AURORA AREA APPLE CORE NEWS

VOL. II NO. 4
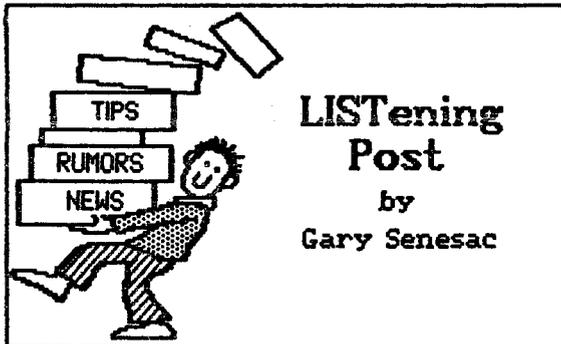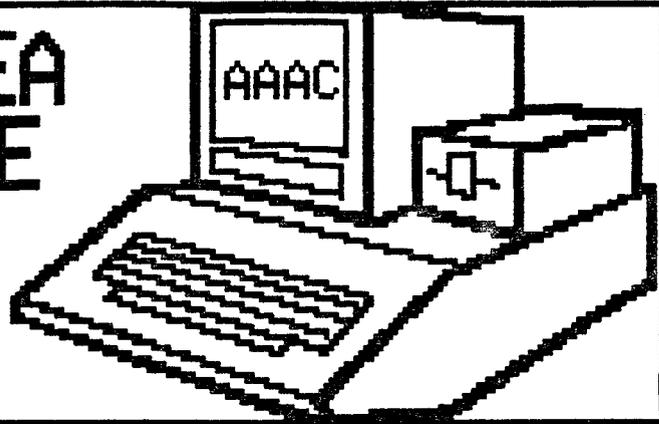
LISTening Post
by
Gary Senesac

Well, like the man says on the Gong Show, we've got STUFF! So let's not waste time and get right to it!

I've just received a rather large package of information for User Groups from Apple Computer. As mentioned at the February meeting, I had written to Apple about the AAAC after discovering they were trying to gather information about User Groups.

They have started a project whose "...primary objective is to develop programs that will extend support from Apple to all Apple User Groups." Once this program is up and running, Apple will have more flexibility in responding to requests and inquiries from individual User Groups.

Creation a data base of User Groups and contacts within each group will provide the foundation for Apple to provide written information to User Groups. Also, the data base will be used to match Apple guest speakers to User Group events, refer Apple end users to local User Groups, build awareness among Authorized Apple Dealers, and distribute to third party vendors and developers.

In addition, Apple is considering setting up a centralized electronic communications network where all Apple User Groups can go to share newsletter articles, questions and answers on products, information on public domain software, and other issues of interest to User Groups. Initially, they are looking at setting up a private forum for User Group officers on the MAUG (Micronetworked Apple Users Group) service of CompuServe.

Apple also intends to share information with User Groups via AppleLink, their in-house communications network previously available only to Authorized Apple Dealers.

A three month pilot project consisting of approximately 60 User Groups will begin in early April. To participate in the pilot project, a User Group must have a 128K or larger Macintosh with modem. User Groups in the pilot study will get two free hours per month access to AppleLink. Additional time beyond the first two hours may be purchased at a rate of $25 per hour.

Since we do not have anyone with a Macintosh system, and the $25 per hour charges would soon deplete our modest Treasury, the AAAC will not apply to be one of the 60 pilot groups. However, Apple indicates that during full implementation of this program they hope to have an alternate solution for User Groups that do not have a Macintosh system.

Another neat feature of this program is called The Great Tech Notes - Newsletter Exchange. In exchange for sending Apple a copy of our monthly newsletter, we will receive free of charge a one-year subscription to either Apple // Technical Notes or Macintosh Technical Notes.

The package from Apple contained a sample of the Macintosh Technical Notes, not of great use to a group consisting of Apple // owners only, but interesting just the same. These Technical Notes are the same ones released to third party hardware and software vendors that identify bugs and any fixes or patches released or recommended by Apple. Needless to say, we will be participating in this portion of the program immediately!

So, all in all it looks like some very interesting things are going to be comming out of Cupertino in the next few months. Be sure to stay current with any new developments as they are announced, both here in the AAAC News and at the monthly meetings!

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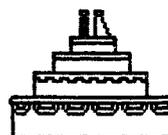
MEMORY IS WHAT TELLS A MAN HIS WEDDING ANNIVERSARY WAS YESTERDAY!

APPLEWORKS DATABASE DEMO AT MEETING
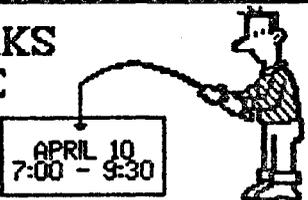
APRIL 10
7:00 - 9:30

The next meeting of the Aurora Area Apple Core will be on Thursday, April 10th, at 7:00 PM in the Waubonsee Community College Center Building. We will again be meeting upstairs in the Board Room.

Our program this month is AppleWorks - Part II - The Database. Judging from the turn out at last month's session about AppleWorks' Word Processor, this is indeed a very popular program (AppleWorks that is!). Be sure to come early and get a good seat. Also, be sure to ask Mike Miller before and after the program if knows what a data base is!

We hope to make some improvements in the visual side of the program this month so more than the first two rows can see what is happening on the monitor! The problem of trying to get a good 80 column text display on a large screen TV or video monitor has so far eluded both Glen and I.

Anybody out there a hardware whiz with a simple (read cheap!) solution? If so, please contact Glen Shields prior to the next meeting so he can try out your ideas before program time.

OOPS...

We goofed! But we weren't the only one! At February's meeting I mentioned that International Solutions was running a $10 special on their MouseDesk program to offset Apple's decision to give away Catalyst 3.0 free with the purchase of a new Uni-Disk 3.5. Not entirely true!

The $10 offer for MouseDesk was ok, but Apple is NOT giving away Catalyst 3.0 with the purchase of a Uni-Disk 3.5 drive. There is only an option to purchase Catalyst 3.0 included with the Uni-Disk! If you have bought or are planning to buy one of these new drives, please don't accost your dealer when there is no free Catalyst 3.0 in the box!

COMPUTERESE

BIT: A word used to describe computers, as in "My computer cost quite a bit!".
BUG: What your eyes do after you stare at that tiny screen for more than 15 minutes.
CURSOR: What you turn into when you can't get your computer to do what you want, as in "you %$#%&+@ computer!".
HARDWARE: Tools, such as lawnmowers, rakes and other equipment you haven't laid hands on since getting your computer.
MENU: What you'll never see again after buying a computer because you can't afford to eat out.
WINDOW: What you heave the computer out of after you accidently erase a program that took you three days to set up!

.... tnx ARNS & FRRL Arc Over

CAUTION
SPRING WEATHER TIME!

Ah, Spring! The mid-winter blahs have been given the bums rush by the recent spate of unseasonably warm, but welcome, early spring weather in the Midwest. Even as I sit here banging out this newsletter, the sun is shining and low 80 degree temps are all over the place! (Boy, talk about devotion to duty!)

But spring is also a time to be wary of mother nature and the fickle finger of fate she can sometimes dole out.

Spring weather systems can generate copious atmospheric discharges (known amongst the scientific types as "lightning") that can render great pain and suffering to all your microchips in nanoseconds! Be cautious and save your Apple from a horrible death.

If lightning flashes are visible on the horizon, or thunder can be heard in the distance, its time to pull the plug - literally! No matter how important your task at the moment may seem, it can wait.

Do you believe the weatherman's forecast of "clear and sunny all day" and leave your computer plugged in when you go off to work? If you do, I predict you will be

COPY PROTECTION OR REVENGE?

I've recently noticed quite a few articles appearing in the computer magazines I subscribe to discussing the illegal copying issue again. This seems to be a favorite subject that gets hot for a time and then just as suddenly goes cold.

I will not attempt to rehash all the arguements, pro or con, in this area. Lets just say that I am firmly in the camp of those who advocate no copy protection of disks.

My reasons are simple. When I buy a software program, I feel it is MY program! After all, it was MY money that crossed the counter!

Wacky as I am, I think that when I purchase a program (see, I even have a receipt that says I gave money!) I should be entitled to make a back up copy for my own use, have the freedom to install the program on a hard disk if I desire, examine the program logic to make modifications that fit my needs or desires, and have a program that will always boot up unimpeded by the copy protection scheme!

I also resent being sold a program that I cannot back up myself, and then being gouged for more money to purchase another copy of what I have just purchased! Recently I bought three new programs, all of which turned out to be copy protected. Two of the publishers will sell me a back up, for $10 and $7.50 respectively, while the third has no back up policy other than to replace defective disks for $7.50 and the original disk!

Terrific! If I want back up protection, I must shell out another $17.50 and in one case must be without the use of the program I paid for while they replace the blown disk. Heck of a deal!

Of course software publishers contend I didn't buy the program, I have merely leased the right to use their software! The warranties that accompany this leased software are a real piece of work too.

When you read through all the fine print, you find that you have purchased nothing, which is fine because it is warranted to do nothing! Only the media the software is on is warranted. I wonder how far Detroit would have gotten had they only warranted the highways their cars were driven on and not the cars themselves?

But I digress! The real purpose for starting this diatribe (quarter word!) is to advise you of a disturbing new development in software protection schemes to thwart the pirates.

According to an article in the April issue of Nibble, some publishers are resorting to building worms into their programs. A worm is an intentional bug designed into the program that is only activated if some predetermined condition is met. The logic used here is such that if a program is copied, the worm is turned on and starts ticking away.

After some condition is reached, elapsed days on the calendar, number of clicks of the mouse button, whatever, the worm goes to work and destroys the disk and all associated data. Not only the data is lost, but all the time and effort put into entering the data is also lost!

If the disk is an illegal copy, the stuckee has no legitimate right to grip. But, what if the copy is a LEGAL back up copy made by the purchaser of the program? To be effective, the existence of the worm must be concealed from even legitimate users. If a LEGAL back up copy is made and used, is the data and time lost when the hidden worm destroys the disk the responsibility of the designers of the worm? I'm not a lawyer, but I'd say it sure seems like they should be liable!

There can be no rational justification for the planting of a delayed action time bomb like this in a program. Software designers who resort to this extreme to protect their product seem to be more interested in extracting revenge on the pirates than in taking care of their legitimate customers.
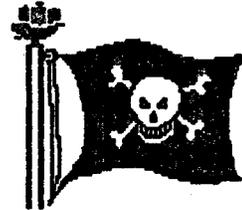
There would seem to be only two methods of stopping this stupid policy from being used throughout the software industry. First, if legimate users are harmed by "wormed" programs, and they successfully sue the pants off the manufacturer, the concept will be not be viewed with great relish by other software publishers! Second, if the buying public is aware of such tainted software and avoids it like the plague, manufacturers will be forced to abandon the poicy to avoid economic suicide.

The second point is where we can lend one another assistance. If you know of any software that employs the "worm" as its means of copy protection, let us know and we'll pass the information along to our members so that they may make informed purchasing decisions! However, please make certain that any information you want to pass along is factual and not just unfounded rumor. It is equally wrong to unjustly bring economic harm to a software manufacturer on the basis of a rumor that his programs employ a "worm".
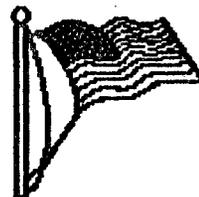
AMERICA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHERE IT TAKES MORE BRAINS TO MAKE OUT THE INCOME TAX RETURN THAN IT DOES TO MAKE THE INCOME!

on a first name basis with your favorite
service center in the near future!

When trying to divorce your computer,
printer, monitor and other devices from
the AC circuit, don't forget the little wire
from Ma Bell going to your modem. Ma Bell
and Ma Nature have been known not agree
from time to time as well! A couple of
years ago, a friend of mine had his Heath
computer zapped by a close hit that
reached his unplugged machine via the line
to the modem.

Of course, if your number is up nothing
helps. Another friends son had his
Commodore 64 rendered into a paper
weight when their house wiring was stuck
by a bolt. The 64 was not connected to
anything, but the energy in the vicinity
was enough to blow out a few chips!

NASA LOGIC QUIZ
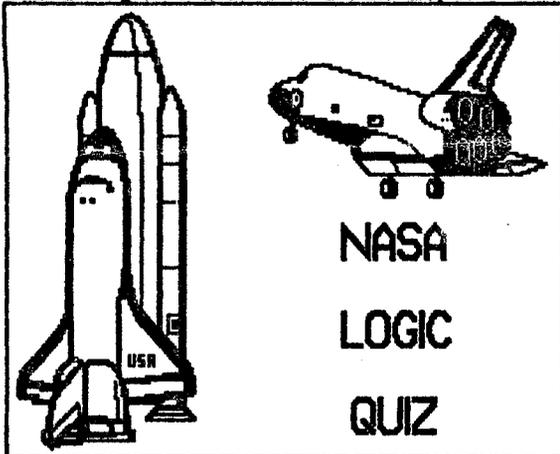
Since the Challenger tragedy NASA has
been getting a lot of press, most of it
negative, that tends to hide their past
accomplishments. These should not be
quickly forgotten in the media hype to
crucify a few mid-level managers.

The only men to explore the surface of
the moon, the only reusable space vehicle
and the only satellite repair crews who
make house calls all carry the NASA logo!
All of these feats owe much to the use
of logic in resolving real or potential
problems.

The computer is a creature that thrives
on logic.   As its master(?), you may be
interested in trying this little logic quiz
given to all the astronauts to test your
reasoning powers.

INSTRUCTIONS: You are a member of a space
crew originally scheduled to rendezvous
with a mother ship on the lighted surface
of the moon. Due to mechanical difficul-
ties, however, your ship was forced to
land at a spot some 200 miles from the
rendezvous point.

During re-entry and landing, much of the
of the equipment aboard was damaged.
Since survival depends on reaching the
mother ship, the most critical items
available must be chosen for the 200 mile
trip. Below are listed 15 items left intact
and undamaged after landing. Your task
is to rank order them in terms of their
importance in allowing your crew to reach
the rendezvous point. Place the number 1
by the most important item, number 2 by
the second most important, and so on

through number 15, the least important.

____ A Box of Matches
____ Food Concentrate
____ 50 Feet of Nylon Rope
____ Parachute Silk
____ A Portable Heating Unit
____ (2) .45 Caliber Pistols
____ 1 Case of Dehydrated Pet Milk
____ (2) 100 lb. Tanks of Oxygen
____ Stellar Map of the Constellations as
     seen from the Moon
____ Life Raft
____ Magnetic Compass
____ 5 Gallons of Water
____ Signal Flares
____ First Aid Kit with Injection Needles
____ Solar Powered FM Receiver/
     Transmitter

NASA's answers next month.
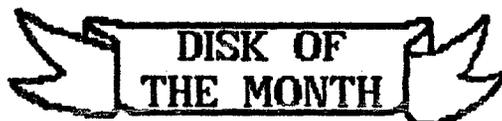
DISK OF THE MONTH

Jackpot time! This month we have four,
count 'em, f-o-u-r new public domain disks
for your computing pleasure. Games,
utilities and graphics are all covered.

The International Apple Core disk of the
month is a double sided game disk called
Fireground. This game was put together
by the Northern Illinois Apple Users Group,
NIAUG, and is a maze type memory tester.

An AUDIO voice command gives you the
address of a fire and you must figure out
how to find the address while driving the
fire engine to the scene. A joystick is
required for the side 2 portion.

Jack Hammond has provided us with a disk
that prints pictures on your printer in
ASCII text format. Instead of the figure
being made up of dots that vary in
intensity, the pictures are made up of
alphanumeric text characters. Several
pictures are included on the disk.

Jay Vicory is back again this month with
two disks that include graphic intros he
designed. The first disk, Diskette Doctor,
is a utiltiy disk that allows you to edit
sectors, copy disks, etc. The second disk
is a game disk with two games on it; Star-
Trek and Rubik's Cube.

All disks are $2 each for AAAC members.

LOCAL AREA NETWORK CONFERENCE APRIL 12

The Northern Illinois Computer Society will
offer a program on Local Area Networks
(LANS) on Saturday, April 12th at Harper
Community College, Palatine, IL from 10:00
AM to 2:00 PM. The meeting is open to all
who wish to attend.

Vendor presentations of how printers,
files and software applications can be
shared by groups of computers will run
from 10:30-12:00. Vendors include, Apple
Computer, Inc., Nestar Systems, Inc. and
Novell Inc. Also, public domain software
demonstrations for Apple //, Macintosh
and IBM PC. Call Terry, 577-7381 for info.
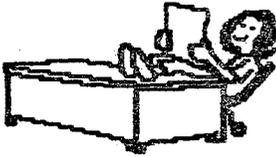
WIN A FREE YEAR OF NIBBLE!

How would you like a free one year subscription to Nibble or Nibble Mac magazine? Well, not completely free - you'd have to "earn" it!

MicroSPARC, Inc., publisher of Nibble and Nibble Mac, sponsors a very nice continuing program to encourage members of User Groups to get involved and participate in group functions. As an incentive to get you involved in YOUR group, MicroSPARC will give away three twelve-issue subscriptions to Nibble AND three eight-issue subscriptions to Nibble Mac for your participation.

As your President, it is my privilege to award these subscriptions to whomever I feel is most deserving. Several worthy candidates come to mind immediately, but I would like your input and suggestions. My most pressing concern is to intice some of you into helping out with the newsletter.

With 100 members now in the AAAC, it is becoming too much of a load for me to manage the administrative details AND single handedly write, edit, print, fold, stamp and mail the newsletters. If someone would consider writing a regular newsletter article, or help with folding, stamping and mailing, or serve as editor, they might qualify for a subscription to one of the best Apple specific magazines on the market today!

Look at it another way. At $3.25 each, the single issue price of Nibble is $39 a year. Our dues are only $20 a year! If you subscribed yourself, it would still cost $26.95 for a one year subscription! Incidently, if you already get Nibble or Nibble Mac, you can still qualify for this special offer. Your present subscription will be extended for one year beyond your current expiration date! Besides, aren't you really itching to use that computer and word processor for something besides notes to Aunt Aggie?

Think it over. Come to the meeting and lets air any other ideas. This is a great offer and we should take advantage of it!
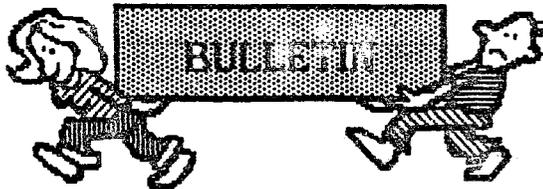
Just in, direct from Apple! From now until May 15, 1986, Apple has provided your authorized Apple dealer with special prices on certain limited-quantity Apple products. Products include: a //c "portability" pack - a //c monitor, stand and carrying case for less than $100, Scribe printers, Apple Modem 300's, selected software, books and accessories. Contact your favorite Apple dealer for a complete list and prices!

Apple has also announced a rebate program for full-time teachers and college students. Begining April 1, qualified teachers and students can receive a $75 rebate on the purchase of an Apple //c, $150 for an Apple //e, $175 for a 512K Macintosh, and $200 for Macintosh Plus.

If you are interested, you should contact your local Apple dealer for brochures containing rebate certificates. If you submit a dealer endorsed rebate certificate, the original sales receipt and verification from your school that you are a full-time educator or college student, Apple will send you a rebate check in 6 to 8 weeks.

Finally, keep your eye on WTTW, Channel 11 the week of April 21st. Hackers - Wizards of the Electronic Age, a half-hour public TV documentary about the midnight programmers and fanatic engineers that created the personal computer will be aired. Apple Computer helped underwrite the production of this documentary.

The program features short interviews with some of the early pioneers of personal computing, including: Steve Wozniak, designer of the Apple //, Lee Felsenstein, designer of the Osborne 1, Bill Budge, video game wizard and creator of MousePaint, and the designer of MacPaint, Bill Atkinson. Sounds like an interesting half-hour!

WTTW, Channel 11 in Chicago, has tentatively scheduled this program to air on Monday, April 28th, at 9:30 PM. Be alert for any last minute scheduling changes!

BUGS IN YOUR APPLE?

Tim Patsch has experienced a couple of hardware problems recently you should know about. First, his two day out of warranty Apple //e Color Monitor suddenly died! Fortunately, Farnsworth Computer fixed it with no trouble. Seems there is an internal fuse in the monitor that is a tad undersized and it blows out easily. If it should happen to you, your dealer can replace it with a slightly larger variety.

More troubling is an apparent problem with the Apple Duo-Disk drive. Tim reports that his Duo-Disk went berserk when he tried to boot a disk with the Open-Apple, Control, Reset key method and a program disk (without a write protection tab) was wiped out!

The service shop indicates that Apple has advised them that there is a problem with something in the controller hardware on Duo-Disk drive units. Whatever the problem is, it apparently is confined to only the Duo-Disk package and only occurs during the Open-Apple, Control, Reset key sequence. If you have a Duo-Disk, you might consider calling the dealer to check it out!

In the meantime, use write protect tabs or boot with the power switch or PR#6! I told you I liked having back up copies!

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