NEPACC NEWS

OPINION   by DAVE ORBIN

It is obvious that the sales of personal computers soared during the holiday gift buying season. Advertising for computers filled the airways and the press. We wonder if the machines sold can live up to the hype of the discount house sales persons. Put another way, how many computers will be shoved under the family T.V. by the end of January?

You may ask what difference it makes whether these machines ever get used. We think that the first introduction to computers is very important to every computer owner. If a person spends hundreds or thousands for a computer, for which there is no use, that person will sooner or later regret the purchase.   The public image of computers is not really that great anyway. Computers will be used only if owners find them useful. A new computer owner should ask, "What makes the computer better than a T.V. game?"

Application is the test of a computer's value. We are not talking about game cartridges, or programs to keep track of your 15 name address file or 4 bottle wine cellar, or balance your family checkbook. If a computer is going to be a significant tool it has to do the job faster and more efficiently than a paper, pencil and calculator. It has to do something that needs to be done.   Now we're not knocking games, graphics, music or math drills. They can be very entertaining, but they can also be had with a video game system, for less money. The real power of the computer involves more than entertainment.

Effective application of computers requires significant software.   What stacks up as significant software? We think that there is a great deal of significant software available. We would include word processors, bookkeeping programs, mailing lists, inventory programs. That short list is based on uses we see for our computer. Each computer owner could have his or her own list. But all significant software shares certain characteristics. 1.   Good software is individualized.   It does the job you need done, in the best possible way. 2. Good software is updated. There is always room for improvement. 3.   Good software is easy to use and never assumes the user has a Ph.D. in computer science. 4. Good software is difficult to write and will cost the computer programmer a good deal of time, and the computer user a good deal of money. The investment in software makes the investment in the computer worthwhile. 5. Good software never takes longer to do a job than any other method. In calculating this time you must include time to turn on the computer, load the program and data, and run the program.

Finding significant software is the MOST important task of any computer owner. It is a task that should be undertaken BEFORE the purchase of the computer. With the right software your computer can more than entertain you, it can educate you, save you time and money, and improve the quality of your life.

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TI-99A SOFTWARE TOPIC FOR JANUARY MEETING

The regular NEPACC meeting for January will be held at 8:00 pm on Friday January 14. The meeting will be held in room C-1 in the Classroom Building of the Pennsylvania State University, Hazleton Campus. The program for January will be a demonstration of software for the TI-99 Computers by Dan Cooper, Pat Galioto and David Richards.

USERS GROUP MINISESSIONS

NEPACC started sponsoring MINISESSIONS for various users groups in December. The sessions in December proved very popular and will definitely be a continuing feature of NEPACC meetings. This month we will be adding a new MINISESSION for members and guests who do not own a computer, but are interested in general information. The Executive Committee planned the session as a means of dealing with the request for consumer information raised by new club members and guests last month. The session will take the form of a question and answer session conducted by various experienced members of the club. If you are looking for answers to questions of a general nature this MINISESSION is for you.

The following rooms have been reserved for MINISESSIONS;

Apple Users C-102,   COMMODORE Users (including VIC users) C-118   TI-99 Users C-1,
TRS-80 C-117,   General session (for non-owners) C-101   ZX-81 Users C-118.

Please note that there are no planned programs or activities for these MINISESSIONS. All act: es at these sessions are up to the users of these computers. The club is providing the rooms to promote communi: among the users of these computers.

BASIC TUTORIAL

As this newsletter was being written the texts for the BASIC tutorial had not arrived. However we have been
that they have been shipped and should be available by Friday night. If you want to get your book earlier you can g
your copy at *the Hazleton* Campus Bookstore. Please call before you go to the bookstore to be certain that the texts are
available. The Campus Bookstore phone number is 454-8731. The text selected is INTRODUCTION TO BASIC PROGRAMMING, by
Steven Mandell.

All members registered in the BASIC tutorial are encouraged to attend the session at 7:00 this Friday night. Jim
Sahaida and Joe Dandios are in charge of the session.

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ATTENTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, FORMER CLUB OFFICERS AND INTERESTED MEMBERS

Club president, Paula Krisa has called a meeting of the NEPACC Executive Committee for 7:30 pm, THURSDAY January
13th. The major item for discussion will be COMPUFAIR '83. All officers and committee chairpersons are ask to attend.
ALL former officers and any members interested in helping with the planning of COMPUFAIR 83 are also invited and
encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held in room C-114.

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DECEMBER MEETING BREAKS ATTENDANCE RECORD (AGAIN)!

Over eighty persons attended the November 12th meeting of NEPACC! The meeting featured a demonstration of the new
COMMODORE 64 by club treasurer, George Lee. Those present had an opportunity to see the excellent graphics of the 64.
The demonstration programs also showed off the 64's built-in music synthesizer. We're grateful to George for sharing his
computer. It was certainly enjoyed by the membership.

Sixteen new members joined the club in the month of December. We are glad to welcome these new club members.

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TWO NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST TO MICRO USERS AND WOULD-BE USERS!   by JOE MARCHESANI

Looking for a source of information about microcomputers? One that is sane, current, and -- no easy feat -- quite
funny, too? If so, check out THE PERSONAL COMPUTER BOOK by Peter A. McWilliams (Prelude Press). In about 300 pages, many
of them playing with 19th century illustrations copped from Dover, THE PERSONAL COMPUTER BOOK tells you what they are and
what they can be used for. Already know all that, huh? Well, it also surveys the current models, and tells you what each
will do and for how much. Names names. Gripes gripes. Lets you know what to look for, with lots of kidding along the way.
The analogy between Atari, Apple, and Radio Shack with the big American auto manufacturers is itself worth the cover
price ($9.95, paperback).

For those of you who might be particularly interested in word processing ("If you write anything from a letter a day
to a book a month, reading this could change your life."), McWilliams offers THE WORD PROCESSING BOOK. Similar format,
overlapping content, same price. Naturally, in ITS buying guide, THE WORD PROCESSING BOOK emphasizes not just the
machines but the programs that turn the microcomputers into word processors. Updates on the guides in both books are
available (with SASE) from McWilliams.

While THE PERSONAL COMPUTER BOOK and THE WORD PROCESSING BOOK are aimed at people who know just enough about
microcomputers to feel insecure, either can be read profitably by the more confident or experienced. (The buying guides
are a good cure, as well for feeling oversold on whatever you already have.) If you would like to look at either of
these books contact Joe Marchesani (work: 454-8731; home: 788-4878). He is willing to circulate his copies among the
members of the club.

These reviews were contributed to NEPACC NEWS by NEPACC member, Joe Marchesani, Assistant Professor of English at
the Hazleton Campus of the Pennsylvania State University.

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MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER

At the request of numerous NEPACC members we are publishing our first membership directory. If the information
listed for you is incorrect or incomplete please contact the newsletter editor. We will correct it in the next edition.
Please save your copy of the directory for future reference.

HAZLETON CAMPUS AWARDED GRANT TO PURCHASE PERSONAL COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

The Hazleton Campus of Penn State has been awarded a grant by the Pennsylvania Department of Vocational Education to incorporate the use of personal computers into its Business and English courses. More than $50,000 of the grant will be spent on computers printers and software. Plans are to expand the lab currently in room 121 to fill the entire room. Eighteen TRS-80 computers and Printers have been ordered. The computers will be Model IIIs with 48K RAM and two disk drives. The initial objective of the program will be expand the use of microcomputers in the associate degree programs at the Hazleton Campus. Additionally the equipment will permit expansion of all phases of computer related courses.

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!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! USERS GROUPS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

TI-99 USERS GROUP   by DAVE RICHARDS

NOTE: CHANGE OF ROOM FOR THE JANUARY TI-99 MINISESSION. Due to the fact that TI-99 users are in charge of the program for the regular NEPACC meeting at 8:00, the TI-99 MINISESSION will meet at 7:00 in C-1 (the auditorium).

A suggestion made in the 99'er Magazine could be helpful to all computer users. Before typing a long program into your computer, connect a cassette recorder and make sure you have two blank cassette tapes. For each 10 to 20 lines you type in, use the SAVE command to record that program segment onto one of the tapes. Alternate between the two tapes each time you save the program. Be sure to rewind to the beginning of each tape before saving, so that you always record over and replace the shorter segment with the new longer segment.

Now you will retain most of your program even if the lights go out or you enter a QUIT command by accident.

Dave Richards has agreed to write the TI-99 Users Column for the NEWS each month. If you have items of interest to TI-99 owners please contact Dave.

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COCO USERS GROUP

The COCO invasion has begun. COCOs are TRS-80 Color Computers, and their numbers are growing daily. NEPACC'sCOCO owners have started a users group of their own and plan to meet regularly. The first COCO Users Group meeting was held on Friday January 7th at the home of Jim Baker. The next COCO Users meeting will be the MINISESSION this Friday in C-119 along with other TRS-80 users. The next separate meeting of COCO users will be held Friday January 28th at 7:30pm in the home of Gerald Greiner in Weston. Topics for this month's session will include upgrades, software exchange, and programming techniques. See Gerald at the meeting Friday night for directions, or call 384-3446.

COCO owners may find the January issue of Creative Computer of interest. In that issue Editor David Ahl evaluates the Spectrum Stick, a replacement joystick for the COCO. If you long for a better way to play those computer games requiring a joystick, check out the January issue of Creative Computing.

TRS-80 USERS GROUP

The January meeting of the TRS-80 Users group will be held at 7:00 pm in room 121 on the Hazleton Campus. All TRS-80 owners and users are invited and encouraged to attend.

If you are into creating graphic displays using packed strings can save you a lot of effort and memory. Stephen B. Gray discusses a simplified string packing technique in his column, TRS-80 strings in the January issue of Creative Computing. The new string packing technique was developed by Dennis Tanner, of Tandy's Educational Division. The new approach requires "DEBUG" in Model III TRSDOS. Using "DEBUG" does not modify the program in memory but does modify the disk file of the program. It appears to be a handy and simplified method of getting packed string graphic display. For more details see page 300 of the January C.C.

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CLASSIFIED

JOY STICKS FOR SALE. One ATARI joy stick and two old style TI joysticks for sale.   Call 454-0323.

Want to sell some equipment you no longer need. Classified adds in NEPACC NEWS are free to members. If you're interested contact the NEWS editor, Dave Orbin.

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CALANDER NOTES NEPACC MEETINGS

The enclosed calander is brought to you with the best wishes of NEPACC for a happy and prosperous new year. Meeting nights are circled on the calendar. Please save for future reference.

NEPACC NEWS is published monthly September through May by the North Eastern Pennsylvania Amateur Computer Club.
Paula Krisa, President   David Richards, Vice-president   James Sahaida, Secretary   George Lee, Treasurer
Dave Orbin, NEPACC NEWS Editor.
The Mailing Address for the club is;
NEPACC, The Pennsylvania State University, Hazleton Campus, Highacres, Hazleton, PA 18219. Correspondence should be
sent to the attention of David Richards.
NEPACC gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the Hazleton Campus of Penn State in the publication of NEPACC NEWS.

David P. Orbin
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
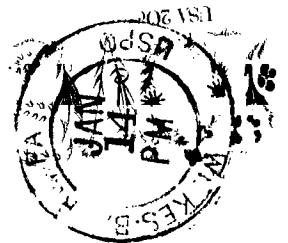HAZLETON CAMPUS
Highacres
Hazleton, PA. 18201

Edmonton Users Group
P.O. Box 11982
Edmonton Alberta
T5J 3P1

FIRST CLASS

NORTHEASTERN PA. AMATEUR COMPUTER CLUB

1983

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