mini'app'les

apple computer user group newsletter

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1980 MINI'APP'LES CLUB DUES

REMINDER

Club dues are payable now to your treasurer. (See page 1 for address) $10 buys you membership through Dec 1980. Make checks payable to MINI'APP'LES. If you want to receive next months newsletter, mail your checks to arrive no later than Jan 1st or payup at next meeting.
This is your club and without you we will not have a club.

URGENT NOTICE

Inside this issue you will find a report on the INTERNATIONAL APPLE CORE. A major document of over 100 pages of Apple related information will be published by approximately March of this year. It will be edited by Val Golding (of Call Apple fame) and is available to Mini'app'les members for $1. However, to receive your copy at this advance publication price (after publication they will cost $5 each) you must send your $1 to the treasurer to arrive not later than Friday Dec 21st. You must also have paid your 1980 dues! Payments for the document, to be called the APPLE ORCHARD may also be made at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of MINI'APP'LES will be on Wed. Dec. 19th at 7.30 pm in the Minnesota Federal Savings and Loan Building, 9th Avenue South, Hopkins. The schedule for the evening includes:
(1) Christmas programs. Bring your Christmas tree displays in HIRES, or Rudolf with a HIRES nose, or a high quality silent night. If there is sufficient interest, we will have a prize !
(2) talking about Silent Night, John Riskin of Personal Business Systems Inc has kindly offered to demonstrate the MicroMusic Music Board. He will also have some Christmas flavoured demos on it !
Consider bringing your family along- they might enjoy the decorations.

WEDS., JANUARY 16th:

We are still planning on having Bill Schloffer, a dealer representative for Mountain Hardware, of Santa Cruz, California. He will make a presentation to the group about Mountain Hardware products. They make Supertalker, ROM+, Apple Clock, Real World Control, etc. This event has been arranged for us by Computerland whom we thank.

WEDS., FEB. 20th

Tentative
We need volunteers to talk about their experience with packaged software or to give tutorials on available software of interest to Business users.

INTERNATIONAL APPLE CORPS

On Oct 27-28th a group of people representing Apple User groups from 8 different states met to discuss the formation of a non-profit organization. This organization, to be called International Apple Corps, will consist of Apple clubs and their members from all parts of the USA and the whole world. The organization's purpose is to pass on to users all forms of hardware and software information originating in other Apple clubs, hardware and software manufacturers and Apple Computer.

The group together with Apple Computer, as a measure of good faith, distributed a large variety of documentation to the President of each prospective club. The organization will be funded by membership fees for members of participating clubs. This will probably be around $5 per year. This will entitle the member to-
(1) Access thousands of programs including the entire Apple Co. contributed library.
(2) Access for club officers or board members to the timesahring system SOURCE (A max of two persons in each club will receive valid I.D.s each month. This will enable those persons to quickly obtain up to date info about happenings in the organization.
(3) Access to printed Information.   .
(4) Reduced subscription rate for planned publications.

Each member club is being asked to pay a $50 initiation fee. Our board has already approved this fee.

On the front page of this newsletter is an offering by the organization to participate in their first reduced rate publication. This is a one shot issue called the Apple Orchard. It will contain over 100 pages of information of interest to Apple users. It will be edited by Val Golding. Nowhere else can you obtain 100 pages of quality data for $1. So sign up before Dec 21st.

The next meeting of International Apple Core will be held in conjunction with the next West coast Computer Faire in sunny San Francisco. This will be in March 1980. If anyone is planning a trip west at that time, please inform the President.

SCANNING the ISSUES

I've gotten behind in my reading this month. I did notice an interesting article in Call Apple Nov/Dec called "Apple Gaming: Playing Card Generation " by Jim Higler. In it he includes an machine code listing of a routine which does all the HIRES work to display good looking playing cards. So anyone planning a POKER program should get hold of that issue.

A SMALL MINI'APP'LES newsletter!

Don't complain about how skinny this issue is-
CALL Apple doesn't publish at all a separate Dec issue!

GE LIST FOR THE APPLE
Thanks to Steve Johnson for the page list program now in the User Bank. Steve entered the program from Dr. Dobb's Journal of Computer Calisthentics & Orthodonta. The program will list 20 lines at a time and then stop and wait for another key. Esc will list one line at a time. This program is very nice for looking at a program if one doesn't know the line numbers. Thanks Steve.

INUTES Nov. 21 Meeting

eeting called to order at 7:37 by D. buchler. Minutes approved as printed.

OLD BUSINESS
      1. Clarification of the rules governing use of the library disks needs to be made. The charge is 50 cents per disk or $2.00 per volume. A borrower MUST(!!!) contact the next person on the list. Rules governing length of time to keep disks will be with the disks--READ THEM!!! Our turn-around time is very slow, and out state members are waiting.
      2. A check is being made to find out what sort of club deals could be made on quantity disk purchases.

NEW BUSINESS
      1. Val Golding of Call A.P.P.L.E. has apparently been hired by Apple to produce a "monthly" newsletter--perhaps replacing CONTACT.   .
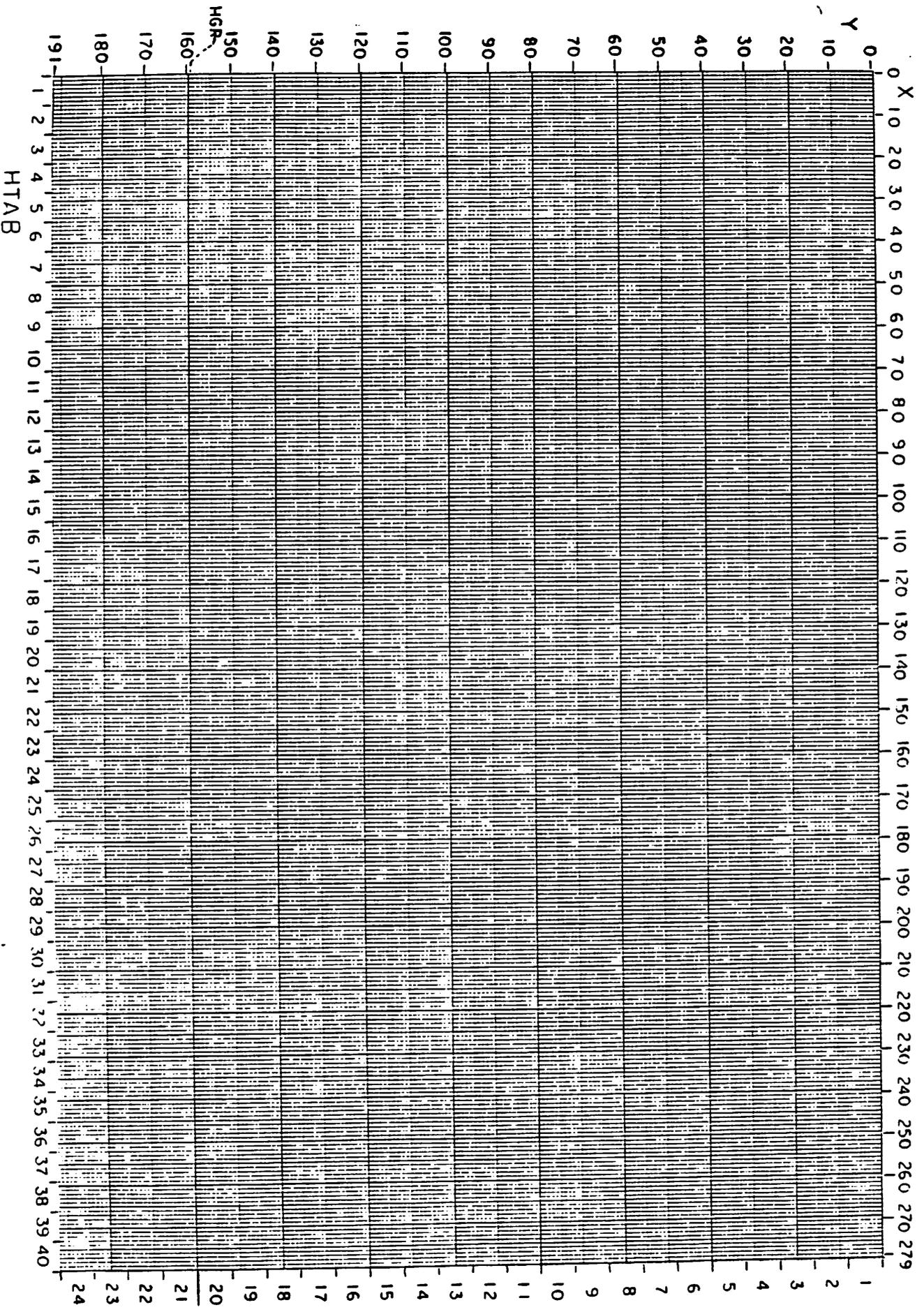   2. Apple's method of generating color has been granted a patent.
      3. Those members with MODEMs should contact D. Buchler to try to get a network going.
      4. Chuck Thiesfeld is working to get his 40 MEGABYTE disk interfaced. When completed it will be available to members in ways to be announced. (A message center Chuck??).
      5. Suggestions for newsletter input: Software reviews--your comments could help others. Documentation on programs in library--the programs have come in at too rapid a rate to keep up--help us!!

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 for question answer session for beginners.   ‹

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USER BANK

ρ complaints were aired at the last meeting regarding the slow rate at which the .isks at Computerland got around. (see minutes). Improvements in communicating the rules for distribution to members will hopefully improve the situation. The net effect of these delays has been that we have never gotten to the bottom of the sign-up sheet for either of the Library sets in the two computerland stores. I again apologize to out of town users to whom we have promised disttibution. Incidentaly, out of town users .ill have to observe strict rules on turn around time to overcome the sort of problems we have experienced with local distribution.

Talking about out of towners, Steve Saliterman of Rochester, Mn made a copy of the user bank at Zim Computer (Thank you Zim) ..d is taking it back to Rochester. He hopes to distribute it to the other two users in the Rochester area.

se of you who come to meetings will have heard about the deal we have made with Brad Smith of Topeka, Kansas. He was kind enough o arrange a 4 way split purchase of about 500 programs from a California group. These ρrograms are in the mail to us as of this writing. Now if Keith Madonna, our Librarian, can figure out a way, and keep his sanity, to distribute this new software.

Incidentily Keith has been busy getting the Call Apple Multiple Disk Catalog to work and ..e hope to show members soon the fruits of his labor. (see oct Call Apple)

USIC BOARD PROGRESS

Dan's Music board (see Oct newsletter) is slowly taking shape. The basic hardware appers to work. Thanks to the help of Chuck Thiesfeld, the problem of interfacing a 6522 VIA to the Apple bus was overcome.
A preliminary spec was published and Dan thanks those who offered comments and criticism. Our plans now call for a much more sophisticated graphics control package though many of the features described in the spec. will be retained.

One interesting aspect related to the board's design, is that, because the board uses a 6522 it can be used not only as a general purpose timer, but also as a general purpose parallel or even serial interface board. However software for such applications would not be available in ROM. Whether we actually add the connectors to accomplish the interface capability, has not been decided.

MINI'APP'LES
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DISK RELIABILIY

You have all heard the stories that abound in this area about the unreliability of VERBATIM disks. It is not our intention as a club to blackball a manufacturer if such stories are untrue. At the Nov meeting two persons identified situations where they have had problems with Verbatims not experienced on other manufacturers disks. In one case, it was reported that a large number of Verbatim disks containing programs could not be read after being stored for about a month. In another case, heavy accessing of one track seemed to cause trouble after 1 1/2 weeks. This writer has one Verbatim on which there is a program which can not be accessed or deleted. Verbatims are also more noisy and more flimsy than most of the competitor's disks. However in many cases they cost less.

The real question is, have we scientifically proven that they are less reliable than other makes? I, for one, don't really know. There is certainly a nagging question in our minds about the reliability of the Verbatim.

It seems that a couple of our members have been in contact with the manufacturer.
Ed Horch,
8941 Elliot Ave.
Bloomington, 55420
is one such person. He writes-
Through a lucky series of coincidences, I was put in touch with Dr. Geoffrey Bate, one of the vice presidents of Verbatim. If some of the complaints, and also disadvantages of or about the Verbatim disks could be relayed to me, either directly, (854-7839 after 6 pm) or at the next meeting, I will relay these to Dr Bate."

Another member who talked to Verbatim received some replacement disks. The manufacturer is obviously concerned about its image, so if you can come up with some real facts, please take the trouble to document those facts and feed it back to the manufacturer. I beleive that they will be sympathetic to you and replace disks that really have been a problem.

Incidentily, this writer sent a note to Dysan this month asking for their comments on using disks on both sides.

Apple HIRES PATENT

Apple Computer has been granted a U.S. patent on the color-video display circuitry used for HIRES. Most micro-computer systems and displays utilize complex and substantial circuitry. Wozniak invented a relatively simple (and therefore more reliable) system in which a recirculating shift register circulates four bits of information to produce the HIRES signals. This eliminates components such as subcarrier generators, phase shifters, etc.

BUNKER RAMO PRINTER NEWS

As of this writing there are 19 operational printers on Apples that this writer knows about. I have had alot of trouble with clutches on printers being reconditioned. As far as I know the installed printers are OK. The problem is that after prolonged storage, to which some of the printers have been subjected, the high iron content clutch plates become rusty. I have advised oiling these in the past but in extreme cases oil will not help because the surface is too rough. In such cases, the only solution is to strip the mechanism. Actually this is easier than it sounds. It takes about half hour to take it apart and another half hour to put it back together. If anyone thinks they have this problem, please call me and I will explain the procedure. The symptoms are erratic line feed or ragged lines.

I apologize to those who have ordered printers and are still waiting. I have been very busy earning my living. This will continue thru Jan 15.

I will do as many as I have time for before then.

PROGRAM REVIEW

US MAP

This is an excellent educational 'game' by Creative computing. A HIRES map consisting of the state borders of all the states in the USA is displayed. The map contains an insert of HAWAII and ALASKA. The program randomly selects one state and then a flashing dot is displayed at the location of the state capitol. The student must type in one of 3 types of answers:
(1) 1st letter of name of state.
(2) Complete name of state.
(3) Complete name of state capitol.
The computer indicates both audibly and visually if you make a mistake. Then, to enhance the learning process, it will retest you later on that particular state at some random point in time. In fact you have to get it right at least twice in a row after getting it wrong the first time before the Apple is satisfied that you have learned that state! When you do get it right, the dot identifying the state capitol remains displayed.
    have only two small criticisms of the implementation of this program-
(1) There is no automatic HIMEM. I made an EXEC file to do the most unusual HIMEM of HIMEM:16383 . Thats right not 16384 !
(2) The HIRES Map only occupies about half of the screen (linearly). It seems that the designer could have made better use of the picture space. Small states like Deleware are hard to distinguish from nearby states.
Otherwise this program is highly recommended, particularly as an educational tool for kids 9 thru 15.

Care and Handling of 8" and 5.25" Flexible Disks

Staff Report, *BASF*

The value of a flexible disk isn't much until you have spent time and money to put a lot of information on it, after which it becomes very valuable — especially at retrieval time.

A floppy disk with valuable data recorded on it deserves the best care. Here are some tips that will help you provide that care:

Storage

Do not expose disks to sunlight or heat; extremes of heat and cold affect disks. The safe temperature range is 50°F — 125°F. Problems can occur if disks are left on a window sill or transported in the trunk of a car.

Floppy disks should be at the same temperature and humidity as the machine for which they are intended. If they have been exposed to temperatures outside of the computer's range, allow them to acclimate outside of the carrying case or shipping container for about five minutes before use.

Improper storage can cause permanent damage. Floppy disks can be stored flat — not more than ten to a pile — or stored vertically. If stored vertically, they must be supported so they will not slump, bend or develop a permanent disfiguration that would cause problems with the computer or machine.

Store disks in their disk jackets or envelopes. When removing a disk from a jacket, lift it by the top edge and carefully insert it into the computer or machine. Return the disk to its envelope directly after use, and then place the disk and envelope in the proper storage facility.

Disks should not be tossed in a desk drawer or left lying around on a desk. Dirt, dust, and environmental contamination are likely to create problems for both the disk and the computer or machine that may result in errors, whether machine or computer errors, operator errors or contamination of the reading head.

Handling

A stack of disks is not like a stack of paper; never place a paperweight, telephone or other heavy object on them. Paper clips are fine for paper, but never clip hard copy or anything else to a disk.

Sharp pencils are also only for paper — dull ones too. Want to ruin a computer or machine? Just contaminate it by introducing graphite from the pencil lead or eraser residue. Want to write on a floppy disk? Use only a felt-tipped pen when writing on its ID label. Or, better yet, select an identification system that eliminates the need to write on disks.

Never touch the exposed areas on a floppy disk; the natural oils on hands or added ones (hand lotions, etc.) are contaminants and cause problems for disks.

Do not clean the disk surface. Disks are delicate magnetic media and adversely affected by magnetic materials that scramble or erase recorded data. For instance, you might have a file case or cabinet that uses a magnetic lock, a paper clip holder that is magnetized with clips around the top or a magnetic clipboard for typing — all items commonly found in an office environment that create drop-out and erasure problems. Magnetic fields are found in power-generating equipment, motors, alternators, transformers and power lines. They are commonplace at airports in security detection systems, conveyor motors, electric luggage carts and aircraft power systems. Most metals are ferromagnetic and can set up magnetic force fields that cause erasure or drop-out on disks. So, when selecting a flexible disk storage container, choose one that is not made of metal.

Finally, never insert damaged disks into a drive. Disks which are physically damaged (torn, creased, warped) or contaminated may cause the machine's R/W head to lift from the disk, resulting in operation errors, equipment errors or head contamination.