AURORA AREA APPLE CORE NEWS

VOL. I NO. 2

WE'RE TAKING OFF!
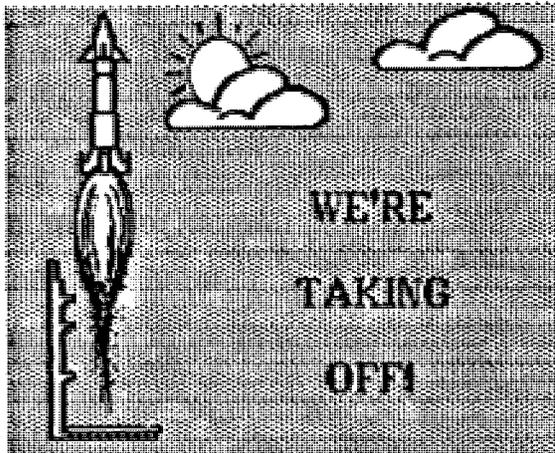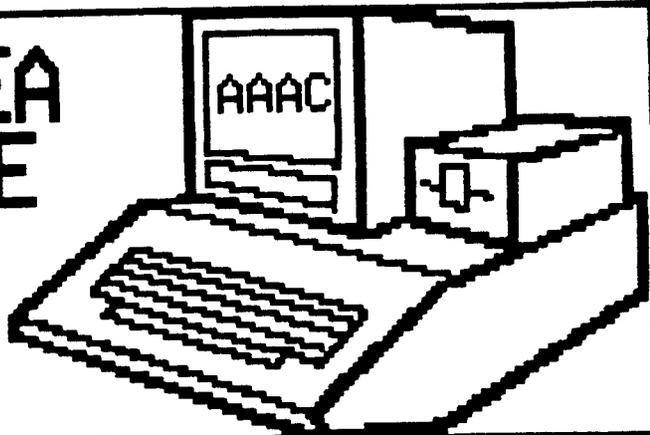
And we have lift off! Our first full fledged meeting last month would have to be rated a resounding success! A couple of highly unscientific nose counts during the AppleWorks presentation indicated we had about 80 people present. A very good turn out indeed.

If the first meeting is any indication, there are lots of Apple people in the area interested in participating in our user group. About fifty families filled out a membership application and I'm sure more will be turned in at the October meeting.

A rough draft of a constitution was handed out at the meeting and, unless there are any changes, will be adopted at the October meeting. The constitution contains provisions for making amendments, so it is hoped that we can get this one accepted as a starting point and make necessary revisions after the initial birthing process is over.

The organizing committee has suggested a dues structure of $20 a year per family. To encourage people to pay their dues early, the dues will be reduced to $15 for the first year if paid in during September, October or November. Beginning with the December meeting, dues will revert back to $20.

If you know of an Apple owner or user who would like to join the AAAC, please bring them along to a meeting.

We will continue to actively seek members unless the size of the group begins to outgrow the limitations of the meeting room. There will be plenty of work to be done in getting various activities started, so don't sit on your hands when asked to join a committee or serve as a group officer or director. The more involved you become in YOUR user group the more you will gain from the experience.

So enough of the organizing stuff! If you have a particular interest you would like to discuss, or a problem you just can't seem to solve, jot down a few notes and bring them to the meeting. I'll bet you'll find others with similiar concerns and someone with an answer. See you there!
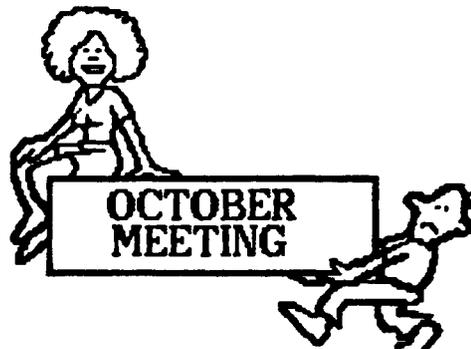

OCTOBER MEETING

The next meeting of the Aurora Area Apple Core will be on Thursday, October 10th, from 7:00PM to 9:30PM in the Waubonsee Community College Student Center Building.

The program this month will feature Ms. Jan Gilbert of Discovery Toys. She will present a short video tape of various software programs her company handles, followed by a demonstration of The Newsroom by Springboard Software, Inc.

Following the main program, a short business meeting will be conducted to review the group constitution and vote on its approval. Nominations for officers will also be entertained from the floor. After the business meeting, a general question and answer period will be held.

Be sure to come early for a good seat.
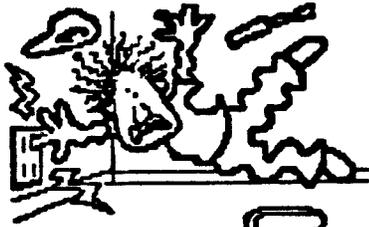
ELECTRICITY

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS ELECTRICITY, AND WHERE DOES IT GO WHEN IT LEAVES THE TOASTER?
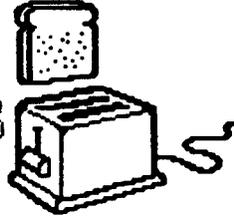
The following bit of humor comes via The Fox River Radio League, an area amateur radio club. It was first used by Bob Roehig, K9EUI, at the FRRL winter banquet in January 1985 and was printed in the Arc Over, the FRRL club newsletter, in April 1985.

Since Apples, or any other computer for that matter, do very little "computing" without electricity I thought you might find this historical look at electricity interesting. (My apologies to the ham radio members among us who will have to read it all over again!)

Here is a simple experiment that will teach you an important lesson: On a cool, dry day, scuff your feet along a carpet, then reach your hand into a friend's mouth and touch one of his dental fillings. Did you notice how your friend twitched violently and cried out in pain? This teaches us that electricity can be a very powerful force, but we must never use it to hurt others unless we need to learn an important electrical lesson.


It also teaches us how an electrical circuit works. When you scuffed your feet, you picked up batches of "electrons", which are very small objects that carpet manufacturers weave into carpets so they will attract dirt. The electrons travel through your bloodstream and collect in your finger, where they form a spark that leaps to your friend's filling, then travels down to his feet and back into the carpet, thus completing the circuit.

Amazing Electrical Fact: If you scuffed your feet long enough without touching anything, you would build up so many electrons that your finger would explode! But this is nothing to worry about

unless you have carpeting.

Although we modern persons tend to take our electric lights, radios, mixers, etc. for granted, hundreds of years ago people did not have any of these things, which is just as well because there was no place to plug them in. Then along came the first electrical pioneer, Benjamin Franklin, who flew a kite in a lightning
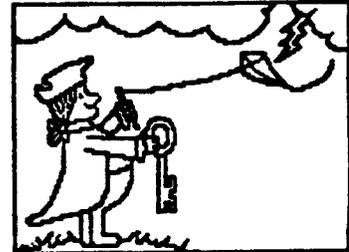
storm and received a serious shock. This proved that lightning was powered by the same force as carpets, but it also damaged Franklin's brain so severely that he started speaking in incomprehensible maxims, such as "A penny save is a penny earned". Eventually he had to be given a job running the post office.

After Franklin came a herd of Electrical Pioneers whose names have become part of our electrical terminology: Myron Volt, Millie Amp, James Watt, Bob Transformer, etc. These pioneers conducted many important electrical experiments. For example, in 1780 Luigi Galvani discovered that when he attached two different kinds of metal to the leg of a frog, an electrical current developed and the frog's leg kicked, even though it was no longer attached to the frog, which was dead anyway. Galvani's discovery led to enourmous advances in the field of amphibian medicine.

Today, skilled surgeons can take a frog that has been seriously injured or killed, implant pieces of metal in its muscles, and watch it hop back into the pond just like a normal frog, except for the fact that it sinks like a stone.

But the greatest Electrical Pioneer of them all was Thomas Edison, who was a brilliant inventor despite the fact that he had little formal education and lived in New Jersey near Bell labs. Edison's first major invention, in 1877, was the phonograph, which could soon be found in thousands of American homes, where it basically sat until 1923, when the record was invented. But Edison's greatest achievement came in 1879, when he invented the electric company. Edison's design was a brilliant adaptation of the simple electrical circuit: The electric company sends electricity through one wire to a customer, then immediately gets the

electricity back through the other wire, then (this is the brilliant part) sends it right back to the customer again.

This means that an electric company can sell a customer the same batch of electricity thousands of times a day and never get caught, since very few customers take the time to examine their electricity closely. In fact, the last year any new electricity was generated in the United States was 1937. The electric companies have been merely re-selling it ever since, which is why they have so much free time to apply for rate increases.

Today, thanks to men like Edison and Franklin, and frogs like Galvani's, we receive almost unlimited benefits from electricity. For example, in the past decade scientists developed the laser, an electronic appliance so powerful that it can vaporize a bulldozer 2,000 yards away, yet so precise that doctors can use it to perform delicate operations to the human eyeball, provided they remember to change the power setting from "Vaporize" to "Delicate".

A final note about electricity. The aforementioned phenomenon of static electricity from all those electrons we pick up from carpets during the cold, dry winter months should not be taken lightly when approaching your Apple. A good static discharge to the chassis of the computer can alter memory, damage chips or erase data on a disk.

Be careful when sitting down at the machine after walking across the room. Discharge static build up by grounding yourself to a metal desk, chair, etc. before touching the Apple.

If everything goes as planned, we should have copies of two Public Domain disks for sale at the October meeting. These disks were obtained through the International Apple Core

as part of the information purchased from them about starting up a new user group.

The two disks are: An Applewriter utility disk, which contains some tutorial text files as well as command files for imbedding print control commands for Prowriter and Epson printers, and a disk of graphics routines and examples that will help you understand graphics on the Apple. These routines could be used within other programs to jazz them up while providing you with some practical programming experience.

These disks will be available for $2 each at the meeting. This covers the disk cost and copying expenses as well as a small club profit.

Several people have expressed an interest on their membership applications in working on a club library of public domain software. There is certainly plenty of software for the Apple out there and a well organized effort should have a mountain of programs available in short order.

Several of the advertisements for public domain software indicate that some of the programs need a bit of work to polish them up. Any one with a basic understanding of Basic (pardon the pun) should find fixing up defective programs an interesting challenge. How about an incentive plan? Fix up a program, tell us how you did it, and get a new disk free!

NEW TRICKS FROM APPLE

Apple Computer has recently announced several new products of interest to owners of Apple II+'s, //e's, and //c's. Unfortunately, all the flap over Steve Jobs' leaving Apple, and the recently filed lawsuit against him, have captured all the headlines.

So, if you haven't already heard about it someplace else, here's what's new! Apple is joining the RAM expansion parade with a 1 megabyte expansion board for the //e. With all that extra RAM to work with, a 140K floppy disk drive becomes a major problem. Not to worry! For another $500, you can add a new 800-kbyte microfloppy disk drive. (That's "microfloppy", as in 3 inch disk!)
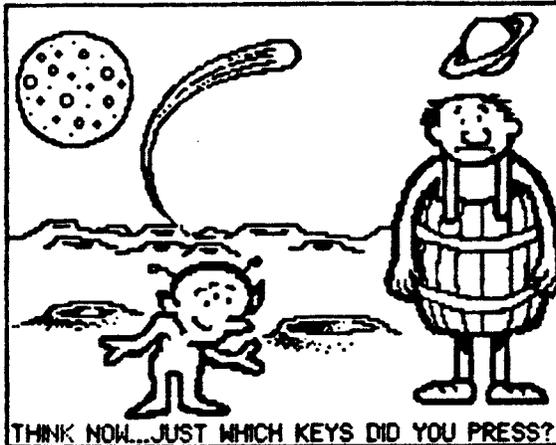
THINK NOW...JUST WHICH KEYS DID YOU PRESS?

Also new are a couple of 12-inch color
CRT's for the //e and //c systems.
Priced around $400, they are
supposed to offer improved high
resolution graphics capability.

Another $600 will get you a new
Imagewriter II printer. A dot matrix
printer, the Imagewriter II is rated
at twice the speed of the current
model and features sheet-load and
color capability.

For the modem set, a 300/1200 baud
system priced at $399 is now available
to help run up your phone bills.

All of the above products indicate
that maybe Apple has decided that
the sun doesn't rise and set only on
the Macintosh. It's nice to know that
Apple intends to support the basic II
family with new hardware and
peripherals.

The only one of the new products
that I would question is the 800
kbyte microfloppy for $500. For
another $195, the Sider hard disk,
with 10 Megabytes of storage
capacity, seems to be a much better
return for the bucks invested.
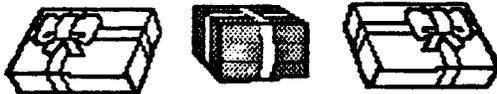
With Christmas only a couple of
months away, it's not too early to
start working on that list of got to
have goodies. I can feel the plastic
in my pocket getting warm now!

If anyone in the group has seen any
of these products demonstrated, or
intends to purchase one in the near
future, how about a product review
for the newsletter? I'm sure an
unbiased evaluation of any
partucular strong points or
shortcomings would be appreciated by
other members.

As we get more settled after the
initial rush to get organized, it may
be possible to have new products
such as these demonstrated at our
meetings by the manufacturers, or
perhaps get a loaner for evaluation.

A couple of people have asked for
help with some problems they are
having.

Bob Zeeck and his son Steve are
having problems connecting a new
Apple Unidisk half high drive to
their //e as the second disk drive.
Apparently this drive takes a
different controller card than the
Disk II card already installed and
there is a cable compatibility problem.
Anyone out there know of a way to
solve this one?

Dick Schlapp would like to know how
to get a full 80 column printout of a
basic program when listing to his
Imagewriter. A PR#1 turns the
printer on, but only 40 columns wide.
I've heard that PRINT CHR$(9) "80N",
which works on Apple Dot Matrix
printers and parallel printers such
as the Prowriter, does wierd things
to the Imagewriter. So who has the
magic formula for this one?

Finally, this one comes as a help
offered instead of help wanted. It
appears there is a controversy
raging over whether or not there is
a bug in the BSAVE command in
Version 1.1 of the ProDOS BASIC.SYSTEM.

Without going into all the gory
details, half of which I don't
understand anyway, it seems there is
a problem (a bug) when BSAVEing a
binary program to disk if that file
already exists on the disk.

Under DOS 3.3, if a binary program is
saved with a BSAVE (filename) A$, L$,
where A$ is the beginning address of
the program and L$ is the program
length, the program is written to
disk and writes over the previous
copy of the program if the file is
already on the disk.

Under ProDOS, the same thing is
supposed to occur. But if the file
already exists on disk when the
BSAVE is performed and the same file
name is used, the program will not
work the next time it is BRUN!

There appears to be three ways
around this problem: 1. BSAVE the
program under a different name on
the disk. This may not be possible if
the program is called by another
program on the disk. A PATH NOT
FOUND error will result unless the

original file is deleted from the disk and the replacement file is renamed with the original file name. 2. BSAVE the program to another disk and use the utilities on the ProDOS User's Disk to delete the old file name and transfer the new file back onto the first disk. 3. Delete the file name from the disk before BSAVEing the new version.

The last method should be used with caution. Do not delete the original file until immediately before you BSAVE the new version. If you delete this file right after BLOADING into memory and then lose power, bye-bye program! The main thing is to be aware that there is a problem. Think before you automatically BSAVE that binary file back to disk!

Well, I think it's time to bail out for this month. Hope to see all of you at the meeting on October 10th.

If you have an idea for a story you would like to see in the AAAC News, be sure to mention it to me at the meeting or give me a call.

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Editor
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