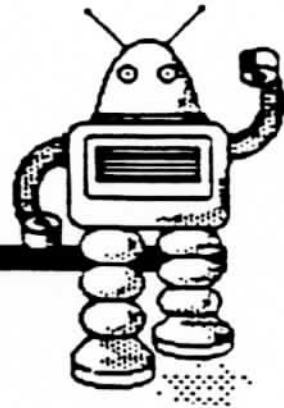


# THE ROBOT COMPANION



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December 1988  
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Published by: THE DALLAS PERSONAL ROBOTIC GROUP  
Editor: Stan Spealbusch  
Contributing Editors, Brian Vaceluke, Bev Bryant and Walter Bryant (this issue by Walter Bryant)

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**November Meeting Minutes**  
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Brian Vaceluke had problems with his robot as he was trying to put the robot in his car to bring it to the club meeting. The torso cable developed a little slack in it and slid under the torso pulley, jamming it. However, he gave a very interesting impromptu speech and we will see his robot demo his improved and simplified version of the home navigation program in the January meeting. (By the way, my own robot has had the same cable problem before and if anyone has a good fix for it please let us know.)

Brian also gave a very impressive progress report on the "Video Degitizer Board Project". He is making incredible progress and will keep us up dated. To humble little me, this is an absolutely incredible step for our club. Vision (not to be confused with the limited 15 degree single vertical line for light and distance sensors the Hero 2000 now possesses), is an essential sensor if robots are to be more than a blind man with a stick. The first projects we strive for when Brian demos the unit will be for the robot to simply distinguish between a circle, a square, and a triangle. One very good thing about the board is that it will work on an IBM compatible computer so most every one can use it whether they have a robot or not.

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**ACTIVE CLUB PROJECTS**  
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Our club is presently engaged in several projects. They exemplify some of the primary goals and objectives of our club and its reason for success as the nation's oldest and largest active personal robotics group. They are:

- a) **The Continuous Consciousness** - This program allows a Hero 2000 to be aware of the details of "his master's home and family life" and to interface with the family

members in a realistic, entertaining, and comfortable fashion. It can control its own actions, take care of its self (charge its batteries), navigate the home "at will", and learn from its environment.

- b) **The Home Navigation Routine** - This program allows a Hero 2000 to accurately and confidently navigate around the home and know its exact position in the house within 1/2 inch, and its direction within one or two degrees. This program, in conjunction with the continuous consciousness allow the robot to navigate the entire house, and yet know exactly where it is at all times. When a club member wants his robot to use this program in his own home, all he will have to do is input a simple floor plan tree layout of his own particular home.
  
- c) **Vision recognition** - Brian Vaceluke is heading a team effort to design and construct an IBM compatible "slow scan, low resolution, black and white TV digitized image". Walter and Bev bought a small black and white TV camera for him to work with, and Brian has designed and bought most all of the circuitry. This system will allow our robots to take "digitized" pictures. In this fashion, interpolating programs can then be used to analyze the pictures allowing the robot (or IBM computer) to "see". Some of the first programs we intend to write is to simply program the robot to distinguish between a circle, a square, and a triangle. But the sky is the limit!

These are but just a few of our active projects - but we must have the participation and input of all our club members to realize success on these projects in the near future! Please attend the next meeting, or write in to the club if our are out of state, and sign up to help. I am sure there are even better projects we will work on in the future, so please tell us what they are, because you are the source of all our ideas and goals!

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#### CLUB ELECTIONS IN JANUARY

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In January we will have club elections again! All you need to do is step forward at the next meeting and say "I would like to run for (insert any office in the club)"!!! This is opportunity knocking at your door! We really need new officers for this upcoming election that will bring new ideas with them and also help us sustain the momentum we have now. You should review our club bylaws, call any of the present officers if you have any questions at all, and put your name in the history books!!!!

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OUT OF TOWN/STATE MEMBERS  
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Did you know that over a third of our paying club members live outside the Dallas/Forth Worth area!!! Most of these club members live outside the state of Texas, and some even live outside of the United States!!! Who represents this fastest growing (and paying), membership of our club? I suggest we bring this subject up at the next meeting and ask:

- a) Can we elect an out of town/state officer to represent these people (within our existing bylaws)?
- b) Can we create out of town/state satellite clubs that would have five or more members?
- c) Can we create out of town/state projects with:
  - 1) mail-in contest, complete with prizes?
  - 2) VCR tape mail in programs?
  - 3) contributing editors to the news letter?For example, Andres of Bogato South America, just scent in another letter to us and suggested "As a suggestion, I think you should make the edition of The Robot Companion with the help of a desktop publishing program like Ventura, it will give a nice look to the magazine".

Andres, we like your idea and eagerly await an example of an article you could show us written with Ventura!!!

What we need is for all of you out-of-state club members to write us. We will read your letters during the club meetings, and write about it in the newsletters. We have had several great letters in the past from many of you, but no one has made any of these suggestions yet. What do you think?

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1989 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR:  
THE DALLAS PRESONAL ROBOTICS GROUP



"No interruptions please. I'm on a roll."

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**NEWS FLASH !!!**  
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Joe Rowe was recently in the news paper, again!! It was the DALLAS TIMES HERALD, Sunday, December 4, 1988. Other people are finding out some of the neat stuff we have known about Joe for years! I made copies of the news article (complete with several neat pictures), so any one at the next meeting that missed the article can get a copy. What will Joe do next!?? Answer: anything he wants to!!

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**THE CLUB TREASURY**  
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The club is doing well and has slightly over \$1,000.00 dollars in the club treasury now. We use the club income of \$10.00 per person per year to support the newsletter efforts. However, we have really never made even one large purchase as a club yet. I suggest we spend some of this money. Spend it wisely, but spend some of it, for the good of the club. To do this we will need two things, a formal plan on how the club officers will supervise the equitable consumption of the money, and ... something really neat to buy!! Think about it a little, then send in your ideas or bring them up at the next meeting!!

note: It will be interesting to see what the out of town/state members suggest.

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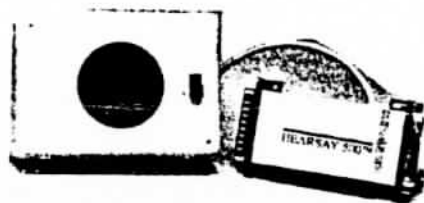
**COMPUTER DIRECT INC.**

22292 N. Pepper Road, Barrington, IL 60010

**Accessories**

**Speech Synthesis/Voice Recognition**

**Voice Interactive Computing**



**Hearsay 1000**

Here is a speech synthesis/voice recognition unit. It's easy to use and is able to work with existing software by publishers such as Epyx, Timeworks, Infocom, Broderbund, Electronic Arts, and many more. Keyboard input can also be replaced by voice. Works with many educational, productivity, and entertainment titles, as well as the user's own programs. Includes internal card, external microphone/speaker. (Disk) HR00001 List \$149.95

**Hearsay 500**

Low cost speech synthesizer. Verbalizes existing software and user's own programs, similar to the hearsay 1000. Includes external speaker and an in-the-line interface that connects to your parallel port. You will not need an additional parallel port to run your printer. Voice recognition not included. (Disk) HR01001 List \$69.95

**SALE \$129<sup>95</sup>**

**SALE \$59<sup>95</sup>**

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## CLUB REFERENDUM

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We might develop a written "club referendum" on all the "neat ideas" the club members have now and/or, will submit in the next few months. We could appoint a committee to list all the entries and attach this document to the newsletter. This would be an excellent way for everyone's ideas to be seen by everyone else. Next, we could develop debates in the news-letters and on the club floor, between the people that really wanted to press their "very best idea", and develop support for their ideas. Finally, we could put it to a club vote.

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## VCR CLUB TAPE(S)

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We would like to all members that may have any VCR tapes of any of the club functions, or just any robot tapes they may have made of their own robot, to bring the tapes, or copies of the tapes, to the next meeting. Walter Bryant has many, if not all of the tapes now, but they are disjointed and need editing. Walter also has two VCRs so he can make copies for all the club members. Just as with the club library which has worked extremely well due to Stan Spielbush's diligent efforts, the only expense to the club member would be to supply a blank VCR tape.

We need to get a club wide effort to make an introduction leadin for the official club tape. Let's bring this up at the next meeting and produce a really neat tape we would like to show our families.





CLUB INFORMATION

The Dallas Personal Robotics Group is a non-profit organization of individuals interested in learning about personal robots, sharing ideas, working on projects, and informing the public about the world of personal robotics. We are open to anyone who has an interest in personal robotics, whether or not they currently have a robot, and whether or not they have any knowledge of robotics.

To become a member and receive the newsletter, have access to our BBS and program library, and be involved in our monthly clubs and user's labs, simply fill out the form below, and send it with \$10.00 to Walter Bryant, Treasurer (address below).

If you are interested, but not sure you want to be a member, feel free to visit our meetings. If you like, we can send you a sample issue of the newsletter. And please feel free to call our robotics BBS (number below).

Tentative Meeting Schedule (1988):

July 9    Aug 13    Sep 10    Oct 15    Nov 19    Dec 17

Meeting times and location: 2:00 PM at the Dallas Infomart.

Club officers:

President: Bev Bryant                      Vice-president: Ed Rivers  
Treasurer: Walter Bryant                Secretary: Brian Vaceluke

Back Issues

A complete set of back issues, from the formation of the club in 1984 to the present, is available for \$3.00. Add \$2.00 postage & handling if ordering by mail. Contact Stan Spielbusch, Editor, 2404 Via Barcelona, Carrollton, TX 75006.

BBS NUMBER: (214) 231-2836      300/1200/2400 baud. 8 bits, 1 stop, no parity

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M E M B E R S H I P   A P P L I C A T I O N

Dallas Personal Robotics Group  
c/o Walter Bryant, 814 Mockingbird Circle, Lewisville, TX 75067

Check one:    ( ) Renewal    ( ) New Member    ( ) Info Change    ( ) Sample issue request

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_      WORK PHONE ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF ROBOT (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF COMPUTER (if any) \_\_\_\_\_      MODEM? \_\_\_\_\_      BAUD \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want the above information available to other members? \_\_\_\_\_