

Computers are Fun

They have such a fun way of playing with your mind. For instance, there is a computer here at the magazine with which I write these monthly comments. It is on temporary leave of absence because the spindle bearing in its dual disk drive is permanently dead. No huhu - we have lotsa these thinkums around here. Unfortunately they communicate. On the way to thinkum number two, I am stopped because thinkum number three is not feeling good. Thinkum number three is currently pinch hitting for thinkum number four, which is in the hospital. Thinkum number three is also the one which controls the cassette duplicating machine, so it gets immediate attention. After a session with Three, I continue on to Two, upon which I am now typing. Two has a pair of disk drives, one being in for repair. It also has a keyboard which has just now developed a tendency to ignore certain letters until the third time the key is hit. If Two dies before One comes back in about two weeks, it's back to the typewriter for all text entry, and comments will start getting really short. Those of you who have started using your computer for text editing can understand that using a typewriter - even the correcting Selectric kind, is cruel and unusual punishment.

But that's not what I'd like to talk about this month, and it would be nice to pass on the next subject, that of Tape Talk and Level One magazines. It is not good manners to talk about the competition (in any field) in a manner which could affect their ability to compete - especially when they are in a "catch up" position. These two, however, are now both effectively dead and I suppose this amounts to a eulogy. Both magazines were to be cassette - based TRS-80 support mags, set up much like CLOAD, except one was to specialize in current events in the computer field and the other was to specialize in business software. Both magazines were headed up by serious, level - headed people who were definitely not in the business of ripping people off intentionally. Neither one (to my knowledge) came out with their first issue, the problem of duplication being far more serious than it initially appeared. If there is anything that should be evident from all this, it is that putting out a cassette magazine is a major enterprise, and the market is not all that large. As for being cautious in subscribing to any of them, ask for a sample issue. If you want to really be assured, wait for the second issue. That second issue is the hardest one of all (it's the first one that has to be done - from beginning to end - in a month).

CLOAD

MAGAZINE, inc

BOX 1267
GOLETA, CA
93017

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Announcements:

John Craig, Editor of Creative Computing magazine, holds a swap meet every year to provide an opportunity for all to come and buy or sell all the stuff they can carry or dump, as the case may be. This year it will be held on the San Mateo County Fairgrounds, San Mateo California (south of San Fransisco) on Saturday, September 15th. Y'all come, especially all you subscribers out there in Australia. It costs \$1.00 to park your dinosaur, but admission is otherwise free to buyers (standard California swap meet protocol). Great chance to meet people who are as crazy as you are. Sellers contact John Craig at (805)-735-1023 for booth price/availability. Buyers/gawkers just come. Sunshine has been scheduled.

Brian Mumford of Mumford Mumford Micro Systems (Box 435-A Summerland, CA 93067 - 805-969-4557) has come up with a neat system for keeping track of all those disks in your collection sorted by disk, program title, space available and so forth. Those of you who are handling a fair amount of data on disks have probably noticed that it is a nontrivial task to keep track of all those files out there. This system is neat. I've seen the results with mine own eyes and it gets my approval.

Another thing I have seen with mine own eyes is Computer Cassettes magazine (Box 466, El Dorado CA 95623), edited by Robert Purser. It's not actually on a cassette, it's a more conventional "hardcopy" magazine which consists of reviews of cassette software currently available for the PET, Apple, TRS-80, and presumably the others as they come along. This has been needed for some time. The amount of software that's currently being offered out there is far too much for anyone to make an intelligent purchasing decision, and there's no way to "try out" software - it's a blind purchase marketing system. What Computer Cassettes is about is a pre-screening of the chaff, allowing a software vendor without a previous reputation to work up to an established name. Check out our competition! (We're reviewed in there, too - but then, we've already suckered you in).

By the by, some subscribers have asked if all the ads in CLOAD have been proven (shades of Col. Winthrop and World Power Systems). All the ads we have run in the past relate to real stuff, and we're being very careful to keep it that way. As a statement of confession, if World Power Systems had placed an ad with us, we probably would have run it. (We have since changed our acceptance policy).

"The Best of CLOAD", volume 1 (our first six months of trying) has been duplicated and will be shipped to those who have ordered an advance copy as soon as this issue is in the mail. It turned out pretty well, if I may say so. I had almost forgotten what the initial programs were like until it was time to write commentary on them. They are now available at the exhorbitant price of \$10.00 (\$15.00 overseas), cash, check, money order, Master Charge, Visa, Gold, what have you.

The CTR-80 tape recorder has a rather disconcerting habit. If the tape is stopped, it puts a "pop" on the tape. If the

tape is stopped in the middle of a program, that's where the "pop" goes. Recommendation: play to the end of each program before stopping. The computer will do this automatically if the motor control jack (the tiny one) is plugged in. A better thing is to modify your cassette recorder to hear the audio as you load the programs. We at CLOAD (meaning me) will be making a cassette recorder modification plan available - it's in the "special projects" queue, position 5. Those of you who do not wish to open up your computer and sling solder might want to get a cassette controller box such as Dick Fuller's RF-III.

This month we have a few interesting ones - "Fuel" is a rather current topic, and this program was written to try to outguess the "odd - even" game of license plate roulette that we play out here in Southern California. As such, I suppose that you could say that this is a regional game, but it shows signs of gaining popularity throughout the United States.

"How Far" is a program which takes two points on the surface of the planet (this one - that is, Earth) and gives you the distance between them and the local angle of departure. The local angle of departure is the direction to the "far" point, in degrees measured clockwise from true North. This is the one you want to aim your ICBM with. It's also good for aiming antennas and designing signposts.

"Psycho" is a patternmaker that is written in machine language, and it uses the terms "ones complement" and "twos complement" to describe certain actions. The actual understanding of these terms is not important, they just change the patterns. They are the way a computer subtracts numbers.

Coming up in the best laid plans department is a four function calculator program designed to allow a little bit extra in the way of precision - about 200 places or so. This is sufficient to allow you to calculate probabilities of poker hands and such.

For now, however, I must finish this off. The rest of the gang has delivered a deadline for this article which expires in approximately thirty seconds, and they are currently gathering the instruments of justice.

Next month,



Ralph McElroy
Publisher

TREK 80

TREK-80, by Bruce Berry, was written for the Radio Shack TRS-80 Computer and will run on any TRS-80 with at least 16K of memory and Level II Basic. This is not just another Star Trek game. It has been in development for over 1 year! Action takes place on a real-time basis. Your mission? Starfleet Command is under heavy attack and you must rescue the supply fleet. You have 2 or more Starbases where you can resupply once, each. There are 45 - 60+ Klingons you must destroy in a given amount of time without losing more than 5 Tugs. Features: 64 Sector quadrants, 64 quadrant universe. Klingons can move, resupply, fire torpedoes or disruptors. Tugs can fire phasers, Enterprise can fire phasers or torpedoes and can lock both and course for fire and move (evasive action). Torpedoes intercept can be locked on or off. Sensors can be short range (quadrant) or long range (eight surrounding quadrants). Probes can scan enemy ships for position, energy and torpedoes. Galactic scan shows all known quads with number of stars, Klingons and bases. Ship's energy can be channelled to phasers, warp drive, impulse engines and shields, in increments of 10% and any combination. Damage Control reports, Self-destruct, Warp and Impulse Movement. Programming notes give instruction for changing allotted stardates for accomplishing mission; units of energy from reactor/date available for channelling; initial and resupply levels for shield, phaser, impulse and warp drive energy; initial and resupply of number of torpedoes; number of Klingons (Min. &/or Max.); number of bases; allotted max. phaser power/shot; Rich in detail. Move and fire any direction. Impulse as well as warp quadrant to quadrant. Time and energy are functions of speed and distance. Damage is logically determined by shield strength. Lots of action all graphically displayed including torpedo track and much much more. THIS IS THE TOUGHEST TREK GAME TO BEAT YET!

TREK-80..... on cassette..... \$15.00

Illinois Residences add 5% Tax

Call for software. We will pay cash or royalties for quality original software which will run on TRS-80, PET or OSI. Write for details:

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