the source field is not changed.

The command B 0:0 500 *1000 < will fill 1000 locations starting from 00500 with the data value stored at location 0000.

MEMORY
The M command opens memory locations for display or modifications, and is used to enter programs. The format is:

M (FA) <

After inputting the M command, the designated memory location is displayed followed by a dash. If a space is entered the next sequential location will be displayed.

If a change is desired, enter the new data followed by a space. A carriage return will end the command. If a memory location cannot be changed (as would be the case if ROM or bad or nonexistent RAM were addressed) a bell or beep will be outputted.

INPUT
The I command inputs one byte from the specified I/O address to the Accumulator and displays the value on the terminal.

Format: I AD <

Entering I 61 < inputs and displays the state of the dip switch S1 on the mother board of the Explorer-88.

OUTPUT
The O command outputs one byte to the output device specified.

Format: 0 AD xx <

Where xx is the value of data outputted to port address AD

CASSETTE
The cassette read and write commands will not be discussed in any detail since the format used is the same as for the IPM PC.

TRACE
The T commands are perhaps the most important in the monitor. They allow you to single-step through a program tracing the execution of each instruction and observing the registers at every step. After execution, control is returned to the monitor and the new value of CS:IP along with the next instruction to be executed is displayed. Optionally, all registers may be displayed if the T command is followed by an R (TR command). This command also allows tracing more than one instruction at a time by entering an asterisk followed by the desired iteration count value. The formats are:

T FA <
T FA *nnnn <
TR FA <
TR FA *nnnn <

As an example of how to use the trace command, lets trace the PROM test portion of the hardware test. Before we start the trace, we have to make sure that code, data, and stack segments are set to match the definitions established when the monitor program was written.

Using the register commands, modify the following registers:

CS = F000 DS = 0FF0 SS = 0FF8

Now enter

TR F000:ECDO *5 <

This command will begin tracing the first 5 steps of the ROM testing program which starts at the absolute address FECD0. Note that the next address to be executed is EDB7. To complete the trace to the end of the test will require in excess of 16,000 steps because all 8K locations of the ROM are added together and checked for the proper result. Step through the first part checking the registers against the results you might expect.

The G command starts program execution at the Full Address specified. If no address is specified, then execution starts at the current CS:IP location. There is an optional break-point address that can be entered to cause control to be passed back to the monitor if the break-point is entered. The monitor loses control of the system. A dash or hyphen entry must precede the break-point address. All registers may be displayed after the break-point is reached if the "GR" command is used. Format:

G (FA) (-AD) <
GR (FA) (-AD) <

Try the Go command by going to the beginning of the monitor hardware test which begins at F000:EBD7. Make sure that the CS, DS, &SS registers are set as described in the trace test. Enter

G F000:EBD7 <

The hardware tests should now be executed just as if they were called directly by the monitor. To test the breakpoint enter GR F000:EBD7-EB05. This will cause the program to break at the beginning of the cassette test.

HARDWARE TEST
The format is: HT <

The final test described is a complete hardware test to perform diagnostics.

1. Read only memory
2. Random Access memory
3. The cassette interface
4. The interrupt controller
5. The timer circuitry
6. The DMA controller
7. The RS 232 port (not tested in the IBM compatible version)

Enter:

HT <

Conclusion. Keep in mind that the 8086 and 8088 are almost "clones," although the 8088 has an 8-bit external data path to memory and I/O and the 8086 can transfer 16 bits at a time, the two processors are otherwise identical. Software written for one CPU can run on the other, without alteration.

What is more important is to experiment with the commands within the Explorer-88 monitor. There is no way you can cause physical harm to the system by issuing wrong or faulty commands. The worst thing that can happen is for the system to "hang up." In this case, simply reset and start over.
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SCRIPT 64 EXECUTIVE WORD PROCESSOR is the finest available for the COMMODORE 64 Computer THE ULTIMATE for PROFESSIONAL word processing application. Featuring simple operation, powerful text editing with a customized word list dictionary, cursor and insert/delete key controls, line and paragraph insertion, automatic deletion, centering, margin settings and output to all printers. Included is a powerful MAIL MERGE when used with THE COMPLETE DATA BASE PACKAGE. List $99.00. Sale $79.00. Coupon Price $52.00. (Disk only).

COMPLETE DATABASE PACKAGE

A user friendly data base system that makes information easy to find and store. You can add, change, delete, and search for data. Print the information on a printer in any format desired. When combined with the word processor pack you have a powerful merge program that allows custom documents and personalized mailing lists. List $89.00. Sale $69.00. Coupon Price $45.00. (Disk only).

COMPLETE ACCOUNTING PACKAGE

This general ledger program is perfect for small business as well as home. It utilizes a double entry bookkeeping system. You only need enter one transaction and the computer will handle the other. All accounts are user definable and will build for 1 year, resulting in a file of all transactions by account number, month and year to date. Each month a current months’ transactions can be viewed at any time (99 accounts 187 entries per month). With this accounting program you will be able to monitor your financial growth as well as your expenses. List $59.00. Sale $49.00. Coupon Price $32.00. (tape or disk).
A MULTIPLE TEST-POINT

Measures volts at a number of circuit points simultaneously.
HAVE you ever had a situation arise in troubleshooting or aligning an electronic circuit when adjustments of a potentiometer, capacitor, or coil caused two or more test point signals to vary simultaneously? When this happens, you must either move your test equipment inputs from one point to another or use several pieces of the same equipment to monitor each test point at the same time.

The Multiple Test-Point Monitor described in this article overcomes this problem. It can measure up to four test points at intervals of 1 to 10 seconds. All four test points can have the same polarity, or two can have positive polarity and the other two negative. The monitor can also be set to operate on two test points only or "look" at one preselected test point indefinitely.

Circuit Operation. As shown in Fig. 1, the circuit is based on IC2, a 4-bit shift register. The inputs to this register are loaded with a binary "1000" when pins 4, 5, and 6 are low, and pins 9 and 10 are high.

When pin 10 is forced low and the right shift is activated by a signal on pin 2, clock pulses from IC1 shift the 1 bit to the right thus changing the binary word at pins 12 through 15. After a 2- or 4-bit shift (whichever is selected by S2), the 1 bit returns to the A output (pin 15).

Switch S2 performs two functions. It initializes the IC2 ABCD inputs to binary 1000 and sets the system to shift 2- or 4-bit positions. When S2 is momentarily activated, it places a low at pin 1 of IC3A (a set-reset flip-flop) which forces its pin 3 high. This high is coupled to pin 10 of IC2. With pin 9 of IC2 tied to high, the next clock pulse will initialize IC2. The low-to-high transition at IC3A pin 3 is also fed to the clock input of IC6A to toggle this flip-flop. When IC6A is set, IC2 shifts 4 bit positions, and when IC6A is reset, IC2 shifts 2 bit positions. The shift is actuated by a closure of momentary switch S2 for one clock pulse.

Transistors Q1 and Q2 are driven by the A and B outputs of IC2, while IC4A and IC4B gate bits C and D from IC2 to transistors Q3 and Q4, with IC6A inhibiting or enabling the two gates. When IC6A is set, the gates are enabled, and when IC6A is reset, they are inhibited.

Gate IC4B's output at pin 6 is also fed to IC5A to reenter the 1 back into the shift register A position after 4 shifts, while IC4C shifts the 1 back to the shift register when the system is in a 2-bit monitor position. Gate IC4C is enabled or inhibited by IC6A depending on whether the latter IC is set or reset. Gate IC3B puts bits A and B from IC2 through to one section of S3 to activate Q5. Transistor Q5 and relay K5 form a polarity-switching network that allows negative signals to be monitored at J1 and J2 without changing the voltmeter leads.

The clock signal generated by IC1 can be adjusted from one pulse per second to one pulse every 10 seconds by potentiometer R3. The clock output is fed to one input of AND gate IC4D, whose other input comes from the set-reset
Fig. 1. The circuit depends on the operation of IC2, a 4-bit shift register.

Fig. 2. A suitable power supply.

PARTS LIST

- C1—1000-µF, 25-V electrolytic
- C2—1-µF, 10-V electrolytic
- D1,D2—1N4001 diode
- F1—1/4-A fuse with holder
- IC1—7805 5-V regulator
- S1—Spst switch
- T1—12.6-V center-tap transformer (Triad F-25X or similar)
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Add a power-failure sensor to any ac digital clock

By James Antonakos

MOST digital clocks do not have the backup circuits (reserve power supply and oscillator) necessary to keep them running during a power outage. Thus, it is possible that someone glancing casually at a clock can be misled as to the time. One way to combat this problem is to install the “Power Out Sensor” in your digital clock. After a power failure, the circuit will “beep” until you reset the clock.

Circuit Operation. When power is first supplied to the circuit, a positive spike, produced by C1, is applied to the SET input of flip-flop IC1. This causes the Q output to go high and enables one half of the dual timer, IC2. The latter oscillates at about 5 Hz, alternately enabling the other half, a 1-kHz oscillator. The circuit will continue to oscillate until the flip-flop is reset by momentarily closing S1. This forces Q low and disables the timer. The circuit will remain in this state because the inputs to the 4027 are grounded through R3. Therefore, the circuit is actuated only when power is shut off and then re-applied.

The output from IC2 is applied to emitter follower QJ, which drives the speaker through R10. The value of the latter resistor is selected for the desired audio level. If the clock is a radio alarm, its speaker can be used, or any small type of speaker can be added. If desired, the audio oscillator output from pin 9 of IC2 can be used to drive any external audio system.

Construction. Assembly is not critical. The prototype was built on a standard perf board cut to fit into the clock to be used. A printed-circuit board could be used but is not required and is time-consuming to prepare.

Because CMOS integrated circuits are used, the supply voltage can be any value between 5 and 18 V, a range suitable for most applications. The current drain for the alarm is only 30 mA and can be safely drawn from most clock power supplies.

PARTS LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1, C2, C4</td>
<td>0.05-µF capacitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>1-µF, 35-V electrolytic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1</td>
<td>4047 CMOS dual J-K flip-flop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2</td>
<td>556 dual timer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>2N4401 transistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>2.2-kilohm, 1/4-W resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Normally open pushbutton switch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPKR</td>
<td>8-ohm speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Mounting hardware, perf board, IC sockets, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving TIMEX/SINCLAIR Tape Loading

Reduce troublesome dropouts and noise problems

By Tim Stoner

The Sinclair/Timex ZX81/1000 is an excellent computer for its price. However, as a result of design compromises made to keep the price low, there are some shortcomings. The most annoying of these is the delicate nature of the tape loading process. Frequently, a cassette has to be run several times before a good load occurs.

Although the tape SAVE/LOAD function within the computer is designed well, tape hiss, dropouts, and other forms of noise from low-cost tape can cause problems. The use of high-quality tapes may not solve the problem either since distortion produced by inexpensive cassette recorders can also make tape loading a frustrating experience. The purpose of the “Z-Dubber” described in this article is to improve tape loading and also allow the user to reliably copy a tape.

The Tape Signals. An idealized pulse train that drives the input of the cassette is shown in Fig. 1A. A sync pulse, or clock burst, consists of four pulses. If the data is a “one,” the four pulses are followed by a “silent period” of approximately the same width as the series of four pulses. A “zero” consists of eight pulses, rather than four.

The purpose of this specialized waveform can be seen in Fig. 1B. When the pulses are played back into the computer, they are applied to a one-shot multivibrator within the multipurpose chip. This circuit modifies the input (as shown in Fig. 1B) by creating an “envelope” of the pulse train. The four pulses become one clock pulse, which is used to synchronize the loading sequence. A gap after the clock pulse represents a “one.” However, when eight pulses occur, the period following the clock stays at the same level as the clock and represents a “zero.”

This scheme is said to be self-clocking, and is very tolerant of playback speeds that are faster or slower than the original recording speed. The data stream provides a series of evenly spaced clock pulses, each of which is followed by a data pulse. The synchronization circuit in the computer waits until the arrival of a clock pulse, then starts looking for a “one” or a “zero.”

It would appear that missing or misinterpreted data bits are eliminated by the conservative save/load design. However, the preceding explanation gave no consideration to the distortion introduced by the cassette recorder.

One of the principal reasons for tape-loading difficulties is that Sinclair/Timex does not supply or recommend a particular cassette recorder for use in conjunction with its computer. As a result, virtually every conceivable make and type of cassette recorder is being used to save and load Sinclair/Timex program tapes.

The pulses shown in Fig. 1A are those applied to the cassette recorder. The ideal waveform from the earphone jack of the cassette shown in Fig. 2A was generated from the waveform shown in Fig. 2B, the one that was used to make the recording. Unfortunately, these ideal waveforms are seldom seen. Inadequate high-frequency response can produce a distorted waveform such as that shown in Fig. 3A. Notice that the area where the one-zero information resides is predominantly positive. Depending at what level the computer makes its decision, the gap can become either a “one” or a “zero.” If one single bit is wrong, a checksum error will occur at the end of the tape, and it’s rewind time again.

Poor transient and high-frequency response combined can make the ideal waveform look like Fig. 3B. This is a very common type of distortion created by cassette recorders with a slow acting automatic volume control circuit.

Another form of distortion commonly encountered is poor low-frequency response that results in the tilt of the gap in Fig. 3C. This improper waveform can cause the circuit to make an improper one-zero decision.

The Mystery Buzz. Just before the computer starts to save to a cassette, a 60-Hz “buzz” occurs for a few seconds. Some users have blamed this on “motor noise” from the cassette. Actually, this is the sound of vertical sync pulses leaking out of the computer into the tape recorder. The Z-Dubber circuit will filter this noise below the level where it is troublesome. However, when making copies of existing tapes, it is a good idea to fast-forward the tape past the point where the buzz ceases.

Circuit Operation. As shown in the schematic diagram on page 86, the circuit is designed around IC1, a quad operational amplifier. Only three sections of the device are used. This particular op amp was selected since it is able to operate efficiently when powered by ±1.5 volts.

The input at P1, connects to the earphone jack of the cassette recorder. Resistor R1 provides a load for the recorder audio, while R2 couples the signal.
"One of the principal reasons for tape-loading difficulties is that Timex/Sinclair does not supply or recommend a particular cassette recorder for use with its computer."
into an active filter formed by IC1A and its associated components. This type of circuit passes and amplifies the resonant frequency, and attenuates all others. The center frequency of the IC1A filter is approximately 3000 Hz, which appears to be the approximate frequency of the recorded pulse bursts. This responds only to sine waves and ignores distortion which appears between the pulse bursts. The output of IC1A is nearly ideal and is shown in Fig. 2A. This is the signal that would have been produced if there were no distortion generated by the cassette recorder.

The output of IC1A feeds the inverting input of IC1B and appears greatly amplified at the output of IC1B. A small amount of the output is fed back to the noninverting input through R8. The feedback provides a small amount of hysteresis, which causes the circuit to switch states slightly above and below the centerline. The hysteresis prevents this stage from switching at zero crossings and thus ignores "glitches" and noise pulses which might get through the active filter.

The output consists of a series of four or eight square waves (depending on whether a one or zero is present). The signal is shown in Fig. 2B and is an exact reproduction of the waveform which originally made the recording. This output is coupled to the computer input jack via C5 and P2.

Since the original waveform has been reproduced, it can be used to feed the microphone input (via PL3) of a second, or "slave," cassette recorder. This can be extremely useful for making backup copies of machine-language programs and other difficult-to-copy tapes. The

input is grounded, the output on pin 14 is also high. Thus, no current flows through LED1. However, when pulses appear at the output of IC1B, the cathode of D2 is brought low. This causes the output of IC1C to go low and allows current to flow through the LED, thus causing it to glow. When the pulses make the cathode of D2 go high, the relatively slow discharge of C4 keeps the noninverting input of IC1C low between data pulses. Thus, the output remains low as long as data is passing through and LED1 steadily glows. This is useful for setting the correct level of the playback cassette.

**Testing and Using.** The circuit can be wired point-to-point on perforated board, or a pc board using the foil pattern shown in Fig. 4 and the component installation of Fig. 5 can be used.

Before installing the two AAA cells, set switch S1 to the on position. Connect one lead of an ohmmeter to one of the cables (ground). Measure the resistance to the plus and minus battery terminals. The reading should be in excess of 1000 ohms. If it is not, look for solder splashes, semiconductors inserted backwards, and so on. Don't insert the batteries until the condition is corrected.

With the LED, R1 and R2 correctly

![Fig. 3. Three forms of distortion involving poor transient and low- and high-frequency response.](image_url)
inserted, the LED should glow when pins 1 and 11 of ICl are temporarily jumpered.

Insert P1 into the earphone jack of the cassette with the tape to be loaded. Insert cable with P2 into the jack labeled EAR on the side of the computer. One half of the cable supplied with the computer can be used to connect the MIC jack to the microphone input of the cassette recorder for saving programs, if desired. It is not necessary to use this cable to simply load tapes. The remaining cable from the Z-Dubber (P3) can be left hanging until a second recorder is connected for copying.

Before attempting to load a tape, get the "feel" of the volume control. Even though the computer is not yet turned on, the LED should glow at some point as the cassette recorder volume is increased. Notice that as the volume is raised and lowered, the LED goes on and off. The correct setting is 10-20 degrees past where the LED first illuminates. This will ensure that "weak spots" on the tape do not drop below the threshold level. If the volume level is advanced too far, the signal may overload the Z-Dubber.

Once you feel you have the correct setting, rewind the tape to the start of the program (where the musical buzz starts), power up the computer and follow the vendor's instructions for loading the tape.

Normally the LED should remain lit. If it flickers off and on, the volume is set too close to the threshold and should be slightly advanced. As the tape is load-

was recorded and will vary from tape-to-tape. One will find that different tapes may require different settings of the volume control. Always add the few degrees of volume advance to that required to illuminate the LED.

Making Copies. The procedure for making tape copies is almost exactly the same as for loading tapes. In fact, to ensure a perfect reproduction, the tape should be loaded at the same time the copy is made. When the tape is loaded properly, the user can be assured that the copy is perfect. The signal to the "slave" recorder is essentially the same (except for a much lower level) as is fed to the input of the computer.

As mentioned earlier, the tape being copied should be advanced to just before the point where the buzz sound starts. This way, one can "edit out" the vertical sync noise that appears on some tapes. Always use good quality tape in the "slave" recorder and don't forget to leave a 10-second leader at the beginning of the new tape. This will eliminate plastic leaders, wrinkles, and so on.

Fig. 4. Actual-size foil pattern for the circuit board.

Fig. 5. Component layout diagram.

Schematic diagram of the circuit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTS LIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1,B2—1 5-V AAA cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1,C2,C3,C4—0.01-µF monolithic capacitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5—0.1-µF, 50-V disc ceramic capacitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6—100-µF silver mica capacitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1—1N4148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1—LM324 quad operational amplifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED1—MV50 or similar light emitting diode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1,P2,P3—12&quot; shielded cable, terminated in miniplug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1—100-ohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2—12-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3—1.1-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4—24-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5,R8,R11-1-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6,R7—10-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8—62-kilohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10,R12—1-megohm, 1/4-W, 5% carbon resistor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1—Dip slide switch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.—Suitable enclosure, perforated or printed circuit board, battery holder, for two AAA cells, tie wraps (3), double-sided &quot;sticky&quot; tape for securing pc board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The following is available from ByteSize Micro Technology, PO Box 12309, Seattle, WA 98111: kit of all parts and materials at $22.95. Also available separately: pc board at $8.50 punched and silk-screened cabinet at $6.50. Postage and handling prepaid.
No longer must one pay almost as much for the VIC "digital" cassette machine as for the VIC-20 computer itself. Frugal owners will be happy to learn that a simple, easily built, dependable circuit, costing about $7, can be used to interface the VIC-20 with any commonplace audio cassette tape recorder.

Circuit Operation. The circuit, shown in Fig. 1, is based on JCl, a hex Schmitt trigger package. The main characteristic of such a trigger is that it will convert an irregular input waveform into a train of clean, square-edged pulses at TTL levels. Typical operation of a Schmitt trigger is shown in Fig. 2. Diode D1 prevents the cassette audio from applying a negative signal to the Schmitt.

As shown in Fig. 2A, the Schmitt has an upper and lower triggering threshold. When the input voltage level rises above the upper-trigger level, the output of the stage goes high and remains high as long as the input voltage level exceeds the lower trigger level. When the voltage drops below the lower trigger level, the stage output drops to zero. This action is shown in Fig. 2B.

Note that, even if the varying input voltage drops below the upper trigger level, as long as it does not go below the lower trigger level, it will not affect the output signal. It is this "dead band" between the upper and lower triggering threshold that gives the Schmitt trigger the capability to ignore random fluctuations in the input signal level.

Since the circuit is not sensitive, any type of construction can be used (point-to-point wiring on perf board or a small PC board). Any pair of gates in JCl can be used. Power is obtained from the B line of the VIC-20 cassette port connector (with ground coming from pin A). To minimize chip current drain, ground the input of the four unused gates.

The cassette interface is connected to the VIC-20 cassette edge connector through J1, which can be made from any edge connector having 0.154" spacing.

Use. Connect J1, the cassette interface, to the VIC-20 cassette port, and connect the cassette recorder audio output to J2. Then, connect J3 to the microphone input connector on the VIC-20 computer.

To store a program on cassette, type SAVE, with the computer responding by printing PRESS RECORD AND PLAY ON TAPE. At this point, the computer halts. Simultaneously depress the PLAY and RECORD buttons on the recorder, then close SI on the interface. The computer sends data to the cassette recorder. The cassette volume control will have to be adjusted for the correct signal level. However, once this is done, the knob position should be marked and never moved.

To load a program from the cassette, type LOAD on the computer, then close SI. When the interface is not in use, open SI.

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**Fig. 1.** The circuit uses a hex Schmitt trigger package to convert the irregular input into a train of smooth pulses.

**Fig. 2.** As shown at (A), the triggering of the circuit is determined by the upper and lower levels of the input signal. Whether or not the circuit is triggered determines the output level at (B).
Digital TV—How Soon?
By Len Feldman

For some three years now, several high-tech consumer electronic companies such as Sony and Panasonic have been demonstrating what they call "high-definition" TV. The television pictures they have shown consist of between 1050 and 1150 lines per frame, or more than twice the number of lines currently in use in standard NTSC TV transmissions (used in the United States and Japan). European TV, which for the most part employs a 625-line format, offers far better definition or picture resolution than U.S. television, but still suffers by comparison with these experimental systems. In addition to the greater number of lines per frame employed in these systems, the aspect ratio (picture width to height) has been increased over the present standard of 4:3.

This was done to accommodate motion pictures that were filmed for widescreen viewing, but are shown on TV with their sides chopped off.

Although high-definition TV is certainly a worthwhile achievement, there is currently no way for such superb-looking TV pictures to be transmitted over the air. Present TV frequency allocations, established in the "dark ages" of television, assign a bandwidth of just 6 MHz for each TV channel, for both vhf (channels 2 through 13) and uhf (channels 14 through 83) service. This 6-MHz bandwidth accommodates the present 525-line system, its associated color sub-carrier signal, and even currently proposed (but not yet approved) stereo or multi-lingual audio channels. But an increase in the number of lines per frame would mean an increase in each channel's frequency bandwidth. The FCC is not about to revamp the entire TV broadcasting frequency band at this time, what with more than 80-million households now owning one or more TV receivers.

There has been talk of developing a new band of frequencies for high-definition TV, way up in the 12 gigahertz (GHz) region. In fact, some have proposed that the FCC make provisions in that "empty" and spacious frequency region not only for high-definition TV, but for digital high-definition TV. A digital system might require frequency assignment in excess of 30 MHz per channel, but such wide channel bandwidths are perfectly feasible up at 12 GHz. What's more, the 12-GHz frequency band is being proposed as a new satellite frequency band. This means that if the industrialized nations of the world could get together and agree upon a high-definition TV standard, we might finally have a single, standardized, high-quality TV service for the entire world.

One Form of Digital TV Is On The Way. While we wait for such a system, several manufacturers have been hard at work improving the picture quality of today's TV receivers. At least two of them have indicated that they intend to market "digital" television sets before...
the end of 1983. However, these digital TVs will still have conventional (i.e. analog) front ends and IF sections. The signals demodulated by the analog circuitry, which have a bandwidth of only 4 or 5 MHz, will then be digitized. The signal processing, including the analog-to-digital conversion, will be done by a set of eight chips that contain five VLSI (very large scale integrated) circuits. These chips, which were designed and produced by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. (ITT), are said to perform the work of about 300,000 transistors. According to ITT, digital TV sets using this technology can provide better image quality than is now available, at about the cost of today’s higher priced sets. Furthermore, the kind of digital signal processing performed by these circuits will allow for the introduction of additional features over the years, such as the ability to zoom in on part of a picture, simultaneous viewing of two station signals (with one picture inset in the other), and the ability to process teletext.

As for better picture quality, ITT claims that at least partial elimination of ghosts is possible. A digital TV set will be able to lock onto a sync signal to suppress interference from electrical appliances, passing aircraft, etc. Once a video signal is digitized, picture storage becomes possible. Such picture storage capability will provide a number of useful

Fig. 2. Block diagram of the video CODEC chip.

Fig. 3. How the video processor chip works.
features that are not possible using current analog technology. For example, it should be possible to provide a so-called pseudo high-resolution picture. The set would interpolate between scanning lines of a picture and produce additional scan lines that could be positioned between the original lines. This technique, which would produce twice as many scan lines, would give the appearance of a high-resolution picture. Not only would a normal-sized picture seem much sharper, but the resolution or definition of pictures projected onto large screens would be greatly improved. If digital TV circuitry should ever be applied to video cassette recorders, the ability to store images would allow the user to watch pictures in slow motion or freeze frame without the usual "noise bursts" now common on analog VCRs.

Digital TV is also expected to be of great importance in the development of DBS (direct broadcast satellite) transmissions. For one thing, it overcomes incompatibility problems between our own NTSC system and European PAL and SECAM color-TV transmission systems. Digital sets can be designed to handle all three types of transmissions.

In addition, digital TV would permit direct processing of satellite transmissions that are expected to include digital and multichannel sound transmission (bilingual and/or stereo audio). Normally, in the case of conventional receivers, such digital audio signals would have to be converted into analog form for further processing by analog circuitry.

How Digital TV Sets Work. A digital TV uses analog circuits until the incoming signal has been demodulated. Then both the video and audio demodulated signals are converted to digital form. Experience has shown that an 8-bit code is needed for proper resolution of the video luminance (brightness) signal; 6 more bits are required for the chroma (color) signal; 13 bits are needed, for the deflection signals; and 14 bits are required for the audio signal.

The digital processing is performed by five VLSI chips, aided by a clock generator, a digital amplifier, and a microcomputer that controls the process based upon the user's front-panel control settings. The five chips are a video "codec" (coder/decoder), which consists primarily of A/D and D/A converters for the video signal; an audio codec, which performs the same functions for the audio signals; a deflection control unit, which deals with the sweep synchronization signals; and video and audio processor units, which do the filtering and decoding of the video and audio signals. A block diagram of a com-

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**Fig. 4. Simplified diagram of the audio A/D converter.**

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**Fig. 5. Block diagram of the MAA2400 audio processor.**
COMPLETE TV RECEIVER USING THESE CHIPS IS SHOWN IN FIG. 1.

Demodulated signals from the IF amplifier, at the upper left of the diagram, are fed to the video and audio codec chips, which convert the analog signals into digital. These signals are then passed along to the audio and video processor units. These units are controlled by the central control computer, which also receives inputs from the user via a keyboard or an infrared remotely controlled hand-held module. Signals from the video and audio processor units are fed back through the converter where they are changed back to analog and fed to the color beam amplifiers and the CRT (in the case of the video signals) or to the audio amplifier and speakers (in the case of the audio signals).

A more detailed view of the video codec is shown in the block diagram of Fig. 2. This codec is a bipolar VLSI chip which takes signals from the i-f stage and converts them into digital in the A/D block. These signals are then fed to the video processor. The processed signals are converted back into analog by three D/A converters (two for the color-difference signals and one for the luminance signal). These analog signals are then fed into the RGB matrix, an analog circuit that combines them to produce the red, blue, and green signals that are fed to their respective electron guns in the CRT. The process is controlled by brightness settings passed on by the control computer from the user. The electron circuits on the chip can also be activated by a teletext input.

Signal processing that takes place within the video processor block of Fig. 1 is detailed in Fig. 3. The video processor takes the digitized output from the video codec and separates it into two channels. The luminance channel is filtered to emphasize high-frequency components, using a peaking network. This improves sharpness and picture definition. The signal is then passed on to a multiplier, which sets the contrast, and from there it is sent back to the codec chip. The chrominance channel signal goes through a bandpass filter, an automatic color control circuit, a comb filter, the color decoder, and then back to the codec. In the chrominance channel, the signal is amplitude controlled by a circuit that keeps the amplitude of a reference signal constant. In the NTSC and PAL color-TV systems, the signal codings for blue-minus luminance and red-minus luminance are amplitude modulated onto the carrier in quadrature (90 degrees apart). In the SECAM system (used in France) frequency mod-

processing the audio signals. The audio chip has two parallel-processing channels and an arithmetic/logic unit that shares them to carry out the required filtering operations. A block diagram of the audio A/D converter is shown in Fig. 4. It uses a pulse-density modulator and digital converter. The circuit samples a 4-MHz input signal and produces a 1-bit data stream, which is then converted into a 16-bit resolution stream at a 35-kHz sampling rate. A digital identification filter extracts the identification signal that determines whether a broadcast is mono, stereo, or bilingual. The parallel-to-serial converter multiplies the output to the audio processor, reducing the number of pins required for the chip.

A block diagram of the audio processor section of the audio chip is shown in Fig. 5. The audio processor takes the digital signals from the A/D converter and splits it into two channels. Each signal is then sent through a series of filters that control stereo balance, tone, loudness, etc. Filter characteristics are controlled by signals from the control computer chip and are based on user front-panel control settings.

ITT is, so far, the only semiconductor manufacturer to produce digital TV chips. If the chips prove reliable and the yield makes them economical enough to use in consumer products, the company plans to follow up with two-chip and one-chip versions that should make digital color TV sets competitive in price with the least expensive present-day color TV sets. ITT's own TV manufacturing division in West Germany expects to begin making digital TV sets sometime this year. The sets, to be marketed in Europe, will be able to receive signals transmitted by the PAL, SECAM and NTSC systems. Zenith Radio, in this country, also expects to begin production of digital TV sets using the ITT chips, but as of now exact dates or availability have not been announced. Sony Corporation, Sanyo, and Sharp International, all of Japan, as well as Telefunken of West Germany have also indicated an interest in the ITT chip development.

It appears, then, that although we may have to wait quite a while for a new TV system that is digital "from transmitter to receiver screen," digital enhancement of our present system of TV broadcasting may make the wait more tolerable.
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Homemade Electroscopes
Experiencing with a Geiger Counter

By Forrest M. Mims, III

More About Radiation Monitors

The subject of nuclear radiation often generates concern about human safety. I was reminded of this recently while gathering information for this column. I had taken a portable Geiger counter into a department store to search for radioactive materials. In the sporting goods department, I found what I was looking for. When I pushed the Geiger counter into a display of a hundred or more Coleman lamp mantles, the counter emitted a chorus of loud chirps. The saleslady was thoroughly alarmed. As you may know (she didn't), lamp mantles contain radioactive thorium.

This month we'll explore the topic of low-level radioactivity. We'll also build from common household materials a couple of electroscopes, a type of early voltmeter and radiation detector.

Recently I've heard from two manufacturers of radiation monitoring instruments in response to my coverage of this topic for this magazine (see "Solid-State Developments," April 1983). First, Mr. Al Zirkes, Marketing Manager of the Dosimeter Corporation (P.O. Box 42377, Cincinnati, OH 45242), sent a thick package of information about his company's wide-ranging line of radiation measuring instruments and related products.

Among its electronic monitors is the MiniRAD-D (Fig. 1), a pocket-sized monitor that displays (on a 4-digit liquid-crystal readout) radiation levels up to 2000 milliroentgens per hour (mR/hr). It includes an audible indication of the radiation level as well as a visual indication provided by flashing LEDs. The MiniRAD-D sells for $375.

Another member of Dosimeter Corporation's family of compact electronic radiation monitors is the MiniCON®II (Fig. 2). It displays radiation levels on a conventional moving-coil meter and includes an audible output. A useful advantage of this unit is its cable-connected, external Geiger tube. This greatly simplifies some measurements since the tube can be placed in locations where instruments with internal tubes will not fit. The MiniCON II sells for $450.

Dosimeter Corporation makes a complete line of electronic radiation monitors like the MiniRAD-D and the MiniCON II, but its best-known product is based upon an operating principle not included in my previous column. Noticing this omission, Mr. Zirkes wrote that I failed to describe "... the largest selling and lowest cost personnel radiation detection device, the Direct Reading Pencil Dosimeter, which sells all of the instruments noted by a factor of at least 100.

I purposely omitted direct reading dosimeters from the previous article since they are not usually considered electronic devices. Other such devices include film badges, certain plastics, and phosphor screens.

In a very real sense, however, Dosimeter Corp.'s pocket dosimeters are indeed electronic devices. In fact, they are the modern version of one of the very first electronic instruments, the electroscope.

Since Dosimeter Corp.'s pencil dosimeters sell for as little as $95, they are certainly economical. However, since they require a charger that costs another $80 or more, they are not as economical as some competing devices.

For example, Mr. Dan Sythe of Solar Electronics International (156 Drakes Lane, Summertown, TN 38438), the second firm to respond to my earlier article, loaned me one of his company's Monitor 4 radiation detectors. This instrument, which I briefly described in the previous article, indicates alpha, beta and gamma radiation on a scaled moving-coil meter and with audible chirps— not bad for a device that sells for $150. In its nonaudible mode, the Monitor 4, indicates individual counts with a flashing LED. While it lacks the ruggedized construction of its more expensive counterparts, it is compact and has a low power consumption.

Later in this column I'll describe how I've used the Monitor 4 to measure the radioactivity of several objects found in or around my homes. Meanwhile, let's find out more about the operating principles of direct reading dosimeters.

Direct Reading Dosimeters. The direct reading dosimeter is a modern form of the venerable electroscope, one of the first devices capable of indicating the presence of static electricity. The electroscope is based upon the well-known principle that unlike charges attract while like charges repel.

Traditional electroscopes are made by folding a rectangular piece of gold leaf into two equal halves and hanging it from a conducting support in a glass bottle. The electroscope is "charged" by touching a positively or negatively charged object or electrode to a metal sphere attached to the conductor emerging from the bottle. This applies an equal charge to both leaves of gold foil. Since like charges repel, the leaves will then fly apart and defy gravity until their charge gradually leaks away into the surrounding air or is intentionally shorted to ground.

Fig. 1. Dosimeter's MiniRAD-D.

Fig. 2. MiniCON radiation monitor.
So how does the electroscope detect radiation? The charged leaves of the electroscope will gradually give up their charge by transferring electrons to or receiving electrons from the surrounding air. Unless it contains moisture, however, air is a poor conductor of electrons. radioactive particles and rays have the ability to strip electrons from atoms that form air. These ionized atoms provide a conductive path for the charged leaves of an electroscope. Therefore, assuming no other leakage paths are present, the distance between the leaves of a charged electroscope is proportional to the cumulative radiation which has entered the space around the electroscope’s leaves.

Figure 3 is a cutaway pictorial view of a typical pencil dosimeter made by Dosimeter Corporation. The device is prepared for use by first inserting the end containing the contact pin into the socket of a charger. The contact pin is mounted within a flexible metal bellows. When the dosimeter is pressed down into the charger’s socket (Fig. 4), the opposite end of the contact pin makes contact with a metal member (the frame) inside the dosimeter. A charge of about 170 V is then transferred to the frame via the contact pin.

The charge is also applied simultaneously to a metal-plated quartz fiber suspended from and in electrical contact with a hinge on the frame. Since the frame and the fiber are given equal and like charges, the fiber swings away from the frame as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The sealed portion of the dosimeter that houses the quartz fiber and its frame is filled with dry air and is called an ion chamber. Radiation entering the chamber ionizes atoms of air, thereby providing a conductive path for some of the electrons on the fiber. As the charge on the fiber is gradually diminished by a radiation field, the quartz fiber moves toward the frame.

The position of the fiber can be viewed against a scale inside the dosimeter by peering through the instrument’s eyepiece while pointing the contact end toward a light source. Light enters the instrument through a glass collar around the contact pin.

A key component of the dosimeter is the contact-pin/bellows assembly. Since the bellows pulls the contact pin away from the frame when the instrument is pulled from the charging socket, the charged quartz fiber is electrically isolated from the outside world. Consequently, a dosimeter typically loses only about 0.25% of its charge per day.

The pencil dosimeter is a very important radiation monitoring device. Unlike most electronic monitors, it is truly pocket-sized. And although, it doesn’t provide an indication of the rate of incoming radiation, it does give an accurate measure of cumulative exposure. Note too, that although it requires an external charger, one charger can be used to service dozens of instruments.

A Homemade Electroscope. Figure 5 shows a simple electroscope you can make from homemade materials. For best results use a heavy-gauge copper wire for the conducting support. Round off both ends of the wire with a small file and fine sanding paper. This eliminates sharp edges and burrs that would otherwise serve as discharge points for the charged leaves. Insert the support wire through a cork and form it as shown in the figure.

Some hobby and craft stores sell gold leaf which you can use to make a traditional electroscope. But I’ve used both standard and heavy-duty aluminum foil with good results. The standard gauge works best.

Prepare the foil by cutting it with sharp scissors to the size you plan to use. The finished size isn’t critical so long as the leaves don’t touch the sides of the bottle. Next, smooth the foil by placing it on a flat surface and stroking it a few times with a smooth pencil or your thumb. For best results, the foil should be as flat as possible. But this is not easy since it tends to curl when stroked.

After you smooth the foil, fold it in two equal sections over the edge of a piece of cardboard and hang the foil leaves over the support wired. Insert the cork with support wire and foil leaves into the jar as shown in Fig. 5. The leaves should be closely spaced and parallel to one another.

You can charge this homemade electroscope simply by touching the exposed end of the support wire with a comb you’ve stroked a few times through your hair. If both your hair and the comb are dry, the leaves will fly apart and remain extended for at least a
few seconds. On a very dry day, they will stay apart for quite some time.

If the leaves appear to stick to the sides of the bottle, use a larger container or smaller leaves. If the leaves fail to diverge when the electroscope is charged, make sure they have not become attached to one another at any slight nicks or frayed edges along the edge of the foil.

Failure of the leaves to diverge may indicate moist air in the electroscope's bottle (its ion chamber). Assuming everything else checks out, but the leaves still fail to repel one another, it may be necessary to replace the air in the bottle with dry air.

Several companies sell cans of pressurized, filtered, dry air for blowing dust from photographic film and mechanical devices. I've used good results using such air in my homemade electrosopes. Just remove the cork and leaves, squirt a dose of dry air into the bottle, and quickly replace the cork and leaves.

When you place a radioactive sample (see below) near the exposed electroscope wire, the leaves will begin to collapse at a much faster rate than normal. Move the sample away and the leaves will stop falling. This proves that a charged electroscope, even one made with household materials, can indeed detect ionizing radiation.

A Better Electroscope. Figure 6 shows another homemade electroscope with which I've experimented. It differs from the first in that it has but one moving leaf. The second leaf had been replaced by a rigid rectangle of two-sided copper-plated printed-circuit board.

The support member is a copper wire soldered to the back side of the pc board and bent around to the front side to form a support for the movable leaf. The leaf is a strip of smooth, flat aluminum foil. Shape the foil by wrapping one end of it around a wire with a diameter larger than that of the support wire. Then slip the resulting foil tube over the support wire to form a hinged leaf.

This electroscope can be installed in a plastic pill bottle much like the one in Fig. 5. I used, however, a small glass bottle of the type used to ship soft contact lenses. The bottle has a plastic cap into which you can easily insert the support wire. The cap provides a secure seal and is easily removed.

Note that this electroscope doesn't have a protruding wire contact. This greatly reduces the possible leakage paths and preserves the electroscope's charge for a longer time.

A Non-Electronic Electroscope Amplifier. You can amplify the motion of the leaves of an electroscope by reflecting a narrow beam of light from one of the leaves. If the reflected spot of light is directed toward a white card marked with an appropriate scale, you can easily measure movements of the leaf.

Figure 7 shows how you can use a helium-neon laser for this purpose. For best results, make sure the shiny side of the aluminum foil electroscope leaf faces outward.

If you place the white card a few feet away from the electroscope, the reflected spot of light may move 6° or more as the leaf falls from its fully charged, extended position. Since the foil surface is not perfectly flat, the reflected spot of light will be fairly large and blurred around the edges. Nevertheless, by arranging the electroscope, laser and card in suitable positions, you should have little difficulty detecting very tiny movements of the electroscope's leaf when a sample of radioactive material is placed near its external electrode.

Radiation Sources. By now you may be wondering where to obtain a radioactive source to check out a homemade electroscope. One possibility is to purchase a source from a manufacturer or distributor of radiation monitors. For instance, Dosimeter Corporation sells a source containing 5-microcuries or cesium 137 for $35.

You can obtain other sources for considerably less, though. The cheapest is probably a thorium impregnated lamp mantel made by Coleman, Aladdin and Gaz. These mantles contain thorium-232, an isotope that can be bred into uranium-233, the fissile isotope used in nuclear reactors and weapons. Thorium-232 emits alpha particles, and decays through a series of ten radioactive daughters (subsequent elements), the first being a beta emitter, radium-228.

Another reasonably low-priced radioactive source is the polonium-210 used in Staticmaster dust removers, a product of Nuclear Products Company (Box 5178, El Monte, CA 91734). The Staticmaster is a soft brush equipped with a replaceable cartridge containing a strip of metal coated with polonium-
210, permanently encapsulated in tiny ceramic beads. The polonium-210 emits a potent spray of alpha particles that ionizes the air near the brush. This provides a conductive path for the static charge that attracts dust particles to glass lenses, phonograph records, and photographic film.

StaticMaster brushes (they come in two sizes) and replacement cartridges are available from some audio equipment and camera stores. If you just want a radioactive source, buy only a replacement cartridge. Be sure to comply with the safety precautions supplied with the cartridge.

Experimenting with a Geiger Counter. Solar Electronics International's Monitor 4 is a compact Geiger counter that indicates radiation levels by means of a moving-coil meter, flashing LED, and an audible chirp generator. The instrument incorporates CMOS circuitry and consumes only about 3 mW in a low radiation field. This provides a life of up to 2000 hours for the 9-V battery that powers the instrument, so long as the radiation level doesn't exceed a nominal background.

The Monitor 4 uses a Geiger tube having a mica end-window to permit the detection of alpha particles. The tube also detects beta particles and gamma and x-radiation.

I've used the Monitor 4 to detect radiation from several sources. For example, a Coleman lamp mantle lying on a flat surface produces a reading of 0.1 to 0.2 mR/hr when the Geiger tube's port is placed directly over the mantle. Rolling the mantle into a tight bundle and placing it next to the port gave a reading of 0.4 to 0.5 mR/hr.

When I placed a sheet of paper between the mantle and Geiger tube, the radiation level was only slightly lowered. Since alpha particles are stopped by paper, the bulk of the radiation appears to be beta particles emitted by the radium-228 byproduct of the thorium in the mantle.

I've also used the Monitor 4 to detect the alpha emission from the polonium-210 microbeads in a Staticmaster IC200 static eliminating brush. When the Geiger tube port is placed directly against the grid over the polonium-210 microbeads, the radiation level exceeds the Monitor 4's maximum detection level of 50 mR/hr. Alpha particles are blocked by only a few centimeters of air. When the grid over the polonium-210 is placed exactly 1-cm from the Geiger tube port, the radiation level is 10 mR/hr. At 2-cm, the level is too low to measure.

Since polonium-210 decays with time, Staticmaster cartridges are stamped with an expiration date. Therefore, the measurements you obtain may differ from those I obtained.

You can use the Monitor 4 and similar monitors to detect very low levels of radiation if you first determine the natural background count. The background count can range from several to more than a hundred counts per minute, although the typical figure is between 10 and 25 counts per minute.

The background count is caused by cosmic rays, the natural radioactivity present in soil, and perhaps the building materials of your home or office. The background count can vary with atmo-
spheric conditions. For instance, a tightly sealed home can collect a higher than usual accumulation of radioactive radon gas emitted by construction ma-
terials such as brick and any other radon source. After you measure the background count, you can proceed to check suspect-low level radiation sources. For instance, on a day when the background was 16 counts per minute (averaged over 5 minutes), the center of the screen of a color television set I use as a computer monitor gave a count of 28 per minute. While this figure is nearly double the background rate, it's still low.

Other radioactive sources around my home, checked on a day when the background averaged 11 counts per minute, include a glazed brick used as a step for a storage building (40 counts/minute) and a ceramic tile entryway (16 counts/minute). An ionization-type smoke detector with an internal radia-
tion source produced no detectable radia-
tion above the background count.

Other household radiation sources include older pieces of earthenware-glazed with orange or red pigment containing uranium oxide. And though

Mr. Milo Voss, Manager of Safety, Health and Plant Protection at the Ames Laboratory of the U.S. Depart-
ment of Energy, is one of many health physicists who have studied low-level background radiation. In a recent tele-
phone conversation, Mr. Voss recounted how aerial surveys have spotted higher than usual radiation levels over some cemeteries and golf courses. Ap-
parently the radiation sources are the granite headstones in the cemeteries and the phosphate fertilizer spread over the greens of the golf courses. Mr. Voss also observed that pilots and passengers of high flying aircraft are exposed to higher than usual levels of radiation.

Summing Up. The subject of nuclear fission always generates considerable controversy, particularly when so-called minimum acceptable exposure levels are discussed. Some health physi-
cists believe no level of exposure can be incurred without some risk to the popu-
lation. Others feel this view is far too ex-
treme, particularly in light of the natu-
ral occurring background radiation to which we are all subjected.

Milo Voss, for instance, has studied thorium in some detail and concluded in a 1979 report that the material is rela-
tively safe unless it is inhaled or inges-
ted. On the other hand, Walter Wagner, a Veterans Administration health phys-
icist, has filed a $300 million class ac-
tion lawsuit against the Coleman Com-
pany and other manufacturers of lanter mantles. Mr. Wagner is con-
vinced that the thorium in the mantles constitutes a public health hazard.

Despite their divergent views regarding exposure levels, both sides agree that, for better or worse, naturally occurring radioactive sources abound. They are found in granite, bricks, grains, soils, and even in our bodies. The call for frequent housing of a DIP type integrated cir-
cuit can be slightly radioactive.

Another area of agreement is that ra-
diation, no matter its source, is very dif-
cult to accurately measure—much more difficult than measuring light.

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  - DB25PC/P Vertical PC-Mount 1.49
  - DB25PC/S Vertical PC-Mount 1.69

- Transistors:
  - 2N3904 TO-92 100/7.95
  - 2N3906 TO-92 100/7.95
  - PN2222 TO-92 100/7.95

- Ceramic Monolithic Caps at the Price of Disc:
  - 1UF-MONO 100/12.00
  - 0.1UF-MONO 100/11.00
  - 0.01UF-MONO 100/10.00

- Prime LED’s:
  - Jumbo Red 100/8.00
  - Jumbo Yellow 100/12.00
  - Jumbo Green 100/12.00
  - 5022-7760 10/9.75

- Special thanks to Matt for his recent software developments which will enable JDR to better serve our customers.

- Visit Our Expanded Retail Store New Saturday Hours 10-3

- Visit Our Retail Store
  - Hours: Mon-Wed & Fri 9:30-5
  - Thurs 9-9
  - Sat 11-3

- Prices are subject to change without notice. We will match or beat any competitor’s price provided it is not below our cost.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Integrated Circuits</th>
<th>Integrated Circuits</th>
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<td>100M Ohm Resistors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Texas Instruments Gold Edgecard Connectors**

**Panasonic LS Series**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**NEW Kit**

**Panasonic TSW Series**

Large Volume Incremental Discounts
BUILDERS GET MORE AT RADIO SHACK!

Low Prices! High Quality! Wide Selection!

### Replacement Transistors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Cat. No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>276-2007</td>
<td>Each</td>
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<td>MPS229A NPN</td>
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<td>PN2484 NPN</td>
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<td>MPS3904 NPN</td>
<td>276-2016</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>.69</td>
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<td>TIP311 NPN</td>
<td>276-2017</td>
<td>Each</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIP3055 NPN</td>
<td>276-2020</td>
<td>Each</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPS2907 NPN</td>
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<td>Each</td>
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<td>MJE34 NPN</td>
<td>274-2017</td>
<td>Each</td>
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<td>2N9053 NPN</td>
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<td>MJ2955 NPN</td>
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<td>MPSA13 NPN</td>
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<td>MSPA42 NPN</td>
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<td>MJ4891 UJT</td>
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<td>2N3619 N-FET</td>
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<td>MFP102 N-FET</td>
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### Computer Connectors

#### Power Transformers

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<td>Mini 12.0</td>
<td>300 mA</td>
<td>273-1385</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini 24.0</td>
<td>300 mA</td>
<td>273-1386</td>
<td>2.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini 12.0 CT</td>
<td>450 mA</td>
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<td>Mini 24.0 CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Std. 6.3</td>
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<td>Std. 12.6 CT</td>
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### Tantalum Capacitors

#### ±20% Tolerance

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<td>0.47</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
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<td>10</td>
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### Electrolytic Capacitors

#### Axial Leads

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### PC-Mount Leads

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1k</td>
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<tr>
<td>10k</td>
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<tr>
<td>100k</td>
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### Miniature PC-Mount Pots

#### ±1% Tolerance

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<td>.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>50k</td>
<td>271-958</td>
<td>.39</td>
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### Submini Toggle Switches

10A at 25VAC. Each includes 4 colored handle covers. "H" mounting holes.

### RF/IF Components

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>MC1330 Video Detector IC, 8-pin DIP with data, 276-1757</td>
<td>2.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC1350 Universal IF Amp IC with AGC, 8-pin DIP with data, 276-1756</td>
<td>1.99</td>
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<td>MC1358/CA3065 FM Detector, 14-pin DIP with data, 276-1759</td>
<td>1.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFE4,5MB, 4.5 MHz Ceramic TV-Sound Filter, 272-1304</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA4,5MD3, 4.5 MHz Ceramic Discriminator, 274-1305</td>
<td>79c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 18-Range Multitester

1995

Big 3" Meter
With color-coded and mirrored scale
Measures 0 to 1000 volts, AC and DC, 0 to 250 milliamperes DC current, 0 to 2 megohms resistance, -20 to +52 decibels, 5½ x 15½". With test leads and manual. Requires "AA" battery, 22-201. 15.95
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