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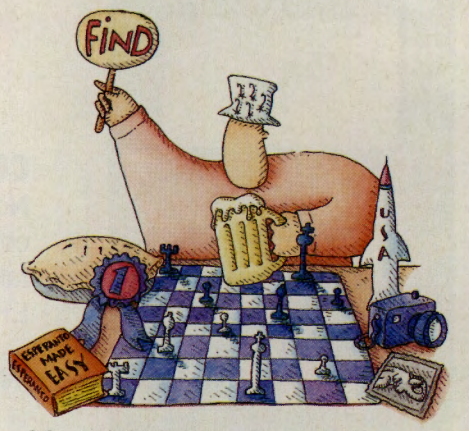

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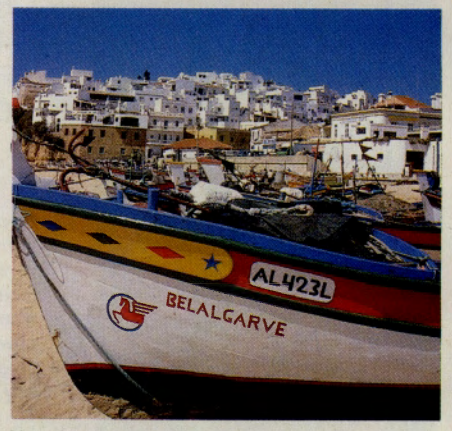

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There's no gain saying that the CompuServe Information Service can be, at times, monumental in size and scope. With hundreds of services and tens of thousands of individual subject areas, program files and data records on tap, it's truly difficult to get a complete grasp of everything that's available online.

Faced with such tremendous scale, it may seem easier to stay inside our own "neighborhoods" on the service, safe within the bounds of a few well-worn standard services and a favorite forum or two. But, by playing it "safe," you also run the risk of missing out on some services that could greatly increase the usefulness and value of your membership and help you solve some of those nagging problems that life tosses in the way.

If you haven't had the time or inclination to explore other areas of the Information Service, don't pass up the opportunity to browse through this month's cover story. We've prepared a kind of "sampler platter" featuring a wide variety of services that provide shortcut solutions to an entire range of life's problems—from the overwhelming (relocating) to the merely irritating (buying a car). The series of short articles covers many subject areas on the Information Service and is flush with tips and helps of all kinds from experts and fellow CompuServers.

Give it a try beginning on page 10, and see if you don't pick up a few new ideas and pointers along the way.

* * *

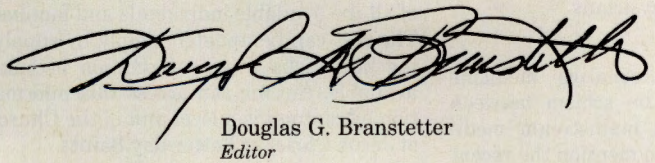
Speaking of getting some pointers: if you're in the market for a PC clone, or interested in performing upgrades to one you already own, you'll want to visit one or more of the many PC clone support forums on CompuServe. Your first stop, however, should be the story on page 24—a roundup of PC clone support services on the Information Service.

Whether it's Dell, Toshiba, Gateway, Epson, Northgate, Compaq or any of another dozen manufacturers (along with the software creators who support those machines), you'll find company representatives and forum members ready to help you with buying and upgrade decisions. An overview chart on page 26 lists all the PC clone forums and other information resources available.

* * *

We would like to hear from you! Stop by and see us in the new CompuServe Help Forum (GO HELPFORUM)—our new home since the *Online Today* Readers' Forum was closed. *CM* editors monitor Section 10 of the forum, which is dedicated to your questions about the magazine and the articles that appear in it. We encourage your suggestions for future articles and any other general comments about magazine content.

We also welcome letters to the editor via CompuServe Mail. Send your letters to 76004,3302.



Douglas G. Branstetter
Editor

Letters

Alternative Medicine

I enjoyed the recent article in *CompuServe Magazine* on "A New Prescription for Health" (August, p.38). However, it didn't mention the only licensed alternative primary care in American medicine today: naturopathic medicine.

In the article, two M.D.s gave opinions. Dr. Scott Prior said, "I can make a case that 'alternative therapies' might even be dangerous." In response to this, I can easily make a case that M.D.-caused illness (iatrogenic) ranks among America's top 10 causes of death, and that much of modern medicine is experimental, inherently risky and unscientific. Dr. Neil Lombardi said, "The so-called 'alternatives' come on with beautiful promises and no objective data to back them up..." This is untrue regarding naturopathic therapies. If he would read *The Journal of Naturopathic Medicine* or *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*, he would find a wealth of objective data.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), a federal agency, has recently assembled a panel of doctors to investigate alternative medicine. It is interesting to note that all the panel members are M.D.s, with the exception of one N.D. For more information, contact the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians at 206/323-7610.

Dr. Rick Kirschner, N.D.
Chair, Public Affairs
American Association of
Naturopathic Physicians
Ashland, Ore.

The article on alternative medicine seemed to dwell on the schism between holistic therapies and mainstream medicine. It also neglected to mention the recent developments in naturopathic medicine that have begun to subject many traditional and folk therapies to the same rigorous criteria as allopathic (mainstream) medicine. While there is a future for medical self-help, one of the pitfalls of alternative medicine results from the lack of control over when and by whom these therapies are employed; not by inefficacy, as is often suggested by its critics.

Much of the recent interest in the health effects of nutrition, exercise and stress reduction did not stem from internal evolution within our medical system, but rather from a belated, grudging response to consumer advocacy groups and market (i.e. patient preference) pressures. Just as humans work better with a left and right hand, our medical system could work better with a "health care" aspect coupled with our existing "disease care" system.

Peter D'Adamo, N.D.
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Naturopathic Medicine
Greenwich, Conn.

Laptops

I enjoyed the August feature on going portable with laptop computers ("Going Portable," p.10), but was surprised to see that your list of recommended files overlooked my large laptop tutorial system, Professor P.C. Laptop, which covers many of the topics listed in smaller tutorial files scattered among many CompuServe forums. This shareware, LAPTUT.ZIP, is available in the IBM Hardware Forum, Library 6, "Small Computers."

Jim Hood
Mercer Island, Wash.

Genealogy

It was with great pleasure that I read the article "Building a Generation Map" in July's *CompuServe Magazine* (p.10), about resources available for researching family history.

May I note that nearly every local unit of the Latter-day Saints Church will soon have, if not already, all the information that is available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. This is possible because of CD-ROM technology. One disk has the index of all the available individuals and families. The rest can be updated simply by supplying new disks when information becomes available. Anyone can access this information by contacting a local unit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jack B. Friend
South Salt Lake City, Utah

CompuServe Women

The letter from Kendra McCarthy in the July issue (p.4) struck a responsive chord. There is a preponderance of images (both verbal and pictorial) of males in *CompuServe Magazine*. I imagine this is mostly because there are more men than women in the computer field, and computer people use CompuServe most. However, it would help if you tried to reach a balance by featuring more women in technical areas.

I find CompuServe invaluable in my work as a computer consultant. When I was a company employee, I used CompuServe to research products and get technical support on a variety of forums. Now that I am an independent consultant, in addition to those uses, I use CompuServe regularly to send messages and files by e-mail to my clients, some of whom found me on CompuServe. I couldn't function as a telecommuting consultant without CompuServe.

Helen Feddema
Kerhonkson, N.Y.

Design for Science

The molecular images on p.28 of the July issue ("How to Play with DNA") were pretty, but they gave me a headache. If the structure shown is aspirin, as indicated, I need to go back to graduate school for remedial chemistry.

Please advise your readers not to ingest any of that stuff. It looks more like a globular protein to me.

Bruce Onisko
Kensington, Calif.

Place Names

Steve Sherman seems to think writing Praha instead of Prague is wrong (Letters, August, p.4). But, as he says himself, "Praha is the Czech name for Prague." Since the city is in Czechoslovakia, and is inhabited mainly by Czechs, I would consider Praha to be the correct name. The same holds true of München (Munich), Roma (Rome), etc. Mikhail is the Russian form of Michael, but I don't remember anyone referring to the former Soviet leader as "Michael Gorbachev." Proper names are proper names. Why should anyone change the spelling?

John Hawkins
San Diego, Calif.

Send a Letter

Send your letter to the editor by CompuServe Mail to 76004,3302. A $25 connect credit is given to the writer of each letter published. *Sorry, we cannot acknowledge letters or answer questions through this service.* Please use CompuServe's Feedback system (GO FEEDBACK) or call **800/848-8990** for questions, problems, address changes, etc. A representative from Customer Service will be glad to help you.

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Shooting Video, As Seen on TV

If your home videos look like remakes of *Earthquake* (jitter city) or Fellini extravaganzas (wild zooms and pans), you should probably pay a visit to the Consumer Electronics Forum (GO CEFORUM) to seek help from its resident camcorder experts.

Paul Braren, a regular in Section 17, "Camcorders," notes that one-hand camera grips, while convenient, are the major reason for shaky shots. "Two hands help, but a tripod or chest pod works best," he says. Braren is also a fan of the electronic image stabilization technology now offered on many high-end camcorders. "It's the best way to get rid of those pesky shakies," he notes.

The No. 1 mistake made by camcorder users, according to member Rich Goldner, is "too much and too fast panning and zooming." Individuals guilty of this practice should carefully observe professional movies and TV shows to get a feel for the proper pacing of pans and zooms in different situations, say the forum's experts.

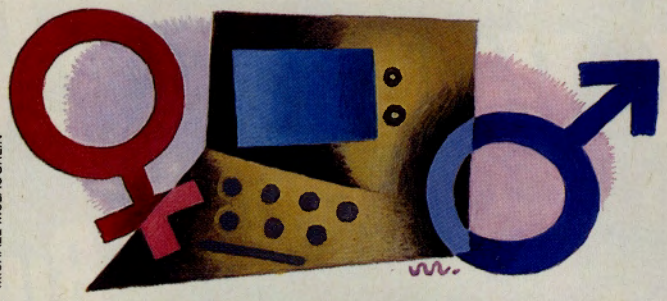
Other problems afflicting novice camcorder productions:

- Not using enough natural or man-made light.
- Failing to remind subjects to move and talk.
- Forgetting to buy enough tapes and batteries.
- Accidentally leaving the camcorder on, resulting in *avant garde* shots of feet and concrete.

For more advice, check out file CAMTRV.ART in the forum's Library 17, "Camcorders."

Monitor

Contributors:
Cathryn Conroy, John Edwards, Mike Pietruk, Lindsy Van Gelder



MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

Getting Ahead by Booting Up

Computers are playing an increasing role in assisting women to break through the corporate "glass ceiling" and achieve a measure of parity in the workplace. Those are among the findings of a PCs and People survey conducted by Logitech Inc., which indicates females outnumber males two to one as PC users.

While the raw numbers are encouraging, the report acknowledges that some inequities still remain. For example, managers responsible for computer-purchasing decisions as well as management information systems departments are still predominantly males.

Logitech, a manufacturer of trackballs, handscanners and mice, discovered some interesting gender differences among users. Women, for instance, perceive greater utilitarian benefits from their computers, while men tend to focus on touch-and-feel aspects. The survey indicated that 84 percent of the women think computers are fun, yet 44 percent of the female respondents also view them as a "necessary evil" in business today.

Men were more likely to use sensory-type input devices such as a mouse. Men also wanted computers that are a more intuitive extension of their own senses, and they believe that systems with human ways of communicating could encourage greater numbers of people to use them.

For more information, visit the Logitech Forum (GO LOGITECH).

For a Fee, He'll Dig Up European Ancestry

When you begin a genealogical search, you never know where it might lead. If your family history search takes you to Western Europe, maybe Genealogy Forum member Jacques de Guise, Baron de Joinville, can help. He recently turned his genealogy avocation into a commercial venture with the opening of his Geneva, Switzerland-based Geneva Research Center.

Fluent in five languages, de Guise will conduct searches in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland that include reading microfilm, analyzing tax, land, marriage, birth and baptismal certificates and other documents, as well as re-creating a lost or unknown family coat of arms.

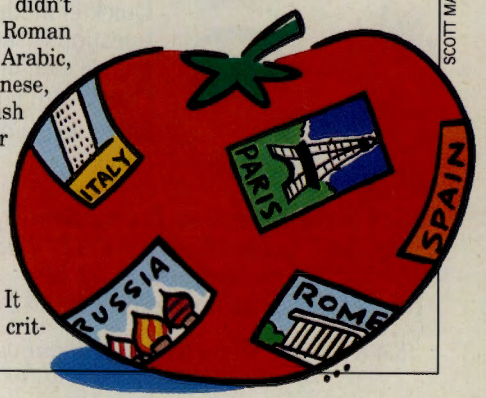
For more information on the Geneva Research Center, see file SWITZ.TXT in Library 6, "Text Files" of the Genealogy Forum (GO ROOTS). If you're interested in pursuing international genealogical research, contact de Guise through CompuServe Mail at User ID number 75130,2552.

You Say 'Tomato,' I Say 'Watch Your Mouth'

When Tim Swan's fiancée was designing a public relations campaign for a tomato company, Swan helped her by accessing the Foreign Language Forum (GO FLEFO) and asking members to help him find the translation for "tomato" in as many languages as possible.

Before you could say "Jersey beefsteak," messages poured in with translations from all over, including Chinese (*fan quie*, literally "barbarian eggplant"), Hungarian (*Paridicsom*—the same word as for heaven), Latin (no such thing—they didn't have tomatoes in the Roman empire), plus Aztec, Arabic, Russian, Hindi, Japanese, French, Italian, Swedish and a truckload of other languages.

One warning did come from a member advising care in using the Portuguese version *tomates* in the plural: It apparently is slang for a critical section of the male reproductive system.



SCOTT MATTHEWS

Real Names Don't Fit on the Marquee

Did you happen to catch *Batman Returns*, starring Michael Douglas, at your local quintiplex last summer? How about *Far and Away* with Thomas Mapother?

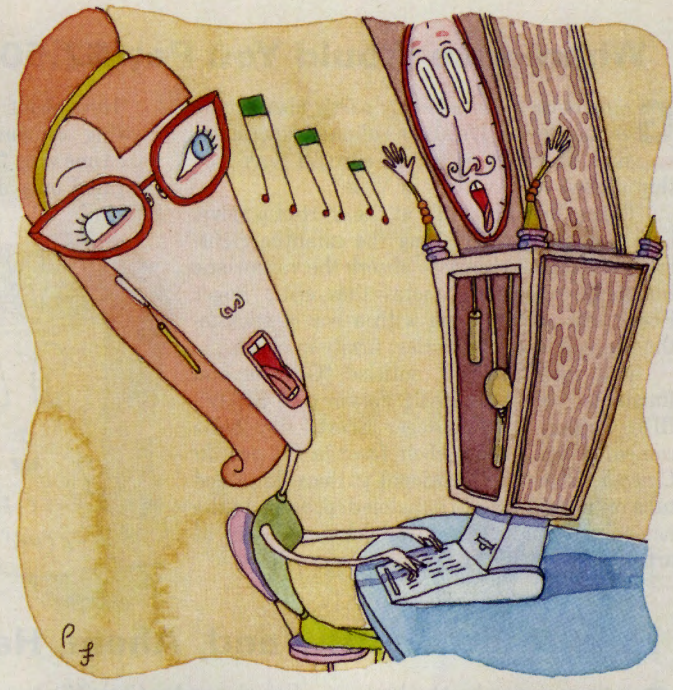
Michael Douglas as Batman? Thomas Mapother?

As it turns out, Michael Keaton's real name is Michael Douglas. (Kirk's kid filed his moniker first with the Screen Actors Guild.) Thomas Mapother is none other than Tom Cruise.

These and other juicy tidbits are available in the file ORIGST.NME in Library 5, "Celebrities," of the ShowBiz Forum (GO SHOWBIZ).

Here are some other examples: Albert Brooks' name is actually Albert Einstein. Diane Keaton's given name is Diane Hall. And Alan Alda is really Alphonso D'Abruzzo.

You'll also discover that veteran screen idol Stewart Granger faced the same problem as Michael Keaton: His real name is James Stewart.



PAUL FISCH

The Sound of No Hands Typing

Computers may improve your productivity but, for some people, they can be a real pain in the wrist.

Carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis and other disorders can result from improper use of keyboards. Preventing such injuries is easier than treating them, and one of the best ways to keep your wrists pain free is to take a break every hour or two. Stand up, stretch, get some coffee, stare out the window, make a phone call. Just do something other than type.

If *remembering* to take that break is a problem, check out the program NJCHIM.ARC (12,197 bytes) in Library 7, "Desktop Utilities," of the IBM Systems/Utilities Forum (GO IBMSYS).

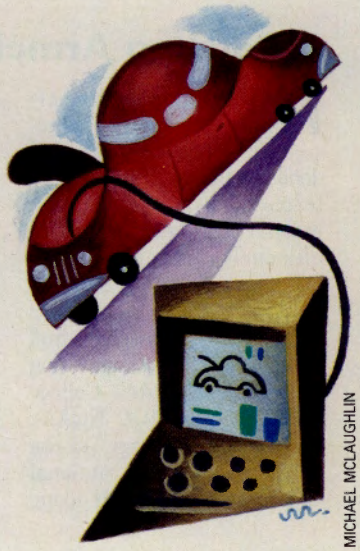
This terminate-and-stay resident utility takes less than 1K of memory and plays a short set of notes, much like a grandfather clock's chime, every 15 minutes or hour, reminding you to get up and stretch. It also features three well-known clock chimes and "time tones."

Mechanically Inclined? Now Your PC Can Be

In light of reports of overcharging and fraud in the automobile repair business, cautious owners want to know what ails their cars before a trip to the dealer or mechanic. To this end, a growing number of self-diagnostic tools are available on the market. One, Diacom from Rinda Technologies, is supported in the Automobile Forum (GO CARS) Section and Library 16, "Rinda Tech/Diacom."

Diacom is a hardware/software system that enables a PC to read a GM or Chrysler car's onboard computer and diagnose faults. Two slide show files—GMDEMO.EXE (for GM) and CHRYDE.EXE (for Chrysler)—are available to demonstrate the computer-to-car system.

The library contains a number of files offering hints and tips. Diacom Tech Tip 104 (TIP104.TXT), for instance, offers advice on automotive batteries, including testing and the use of Diacom to monitor the vehicle's charging system. TIP102.TXT covers clogged fuel injectors and fuel restriction problems on GM cars. It describes an easy method for problem determination that provides information on Integrator and Block Learn fuel-delivery parameters.



MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

MEMBER ESSAY

On the Air

There are hundreds of radio stations broadcasting via short wave that carry programs in many languages beamed worldwide. Unlike AM or FM stations, many short-wave stations operate only for certain hours of the day and have to change frequency several times a year. Listeners are often unable to keep track of these changes.

Fortunately, some stations have radio programs that tell of the most recent media developments, usually obtained from their listeners. The oldest is Radio Sweden's *Media Scan*.

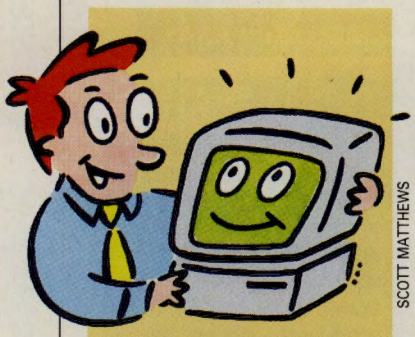
I'd lost contact with the program for some time, but I recently discovered that CompuServe member George Wood, a longtime editor of *Media Scan*, regularly uploads his scripts (with file names SCDX.*) to Library 3, "SWL Library," of HamNet (GO HAMNET). They contain questions from listeners asking for help in identifying mysterious broadcasting stations. After reading these questions, I knew I had the answers.

I sent Wood a CompuServe Mail message identifying some of the frequencies, and he included my contribution in his next script. He then converted everything into a fax message that was read on *Media Scan* a few days later. Small wonder that I was the only short-wave listener whose name was mentioned in that edition of *Media Scan*.

Kurt Ringel
Wiesbaden, Germany

How to Submit Member Essays

Compete for $50 worth of connect time and free CompuServe Information Manager software in *CompuServe Magazine*'s monthly Member Essay contest. Write a 200-word essay describing an original way you've used the Information Service and send it to User ID number 76004,3302. Include your full name, address and User ID number, and watch for winning essays in Monitor.



SCOTT MATTHEWS

My Computer, My Friend

When it comes to your computer, does "PC" really mean personal companion to you? If so, you're not alone.

According to the PCs and People survey conducted by Logitech Inc., 98 percent of the more than 300 computer users responding feel they have personal relationships with their machines.

Of those surveyed, 13 percent said they ascribe personalities to their computers, and 9 percent admitted they have named them. Fully half said they consider their computers extensions of themselves.

Electronic Frontier Foundation Forum (GO EFF) member Lee Hunt, who installs computers in corporations, says it was once a matter of inflexible policy that his clients name their computers. He realized that naming these strange, new machines was the first step in eliminating some of the technophobia they induced.

"Isn't your computer supposed to be your best friend, to have and to type on from this day forward so long as your computer has power?" quips Albert Dayes, member of the Atari Arts Forum.

What are some of our best friends' names? A quick survey in a handful of CompuServe forums turned up these gems: Rosie the Porcheron, Bert and Ernie, El Queso Grande and El Queso Pequéo, the Antikythera Mechanism, Taarna, Sandler Boggs and Benny Profane.

"My computer is a personal companion, and it proudly bears the name Moneypit," says Donald Devich of the ShowBiz Forum. "Each day upon booting up it says, 'Feed me!' "

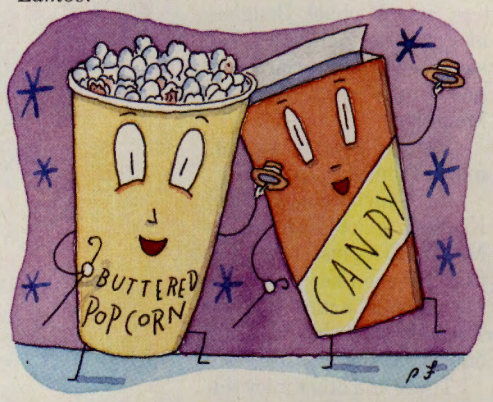
Where Else Would You Pay $2.50 for 'Goobers'?

Going to the movies is only partly about going to the movies. It's also a culinary experience, and an excuse to eat all sorts of junk food that doesn't come with your VCR.

"Eating juvenile candy at the start of a movie is a way of re-establishing the infantile right-brain setting necessary to absorb the voyeuristic filmgoing experience," notes film critic Roger Ebert, his tongue (along with a box of stick-to-the-fillings Good 'n' Plenties) firmly in cheek.

In a recent thread, entitled "Goobers and Raisinets," in the ShowBiz Forum (GO SHOWBIZ), Section 8, "Ask Roger Ebert," film buffs compared notes about their favorite *Cuisine du Cinema*, from the traditional garbage-can-sized tubs of "buttered" (i.e., napalmed) popcorn to the neo-yuppie sandwiches favored by audiences at art film theaters.

"How about chewing on the fingers of your viewing companion during the scary parts?" asked one wag. "Sorry," replied another, "that was tolerated only during the run of *Silence of the Lambs*."



PAUL FISCH

How to Be Healthy and, Ahem, Have Few Friends

Garlic may not be the best thing to eat before a big date, but many members of the Cooks Online Forum (GO COOKS) think "the stinking rose" is delicious—and probably quite healthful, too.

"The Egyptian slaves who built the Great Pyramid in the fifth century B.C. lived on garlic and onions," notes forum regular Jenee Burns. "Virgil, the Latin poet, recommended that reapers eat garlic to help them stand up under their strenuous work in the sun." Burns also claims that garlic oil extract remains widely used in Russian medicine.

Forum member Chris Mitchell says garlic is "good for the heart, blood and circulation." Fellow member Jerry Corcoran adds, "There's nothing better for controlling blood pressure."

Yet most of Cooks Online's garlic aficionados simply appreciate the taste of the malodorous herb. "I just wash the garlic off, remove the outermost layer, and then throw the whole thing into a pot of soup, stew, gumbo, pot roast or whatever," says Corcoran.

"Last month, I made garlic soup, garlic cookies and even garlic ice cream," says Michael Aichlmayr, leader of the forum's Section 4, "Herbs and Spices." "Garlic ice cream is great with pineapple topping," he notes.

C. S. O'LEARY

Settling Armchair Disputes

For fans, perhaps the only thing more fun than a Saturday of college football is debating the merits of favorite teams and players. Almost without fail, these arguments ultimately center on someone bringing up a trivia tidbit or sports statistic.

Pigskin junkies will find great statistical ammunition and more in NCAA's College Sports Network (GO NCAA). Section 1, "Statistics," of the database presents national and conference records along with those for individual schools.

For example, if you are interested in learning more on the Ohio State Buckeyes, data is available on 13 specific categories, including individual and team punt returns, team rushing and passing offense, team rushing defense and team pass efficiency defense.

Note that coverage isn't limited to the big schools, but also extends to the harder-to-find smaller Division II and III colleges and universities.

Space Savings

OK, so it's true that on some planets you might climb on the scale and find that you weigh a few tons. But your paycheck might also stretch a lot further, according to a message thread in the Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM).

As one member pointed out, all of the food and goods on *Star Trek's* ship *Enterprise* are produced by a matter converter running off the ship's engines. Therefore, supplies exactly match demand; i.e., there's no stockpiling of inventory in anticipation of future demands, and no cutbacks and layoffs when the demand drops and the inventory grows too large. In other words, the economy of the *Enterprise* is completely recession-proof. (Hmmmm. How do you say "Read my lips, no new taxes" in Vulcan?)

INTRODUCING ZIFF BUYERS' MARKET. NOW YOU CAN SCREEN THOUSANDS OF COMPUTER PRODUCTS ON-LINE.

Begin your search by selecting the product category you are interested in from the main menu including: computer systems, storage devices, printers, modems and more. In this example we chose computer systems.

The search path shows we further narrowed the field by selecting desktop systems with a 386/33 chip and minimum of 80Mb hard drive. You can also choose to search by price range, for example, "desktop systems less than $2000".

Search Path: Computer Systems, Desktop, 386/33, 80 Mb

There are 3 Featured products. A complete alphabetical listing of 160 products follows the featured items.

May 1,1992

	Manufacturer	Type	RAM	HD	Video	Seller	Svce	Price
1	Zeos	386/33	2	107	SVGA14	Zeos	TSG	1895
	Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows, Ami Pro 2.0, Sierra DAC, WinRIX free.							
2	Insight	386/33	4	124	SVGA	Insight	GTW	1669
	You can have it all: amazing prices plus world class service.							
3	Dell	386/33	4	80	SVGA	Dell	TSG	2049
	Dell quality at even lower prices.							
4	APlus	366/33	4	120	SVGA	APlus	GS	1475
5	CompuAdd Exp	386/33	4	80	VGA	CompuAdd Ex	ST	1795
6	LodeStar	386/33	4	125	SVGA14	LodeStar	GSTW	1669
7	Magnavox	386/33	2	130	EVGA	Elect Disc	GT	1395+
8	Professional	386/33	4	120	SVGA14	Professional	GT	1565

0 Revise search

Please enter one or more numbers or press enter for more products:

S Service on site
G Guaranteed money back
T Toll free support
W Warranty extended
+ Credit card surcharge

Ziff Buyers' Market lets you see the most important product characteristics at a glance; technical specs, seller, service policies and current pricing.

Manufacturers and sellers use top listings to make you aware of specials and promotions— then the alphabetical listing makes it easy to scan the complete list of products that meet your needs.

Enter a number to find even more detail on the product and seller you are interested in — including complete ordering information and toll-free numbers.

Since price and product specs are constantly changing in this fast-moving industry, you'll be glad to know Ziff Buyers' Market is updated at least monthly, but in many cases daily.

Finally, there's a way to feel confident you're buying the right product at the right price. With Ziff Buyers' Market, a new on-line buying service that lets you almost instantly find the product and pricing information you need on more than 10,000 products available from the direct channel. And only Ziff Buyers' Market gives you side-by-side, up-to-the-minute comparisons of detailed technical specs, pricing, service policies and ordering information. And makes it easy to take advantage of timely specials and promotions from the leading direct sellers. Ziff Buyers' Market is available on ZiffNet or CompuServe® (GO BUYMARKET), so if you're not already a member, sign-up today*. You'll discover that any other way of buying computer products simply doesn't compare.

The on-line service for buying direct. Just type GO BUYMARKET today.

Ziff Buyers' Market

*CompuServe members will be billed for connect time rates of $12.80/hr. for 1200 or 2400 BPS, $22.80/hr. for 9600 BPS access. ©1992 Ziff Desktop Information. CompuServe is a registered trademark of CompuServe Information Service.

GO OLI for more information.

Gee! I Can Do That Online?

Life, like CompuServe, can sometimes seem overwhelmingly huge and complex. You have a problem—so the car makes a funny *whirrr* noise, you don't know if a mortgage will be affordable, you're not sure how to price your latest free-lance effort .... As a CompuServe member, you're hooked into a large mass of accumulated experience, an information service with hundreds of services and hundreds of thousands of people, many who know more about your troubling topic than you and would like nothing better than to help. But where in the electronic world is the answer you seek? To help out, we present the following informative and quirky ideas demonstrating how CompuServe can provide shortcuts, saving time, money and mental anguish encountered in life's big necessities and little annoyances.

How Much is Your Time Worth?

This question is more than just philosophical if you're starting your own free-lance or consulting business. Many CompuServe members have tapped the online expertise of entrepreneurs before deciding how much to charge.

"I received lots of counsel and advice in the Public Relations and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG) in the months leading up to quitting my ad agency job for a full-time free-lance career," says forum member Ken Norkin. "While there have been a few messages about going rates, most exchanges seem to deal with how to charge (hourly, retainer, per project) and how to set rates for any of these."

You also can find advice about free-lance rates in the Journalism Forum (GO JFORUM), Literary Forum (GO LITFORUM), Computer Consultants' Forum (GO CONSULT), Working From Home Forum (GO WORK) and in the consulting-related sections of many computer forums.

"For me, the benefit of online discussions is in finding out what the market is bearing," says Lamar Graham, a participant in the Journalism Forum. "If I'm getting a buck a word and everybody else is getting 50 cents, then I'm sitting pretty."

Forum libraries also offer useful information. Eavesdrop on writers discussing rates in the Journalism Forum, Library 3, "Freelancers," file MONEY.THD (101,796 bytes). Check out a sample free-lance contract by Dan Greenleaf in the PR and Marketing Forum's Library 1, "On Your Own," AGREEM.SAM (10,690 bytes).

Remember that rates are only part of running your own business, says Esther Schindler, a Computer Consultants' Forum member. "Lots of folks show up here asking, 'How much should I charge?' and expecting an integer value in return," she says. "Instead, they get a lot of discussion that, we hope, helps *them* decide what the answer should be. The issues of running a business begin at rate setting, rather than end there."

THOS. HOGAN

Looking for Work in Online Places

Looking for a new job? Instead of getting your fingers inky with newsprint, give your search a high-tech boost with Adnet Online (GO ADNET), an employment advertising network available on the Classifieds menu (Select Option 1, "Browse/Read Ads").

With hundreds of prestigious employers such as Motorola Corp., Johns Hopkins Hospital, Digital Equipment Corp., MasterCard International, H&R Block, Shearson Lehman and a number of federal government agencies offering professional, managerial and technical job listings online, it's an efficient way to locate a job.

Scanning the well-categorized ads can save you money at a time when money counts, says Adnet's Al Wigginton. "You can spend $15 in a heartbeat buying Sunday newspapers and trade magazines, and you can spend a lot of 'hidden dollars' in a search that lasts weeks or months, because you forget about that trip to the bookstore or the drive to the library downtown. With AdNet, we're creating a central repository for important positions, which users can read at their leisure."

Designed for those actively looking for employment, as well as those who want to track hiring trends in specific industries, Adnet Online allows you to search by type of position and geographical location. Listings, which are lengthy and detailed since there are no space limitations, are displayed as soon as a position becomes available and removed once they are filled. In addition, the majority of the jobs listed in Adnet Online do not appear in newspaper classifieds, offering you a leg up on the competition.

If you're an employer wanting to place an ad, contact Adnet Online via User ID number 76702,1771 or call 800/682-2901.

In the Cards: Your E-mail Address

It seemed like a good idea at the time: run a supremely silly contest encouraging CompuServe members to send in business cards (or a facsimile thereof) with their User ID numbers either already printed on them or with the cards "artistically modified" to include them. Judging was guaranteed to be completely partisan, and the categories were preposterous: Most Interesting, Card Bearing Name We Happen to Like, etc.

It ended up being a *great* idea: Nearly 2,000 entries arrived from all over the globe, with occupations "from shepherds to rocket scientists," according to Deborah Knight, advertising supervisor. CompuServe's membership took artistic modification to new heights, and in some cases, extremes. User ID numbers were penciled, stenciled, stamped, scribbled, embroidered, embossed, markered, laser-printed, typed and rubbed on all manner of cards—Rolodex cutouts, pop-ups, fold-overs and more.

In letters accompanying many of the entries, members bragged about how long they've had their User IDs on their cards, or expressed gratitude for the idea and indicated that they had modified theirs as a result (or would gladly steal the idea shortly). Computer consultant Michael W. Blake-Knox and others noted the need for some sort of standard format for business card e-mail addresses. The following format is simplest and was preferred by most entrants:

CompuServe: xxxxx,xxxx

and, if applicable:

Internet: xxxxx.xxxx@compuserve.com

A discussion of more business card e-mail etiquette is archived in the Computer Consultants' Forum (GO CONSULT), Library 4, "Business Issues," file CARDS.THD.

The advantages of having your CompuServe User ID number on your cards are clear to those who have done so for years. The techno-hip image created by the address is important to bringing in business, maintaining credibility and putting other online-savvy clients at ease, says Scott Anderson. His California software publishing company, Wild Duck, sells a product "better seen than described," a demo of which is stored in one of the graphics forums' libraries. "When I hand out my card, I can tell people to download the demo and leave me a message."

It's also a great conversation-starter among clients or colleagues who aren't familiar with CompuServe, and in a small way helps to spread the reach of the online world with those who come away intrigued, says Andrew Steele, director of the U.K. office of a Christian broadcasting company. "There are still an awful lot of people who prefer to surrender the benefits of online communication for the relative simplicity of fax. However, there is always the one who courageously asks what e-mail is all about."

Moving Days

Relocation. If that word inspires fear, loathing and an acute case of inertia, you'll be relieved to know that you can obtain cogent advice on housing, medical care, shipping, computer concerns, schools, foreign customs and more on CompuServe. A few hints:

Ask for help in familiar forums, particularly those dealing with your business or personal interests. When information broker Andi Plotsky needed to move home and business from San Diego to Atlanta, she went to Section 0, "Association of Independent Information Professionals," a private section for AIIP members in the Working From Home Forum (GO WORK). "I wanted to maintain contact with San Diegans who saw my Yellow Pages ad while I was getting settled in Atlanta," she says. "The resulting thread on both 800 and the new 700 phone numbers helped me."

Other resources include the International Entrepreneurs' Forum (GO USEN) and the Public Relations and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG).

Check forums with sections covering the region you're considering. Steve Apple of Miami Beach had a solid job offer in Tampa. "But I wanted to know what the city was all about—especially its neighborhoods and nightlife," he says. Apple consulted Tampa-based friends in the Travel Forum (GO TRAVSIG) and Florida Forum (GO FLORIDA). He not only learned of a suitable neighborhood—Ybor City—but he also got detailed information on Tampa's character, traffic patterns and housing.

Other resources: Neighborhood Report (GO NEIGHBORHOOD), SUPERSITE (GO SUPERSITE), U.K. Forum (GO UKFORUM), Foreign Language Forum (GO FLEFO) and TAPCIS Forum (GO TAPCIS), Section 6, "International."

Make friends at the new location. U.S. embassy staffer Doug Ellice consulted the IBM European Users Forum (GO IBMEUROPE) before his 1990 posting to Paris. "I posted messages there and was deluged with e-mail from people in France, including two CompuServers in the embassy," he says. "When I stepped off the plane, I had a half-dozen friends in Paris I could call for anything.

"With CompuServe's nearly global coverage, no one ever need be a 'stranger in a strange land' again."

Shop for Cars, Stars and Maybe a Mate

Burn Rubber Through Car Shopping

Screeeeech! Bang! Your car is wrecked, and you need to replace it pronto. How can this be quick and painless? Try CompuServe's automotive services to save time, money, and mental wear and tear.

The headaches of choosing a new car may be quelled by consulting *Consumer Reports* (GO CONSUMER), which lets you search for vehicles by using up to six criteria or by model name. Want others' opinions? Ask around in the Automobile Forum (GO CARS).

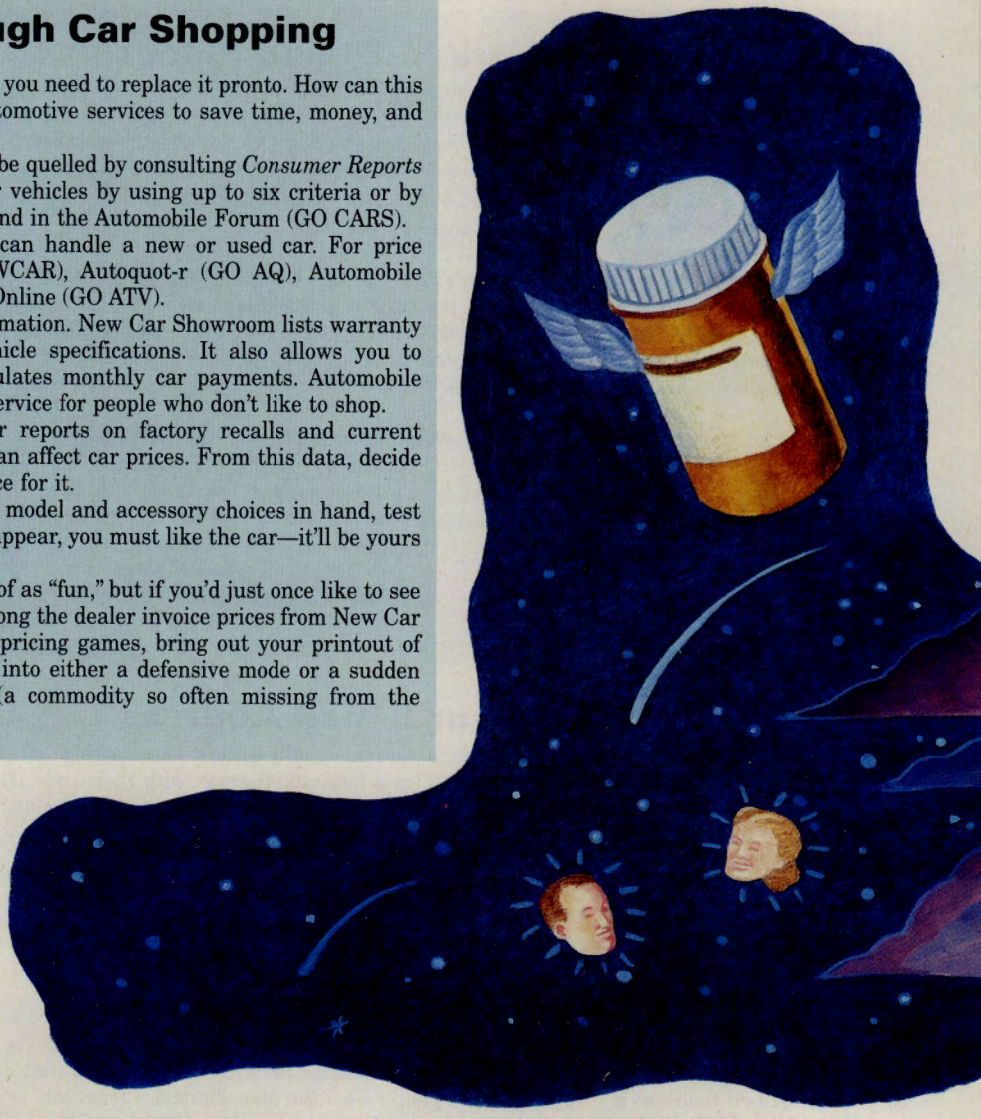
Price usually determines if your budget can handle a new or used car. For price information, use New Car Showroom (NEWCAR), Autoquot-r (GO AQ), Automobile Information Center (GO AI) or AutoVantage Online (GO ATV).

Some auto services supply additional information. New Car Showroom lists warranty periods, standard features, options and vehicle specifications. It also allows you to compare two models "side-by-side" and calculates monthly car payments. Automobile Information Center offers a new-car buying service for people who don't like to shop.

Finally, check the Automobile Forum for reports on factory recalls and current factory-to-dealer incentives. Both situations can affect car prices. From this data, decide on a make and model and calculate a fair price for it.

Once you decide, go shopping. With make, model and accessory choices in hand, test drive that car. No matter how good statistics appear, you must like the car—it'll be yours for a long time.

Negotiating price has rarely been thought of as "fun," but if you'd just once like to see the salesperson squirm instead of you, take along the dealer invoice prices from New Car Showroom. If the salesperson starts playing pricing games, bring out your printout of figures, which usually stuns the salesperson into either a defensive mode or a sudden desire to talk nuts and bolts, dollars and (a commodity so often missing from the car-buying process) *sense*.



A Medicinal Transplant

When Kathy Morgret decided to move from Montana to Tennessee, she had the problem of what to do with her medical prescriptions. Morgret needed continuing access to a couple of medications, but knew it would take time to locate and establish a relationship with a new doctor. So she moved her prescriptions to Court Pharmacy, The Electronic Mall's online pharmacy (GO RX).

"I went to my doctor and she wrote a prescription for a year's worth of refills, which I mailed to Court Pharmacy," says Morgret. "Then I gave Court a credit card number and once a month I stopped by The Mall and asked for a refill. It gave me time to become established in Tennessee and find a new doctor without having to worry about those medications."

Court Pharmacy's Dr. Tom Santisi says Morgret's situation is not uncommon. "We've shipped birth control pills to a Peace Corps director in Africa's Ivory Coast faster than her prescription service through the State Department. We've sent prescription drugs to patients in Taiwan for products that weren't available locally."

To enter a prescription, Court Pharmacy requires either a written copy of a patient's prescription or a phone call from the physician (800/367-7988).

The Gift That Keeps on Shining

Having trouble picking out that special gift for your significant other? Looking for a truly unique anniversary present for Mom and Dad? Consider buying them doublet stars—two stars that eternally revolve around each other.

Astronomy Forum Sysop Dick DeLoach can put you in touch with the International Star Registry, a company that will name stars for you or whomever else you'd like. "The symbolism associated with a star's immortality no doubt contributes to the appeal of having one's name linked to one," notes DeLoach, who adds that the Astronomy Forum (GO ASTROFORUM) is in no way connected with the registry. "There is also great symbolism associated with doublet stars—two stars each caught forever in the orbit of the other."

While some Astronomy Forum members look disdainfully upon the service and note that the names are not officially recognized by the International Astronomical Union, others are more open-minded.

"I 'gave' stars to my wife and son, and I assure you they don't give a hoot that their stars are not officially recognized," says forum member Darrell Green. "But they *do* care that I wanted to remember them in that special way."

Do an Ego Exam

Oh, admit it. You've always suspected, deep in your heart, that your inner child is as sensitive as Bambi and that your insights into your significant others would make Freud jealous. So why not put it to the test with an online personality assessment or two?

Numerous Mac- and IBM-specific programs are available for downloading, ranging from home versions of the famous Myers-Briggs personality analyzer to numerology software. (Check the Macintosh and IBM File Finders, using PERSONALITY as the keyword.) For an online reading, GO TMC-90, where you can choose between "Personality Profile" (a multiple-choice test that rates you in eight areas, including attitude toward life, body awareness and flexibility) and *So You Think You Know Me?* This game asks you and a loved one (parent, child, mate, sibling or friend) to answer questions about the other one (e.g., "What is Mom's favorite way to relax?"). Then you compare the answers, and either bask in togetherness or bicker for the rest of the evening.

Should I Get a Second Opinion?

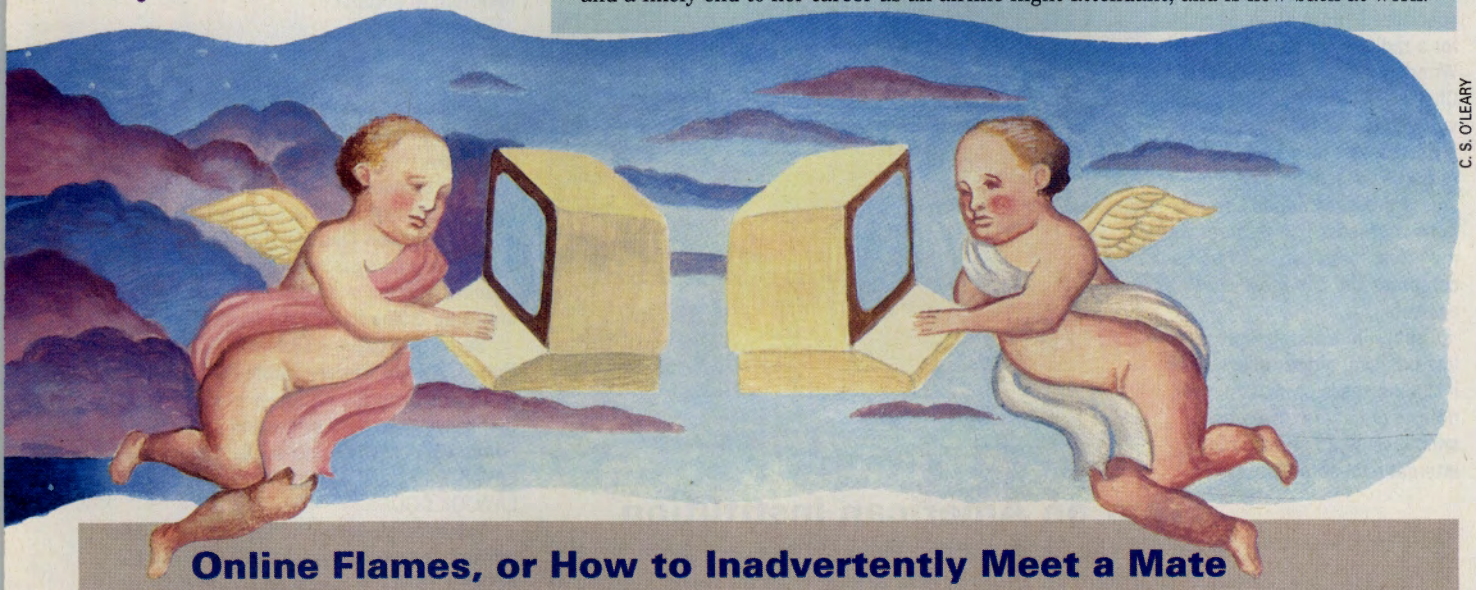
You have an impossibly difficult decision to make. A lawyer has a dotted line that requires your signature, or a surgeon has a dotted line in mind for your upper abdomen. You're not comfortable with the fine print or the diagnosis and wonder if a second opinion is in order.

A variety of areas on CompuServe can put you in touch with professionals who can help you find the right course of action, including the Legal Forum (GO LAWSIG), the Health and Fitness Forum (GO GOODHEALTH), the Cancer and Diabetes Forums (GO CANCER and GO DIABETES), the AMIA Medical Forum (GO MEDSIG) and the Human Sexuality Open Forum (GO HSX100).

In the Legal Forum, questions are often about finding a competent attorney in specialized areas. Recently a CompuServe member in Tulsa, Okla., asked for help in finding an attorney for a child custody case. A member in Washington, D.C., looking for a lawyer to handle a sexual-harassment case got a response from another member whose Washington law firm specializes in them.

Medical questions are perhaps even more thorny. Member M.J. Plaster was diagnosed with Presumed Ocular Histoplasmosis Syndrome, for which her doctor advised immediate laser surgery. "My doctor is one of the best retinal surgeons in the area, but extracting information from him proved futile," she recalls. "It left me with more questions than answers."

Her postings in MEDSIG and the Health and Fitness Forum produced support, inspiration and mounds of published research, "90 percent of which was understandable to the layperson." Plaster went on to have the surgery, avoiding legal blindness and a likely end to her career as an airline flight attendant, and is now back at work.



C. S. O'LEARY

Online Flames, or How to Inadvertently Meet a Mate

Remember the 19th-century epistolary tradition of exchanging love letters? Those of you not primping for your next video-dating encounter may note that this lost art is being kept alive by forum members who inadvertently meet on message boards and get hit by Cupid's electronic arrow. Unlike Tchaikovsky and his prolific steady, Nadezha von Meck, the e-mailing romantics of the present day may eventually meet and (happy endings!) marry.

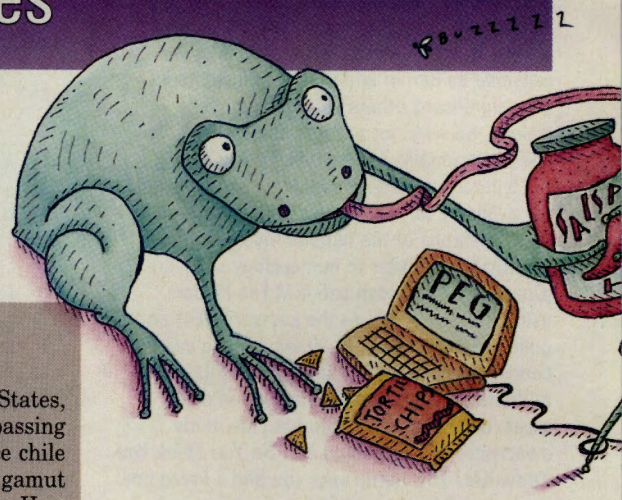
Steve Bobker, editor-in-chief of *Windows User* magazine, found his eventual wife Hilary as the sole voice of reason amidst a polarized early 1990 debate in the Mac Clubhouse Forum. Multiplayer Games Forum Associate Sysop Bruce Linton ("Bonsai") and wife Cynthia ("Lucy the Witch") wooed in messages and conferencing after noticing each other in the *British Legends* game. Laura Haggarty, sysop in the Desktop Publishing Forum, met husband James at the April 1990 MacWorld Expo, after months of purely professional forum dialogue. She was happily "conned" into moving 2,000 miles to Saskatoon shortly thereafter, which thoroughly confused her mother. "She never did understand how it happened—she thought it was 'computer dating'," says Haggarty.

Lee Goodwin and Meredith Macklin bumped into each other in the Outdoors Forum, where Macklin had mentioned that she was the only female player on an all-male winter league soccer team. "I was simply intrigued," says Goodwin. "Every message after that was more and more intriguing, until we realized we were spending more time and effort writing each other than we were working or living." The two met in Texas last April after two and a half months of e-mails and 500 pages of letters; a wedding is planned for this winter, complete with pre-ceremony online conferencing.

A certain clarity of expression results in e-mail courtships. "E-mail thoughts are much more easily edited and rearranged," Goodwin says. "You can think about what you want to say and say it more confidently."

But the ultimate windfall of modemic courtship? If you're the archiving type, you'll have a complete record of your romance. "I have a copy of every single word and thought Meredith and I exchanged before we fell in love. How many lovers can claim such a history?" Goodwin says.

Get a Line on Favorite Pastimes



Cursing Your Hot Wheels?

It was a Saturday afternoon in Switzerland when the brakes on Silvio Meyer's 1958 Studebaker failed and the exhaust started spewing white smoke. For two hours, Meyer searched for where to add brake fluid. Frustrated, he finally accessed CompuServe's Worldwide Car Network Forum (GO WCN), and—voila!—Sysop John Hribal soon diagnosed the problem, and explained that the master brake cylinder was hidden under the floor mat on the driver's side.

For vintage-auto buffs, sports car enthusiasts, collectors of rare vehicles and even middle-of-the-road tinkerers, WCN provides speedy, specialized information. Searching for a radiator for your 1923 roadster? Wondering what Uncle Bob's '64 Chevy is worth? Planning to take your sports car overseas but uncertain just how to do it—or how to find a bargain on a new one once you're there? Stumped about how to get your Model T to perform well on mountain roads? Just rev up your computer and zoom over to WCN for answers.

The forum also regularly offers late-breaking automotive news, including specs on new models, notices of factory recalls and announcements of upcoming international auto shows.

Pick a Pepper

Sales of salsa are booming in the United States, with this zesty tomato sauce now surpassing ketchup as the condiment of choice. But since chile peppers in traditional Mexican foods run the gamut from mild to wild, burning questions remain: How do you pick a pepper? How can you avoid biting into either a tepid disappointment or a scorching surprise?

Pepper-picking was a hot topic recently in Section 7, "Ethnic Recipes," of the Cooks Online Forum (GO COOKS). After heated debate—including Chris Mitchell's homemade diagram of a chile pepper, with semicolons for seeds and exclamation points for the stringy placenta inside—the consensus was that you can't always judge a pepper by its color, but you can make it milder by removing the seeds and placenta. Still, you might want to keep handy some cold milk or ice cream—not water or beer—in case this surefire method fails.

Whether you're curious about cooking *couscous* or good *gado-gado*, Library 7, "Ethnic Recipes," contains many other helpful tidbits ripe for the picking.

From the Giggle Files

"And why is it women always head to the restroom in groups? ... "

<click>

"My boyfriend is so fat ... "

<click>

"What are these home shopping channels about, anyway?"

<click>

If the comedy explosion on cable TV seems to have you catching the same act on *Evening at the Improv* on Thursday that you saw on *Comic Strip Live* on Saturday, quit channel-hopping and do some quick library browsing online for original laughs.

Begin by exploring Library 8, "Comics and Humor," of the Literary Forum (GO LITFORUM). Next, check out the attorneys poking fun at themselves and their profession in the Legal Forum (GO LAWSIG), Library 0, "General," file LAWJOK.TXT and Library 14, "Bar Room," LAWJOK.DOC.

Teachers, students and the rest of us who remember school days will delight in the file BLOOP.ERS in the Education Forum (GO EDFORUM), Library 14, "Language Arts." That all-time favorite topic of cars is addressed in the Automobile Forum (GO CARS) with such funny-bone pleasers as DUMB.TXT, DMODNT.THD and RVNGE.THD in Library 8, "The Village Inn."

Don't overlook an old favorite of current topical humor: Jay Trachman's (not Leno's) weekly *One to One* is distributed through Library 5, "Radio/TV Talent," of the Broadcast Professionals Forum (GO BPFORUM). And, then, of course, there's a number of joke-a-day Internet news groups accessible via CompuServe Mail (see file INTGRP.ZIP in Library 12, "Usenet & Mail," of the Unix Forum, GO UNIXFORUM).

Tour an American Institution

What do the black leather motorcycle jacket worn by the Fonzie character in *Happy Days* and a visit by Boris Yeltsin to the White House have in common?

Thanks to reasonableness on the part of Yeltsin's image handlers, absolutely nothing, save for the fact that both visuals are little pieces of Americana stored for posterity by the Smithsonian Institution. More than 500 GIF images from Smithsonian collections are available in two libraries of the Art Gallery Forum (GO ARTGALLERY). There's wildlife (flamingos, tree frogs, a one-horned rhinoceros); history (a stone sphinx, Napoleon's diamond necklace, a mummy mask); and famous jewels (the Hope diamond).

The Smithsonian's participation in the graphics forums is an effort by the Institution's Office of Printing and Photographic Services to find new ways to reach a broader audience, says forum staff member David Shaver. The collection is intended to cover all of the basic topics you'd find in a visit to the Smithsonian. What's more, on occasion the Institution will upload a specific image at a forum member's request.

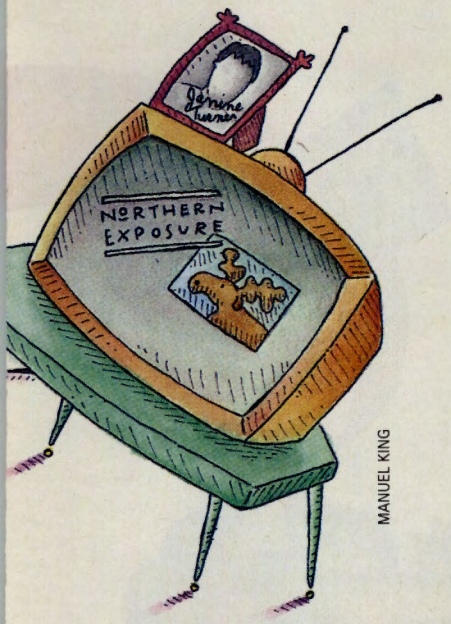
So You Wanna Write a Rock 'n' Roll Star?

OK, how many single CompuServe men have an infatuation with Janine Turner, the bubbly butch-cut actress who plays bush pilot Maggie O'Connell on TV's mountainously huge hit *Northern Exposure*? While you may never have met her, there's a snowball's chance in Cicely (the series' fictional Alaskan town) of getting an 8-by-10 glossy of Turner, maybe even her signature along with it. But where to begin? What's a poor enamored fan to do?

Many star-struck CompuServers know to access the ShowBiz Forum's (GO SHOWBIZ) Celebrities section and query Sysop Donald Devich, business manager for the arts and lectures program at the University of California at Santa Barbara and a 12-year denizen of the administrative end of Hollywood. "We have a saying in the forum: Nothing is trivial. We have people ask the most arcane questions you could imagine, and with tongue firmly in my cheek, I say we take them deadly serious."

Common requests include posting of filmographies (a listing of films an actor has appeared in) and contact addresses for celebrities via their agents, managers or companies. "We don't traffic in gossip or personal addresses," says Devich. Fan club information is routinely desired, but sometimes hard to obtain. "A lot of them are not terribly well-organized—it's catch-as-catch-can. There have been a couple of times I've been stumped: Madonna, I found out after a lot of looking, doesn't have an authorized fan club, just a merchandising outlet."

Devich tracks down addresses and more esoteric data (often to end heated online debates over such topics as Peter O'Toole's first film) using his own personal film library, as well as access to special collections at his university's library, professional contacts and entertainment industry folk in the forum. "We don't have library files with these kinds of information in them. You have to ask," he says."But we'll go to any extent to find out for you."



MANUEL KING

On TV? On PC!

It's the critical question on everyone's mind: "What's on the tube tonight?"

You can turn to your local newspaper or *TV Guide* for the latest listings or, better yet, check out *Personal Entertainment Guide*, the first TV listings "magazine" designed to operate on a DOS-based PC.

Like printed publications, *PEG* features articles, program descriptions, grid listings, and program breakouts by type and category. But compared to most other sources, *PEG* provides far more channel and programming information. The software presents listings up to three weeks in advance of air time with unprecedented detail. For example, the description for most movies featured in *PEG* contains a synopsis, year of release, MPAA rating, quality rating, and the names of the director and six actors. Additionally, *PEG* includes episode titles and descriptions of even the oldest syndicated shows.

Once a week, at a convenient day and time, CompuServe members who use *PEG* download the magazine's latest information from the Consumer Electronics Forum (GO CEFORUM). The weekly update is highly concentrated, allowing the details of *PEG*'s 10,000 listed shows to be transmitted in only five minutes at 9600 baud, or 20 to 25 minutes at 2400 baud. The publication and its updates are shareware products, published by New York-based Lookahead Communications Inc.

To obtain the main *PEG* software, visit Library 16, "*PEG*-TV Listings," of the Consumer Electronics Forum and download PEGWAR.EXE. *PEG*'s weekly updates are also archived in the library, as is a demo version of the software, DEMO01.COM.

Casting a Line for Advice

Whether you're an accomplished fly fisherman or a novice worm drowner, you can find out where the big 'uns are biting by checking Section 5, "Fishing," of the Outdoors Forum (GO OUTDOORS).

Experienced fishermen, including accomplished writers such as Joe Reynolds of *Outdoor Life* magazine, can give you tips to fill your creel. Give your destination, and you'll reel in all the tips you can handle. Recent threads have discussed hot spots in Montana, Wyoming, New England, Pennsylvania and Idaho. In addition to which bait or lures are working (and which have been duds), you'll find out how to avoid crowds, where to buy a temporary permit and fishing gear, the depth and temperature of local waters, stocking information and other conditions that could affect your excursion. You can even find out where the locals eat.

As a result of meeting online, many members have acquired lifelong fishing partners—a relationship only slightly less sacred than marriage. After Tim Fahey and fellow Pennsylvanian Jeff Geckler began corresponding, they learned they lived only 10 minutes from one another. "We've fished together several times and get along well," says Fahey. "He is introducing me to trout fishing, and I am introducing him to flyfishing for small-mouth bass."

If you have any questions, Sysops Bill Cleve, Joe Reynolds and Tony Mandile are happy to oblige.

Scanning the Globe

Oh, drat. It's Saturday night and Radio Bulgaria's programming schedule can't be found. Is this the evening for *Saturday with Sofia Sophie* or *Mickey's Mikhaylovgrad Melodies?*

Better see what HamNet (GO HAMNET) has to say. Library 3, "SWL Library," file SWENGL.TXT—Short-wave Broadcasts to North America in English—says Radio Bulgaria goes on the air nightly at 00:00 Universal Time (that's 7 p.m. EST). The frequencies are 9.595 MHz, 9.700 MHz, 11.660 MHz, 11.680 MHz, 11.720 MHz, 11.870 MHz, 11.950 MHz and 15.135 MHz. Threads in the forum's Section 3, "Short-wave Listening," indicate there've been no programming changes. It's time for an evening of fine listening.

Contributors

Martha Barnette, Nicki Chodnoff, Cathryn Conroy, John Edwards, Christopher Galvin, Robin Garr, Lindsy Van Gelder, Wendy Grossman, Patricia Harris, Douglas W. Jackson, Dan Kening, David Lyon, Michael Naver, Hank Nuwer and Andy Rathbone.

Save Time, Data and Your Dreadful Spelling

No 'Z' in SCSI

Next time your word processor's spelling checker chokes on a highly technical or industry-specific term, turn to any of Ziff Communications' four online reference libraries—Magazine Database Plus (GO MAGDB), Computer Database Plus (GO COMPDB), Health Database Plus (GO HLTDB) or Business Database Plus (GO BUSDB)—for assistance. Together they likely contain every word, phrase and acronym of the English language.

Each library offers, among its search options, the ability to locate articles by keywords embedded in the text. If your request yields zero "hits," assume an error and try alternates to discover the correct spelling. Once the word is found, you can view bibliographic information, read the stories online, download them for offline reading or immediately log off.

MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN

Fast Fixes for a Hard Disk

Besides frequent backups of your data, the best precaution against a hard-disk crash on your computer is to have a good suite of disk utilities at hand, such as those found on CompuServe.

Some are free or low-cost shareware you can download from the major user forums, such as the IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW) or the Macintosh New Users Forum (GO MACNEW). Others are in forums sponsored by vendors of commercial disk protection software.

Use them whenever you need to "defragment" your hard disk, repair damaged files, format a diskette, disinfect a disk or perform other first-aid.

Where to look for help? If you have a commercial product, use it. For technical support and customer service, go to that publisher's forum; for example, GO CENTRAL for Central Point Software's PC Tools or MacTools, or GO SYMANTEC for Symantec Corp.'s Norton Utilities.

If you don't have a commercial utility, first try one of the free or low-cost shareware programs in the user forums. You might find it does all you need to save your disk or recover your data.

Here's a sampling:

Disk Organizer—Defragments files on a PC hard drive. IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW), Library 1, "Disk/Disk Utilities," DOG.ZIP (54,761 bytes).

Hard Disk Test—Allows read/write testing of a hard disk or diskette without disturbing data. IBM Hardware Forum, Library 1, HDTEST.ZIP (139,775 bytes).

Disk Repair—Diskette rescue program. Zenith Forum (GO ZENITH), Library 5, "DOS Utilities," ANADSK.ZIP (62,680 bytes).

Floppies—Recovers files from damaged Macintosh diskettes. Macintosh New Users and Help Forum (GO MACNEW), Library 5, "Disk Tools," FLOPPY.SIT (73,728 bytes).

MacSnoop—Disk editor with manual. Macintosh New Users and Help Forum, Library 5, MACSNO.SIT (76,000 bytes).

Fast Floppy Formatter—Diskette formatter. Macintosh New Users and Help Forum, Library 5, FF.SIT (56,000 bytes).

File Saver—Recovers files from a disk whose directory and FAT have been destroyed. Atari Productivity Forum (GO ATARIPRO), Library 4, "Utility Programs," RECOVR.ARC (4,937 bytes).

Formatter—Formats any mounted device and maps out bad tracks. Amiga User Forum (GO AMIGAUSER), Library 9, "Disk Utilities," BFMT.LZH (16,640 bytes).

Killing Time on the Connect Clock

Sure, you already have CompuServe Information Manager or other modem software to access CompuServe. And you may already be taking advantage of CIM's offline capabilities (GO CIM for more information). But do you know you can get special software that automates your CompuServe sessions while you sit back and save money?

These free or low-cost shareware "auto-access" programs can save you serious time and money because they log on to CompuServe for you, automatically send and receive your messages, download your files, then log off. This lets you read and write messages offline when the connect-time clock isn't running.

How much will you save? "Hard to say," reports IBMNET Forum Manager Don Watkins. "I'd say 50 percent would be possible if you didn't expand your usage. But many people report no savings because they use the forums more and get more information."

What flavor of auto-access software is right for you? Here's a rundown:

TAPCIS—The granddaddy of these programs, for IBM PC-compatibles. TAPCIS has accumulated many new features since it was introduced. Cost is $79, shareware. Download it in the TAPCIS Forum (GO TAPCIS), Library 1, "TAPCIS," files TAP.EXE (211,812 bytes) and TAPDOC.EXE (154,832 bytes).

Autosig—Popular with PC users for its flexibility and script language. Available free in the IBM Communications Forum (GO IBMCOM), Library 1, "Autosig (ATO)," files WHATIS.ATO (6,475 bytes), ATOSIG.REQ (5,625 bytes), ATOSIG.EXE (133,393 bytes), and ATODOC.EXE (70,827 bytes).

OzCIS—New for IBM PCs, OzCIS is known for its ease of use, graphical interface and ability to display graphics files. Available free in the IBM Communications Forum, Library 12, "OzCIS," files OzCIS.REQ (5,940 bytes) and OZCIS.BRO (7,868 bytes).

CISOP—Also new for PCs, CISOP requires Crosstalk Mark 4 or Crosstalk Communicator software. Cost is $35, $70 with Communicator. Download from Crosstalk Forum (GO XTALK), Library 6, "CISOP Scripts," CISOP.EXE (413,862 bytes).

CompuServe Navigator—The Macintosh user's favorite, it's been updated often over the years. Cost is $70. GO NAVIGATOR or GO ORDER.

AutoPilot—New for the Amiga, it allows multitasking. Cost is $60. Download from Amiga Vendor Forum (GO AMIGAVEN), Library 9, "ATI/Whap!," AP.LHA (approximately 150,000 bytes).

QuickCIS—For Atari ST and TT series machines, QuickCIS is free and available in the Atari Productivity Forum (GO ATARIPRO), Library 2, "Telecommunications," QWKCIS.PRG (87,892 bytes).

When You Wish Upon a Computing Forum

Wishes can come true.

Members who've wondered aloud in the "Wish List" sections of some CompuServe forums why they couldn't find a particular program, macro or special feature for their machine have posted original ideas and seen them turned to reality by generous software authors.

When Atari released its MS-DOS compatible palmtop a few years ago, energetic programmers went to work, churning out new public-domain and shareware programs daily as suggested by members in the Portfolio Forum's (GO APORTFOLIO) Wish List section. It hasn't stopped. Peter Bennett asked for a program to view the Portfolio's graphic files on his desktop PC. "In less than a day," Bennett says, "the program was in the libraries, courtesy of programmer Don Messerli."

In the UserLand Forum's (GO USERLAND) Wish List section, members often request and receive macro scripts custom written in Frontier for their Macintosh applications. Rich Parker posted a request for a script to automatically print pictures with their captions. *Poof!* A programmer took up the challenge. "That Frontier script saved me hours of tedious toil," Parker says. "All I had to do was turn on my printer, double-click on the DeskScript and stand back!"

More than half of the hundred new features in Autodesk's (GO ASOFT) 3D Studio originated in that forum's Wish List section, as did features in Datastorm's (GO DATASTORM) new Procomm Plus for Windows. Some Wish List posts border on fantasy, but for the most part, the feedback works well.

"It allows the users of the Datastorm products to remove the blinders that developers often have," says Datastorm Forum member Mark Young, "and allows Datastorm to identify real-world problems that some new features could fix. It becomes a win-win situation."

Do All This Other Stuff, Too...

Give Me Some Credit

People are forever taking interest in your financial life history: lending institutions when you're trying to finance that new home or car, credit card companies when you apply for some new plastic, and so on. Yet when you hire someone to repair your roof or cater a party, or even when you're considering a new employer, you're expected to provide a sizable deposit on faith alone, or take the company's fiscal soundness at its word.

Put the credit-checking shoe on the other foot for once by taking advantage of the TRW Business Profiles (GO TRWREPORTS). This database, maintained by one of the leading U.S. credit reporting agencies, contains information on more than 13 million business locations. Typical details generally include credit payment histories; financial ratios; key facts such as size, ownership and products; UCC filings, tax liens, judgments and bankruptcies.

Working From Home Forum (GO WORK) member Irv Feldman finds TRW Profiles valuable in evaluating potential employers. "How good is a job with a firm that is economically unstable or late in paying suppliers? After all, the company can also be late in meeting payroll," he says.

Desperately Seeking City Information?

The great asset of cities can also be their biggest drawback. Cities are, as Lewis Lapham says, places of infinite possibilities. That can make finding goods or services a little like the proverbial haystack search—unless you know just where to look. Online resources can reveal city information beyond the "usual suspects." Say, for instance, you want to find a good French provincial restaurant, even in a city you know. Go online to the City Travel Planner in the Official Airline Guides Electronic Edition (GO OAG). It's an amazing source of assorted information buried under "Lodging and Dining" on the OAG main menu.

City Travel Planner works as a compendium of concierges around the globe. Like all value judgments, the rating system can be a little arbitrary, but the descriptive information is dead-on for restaurants, local tours, museums, performing arts, sports and assorted "attractions." If you're heading to an unfamiliar city, check out quirky tours (by foot or sail, for example), off-beat museums and performing arts.

While the City Travel Planner is excellent on amenities, business services such as a limousine, a handball court, an interpreter or a typist are best found elsewhere. Use Biz*File (the U.S.-Canada Yellow Pages) to find almost any kind of business phone number and address, with listings for everything from ethnic grocery stores to artwork-transport companies.

In a pinch, you can even stop and ask directions—especially from a forum contact who lives where you're headed. How can you find the best pizza in town unless you ask?

C. S. O'LEARY

Now, the Good Brews

"Tea," says Miami-based U.K. Forum (GO UKFORUM) regular Dennis Lefebvre, "like computing, involves both hardware and software."

Lefebvre learned from the forum to make tea from boiling water, rather than the tepid stuff that comes out of the red button tap on the water cooler at work.

Food and drink are big topics in the forum anyway, and Sysops Steve Manners and Andy Johnson find themselves sending out a lot of food parcels containing pickled onions and marmalade. But so many people ask how to make tea that the forum has a file, TEA.TXT, in Library 1, "General and Library Info." On June 7, the forum had an online iced tea tasting session; the results are in the file CONF.TEA in Library 1.

These files are not the last word on the matter. Put up a message asking for help, and you'll get an argument over electric kettles, teapots, loose tea or teabags—and diatribes on the awfulness of instant tea.

Moneywise, It All Adds Up

Even the most serendipitous among us on occasion must do some cold, hard calculating: What's my net worth? What are these house payments going to be? Will five (dollars) really get me 10 (lire, francs, yen)?

With that in mind, here are a number of things you can compute online:

- Calculate monthly mortgage payments and see a repayment amortization schedule (GO HOM-17).
- Figure out your car payment or that for other consumer debt following the "rule of 78s" (GO NEWCAR).
- Monitor the value of actual or hypothetical investment portfolios (GO PORT), or use the CompuServe Information Manager's portfolio feature on the services pull-down menu.
- Compare performance of investments for any desired time period (GO RETURN).
- Determine the proper amount of money to receive in exchange for any other major world currency by accessing Worldspan Travelshopper (GO WORLD). Select Option 8, "Access Travelshopper," then Option 4, "Other Services/Nice to Know." Similar data is incorporated in the travel information system of the Official Airline Guides Electronic Edition Travel Service (GO OAG).

What Does This Say? Translating Whatever's Greek to You

John Scott, who lives in Northern Ireland, is learning German—with a lot of support from the Foreign Language Forum (GO FLEFO).

Translator Nick Rosenthal, who is based in Stockport, England, also uses the forum to get technical and professional help in his work. If he puts up a request for help on, say, a German legal abbreviation, replies come from translators in the United States, Britain and Germany. Forum regular Paul Danaher agrees; a recent query, he says, was over the meaning of BRAGO, which is "a German officialese abbreviation for the federal regulations setting standard attorney fees." It would be difficult to find an answer to such a question, he points out, without exactly the right reference book. In case you're curious, the written-out version of BRAGO, according to Robert T. Creutz, is *Bundesgebuehrenordnung fuer Rechtsanwaelte*.

The forum has too many helpful files to list; the section for each language includes vocabulary tutors, quizzes and flash card questions. Besides its variety of modern languages, the forum also covers classical languages such as Greek and Latin. There is even, in Library 9, "Other Languages," a file on Etruscan grammar (ETRUSC.AN).

But it's not just foreign languages that need translation sometimes. As George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "The U.S. and Britain are divided by a common language." Nowhere is this more obvious than in the U.K. Forum (GO UKFORUM), whose Library Section 14, "Travel Info," includes AMLISH.TXT, a U.K./U.S. dictionary for the confused.

In and Out of IQuest Quickly

If you're the type who would rather drive in circles than ask for directions, don't indulge that habit in IQuest.

With more than 850 databases, IQuest is one place where it pays—in time and money—to ask for directions so your search will be focused on just the information you need. SOS to the rescue.

After you enter IQuest (GO IQUEST), type SOS at the main menu prompt. A real, live person—sort of an electronic librarian—offers greetings and one-on-one assistance that costs you nothing more than connect-time charges.

Tell the IQuest specialist your research question, and you'll receive a specific answer about which database to search, a search string to use and tips on getting the most from IQuest. You'll spend less time online, cut your costs considerably and reduce frustration.

SOS is available 24 hours a day. During most of that time you can interact directly with the SOS crew, all of whom are professional librarians. They know how to ask you the right questions so they can help you define your search.

A member recently asked Ann Kralick, one of the SOS librarians, how to find articles on riding equipment, but what he really wanted was information on riding clothes and saddles. He left SOS with the SIC code for riding clothes and a complete search strategy. Had he used RIDING EQUIPMENT as the search term, it would have been too broad and yielded information not specific enough for his needs.

"People don't want to bother us with details, but we need to know them to really help," says Kralick.

Ask a Cop

Wondering if you've done all you can to protect your home while you're out of town? Need help finding the most effective security alarm for your car? Want expert advice on which type of self-defense class is best for you?

You can get quick answers directly from law enforcement professionals in the SafetyNet Forum (GO SAFETYNET), Section 8, "Police Chatter." SafetyNet is where cops talk shop online, and they welcome questions from the rest of us LACs. (That's police talk for "law-abiding citizens.")

When law student Alan Yarcusko posted a question about a court case he was studying for criminal procedure class, he was deluged with examples of how such judicial decisions translate into everyday practice. Those stories from the "front lines" provided valuable perspective—and eventually helped him earn an A in the course. Another fascinating file, LAKING.ZIP in Library 9, "Police Business," lets civilians "listen in" on police discussing the Rodney King verdict.

Other NPs ("nonpolice") have learned about the relative merits of chemical repellents—finding, for example, that OC (oleoresin capsicum), a spray made from red-hot cayenne peppers, may be more effective than Mace.

Another visitor, anticipating a brief jail term for "a non-drunk-driving traffic matter," posted a frantic message and received practical, compassionate responses about how best to survive it. Advised one officer: "Be civil to everyone, polite to no one."

Others have learned the most innovative (and sometimes successful!) excuses offered for speeding—such as the one a wayward motorist recently tried on Sgt. Richard Scalzo: "He asked me how he was supposed to know the traffic laws, since he had never gotten a driver's license." (It didn't work.)

Something for Baby

It's billed as "the ultimate infant experience." RAINA, a freeware program for infants and toddlers, transforms their random keyboard pounding into fun, colorful shapes and tones.

Author Stewart Johnson admits it has little educational value, but it *is* fun. "It's the first step in getting children comfortable with computers," he says. Find RAINA.ZIP in the IBM Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP), Library 11, "Education."

Dozens of other freeware, shareware and text files for moms and dads are online in a number of forums, offering everything from determining due dates (see file BABY4U.EXE, IBM Applications Forum, GO IBMAPP, Library 7, "Gen. Apps.") to picking a name for Junior (NAMEME.ZIP, IBM New Users Forum, GO IBMNEW, Library 8, "Word & Card Games") to a baby sitter management program (SITTER.ZIP, Zenith Data Systems Forum, GO ZENITH, Library 6, "DOS Applications").

For many more, search in the IBM, Macintosh or Amiga File Finders using the keywords BABY or PREGNANCY.

Still Haven't Found What You're Looking For?

Two Ways to Find It Online

It doesn't matter much if you're an old hand, a CompuServe neophyte or even a *CompuServe Magazine* editor: the Information Service seems impossibly huge.

One simple way to clear a path is using CompuServe's FIND command from the CompuServe Information Manager services pull-down menu or at any ! prompt. Typing FIND CARS, for instance, brings up a brief listing of forums and other services related to automotive pursuits and their GO commands.

But if you're a basic services member with a desire to see what's out there without paying for the exploratory connect time, that's not a lot of information to go on. A better idea of forum contents can be had by downloading the Practice Forum's (GO PRACTICE) file SECTNS.ARC (available in binary format in Library 1, "Forum Help & Info"). This timely file, compiled every four to six weeks by Sysop Ed Girou, contains a complete list of CompuServe forums and the names of their message sections and libraries. Scanning this list, you'd find that the Automobile Forum does indeed have a section devoted to car buying, or that—yes!—the Worldwide Car Network Forum has a section about convertibles.

You can even turn the file into a kind of makeshift forum database, employing a technique we've used here to come up with story ideas. Load it into your word processor and type your topic word into the Find or Search Text command. Voila! All of the message sections and libraries related to operating systems, jobs, music or whatever you happen to be into are paged before your eyes. And you'll have an idea of what awaits you before you even get there.

MANUEL KING

Chock Full of Tips: Forum Libraries Have the Answer

Forum libraries are much like real libraries: Generally, no matter what problem you seek a solution for, someone else has already been in the middle of that conundrum, worked their way out of it and written a book (or in this case a text file) about how they did it. If you're in need of tips on getting print drivers working correctly, how to shop for a cellular phone, cooking up a storm on board a boat or whatever, before posting your message on a forum's message board, take a moment to search the libraries or a File Finder. With the File Finders, CompuServe's Across Library Searching (allowing you to hunt through a forum's entire holdings at once) and a well-chosen keyword, you may unearth a wealth of answers in a few minutes without having "gone public." Just to give you an idea of what's available, here's a small sampling of forum files that include the keyword TIPS:

Font of Information—A PostScript file of tips to help Macintosh applications and print drivers work with the Adobe Type Manager. Adobe Forum (GO ADOBE), Library 4, "PostScript," TECHTI.SIT (80,640 bytes).

Setting Up a Saltwater Tank—Afraid to try it? Larry Lundin shows you where to start and how to get past those initial doubts. Aquaria/Fish Forum (GO FISHNET), Library 5, "Marine/Reef Aquaria," MA0146.TXT (2,227 bytes).

Using Your Imagination—This "best of" file contains hints and tips for getting the most out of the Amiga program Imagine. Amiga Arts Forum (GO AMIGAARTS), Library 10, "3D," CMPEND.LZH (127,272 bytes).

Flying Freehand—The finer points of flying with autopilot are explained by a veteran pilot. Aviation Forum, Library 6, "Instrument Flight," AUTOPI.USE (19,457 bytes).

Look, Up in the Sky—Thoughts on observing the summer skies with the naked eye, binocular or telescopic aid. Astronomy Forum (GO ASTROFORUM), Library 2, "Getting Started," SUMMER.TXT (14,611 bytes).

Stop Thief!—Archived message threads discuss how to prevent car theft and some of the devices available. Automobile Forum (GO CARS), Library 6, "Driving Experience," THFTDV.THD (11,906 bytes).

Pop Open a Homemade Cool One—Everything you need to know to start making your own homebrew beer. Bacchus Wine Forum (GO WINEFORUM), Library 14, "General Homebrew," KEG.TIP (27,892 bytes).

Quattro Printing—A handy guide noting valuable tips and traps in printing in Quattro Pro. Borland Applications Forum (GO BORAPP), Library 9, "Quattro Pro," TI536.ZIP (6,741 bytes).

Winning Chess—Ten tips on succeeding in the board game from Grandmaster Arthur Bisguier. Chess Forum (GO CHESSFORUM), Library 11, "USCF Q&A," 10TIPS.TXT (35,170 bytes).

Enjoying Auctions—How collectors can get the most out of attending auctions. Collectibles Forum (GO COLLECT), Library 1, "General Information," TIPS.TXT (5,003 bytes).

Starting Out Illustrating—A primer for aspiring comics artists with a simple set of guiding principles. Comics/Animation Forum (GO COMICS), Library 9, "Writing and Drawing," DRWTXT.1 (7,198 bytes).

To Shop for Cellular—*Mobile Office* staffers who went looking for transportable phones around the United States relate what they learned. Consumer Electronics Forum (GO CEFORUM), Library 14, "Mobile Office," UNDSHP.TXT (15,587 bytes).

Sewing on the Edge—Time-saving techniques for sergering—working with the sides of fabric to prevent raveling. Crafts Forum (GO CRAFTS), Library 6, "Sewing & Quilting," SERGER.TXT (2,732 bytes).

Autism Tips—Reminders on the limitations of autistic individuals and advice on teaching them, compiled by a parent and her autistic daughter's instructor. Disabilities Forum (GO DISABILITIES), Library 1, "Developmental Disabilities," TIPAUT-.TXT (2,955 bytes).

How Art Happens—An illustrated essay on typography and typographic management, in QuarkXPress format with art files. Desktop Publishing Forum (GO DTPFORUM), Library 13, "Design & Writing," HAPPEN.SEA (12,5312 bytes).

Do They 'Get It'?—Teaching tips dealing with methods by which you can know if students are understanding the concepts you're introducing. Education Forum (GO EDFORUM), Library 17, "Higher Education," UNDRST.TIP (39,935 bytes).

Speaking Esperanto—How to go from being a mediocre Esperantist to a great one. Foreign Language Forum (GO FLEFO), Library 8, "Esperanto," GRAMHE.TXT (10,562 bytes).

What to See in the Key—Random thoughts on "fun and funky" sights and accommodations in Key West. Florida Forum (GO FLORIDA), Library 12, "Southeast," KWTIPS.TXT (5,841 bytes).

Cartridge Game Help—Unending lists of tips for cartridge games from Nintendo, Sega, Atari and NEC. Search by manufacturer name. Gamers' Forum (GO GAMERS), Library 8, "Cartridge Games."

For the New Researcher—A collection of hints and how-to's for newcomers to roots-digging. Genealogy Forum (GO ROOTS), Library 1, "General Information," QUICK.TIP (8,815 bytes).

A Guide to Tuning In—Information on the International Listening Guide, a publication of short-wave English-language broadcast schedules. HamNet Forum (GO HAMNET), Library 3, "SWL," ILGIDE.SWL (2,342 bytes).

Staying Together—Two files of archived threads discussing how to maintain a happy marriage, including creative arguing and the need to yell. Human Sexuality Open Forum (GO HSX100), Library 2, "Problems of Parents," TIPS1.THD (11,944 bytes) and TIPS2.THD (10,497 bytes).

The Shareware Book—First edition of a *Whole Earth* catalog containing tips, tools and techniques of successful shareware marketing and development. IBM Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP), Library 8, "Demos/Misc.," SHAREB.EXE (258,934 bytes).

Visual Basic—A large file of tips, routines and common questions and answers for using Visual Basic. IBM Programming Forum (GO IBMPRO), Library 4, "BASIC," VBTIPS.EXE (78,138 bytes).

Making Money in Real Estate—Two archived threads on gaining an edge in real estate investing. Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM), Library 6, "Real Estate," TIPS.THD (25,580 bytes) and TIPS2.THD (35,170 bytes).

Get a Job in Broadcasting—Don Fitzpatrick's advice on improving an audition tape and finding work in this tough field. Journalism Forum (GO JFORUM), Library 4, "Journalism Tools," TAPE.TXT (48,739 bytes).

Switching Formats—A collection of tips on converting files from one word processing format to another. Literary Forum (GO LITFORUM), Library 16, "Writer's Tools," WPTIPS.TXT (8,650 bytes).

System 7 Tidbits—A list of obvious, obscure, useful and fun tips about using System 7. Macintosh Clubhouse Forum (GO MACCLUB), Library 8, "Magazines/Reviews," TB104.SIT (12,160 bytes).

Apple Patches—Useful tips for LaserWriter drivers 5.2 and 6.0, including patches to turn network drivers into async drivers. Macintosh Systems Forum (GO MACSYS), Library 10, "Printers/Output," PSTIPS.TXT (13,430 bytes).

NetNews Newsletters—Series of files published by Microsoft addressing common problems and innovations in the use of LAN Manager, SQL Server and Mail. Microsoft Client Server Computing Forum (GO MSNETWORKS), Library 6, "SQL Server Tips," file names follow NN*.ZIP format.

Networked Windows—Tips on using Windows 3.0 on a network. Microsoft Windows Advanced User Forum (GO WINADV), Library 9, "Networks," WINNET.ARC (27,648 bytes).

Rocket Science—Series of uploads of *APOGEE*, the newsletter of the Miami Valley Rocket Society, with tips on model rocketry. All file names follow TIPS*.TXT format. ModelNet Forum (GO MODELNET), Library 8, "Sport Rocketry."

***Kesmai* Crash Course**—Secrets for new players of *Island of Kesmai*, with insider tricks for surviving and prospering. Multiplayer Games Forum (GO MPGAMES), Library 4, "IoK/Beginners," NEWBIE.REF (29,648 bytes).

Recycle Before You Buy—Tips on how to "precycle" while you're shopping. Earth Forum (GO EARTH), Library 4, "Eco-Consumerism," PRECYC.001 (6,931 bytes).

Seasonal Fishing—A series of files from fishing-line maker Du Pont/Stren on fishing through the year. Outdoors Forum (GO OUTDOORS), Library 5, "Fishing," SPRING, SUMMER, FALL and WINTER.91 (from 10,000 to 29,000 bytes).

Meeting-ed Out?—Pointers to help your organization improve formal and informal meetings, from a message thread. PR and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG), Library 0, "The Open Door," MTGS.STR (10,210 bytes).

Don't Leave Home Without ... — Reproduction of a pamphlet from the Maryland State Police with safety tips for travelers before leaving home, on the way and at the destination. SafetyNet Forum (GO SAFETYNET), Library 9, "Police Business," TRAVEL.TIP (4,808 bytes).

Gallery of Galley Tips—Thoughts on cooking on-board from forum threads, including recipes for Boston Brown Bread and Ordinary Brown Bread. Sailing Forum (GO SAILING), Library 4, "Cruising Grounds," RECIPE.THD (100,648 bytes).

Beginning Asimovs—Advice for neophyte writers from Don Sakers, author of *The Leaves of October*. Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum (GO SCIFI), Library 14, "WW Grads/Breaking In," ADVICE.TXT (9,595 bytes).

Porting THINK C—A collection of tips and hints for porting applications from THINK C 4.0 to 5.0. Symantec Forum (GO SYMANTEC), Library 6, "THINK C," TIPS01.TXT (5,800 bytes).

Better Pictures—Techniques for improving your travel photos, covering composition, lighting, filters and more. Travel Forum (GO TRAVSIG), Library 0, "General Interest," PHOTO.TIP (16,144 bytes).

Homeworking Newsletter—An edition of *Making It on Your Own*, with tips on managing stress, maintaining cash flow and making the homeworking transition. Working From Home Forum (GO WORK), Library 1, "General Information," MAKEIT.891 (15,482 bytes).

Conferencing Help—Tips and suggestions for newcomers on using one of CompuServe's most valuable resources. Zenith Forum (GO ZENITH), Library 2, "Help & Information," CONFER.HLP (22,930 bytes).

Help is Just a Free Forum Away

So where do you go on CompuServe when you have absolutely no idea where to go on CompuServe? If you need directions, try the new Help Forum (GO HELPFORUM). The forum is free of connect charges and is part of CompuServe's basic services.

"It's designed to help members learn how to use the Information Service," says Mike Schoenbach, Help Forum manager and a 10-year CompuServe veteran. The forum has sections devoted to CompuServe's various service categories, the Standard and Alternative Pricing Plans, Information Service access, network surcharges, and an area for comments and questions to *CompuServe Magazine*. "The Practice Forum lets members learn forum structure, the CIM Support Forum handles questions on Information Manager, and we'll take questions on any other CompuServe service," Schoenbach says.

Section 16 in the forum is dedicated to and monitored by representatives from CompuServe's Customer Service, and handles pertinent queries on such concerns as individual billing and access. In addition, CompuServe management visits the forum and listens to ideas and problems.

The forum is intended to provide merely a point in the right direction; questions of a technical nature ("Why isn't my mouse working?") will be directed to the appropriate support forum. Schoenbach thinks members of CompuServe's basic services especially can benefit from a visit to the forum's libraries (with files describing many of the extended services) and a glance at the strict question-and-answer messaging. "They can get the bigger picture on what's available on CompuServe just by reading through this forum," he says.

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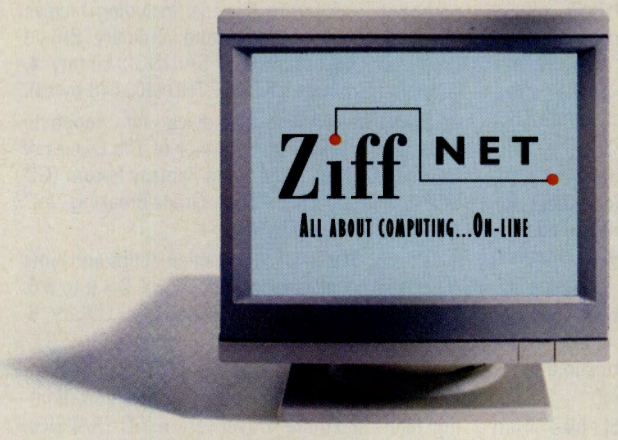
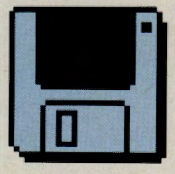
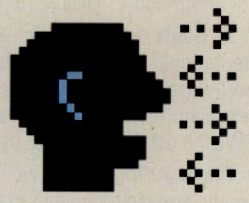


Where's the first place you should turn for productivity-boosting software, plus the latest information and advice about computing? ZiffNet, the on-line information service from the publisher of the leading PC and Mac publications, including *PC Magazine, PC/Computing, PC Week, MacWEEK, Computer Shopper* and *PC Sources.*



The best in downloadable software

For starters, you can choose from the best in downloadable software from a library of more than 2000 free or inexpensive shareware or public domain programs–everything from games, to *PC Magazine* utilities, business applications, education titles, and more. Unlike many other on-line services, only the best and most reliable programs are selected for the library. And all are ready to download and use immediately.



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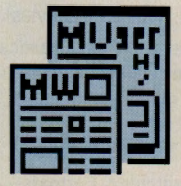
On ZiffNet, you can access more than 20 interactive forums organized by specific topics–many hosted by the leading columnists and editors in the computer industry. Ask for advice, find a solution to a technical problem, debate the issues or exchange information with the experts or your colleagues on-line.



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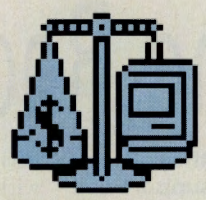
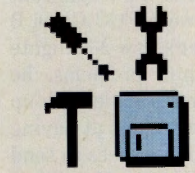


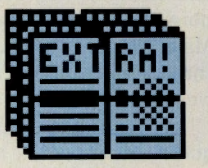
Shop smarter

ZiffNet helps you shop smarter, with a broad range of services offering information and advice on buying desktop computer products. Now including Ziff Buyers' Market™–a new buying service with detailed product and pricing information on more than 10,000 products available from the direct channel. You'll also find Buyers' Digests, comprehensive reports on individual product categories; Demos Showcase with hundreds of the latest demos you can download and evaluate immediately; and Computer Select™ on-line, with information on more than 70,000 products from over 10,000 companies.

As for technical support, ZiffNet provides software tools and technical advice to help you, or the users you support, work more effectively and productively. There's an on-line newsletter to help you trouble-shoot Windows™ problems. A diagnostics tool from the Cobb Group to answer questions about Lotus® 1-2-3®. Or download utilities that automate tasks, add functionality, save you time and more.



Technical support and solutions



What's news

And finally, ZiffNet gives you the news. Daily news from Newsbytes™. Weekly news summaries from *PC Week* and *MacWEEK*– the Friday night before they're published. All so you can keep pace with, and make sense of, computer industry trends and events.

Add it all up and you'll see why ZiffNet is the first place to turn for what you need to get the most out of computing.

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COM1000

by Andy Rathbone

Buying Clones Off the Rack

They're great PCs, but they all look the same. Customer support can often be the deciding factor.

Mike Cromer's '386SX Gateway 2000 computer just didn't have enough "oomph" for the Windows software he wanted to run. He wanted to upgrade, but instead of heading for the computer store, he headed for Gateway's online support area (GO GATEWAY).

"First I downloaded the latest price lists and configuration options from the forum's libraries," says Cromer, of Framington, Mass. "Then I lurked in the forum for two or three weeks to see what the Gateway users were saying."

Soon Cromer jumped in with his own questions. Should he buy the DX2-50 doubler chip, or the 33 MHz version? A forum member responded with benchmark figures that convinced him the DX2 would be 20 percent to 25 percent faster. Cromer's question about Gateway's tape drive brought a reply that steered him toward a different brand, the Colorado Jumbo.

Armed with a potential configuration list for his new computer, Cromer headed for the Windows Advanced Users Forum (GO WINADV) for reports on the current crop of video cards. He then checked into the WordPerfect Users Forum (GO WPUSER) for software advice from industry veterans Gordon McComb and Ron White.

"After factoring in the data I got from people on all three forums," Cromer says, "I was able to make my decision. I was much more confident of the purchase I ultimately made, and my expectations were properly set."

Cromer and hundreds of others have learned to tap the power of support forums when shopping for a new PC clone or upgrade. Dozens of PC clones flood the markets today, and many differ little in either features or price. A manufacturer's level of support—their willingness and ability to help customers put their new machines to work—can be the deciding feature between two brands.

On CompuServe's many support forums, members commend—or condemn—a manufacturer's product line, offering their own experiences to back up their words. Informed decisions can be made quickly and easily with this help.

For instance, Gary Nakayama of San Mateo, Calif., had spent two years deciding whether to upgrade his Hewlett-Packard Vectra to a new BIOS and microprocessor. After struggling with dealers and technical support numbers for advice, Nakayama finally took a gamble and ordered the upgrade parts. Soon after ordering, he joined the Hewlett-Packard Systems Forum (GO HPSYS), where forum members reassured him that he'd made the right decision. "In a couple of online sessions I found answers that had taken me several years to find out," Nakayama says.

Kent Pietsch of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, joined CompuServe specifically to find information about Toshiba's T4400SXC notebook PC. He joined the Toshiba Forum (GO TOSHIBA) to gauge the thickness of the forum's libraries and message sections.

"I got more than 50 Toshiba files in less than two weeks, mostly regarding this particular piece of hardware," says Pietsch. "I decided to spring for a T4400SXC because of the enthusiasm expressed for it by current owners, because of the manufacturer support forum and the obvious enjoyment forum members exhibit in trying to help each other out."

After comparing prices, Pietsch ordered a Toshiba 4400SXC through a mail-order firm he'd found in the PC Catalog in The Electronic Mall.

Other shoppers turn to the forums for support after purchasing their machines. For instance, Robert Griesemer Jr. of New Paltz, N.Y., remembered that Northgate's CEO Art Lazere had reassured him in the forum that all Northgate computers were FCC Class B approved. When Griesemer's new Northgate computer began giving him problems, he headed back to the forum and looked up Lazere and told of his frustrations at having to spend about $150 in shipping fees to send defective parts back to Northgate. "I received a letter of apology in the mail and a check for the $150."

The forums made a difference for member Bill Del Vecchio, as well. "When we were evaluating alternatives to Compaq last year, we got a lot of insight into the clones by monitoring the traffic on the IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW), specifically the 'Buy-

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▼
Distinguishing the Look-alike PCs
▼
Clone Vendors, p. 26
▼
Picking a LAN E-mail Package, p. 27

Cards & Drivers: Popular Clone Files

Most forums for IBM-compatible PCs contain upgrade and purchasing information specific to their own brand, plus brand-specific drivers required when upgrading to programs like Microsoft Windows. ZiffNet's *Computer Shopper* Forum (GO ZNT: COMPUTERSHOPPER) also contains many reviews and information about current products.

Utilities and Upgrades

Sample Configuration File—Sample CONFIG.SYS for Packard Bell computers running DOS 5.0. Packard Bell Forum (GO PACKARDBELL), Library 1, "General Info," CONFIG.SYS (93 bytes).

Keyboard Utilities—Version 1.1 of Omniconfig, a keyboard configuration utility for Northgate Keyboards. Northgate Library of the PC Vendor A Forum (GO NORTHGATE), Library 10, "Northgate," KBUTIL.EXE (21,619 bytes).

Toshiba Utilities—Program to change cursor size/shape, toggle backlighting, toggle modem power and a vast array of other options. Now supports the T2200SX, T4400SX and T3300SL. Toshiba Forum (GO TOSHIBA), Library 2, "Toshiba Utilities," TOSHUT.EXE (22,000 bytes).

BIOS Upgrades—BIOS upgrades for Dell computers using Flash BIOS. PC Vendor D Forum (GO DELL), Library 1, "Dell Computer," DPA07.ZIP for '486D and '486P systems (96,521 bytes), NA08.EXE for 320N (101,941 bytes). Mail-order sources for upgrading Phoenix, Award and AMI BIOS chips. IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW), Library 4, "General Hardware," BIOS.TXT (1,639 bytes).

ATI Graphics Ultra Drivers—ATI Graphics Ultra card drivers for Windows 3.1. PC Vendor C Forum (GO GATEWAY), Library 13, "Gateway 2000," ATIGUW.EXE, (459,234 bytes).

Hard Disk Upgrade—Tips for upgrading a SupersPort/'286's stock 20/40MB to a 100MB or greater drive. Zenith Forum (GO ZENITH), Library 11, "Hardware," SS286D.ZIP (11,787 bytes).

Data Transfer—Program to move data on DEC's RX50 diskettes to or from an IBM PC or compatible. Digital Equipment Forum (GO DECPC), Library 4, "Utilities," RX50.ARC (23,358 bytes).

Hirez Plus Drivers—Video drivers for CompuAdd's Hirez Plus. CompuAdd Forum (GO COMPUADD), Library 9, "Video," HREZ_P.ZIP (608,244 bytes).

Buying Information

Laptop/Portable Buyer's Guide—Chart of systems, prices and specifications from laptop vendors. *Computer Shopper* Forum (GO ZNT:COMPSHOPPER), Library 3, "Buyer's Guide," LAPBG.ZIP (14,613 bytes).

Video Card Buyer's Guide—Buyer's guide to video cards, comparing features and prices. *Computer Shopper* Forum (GO ZNT:COMPSHOPPER), Library 3, "Buyer's Guide," VIDBG.TXT, (84,406 bytes).

How to Buy a Computer—Forum discussion about what to look for when buying a new computer. IBM New Users Forum (GO IBMNEW), Library 7, "Ask the Sysops," NEWSYS.THD (15,328 bytes).

Dell Price Cuts—Press release announcing price reductions of up to 26 percent on Dell products. PC Vendor D Forum, (GO DELL), Library 1, "Dell Computer," PRICE.TXT, (3,464 bytes).

New Compaq Products—Press release announcing Compaq's new line of computers. Compaq Forum (GO CPQFORUM), Library 1, "New Uploads," JUNE15.TXT, (40,859 bytes).

ing a System' section," says Del Vecchio. "We're sticking with Compaq. The recent price cuts and introduction of 'Compaq Care' (especially the Compaq Forum) will only serve to solidify our commitment."

Michael Dell's personal appearances in the Dell Forum aren't lost on member Charles McLaughlin. "I've continued to buy Dell because of a forum such as this," McLaughlin says. "Generally, the Dell phone support is very good, but here, the problem is not only treated quickly but, with the top man watching, the answer has to be solid."

Some CompuServe members outside the United States can find PC upgrade answers online when they aren't available anywhere else. For instance, Xavier Badosa lives in Barcelona, Spain, where he uses a Zenith Data Systems computer. Few people in that country use that brand of desktop computer, he says. In fact, he couldn't find any companies in Spain that sold RAM chips compatible with his machine.

In the Zenith Data Systems Forum (GO ZENITH), members told him of a special motherboard designed specifically for his machine. The motherboard would upgrade his computer to a '386, as well as allow it to use standard RAM banks.

Badosa used the CompuServe Mail fax option to contact the California company that manufactured the motherboard, and the company arranged an overseas shipment. "Now, a representative from the company has joined CompuServe and the Zenith Forum so I can get help online," Badosa says.

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An Overview of PC Makers Online

An increasing number of IBM-compatible computer vendors offer support for their computers through CompuServe. The vendors offer technical "how-to" advice, as well as answer questions from potential customers. Forum members engage in frank discussions about their particular brand of computers, talking up the machine's good features and providing work-arounds for any shortcomings.

The first table lists CompuServe's vendor forums by company name and location. The second table lists other areas on CompuServe helpful to members wishing to upgrade systems or buy a new computer.

Clone Forum	Location
Acer America	PC Vendor F Support Forum (GO ACER), Sec. and Lib. 1
Compaq	Compaq Forum (GO CPQFORUM)
CompuAdd Corp.	CompuAdd Forum (GO COMPUADD)
Cumulus Corp.	PC Vendor D Support Forum (GO PCVEND), Sec. and Lib. 6
Dell	PC Vendor D Forum (GO DELL), Sec. and Lib. 1
Digital Equipment Corp.	DEC PC Forum (GO DECPC)
Epson	Epson Forum (GO EPSON)
Gateway 2000	PC Vendor C Forum (GO GATEWAY), Sec. and Lib. 13
Hewlett-Packard	Hewlett-Packard Systems Forum (GO HPSYSTEMS)
Librex	PC Vendor E Support Forum (GO LIBREX), Sec. and Lib. 10
Northgate	PC Vendor A Forum (GO NORTHGATE), Sec. and Lib. 10
Packard Bell	Packard Bell Forum (GO PACKARDBELL)
Toshiba	Toshiba Forum (GO TOSHIBA)
Zenith Data Systems	Zenith Data Systems Forum (GO ZENITH)
Zeos International Limited	PC Vendor E Forum (GO ZEOS), Sec. and Lib. 5

Other Resources	Location
Computer Database Plus includes computer-related articles from more than 130 magazines	GO COMPDB (surcharged)
Computer Shopper Forum has an online discussion area for readers of *Computer Shopper*	GO ZNT:COMPSHOPPER, Sec. 3, "Buying Systems"; Sec. 4, "Buying Peripherals"; Lib. 3, "Buyer's Guides"; Lib. 4, "Upgrade Update"
IBM Hardware Forum offers advice on buying and upgrading computers and hardware	GO IBMHW, Sec. 7, "Buying a System"
PC Sources includes *PC Sources* Magazine discussion area	GO ZNT:SOURCES, Sec. 4, "Service and Support"; Sec. 5, "Mail Order Buying"; Lib. 2, "HW Buyer's Guides"; Lib. 5, "Product Reviews"
ZiffNet Reviews contains indexed product reviews from Ziff-Davis publications	GO ZNT:REVIEWS, to search reviews by product, company, topic or magazine.

COMPUTING SERVICES

The availability of experts and fellow users in the forums can help those who are trying to make a decision between two PC clones. Tracey Siesser of Forest Hills, N.Y., spent hours of online research before buying her '486 computer. Eventually she narrowed her choices down to two virtually identical systems: A clone from Gateway 2000 and one from Standard, which is supported in the IBM Hardware Forum (GO IBMHW). "I wavered daily," Siesser says, "posting a rash of messages describing whatever my leanings of the past five minutes were and why, and begging for comments. Until I decided, I drove everyone crazy."

She eventually chose the Standard system, partially from the encouraging information she heard from other Standard owners in the IBM Hardware Forum. Now, as a satisfied owner, she helps other forum members make decisions. "I left a trail of messages about my discoveries, listing things I thought potential buyers should be aware of, such as being sure to get prices on the exact system you want to buy, not just the generic 8MB/200MB system, since upgrade prices on larger disks and faster video cards can vary wildly."

To ensure that they're making the right decision when buying a new computer or upgrade, some forum members have narrowed their information gathering process to these steps:

- First check to see which computer companies provide online support, says Don Bonnice of Fort Myers, Fla. "I try to find a software or hardware vendor on CompuServe before I buy anything from them."
- Choose several online vendors and drop by each of their forums to judge overall responsiveness, says Bob Simmons of Edmeston, N.Y. "I spent a lot of time reading threads in the vendor forums from Zeos, Gateway 2000, Dell and Northgate. Users seemed happiest in the Northgate section, so I went with that system."
- Browse the message areas for compatibility issues that could affect your particular setup, says Raoul Encinas of Newark, N.J. "Simply browsing through the headlines of the message threads will point you to potential trouble areas."
- Don't be afraid to post questions in the forums addressed to "All." You never can tell who might jump in with a helpful suggestion, says Meredith Jones of Gladwyne, Pa. When Jones posted a question in the Microsoft Word Forum, the CEO of Dell Computer, Michael Dell, jumped in to answer her question personally.
- Look for online reviews in most support forum libraries, as well as on ZiffNet (GO ZIFFNET). Computer Database Plus (GO COMPDB), a surcharged database, also contains searchable text from thousands of computer magazines. Jeff Hacker of Dallas, Texas, visited all three areas to read reviews of several laser printers before making his final purchasing decision. "The write-ups convinced me that the Packard Bell 9500 was a better buy," he says. "I haven't regretted it."
- Finally, visit the online vendors in The Electronic Mall (GO MALL) to compare prices, Bonnice says. "I used the PC Catalog (GO PCA) to find the best price on sound boards," he says. "It's so much easier to let CompuServe select the type of hardware I was looking for and bring it up on one screen instead of paging through a magazine."

Andy Rathbone, co-author of the book PCs for Dummies, *is a free-lance writer based in San Diego. His CompuServe User ID number is 75300,1565.*

by Harry Green

E-mail on the LAN

Online help and the CompuServe Mail Hub get LAN messages moving.

To CompuServe members, there's nothing unique about the ability to send electronic messages anywhere in the world. Sending e-mail within a local area network or between LANs, though, is a different form of communicating that raises questions about which LAN e-mail software package to choose, how to get it up and running, how to communicate between LANs that have different packages, and more. Such decisions are becoming easier now that several LAN e-mail manufacturers and experts are available in CompuServe's forums, and CompuServe itself offers a "mail hub" to help users on dispersed LANs communicate efficiently.

Selecting a LAN e-mail package is no easy task if you're not experienced in the technology. Norman Thompson, who is senior manager for Kenneth Leventhal & Company in Dallas, Texas, used the Novell C Forum (GO NOVC) for help in selecting e-mail systems for his company. "Our firm will probably end up with some combination of DaVinci, WordPerfect Office and ExpressIt!," Thompson says. He recommends the Novell C Forum as a good place to find e-mail expertise.

Jack Dausman, MIS manager for Univax Biologics Inc. in Rockville, Md., was evaluating e-mail systems for his company, which uses a combination of Macintoshes and '386/'486 computers running Windows under Novell Netware. His objective was to tie the e-mail systems into their databases so the database would trigger an e-mail note to quality assurance when a product fails. He asked members of the LDC Words & Pixels Forum (GO LOTUSB) whether Lotus' cc:Mail could support such an application without leaving Windows. He received several affirmative replies, including one from Lotus, and another from a user who sends messages directly from his database to field people who don't get reports in on time.

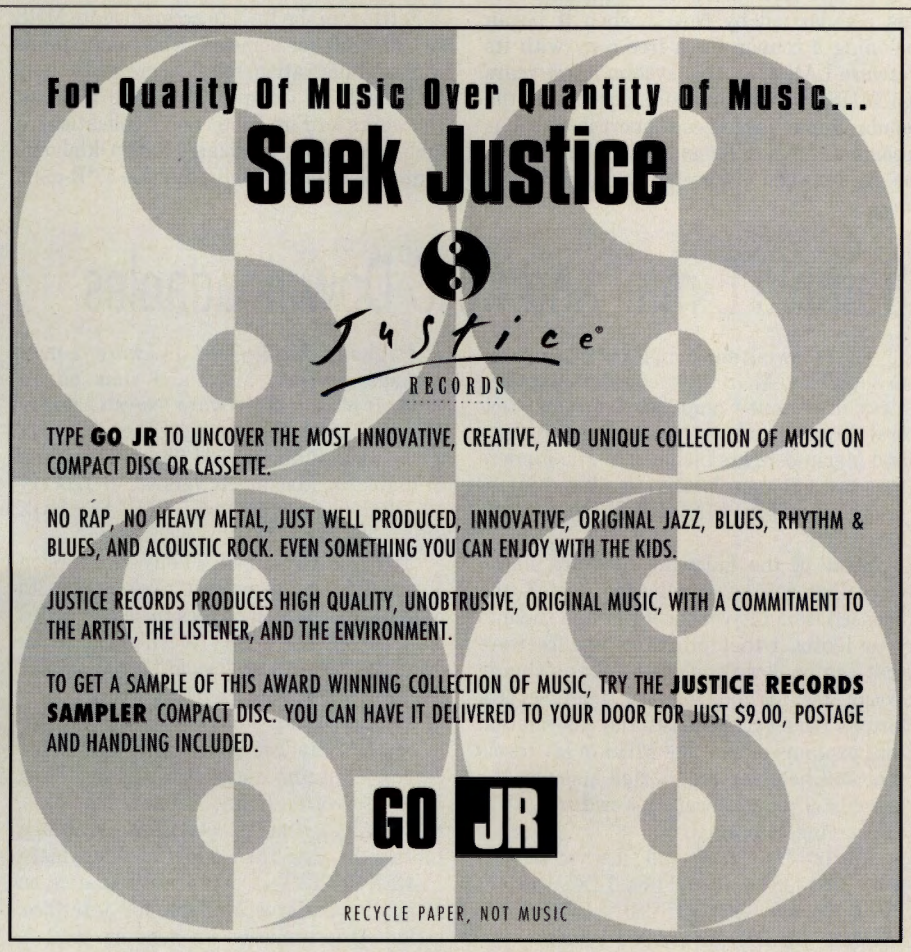
The next question is how to send mail between LANs. If there's enough traffic to justify it, the company can install a dedicated circuit that interconnects LANs through devices such as bridges and routers. But even that may be too confining because it limits communication to those connected to the same network. What about sending e-mail to vendors, customers, distributors and other outside organizations? It's impractical to run dedicated services to all of them, and the cost of long-distance phone calls makes dial-up costly. Furthermore, unless someone has controlled the company's purchase standards, the probability is high that not all locations are even using the same e-mail package. The answer for many companies lies in the CompuServe Mail Hub.

The Mail Hub is to e-mail what the post office is to ordinary mail: It receives messages, stores them and delivers them to the recipient. Provided the LAN is compatible with Novell NetWare MHS version 1.5C, the Mail Hub can carry mail among otherwise incompatible systems. Messages can be retrieved with a local phone call, which normally is placed automatically by the recipient's Netware MHS software. For instructions on accessing the CompuServe Mail Hub, GO MHS.

The Mail Hub can make otherwise complex tasks look easy. Marty Winston, who runs a marketing firm from his home in Russell, Ohio, has developed a highly automated process for distributing bulletins, news tips and press releases for his clients via the CompuServe Mail Hub. The information he distributes through the hub is accompanied by a seven-digit code. Clients respond using the code to identify the information they want. Winston's system delivers the requested information via fax or e-mail.

Although Winston has what he calls a "one-man LAN with 10 workstations," a LAN isn't required on both ends of the connection. The CompuServe Mail Hub can exchange messages with CompuServe Mail, AT&T Mail, AT&T EasyLink, Internet, Novell's NHUB and Group 3 fax machines. According to Mike Finney, CompuServe's MHS marketing specialist, users can specify CompuServe as their preferred hub address when they register on the Mail Hub. If MHS can't send a message directly to the addressee, it sends it to CompuServe for delivery.

The Mail Hub will even forward the message to another hub service if necessary. Brett Wharthen of Infinite Technologies uses



GO OLI for more information.

the preferred address feature to correspond with distributors in France, Germany, England, Norway, Austria, Australia and Japan over the CompuServe Mail Hub. Some of his clients use NHUB, but Infinite doesn't have to worry about which ones they are. "If the CompuServe Mail Hub doesn't know how to deliver the message, it passes it on to the Novell NHUB automatically," Wharthen says.

COMPUTING SERVICES

One of Infinite's distributors, Olaf Martinus Berli, who works for Infonor Kompetanse A/S, a small LAN dealer in Skiptvet, Norway, sells Infinite Technology's ExpressIt! e-mail package. Before the company could sell the product, it had to translate the instructions to Norwegian, and used e-mail to communicate with Infinite during the process. "When we began using MHS, suddenly everything became fast and easy," Berli says.

From an overseas location, one thing to consider is cost. Berli first used a local packet-switching service that based charges on characters transferred, which was expensive. He wrote an MHS script for Infonet, a European carrier, and the costs went down significantly compared to the cost of conducting business via overseas phone calls. He uses the CompuServe Mail Hub several times per day to exchange messages with U.S. and German companies.

NetWare MHS is a de facto standard that was popularized by Novell when it began including a coupon for a free copy with its Netware LAN operating system a few years ago. MHS isn't free anymore, but most of the popular e-mail packages support it, so it has become a common language that can bridge the gap between dissimilar systems.

The CompuServe Mail Hub receives messages from the originating LAN over a local telephone circuit and stores them until the recipients dial in to retrieve them. The whole process can be automated so the users are insulated from the technicalities. This makes it easy for many companies to keep in touch with customers via e-mail.

Rob Jones of MacSoft Co. uses the CompuServe Mail Hub to support a worldwide dealer network. "Prior to the CompuServe MHS connection, these dealers would dial our BBS to obtain patches and fixes for our software," he says. "This was expensive and error-prone due to the shakiness of overseas phone circuits." Now MacSoft asks its dealers to obtain a CompuServe account. The company sends them mail and binary files with local phone calls at each end.

Connecting to the CompuServe Mail Hub isn't quite as easy as buying a stamp at the post office, but the process is not difficult. The details are available online (GO MHS). All you need is MHS version 1.5 on your LAN, a patch to convert it to version 1.5C (available on CompuServe) and the address of the receiving station. The rest is handled by software. The patch can be downloaded from the MHS Hub main menu. You register your workgroup with CompuServe, after which your mail address takes the form user name@workgroup; for example, Brett Wharthen's address is Brett@Infinite.

Setting up the LAN to accommodate MHS isn't difficult for someone who understands LAN administration, but if you're stuck, help is available on CompuServe. John R. Hoss, who works for Fire Protection Publications, a publishing house associated with Oklahoma State University, turned to Section 5, "E-mail/MHS," of Novell's C Forum for help in setting up his cc:Mail application. Hoss plans to use e-mail to exchange messages with clients of its fire protection training materials. For a list of forums where product-specific support is available, see "LAN E-mail Resources Online," p.29.

CompuServe's forums contain numerous e-mail utilities and demonstration programs. A favorite is Pegasus (P-mail for short), a freeware e-mail package available in the Novell Library Forum (GO NOVLIB). Pegasus was developed by David Harris, a New Zealander who makes the program available at no charge.

In a small office, it's often difficult to justify the cost of an e-mail package, which can run several hundred dollars. Pegasus doesn't have all the features of more elaborate packages, but it supports MHS, and it's an excellent way to get LAN e-mail and MHS experience. A Macintosh version also is available in the Novell Library. For more LAN e-mail files, see "Sample E-mail and MHS Downloadables" below.

Industry experts see e-mail as the growth industry for the coming decade. The Yankee Group, a Boston, Mass., firm that tracks industry trends, estimates that there are approximately 19 million e-mail users today, with much of the growth concentrated in LANs.

If you work in an office today, your PC is either connected to a LAN, or it probably will be. Then follows that inevitable progression that will connect you to the rest of the world via e-mail.

Harry Green is president of Pacific Netcom Inc., a Portland, Ore., telecommunications consulting firm. His latest book, The Business One-Irwin Handbook of Telecommunications, *was published in January.*

Sample E-mail and MHS Downloadables

The following are samples of files related to e-mail and MHS that you can find tucked away in various CompuServe forums. Several forums, such as Novell, Banyan, IBM and Macintosh, are included in File Finders that can help you locate e-mail and MHS-related files. Type FIND FILEFINDER for a list.

Some of the following files are shareware that can be downloaded, tested and licensed from the vendor if you find them to your liking. Other programs are freeware that can be downloaded free of any charge except for normal connect time. Several forums have excellent tutorial information that explains e-mail and MHS in lay terms that will help you get started enjoying the benefits of communicating worldwide without leaving your LAN.

Mail2—Use it to send files via cc:Mail from the DOS command line. LDC Words & Pixels Forum (GO LOTUSB), Library 11, "cc:Mail," MAIL2.ZIP (19,303 bytes).

Pegasus Mail—This freeware e-mail package supports MHS and runs on all versions of Novell Netware. Novell Library (GO NOVLIB), Library 17, "Other New Uploads," PM232.EXE (594,680 bytes). Also available in Macintosh version in Library 16, "Public Domain/Text," PMMAC1.HQX (254,588 bytes).

MHS Librarian—A 30-day trial version of an MHS gateway that allows users to request information or files to be forwarded or retrieved via MHS. Novell Library, Library 15, "Shareware/Demo," MHSLIB.ZIP (90,829 bytes).

Oxford Easy Mail—A shareware release that can get your users hooked on e-mail. Contains many features including Send, Forward, Reply, Acknowledgments, File Folders, Import, etc. Novell Library, Library 15, EASYMA.ZIP (190,208 bytes).

CSX400.TXT—Contains information on using CompuServe Mail's X.400 interface, including information on sending mail to AT&T Mail subscribers via the X.400 gateway. Telecommunications Forum (GO TELECO), Library 6, "E-Mail/Fax," CSX-400.TXT (16,356 bytes).

Quick 'n' Dirty E-mail for Novell—A quick and dirty e-mail system—works, too. *LAN Technology* Forum (GO LANTECH), Library 12, "E-Mail," EMAIL.NOV (13,952 bytes).

MBSAVE—A utility that recovers lost mailboxes for DaVinci e-mail. Windows Third Party A Forum (GO WINAPA), Library 3, "DaVinci," MBSAVE.ZIP (15,360 bytes).

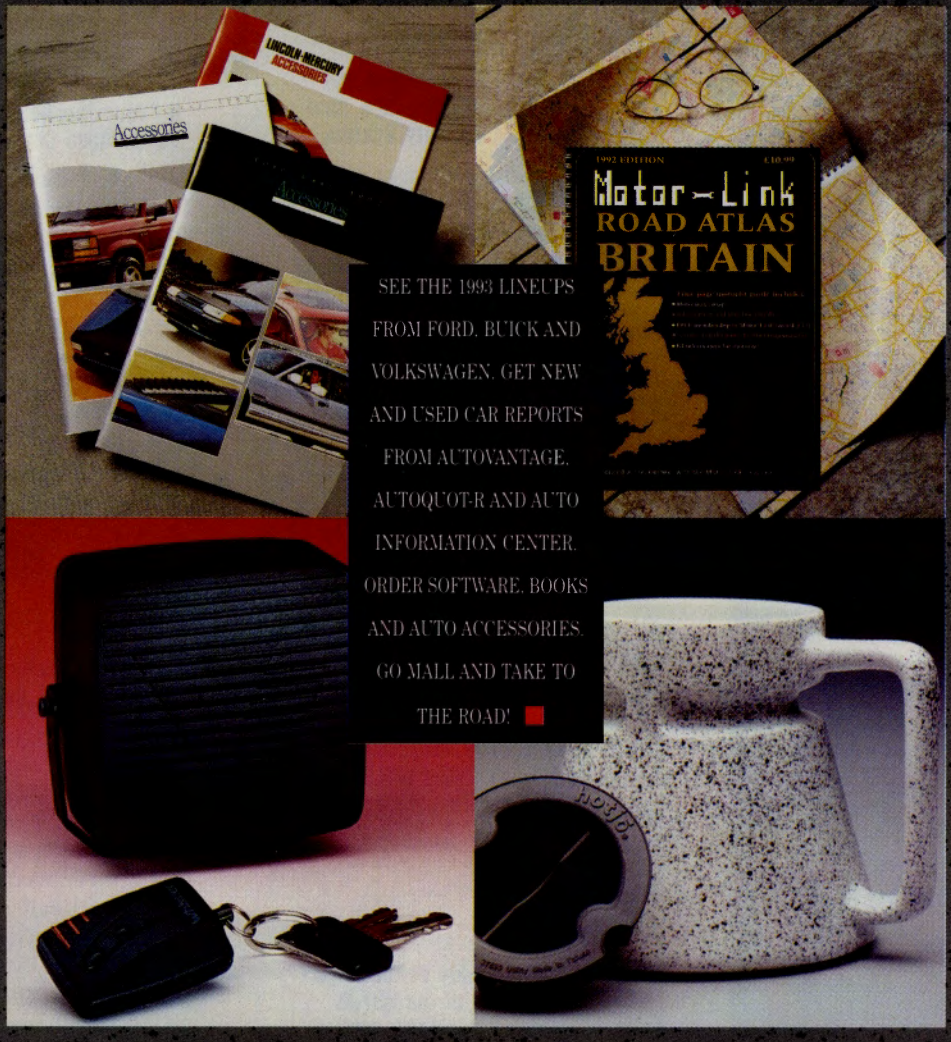
Message Mover—An unsupported HyperCard stack that will forward all mail and folders of one user from one Microsoft Mail 3.0 server to another 3.0 server. For AppleTalk networks only. Microsoft Applications Forum (GO MSAPP), Library 3, "PC/Mac LAN E-mail," MESSMV.SEA (54,016 bytes).

—HG

GUIDE TO SHOPPING ON THE COMPUSERVE INFORMATION SERVICE

THE ELECTRONIC M·A·L·L®

OCTOBER 1992



SEE THE 1993 LINEUPS FROM FORD, BUICK AND VOLKSWAGEN. GET NEW AND USED CAR REPORTS FROM AUTOVANTAGE, AUTOQUOT-R AND AUTO INFORMATION CENTER. ORDER SOFTWARE, BOOKS AND AUTO ACCESSORIES. GO MALL AND TAKE TO THE ROAD!

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AUTOMOTIVE 5
QUICK REFERENCE CHART 6-7
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WHISTLER 525 AUTO SECURITY SYSTEM
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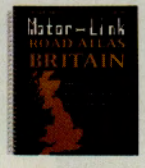


Find your way in Britain.

If you travel or live in Britain, pick up *Motor Link Road Atlas: Britain*. This spiral-bound British import includes all motorways and major routes, road, weather and local radio information, maps and street indices for Central London, ferry maps, town center maps and town plans, national parks, and more. Item #1794064.

BARNES & NOBLE. GO BN
***MOTOR LINK ROAD ATLAS: BRITAIN* $12.95**

Enjoy coffee-to-go with the HOTJO traveler's mug.

This unique stoneware mug has a patented twist-in drink-thru-top, and keeps your coffee hot. HOTJO features a wide base and non-slip bottom to prevent splashes and spills while on the-road. Comes in a decorative box for gift-giving.

COFFEE ANYONE ??? GO COF
HOTJO TRAVELER'S MUG $13.25

Your Number's Up!

If "Your Number's Up," you could win a Volkswagen Corrado SLC or Passat GL!

Hurry, time is running out! You only have through midnight on October 26 to enter Your Number's Up! for a chance to win your choice of a 1993 Volkswagen Corrado SLC or Passat GL. So, which would you choose? The Corrado SLC, a world-class performance sports coupe, or the Passat GL, a roomy family sedan designed to withstand the challenges of the road? You'll find lots to help you decide at Volkswagen Online. Check out the complete specs, request **free** color brochures or download **free** graphics. Then find the dealer nearest you in the easy electronic dealer locator and go for a test drive! GO YNU

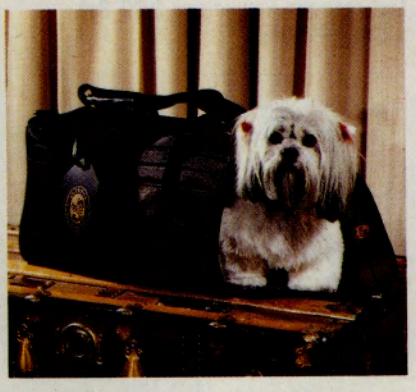
Two more weeks to win prizes in Your Number's Up!

You can still enter Your Number's Up! and win great prizes like a Dual Media Floppy Drive from Dalco Computer Electronics and Serengeti Strata Sunglasses, compliments of Sunglasses, Shavers & More. Each Wednesday through October 14, we'll pick 50 weekly winners and post the winning CompuServe User ID numbers online. If "Your Number's Up," you're eligible to select the prize of your choice in the Electronic Prize Showcase (through October 26). From October 14 to October 26, you can continue to enter weekly for the Grand Prize drawing. At 5 p.m. (EST) on October 28, we'll announce the Grand Prize winner from all valid entries received through 12:00 a.m. (EST) on October 26, 1992. If you're our lucky Grand Prize winner, you'll soon be in the driver's seat of a Volkswagen Corrado SLC or Passat GL! You'll find complete contest rules online. GO MALL

Here on page 3 and 4 are just some of the prizes you could win in Your Number's Up!

Dual Media Floppy Drive, a $198 Value

The dual media floppy drive has a 5¼″ and a 3½″ high-density drive in one half-height frame. Uses only one bay in your computer, allowing more room for other drives. Compliments of Dalco Computer Electronics. GO DA



Sherpa Pet Carrier, a $69.99 Value

Made of tough, padded nylon with mesh panels for ventilation and visibility, this quality carrier features reinforced handles, adjustable shoulder strap, and a roomy zippered pocket for papers and personal items. Fits comfortably under an airplane seat. Measures 17½″ x 10½″ x 10″. Compliments of PetWorks. GO PT

Blockbuster Computer Books and Book/Disk Packages, Values from $29.95 to $89.95

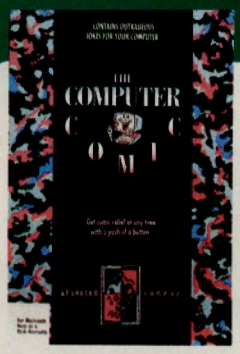
Choose from 10 best-selling computer books, including *Windows 3.1 Secrets*; *Dvorak's Guide to PC Telecommunications, Second Edition*; *The Waite Group's Master C*; *Debugging: Creative Techniques and Tools for Software Repair*; and *Practical Image Processing in C*. Compliments of The Small Computer Book Club. GO BK

Mickey Waffler, a $59.95 Value

The Mickey Waffler features non-stick baking grids to make cleanup a breeze, indicator light and stay-cool handles. The 7½″ round iron makes 6″ waffles. Includes recipes and gift box. Compliments of The Chef's Catalog. GO CC

Gourmet Delights Gift Basket, a $32.95 Value

This lovely gift basket contains Lynn's Incredible Edibles shortbread cookies, Moonshine Trading Co. gourmet honey and apricot spread, Royal Garden tea, Boyd's macadamia Mystique Dessert beverage, a black diamond mug, and two 2 oz. packages of coffee. Compliments of Coffee Anyone ???. GO COF



Computer Comic, a $24.95 Value

With this Macintosh accessory, a joke displays in a pop-up window the minute you log on to your computer. Provides loads of fun with tasteful adult jokes. Compliments of MacWarehouse. GO MW

Lynx Trackball (SE), a $129 Value

This versatile device is easy to use for sophisticated desktop publishing, graphics, cad cam and many other applications. Offers 250 counts per inch of tracking resolution. Item #INO950. Compliments of MicroWarehouse. GO MCW

Thunder Board from Media Vision, a $129.95 Value

This 100% Adlib- and SoundBlaster-compatible music card gives you everything you need in a PC sound card. Features include digital audio converter, dynamic filtering for low noise sampling and playback, digital audio recording, microphone input with automatic gain control, and joystick port. Compliments of Sierra Online. GO SI

Led Zeppelin *Remasters* 3-CD Set, a $39.99 Value

Here is a condensed retrospective spanning the career of one of the greatest bands of all time. Includes 26 Led Zeppelin classics on two CDs, plus a third disc featuring interviews with Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones. Includes two lavish eight-page booklets. Compliments of Bose Express Music. GO BEM

Serengeti Strata Sunglasses, a $330 Value

These are the finest sunglasses available in the world. The Strata Polarizing System combines photochromics (lenses adapt to changing light), a spectral control filter and a polarizing filter. Compliments of Sunglasses, Shavers & More. GO SN

Become an informed automotive shopper at The Electronic Mall.

Pricing reports for new and used cars. Sources for accessories and product information. Savings on everything from lube jobs to alarm systems. Check out the new lineups from Ford (GO FORD), Volkswagen (GO VW) and Buick (GO BUICK) online, too! All are at your fingertips at The Electronic Mall. GO MALL

THE COMPUSERVE COMMITMENT TO ELECTRONIC SHOPPING

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■

SHOPPERS GUIDE

Find automotive parts and services toll-free at AT&T.

Are you looking for a hard-to-find part for your motorcycle? Interested in installing a sun roof in your car? Curious how much it costs to rent an RV? You'll find sources for solutions to all your automotive needs in the AT&T Toll-Free Directory. From trailer hitches to hubcaps, body shops to towing services, AT&T has your number. Search by company name or cruise through the 47 different automotive categories. GO ATT

Try AutoVantage for three months for only $1.

If you're buying or selling a car, or if you're interested in getting the best parts and service for your vehicle at the lowest possible price, check out AutoVantage OnLine. Try AutoVantage OnLine for three months for only $1. Your membership entitles you to five **free** New Car Summaries and three **free** Used Car Valuations. Members can also take advantage of discounts at thousands of quality service centers like AAMCO® Transmission Centers, Meineke® and Precision Tune® Centers. You save on car stereos, radar detectors and alarm systems, too! You can even purchase a car at a discount through AutoVantage. Complete membership details and immediate enrollment online. GO ATV

Qualify for a free Used Car Buyer's Guide at Auto Information Center.

Be sure you get a fair deal if you're buying or selling a used or classic car. First, learn what the car is worth by ordering a Used Car Valuation Report. Each report costs only $5.95 and is delivered within 24 hours by CompuServe Mail. Auto Information Center offers Collector Car Valuation Reports, too. They feature current market prices based on condition for most foreign and domestic collector cars from 1946–1972, for only $14.95 each. Order any two valuation reports and get a **free** copy of the Used Car Buyer's Guide. GO AI

Get the facts you need to be an educated consumer at AutoQuot-R.

If you're considering buying a new 1993 car or truck, take a trip to AutoQuot-R first. A New Car Pricing Report includes dealer invoice and suggested retail price, EPA ratings, warranty information and consumer and factory to dealer incentives. Armed with this information, you could save hundreds, even thousands of dollars on your next new car purchase! AutoQuot-R also offers quotes on most new and used domestic and foreign vehicles. Reports are $16 for one and $28 for two. Additional reports are $10 each when requested with original order. AutoQuot-R has added a new exclusive personal counselor service, too. GO AQ

Shipping Information

Shipping destinations and methods differ from store to store. Many stores will ship virtually anywhere in the world. Others limit shipping to the U.S. and Canada, or to the U.S. only. Shipping options differ, too. In addition to standard UPS ground delivery, many merchants also offer one-, two-, or three-day rush delivery for an added fee. In some cases, the price online includes shipping and handling anywhere in the continental U.S. Use the handy guide below as a quick reference for each store's shipping policies.

THE ELECTRONIC MALL/ QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Use this handy table when placing your order.

| Merchant | Go Code | CATALOG | | | | SHIPS TO | | | | | PAYMENT OPTIONS | | | | | | | | | | DEPARTMENTS | | | | | | | | | |

How to Place an Order

When you see a product you would like to purchase, simply type "O" to order. Imagine you are putting an item in an electronic shopping cart. You can continue shopping in a store, adding more items to your cart, or you can head directly to the checkout counter by typing "Checkout." An electronic order form will appear and you will be prompted for all pertinent information, such as size, color, delivery method and credit card billing. Remember, you can cancel your order at any point by typing "Exit." Once your order is complete, you will see an order confirmation, giving you another chance to change all or part of your order.

Holabird Sports Discounters	HB
Home Tech Depot	HT
Honey Baked Ham	HAM
Ideal Business Services	IB
Independent Investors Research, Inc.	IIR
JCPenney	JCP
JDR Microdevices	JDR
Justice Records	JR
K & B Camera Center	KB
The Laser's Edge	LE
Lincoln Electronic Showroom	LM
MacUser	MC
MacWarehouse	MW
Mac Zone/PC Zone	MZ
Max Ule Discount Brokerage	TKR
McGraw-Hill Book Company	MH
Mentor Technologies	MN
Mercury Electronic Showroom	LM
MicroWarehouse	MCW
Mission Control Software	MCS
Money's Financial Market	MFM
Music Alley Online	MAO
Narada Productions	NP
NEBS	NEBS
NewsNet	NN
Omaha Steaks	OS
Omni Technics	OT
Parsons Technology	PA
Paul Fredrick Shirts Company	PFS
PC Catalog	PCA
PC/Computing	PCC
PC Magazine	PM
PC Publications	PCB
PC Sources	PC
Penny Wise Office Products	PW
Peterson's Connexion	PX
PetWorks	PT
PRC Database Publishing	PRC
Rent Mother Nature	RM
Robertson Electronics, Inc.	RE
The Rodeo Mile	ROD
Safeware Computer Insurance	SAF
Sears	SEARS
Shareware Depot	SD
Sharon Luggage and Gifts	SL
Shoppers Advantage Club	SAC
Short Sizes Inc.	SS
Sierra Online	SI
Small Computer Book Club	BK
Softdisk Publishing	SP
Software Excitement	SE
Software Specialties	SOF
Sounds & Video Online	SO
Sunglasses, Shavers & More	SN
TRW Credentials	CRE
TSR Games Shoppe	TSR
Twentieth Century Mutual Funds	TC
University of Phoenix	UP
VitalStats	VS
Volkswagen	VW
Walden Computer Books	WB
Walter Knoll Florist	WK
Windstar Cruises	WIND

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Wrap up your yearly gift-giving at Florida Fruit Shippers and save 10%. Place your order online anytime during October and specify your desired delivery date. Order now for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, even Mother's Day! You won't be billed until the fruit is shipped. Best of all, Florida Fruit Shippers will automatically take 10% off your bill. Select from ¼, ½ and full bushels of fresh Florida oranges, ruby red grapefruit or orange/grapefruit mixes. Or opt for a gift pack such as the Champagne Hamper, the Palmbo or the Tower of Delights. All prices include shipping and handling anywhere in the U.S. or Canada. During the holiday season, Florida Fruit Shippers offers a special Europak to 11 countries, too. Complete details online. GO FFS

Short Sizes salutes short men with a 10% off Columbus Day sale.

In honor of Christopher Columbus and short men everywhere, Short Sizes is taking 10% off of all orders during October. Hart Schaffner & Marx suits regularly $485, are now only $436.50. Asher slacks regularly $90, are now $81. Pinpoint oxford shirts regularly $34, are now only $30.60. And, John Weitz blazers regularly $190, are now $171. Request a **free** catalog online. Also, send us the names of three short (5′8″ and under) friends, relatives or business associates and receive a **free** pair of socks!

SHORT SIZES. GO SS
JOHN WEITZ BLAZER
REGULAR PRICE $190
SALE PRICE $171

Get a free disk clock with any purchase of $50 or more at Direct Micro.

There's no better time to shop Direct Micro. Make any purchase of $50 or more during October and you'll automatically qualify for a **free** disk clock. Increase your data/fax transmitting speed with 14,400 bps modems by Zoom Telephonics. Stock up on disks and ribbons. Direct Micro is offering the V.32 bis 14,400 bps modems, ribbons and disks at super savings. GO DM

Order the JCPenney 1992 Christmas catalog and get a $5 merchandise certificate.

'Twas the night before Christmas and the gifts were all wrapped and ready because Mom and Dad shopped the JCPenney Christmas catalog! You, too, can find all of your holiday gifts in the hundreds of pages of clothes, household items and toys in the JCPenney catalog. Look for outstanding prices on some of the season's most popular toys, too! Order your catalog online for only $4 and receive a $5 merchandise certificate good on your next purchase.

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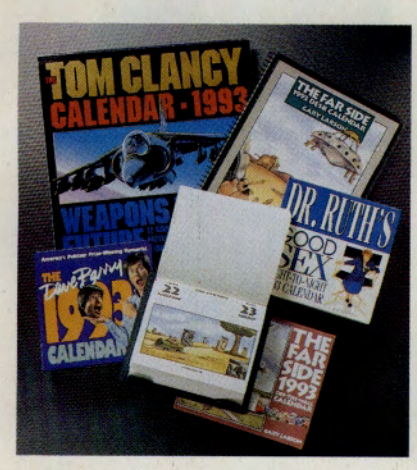
Get four to seven great shareware programs delivered right to your door each month for as low as $5.28 a month. When you join Shareware of the Month Club, you get a variety of business, home and utility programs from such categories as mailing list, word processing, database, home inventory, communications and more. Shipping is **free**, plus you get our ultimate money-back guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied with your first issue, keep it and Shareware Depot will refund your money in full.

SHAREWARE DEPOT. GO SD
SHAREWARE OF THE MONTH CLUB

Shop the CompuServe Store sale and receive a free Navigation Wall Chart.

Be among the first 2,500 shoppers to place an order at the CompuServe Store during the annual fall sale and you'll receive the new basic services version of the Navigation Wall Chart absolutely **free**! Prices have been slashed on a dozen CompuServe guides, software packages and merchandise items. For current members, *CompuServe Information Manager*, list price $25, is cut $10 and includes a $15 connect-time credit, making it virtually **free**! *CIM: The Complete Sourcebook*, list price $19.95, is now only $16. And CompuServe's black canvas logo briefcase, list price $18, is sale priced at $13! To shop the sale and qualify for your **free** wall chart, GO ORDER.



Take $1 off all 1993 calendars at The Court Pharmacy.

Shop early for the best selection of 1993 calendars. Order now before your favorite sells out and save $1, too! The Court Pharmacy stocks over a dozen of America's favorite calendars.

THE COURT PHARMACY. GO RX
FAR SIDE OFF THE WALL PAGE A DAY CALENDAR $8.95
THE 1993 FAR SIDE DESK CALENDAR $8.95
DR. RUTH'S GOOD SEX NIGHT TO NIGHT 1993 CALENDAR $7.95
TOM CLANCY 1993 WEAPONS OF THE FUTURE WALL CALENDAR $8.95
DAVE BARRY PAGE A DAY CALENDAR $7.95
ALL PRICES ARE $1 OFF LIST

Cheer on the home team with the tailgate party basket.

Whether you're at the stadium or in your own living room, this snack-packed basket satisfies hungry fans. The feast kicks off with a 1 lb. football-shaped Quarterback's Choice Beef Summer Sausage. Other taste treats include two 4.4 oz. boxes of Kentor water crackers, a 4 oz. tin of Fowlers roasted almonds, a 4 oz. bag of East Shore seasoned gourmet pretzels, and a 5 oz. jar of East Shore sweet and tangy mustard. Packed in a natural-colored picnic basket and wrapped in clear plastic, this basket is festively accented with a 4-in. long football-shaped foil balloon on a stick and lots of autumn-colored curly ribbons.

THE GIFT SENDER. GO GS
TAILGATE PARTY BASKET $45

Dress in style with Brooks Brothers' leather field jacket.

Handsome English country styling sets off this rich, 100% nubuck leather field jacket, warmly lined in cotton plaid flannel. Three-quarter length with front zipper and placket, shirt collar, front patch pockets, adjustable sleeve tabs and side-buttoned vents. Imported exclusively for Brooks Brothers in saddle tan. Item #264N.

BROOKS BROTHERS. GO BR
LEATHER FIELD JACKET $495

Shop The Metropolitan Museum of Art for unique gifts.

With the holidays approaching, now is the time to visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art's latest location—online with CompuServe. Browse the Museum's online gift shop showcasing dozens of unique gift items including Museum reproductions and adaptations, notecards and calendars, jewelry and scarves, and educational presents for young people. Pictured here are four special selections: *Fun With Hieroglyphs* book/rubber stamp kit ($18.95), a nickel silver antiqued Lace Picture Frame ($38), Head of a Young Girl bonded bronze statue ($165), and a hand-blown Italian Blue-and-White Striped Bottle ($65). Shoppers are also invited to request a **free** copy of the Museum's holiday catalog. You can view or download select Museum graphics online, too!

You can also become a Museum member and discover the many benefits of membership, including a 10% discount on all Museum merchandise purchased online, through the catalog, or in any of the Museum's satellite shops. Electronic enrollment is offered for your convenience. For those living outside a 200-mile radius of New York City, the Museum offers a National Associate membership for $35 a year. Make gift-giving an art and visit the Museum online today. GO MMA

Treat Halloween goblins to Gimmee Jimmy's cookies.

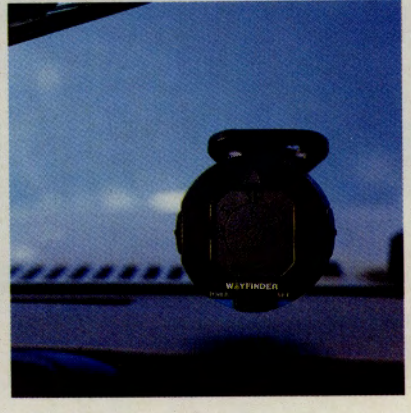
Here's the trick to treating goblins and ghosts this Halloween--cookies from Gimmee Jimmy's! Made especially for Halloween, these delicious, freshly baked chocolate chip cookies are covered with brown and orange M&M® chocolate candies.

GIMMEE JIMMY'S. GO GIM
LARGE TIN (36 COOKIES) $24
REGULAR TIN (24 COOKIES) $19

Scare away ghosts with a Halloween night light.

There's no need to be spooked this Halloween. These glow-in-the-dark, hand-crafted porcelain night lights are guaranteed to keep the ghosts, goblins and creepy creatures away! Each night light measures about 6″ high and includes a cord, switch, plug and bulb. Select from two designs, a haunted stump with ghost or a large jack-o-lantern with ghost. Night light can be delivered in a basket of Halloween theme flowers and greens too.

WALTER KNOLL FLORIST. GO WK
HALLOWEEN NIGHT LIGHT $18.95
NIGHT LIGHT FLOWER BASKET $38.85



Heat up instantly with Auto Heat™ and Back Seat Heat Plus™.

Now you can get instant heat or spot-defrost your windshield without having to wait for your car engine to warm up! Auto Heat™ plugs into your cigarette lighter receptacle and features a quieter air circulating fan that's 30% more powerful than previous models. A 6 ft. power cord allows you to reach any area of your car. For vans, 4x4s and RVs, there is Back Seat Heat Plus™, featuring a patented crystal heat cell that produces 1100 BTU/360 watts of auxiliary heat for the rear area of your vehicle. The thermostat and swivel bracket direct the radiant and convection heat right where you need it. A handy "fan-only" setting provides air circulation in summer months.

SEARS. GO SEARS
AUTO HEAT™ $34.99
BACK SEAT HEAT PLUS™ $99.99

Find your way home with the digital electronic travel compass.

Using patented circuitry similar to that developed for the U.S. military, this digital electronic travel compass gives you highly accurate directional readings for cruising in your car or hiking on the trail. A digital "memory" function can be set before you leave to help you find the way back. Includes a windshield bracket for mounting or fits easily in your backpack. Measures 2¾″ x 2⅝″.

HAMMACHER SCHLEMMER. GO HS
TRAVEL COMPASS $99.95

Your kids will learn math painlessly with *Hey Taxi.*

With *Hey Taxi*, your kids maneuver a cab through city streets to pick up passengers and solve basic arithmetic problems as they collect the fares. But watch out for the competition, traffic fines and speeding tickets! Applying basic math skills to real-life situations makes the learning fun. Available for the IBM-PC, PC-T and PC-AT. Includes two difficulty levels. Ages 6 and up. Item #EN2983.

MICROWAREHOUSE. GO MCW
***HEY TAXI* $24**

Save over $500 on a Pentax PZ 10 camera outfit.

Take professional quality photographs and save over $500. The Pentax PZ 10 outfit includes a PZ 10 body-compact 35mm autofocus SLR, Pentax 28-80mm auto focus zoom lens, SLR holster bag and 6 volt lithium battery. Features include intelligent power zoom system, predictive autofocus, program AE and metered manual modes, multi-pattern or spot metering, built-in retractable TTL auto flash, self timer and auto DX coding. Pentax extended warranty adds four more years to the standard one year warranty for a total of five years. Item #9826710.

BEST BUY!

K&B CAMERA. GO KB
PENTAX PZ 10 OUTFIT
LIST PRICE $997
SALE PRICE $419.95

Discover the hottest new record label —Justice Records.

Founded in 1989, Houston-based Justice Record Company leaped onto the national scene with five chart-breaking releases and was named the top debut label for 1990 in jazz. Recognized as one of the most exciting new forces in jazz, blues, and rhythm & blues, this cutting-edge label continues to garner industry praise and awards with releases such as Herb Ellis' "Roll Call," Emily Remler's "This Is Me" and King & Moore's "Potato Radio." Music fans will find detailed artist bios, tour schedules and album notes online. All releases can be ordered in CD ($15) or on cassette ($9). Prices include shipping and handling within the continental U.S. Overseas orders are welcome. During October only, order any three releases and you will receive Justice Records' "Sampler, The First Year" featuring 11 favorite cuts, absolutely **free**. Music mavens are also invited to request a **free** catalog and to sign up for Justice Records' Electronic HotLine. Get a jump on the best in new jazz, blues, and rhythm & blues. GO JR

Save $81 on a Sony removable radio cassette deck.

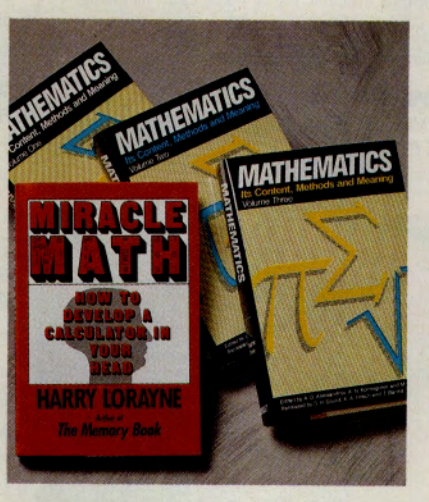
Enjoy music as you drive without worry of theft when you park with this removable AM/FM stereo cassette player from Sony. Features include 18 FM/6 AM presets with auto memory, memory scan, auto reverse cassette deck, separate bass and treble controls, 22 watts x 2 channels or 6 watts x 4 channels power output, fader control balances for front and rear speakers and full night illumination. Model #XR4357. Sorry, ordering is for Shoppers Advantage Club members only. Not a member? Try Shoppers Advantage for three months for only $1.

SHOPPERS ADVANTAGE CLUB. GO SAC
SONY CASSETTE PLAYER
LIST PRICE $230
MEMBER'S PRICE $149

Check out the 1993 Ford Ranger.

It's totally redesigned with a striking, more aerodynamic shape. It has an ergonomically-refined interior, a smoother, more controlled ride and bigger payloads. It's rugged. It's versatile. And above all, it's fun. It's all the qualities that have made it America's best-selling compact pickup. It's the 1993 Ford Ranger. View complete specs and request a **free** brochure online.

FORD DIVISION. GO FORD
1993 FORD RANGER BROCHURE FREE



Brush up on your math.

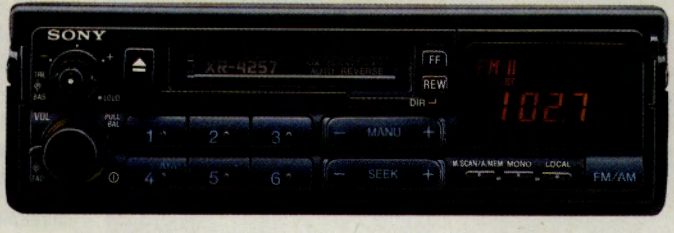
Here are two books that make math easy. Start with *Miracle Math: How to Develop a Calculator in your Head*, a handy little book offering an amazingly simple method to help you quickly and accurately add, subtract, multiply and divide. Then graduate to *Mathematics*. In this three-volume set, a dozen of Russia's most respected mathematicians offer 1,142 pages of comprehensive text to help you understand mathematics. Chapters cover everything from analytic geometry, partial differential equations, the theory of probability, non-Euclidean geometry, topology and more.

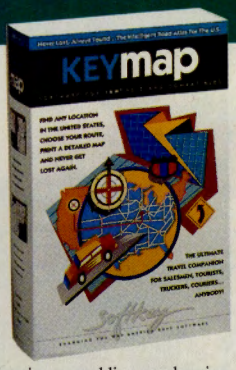
BARNES & NOBLE. GO BN
***MIRACLE MATH* $6.95**
***MATHEMATICS* (3 VOLUMES) $24.95**

Save $40 on the GE portable help car radio.

This ultracompact 40-channel emergency/information two-way CB radio features a 4-watt transceiver and magnetic mount, collapsible whip antenna with 3 meter cord, DC-power cord with cigarette lighter adaptor plug and 1.5 meter cord, electronic up/down scan, local/distant squelch setting, 10 mm green LED channel readout, rubber touch control pads, instant channel 9 access for emergencies, built-in speaker and condenser microphone and built-in automatic noise limiter. Includes interior hanger and rugged compact travel case. Model #3-5909S. Ordering is for members only. Not a member? Try Shoppers Advantage for three months for only $1.

SHOPPERS ADVANTAGE CLUB. GO SAC
GE HELP RADIO
LIST PRICE $79
MEMBER'S PRICE $39





Make your own maps with *KeyMap* and save over $20.

Here is an indispensable tool for anyone taking a trip, hosting a wedding or planning a reunion. *KeyMap* from SoftKey lets you find your destination, choose your route and print out a map with detailed driving instructions. Incorporate exact location of points of interest including national parks, monuments, lakes and rivers. Customize your maps with icons to mark key locations like your house, favorite restaurant or local gas station. Add text and place it anywhere you want! Prints to dot matrix, ink jet and laser printers. Exports to PCX files.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

COMPUTER EXPRESS. GO CE
KEYMAP LIST PRICE $59.95
SALE PRICE $38.97

Save over $20 on *CityMap*.

Now you can make your own detailed, street-level city maps before you travel. Each *CityMap* contains comprehensive, accurate information about the city and its suburbs. More portable than most guide books, your custom maps fold easily to fit in an inside pocket, glove compartment or briefcase for quick reference. *CityMap* is available for 30 major cities including Chicago, San Francisco, Orange County, Detroit, Washington DC, Atlanta and Boston.

COMPUTER EXPRESS. GO CE
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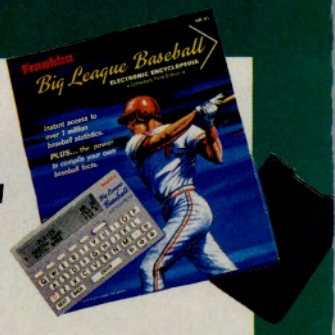
SALE PRICE $38.97



Become a baseball pro with *Franklin Big League Baseball Encyclopedia*.

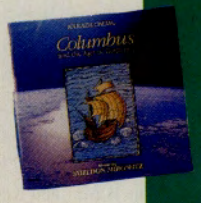
Franklin Big League Baseball Encyclopedia lets you instantly find thousands of baseball statistics, compare players' performances, evaluate trades and answer trivia questions. Your portable electronic baseball statistician gives you detailed career and year-by-year statistics for every player who has ever played in the American or National Leagues. Includes complete year-by-year league standings, World Series results and major player awards. Item #COMP040.

MACWAREHOUSE. GO MW
***FRANKLIN BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL* $99**

Collect Burago model replicas of your favorite classic cars.

These 1/18 scale model replicas of America's favorite classic cars are made of die cast steel and feature working doors, trunks, hoods and steering. Select from 20 models including Jaguar, Ferrari, Mercedes, Porsche, Corvette, Lamborghini, Rolls, Bugatti and Alfa. Makes a sensational gift for the car enthusiast!

SHARON LUGGAGE AND GIFTS. GO SL
1957 CORVETTE $29.50
FERRARI TESTAROSA $29.50



Experience the compelling music of *Columbus and the Age of Discovery*.

Composer Sheldon Mirowitz creates a memorable soundtrack for *Columbus and the Age of Discovery*, an epic seven-part documentary set for worldwide broadcast in 1992. Mirowitz's orchestrated score is inventively accented by electronic textures and the use of native instruments from the Caribbean, Africa and the Americas. CD booklets include a detailed overview of the historical, cultural and sociological impact of Columbus' arrival in the New World 500 years ago, written by author William Scheller. Call the Narada Music Line at 1-900-370-4500 to sample this album, #6002.

NARADA PRODUCTIONS. GO NP
***COLUMBUS AND THE AGE OF DISCOVERY* CD $12.98**
CASSETTE $9.98

Step up to a new idea in family transportation, the Volkswagen EuroVan.

It's not a minivan. And it's not a full-sized van. It's an all new mid-size passenger van that's a perfect fit for today's active families. Inside, EuroVan is over 35% larger behind the driver's seat than the average minivan. The result is uncompromised comfort for seven adult-sized passengers, and remarkable versatility for accomodating your favorite things. Outside, EuroVan is shorter than many minivans, and is only two inches longer than the Honda Accord, so it is easy to drive. You'll find complete specs online. Request a **free** brochure, too.

VOLKSWAGEN ONLINE. GO VW

LAN E-mail Resources Online

Information on nearly any aspect of electronic mail for LANs is available in the CompuServe forums. The IBM File Finder (GO IBMFF) lists more than 100 files under the e-mail category. If you want product-specific information on e-mail packages, several vendors listed below support their systems in CompuServe forums. General discussions on e-mail and MHS can be found in the forums listed under General Information.

General Information

Telecommunications Forum (GO TELECO)—Discussions on this forum relate to all aspects of telecommunications. Section 6 covers e-mail discussions, and the corresponding Library 6, "E-Mail/Fax," contains several useful files.

IBM Communications Forum (GO IBMCOMM)—One of the oldest forums on CompuServe, this forum hosts lively discussions on LANs. It lacks a specific section on e-mail, but its libraries have numerous files on e-mail and MHS.

***LAN Technology* Forum (GO LANTECH)**—This relatively new forum hosts e-mail discussions in Section 12, "E-Mail," and has several interesting e-mail files in its libraries. You will find general discussions on all types of LANs.

Novell Library (GO NOVLIB)—The best place to go to find dozens of files relating to MHS or e-mail that you can download.

CompuServe Mail Hub (GO MHS)—Contains instructions on how to access the Mail Hub, search the MHS directory, register a new workgroup and download MHS 1.5C Software.

Product Specific Information

cc:Mail—LDC Words & Pixels Forum (GO LOTUSB), Section 11, "cc:Mail."

WordPerfect Office—WordPerfect Users Forum (GO WPUSERS), Section 8, "Office/Mail/Nets."

Quickmail—Mac Vendor A Forum (GO MACAVEN), Section 4, "CE Software."

BeyondMail—PC Vendor C Forum (GO PCVENC), Section 15, "Beyond Inc."

Mustang—PC Vendor A Forum (GO PCVENA), Section 9, "Mustang Software."

MHS—Novell C Forum (GO NOVC), Section 5, "E-mail/MHS"

DaVinci E-mail—Windows Third Party A Forum (GO WINAPA), Section 3, "DaVinci."

Microsoft Mail—Microsoft Applications Forum (GO MSAPP), Section 3, "PC/Mac LAN E-mail."

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And now, we're even better than before! We've redesigned the Club's electronic capabilities to give you more new music, more selections and better savings opportunities. All you have to do is **"GO CD"** or **"GO BMG."** Joining the Club is a great way to find out what's new and to collect some of your own greatest hits to build your CD collection.

If you aren't already a member, start getting the music you love with our terrific 8-for-1 offer. If you are a current member, you can continue saving with our increased selection, great values and bonus discounts.

FREE $5.00 USAGE CREDIT WHEN YOU JOIN!

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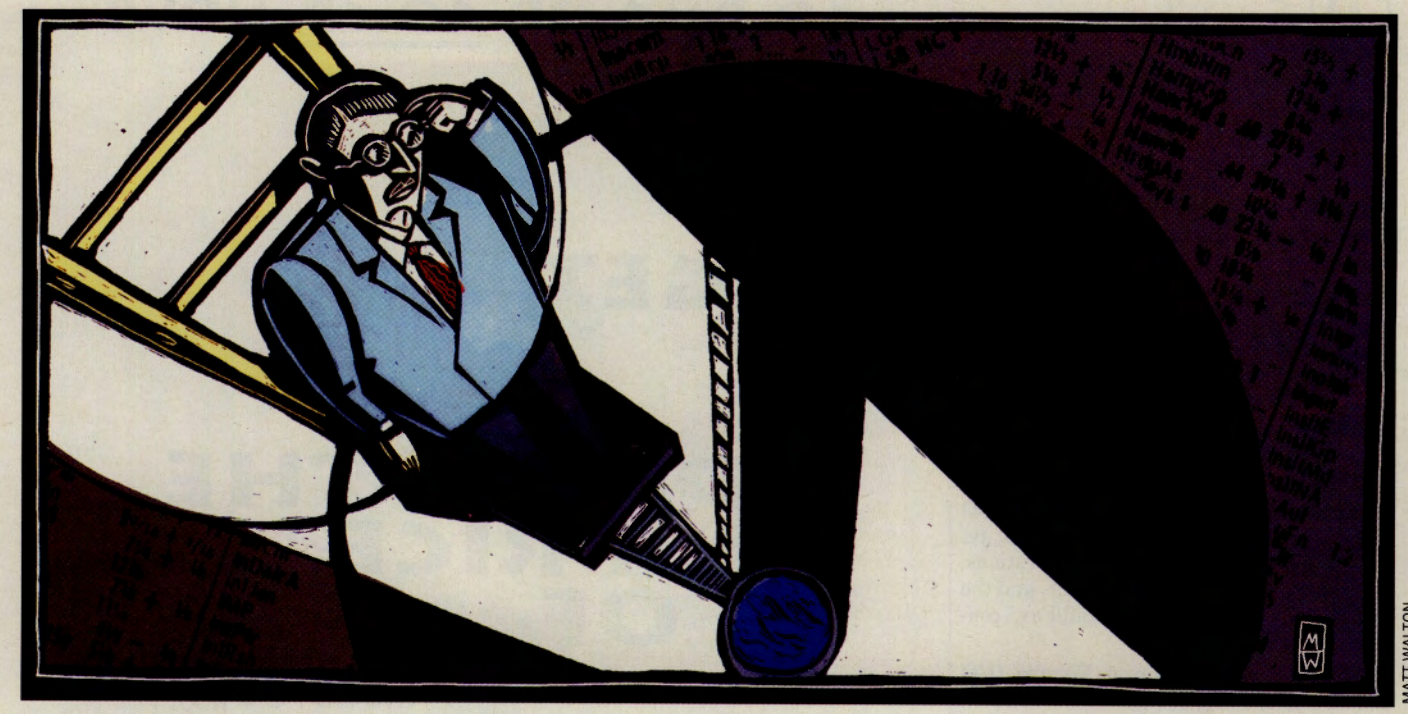
GO OLI for more information.

by Paul A. Gilster



MATT WALTON

Uncertain Futures

Diving into risky, liquid futures trading? Online expertise can help ensure there's water in the pool.

If your broker or investment-wise best friend suggests you trade futures and you don't know what futures are all about, there's a safe, painless way to learn before you leap.

Futures traders frequently gather in the Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM) to continually refine strategies for playing the markets to win. Some are full-time professionals working on the floors of the various exchanges where futures change hands. Others, also full-time, trade for their own account out of their homes, monitoring the markets through live satellite feeds and cable channels that keep them up to date. Part-time traders check the forum for tips, and the forum's Section 3, "Futures & Options," is frequented by newcomers trying to determine whether or not futures are for them.

It's an educational gold mine.

The idea behind futures trading is not to acquire tangible assets, but to use the price movements of the futures contracts themselves to generate profits. By using leverage, a speculator can control a large futures contract for only a percentage of its value. A small move in that contract can create a sizable return on investment, or a substantial loss. Traders monitor the markets daily—often hourly—knowing that risk and volatility are high.

If they're fast-moving, futures are also diverse. Raw commodities such as cotton, coffee and sugar, as well as energy supplies, such as oil, can be the basis for speculation. Precious metals preoccupy traders hoping to capitalize on trends in gold, silver and platinum. Gaining momentum are contracts on financial instruments, which traders use to take positions on worldwide currencies, interest rate movements, or the direction of entire markets through surrogate instruments such as the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index or the London *Financial Times* Index.

If there's one thing traders of all persuasions agree on, it's the need for self-knowledge. Steve Conlon, a floor trader on the Coffee, Sugar and Cocoa Exchange in New York, puts it this way: "I am of the belief that trading is a microcosm of one's beliefs." The sentiment is echoed by Richard Lees, a writer and trader from Los Angeles, who observes, "Trading is so psychological. I'm drawn to it because of that—because it's another way of finding out who I really am inside."

If trading requires self-possession, it's largely because of the demands volatile markets place on the patience and discipline of the individual trader. Yet, the vehicles traders use offer stability to the economy at large. The commodity trading that gave birth to today's futures markets has long provided a unique form of insurance to agriculture. Farmers can commit to the future sale of a product, and manufacturers to the future purchase of raw materials. By contracting for a satisfactory return months before delivery, a farmer can lock in his profit, transferring

MONEY MATTERS

CM's Money Matters Credo:
To the casual and serious investor alike, we vow to provide sanity when the bulls and bears run wild; indeed to explain and inform. Where money matters, we'll provide the means of attaining discretion and thus the better part of financial valor.

▼
How to Specialize in Speculation
▼
Global Report, p. 32
▼
Futures Files, p. 34

Online Resources for Following Futures

CompuServe provides a number of services that can help you keep abreast of market developments. Here's a list of the places to look for information.

Agri-Commodities (GO ACI)—Under this heading, you'll find *Futures Focus*, a weekly newsletter for the futures trader. A product of News-a-tron Corp. of Salem, Mass., *Futures Focus* includes a trading system called TSF, which provides buy and sell recommendations for selected futures contracts. Also of value is a market overview that summarizes major economic trends affecting futures activity.

Commodities Lookup (GO CSYMBOL)—Commodity access symbols can be confusing, but they're needed to use the Commodities Pricing and Analysis service efficiently. CSYMBOL allows you to search by commodity group (financials, foods, grains), or by the futures exchange your commodity is traded on. Symbols identified through this service can then be used to generate reports.

Commodities Pricing and Analysis (GO CPRICE)—Here you'll find historical pricing and volume data on commodity contracts, from financial and currency futures to petroleum and agricultural contracts. Each report includes open, high, low and settle prices for each contract, as well as volume and open interest (the total number of contracts that have not been exercised, closed out or allowed to expire). Commodity access symbols in the Commodities Lookup database (see below) can be accessed directly by typing ? at the Commodity prompt.

Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM)—In addition to its libraries and Futures & Options section, the Investors' Forum provides a Trader's Diary section, where active traders frequently talk over their latest moves and discuss the rationale behind them. This is a place where market newcomers can learn from the actual trading experiences of futures veterans, and ask questions about trading strategies.

MMS International (GO MMS)—MMS International specializes in economic and financial research. Traders involved in the currency markets find its reports on the technical and fundamental factors affecting price movements helpful in gathering an overall picture of economic activity. Interest rate movements through the MMS Fedwatch service, and bi-weekly analyses of key economic data are included. MMS Monthly Forecasts give the outlook for key interest rates, as well as monetary and credit projections.

News-a-tron Market Reports (GO NAT)—News-a-tron's reports are generated daily to provide news, analysis and cash quotes for selected commodities, market indexes and financial instruments. The list of reports is extensive: A recent check revealed analyses of oil, precious metals, international currencies, grains and more. International exchange quotes are available, as are updates on the performance of the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index.

his crop and weather risk to speculators.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the idea of buying contracts on financial instruments such as stocks and bonds was implemented. The S&P 500, for example, is an index of some 500 stocks that can be traded in much the same way as a commodity, although the price of its contracts is higher than most. As of mid-1992, the value of an S&P 500 contract was in the $206,500 range; a speculator would put up roughly $20,000 as margin to control that contract. The leverage available—$20,000 controlling the larger amount—is one of the primary attractions, and risks, of futures trading.

"The S&P is a proxy for the U.S. stock market in general, and thus, whatever trend-calling expertise you develop, or think you have developed, can be proven quickly," says Murray Gaskins, a retired research plant physiologist. "It's a big-time, highly liquid market, so you don't have to worry that it's being manipulated. U.S. government actions that affect it are pretty much upfront and in the public eye, so we don't have to wonder constantly what sort of sly and covert shenanigans might be in progress. I see all these as important advantages for the little guy."

Gaskins trades futures from his home in Alapaha, Ga., using two computers to manage his activities. He downloads end-of-day futures quotes by satellite link, and fills in needed historical information by tapping CompuServe. For newcomers, his advice is to develop a trading system that works well with historical data, followed by "paper trad-

WHAT DO T ESE DATABASES HAVE CO ON?

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The ultimate reference for computers and computing.

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General interest articles for almost everybody.

▲ Health Database Plus™
The leading health information resource for non-practitioners.

A lot, actually. Despite the diversity of subjects, these databases share a fast and easy-to-use interface, and provide comprehensive full-text coverage. And you can download articles right to your PC.

Find it now. Read it later. Type GO BUSDB, GO COMPDB, GO MAGDB or GO HLTDB at any ! prompt on CompuServe or ZiffNet.

Information Access COMPANY

GO OLI for more information.

Global Report: The International Trader's New Edge

CompuServe's new Global Report service keeps traders on top of the news no matter where it happens. A product of Citibank, Global Report (GO GLOREP) combines comprehensive databases with real-time news feeds, becoming an information crossroads for anyone with a need to follow the international markets closely. From breaking headlines to interest rate movements and currency fluctuations, this service mines the resources of some of the world's most trusted data providers.

AFX News, for example, is a joint wire service produced by Extel Financial and Agence France-Presse (AFP), leading suppliers of European financial data. Business International is a business research and consulting firm providing information on currency, exchange controls and other economic statistics for more than 25 countries. Citibank keeps traders abreast of current rates on the major currencies, as well as providing a daily market commentary.

And that's just the beginning. Other sources include such names as FOREXIA, a U.K.-based forecasting service specializing in foreign exchange, and *Financial Times* Business Information, which offers analyses of the money markets, currency hedging advice and international stock market comments. Also joining the list is Comtex, a consolidated venture offering continuous coverage of international business from wire services around the world.

Currency traders know that fast-moving news events can make or break a trade. With Comtex and the rest of Global Report's wire service capabilities, traders can quickly find the needle in the haystack. And for hard data, the news providers are supplemented by Direct Bank Feeds, a service supplying key international exchange rates from major banks worldwide. Twenty-five banks provide data as of December 1991.

But Global Report isn't just for currency traders. Quotron provides market data on stocks and bonds as well as commodities, while Knight-Ridder Financial Information tracks commodity, foreign exchange, money and stock markets internationally, offering news and commentary on all. Extel Financial is a key source for U.K. company news, while Standard & Poor's offers profiles of more than 10,000 U.S. companies. And if it's Italy that interests you, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, the leading Italian financial daily, is also available online.

A search for data on recent movements in the Deutschemark showed what Global Report can do. Here's a sample: Knight-Ridder offered the comments of two Bundesbank directors on the impact key wage settlements have had on interest rates, and their thoughts on money supply growth. *Financial Times* Business Information analyzed the Deutschemark's position against the dollar and other currencies in light of an averted metal workers strike. AFX discussed the remarks of a Bundesbank council member on capital requirements within the European Community.

With technical forecasts and advice on hedging the Deutschemark, not to mention updated news and exchange rates, traders hoping to track this or any other major currency will not lack for information. More than most markets, futures trading requires daily and often by-the-minute participation to take advantage of potential price swings. Global Report makes it possible to track U.S. and worldwide developments more reliably than ever.

—PAG

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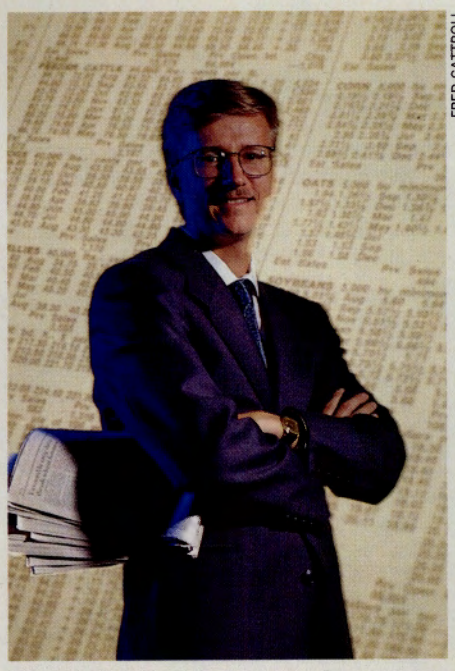
ing" (no real money used), only entering the markets for real once results become acceptable. He advocates deducting $200 per paper trade to account for fees and market movement.

The subject of paper trading as a teaching device prompts considerable discussion among forum traders. Many support it as a safe way to apply new trading systems, teaching the novice the ins and outs of the markets. Others point out that real trades are not always executed at exactly the price the trader had specified (the general term for this is "slippage"), leading to false expectations and disappointment when the new system is tried out for real. All agree, though, that a systematic approach is critical.

"My advice to people starting out is this: For at least the first year, forget about making money," says Dean Mouscher. "The goal should be first and foremost *preservation of capital* while learning the game. Patience, patience, patience. If you can get a year's trading experience and lose only a small amount of money, you're way ahead. If you ever find yourself just hoping that a market goes your way—and have lost track of the original reason you made the trade—recognize that you've lost your handle on that particular trade. Get out, and collect your thoughts before you get back in."

Mouscher sees the ins and outs of trading from a tightly focused perspective. He's a member of the Chicago Board of Trade who spends his workday in the T-Bond options pit. Agreeing that 85 percent of trading is



FRED CATTROLL

Market skill learned the hard way: Dancer

emotional ("It's not so much you against the market as it is you against yourself"), Mouscher puts little stock in paper trading because it keeps the intensity of the actual experience at arm's length. Like all active forum traders, he enjoys the challenge and drama of the chase.

Whether full- or part-time, trading is a roller-coaster experience where large amounts of money routinely change hands and losses by the unwary are all but guaranteed. Depending on which study you read, between 65 percent and 90 percent of futures speculators lose money, but because trading is a zero sum game, the winners tend to do very well indeed. Terry Pukula, a commodities trading advisor based in Chicago, pegs where poor traders go wrong: They lack a trading system and the discipline to follow it, and they over-extend by using too much leverage in their trades.

Given the odds against them, why do people continue to be attracted to futures? "Because if you have a method that has been thoroughly researched, the discipline to execute it religiously, and use a margin to equity ratio of only 20 percent to 30 percent," Pukula says, "then you can have substantial returns that are hard to match in other investment vehicles."

The numbers indicate that many traders agree with Pukula's assessment. More money is traded every day on the S&P 500 contracts in Chicago than on the actual S&P 500 stocks themselves. The underlying value of contracts traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange has risen an average of 33 percent a year to $50 trillion in 1991. That's up from $18.7 trillion in 1986. Trading volume worldwide has risen from 100 million contracts in 1980 to 500 million last year.

Traders caution that futures should be considered a small business rather than an investment, with comparable long hours and the need for wholehearted commitment. One newcomer applying this advice to the markets is Tom Barron, a software engineer with Envoy Corp. in Nashville, Tenn. Barron's methodical self-education regimen includes two paper-trading accounts, one based on a mail-order course from the Ken Roberts Co. (Ojai, Calif.), the other on a technical analysis strategy Barron is devising himself.

"Each evening, I download from CompuServe prices for about 10 futures contracts that I'm following," Barron says. "From that information, I update my charts and accounts. In the Roberts-style account, I base buy and sell decisions on the patterns Roberts describes in his course. For the moving average account, I've set up a spreadsheet for each contract I follow that shows closing prices, the moving average, a buy/sell signal, profit or loss on a hypothetical contract, the commission that would have been required to follow each signal, and cumulative profit or loss."

MONEY MATTERS

Market knowledge is hard won, requiring hour after hour of Barron's kind of patient analysis. Another self-taught trader is Paul Dancer, a systems analyst from Ottawa. Dancer's interest in futures was piqued by studying futures charts and applying daily and weekly technical analysis procedures on them. Developing his own system, Dancer made a quick $6,000 in soybeans before a sharp reversal brought him back to the break-even point.

"It was a sobering experience," Dancer says. "I've made many trades since then, but I tend to stay out of those uncontrollable markets. I still love trading and have learned enough to know that the market is in charge and that I don't really know where it's going. But if it lets me come along for a bit of the ride, that's great. I still feel that trading is a skill that can be learned, and each year since my rather volatile start, I have been getting better, as evidenced by a better bottom line."

Investors' Forum traders are quick to lend a helping hand to those learning the ropes, but they're not at all hesitant to point out the stress and level of risk involved in regular trading. For those with the discipline and self-knowledge required to make a go of it, trading futures can be financially rewarding and, as evidenced by the forum's regulars, obsessively habit-forming. Interested parties would be well advised to spend some time with the forum's experts before committing capital to these volatile markets.

Paul A. Gilster is a computer columnist and technology writer based in Raleigh, N.C. He specializes in the application of new technologies to business.

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From the Investors' Forum: Futures Trading Files

The Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM) libraries contain much useful information for the futures trader and those hoping to become involved. Here's a list of some of the best files.

Price History of the Eurodollar—The Eurodollar (U.S. currency held in banks outside the United States) is tradable. This self-extracting program for Microsoft Windows charts the complete price history for several Eurodollar contracts. Library 4, "Commodities/Metals," ED_SEE.EXE (75,671 bytes).

Computerized Trading System—Using highs and lows of the closing price over the cycle of a commodity, this program determines buy, sell, wait or hold conditions for a particular contract. Shareware. Library 4, CSS.EXE (277,632 bytes).

Profits on Futures—How much profit can you reasonably expect from futures trading? This message thread discusses the issue based on the actual experiences of regular traders. Library 4, PROFIT.THD (36,339 bytes).

Orders and Slippage—Do you always get the price you planned when you trade? Here's a thread for advanced traders discussing the ins and outs of different kinds of orders, and how they are likely to be filled on the floor. Library 4, MIT.THD (26,518 bytes).

King Cotton—Few commodities have traded as long as cotton. This thread discusses cotton from the viewpoint of those actively trading it. Library 4, COTTON.THD (2,751 bytes).

Pitfalls in Futures Trading—A text file of an article by Commodity Trading Advisor Raymond J. Kaider dealing with problems traders encounter in the futures and options markets. Library 4, B4CHT.TXT (14,625 bytes).

Advice from a Pro—The transcript of an online conference with Bruce Babcock, editor of *The Commodity Trader's Consumer Report.* Tips for beginners make this a useful file for people interested in the futures markets. Library 4, BBCOCK.CO (26,104 bytes).

Expert Trading Systems—The text of an article by Michael Archer on basic principles of artificial intelligence. Although dated, this article is useful as an introduction to a field that's steadily growing in importance. Library 4, ARCHER.TXT (11,162 bytes).

Clients and Brokers—A conference transcript with commodity broker Raymond Kaider on the client-broker relationship. A must for people thinking of opening a futures account. Library 4, KAIDER.CO (39,240 bytes).

Principles of Gambling—Futures traders tend to have a weakness for poker. This file summarizes a theory of gambling, with relevance to the options and futures markets, and provides tips on developing your own trading strategy. Library 8, "Theory/Commentary," THEORE.TXT (24,195 bytes).

Futures for the Novice—A thread discussing how beginners can learn the ins and outs of futures trading. Successful traders and industry professionals comment on the pros and cons of mastering their challenging occupation. Library 15, "The Novice Investor," FUTNOV.THD (41,300 bytes).

Leverage and How to Use It—An Investors' Forum thread on using leverage in futures to control more funds than you put up, along with a discussion of the risks involved. Library 15, LEVER.THD (7,008 bytes). ◀

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by Patricia Harris & David Lyon

At the End of the World

DAVID LYON

Whitewashed buildings overlook a vast crescent beach where fishing boats usually outnumber tan-seeking tourists: Coastal village of Albufeira

Portugal's Algarve province still echoes its Moorish heritage as the origin of European seafaring.

As frequent travelers, it figured that we would eventually go to the end of the earth for a vacation.

Looking westward from the high cliffs to the far horizon of the Atlantic, we could understand why, for thousands of years, sailors called Cape St. Vincent *O Fim do Mundo*, "the end of the world." The cape lies but a few miles from orange and olive groves and Europe's finest beaches, yet it is a desolate place. Scrubby plants poke from cracks in the rocky landscape and the scant trees stretch horizontally, misshapen by relentless winds. Weathered limestone cliffs drop almost straight down to a dark, turbulent sea.

The legendary Portuguese prince, Henry the Navigator, chose the Sagres peninsula, of which Cape St. Vincent is the tip, as the base for a "school" of navigation that has taken on mythical proportions since the mid-15th century.

It was here, as a shipwrecked young man, that Christopher Columbus learned his trade. Naval architects, mapmakers and geographers gathered in a medieval "mission control" on the frontier of the unknown. The Sagres peninsula was a launching pad to go where no European had gone before—around the world.

Over the last few decades, more and more of the world has come to Henry's haunts. The Sagres peninsula belongs to the Algarve, the ancient Moorish kingdom that is Portugal's southern province. The region's architecture and place names echo its Moorish heritage and the agriculture—olives, almonds, citrus fruits and figs—seems more North African than European. This 20-mile deep green swath, stretching approximately 100 miles along the southern edge of Portugal, is compact enough to cover in a short vacation.

The Monchique and Caldeirão mountain ranges to the north provide a climatic barrier from the rest of Portugal, just as they once formed a geopolitical boundary. The Gulf Stream keeps the ocean reasonably warm all year. The region receives more hours of sunshine than any other European vacation spot, and has the best natural sand beaches in Europe.

Understandably, the Algarve swarms with Europeans on holiday during July and August. The multilingual vacation scene has a genuine appeal, especially since the Portuguese government stepped in recently to halt further development of discos, water parks and high-rise resorts. But, for a more relaxed visit where it's easier to explore and meet the locals, go in the fall or spring. Costs are even lower and the crowds are gone. The Algarve is easily the most affordable place in western

TRAVEL

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Iberia's Emerald Swath

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EAASY SABRE
Rolls Over, p. 39

Europe, less expensive than the rest of Portugal, which in turn is less expensive than the rest of the European Community.

A rental car opens up the whole province via an excellent if somewhat twisty network of roads. Off-season, you're as likely to share the byways with donkey carts as Fiats and Escorts. Service to the airport at Faro, the provincial capital, is limited, so the best bet is to fly into Lisbon, pick up a car and drive down over the mountains. This approach gives you the additional advantage of passing through two of the Algarve's must-see interior towns that are often neglected in favor of the beaches.

The village of Caldas de Monchique is tucked into a green hillside at the divide in the mountain range that isolates the Algarve from the rest of the Iberian peninsula. The reputation of its healing baths dates back to the Romans, and the village seems to have changed little since the current thermal baths were built in the 17th century. Stop for lunch in the center of town and savor the ambience; it's the last glimpse of European Portugal.

Silves lies farther down the mountains on the Arade River, which was navigable in Moorish times, when the city was known as Chelb. From the initial Moorish invasion of 711 until the empire fell in 1189, Chelb was renowned for its lush gardens and its writers and philosophers; it also served as the Moorish capital of the Algarve. Although the earthquake of 1755 leveled almost all of the Christian town, the ruins of the Moorish fortification overlook modern Silves and still command the best strategic view of two riverways, the mountain passes and the rich farmland below.

Of course, most travelers go to the Algarve for its incredible coastline, which varies from the rugged cliffs of Cape St. Vincent to the justly famous, long, sandy beaches. The ocean is cold for swimming from December through May (averaging around 62 degrees), but the beaches are fine for sunning, beachcombing and strolling.

For beach towns, we favor two very different spots at mid-coast—one a pioneer resort village, the other a port where the fishermen and tourists coexist comfortably. Praia da Rocha means "beach of the rock," so named because behemoth honeycombed boulders jut as much as 100 feet out of the golden sands of the wide, flat beach. Zigzag wooden stairs ascend a nearly sheer cliff from the beach to the village perched above. Turn-of-the-century villas, one of which has been converted into the magnificent Hotel Bela Vista, perch on the cliffside promenade. Dramatic views from the cafés, bars and restaurants (with sunsets to rival the South Seas') draw a chic and cosmopolitan crowd, and some of the nearby beach areas are dotted with high-rise apartment hotels that rent at bargain rates in the off-season. This classic beachfront resort predates the jet age, so the pace is less frenetic than, say, at the nearby casino town of Alvor.

The port of Albufeira combines the best of traditional life with amenities for travelers. Albufeira is a Moorish city of whitewashed buildings with red tile roofs gleaming on a cliff above a golden crescent beach. Apart from Olhão (beloved by the Cubists), it is perhaps the most picturesque town in the Algarve.

Although Albufeira is mobbed in July and August, fishing boats outnumber sun worshippers the rest of the year. The fishermen ply the shallow coastal waters in small open

DAVID LYON

Narrow, winding streets lead to cafés and a farmers' market: Albufeira's central square

Speaking Portuguese

It's a typically American cop-out to avoid the local tongue, and it's true that English is widespread in the Algarve—thanks to decades of British vacationers and centuries of friendship between Portugal and Great Britain. But the English veneer gets thin on back streets and in small villages, and in any case, it's polite to try the local language and let your host switch to English if necessary.

Several Portuguese language courses are available, including the Language/30 set from Barnes & Noble in The Electronic Mall (GO BN). The best way to build vocabulary is by practicing in the Foreign Language Forum (GO FLEFO) message board. Portuguese shares Section 2 with Spanish, the other major language of the Iberian peninsula. But Portuguese contains many Germanic, Arabic and African roots, which can make it seem out of place among the other descendants of Latin.

Most Portuguese speakers/writers in the forum hail from Brazil rather than Portugal. The Treaty of Tordesillas (June 7, 1494) split the western hemisphere between Spain and Portugal, drawing an imaginary line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Everything to the west belonged to Spain, to the east to Portugal. The effect was to reserve the riches of what would become Brazil for the Portuguese empire. Brazil has a bustling high-tech and computer industry, and online communications through CompuServe are proving ever more popular.

The message board is a good place to join discussions in both English and Portuguese. During June's Earth Summit in Rio, the board was abuzz with on-the-spot reports and issue discussions with participants from Canada, the United States and Brazil. English speakers practicing their Portuguese inevitably encounter the gregarious Rizzieri Maglio, an astute, helpful, bilingual member from São Paulo.

Also, don't forget that the Travel Forum (GO TRAVSIG) is the place to find tips from members on traveling in Portugal. Library 8, "Europe," has files on the Portuguese islands of Madeira (MADERA.2P and MADERA.P) and the Algarve (WINTER.HOL). Or search the libraries using the keyword PORTUGAL.

—PH & DL

DAVID LYON

A familiar sight on Algarve roads in off-season: Donkey-drawn cart

boats, bringing their catch to shore shortly before low tide. The receding tide beaches their boats, giving them a few hours to eat and prepare their nets.

As the tide begins to rise, they will gladly accept a hand (or shoulder) from visitors to push the boats across the sand and into the water for another run. Many of the fishermen speak a smattering of English, German, French or Spanish and enjoy discussing their work as they wait for the tide to rise.

But there is more to Albufeira than the face it turns toward the sea. From the promontory overlooking the ocean, a fascinating little town spills into the interior. The streets are narrow and winding, but many lead into a broad square lined with cafés terminating in one of the Algarve's best local farmers' markets.

The inland side of Albufeira is a taste of what Faro to the east and Portimão to the west have to offer. Faro's beach lies on the seaward side of a barrier island that creates a placid marina-lagoon in the middle of the city. As the provincial capital, Faro has stately government buildings and museums and a pedestrian shopping mall. It is a great city for strolling, with several parks and an open square with an old-fashioned bandstand.

Portimão, less than two miles from Praia da Rocha, is tied to the sea, but not as a playground. This deep-sea fishing port rarely pays more than a passing nod to tourism, although the great trawlers are colorful vessels and the city has erected a small park right by the docks. Uphill in the town square are a few craft and souvenir shops (and street vendors) with excellent embroidery, lacework and local crystal. The White House is notable for its lace—(its name is a tip-off that English is the chief second language here). Across the square is O Aquário, a shop featuring finely made regional crafts and arts, notably crystal, pottery and brass. Neatly groomed parks punctuate the city streets. Benches are covered with commemorative scenes depicted in the region's distinctive blue-and-white tiles called *azulejos* —a ceramic legacy of the Moors.

Two outstanding studios, Olaria and Casa Artisanata, located in Porches on the main road between Portimão and Albufeira, continue the local ceramic tradition. The fishing village of Olhão (east of Faro) is the center for the Algarve's other major craft, basketry.

Traditional music is difficult to find in the Algarve, but feast days still feature the accordion-based regional folk music and dance, *Corrindinho*. Tracking down *fado*, a Portuguese "deep song" related to flamenco, is trickier. Skip the tourist exhibitions, which are pale imitations at inflated prices, and hunt out the dark, smoky bars on back streets where the mournful music mixes headily with strong drink. *Fado* is not native to the Algarve, but we found that the old town of Lagos, west of Portimão, has the greatest concentration of *fado* bars. The best of them advertise only on posters and handbills.

TRAVEL

Dining in the Algarve is never a problem, as long as you like fish—broiled, steamed, baked, stewed, even pickled. Foot-long sardines grilled over a smoky fire are a regional specialty. Restaurants that specialize in *sardinhas* often have the kitchen at the front with a large fan blowing the smoke through a door-sized window.

Algarve cooks also make a local version of bouillabaisse called *caldeirada de peixe*—a soup thick enough to eat with knife and fork. The classic of the region, however, is *cataplana*, a savory mixture of clams, sausage, ham, onion, garlic, paprika, hot peppers, rice and white wine. Like its Spanish cousin, *paella*, there is no bad *cataplana*—only some that are better than others.

Tourist-hotel restaurants generally cater to the palates of older British tourists. A better bet are the small cafés and grilles of beachfront towns. One of the best meals we ate in the Algarve was at Restaurante Ju, a modest roadside spot west of Praia da Rocha that grills chicken as well as sardines. Local musicians stop by on their motorcycles to play a set of popular tunes and pass the hat.

This kind of place is a doorway into the Algarve, where the fishermen and carpenters share a song and a bottle of local Lagoa wine. Off-season, even the stray tourist can join in, passing the night in broken English and fractured Portuguese, just miles from the ancient end of the world.

Patricia Harris and David Lyon are free-lance writers based in Cambridge, Mass.

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The English-born Bullen works six or seven days a week managing his company, Bottomline Ventures, so he and his wife of less than a year are looking forward to the getaway these tickets will provide.

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Complete instructions for using EAASY SABRE can be found on the EAASY SABRE main menu, Option 2, "How to Use." In addition, a toll-free U.S. telephone number to the EAASY SABRE Help Desk offers one-on-one assistance (800/331-2690). For members outside the United States, a telephone help number is also available (817/355-2936). ◀

—Cathryn Conroy

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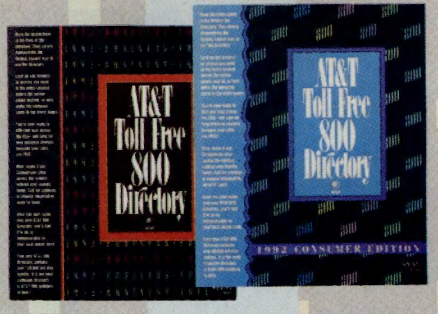

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by Liz Quinn Peters

The Newsletter Boom

For business professionals, it's 'publish or languish.' Help with the niche market medium is online.

When Michael Vesely of Vienna, Austria, decided to publish a newsletter to promote his burgeoning database consulting firm, he turned to the Public Relations and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG) for help.

"I would like to try a different, honest and caring approach," Vesely wrote. He was concerned about "selling" his services in a country where computer consultants are considered "direct descendants of horse traders." And he was overwhelmed by issues ranging from the amount of work involved in publishing a four-page monthly newsletter to the intricacies of selecting an appropriate design and targeting his audience.

"The responses I got on CompuServe made me rethink my business strategy," Vesely says. After discussions in the PR and Marketing Forum, he changed his focus to computer professionals rather than end-users, and the resulting *EDP-Letter* earned rave reviews. He also picked up several new clients and, because of his careful design work, was asked by one firm to create its next annual report.

Vesely is part of a growing number of business professionals using newsletters to market services and products. Many are looking to CompuServe for expert guidance in writing, design, hardware and software use, printing, pricing and more. "We've seen an explosion in the use of and demand for newsletters," says Thom Hartmann, sysop of the Desktop Publishing Forum (GO DTPFORUM) and president and owner of The Newsletter Factory, a Marietta, Ga.-based newsletter vendor and consulting firm that offers training in newsletter editing, design and marketing. Worldwide seminars have drawn participants ranging from school districts to major corporations.

Hartmann credits the explosion—from 2,200 to 4,500 subscription newsletters in the last decade (experts estimate there may be 100,000 amateur and professional newsletters overall)—to the increased awareness of newsletters as a communication vehicle and the boom in desktop publishing. "Dollar for dollar, newsletters are the most cost-effective and powerful communication medium a company can produce," he says. They allow corporations, individuals and associations to communicate frequently with a tightly targeted audience, enhance a business' image and credibility, and expand the market of potential customers.

And when properly prepared, adds Hartmann, the publication's contents are viewed as real news rather than advertisements. "The key to starting a successful subscription newsletter is to provide people with timely, unique information that they couldn't easily find anywhere else."

Finding the appropriate niche is also vital to success. Lawyer and planning commission consultant Wayne Senville found his niche with the *Planning Commissioners Journal*. While advising local planning representatives, Senville realized that no publication addressed both basic planning and legal land use issues—the stock and trade of the planning commissioner.

In 1989, Senville started publication of his newsletter with helpful tips on start-up and promotional mailings from the Working From Home Forum (GO WORK). He got editorial advice on articles after uploading them to the Legal, Journalism and even the Astronomy Forums. "It's a good 'security blanket' to know that others have reviewed the drafts and not found major errors or flaws," he says.

As Senville neared his seventh issue, his thoughts turned toward renewal strategies. His question in the Getting Business section of the Working From Home Forum raised a hearty discussion about the merits of different strategies ranging from combining a re-

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▼
The Argument for Circulars
▼
Online Newsletters, p. 42
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Vets vs. the VA, p. 46
▼
Deep Space in a GIF, p. 48

ULRICH SCHNARR

Forum helped hone readership for four-page monthly promoting his Viennese consulting firm: Vesely

Newsletter Publishing Uploads

Planning to publish your own newsletter but don't know where to start? Here is a sampling of the resources available online for newsletter novices and experts alike.

General Information

Clip Art—Comprehensive index of non-copyrighted artwork. Desktop Publishing Forum (GO DTPFORUM), Library 1, "Forum Transcripts," DTPLIB.ZIP (for PC; 54,192 bytes) and DTPLIB.SIT (for Mac; 68,480 bytes).

Text File Consolidator—Merges text files from various word processing programs into one file. Shareware. Mac Applications Forum (GO MACAP), Library 2, "Word Processing," TFC181.SIT (28,928 bytes).

Starting a Newsletter—Three files containing an archived discussion on the ins and outs of newsletter publishing. PR and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG), Library 5, "Potpourri/Products," NWSLTR.1-3 (33,551, 34,765 and 16,544 bytes).

InHouse Subscription Manager—Handles circulation management for newsletter publishers. Press release explains program functions, including issue labels, renewal notices, invoices and printing reports, and supports first-, second- and third-class postal presorts. Mac Applications Forum, Library 6, "General Business," SUBMGR.TXT (3,429 bytes).

NewsMaster 11 DTP Software—Makes creating newsletters a snap. Working From Home Forum (GO WORK), Library 14, "Office Hardware and Software," NEWS.SFT (2,368 bytes).

Marketing & Promotion

Church Newsletters—Transcript of conference held in March 1990. Desktop Publishing Forum, Library 1, "Forum Transcripts," CHNLCO.TXT (20,434 bytes). A current list of Church Newsletter Exchange participants, CHURCH.TXT (1,330 bytes).

Marketing with Newsletters—Transcript of a DTP Forum conference with advice on target marketing. Desktop Publishing Forum, Library 1, NWSLCO.TXT (20,142 bytes).

Mailing List Tidbits—Ideas on using direct mail and mailing lists. Working From Home Forum, Library 2, "Business Info," file names follow TID.* format (6,000 to 24,000 bytes).

Marketing Strategies—Laura Douglas, co-author of *Getting Business to Come to You,* and Sysops Paul and Sarah Edwards join thread focusing on marketing strategies for small businesses, including newsletters. Working From Home Forum, Library 7, "Getting Business," MRKT.ING (27,718 bytes). For tips on using DTP in marketing, see transcripts from two desktop publishing conferences with DTP Sysop Thom Hartmann. Desktop Publishing Forum, Library 1, "Forum Transcripts," NLCO.TXT (30,815 bytes) and NWSLCO.TXT (20,142 bytes).

Newsletter Subscriptions—Transcript of thread discussing subscription options, the pros and cons of advertising and mailing advice. Working From Home Forum, Library 10, "Independent Writers," NLSUBS.THD (15,696 bytes).

Getting Started—Thread gives in-depth advice on making profits with newsletter publishing. Working From Home Forum, Library 10, NEWSLE.THD (7,477 bytes).

Templates

From the Desktop Publishing Forum, Library 7, "Samples & Templates":

ASCII PostScript—Sample of *The Clark News*, July 1990, CNEWS6.PRN (73,703 bytes).

CorelDraw—Samples of *The Clark News*, Dec. 1990, CNEWS7.ZIP (23,623 bytes); April 1991, CNEWS8.ZIP (37,498 bytes).

More Planning Advice—Booklet in PageMaker format with advice for prospective newsletter publishers. NWSBKL.SIT (44,868 bytes).

PageMaker—*On the Common*, sample church newsletter, NLSAMP.SEA (117,248 bytes); booklet with advice to newsletter providers, NWSBKL.SIT (44,868 bytes); *GEOSS*, a teacher's newsletter, 1990 edition, GEOSSA.ARC (90,421 bytes).

Publish*It!—Sample camera club newsletter, YCCDTP.ZIP (57,025 bytes).

Quark XPress—Sample edition of *Newsletter Communications*, the newsletter from The Newsletter Factory, NLCOM1.SIT (44,544 bytes) and NLCOMM.SIT (166,400 bytes); template for a four-page, three-column newsletter, 3COLLT.NEW (12,800 bytes); first issue of *Mothers and Daughters Newsletter*, MOTHER.SIT (48,256 bytes); and newsletter sample with multiple elements, NEWSLN.SIT (35,712 bytes).

Utilities

Master Utilities—Multiple utilities for Quark XPress. DTP Forum, Library 5, "Mac DTP Utilities," MMUTIL.SEA (19,200 bytes).

Be True to Your Type—TrueType font installer and upgrade pack for Window 3.1 version 4.0. DTP Forum, Library 6, "PC DTP Utilities," TTI14.ZIP (253,514 bytes) and TTI14U.ZIP (21,291 bytes).

newal form with a readership survey or an index of back issues to offering renewal incentives, such as pens or coffee mugs embossed with the newsletter's logo. One member felt renewal strategies should start from day one of publication, while others said readers should be subjected to as few renewal ploys as possible.

Senville opted for more subtle renewal strategies, such as the index and an editorial recap of the first year's highlights. Although results are still pending, he hopes to reach a circulation of 700 subscribers, at which point, "I can continue with this indefinitely," he says.

Novice newsletter publishers not only struggle with the basics but also the cost. Average start-up costs for a subscription newsletter can be as high as $50,000 to $100,000, and 50 percent of all endeavors purportedly fail. That rate could be cut dramatically if newsletter publishers would create a mission statement for their publication and stick to it, says Hartmann. "I see failing to have a mission statement as the most pernicious, insidious and destructive mistake people make," he says.

Sometimes it's better to let the experts take over, as computer consultant Kevin G. Barkes learned. Thanks to advice gleaned from Computer Consulting Forum Sysop Guy Scharf, Barkes was able to avoid the hassle of writing and designing his own newsletter each month by using a "canned" or "franchise" newsletter from a local service that published a newsletter called *Executive Computing*.

The service prepared the newsletter imprinted with his business name, while Barkes added his personal views in a laser-printed addendum called the "KGB Report." He freely admitted to customers that the newsletter was canned, but explained that he thought they might find it useful. Apparently they did. After only seven months, Barkes had so much new business that he had to refer clients to other consultants.

Optometrist Joseph Ross credits his newsletter with keeping his business thriving during recessionary times. "One of the most difficult tasks I face is teaching my patients the importance of preventative vision care and communicating to them the special services we offer," he says. With his newsletter, he can combine a high-tech image with personal care.

Ross does all of the newsletter writing and design himself on a Super VGA Gateway 2000 '386 machine, and relies on his office staff to assist with labeling, sorting and stacking the final product. "When I started out, I had difficulty with PostScript print-

continued on page 44

Online Headlines: A Look at Electronic Newsletters

Paul Graveline would rather be basking in the sun on a tropical island than braving the winters in his Andover, Mass., home. To ease the transition between the two and to share his love of the islands with fellow travel bugs, Graveline began publishing his monthly electronic newsletter, *Caribbean Travel Roundup*.

Within three months of publishing his first issue, Graveline was offered a free trip to the Bahamas. But free trips aren't all Graveline is after. After two years, his travel reports have made him an expert in the field. He is convinced that while electronic newsletters are still in their infancy, they are the media of the future. "If you're looking more to make a name than to make money, going online is a good idea," he says.

Graveline selected CompuServe for his online distribution because it was the quickest way to reach a large, upscale audience at minimal startup expense. While he now posts *CRT* on other commercial information services and travel BBSes, many of his favorite contributors come from CompuServe's Travel Forum. For an index of back issues of *Caribbean Travel Roundup*, see CTRIND.TXT (3,394 bytes) in Library 4, "The Caribbean," of the Travel Forum (GO TRAVSIG).

Here's a sampling of other popular online newsletters.

Abacus Online—Quarterly newsletter focusing on executive computing, with valuable information for decision-makers. Lotus Spreadsheet Forum (GO LOTUSA), Library 3, "1-2-3," AOLS92.ZIP (17,792 bytes), AOLW92.ZIP (20,864 bytes).

Anime Stuff—News and reviews of Japanese animation software. Comics/Animation Forum (GO COMICS), Library 5, "Japanimation," file names follow STUF*-.ARC format (25,000 to 200,000 bytes).

Captain Midnight's Game Room—Reviews games for the Atari ST. Atari Arts Forum (GO ATARIARTS), Library 15, "News & Reviews," CAPMD1.ARC (16,896 bytes), CAPMD2.ARC (25,216 bytes).

Chicago Astronomical Society—Online version of monthly newsletter from one of the more prestigious star-gazing groups. Astronomy Forum (GO ASTROFORUM), Library 9, "Activity/Club News," search for files using keyword CHICAGO (files range from 25,000 to 60,000 bytes).

Communique—The quarterly newsletter of the International Association of Business Communicators U.K. Chapter. PR and Marketing Forum, Library 8, "PR Bookshelf/IABC," UKNEWS.292 (23,174 bytes).

The Daily Report Card—Uploaded each weekday, this updates the six education goals set forth in the America 2000 mandate, "covering the coverage" provided by the U.S. media. Published by the American Political Network. Education Forum (GO EDFORUM), Library 1, "New Uploads." Browse files for those with DRC extension or by keyword REFORM.

DiscNews—An electronic newsletter concerning communication in the computer age, specifically telecommunications, multimedia and demo disks. IBM Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP), Library 8, "Demos/Misc," DN001.EXE (255,918 bytes).

Distance Education Newsletter—Analyzes the impact of electronic communication on academic research. Telecommunications Forum (GO TELECOM), Library 13, "Human Aspects," DE0124.TXT (33,957 bytes).

Electronic Freedom Foundation Newsletter—Published by Mitch Kapor's nonprofit organization formed to protect the rights of BBS users and operators. Electronic Frontier Foundation Forum (GO EFFSIG), Libraries 2, "Now Online," and 3, "The Frontier Files," files have prefix EFFO.

Family History Library—News from the pre-eminent library for genealogical research in Salt Lake City. Genealogy Forum (GO ROOTS), Library 10, "Other Archives," file names follow NEWS*.FHL format (7,000 bytes).

The Flame—A publication of the "Society of Dead Teachers." Literary Forum (GO LITFORUM), Library 1, "New Uploads/Help," FLAME4.NEW (54,791 bytes), FLAME3.NEW (45,403 bytes).

Four Corners—Series of newsletters by Drew Kerr espousing "power publicity for the creative mind." Issues include tips on everything from holiday schmoozing to online notes from the big cheese. Find the latest issue in PR and Marketing Forum (GO PRSIG), Library 9, "Online Newsletters," using the keywords FOUR or CORNERS.

Jim's Jems—Monthly newsletter of personal development. Health and Fitness Forum (GO GOODHEALTH), Library 17, "Self Help/Support," JEMS.MAY (8,218 bytes), JEMS.APR (9,554 bytes).

Making It Working from Home—The Working From Home Forum newsletter. Issues available in the Working From Home Forum (GO WORK), Library 1, "Forum Transcripts," MAKEIT.492 (42,358 bytes).

News from the Disktop—Premiere issue of newsletter covering developments in electronic publishing, from the Disktop Pub-

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lishing Association. IBM New Users Forum (GO IBMNEW), Library 7, "Ask the Sysops," DNEWS1.DOC (24,013 bytes).

Northern Lights—Electronic edition of newsletter documenting recent work of Canadian science-fiction authors. Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum (GO SCIFI), Library 3, "SF Literature," NL01.ASC (16,857 bytes), NL02.TXT (15,999 bytes).

Palm-to-Palm—An online newsletter about palmtop computers. Palmtop Forum (GO PALMTOP), Library 15, "News/Reviews/Shows," P2P_03.NWS (22,168 bytes), P2P_-02.NWS (22,349 bytes).

Stock Market Newsletters—Ken Deen's *Aggressive Trader* and Steve Hovland's *Market Muse* weeklies provide trading advice. Investors' Forum (GO INVFORUM), Library 10, "New Uploads/Help," search files using the keywords DEEN or HOVLAND (1,000 to 30,000 bytes).

Take Off!—News and reviews of flight simulator programs. Flight Simulation Forum (GO FSFORUM), Library 16, "Hangar Talk," TAKE02.ZIP (15,666 bytes), TAKE-01.ZIP (13,699 bytes).

Teleputing Hotline and Field Computing Source Letter—Published by Newsbytes News Network. Gives a four-page weekly update on the telephone communications and field computing industry. Also distributed by fax machine. Telecommunications Forum (GO TELECOM), Library 1, "News/Telecom Digest," THO525.92 (19,504 bytes), THO302.92 (19,780 bytes).

TidBITs Newsletter—Offers witty and slightly cynical reviews of the latest news, people and products in the Mac desktop publishing world. Mac Community Club Forum (GO MACCLUB), Library 8, "Magazine/Reviews," TB126.SIT (14,848 bytes), TB125-.SIT (14,080 bytes), TB124.SIT (15,232 bytes).

Wine Investors/Buyer's Guide Newsletter—The Wine Forum's monthly buyer's guide. December 1991 to June 1992 issues available in text and ARC formats. Bacchus Wine Forum (GO WINEFORUM), Library 1, "Buyers Guide," GO692.TXT (28,335 bytes), GO692.ARC (15,354 bytes), GO592.TXT (27,719 bytes), GO592.ARC (15,086 bytes).

Winston & Winston—Series by Marty Winston gives client advice on PR issues from generating credibility to working with editors. PR and Marketing Forum, Library 9, EDEYE.WW (8,182 bytes), CREDIB.WW (4,212 bytes), BIGOTS.WW (3,888 bytes).

Zapp!—All-electronic gaming newsletter with reviews for the most popular systems. Gamers' Forum (GO GAMERS), Library 8, "Cartridge Games," ZAPP4.ZIP (31,570 bytes) and Library 16, "Other Magazines," ZAPP5.ZIP (24,128 bytes).

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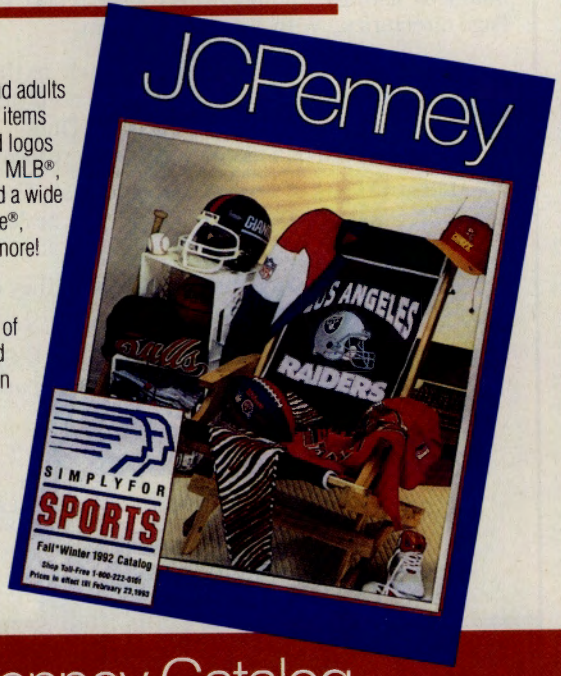

JCPenney Catalog

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ing," he says. He had purchased PostScript Emulation, a program that creates pseudo-PostScript fonts for the Hewlett-Packard II printer. The program earned rave reviews in DTP magazines. Yet nearly every time Ross tried to use it, it gave him an error message saying his printer adapter was missing. When the printer actually worked, it was incredibly slow, he says. Ross went online with his problem, and DTP Forum members pinpointed the difficulty. After sharing their own product complaints, they advised him to purchase a Pacific Page Cartridge, which solved the problem.

Now in his sixth year of publication, Ross finds that while the production aspect of the newsletter is getting easier, the distribution and circulation aspects seem to be more complex. He asked DTP Forum members for advice when the complexities of postal sacking rules began to get the best of his beleaguered staff.

Ross' plea struck a chord among fellow members, who suggested that he hire friends or students to do the work. Others told him to check with local print shops or state handicapped workshops that specialize in such tasks. Although Ross couldn't find the services through a print shop or state agency, he met an individual willing and able to tackle the job on a free-lance basis.

PERSONAL BUSINESS

As with any product, determining the worth of a newsletter depends not only on work involved but also on what the market will bear. After 12 years as a copy editor and technical guru with *The San Francisco Examiner*, David Cole had packed up his pica poles and put out his shingle as a consultant in the professional publishing systems industry. To promote his new venture, he began publishing the *The Cole Papers* in 1989 as a free quarterly newsletter. Little did he realize that his cantankerous and often irreverent writing style would develop a market. "I found that people were more interested in the newsletter than they were in my consulting business," he says. So in June 1991, he switched to a monthly format with a $99 annual price.

Raising subscription prices, however, doesn't always translate into high dollar returns, as Cole soon learned. His distribution to 1,800 free subscribers dropped 80 percent when he switched to paid circulation. To get back on his feet, he reinvests everything except a small monthly allowance into the business. He also saves his pennies by using CompuServe Mail to communicate with his five correspondents across the United States, and frequents the Journalism and Desktop Publishing Forums to network with other publishing professionals and keep track of the latest developments in the field.

Chance online meetings also can lead to collaborative newsletter efforts. It was in the DTP Forum that Cole met Dean Paul Varner of Cincinnati. He and Varner now are working together on a postal barcode program that will enable them to create their own Post-Net barcode font for the Macintosh. The font, which they hope to distribute eventually as shareware, will cut down postage rates and speed up handling time at the post office—a high priority for someone who mails out 25,000 direct-mail pieces each year.

Getting help from others may be the only way to ensure a successful publication, online or off, says Hartmann. Nobody is an expert in all facets of publishing. "Enlist the best high-quality help—don't try to do everything yourself. Online we're always finding neat little things about typefaces, design concepts, shortcuts to using our software and ways to market our services."

And as the market matures, Hartmann adds, the demand for sophistication will increase, putting pressure on newsletter publishers to keep up and find new means of creating effectiveness and impact. The range of technological tools and experience online is custom-built for that need, he says. "It's an entire spectrum of information and people, all designed to help newsletter publishers upgrade the quality of their work, and to make their jobs easier."

Liz Quinn Peters is a free-lance writer in Columbus, Ohio.

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Newsletter Databases Online

Interested in publishing a newsletter and wondering if you'll have some competition? Or do you have a need for timely, specialized or esoteric information? One of the comprehensive newsletter databases below may have the answers. All publications referenced are in English but include worldwide coverage.

NewsNet (GO IQUEST)—Offered through IQuest, this service provides full-text articles from more than 300 newsletters with topics ranging from automation to international news. Updated monthly. Newsletter titles, which must be known prior to search, are available in IQuest. Surcharged.

PTS Newsletter Database (GO IQUEST)—Published by Predicasts Inc., PTS includes full-text articles from specialized industry newsletters providing concise information on companies, products, markets, services, technologies, politics and legislation from around the world. The database covers newsletters from 1988 to the present and is updated daily. Full-text articles may be accessed by subject, newsletter name, publication date or industry/geographic region code. Surcharged.

Data-Processing Newsletters (GO DPNEWS)—A searchable database with full-text articles taken from several leading computer, electronics and telecommunication newsletters. Articles may be retrieved by keywords or date of publication. The database is a subset of the PTS Newsletter Database. Surcharged.

Media Newsletters (GO MEDIANEWS)—Presents the latest facts, figures and analyses of the ever-changing global media market. Articles may be retrieved by keywords or date of publication. The database is a subset of the PTS Newsletter Database. Surcharged.

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by Dan Kening

An Uphill Battle

Vets seeking benefits hope to get their due in the Military Forum.

The estimated 30 million U.S. military veterans span several generations. But whether they served in World War II, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm or in peacetime, they're united by a common promise: In return for putting their lives on the line for their country, they receive wide-ranging benefits in such areas as medical care, education, home loans, and employment and disability assistance.

Many veterans, however, are unaware of the benefits they're entitled to by law from the Department of Veterans Affairs, formerly the Veterans Administration (and still referred to as the "VA"), the second largest government agency after the Department of Defense. Others find battling the bureaucracy at the slow-moving VA, which dispenses some $33 billion a year in accumulated benefits, to be frustrating and demoralizing.

That's where CompuServe's Military Forum (GO MILITARY) can help. Veterans can access often hard-to-find information and receive guidance concerning their rightful benefits.

"Many veterans don't contact the VA," notes Forum Manager Duane Goodridge, an ex-Marine and Vietnam vet. "In the past, the VA didn't look out for veterans very well. This has changed, but its image is tarnished. Many veterans might be more likely to contact us for information about benefits."

The forum's Library 2, "Veterans Benefits," and Section and Library 3, "Vietnam," are where much of the interaction takes place. Among those in the forum are a number of veterans service officers, trained and paid by veterans service organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, to help vets work through the system and get what's coming to them from the VA.

PERSONAL BUSINESS

Jim Hubbard, the American Legion's executive economic director, serves as the forum's veterans benefits adviser. "The forum's other sysops and I have answered questions on VA home loan guarantees, Desert Storm-related illnesses, GI Bill educational benefits and other subjects," he says. "I also have provided updates on pending legislation regarding veterans."

Health care is a chief concern for veterans in the forum. Some have service-related disabilities. And despite the fact that the VA's health care network is the largest in the United States, including 172 hospitals, 339 outpatient clinics and 126 nursing homes, many have to fight to get what they deserve.

Typical of the health-related exchanges on the forum is a message posted by a vet treated at an Air Force hospital in Vietnam in 1971, who must provide the VA with verification of his injury. Goodridge suggested that he contact his local county VSO for help with his claim, and told him how to get copies of his military record. In another message, a disabled vet wondered why the VA pays a private physician $100 for services rendered, but doesn't compensate him for a $10 insurance co-payment. According to Hubbard, the situation is not unique; federal law restricts Medicare reimbursement for VA treatment, a law that the American Legion is working to change.

Thomas Ingram, a vet from Jamaica, N.Y., and a forum member, recently opened a temporary house of residence for veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), drug and alcohol problems, as well as for those who are homeless or just in need of affordable housing. "It had to do with my own recovery. I was homeless up until a couple of years ago, and I'm a graduate of some of the programs the VA has to offer, so I set up this transitional housing. My growth is based on other vets' growth," he says. Ingram's efforts to give vets a new start now extend to three houses in his area and the planned future establishment of a nonprofit organization, as well as the offer to share details with other interested parties online. "We'd like to see the idea expand throughout the United States," he says.

Health professionals concerned with veterans' affairs also use the forum to help out. San Francisco psychologist Stanley Mayerson, who works with vets suffering

Veterans' Rights: Military Forum Files

The Military Forum (GO MILITARY) is not intended only for use by veterans. Buffs of military history and weapons systems share their expertise here, while those mulling over joining the service can get information to help them make this decision. Active duty personnel being transferred to other bases also use the forum to find out "What's it like there?"

Still, veterans issues make up a large percentage of the activity in the forum, and message sections and libraries include valuable information about veterans rights and benefits. The following is a list of library files of interest to vets:

Buddy Finder—Story demonstrating the use of "skip tracing" in locating an old military buddy anywhere in the United States. Library 1, "General," BUDDY.FND (11,551 bytes).

Army Addresses—Source of useful U.S. Army addresses for locating friends, obtaining military records, and receiving copies of lost decorations or awards. Library 1, LOCATE.TXT (2,740 bytes).

Vietnam BBSes—Listing of BBSes in the United States that carry the Vietnam Vet Echo, a Fidonet echo relating to veterans and their problems. Library 2, "Veterans Issues," VETBBS.LST (9,250 bytes).

Veterans Benefits—Brief message with information about the booklet *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Families*, available from the U.S. Government Printing Office. Library 2, BENNIE.TXT (635 bytes).

Veterans Re-employment Rights—Reprint of a *Stars and Stripes-Herald Tribune* Q&A article on the re-employment rights of reservists called to action. Library 2, RIGHTS.TXT (3,780 bytes).

Veterans Benefits—Menu-driven program from the Department of Veterans Affairs listing available benefits. Library 2, VABEN.ZIP (124,928 bytes).

Veterans Readjustment Changes—Summary of changes to the Veterans Readjustment Appointment program. Library 2, VRA.TXT (4,710 bytes).

***Namvet* Newspaper**—Online edition of *Namvet* newspaper, which includes articles on benefits and veterans' problems as well as news about POW/MIA support groups and agencies. Library 3, "Vietnam," NVETAN.NWS (314,545 bytes).

Agent Orange—A history of Agent Orange, its use in Vietnam and the resulting repercussions. Library 3, AOSPEC.ZIP (29,114 bytes).

JOHN MICHAEL/INTERNATIONAL STOCK PHOTO

Tenth-year celebration will give U.S. citizens chance to 'be united in remembrance': The Wall

The Wall's Anniversary

CompuServe's Military Forum serves as the official online service for information on the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., which will take place on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. The Memorial—better known as the "Vietnam Wall"—contains the inscribed names of the 58,183 American service men and women who died during the Vietnam War. The Memorial draws 2.5 million visitors each year, making it the most visited monument in the U.S. capital.

Library and Section 15, "Viet Memorial/10 Year," features the latest information from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund about Veterans Day ceremonies and activities. The VVMF is the private nonprofit organization responsible for creating the wall in 1982. Also available online is information about discounts for travelers planning to attend the ceremonies, while announcements of online conferences relating to the anniversary proceedings will be announced in the message section.

"We believe the 10th anniversary will be an opportunity for an entire nation—once divided by Vietnam—to be united in remembrance and reflection," says VVMF President Jan Scruggs. "Among the events planned is a reading by volunteers of the names on the Wall, beginning Nov. 8 and continuing 24 hours a day for several days until all of the names are read."

The following files are available in Library 15:

Memorial Plans—Press release and follow-up announcing plans for the wall's 10th anniversary. PRESS.TXT (4,919 bytes) and PRESS2.TXT (4,919 bytes).

Travel Information—Information on discounts for airfare, rail travel, rental cars and hotel accommodations for those traveling to Washington, D.C., for Veterans Day ceremonies. TRAVEL.TXT (2,460 bytes).

Vietnam Database—A complete file listing the names of those killed or missing in the Vietnam conflict and other personal information. Can be loaded into database software for searching. KIAMIA.ARC (1,621,046 bytes).

from PTSD, stumbled across the forum while doing online research. He used the opportunity to offer fee-free treatment for vets in his area. "It triggered me to do something I really support. I just wanted to make myself available," he says.

While the 500,000 American service men and women who served in Operation Desert Storm returned home to parades and lots of promises from politicians, budget cuts, bureaucratic languor and a faltering economy have taken away the initial glow. One example is the 300 Eastern Airlines pilots who returned home from the war only to find that Eastern had collapsed. Many of the families of reservists who served in the Gulf suffered from the drop in their income, as did businesses owned by those called up to active duty.

Leo Dougherty, a New York State VSO, says the answer lies in the kind of networking many veterans are already doing in the Military Forum. "The most effective way I know of changing attitudes toward veterans' benefits is grass-roots lobbying," he says. "This means that every veteran of every era must take a pen in hand and educate his or her representatives about what it means to be a veteran. Many in Congress are unfamiliar with the sacrifices a veteran makes. Any member of Congress who has the courage to vote for a war also should have the courage and conviction to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those same people when they come home."

Dan Kening is a free-lance writer based in Chicago.

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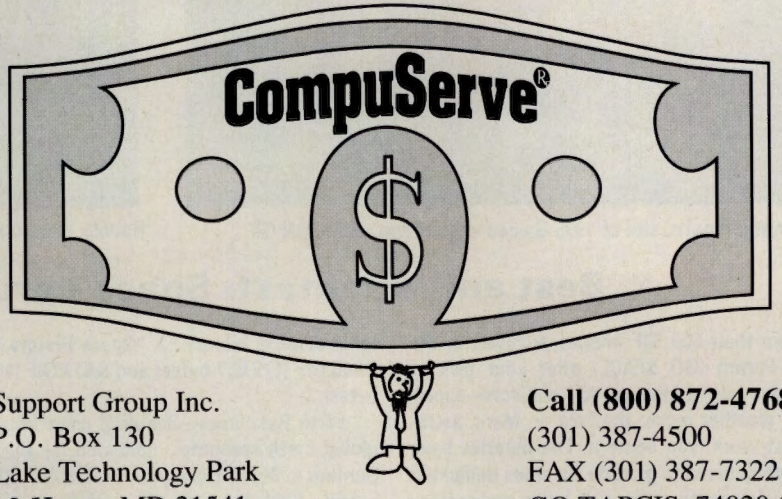

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by Maura J. Mackowski

Space Shots

The Space Forum has the first looks at startling astronomy images.

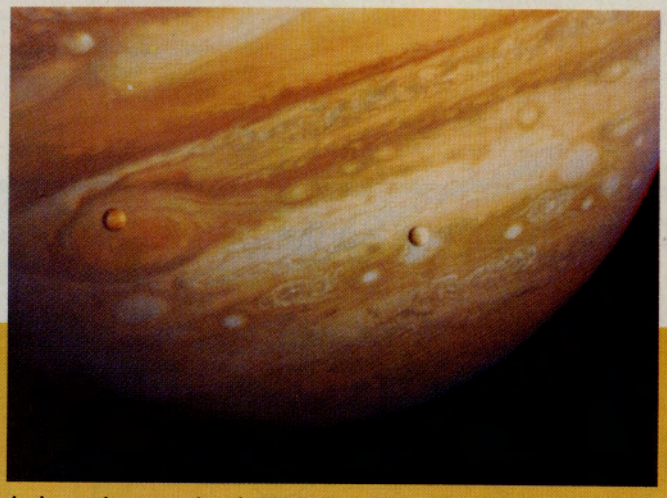
NASA's *Voyager* probe snapped headline-making pictures in a solar system many thought held no more surprises: dramatic images of an active volcano on Jupiter's moon Io, and unexpected rings around Uranus and Neptune. *Viking* spacecraft cameras revealed channels where water might have flowed on Mars. Now the Hubble Space telescope, the Galileo Jupiter probe and the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) are sending back images that may tell us how the universe began. Long before anyone sees them in the technical journals, though, those pictures will be up for viewing in the Space and Astronomy Forums.

"I got a note from a colleague at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center congratulating us on scooping *Physics Today*, which had printed the COBE images on its front cover," says Sysop Dick DeLoach. "Their subscribers were just getting those images. CompuServe members had already had them for three weeks."

What members had were actually downloadable Graphics Interchange Format images obtained directly from NASA. Six libraries in the forum hold more than 500 GIF images from NASA and forum photographers.

These computer-generated images are literally changing the way we view the universe. Astronomers who do all their work squinting into a telescope exist only in the funny papers; today's team of camera and computer can not only see more than the human eye, but also take something that is not an image at all and turn it into information the human brain can handle. In this fashion, *Magellan*'s radar images of Venus are made to "look like" a map of the planet's surface.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., is where images from COBE, Galileo and other probes are received and processed. According to forum member Franklin O'Donnell, a JPL spokesman, scientists examine pictures of the planets close to Earth for insights on the greenhouse effect, tectonics (the structure of a planet's crust and the forces that act on it) and organic chemicals needed for life to develop. Images of the outer planets and their moons



Jupiter and moons, site of 1995 Galileo exploration: JUMOON.GIF

Hubble Telescope image from study of Mars' seasons: MARS.GIF

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NASA

Best and Brightest: Space Forum GIF Images

More than 500 GIF images archived in the Space Forum (GO SPACE) offer your pick of numerous out-of-this-world subjects—supernovas, weather maps, the face on Mars, astronauts at work, you name it. The libraries have been reorganized to provide six areas dedicated to GIFs. A seventh, Library 16, holds explanatory caption files.

Satellite Deployment—Spectacular picture of the LDEF (long-duration exposure facility) satellite being deployed from the shuttle cargo bay. Library 10, "STS Mission GIFs," SH21.GIF (164,716 bytes).

Shuttle Landing—Landing of *Discovery* at the Kennedy Space Center. Library 10, SHULAN.GIF (81,408 bytes).

Moon Views—Familiar pictures of a footprint on the moon and an astronaut saluting from the lunar surface. Library 12, "Space History GIFs," SA40.GIF (179,657 bytes) and SA17.GIF (163,170 bytes).

Earth Resources—Beautiful color images of global Earth resources, uploaded for the Earth Summit in Brazil. Library 12, EARTH.GIF (239,400 bytes), BIOS.GIF (181,256 bytes) and SEATMP.GIF (167,630 bytes).

Asteroid—Color close-up of an asteroid, taken by Galileo on its way to Jupiter. This 11-by-7-mile "space potato" looks to have been sheared off a larger object by a collision in space. Library 13, "Solar System GIFs" GASPRA.GIF (172,083 bytes).

Mars—Hubble color image of the red planet. Library 13, MARS.GIF (153,554 bytes).

Jupiter—A shot of Jupiter with two of its moons, Io and Europa, taken by *Voyager*. Library 13, JUMOON.GIF (184,444 bytes).

Hubble Pictures—These photos made headlines with clues to the structure of the early universe and the validity of the Big Bang theory. Library 14, "Deep Sky Astronomy GIFs," COBE.GIF (240,208 bytes) and BIGBNG.GIF (62,471 bytes).

"Fireworks"—What has been called a "cosmic string of firecrackers." Seven go pop in these Hubble Space telescope color images. Library 14, ARP220.GIF (188,811 bytes) and STRBST.GIF (212,768 bytes).

Charts and Graphs—A comparison of U.S. vs. Soviet space activity. Library 15, "Miscellaneous GIFs," LAUNCH.GIF (14,348 bytes).

NASA Budget—A look at NASA spending as part of the overall U.S. budget. Library 15, NASA.GIF (4,276 bytes).

are scrutinized for what they tell about the formation of planets, atmospheric dynamics and geological processes. They use Hubble and COBE pictures to study deep space to evaluate their theories on the origin of the universe. Satellite hookups also make it possible for investigators working anywhere there's a computer to access that same data.

Astronomers who don't work via planetary probe or deep space explorer likewise use a combination of cameras, computers and ground-based observatories to filter out a problem that has put some observatories almost out of business: light pollution.

David Cortner, an amateur astrophotographer in Tennessee, explains what light pollution really means to the night sky observer. A good way to tell how much light pollution you are looking at, he says, "is to simply determine what is the faintest star you can see with your eyes wide open and your head tilted back on a clear night. I tell my sky-gazing groups that if they come out with me to a dark shoulder of Roan Mountain, 20 miles from city lights, they'll see a sky filled with up to 50 times as many stars as they can see from their city and suburban homes."

The images that seem to be drawing the most oohs and ahhhs in the forums are those that are literally taking us where no one has gone before: the beginning of time. COBE and the Hubble Space telescope are both relaying images that many scientists are speculating might date very close to the theorized "Big Bang."

Getting pictures like these is no trivial matter. The image must be relayed from a spacecraft that may be speeding out of the solar system, and the data must be massaged into something fit for human consumption. O'Donnell explains how the whole process works.

"The spacecraft have cameras with CCD (charged couple device) sensors," he says. "A CCD is a computer chip. When light falls on it, it illuminates a whole array of pixels. Each pixel has a value, from 0 for complete darkness to 256 for total brightness, which are converted to a data stream that the spacecraft relays to Earth for processing."

That raw data is a mind-numbing array of 800 by 800 pixels, O'Donnell adds, each with 256 brightness possibilities and three exposures, if they're color images. The sheer bulk is just too much for most people to download as a CompuServe GIF file in a reasonable amount of time, he says, so JPL's image experts made a judgment call and resized the data to be more digestible without any visually detectable loss of picture quality.

"What works best for a GIF image is 640 by 480 pixels in 256 color levels," O'Donnell says. "That gives you about the same quality image as a VGA monitor."

George Hastings, a teacher with the Mathematics and Science Center enrichment program in Richmond, Va., uses the images as a springboard. He downloads GIF files to help convince students that the universe is literally worth a second look, then accesses other CompuServe features to take them a jump beyond.

"I've downloaded images of most of the planets for lessons on comparative planetology," Hastings says, "drawing parallels between processes such as volcanism, atmospheric dynamics, tectonic movement, and so on, that are found on Earth and on other bodies in the solar system."

The Center also conducted a special summer school for gifted students: "Mission to Mars." Hastings bounced ideas for the program off of other forum members. "I found someone who wrote a space shuttle simulation that middle school students used to learn about orbital mechanics," he says. "They practiced lifting off, accomplishing orbital insertion, circularizing orbits, and rendezvousing and docking with a space station."

Hastings met another teacher online whose classes had been doing mission simulations on Long Island. This led to the first simulation linking two schools in different parts of the United States through the CompuServe Electronic Convention Center. "My students acted as crew on a flight to Mars, and his students acted as mission controllers," Hastings says. Now Hastings is accessing images and data files on Soviet space research, missions and launch vehicles to prepare for a trip to Russia for a week of simulated cosmonaut training.

Given the electronic format of space probe data plus the appearance of CCD cameras in everyday use, DeLoach predicts that the electronic medium will change how the public accesses and uses data from space. "Conventional print media will always play an important role in distributing scientific information," he says, "but as the COBE, Hubble and Galileo images demonstrated, it's constrained by the speed of ink. We go at the speed of light."

Maura J. Mackowski, a free-lance writer in St. Louis, specializes in space science and other high-tech topics. Her CompuServe User ID number is 76004,2243.

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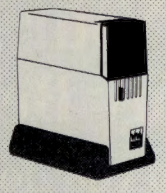

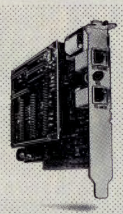

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Secrets of the Star Shooters

Real astrophotographers do not have food in their freezers; they have film. Real astrophotographers travel at least one hour to their observing site, then spend two hours setting up their telescopes in the dark. Real astrophotographers go out every clear night from sunset to first light. And as you might expect, RAs may often call into work sick or sleep at their desks.

Real astrophotographer Bert Stevens has another half-dozen or so guidelines for determining who qualifies to be an RA. He'll be happy to share them with you in the Astrophotography section of the Astronomy Forum (GO ASTROFORUM). That's where skyshooters meet to swap equipment, star maps, exposure time spreadsheets, advice and, best of all, the latest news about celestial events worth waiting up for. Every astrophotographer has spent at least one sleepless night in search of his or her Holy Grail, be it a color shot of the northern lights or the prestige of discovering a new asteroid or comet.

To join in the hunt, you certainly don't need to be an RA as Bert Stevens defines it. Dedication and expertise levels in the forum are almost as varied as the members' budgets. Donald McAfee of Richmond, Va., claims to operate "at the low end." Any beginner, he says, can stop by and learn to shoot constellations, star clusters, nebulae and even other galaxies with a basic manual 35mm camera. To get a feel for the beauty the night sky can offer, he recommends starting with star trails, circles of light produced as the Earth and camera rotate.

MICHAEL R. BARBER

M101 galaxy caught on NASA-quality gear: CCD image

If you are trying to focus on a specific celestial object though, star trails aren't desirable, and eliminating them requires the next step up in paraphernalia: a drive mechanism. Messages and uploads to Library 6, "Astrophotography," contain information on building your own or evaluating a drive for purchase. "I work mostly by cranking a homemade thingamabob," says Tennessee skyshooter David Cortner. "It's a 'barndoor mount' made from a heavy hinge." Some, such as Steve Coe of the Saguaro Astronomy Club in Phoenix, "piggyback" cameras onto telescopes to allow smooth tracking for hours.

Others, including Stevens, believe what's inside the camera is even more important than what it sits on. Library 6 uploads detail the extremes they go to to select, prepare and develop the perfect photographic film.

"I hypersensitize all of my film," says Burbank, Calif., marketer Darrell Green. "That means putting it in a special tank, creating a vacuum, and pumping in a mixture of hydrogen and nitrogen. The tank is heated to 50 degrees Celsius and left to bake for several hours." To keep the film "hypered," it's frozen until use. Stevens declares that the truly dedicated then pack their film in dry ice for the trip to the viewing site. Those in pursuit of the perfect film say that hypering does improve its light sensitivity and color accuracy.

An even smaller group of specialists doesn't even bother with film at all. In fact, they don't enjoy standing out in the cold night air for hours on end. Real astrophotographers? Definitely. They do their imaging with Charged Couple Device (CCD) cameras almost exactly like those NASA flies. You can judge the quality of their results in the GIF image files in the Astronomy and Space Forums.

Mike Borman, an Evansville, Ind., electrical engineer and president of the Evansville Astronomical Society, uses his Star Tracker 4 CCD camera every clear weekend. He explains how the imaging works: "The camera head is attached to a telescope, which in turn connects to a controller box with a cable, and another cable connects that to my notebook computer. We point the telescope at the object we want to image, and then take a time exposure lasting anywhere from .01 seconds to 5 minutes, depending on the brightness of the object. When the image appears on the screen, if it looks OK, it is saved to disk. Later the images are loaded onto the club's '486 computer and processed to remove noise and bring out faint detail."

CCDs are expensive, he reports, and not nearly as high resolution (yet) as NASA's. That means the CCD could never completely replace the camera. How could it? According to Stevens, that would mean there were no real astrophotographers left, anywhere. After all, he states, "RAs process all their own film, no matter what the odor or inconvenience," and most especially, "RAs never make a print smaller than 8 by 10, except for the hundreds of wallet-size photos they show to people who bring out pictures of their kids." ◀

—MJM

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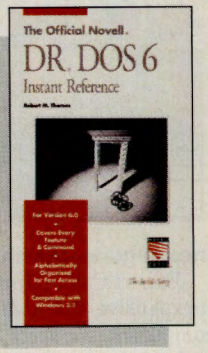

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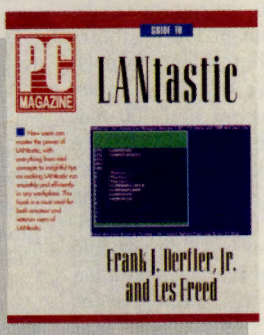

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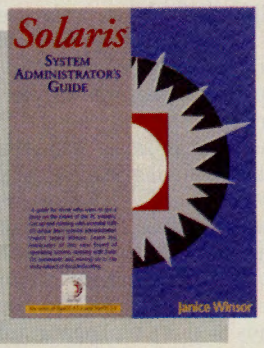

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Following are summaries of hardware and software reviews available for reading this month in *Online Today*. To read the complete reviews, use the GO commands listed at the end of each summary.

Hardware

Inexpensive Printer Sharing

PrintShare (GemTek Technology Inc.) is an inexpensive set of printer-sharing hardware and software for any parallel-port printer system. Up to 40 computers can be connected to a maximum of four printers with simple adapters that attach to each machine and inexpensive telephone cable. Individual cables can be up to 1,300 feet long. If only one printer is used, no software is necessary for the printer-sharing network. Reviewer Christy Brothers found the PrintShare system extremely easy to install. She says she tried everything possible to confuse the system, but it always handled printing tasks correctly. She rates PrintShare highly for small offices that want to share printers but don't want to invest in complex network systems. *GO OLT-3920*

Software

Upgraded Spreadsheet Program

Excel for Windows version 4.0 (Microsoft Corp.) is a full-featured spreadsheet program for Microsoft Windows. Reviewer William J. Lynott says the previous version of Excel was perhaps the best spreadsheet on the market; this version, he says, has enough new features to win over devoted users of competing products. Excel 4.0 features customizable and special purpose toolbars; automatic filling of series entries; new calendar and financial functions; workbooks of related spreadsheets, macro commands, and charts; and the ability to interpret and run macros written for other spreadsheets. It also has context-sensitive menus of shortcuts, new graphing capabilities, and many other new features.

For more information, visit the Microsoft Excel Forum (GO MSEXCEL). To read the review, *GO OLT-3885.*

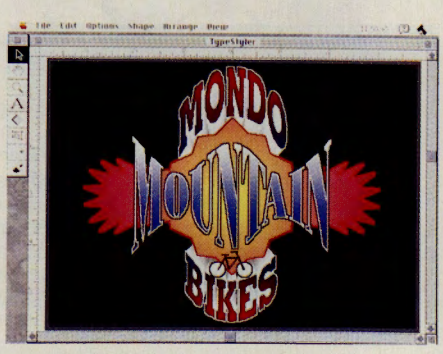
Shareware Presentation Program

Lecture 1.0 (Barn Owl Software), a shareware program for Microsoft Windows, simplifies text-based presentations. The program can read any ASCII file and display it, one slide at a time, in a standard window on the screen. The computer's mouse can be used to change screens in much the same way as a slide projector remote control switch. Reviewer James Moran says the program is extremely easy to learn and use. While it doesn't have the graphics capabilities of most presentation programs, it is ideal, he says, for those who must create a presentation quickly and simply.

For more information or to download the program, visit the IBM Applications Forum (GO IBMAPP). To read the review, *GO OLT-3905.*

Backing Up Windows

Back-It for Windows (Gazelle Systems), a full-featured backup utility for Microsoft Windows, features support for all standard diskette formats including 2.88MB, along with support for more than 40 tape drives. Backups can be performed interactively, with a Windows icon or at specified times. The package also includes a virus-detection utility program. Reviewer Franklyn Jones says Back-It is easy to learn and to use, and is extremely versatile. He says its budget price makes Back-It an excellent value. *GO OLT-3910*



Designing Type and Logos

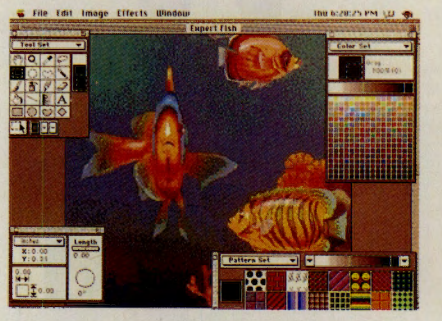
TypeStyler version 2.0 (Broderbund Software), a type design and manipulation program for Macintosh computers, lets users create special effects using any PostScript or TrueType fonts. It supports most common printers and includes 10 special fonts converted to its own format. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says this release eliminates the major problems with earlier versions of the program. He criticizes the program for its documentation, but applauds it for its flexibility and its complete set of type manipulation tools. He rates TypeStyler as one of the most powerful font programs available.

For more information, visit the Mac A Vendor Forum (GO MACAVEN). To read the review, *GO OLT-3895.*

The Newest dBase

dBase IV version 1.5 (Borland International Inc.), the latest version of the classic database manager for IBM computers, features a simplified installation procedure, better mouse support, a more flexible control panel, and new commands for both users and developers. It also features improved query-by-example and a query optimization scheme. Reviewer William J. Lynott says current dBase users will appreciate the new features and should find the upgrade worthwhile. However, he says there is little in this package that will make users of competing products want to switch to dBase, at least not until the next major upgrade appears.

For more information, GO DBASE. To read the review, *GO OLT-3915.*

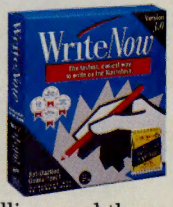


Inexpensive Macintosh Graphics

Expert Color Paint 1.0 (Softsync Inc.), an inexpensive paint program for Macintosh computers, supports 32-bit color and has a tool palette that includes adjustable brushes, magic wands and air brushes. The program also has brightness, contrast, blur, stretch and dither, and anti-alias controls for graphic images and photographic enhancement. It also includes a disk of clip art. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says the program is surprisingly powerful considering its price. He says it has some features that are missing on even the most expensive Macintosh paint programs.

For more information or to download a demonstration version, visit the Macintosh C Vendor Forum (GO MACCVEN). To read the review, *GO OLT-3925.*

Small, Powerful Word Processor



WriteNow 3.0 (T/Maker Inc.), a small, moderately priced Macintosh word processor, includes a 135,000-word spelling checker, a 1.4-million word thesaurus and a full grammar checker. The program features paragraph and character style sheets, document management, print preview, graphics, page layout and online help. The program can import and export to many Macintosh and IBM file formats. Reviewer Anthony Watkins says WriteNow is the only Macintosh word processor he has found that can format text correctly for uploading to CompuServe. He also says its small size is ideal for PowerBook users and others who don't want to dedicate a large amount of disk space to a word processor.

For more information, visit the Mac B Vendor Forum (GO MACBVEN). To read the review, *GO OLT-3985.*

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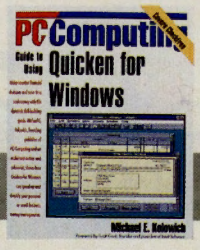
Following are summaries of book reviews available for reading this month in *Online Today*. To read the complete reviews, use the GO commands listed at the end of each summary.

Online Information Hunting

By Nahum Goldmann
Windcrest/McGraw-Hill, 1992
236 pages, $19.95 (softcover)

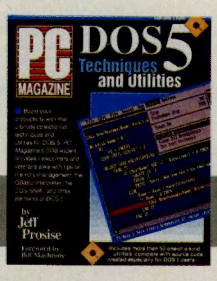
Written for people who want to quickly find the hidden gold in CompuServe and other online services, this book provides a set of simple rules to access information on any topic on any online service. Use this as your pickax for data gold mining, says reviewer John Edwards. *GO OLT-5700*



PC/Computing Guide to Using Quicken for Windows

By Michael E. Kolowich
Ziff-Davis Press, 1992
523 pages, $24.95 (softcover)

Offering fresh insights into Quicken for Windows that go far beyond the users manual, this book also provides readers with wisdom about general financial matters, says reviewer William J. Lynott. *GO OLT-5740*



DOS 5 Techniques and Utilities

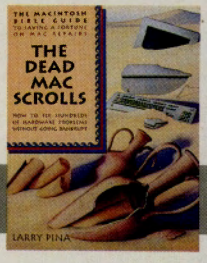
By Jeff Prosise
Ziff-Davis Press, 1992
1,011 pages, $39.95 (softcover with two diskettes)

This hefty book starts off where the DOS 5 users manual leaves off and is packed with tips, techniques and useful utilities. If you need to know anything about this operating system, reviewer William J. Lynott says this is the best place to find it. *GO OLT-5710*

Windows 3.1 The Complete Reference

By Tom Sheldon
Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1992
512 pages, $19.95 (softcover)

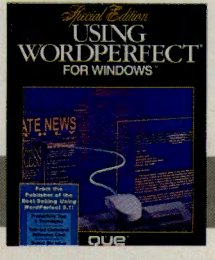
True to its name, this is a primer on the basic features of Windows 3.1 and has something to offer all new users of the program, says reviewer Michael Naver. *GO OLT-5720*



The Dead Mac Scrolls: How to Fix Hundreds of Hardware Problems Without Going Bankrupt

By Larry Pina
Goldstein & Blair, 1992
484 pages, $32 (softcover)

Expertly written and organized, this practical book offers affordable solutions to Macintosh hardware problems. But reviewer Franklyn Jones warns that this book is only for those who have a technical grasp of the Mac's innerworkings. *GO OLT-5730*



Using WordPerfect for Windows (Special Edition)

By Que Development Group
Que Corp., 1991
1,184 pages, $29.95 (softcover)

This is a big book that teaches a big program, especially excelling in its instruction of advanced word processing techniques. Reviewer Sharon Kahn says it lives up to its billing as a compendium that provides extensive coverage of a complex program. *GO OLT-5750*

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UPDATE

TONY MANDILE

Outdoors Forum's All-Natural GIFs

The Great Outdoors Forum has opened its new Library 4, "Outdoor Graphics," devoted to high-quality, 256-color GIF graphics images. The selection includes wilderness images by photographer and forum sysop Tony Mandile, whose pictures have appeared in nearly every major outdoors publication and have earned awards from Nikon's Outdoor Photographers Showcase and other professional organizations. GO OUTDOORS

A Program to Raytrace Away

The Persistence of Vision team has introduced the first complete version of its Stone Soup concept program, POV-Ray. Developed by a network of enthusiasts in the Computer Art Forum, POV-Ray is a raytracing graphics program that uses representations of three-dimensional objects and models of light sources to mathematically render a realistic image. Versions of POV-Ray are available for IBM-compatible, Macintosh, Amiga, Unix and other computer systems. GO COMART and search Library 16, "Raytrace Sources," for file POVINF.DOC, which details system requirements and required Computer Art Forum files for all versions of the program.

The connect-time surcharge in Magazine Database Plus and Health Database Plus has been eliminated until further notice. Magazine Database Plus (GO MAGDB) provides access to the full text of more than 129,000 articles from 100 general interest magazines covering current events, people, sports and many other topics. Use Health Database Plus (GO HLTDB) to select from more than 100,000 articles and abstracts from 80 consumer health magazines and 83 professional medical journals. Article surcharges and CompuServe standard connect charges remain in effect.

Official representatives of the major U.S. presidential candidates are online in the Campaign '92 Forum, responding to members' questions and uploading appearance schedules and position papers that help you understand the candidates and their party platforms. GO VOTEFORUM

Support for worldwide users of U.K. hardware and software products has been enhanced with the launch of the U.K. Computing Forum. The forum has general computing areas as well as sections managed by leading U.K. vendors. Wigwam, a Windows offline reader program, and Telepathy, a similar DOS program, are available from Ashmount Research in Library 10, "Ashmount." GO UKCOMP

The ThinkPad Forum and the IBM LAN Management Utilities/2 (LMU/2) Forum have been opened by IBM Corp. The ThinkPad Forum assists developers who are or are planning to develop software for IBM's pen-computing entry (GO THINKPAD). The LMU/2 Forum supports IBM's Lan Management Utilities/2, an OS/2-based set of services to aid in the system management of LANs (GO LMU2).

Move your Windows 3.x shareware application to Windows NT and win prizes. CompuServe, Microsoft, Jolt Cola, NEC and other hardware vendors, with the Association of Shareware Professionals, offer the chance to have your 32-bit shareware application judged by the computer industry's leading Windows enthusiasts at the 1992 Fall Comdex show in Las Vegas. There will be five grand-prize winners. Download the contest entry form from the Windows NT Pre-Release Forum (file NTCTST.ZIP in Library 4, "Win32 PD/Shareware") and enter by Oct. 15. GO WINNT

Users of Digitalk Inc.'s Smalltalk/V products can communicate directly with company representatives and other users in the Digitalk Forum to answer technical questions. Forum libraries contain Smalltalk code, tools, applications, tips files, company announcements and more. GO DIGITALK

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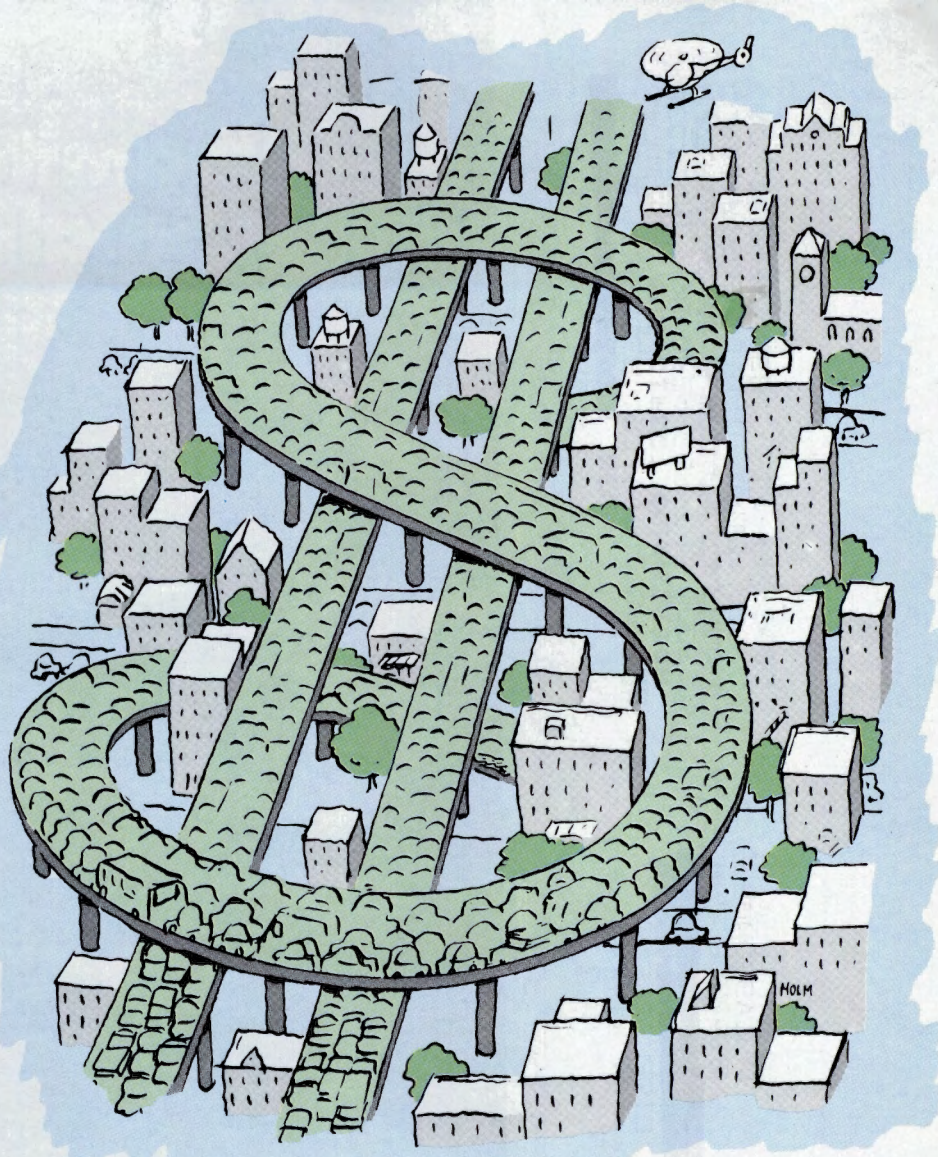

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